Formative Evaluation of v
The National Young Volunteers’ Service
Final Report

Authors: National Centre for Social Research, Institute for Volunteering Research, University of Southampton, University of Birmingham, Public Zone
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The research consortium was made up of:

**NatCen**
Carol McNaughton Nicholls, Naomi Jones, Chris Creegan, Ashley Brown, Naomi Day, Rachel Kinsella, Gareth Morrell, Natalie Low, Emma Drever, Cheryl Lloyd, Christopher Fergusson and Nicky Cleghorn.

**Institute for Volunteering Research**
Nick Ockenden, Daniel Stevens, Matthew Hill, Angela Ellis Paine, Georgina Brewis, Jonathan Paylor, Jennifer Russell, and Joanna Stuart

**Third Sector Research Centre**
John Mohan, Steven McKay, Andrew McCulloch, GeoData Institute (University of Southampton).

**PublicZone**
Amanda Prosser, Christopher Doggett.

**Peer researchers**
Lee-Anna Olonade, Dillon Denton-Ashley, Carla Jones, Jack Graves, Jonathan Phillips, Viola Fung, Ania Ryszkowska, Elizabeth Goldsbrough, Jonathan Paylor, Helen Ellis and Fareeda Miah

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Executive Summary

In 2004 the Russell Commission was launched to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. The Commission’s headline recommendation was the creation of a dedicated, young person-led, independent, implementation body to deliver this framework. This body is v - The National Young Volunteers’ Service. v are a youth led charity, who aim to place young people and their interests at their centre.

v was launched in 2006 and was tasked with implementing 12 of the Russell Commission’s 16 recommendations. Together, the recommendations were designed to deliver a step change in the quantity, quality and diversity of youth volunteering in England. In response to one of these recommendations, v commissioned a formative evaluation of its activities, which brought together nine methodological strands of activity over two and a half years to evaluate the v programme. This report presents the first draft of the final set of findings from the formative evaluation of v.

The v volunteers

- Monitoring data indicates that 1.05 million youth volunteering opportunities have been created via v and by autumn 2010 over 700,000 opportunities had been taken up by young volunteers.
- Latest figures (June 2011) from v’s Annual Report record that 1,094,175 opportunities have been created and taken up.
- No more than 60 per cent of these young volunteers had volunteered in the previous 12 months.
- The characteristics of the volunteers reflect that of the general population of young people, indicating that social mixing may have occurred due to the programme.
- There is also evidence that a higher proportion of young people who are Black, Asian or minority ethnic, and to a lesser extent, from socially deprived areas, have been involved.

The experience of being a v volunteer

Routes in:

- Routes into v volunteering appear to be along a continuum of active to passive involvement.
  - Those who were active tended to have specific aims and motivations for volunteering, and sought these opportunities out via websites and volunteer brokerage services such as vinvolved teams.
  - Those who were less active tended to become involved in volunteering opportunistically due to the activity being on at a time and place they would already be present (for example they attend a sport activity there); or friends are involved and ask them to join in.
- Word of mouth and hearing about v via teachers or youth workers seemed particularly important for young people aged under 20. Those who were
unemployed, in education, in part-time employment, and were younger also tended to be motivated by the desire to obtain employment skills or experience, to a greater extent than those volunteers aged over 20 and/or in employment.

Nature of activities
- A range of different volunteering activities, with different levels of commitment required seem important for ensuring different motivations for volunteering are catered for.

Barriers
- Barriers to volunteering include a lack of time, concerns regarding the cost of volunteering and not being able to afford it, and a lack of awareness of opportunities.

The impact of v

On volunteers
- The following impacts have been found to occur for young volunteers:
  - increased human capital, including qualifications and life skills
  - increased social capital, with bridging capital playing a key role in linking young people to new opportunities, support networks and aspirations
  - increased confidence, self-esteem and an opportunity for meaningful occupation, which has been conceptualised as ontological capital
  - increasing awareness of and engagement with the local community
  - It should also be recalled that not all young people are able to engage in volunteering due to barriers such as childcare or income, although the evidence does indicate the v programme has been relatively successful in engaging young people from diverse backgrounds, and at least 40 per cent of the volunteers had not volunteered in the previous 12 months.

On the wider community
- Social impacts can be difficult to quantify or measure tangibly. However the evidence indicates the following social impacts:
  - Increased propensity for young people to get involved in their local community and have civic responsibility
  - An improved image of young people and inter-generational relationships
  - Greater awareness of volunteering opportunities and access to volunteering among young people.

On organisations (the funded network)
- Key impacts that organisations identify are:
  - Increased quantity of young people involved as volunteers
  - Improved quality and support for young people due to the measures put in place due to being part of the v network (including Reach\(^1\))
  - Increased involvement of young people and youth-led activities (the level reported increased across the two waves of the grant recipient survey)

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\(^1\) A quality assurance accreditation system rolled out across the v network.
• Increased networking and communication with other organisations
• Increased workloads and paper work

‘Distance travelled’ for organisations is important to consider – for organisations that had previously not involved young people and/or volunteers or had limited structures in place to do so, these impacts were more pronounced than for those that already were successfully doing so prior to v funding.

On the wider sector
Key impacts on the sector included:
• Professionalisation of youth volunteering.
• Volunteering increasingly linked to personal development.
• Youth engagement and empowerment agenda becoming explicitly linked to youth volunteering.

Whether the professionalisation of volunteering was viewed as a positive or negative impact may have related to the paradigm of youth volunteering supported.

Cost benefit analysis
• Overall v-funded activities generate a robust SROI of around 6 to 1 in relation to direct impact on young volunteers.

Implications for processes
Managing volunteering projects
• Grant recipients are satisfied with the support they have had from v, and this is particularly pronounced among v cashpoint recipients.
• Organisations with different levels of need or experience may require more or less support.
• Creating opportunities was noted to be fairly easy by the funded network, though full-time opportunities were most challenging.
• Reach appears to have been successful in establishing quality among the grant recipients.
• Creating youth-led activities and consulting young people may be particularly successful for identifying relevant opportunities for young volunteers.
• The most prevalent form of support is young volunteers having a named manager/advisor.
• Welcoming atmospheres, support from project staff (especially with personal issues) and opportunities matching needs and interests were the key factors in retaining and recruiting volunteers.

Monitoring volunteering
• Targets set by projects tended to be met, however a minority did not appreciate the value of such targets (perhaps indicating a lack of understanding of their value).
• Generally there was support for monitoring processes and the process had improved, however more could be done to continue to improve ways of monitoring youth volunteering.

Communicating with young people
• Young volunteers appreciated opportunities for direct contact with v, and in particular with other v volunteers.

In terms of how successful v has been in communicating with young people and ensuring they can access information on volunteering the evidence indicates the following impacts:
• Mixed awareness of v as a volunteering organisation which has risen and then fallen again over time.
• Improvements to the website usability, and increased website traffic.
• More positive reactions to the recent Summer of Give campaign than the earlier Big Hand and more recent Make the Team campaigns (Posters from the campaigns are in appendix C).

Overall there is a mixed awareness of the v brand, although it is important to note differences between groups of young people and that different mediums may be more effective for communicating to some than others.

Creating a network
• The grant recipients’ most prevalent contact with v was via newsletter or email updates.
• Face to face meetings appear to have been the most used and effective ways in which networking was facilitated.
• Private sector engagement has been particularly successfully facilitated by v - The private sector reported positive relationships with v in terms of increasing funding, increasing volunteering and their improving capacity to support young people, in a good working partnership.

The future for v
• Stakeholders described a challenging environment for volunteering, primarily due to the depth and breadth of the spending cuts. There was, however, a feeling that volunteering, albeit in a changed form, would survive this period.
• Opinion about the future of v varied, with some feeling that it would not exist in five year’s time and others being far more positive.
• Whatever form v’s future would take, there was a strong desire for its learning and expertise not to be lost.
• There was a desire to see v build on its strengths, including funding the sector and marketing and promoting youth volunteering, and mixed views expressed about the extent to which it could or should become involved in direct service delivery.
• Stakeholders expressed a desire to see v effectively communicate decisions about its future direction to the sector.
1 Introduction

This report presents the first draft of the final findings of the formative evaluation of v. The evaluation was commissioned in December 2008 and will conclude in June 2011. This report follows on from the interim report released in April 2010. The interim report focussed on the processes and impact of v thus far. In this report the focus is squarely on the impact of v and the implications that the evaluation findings have in terms of future lessons and good practice, both for v and for the youth and volunteering sector.

v, The National Young Volunteers’ Service, is an independent charity dedicated to helping young people volunteer in ways that matter to them. It was established in 2006 to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission which found that there was a ‘need for a new national framework for youth action and engagement’. The commission made 16 recommendations, 12 of which became v’s responsibility (detailed further in Chapter 2). Among them was the recommendation that ‘the implementation body (v) will need to measure the impact of the framework and ensure that there is constant learning and evaluation.’ To meet this recommendation, v chose to commission two separate evaluations of its activities. The first was a summative evaluation that was carried out between 2006 and 2008 by WM Enterprise. Summative evaluation is designed to assess the effects and effectiveness of a programme and to report on these (Robson, 2002).

This second, formative, evaluation of v was commissioned in December 2008, to run until June 2011. A formative evaluation is different to a summative evaluation in that it is designed to help with the development of the programme it is evaluating by sharing learning that can be incorporated into future design and decisions (Robson 2002). v commissioned a formative evaluation in Dec 2008. Formative evaluations require constant scrutiny and review of practice, and as such differ from summative evaluations in terms of both the commitment required from organisations to adapt, in line with evaluation recommendations and also the resources required to do so. The benefit is that they allow organisations to shape their evaluation as it is undertaken in a responsive manner.

This formative evaluation has been undertaken by a consortium of independent organisations, led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and comprising the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR), the Third Sector Research Centre (represented by Birmingham and Southampton Universities) and Public Zone. The consortium were selected to undertake the evaluation following a procurement process that took place between July 2008 and December 2008 and which was governed by the rules of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). This report represents the final set of findings from this formative evaluation process.
1.1 Evaluation aims and objectives

Aims for the evaluation were defined by v and OCS prior to commissioning the evaluation. Following a scoping study and the initial phase of evaluation, the research team proposed a slight change in the scope and balance of these overarching aims and objectives. The current agreed objectives are outlined below.

1.1.1 Overarching objectives for the evaluation

1. To review the development and delivery of v, in context:
   - the position of v in the volunteering landscape;
   - the organisation of v; and,
   - the delivery of v (including: partnership working and sector engagement).

2. To review the process of commissioning and supporting activities:
   - the ‘fit’ of v activities with the Russell Commission recommendations;
   - the effectiveness and efficiency of v’s commissioning process;
   - the quality of support provided by v to funded projects; and
   - the quality of communication with v funded projects.

3. Analyse the impact of v’s commissioned activities, in terms of:
   - young people (including: propensity to volunteer; attitudes towards volunteering; skills development; personal development; employability; community engagement; social integration);
   - organisations (including: ease of recruiting young volunteers; enhanced standards of volunteer management; enhanced skills for developing a young-person led approach);
   - communities (including: development of social capital; enhanced levels of participation; enhanced intergenerational relations; enhanced attitudes towards young people);
   - volunteering (including: the development of good practice in youth volunteering; delivery of a step change in youth engagement; the development of youth-led volunteering activities); and
   - the value for money of each programme and ‘strand’ of commissioned activity.
4. To provide recommendations for the ongoing development of youth volunteering.
   - recommendations to v about its ongoing development and implementation of the Russell Commission recommendations; and,
   - ideas for developing and sharing knowledge and good practice in youth volunteering.

Each of the four key objectives are addressed in this report, and an additional focus is also added – understanding the process whereby young people became involved in and experienced v volunteering, from their perspective.

1.2 Evaluation design

This is a large-scale evaluation which forms a comprehensive assessment of v’s activities rather than focussing on specific elements. The evaluation draws on nine methodological strands to do this and these are listed below and discussed in detail in appendix A. It is worth pointing out, however, that while the methodology for this evaluation has been designed to give broad and robust evidence on v’s activities, given the scope of what v does, the range of audiences it engages and v’s own evolution as an organisation, there are inevitably some activities that are not included in the evaluation. For example, while the evaluation incorporates the views of some of v’s stakeholders on v’s activities and communication with them, the evaluation does not include a full audit and assessment of v’s communication activity with its stakeholders or v’s research activity.

As is the nature of formative evaluations the aims and methodologies have been in a constant state of review and development as the evaluation progresses, to respond where possible, to changing needs, and some of these changes are highlighted in the section below on evaluation scope.

There are nine core strands to the evaluation which are:

1) a survey of recipients of grants from v, over two waves;
2) a random sample survey of young people;
3) an analysis of the volunteering data in the Citizenship Survey;
4) an analysis of v’s administrative and monitoring data (including data from individual level monitoring, collected only towards the latter half of the evaluation, directly from volunteers);
5) a cost-benefit analysis including Social Return on Investment;
6) qualitative case study explorations of activities funded by v, including interviews with young people and project staff, over two waves;
7) interviews and workshops with v’s stakeholders, over two waves and interviews with v staff towards the latter part of the evaluation;
8) a policy and media discourse analysis; and,
9) a marketing and communications evaluation.
In line with the youth-led ethos of \textit{v}, a team of young peer researchers were also recruited to assist with the design of the qualitative research with young volunteers. They were also supported to assist with the fieldwork and comment on findings and analysis.

In addition to the nine core strands of the evaluation there was also a short scoping study undertaken during the first three months of the evaluation. This comprised:

- a short literature review of recent research on youth volunteering;
- orientation interviews with \textit{v} staff;
- familiarisation with \textit{v}'s data and processes; and
- familiarisation with the existing evidence base on \textit{v}.

The findings from the scoping phase were used to refine the methodology for the evaluation. Findings from this stage, specifically data from the literature review and orientation interviews, are also included in this report.

The timeline below outlines the broad stages of the evaluation, and when they have occurred:

As already noted, the interim report of the evaluation outlined the process of commissioning and setting up the \textit{v} programme. In this report the focus is more on the impacts, outcomes and implications of the programme.
1.3 Evaluation scope and limitations

A key challenge in an evaluation of this nature is measuring impact. While scientists can carry out experiments in laboratories which allow them to carefully control a range of variables, social researchers can rarely, if ever, do this in real-world settings. For example, youth volunteering will simultaneously be affected by v’s efforts but also by wider social changes. This makes it difficult – and sometimes impossible - to isolate changes in volunteering that can be attributed solely to v and its partners.

In considering what would have happened in the absence of v’s initiatives, the evaluation team have sought, in Chapter 3, to make use of existing data sources – where possible pre-dating the formation of v - to identify suitable baselines or groups with which (some) comparison can be drawn with v-funded volunteers or organisations. For example, it is possible to look at the demographics of v volunteers compared to the general population using UK census data.

However, for other impacts defining a baseline is less straightforward. There are not easily comparable statistics on, for example, the comparative costs of providing volunteering opportunities, nor is there much in the way of survey evidence on the impact of volunteering on individuals or on the ways in which volunteering is managed by organisations. Therefore, saying something about the value of v’s initiatives or how they have impacted on individuals or organisations can be more challenging. In response to this, and following the interim report, the second waves of data collection in the evaluation particularly focussed on assessing the impact of v, by asking young volunteers, the grant funded network, and stakeholders, directly what they feel the impact of v’s activities have been. This was via both the survey of grant recipients and depth interviews and focus groups with young volunteers, grant recipient staff and stakeholders.

Over the course of the evaluation the quality of the monitoring data returned from the grant recipients to v improved, however some categories continued to have limited responses with which to assess the overall profile of v volunteers (with a high proportion of responses in the ‘prefer not to say’ category). In response to the challenging quality of the project monitoring data, a process for collecting monitoring data at an individual level, directly from volunteers was developed towards the latter part of the evaluation. This consisted of young volunteers being sent a website link and being asked to complete a short, online survey on their experiences and the impact of their volunteering. This monitoring design change was created in response to the interim findings of the evaluation. The individual monitoring data has greatly improved what can be said about the impact of v from an evaluative sense, though it should be cautioned that attribution remains problematic to assert.

The methodological design for this evaluation focuses on the perspectives of some of v’s key audiences including young people, the youth sector, government and policy makers, v’s funded network and the broader volunteering community.

The views of young people and young volunteers have been central to this evaluation. The key data collection methods for mapping young people’s views took place in the second part of the evaluation and is a key focus of the findings presented here.
The Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis was also unable to be completed until towards the end of the evaluation, when the data sources on impacts becomes available, and the first development of this is included here.

Strong evaluative research brings together differing perspectives, from participants with a range of political, personal and professional standpoints. Therefore, as with any evaluation, there are instances here where participants’ views may be at odds with v’s perceived organisational reality. Where possible we have tried to indicate where there is a disjuncture between v’s perceptions and those of its audiences, and to offer an explanation as to why this might be the case.

1.4 Report outline
The rest of this report presents the final results of the evaluation. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the background to v and outlines its aims and targets as well as detailing the current context in which v is operating. Chapter 3 examines existing evidence bases on volunteering and the profile of v volunteers across the programme. Chapter 4 looks at how the young people who volunteered with v funded organisations experienced this, including their motivation and routes into v volunteering. Chapter 5 looks at the impact that v is having on young volunteers, on the wider community, on organisations delivering volunteering projects, on the volunteering sector, and the value some of these impacts represent. Finally, Chapter 6 sets out the key learning and practice implications that have emerged from the evaluation in terms of the process and impact of creating a major programme of youth volunteering in the manner that v has, including communicating with young people and raising awareness of v. There are section summaries included throughout the chapters.

Throughout the report, verbatim quotations are used to illustrate the qualitative findings. They are labelled to show the v funding scheme that they are associated with, the area the participants work in, or the job title they hold. This is to ensure that all research respondents remain fully anonymous. Quotes are drawn from across the sample.

Each chapter uses relevant data from across the evaluation. In each case the source of the data is given. Where no source is given this indicates that the source is the same as the last listed source. Where data from several sources have been triangulated or compared this is also made clear.
2 Context of v

In the past year alone, a new Coalition government has taken office, the profile of volunteering has been dramatically raised through the Big Society policy agenda, and the country is experiencing the most significant funding cuts for a generation. The purpose of this opening chapter is to explore the environment within which v emerged, its subsequent development and the context they are operating in and to describe the form it has taken as an organisation thus far. This will help set the context on which the remaining chapters will be based. To do this, it draws on findings from research with key stakeholders and information from the case studies and discourse analysis, as well as bringing in wider evidence on volunteering.

In section 2.1, definitions and characteristics of volunteering are explored, before discussing the wider political, social and economic context within which v operates. The development of v is examined in section 2.2, describing the Russell Commission and Millennium Volunteers in particular. Section 2.3 then outlines the delivery of v, including its aims and objectives and the design of its programmes. The final section, 2.4, discusses stakeholder views about wider challenges facing volunteering. The chapter concludes with an exploration of implications.

2.1 Context

2.1.1 Definitions and characteristics of volunteers

Volunteering has no one legal definition within the UK and the term is often stretched to meet different objectives and agendas. However, the most authoritative policy definition was given in the ‘refreshed’ Compact on relations between Government and the Third Sector in England. This defines volunteering as:

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

(The Commission for the Compact, 2009)

This is best seen as a policy definition and doesn’t necessarily chime with lay definitions and conceptions of volunteering. Many lay definitions only include activity with an organisation as volunteering and research of different cultural understandings of volunteering showed that people commonly associate a ‘net-cost’ dimension to volunteering i.e. the cost to the volunteer must be greater than any benefit they receive (Handy et al, 2000 and Meijs et al, 2003). In Chapter 4 the views of the v volunteers on how they define volunteering are presented.

Volunteering takes place across the voluntary, public and private sector, although a large proportion of it happens within voluntary and community organisations (Low et al, 2007). It is supported by a sizeable infrastructure, that operates at national, regional and local level and which has developed over the past 40 years or so (Rochester et al, 2010). Indeed,
the volunteering infrastructure is now reasonably complex, consisting of generalist bodies such as Volunteering England operating at a national level, organisations such as Greater London Volunteering at a regional level and a network of Volunteer Centres at a local level. These operate alongside a whole host of specialist bodies which focus on developing volunteering either within specific demographic groups (such as young people), specific forms of volunteering (such as employer-supported volunteering), or through specific recruitment mechanisms (such as the internet).

Volunteering is often divided into ‘formal volunteering’, which takes place within or through a group or organisation, and ‘informal volunteering’, which takes place between individuals. Levels of volunteering in England are relatively high compared to other countries in the UK, many European countries and other ‘western’ countries such North America and Australasia (Rochester et al, 2010). Furthermore, participation in volunteering appears static. Despite a few small fluctuations, both shorter-term (see the Citizenship Survey series) and longer-term data (see the British Household Panel data in Staetsky, 2010; and the National Surveys of Volunteering – Davis Smith, 1998; Low et al, 2007) suggests that there has not been much change in terms of the proportion of the population who volunteer over the last few decades.

There are recognised differences in volunteering trends according to key demographics. Women, for example, are more likely to volunteer than men (Drever, 2010). Broadly speaking, there is also a positive relationship between education, employment and income with participation in volunteering (Hill and Russell, 2009). Age also makes a difference with 16 to 25 years being one of the age groups that are least likely to participate in regular (once a month or more) formal volunteering, but at the same time the most likely to get involved in regular informal volunteering. While young people on the whole have largely positive views of volunteering and volunteers (v, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Davis Smith, 1998), there is a tendency for this age group (and others) to have quite narrow, stereotyped views of volunteering. However, these views can vary with background and demographics - young women, for example, tend to display a more positive perspective of volunteering than young men (v, 2008).

2.1.2 Political context

In this section the political context that v currently operates within is explored, followed by a discussion of the political context in which v first developed.

The political context under the Coalition

The current political context is dramatically different to the environment within which v emerged, which was characterised by considerable financial support from government for volunteering. Both the size and nature of this financial support has changed significantly. Although it is likely that whichever party had won the 2010 general election, funding for volunteering infrastructure would have been cut: the forming of the Conservative-led Coalition government has seen this financial support reduce dramatically and has precipitated a change in the nature of the funding relationship, with the government being more prescriptive in return for their financial investment.
Currently, there are two key policy areas that are directly affecting volunteering. By far the most significant of these is dramatic public sector spending cuts. Of secondary (but more positive) importance is the ‘Big Society’ agenda.

Public spending cuts are being felt across many government departments and public policy areas. Volunteering is no exception. It itself has seen its own funding from the Office for Civil Society (OCS) fall dramatically from £37 million in 2010-11 to £1.25 million in 2011-12 (although, the initial funding was always scheduled to come to an end in March 2011) (Third Sector, 2011a). The OCS has also significantly cut its strategic partners programme. In 2010-11, forty-two organisations received £12.2m from the fund whereas the new programme only involves 17 organisations, who will receive a total of £8.2 million over the whole three years at which point the programme will cease – effectively resulting in a 100 per cent cut (Third Sector 2011b).

The changing relationship between government and the sector is not purely one of reduced funding; the nature of the funding relationship has also altered:

‘We’re different from Labour. The heart of the big society agenda is about trying to reduce people's sense of dependence on the state, and that goes for the sector as well’ (Nick Hurd, the Minister for Civil Society, Third Sector 2010)

It could be suggested that such dramatic spending cuts undermine the coalition government’s aim to build the ‘Big Society’. However, David Cameron has restated his commitment to the concept by claiming it is ‘his “mission” in politics to make the Big Society succeed’ (BBC, 2011a). The concept remains somewhat amorphous for many (e.g. nfpsynergy, 2011) but has become clearer since the publishing of the ‘Building the Big Society’ document which outlines five key principles of the agenda:

- give communities more powers;
- encourage people to take an active role in their communities;
- transfer power from central to local government;
- support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises; and
- publish government data.

Although the first four aims will all have an impact, the second is the most directly relevant to volunteering. The aim to ‘encourage people to take an active role in their communities’ is perhaps the most relevant to volunteering. The government will ‘take a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national ‘Big Society Day’ and making regular community involvement a key element of civil service staff appraisals’ (Cabinet Office, 2010). The introduction of the National Citizen Service NCS) is the most directly relevant programme for youth volunteering, although the infrastructure fund, announced in the recent government White Paper on Giving, is also of relevance.
**National Citizen Service pilots**

The NCS is a voluntary eight-week programme for 16-year olds. The programme is focused on youth development and stresses the importance of mixing with others from different backgrounds. Volunteering is a central element of the programme, which includes an introductory phase; two one-week residential; and the design and delivery of a social action project within the local community. 

has been named as one of the 12 organisations to run the pilot programmes in 2011 (Office for Civil Society, 2011). The first NCS pilots take place in summer 2011, with approximately 11,000 places available and if the uptake increases in the way the government hopes, the costs associated with it will be significantly larger than the sum offered to between 2006 - 2011. Whilst this provides funding opportunities to organisations such as v, there are also concerns that funding for the flagship programme may divert resources away from other existing youth programmes (Children and Young People Now, 2011).

The combination of dramatic spending cuts and the drive to build the Big Society places volunteering in a slightly uncertain political context. While youth volunteering may never have been quite so central to government policy agendas, the decline in financial support for the sector could threaten to undermine the commitment to increase the quantity, quality and diversity of involvement in the future. However, some of the more specific impacts of the coalition government on volunteering will only emerge over time. More detail is known regarding the previous government.

**Volunteering under New Labour**

It is not new for governments to be actively involved in volunteering - they have been doing so since at least the 1960s – but what was new under the previous Labour government was the level of sustained interest that was demonstrated (Rochester et al, 2010). Between 1997 and 2010 government was ‘hyper-active’ (Kendall, 2005) in its support for volunteering and for the third sector more generally, seen through the development of numerous initiatives, programmes, events, reviews, consultations and policies. Driven by concerns for developing a mixed economy of welfare provision, for creating civil renewal and more recently for addressing rising unemployment, the developments under New Labour can be grouped into three categories, as suggested by Zimmeck (2009):

- Creating a positive climate for volunteering: for example, developing performance measures on volunteering at national and local level; funding volunteering projects and programmes; sponsoring promotional campaigns; and appointing a special advisor on volunteering.

- Rationalising and improving the capacity of the volunteering infrastructure: for example, providing strategic funding for infrastructure bodies at national level and support for the infrastructure at local level.

- Working to incorporate good practice in its relationships with volunteers: for example, promoting employer-supported volunteering schemes for civil servants; supporting clients, such as benefits claimants, who wish to volunteer.
Itself was one of a series of approximately 30 government funded initiatives since 1997 aimed at promoting and enabling volunteering (Ellis Paine, 2009). Indeed, even since its inception in 2006, at least ten new government funded volunteering initiatives have been launched, with five of these coming into existence in 2009 alone with combined funding of over £20m (see Table 2.1). A common aim across these initiatives was increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, with many focusing on increasing volunteering among specific sections of the population (for example, young people, unemployed people or disabled people) and a smaller number have focused on developing and disseminating good practice in volunteer involvement.
### Table 2.1 Selected volunteer programmes funded by government since 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Funding dept</th>
<th>Duration of agreed funding</th>
<th>Agreed gov. fund level</th>
<th>Broad aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>2006-2011</td>
<td>£114m, for 2008-2011</td>
<td>To deliver step change in the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities for young people aged 16-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering for All</td>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>£4.5m</td>
<td>To identify and tackle barriers to volunteering through funding high quality ‘exemplar’ volunteering opportunities and raise positive awareness of voluntary activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform 2</td>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>£10m</td>
<td>To engage 18 to 25 year olds in international volunteering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Volunteer Scheme</td>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>£3m</td>
<td>To use the potential of diaspora communities to actively contribute to fighting poverty through international volunteering and development awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernising Volunteer Support Service</td>
<td>OTS/Capacity Builders</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>£1.4m</td>
<td>Part of the National Support Services Programme. Equipping support providers to help volunteer-involving organisations to involve and engage more diverse volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit into Coaching</td>
<td>DCMS</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>£5m</td>
<td>To recruit and deploy 10,000 new volunteer coaches by 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Legacy Programme</td>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>£1.6m</td>
<td>Building a volunteering legacy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generations Together</td>
<td>OTS, with DoH, DCF, and DWP</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>£5.5m</td>
<td>Generate wider interest, thinking and evidence of the value of intergenerational work and increase the number of volunteers involved in intergenerational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Brokerage Scheme</td>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>2009 – 2011</td>
<td>£8m</td>
<td>To match 34,000 jobseekers with volunteer placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Volunteering Scheme</td>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>£2m (pilot scheme)</td>
<td>To reduce barriers to disabled people volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Managers Programme</td>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>£3m</td>
<td>Grants programme providing support to people who manage volunteering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Ellis Paine, 2009*

One of the most significant developments in youth volunteering policy at the beginning of the New Labour government was the Millennium Volunteers (MV) programme. It was set up in 1999 by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with the intention of promoting and recognising volunteering among 16 to 25 year olds. The programme provided volunteers with an excellence award on completion of 100 hours and 200 hours.
of volunteering, delivered through voluntary organisations or a self-designed project. This
did not represent full-time volunteering, but aggregated time given over a period of one
year (Hill and Russell, 2009). The MV programme was the precursor to \( v \), and the
transition between the two programmes is explored later in this chapter.

The wider youth agenda
Over the last decade there has been a divide between policy based on more positive
conceptions of young people and that focused on tackling the perceived negative aspects
of this age group. More positive and inclusive conceptions of young people have centred
on increasing the participation of young people in the decisions that affect their lives (e.g.
youth councils, youth courts etc) and tackling social exclusion (e.g. Every Child Matters).
Alternatively, more negative conceptions have focused on addressing the perceived
deficiencies of young people (whether they be civic, democratic or economic – see, for
example, Barnes and Morris, 2008). This has driven moves to formalise enforcement and
control over young people’s lives especially in the face of anti-social behaviour (Milbourne,

\( v \) can be seen to be located on the more positive side of this divide through its promotion
of a favourable image of young people and a clear commitment to involving them in the
leadership and management of the organisation. However, it could also be argued that the
motivation for developing the programme was in part driven by a deficit view of young
people in terms of their activity in the local community and the need to address this.

2.1.3 Social and economic context
Broad societal trends such as changing demographics (for example, the ageing
population; household composition; patterns of employment; growing wealth and
inequality); changing relationships between individuals and society (for example, growing
focus on the individual; loss of trust in the political process); globalisation and
technological transformation all have implications for volunteering and how it is perceived
and engaged with (Hill and Russell, 2009; Rochester et al, 2010).

In the deliberative workshops conducted with stakeholders as part of the evaluation, the
change of focus towards the volunteer as a ‘consumer’ was noted as a key societal trend.
The Russell Commission and \( v \) are felt to have contributed to ‘a swing towards the wants
and needs of volunteers, trumping the wants and needs of service users’ (participant at
deliberative workshop). It could be argued that this shift in focus was necessary to help
encourage and widen participation; however there were also concerns reported that
shifting away from a focus on community need risks distorting the rights and
responsibilities of volunteers. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, from the
perspectives of the young volunteers and Chapter 5 on impacts, and is a key issue
running though the evaluation in terms of a duality of views on the value and implication of
this ‘shift’.

By far the most significant short-term socio-economic trend affecting volunteering is the
current economic recession and its aftermath. The relatively deep recession, precipitated
by the ‘credit crunch’, began in the second quarter of 2008, with the economy only
emerging from recession in the fourth quarter of 2009.\(^2\) Despite low growth rates over the next four quarters, the economy unexpectedly shrunk in the final quarter of 2010 and the latest figures show that unemployment continues to rise\(^3\), inflation is increasing\(^4\) and consumer confidence is low\(^5\) leaving the UK economy in a precarious state. Within this context young people have been hit particularly hard, with youth unemployment reaching almost a million for 16-24 year olds in the fourth quarter of 2010, and 75,000 of 18-24 year olds having been out of work for two years or more. With young people being the worst affected by rising unemployment and also the group most likely to get involved in volunteering in order to enhance their skills and employability (Low et al, 2007), it is reasonable to assume that many young people will enter volunteering as a route back to paid work. The impact of volunteering in terms of skills development and progression to employment is explored in Chapter 5.

Section summary

- National rates of volunteering, including amongst young people, have been static over the past decade and have started to decline in the past few years;
- The Coalition government’s Big Society agenda has raised the profile of volunteering, although extensive public spending cuts are creating major challenges for volunteer-involving organisations and volunteering infrastructure organisations;
- Volunteering, and particularly youth volunteering, was well supported under New Labour in terms of the size and scope of funding initiatives;
- Society is feeling the negative impact of rising unemployment, which is affecting young people disproportionately.

2.2 The development of volunteering

2.2.1 The Russell Commission

One of the most significant recent developments in youth volunteering has been the launch and reporting of the Russell Commission. Established in May 2004 by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown and the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, the Russell Commission set out to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. The Commission was headed by Ian Russell, CEO of Scottish Power, and aimed to deliver a step change in the diversity, quality and quantity of volunteering opportunities available to young people aged 16 to 25 in the UK (Russell, 2005:9).

The Commission engaged a wide range of stakeholders including young people, the voluntary sector, business and the media, and received over 700 responses from voluntary and community sector organisations, and a further 6,000 responses from young people.

\(^2\) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8479639.stm]
\(^3\) [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=12]
\(^4\) [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12815228]
The Russell Commission findings

Ian Russell presented his final set of 16 recommendations to the Chancellor and Home Secretary in March 2005, which were accepted by the Government. The Commission’s headline recommendation was the creation of a dedicated implementation body, which would take the lead in delivering the new framework. A small Home Office team was appointed to work alongside Ian Russell to set up the new charity, which would bring together young people, business, the voluntary and community sector and government in a shared purpose - to make volunteering a valued part of young people’s lives. In May 2006, v was launched with a remit of creating a step change in youth volunteering. Of the 16 recommendations to come out of the Russell Commission (as summarised in Box 1), 12 became the responsibility of v, while government retained responsibility for the remaining four (indicated by red text). v has, however, also made a contribution to these four recommendations in addition to their 12; the vschools programme has, for example, helped address recommendation four, while its work through the vtalentyear programme has involved young people in local authorities (recommendation nine). The core 12 recommendations varied from specific targets to broad aspirations that are less measurable.

### Russell Commission Recommendations

1. A series of campaigns should promote awareness of volunteering.

2. A national volunteering portal will ensure that young people have ready access to information on volunteering opportunities.

3. To ensure that young people receive high quality advice and guidance on volunteering, the implementation body should contract to put in place 200 Youth Volunteer Advisers. To build the capacity of volunteer-involving organisations to engage and support young volunteers, the implementation body should contract to put in place a further 200 Youth Development Managers.

4. It should be commonplace for young people to volunteer while they are at school, college or in higher education.

5. To celebrate the achievements of young volunteers, the implementation body should facilitate an annual youth volunteering award ceremony, to recognise and reward young people for their contributions to UK society.

6. Young people should have access to a ‘menu of opportunity’, with details of the full range of volunteering activities.

7. There should be a step change in the number of young people volunteering and the

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diversity of young volunteers. This will require a significant expansion in the number of available opportunities – short-term, part-time and full-time – with effective targeting to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to volunteer. The Russell Commission suggested that a step change in volunteering could be defined as 'an additional 700,000 to 1 million young people volunteering at least once per year'. It also indicated that \( v \) would need to directly commission a total of 412,160 youth volunteering opportunities over five years.

8. A national framework should recognise the popularity and worth of international volunteering, by offering up to 1,000 overseas volunteering opportunities.

9. There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy.

10. The quality of volunteering opportunities would benefit from greater assurance on a set of clearly stated criteria. Volunteering organisations should be encouraged to meet minimum standards governing access, involvement, development and reward of young volunteers.

11. The opportunity to improve skills and employability is a powerful incentive for young people to volunteer. It is important to mark the contribution made by young volunteers, and to recognise the skills they learn in the course of their activity.

12. Young people on benefits, and their families, should not suffer a financial barrier when they volunteer.

13. In order to build the capacity of organisations to engage groups which historically have found it difficult to access volunteering, specifically disabled volunteers, the commission recommends that government explore the case for the establishment of a cross-departmental initiative.

14. A dedicated implementation body should commission, through a series of contracts, the delivery of the framework.

15. A series of recommendations are made on funding, including channelling funding for youth volunteering through the implementation body and working to attract private sector funding.

16. The implementation body will need to measure the impact of the framework and ensure that there is constant learning and evaluation.

The recommendations in red (4, 9, 12, 13) are the responsibility of government, all others are the responsibility of \( v \).

Adapted from Russell (2005)
The launch of the national implementation body

V was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and independent of government. The majority of its income was provided through grants from the then Office of the Third Sector (OTS), within the Cabinet Office (now the Office for Civil Society (OCS)). The funding ran from 2006 to the end of March 2011 and amounted to £114.3m, of which £45m equates to the long-term financing of the legacy of the Millennium Volunteers programme, and £72m relates to the step change activities articulated in the Russell Commission report. (http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/volunteering/youth_volunteering.aspx). Thus, much of this funding was distributed via grants to organisations creating youth volunteering projects as part of the V funded network.

V was also tasked with raising a further £50m from the private sector, which could be matched on a pound for pound basis by the Exchequer, providing a total of up to £150m to support implementation. Over 200 companies, trusts, foundations and individuals (http://vinspired.com/about-us/about-us) have invested in youth volunteering under V, with £49.4m being raised through Match Funding initiatives (http://vinspired.com/about-us/Match Fund). V's 2009/10 annual accounts show a total income of £51.5m, with £51.0m raised through charitable activities, £0.1m from investments and £0.4m from voluntary sources (Charity Commission).

From 1st April 2011 V continues to receive core funding from the Office of Civil Society (£1.25 million core funding in 2011-12). This reduction in government funding was in line with the experience of numerous other organisations in the sector and required V to implement an internal restructure at its central offices, involving a programme of redundancies. The staff is supported by a board of 13 trustees and the annually appointed V20 Youth Advisory Board, four of whom are selected to join the Trustee Board.

The 107 Vinvolved teams, which were commissioned by V as a central feature of its infrastructure, covered all local authority areas in England, and worked with young people and organisations to provide expert help and advice on youth volunteering (see section 2.3.2). The teams recruited a network of 107 Youth Action Teams (YATs) which were set up to support the work of the Vinvolved teams and to inspire their peers to volunteer. Further to this were the organisations that V has funded over the past five years to deliver local projects and those who signed up to be registered on the vinspired portal, now totalling over 900 organisations.

Though initiatives such as Vinvolved teams no longer exist as part of the V funded network, V maintains a series of local and regional contacts throughout the country.

Expectations and challenges

The ambitions for V were high from the start, with a broad ranging remit set for it through the Commission’s recommendations, subsequently enshrined within its key performance indicators and then enacted through its programmes of work. Expectations were high, both from government and from other stakeholders especially as over a year had elapsed between the publishing of the Russell Commission report and the launch of the new...
charity. Stakeholder organisations interviewed, for example, noted that the previous success of the Millennium Volunteers programme, meant v had effectively to achieve more in order to be noticed. Furthermore, there was a (perhaps unrealistic) expectation from government and the sector that v would allocate funding immediately, as if they were a mature, pre-existing organisation.

v staff interviewed during the evaluation reported limited consideration having been given to organisation set-up and that they were expected to begin allocating funds through the new programmes, while also facing a number of challenges associated with setting up a new organisation. They were, for example, still resolving logistical issues such as installing IT systems and securing office space. In addition v reported how its set-up was further hampered by the lack of a separate budget for start-up and implementation costs.

2.2.2 The transition to v

Millennium Volunteers was still in operation at the time of v’s launch in 2006, with the Russell Commission recommendations leading to its incorporation into the new body. There was a subsequent period of transition between MV and v, and in many instances, a period of time when the activities of MV and v overlapped. The transition period lasted 12 months. This section explores the implications of this for v, and stakeholder and grant recipient perceptions of how effectively the transition was managed.

Perceptions of the Millennium Volunteers programme

MV was generally considered to be a successful programme (see for example Davis Smith et al, 2002). It effectively involved volunteers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and recruited large numbers of unemployed young people. Participants reported a wide range of benefits, including an increase in confidence and improved employability (Hill and Russell, 2009). While large in itself, the MV programme operated on a smaller scale to that of v; at the time of the national evaluation of MV in 2002, 50,000 young people had taken part in the programme and over 10,000 awards had been issued. Stakeholders and case studies frequently reflected positively on MV as a programme, speaking highly of the level of resourcing, the flexibility and the emphasis on an individual’s progression and development. Praise was also offered of the overall approach of MV, respondents describing it for example as:

‘…exciting, creative, innovative; it tried to break the mould of what a volunteer was in modern day Britain around the turn of the century.’ (vinvolved team, grant recipient)

As discussed, the actual and perceived success of MV has potentially contributed to high expectations being placed upon v from the day of its launch.

Perceptions of the transition period

There have been mixed views among stakeholders consulted in the evaluation about the success of v in bringing the new v and MV initiatives together. A proportion of v’s current grant recipients, particularly within the vinvolved teams, had previously been MV organisations and it is among this cohort that the strongest views were voiced; in some cases, there was an overlap period when organisations were involved with both MV and v.
Positive comments were made about the strategic development of youth volunteering under v, and the learning that was taken from MV:

‘They didn’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. They built on the successes of the previous programme. They’ve adapted it to move it forward.’ (stakeholder government department)

Whilst not attributable to v, concerns were however raised concerning the management of the transition from MV to v. In particular, people felt that delays in wider (government) decision-making about funding and what was to come after MV had been damaging to the work already achieved by the programme; it had meant that staff and volunteers had been left in limbo, and that there had been a loss of momentum, knowledge and good will (case studies):

‘...they [those who worked on MV] seemed to feel like they were basically shut down, swept to one side and that’s it, out the door.’ (v involved team grant recipient)

Beyond questioning the effectiveness of the process, criticism was also levied at Government for driving the change. There was at this time frustration reported at what was felt to be a redevelopment of something considered to already be working well and that change was unnecessary. Interestingly this sentiment re-emerged in discussion about the future development of youth volunteering programmes, with stakeholders in the second wave of interviews. Now, rather than be concerned about the transition from MV to v, they are keen for the learning of v to be capitalized and there is a sense that again, programmes become established and then are reduced or cease, as in the case of MV.

There was also discussion made of the change in emphasis across the two programmes with v perceived by stakeholders to be particularly concerned about the volumes of young people starting to volunteer, rather than the sustainability of young people volunteering. It is important to acknowledge that while there were challenges identified in the transition from MV to v, these may not have been related to the form v took or the eventual impact of v, rather a more general resistance to change, that is again emerging in relation to the future of v.

2.2.3 Media perceptions of volunteering from 2005 – 2010

So far in this chapter the political and social context that v operated in, and the set-up of v has been explored. The evaluation team also conducted a media discourse analysis of coverage of youth volunteering between 2005 – around the time of the launch of the Russell Commission – and 2010, to provide an insight into how volunteering was perceived and portrayed.

Areas of commonality were observed. The language of ‘service’ was used across the time periods and was frequently accompanied by terms such as ‘teenage armies’ or ‘enlisting’. This reflected a particular model of volunteering portrayed in the media as being associated with the Russell Commission recommendations. Differences were evident, however, when referring to specific initiatives. For example, volunteering was discussed in...
the context of the ‘gap year’ in articles about the Russell Commission, whereas volunteering as a ‘rite of passage’ was associated with National Citizen Service (NCS) pilots. A further area of contrast in the media coverage over the time period was whether programmes were described as volunteering. In 2009, the focus of media coverage shifted to enhancing employability through unpaid work activities in the context of the recession. Similarly, terms such as ‘placements’, ‘social action’ or ‘community activities’ were used to describe NCS rather than ‘volunteering’, although NCS was described as a ‘volunteering scheme’ in some circumstances.

An area of concern expressed by the media was coercion and risk associated with ‘persuading’ young people to volunteer’. In some cases this led to questions being raised about the ‘value’ of government investing in the implementation of the Russell Commission recommendations (especially coverage around 2005) but it was also specifically related to commentary of NCS, which was still a proposed programme at the time of the analysis.

The emphasis placed by the media on the community benefits of volunteering varied over time; more recently there was a stronger focus on the personal development of the volunteer against the backdrop of the recession and unemployment. Similarly there was emphasis placed on career and educational-linked motives for volunteering in 2009 and 2010 than there had been in 2005. Although the social inclusion or community cohesion agenda was discussed over the different time periods there was a different emphasis between 2005 and 2010. In 2005 volunteering was perceived to be part of a broader set of measures designed to create a ‘fairer’ society through extending volunteering to all young people. The role of volunteering in addressing the ‘erosion of civil society’ and enhancing social inclusion was also reported on. By 2010, however, the emphasis had moved to volunteering’s part in fostering community cohesion through the engagement of teenagers from mixed social and racial backgrounds in volunteering activities.

**Section summary**

- **v** was established in 2006 as a result of the recommendations of the Russell Commission.
- **v** received significant funding from government to resource its work (£114 million for the 2008 – 2011 period), has raised over £49 million of match funding, and employs a small staff team. In 2011 it restructured, involving significant redundancies, as a result of a reduction in the level of its government funding.
- Expectations and ambitions for **v** were high from the start.
- Views were mixed about the transition of the Millennium Volunteers programme, with some inevitable concerns about the transition as well as praise for building on good practice.
- Media perceptions of youth volunteering varied between 2005 and 2010, with certain commonalities (the language of ‘service’) and other differences (increased focus on the link to employability more recently).
2.3 The delivery of v

2.3.1 v’s aims and objectives

While the aims, objectives and activities of v are broad-ranging, they remain focused on, and are shaped by, the need to implement 12 of the 16 Russell Commission’s recommendations v was originally tasked with. This section examines these aims and objectives, as well as the structure and activities of v, and how these are perceived by stakeholders and grant recipients.

v’s website (www.vinspired.com) describes its overall mission as to:

‘make volunteering opportunities so diverse, compelling and easy to get involved with that giving up your time to help others becomes a natural lifestyle choice for 16 to 25 year olds in England.’

It has reported its initial aims to be to:

‘engage one million more young people aged 16 to 25 in volunteering and community action, and to create a lasting step-change in the quality, quantity and diversity of youth volunteering in England.’ (v formative evaluation tender specification document)

v’s aims have been updated as it reaches key targets and as the context for young people shifts. v’s Board of Trustees agreed the following specific objectives for v in February 2010:

- To foster an ethos of active citizenship and community engagement among the young.
- To maximise opportunities for volunteering and community action programmes that address directly unemployment / worklessness among the young.
- To encourage skills development through volunteering/community action as a means of improving employment prospects for young people.
- To encourage activity that strengthens the bonds between young people and the communities they live in (young people at the heart of stronger communities).
- To encourage youth-led community action and the development of enterprising young leaders.
- To encourage fresh thinking and innovation in engaging young people in community action in such as way as it becomes an integral lifestyle choice.
- To challenge negative perceptions of volunteering among the young and promote a more positive image.
• To raise the profile and value of volunteering/community action among all young people and organisations, including employers.

The theory of change model as outlined by v in 2008 (see Appendix Table B1) provides an overview of its activities, anticipated outputs, outcomes and goals.

2.3.2 Programme design
In order to meet its aims, objectives, key performance indicators and the Russell Commission recommendations, v constructed a number of work programmes. These include several funding programmes, as well as wider programmes of work around, for example, marketing and communications. v’s work has evolved over time, with new programmes and areas of work having been launched during 2010 and 2011. v’s programmes are distinctive and deliberate in design, but share core programme principles, which v describe as:

• embracing youth involvement;
• delivering high quality volunteering experiences;
• embedding equality and diversity;
• enabling creativity and innovation;
• supporting skills development;
• encouraging partnership working;
• maximising social impact.

In light of the original government funding running until the end of March 2011, many of v’s programmes had already, or are due shortly, to come to an end. The principal work programmes to date include:

vinvolved teams
Both the vinvolved teams and the vinvolved projects were developed as a response to the Russell Commission recommendation for a reform, rebrand and expansion of the MV programme. The creation of a network of 107 vinvolved teams covering every local authority in England was a direct response to Russell Commission Report Recommendation 3 to:

• Ensure that all young people have access to information, advice and guidance on youth volunteering; and,
• To build the capacity of volunteer involving organisations.

Each vinvolved team comprised staff with expertise in recruiting and placing young volunteers, training, capacity building and partnership working. The vinvolved teams had three main roles:

• Creating new volunteering opportunities in the public and third sectors;
• Brokering 16-25 year olds into opportunities;
Championing youth-led action.

vinvolved projects
This programme was deliberately split into two tiers (large and small organisations), thereby ensuring a more equitable grant award process where organisations were only competing for funding against others of similar turnover, size and scale. The grants enabled both large and small organisations opportunities to access funding to create and directly deliver innovative short-term, part-time and full-time youth volunteering opportunities. Organisations with a strong track record of youth volunteering, and those with no experience at all, were encouraged to apply for this funding scheme in order to diversify the range of providers offering opportunities to young people, and in turn, to reach new target groups of young people. v commissioned a total of 153 vinvolved projects.

Match Fund (August 2008 to March 2011)\(^6\)
The Match Fund grants programme aimed to inspire greater levels of investment in youth volunteering from private companies, charitable trusts and foundations and individuals. Through this scheme, v provided grants that match up to 100 per cent of any new private sector investment for youth volunteering projects in England. Organisations could apply under six themes: health and well-being; environment; supporting children and young people; community cohesion; poverty; and, human rights. At its conclusion the Match Fund had raised a total of £49.4m.

vtalentyear (2009 - ongoing)
vtalentyear was a £14.7m national full-time volunteering programme for young people. The scheme has been implemented with 32 local authorities, 29 Further Education colleges and two charities, Brook and the British Youth Council campaigning organisations, offering 44 week long placements in Children's and Young People's Services, student support and campaigning.

The aim was to give 2,000 volunteers aged 16 to 25 the opportunity to directly influence and enhance public sector services and gain skills to improve their employability. At least 40% of the places were taken up by young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). The structured placements were delivered in areas such as nursery education, play, youth work, supported learning, student support, campaigning and administration. Participants worked towards completion of a relevant level 2 qualification and participants who completed their placement were offered personal development grants of up to £1,500.

vcashpoint\(^7\)
Developed by the first cohort of v20 Youth Advisory Board, vcashpoint provided young people with the opportunity to design and deliver their own youth volunteering project. Investing £1.5m in 16 to 25 year olds in England over four years (made up of £0.5m

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\(^6\) Some elements of the Match Fund programme were the subject of the summative evaluation.
Formative evaluation of v
cashpoint, £0.5m match fund, and £0.5m from HSBC), to date vcashpoint has provided over 600 young people with the opportunity to improve their community, with a grant of up to £2,500 to bring their ideas to life. Young people could also seek support from the involved team network to develop their ideas.

**Olympic programme: mygames Programme**

This programme aims were to ‘support organisations across the country to provide volunteering opportunities for young people inspired by the Olympic Games, to utilise their skills and talents to make a positive difference to their communities’. v invested in 20 volunteering projects to help young people across England explore what the Games mean to them and how it can have an impact on the communities in which they live. Application to the programme was by invitation only and was extended only to those organisations that v had not previously funded. v provided a grant of up to £160,000 for each Twelve mygames project, and the total funding was expected to be no more than 30% of the organisations annual turnover. Organisations were free to design the project aims and activities themselves, as long as it involved senior staff, delivery staff and young people, and demonstrated a clear community benefit.

**Work focused volunteer placement scheme**

This scheme was launched by the government’s Recession Action Plan and was funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. Between April 2009 and November 2010, v worked with BTCV, CSV and Volunteering England to deliver the programme in England, which involved brokering Job Seekers Allowance customers who had been unemployed for six months into suitable work-focused volunteering placements. In total, the scheme introduced and supported over 20,000 people to volunteer. This work was not evaluated as part of the research.

**National Citizen Service pilots**

National Citizen Service (NCS) was launched in 2010 as a key component of the Coalition Government’s Big Society agenda. It is a voluntary scheme open to 16 year olds in the summer after they complete year 11. Pilots are being run in 2011 and 2012, and it is anticipated that over 11,000 young people will take part in the first year and 30,000 in the second. v is one of 12 providers for the first pilot year and, in partnership with the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust and local partners, will be responsible for 1,065 places nationally. This is a new programme funded from 2011 onwards, and has not been subject to this evaluation.

In addition to the funding and delivery programmes outlined previously, v operates a number of schemes of work in order to meet its objectives, which are explored throughout the report. These include:

- Marketing and communications activity: this includes developing a dedicated web-based portal for youth volunteering ([www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com)) where volunteering

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7 This evaluation covers round two onwards of vcashpoint.
opportunities are advertised; there are marketing activities to promote volunteering to young people; and there is offline advertising (see Chapter 6 for a findings on perceptions of v’s marketing and communications activity).

- Investing in the sector: this includes working in partnership to develop a quality assurance self-assessment framework for youth volunteering (Reach); developing a programme of volunteer recognition (including award and vimpact award); supporting youth involvement; and public affairs activities such as lobbying government on behalf of youth volunteering.
- Investment and partnership with the private sector: engagement has primarily been through v’s Match Fund programme, but other partnerships including the BP Young Leaders programme have also been developed. In addition, in 2010 v launched a CSR Volunteering Website, ‘Volunteering Works’, which aims to help companies track the volunteering activities of their staff and connect their volunteering to their Corporate Responsibility and Human Resource strategies.
- Developing a programme of research around young volunteers. v has commissioned a wide variety of research exploring different areas of youth volunteering, including examining the role of full-time volunteering, exploring approaches to researching the long-term impact of youth volunteering, and researching the link between volunteering and employability. On 18th May 2011, v launched the Volunteering Knowledge Network to provide researchers, policy makers and practitioners with a place to exchange ideas and evidence on youth volunteering.

Having in this chapter outlined the programme design, references will be made throughout the report where relevant findings emerge that relate to specific aspects of different funding schemes within the programme.

### 2.3.3 Perception of v’s aims and objectives

In Chapter 6 the extent to which v has successfully met their stated aims, from the perspective of the grant holder organisations, and the implications of this, is outlined. In this section, what the aims and role of v are perceived to be, from the perspectives of stakeholders, grant recipients and young volunteers, are explored.

When grant recipients were asked in the survey to rate v’s performance against different aspects of its role perhaps unsurprisingly there was strongest support for v’s work around its provision of grants and funding to other organisations and individuals. vcashpoint recipients in particular were very positive about v’s performance in this area. There was also broad consensus that all of the listed activities were something v did as part of its function, with only a very small minority reporting that the named activities were not part of v’s role. This was highest (5 % reporting it not to be the role of v) for providing a voice for young people.

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8 Listed activities included, for example, providing grants and funding for other organisations and individuals, changing the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered, networking and creating positive relationships with the volunteering sector.
Stakeholders interviewed – both those in government and the youth sector – were often unable, or unwilling, to describe the specifics of v’s aims, objectives and activities in more than generalities however, frequently due to a lack of knowledge. Understanding was often confined to recognition of the ‘one million target’ and ‘headline’ information taken from the press. Those who had more contact with v, particularly those in receipt of funding, tended to have a far clearer understanding.

There were, however, two specific areas of v’s aims and objectives in which opinion was more frequently expressed. Stakeholders reported positively on v’s strength as a funding body, often describing this as its primary function (backing up the support for this in the grant recipient survey). Concern was expressed, however, that this could create a tension and some confusion. There was a fear that v as a grant giving body was subsequently less able to represent youth volunteering through, for example, membership of forums or networks or via lobbying activity. Others felt that due to the dominance of its funding function, v did not have capacity to deliver youth volunteering directly. Secondly, some concerns about the balance between quantity and quality were raised, with some stakeholders, especially those in the youth and volunteering sectors, expressing concern that v was focused on the numbers of volunteers recruited.

Chapter 6 explores more fully opinion and practice around the recruitment of young volunteers and reveals the concerns around numbers to be less of an issue than in the past and also that these targets may have played a part in ensuring diversity of volunteers within the programme and outreach to new groups of volunteers. It should also be noted that while there is some confusion and lack of understanding amongst stakeholders about v’s role, aims and objectives, interviews with v staff indicate that v itself is very clear about its remit. This suggests the need for improved communication between v and the network in order to increase understanding and buy-in throughout the sector.

2.3.4 Perception of v’s structuring and functioning

In the stakeholder interviews perceptions of v were also explored. There was a common awareness of the level of government funding invested in v, and a resultant understanding that there was a close relationship. There were subsequent concerns amongst stakeholders (explored in the previous section) that this could compromise their independence:

‘We perceive it to be very much a sort of government set-up...so, although it’s a charity there is a feeling that it is very much a sort of government-directed charity.’

(Infrastructure body stakeholder)

The change of government was seen to bring new challenges around independence, or perhaps more accurately, association. Stakeholders reported concerns that the perceived links with New Labour, and in particular Gordon Brown, could politically damage v’s future. There was a subsequent fear that the current Coalition government would be able to dismiss the work of v on these grounds, however successful it may have been.
‘Politically it’s going to struggle... just because it is a child of the previous administration.’ (Infrastructure body stakeholder)

Amongst government department stakeholders there was less concern about issues of independence; in some cases the advantages of being able to achieve more due to a close working relationship with government were described.

There was general recognition of the involvement of young people in the functioning of v, especially v20. Stakeholders noted positively its commitment to developing a youth-led approach, describing it as innovative, creative and motivational; though it was also reported that v could be ‘youth-influenced’ rather than ‘youth-led’. Never the less these were seen as a part of v’s overall activities.

Section summary
- There is widespread support for v’s aims and objectives as these are understood by stakeholders, but limited awareness of its specific remit, ambition or objectives;
- Stakeholders felt that v was closely associated with government due to the level of funding it received and some concerns were expressed about how this could affect perceptions of its independence.

2.4 Implications

Implications for v
- Continue to communicate the aims and objectives of the organisation. This has become even more pertinent given the completion of the Russell Commission work and v’s subsequent revision of its mission. There remains, however, a lack of clarity about the specific details of its remit. This does not represent a lack of direction on behalf of the organisation as staff at v are clear about this remit, but suggests a problem of communication which needs to be improved. This also applies to adequately communicating the success and achievements of v to its audiences;
- Given the rapidly changing wider environment within which v is operating, it is important that decisions about its strategic direction and work areas are effectively communicated to the sector, something that perhaps has not been adequately achieved to date.

Implications for government
- Whatever the longer-term future of v as an organisation, it is important that the learning and experience that has been gained is adequately shared and not lost;
- v was launched during the New Labour administration, creating a perception amongst some that it is associated with that government. v’s status as an independent charity should be reiterated, and the current or future governments should not associate it with New Labour for purposes of political gain.
Implications for the volunteering sector

- In the context of deep spending cuts throughout the sector, it is important for organisations to collaborate with one another and network. Organisations also need to be open to developing new and creative ways of securing income, while at the same time ensuring that they do not experience excessive mission drift.
3 v volunteers

In this chapter the figures from the project and individual level monitoring data are presented. These illustrate the number of volunteers and characteristics of volunteers involved in the v programme. The chapter situates the profile of v volunteers within the wider context explored in the previous chapter, and existing data sources on volunteering levels per se, to ascertain the level of success v has had in creating opportunities and attracting a diverse range of young people to these opportunities, via the grant funded network. This is in line with the Russell Commission recommendations.

The chapter includes the following:
- An outline of the prevalence and characteristics of volunteers, taken from data sources such as the Citizenship Survey (in 3.1)
- discussion of the number of youth volunteering opportunities created by v (in 3.2)
- the characteristics of the young volunteers in the v programme and how this may differ from that of the general population is presented (3.3)
- findings in relation to the distribution of volunteer characteristics across funding schemes or geographical location are outlined in 3.4 and 3.5.

This is a brief chapter, setting up the remaining chapters by outlining the overall reach of the v programme in terms of numbers and characteristics of volunteers. The following chapters will then go on to describe young people's experiences of being a v volunteer, the impacts of v and the v funded network, and the implications for future learning and practice that can be taken from the evaluation of the v programme to date.

3.1 Profile of volunteering

In the previous chapter various definitions of volunteering were outlined. In this section the existing evidence base on volunteering is presented, drawing mainly from the Citizenship Survey data.

In the Citizenship Survey, formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefit others or the environment. Overall from the Citizenship Survey it appears there has been a decrease in the proportion of all adults volunteering since 2005. In 2005, 76 per cent of adults aged 16 or over in England had volunteered at least once a year, however this had fallen to 66 per cent in 2009-10. Amongst young people aged 16 to 25 levels of volunteering have also fallen. In 2009-10, 68 per cent of young people had volunteered formally or informally at least once in the last year, this is similar to the level in 2008-09 (70%) but is lower than in 2007-08 (75%) and 2005 (83%).

9 The 2005 data was used as the baseline for this analysis as this year of the Citizenship Survey was the closest to the inception of v. However, 2005 was 'The Year of the Volunteer', during which an increased effort was made to encourage more people to volunteer and on some measures of volunteering there was an increase in the prevalence of young people participating. It is unlikely that this would have been measured in the 2005 figures however. For more details please see Appendix A.
Examining the profile of young volunteers from 2003 to 2009-10 (i.e. those that volunteered formally or informally at least once in the year) there has been little change in the proportion of young people from key groups of interest since 2003.

- For example in 2005, 44 per cent of young volunteers were aged 16 to 19 years whereas the proportion of volunteers in this age group was 47 per cent in 2009-10.
- Since 2007-08 some figures have also been available about the sexual orientation and caring responsibilities of volunteers, however, there has also been no change in the profile of volunteers by these characteristics.
- One change to note is the employment status of volunteers in the most recent survey. As may be expected due to current economic conditions, in 2009-10 young volunteers were less likely to be in employment than in previous years: 58 per cent of young volunteers were in employment in 2009-10 compared to between 63 per cent and 69 per cent since 2005.
Table 3.1  Citizenship Survey, The profile of young volunteers, 2003 to 2009-10

Base: Young people who have volunteered at least once in the 12 months prior to interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
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<td>20 to 25 years</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>No disability/LTLI</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>Respondents (core sample)</td>
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<td>621</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1,247</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>1,294</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: All figures based on core sample only, except ethnicity figures which are based on the combined sample.
Predictors of participation in regular formal volunteering

Through analysis of the 2008-09 Citizenship Survey it is also possible to understand the predictors of regular formal volunteering for 16-25 year olds. Factors related to a higher propensity to volunteer include higher qualifications, practicing a religion, having more close friends, higher socio-economic status and being born in the UK. Significantly, a number of variables in the Citizenship Survey analysis were not seen as important predictors of youth volunteering, including ethnicity, income, disability, urbanity and deprivation (i.e. these factors did not appear to influence whether an individual volunteers or not).

In the next chapter the number of youth volunteering opportunities that have been created via the v funded network are outlined.

3.2 Number of opportunities created via v

The Russell Commission report suggested that a step change in volunteering could be defined as ‘an additional 700,000 to one million young people volunteering at least once per year’. It also indicated that v would need to directly commission a total of 412,160 youth volunteering opportunities over five years. The annual reports produced by v also consistently refer to its aim being “to inspire a million more young people aged 16 to 25 to volunteer” (although this has now evolved into “inspiring a new generation of volunteers”). This section explores the extent to which these original objectives have been met.

3.2.1 Progress towards meeting targets

The principal source for this section is monitoring returns provided by individual projects, which can be used to generate estimates of the totals of volunteers on v’s projects and their characteristics. This is complemented with an analysis of responses to a survey of individual volunteers, and a survey of grant recipients.

According to v’s published annual reports, by March 2010, 956,000 opportunities had been commissioned by v, of which 651,000 had already been delivered. Figures reported for previous years were 100,000 (to March 2007) and 650,000 (to March 2008). This section will further update these figures and go into more detail about their interpretation, using the monitoring data provided by v for projects which are actually running or which have been commissioned.

The monitoring data was obtained from individual projects in October 2010 and an update provided of opportunities commissioned as of April 2011. These indicate that a total of 1.05 million opportunities have been commissioned to date. Of these, 700,000 opportunities were commissioned through various directly-funded programmes with a further 350,000 through Match Funding. These numbers clearly exceed the scenario of 412,160 commissioned opportunities envisaged in the Russell Commission report. It’s also clear from the responses to the grant recipient survey that organisations felt they were on track to achieve the targets set for them. In that survey, project staff were asked about progress meeting their targets in terms of volunteer numbers and groups. Across all funding schemes (excluding vcashpoint), 88 per cent of organisations reported they had
met or were on target to meet their original targets for the total number of volunteers they would work with. Amongst vinvolved projects, this figure was 96 per cent, in vinvolved teams it was 95 per cent, in Match Fund projects 87 per cent, and amongst vtalentyear projects, 53 per cent. Forty-four per cent of projects (excluding vcashpoint projects) had met or were on target to meet all of their original targets about working with volunteers from hard-to-reach groups, and 48 per cent were on target to meet most of them (cumulatively 92%). The number of vtalentyear projects interviewed was small (32) so findings relating to them should be viewed as indicative rather than significant. The vtalentyear programme only accounted for 2000 volunteers, which was also a very small proportion of the volunteers involved in the programme indicating that their reportedly lower level of meeting targets affected only a tiny proportion of the programme and would not have affected target levels overall.

This emphasises opportunities created, but what of the numbers of actual volunteers? Note that not all of the opportunities had been taken up at the time that the monitoring data was received by the evaluation team. Projects were still being commissioned while the evaluation was being conducted. Outcome data in February 2010 indicated that 637,000 opportunities had been taken up (out of 930,000 commissioned) which indicates rapid progress on the annual report of 456,000 (out of 898,000 commissioned) for March 2009. The convergence between numbers commissioned and numbers taken up would be expected over time. By autumn 2010 monitoring data relating to 733,000 individuals had been received by the evaluation team, and so the data thus relates to around 70 per cent of total opportunities commissioned and indicates the amount taken up by that stage in the programme. The latest figures to date, from v’s annual report, indicate that 1,094,175 volunteering opportunities have been created and filled.

It is possible that the number of opportunities is greater than the number of volunteers. This situation could arise if individuals were to volunteer in one or more short-term placements, and then go on to a part-time or full-time opportunity. The only way it would be possible to know if this occurred would be if each volunteer was successfully tracked through their engagement with v, which is not currently done and would be expensive and difficult to implement, as well as requiring compliance from the volunteers which might discourage them. However, the emphasis in the Russell Commission was on creating volunteering opportunities. In those terms, very large numbers of opportunities have been commissioned and indeed, taken up, by young volunteers.

It does appear (from the project monitoring data and individual monitoring data) that v funded activities have been attracting young people who are new to volunteering. Volunteers were asked by funded projects whether or not they have been a volunteer in the previous 12 months and the response to this question suggests that 74 per cent of participants had not. However this differs from the individual level monitoring data. That survey found that 40 per cent of the young volunteers had not volunteered in the previous 12 months. This difference is likely, at least in part, to reflect the characteristics of those who have filled in individual monitoring returns; they are likely to be particularly committed and therefore, perhaps, people who already had some engagement with volunteering prior to their engagement with v’s initiatives. Those who completed the individual monitoring
returns also appear to have higher levels of educational qualifications, and given that volunteers in the population as a whole tend to be more highly educated, this could account for the difference between the individual monitoring data and the project monitoring data.

In the interim report it was explained that it is impossible to definitively attribute connections between the activities of v and the level of youth volunteering reported in the Citizenship Survey due to the number of young people who would need to be included in the survey to register an significant effect from v being many million. However the project monitoring data indicates that the numbers of opportunities created and taken up have exceeded the Russell Commission recommendations, the monitoring data also suggests that over 700,000 youth volunteering opportunities had been taken up by autumn 2010, and the latest figures to date (June 2011) that 1,094,175 opportunities had been created and taken up.

Section summary

- Monitoring data indicates that 1.05 million youth volunteering opportunities have been created via v.
- As of autumn 2010, when we were supplied with the project-level monitoring data, over 700,000 of these opportunities had been taken up by young volunteers. By June 2011 this figure had increased to 1,094,175.
- Evidence is less clear as to how many of these opportunities have been taken up by young people new to volunteering, or how many young people overall have engaged in the v programme. Figures for levels of new volunteers range from 40 – 74 per cent.

3.3 Characteristics of v volunteers

This section illustrates the profile of the v volunteers based on analyses of monitoring information data collected by v-funded organisations. The process of collecting the monitoring data is explicitly explored in Chapter 6. To summarise, projects were asked to collate information on the characteristics of the volunteers, including age, ethnicity, and whether they have volunteered before. Key examples of ways in which this information was collected include volunteers being asked to complete questionnaires, and project worker observations. It should be noted that any administrative, monitoring data set will reflect the resources and priorities of those compiling it. Resources are not infinite and there are limits to what can be expected of organisations in terms of compiling detailed monitoring data on individual volunteers. In the interim report for this evaluation, (pages 57 - 59) the concerns of organisations about the onerous requirements of the monitoring process were noted, particularly the difficulties of keeping track of volunteer numbers and characteristics.

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10 v would be required to have many millions of opportunities taken up by young people for their impact to register on the Citizenship Survey population, due to the sample size of the survey. See interim report for further discussion.
Despite this, data on several hundred thousand individuals who have volunteered through \( v \) has now been collected via the project level monitoring data, and it was acknowledged via the interviews with grant recipients that there is widespread support for the need to supply monitoring data, despite the challenges.

The monitoring data collected varies in its comprehensiveness by type of scheme and also by individual characteristics, the most comprehensive coverage in terms of volunteer characteristics being age (for 733,000 volunteers), gender (for 422,000), ethnicity (for 391,000), and employment status (for 369,000). In each of these categories, there is little missing data - fewer than 6% in the "prefer not to say" category. Thereafter, the numbers of responses attributed to those volunteers who ‘prefer not to respond’ to the question increases to cover 10 per cent of responses (for qualifications and disability (where we have data on about 290,000 volunteers), 20 per cent or more for sexual orientation (data available on 270,000 volunteers) and for the various categories of social exclusion (27% of 132,000 volunteers), and to over one third for statistics on progression after volunteering (data available on 132,000 volunteers). These patterns are perhaps unsurprising given that tracing individuals once they have left \( v \)’s schemes is likely to be difficult and gathering data on sensitive topics such as sexual orientation is inherently challenging. In addition individuals may be reluctant to disclose disabilities or qualifications. However this missing information makes it difficult to judge whether the monitoring data is genuinely representative of the volunteers that engaged in the \( v \) programme. Even in cases where information is available for a substantial proportion of the \( v \) volunteer population, it remains possible that those who did not supply it differ substantively from those who do supply it.

Nevertheless, it is still of great value that some data on over 730,000 \( v \) volunteers (from projects which have been in operation for the past four years) has been collected, as well as a breakdown on additional primary characteristics covering upwards of 250,000 individual volunteers (see Table B2 in the appendix for a breakdown of figures from the project and individual monitoring data). This project level monitoring data can also be contrasted with the characteristics of the young volunteers who returned individual monitoring data, adding an additional layer of validity in terms of how generalizable the project level monitoring data is. As these were data sets collected independently, if the individual monitoring data has a similar distribution of characteristics to that found in the project level monitoring data, this indicates these figures are likely to be an accurate representation of the profile of the \( v \) volunteers and reinforces confidence in the validity and reliability of the monitoring data. As well as gathering information on the effects and impacts of volunteering, the survey of individual volunteers asked basic factual questions such as age, gender, employment status etc) which were comparable with the monitoring data provided by the projects. Responses were fairly comprehensive although some minor difficulties with post-coded data are commented on below. Table B2 in the appendix outlines key characteristics of volunteers from the individual monitoring data, and project level monitoring data.

The total number of volunteers for which information is available from the project level monitoring was 733,667. However this is not distributed evenly across the different
funding scheme (which is unsurprising given the difference in scope of each scheme). Match Fund grants account for nearly 70 per cent of the total number of volunteers information is available on (510,373), followed by involved project strand 1 grants which account for around 20 per cent of the total volunteers on which information is available (145,161). The characteristics of the volunteers, based on the project and individual level monitoring data, are outlined below.

Age of volunteers
The breakdown of the age of volunteers was as follows: 22 per cent were aged 16-17, 14 per cent aged 17-18, and the remainder (over 60 per cent) were aged 20-25. However, this breakdown partly reflects the level of monitoring data received from the Match Fund projects, which accounted for over two thirds of the monitoring data received, and tended to have larger numbers of volunteers from an older age group. The individual monitoring data shows that 30 per cent of respondents were aged 16-17, 26 per cent 18-19, and the remainder (over 40 per cent) aged 20 or above. These figures also compare with the Citizenship Survey in which the majority of volunteers in the 16-25 age group were aged 20 or above although the figures are less pronounced for the most recent year.

Thus, there are some substantive differences between the individual responses and those reported by projects, but overall figures are highest for volunteers aged 20 and above across the data sets. This discrepancy in terms of a higher proportion of young volunteers being in the over 20 age category from the project level monitoring data may be because a very substantial proportion of this monitoring data information came from Match Fund projects and these projects appear to have an older age distribution.

Gender of volunteers
The total number of volunteers for which information on gender was available from the project monitoring data was 422,157. Most programmes provided fairly complete information on gender. The exception was the Match Fund grants which only provided this information for 204,965 volunteers, in comparison with the total number of volunteers on these schemes being estimated at 510,000.

From these overall figures, it appears that females made up 57.9 per cent of volunteers, and males 41.5 per cent, mirroring the findings of the Citizenship Survey in terms of gender breakdown, with females more likely to volunteer. There was, however, significant variation across the programmes, with the programmes accounting for the majority of volunteers (Match Fund and involved teams) involving more females than males. On other programmes monitoring data was collected for, notably the involved project large grants, similar proportions of men and women took part. On the individual survey responses, nearly 70 per cent of respondents were female.

Thus there is an indication that, in line with other datasets, more young females than males have been involved in volunteering, although this differed by funding scheme.
Ethnicity of volunteers

The total number of volunteers for whom the evaluation team had information on ethnicity from the project monitoring data was 391,796, with the information again being less complete for Match Fund grants. A significant number of volunteers across the programmes stated that they did not wish to provide this information (6.2 per cent).

Of those volunteers for whom information on their ethnicity was available, the majority were from White British backgrounds (64.7%), followed by Pakistani (4.3%) African (3.9%) and Indian backgrounds (3.6%). Thus, the evidence shows that volunteers on v’s programmes have been more likely to come from minority ethnic communities than is the case for the population as a whole. In the individual monitoring data, this conclusion is upheld. Only 67 per cent of respondents describe their ethnicity as ‘White British’, a substantially lower proportion than in the population as a whole.

There are too few non-white respondents in the Citizenship Survey for valid comparisons to be made between the ethnicity of v’s volunteers and volunteers in general. However figures from the monitoring data (both individual and project level) do indicate v has been successful in engaging young people from minority ethnic communities. As is explored in 3.5 this is especially pronounced in the v cashpoint programme.

Employment and education level of volunteers

A majority of volunteers with recorded information on their employment or education were in education (58.3 per cent). Around 15 per cent of volunteers were employed and another 15 per cent were recorded as ‘Not in employment, education or training’.11 Figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show that around 12 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds are in this category, suggesting that the volunteers were slightly more likely to come from the NEET group than expected among the general population.

In terms of qualifications, it is difficult to reach a judgement about the degree to which young people with different levels of qualifications are under or over-represented among v volunteers because the proportion of young people with qualifications will naturally vary significantly with age. In national statistics the percentage of young people without a level 2 qualification falls from 47 per cent at age sixteen to 22 per cent at age twenty-one.12 The overall percentage of v volunteers in the project monitoring data with less than a level 2 qualification was around 30 per cent, placing it somewhere in the middle of this range. The proportion without qualifications was 8.8 per cent, which is less than the national figure for the 16–21 age group (estimated at just under 20%).

There was also inconsistency between the individual monitoring data and the project monitoring statistics on the qualifications of volunteers. Nineteen per cent of those supplying individual monitoring data had degrees or higher degrees, but the equivalent proportion in the project level monitoring data was 11.1 per cent (reaching 27% for the Match Fund); whereas 18 per cent of those in the project level monitoring data had A-level

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12 http://www.poverty.org.uk/30/index.shtml
qualifications or their equivalent, the corresponding figure in the individual monitoring data was 29 per cent. Conversely those with no qualifications whatsoever constituted 5.4 per cent of the people supplying individual monitoring data, but 8.8 per cent of those in the project monitoring statistics. It is possible that this (those completing the individual monitoring returns having higher level of qualifications) is a reflection of different groups’ access to the Internet, familiarity with completion of online questionnaires, or willingness to support research projects. All of these would be expected to lead to a higher response from those with higher qualifications.

It should be noted that there are differences between the type of scheme which may be explicable by the fact that some projects are run by education providers such as colleges. So although the numbers for vtalentyear are quite small, it is not surprising that nearly half the young people in this program had qualifications below the equivalent of level 2, in contrast to some other schemes (for instance the Match Fund projects where nearly one third of volunteers have A-levels or higher qualifications), given that the aim of vtalentyear is to recruit such young people and support them to develop these qualifications.

**Other characteristics of volunteers**

In terms of disability and mental health the majority of v volunteers had either no disability or this information was not provided. From the project level monitoring 10 per cent of volunteers were reported to have a learning difficulty or learning disability, which is somewhat lower than the proportion of school age children with a special educational need, suggesting that this group may have been slightly under-represented among volunteers.

There was no real difference between the individual monitoring data and the returns from projects in terms of disability. The comparative proportions reporting some form of disability, were 13% (individual monitoring data) and 13.8% (project returns).

In terms of sexuality, the majority of volunteers were either heterosexual or did not provide this information — the level of information that was not provided for this question means that it is difficult to ascertain much about the profile of volunteers for this characteristic.

Finally, the number of volunteers engaged, by target group, can also be explored. The most commonly reported response from the project level monitoring was that they had worked with the low income target group, with 36.9 per cent of volunteers being defined as in this category. It is assumed that this is a self-assessed measure of poverty by the project staff. Government statistics report that the percentage of young people aged 16 to 24 living in a low income household is approximately 30 per cent. Therefore there is some evidence that v’s volunteering initiatives engaged a slightly higher proportion of young people from low income backgrounds than would be found in the general

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population. The Citizenship Survey also suggests that volunteers tend to come from more affluent backgrounds.

The table in appendix B also presents figures on groups who have experienced various kinds of social exclusion – young people who have been homeless, in or leaving care, are offenders or ex-offenders, and who are refugees or asylum seekers. We discuss these groups in more detail in appendix B. The finding is that v has recruited these to a level at least equivalent to their share of the population as a whole. This is to be commended given that these groups are likely to be under-represented in the volunteering population. The reason for caution in this judgement in terms of being able to ascertain the extent to which these groups have been recruited to the same or different degree than they are in the population as a whole, is that the numbers of these groups are small, there are few reliable sources of data that can be used to validly ascertain how many young people are in these categories in the general population that would match the project level monitoring data. They are also likely to overlap to a degree since some young people will experience multiple forms of exclusion (e.g. having been in care may be associated with subsequent homelessness and criminal behaviour). However a clear finding is that v has been successful in ensuring diversity across the programme.

Thus, as far as it is possible to judge given the completeness of the data, the characteristics of v volunteers would seem to be broadly equivalent to the characteristics of young people in general, and those found in the Citizenship Survey. The exception to this may be minority ethnic volunteering, which is clearly over-represented among v volunteers, and to a lesser extent, those from low income backgrounds. Both of these groups are over-represented in the v project monitoring data. Notably young people experiencing other forms of exclusion, such as refugees and ex-offenders have also been engaged in the programme.

Section summary

- v volunteers were spread across the age range 16–25, but the highest proportion came from those aged 20–25 (mainly due to the high number of volunteers in Match Fund, whom were older).
- There were more female than male volunteers across the programme.
- There were more young volunteers from minority ethnic groups than would be expected, compared to the general population. There was also a slightly higher proportion reported to be from low income backgrounds.
- The profile in terms of disability, qualifications and so on was fairly similar to that of the general population of young people.
- Therefore the v volunteers were similar to the general population, with an over representation of young people from minority ethnic groups.
- There is some evidence that v has succeeded in reaching groups who have experienced various kinds of social exclusion since these seem to be over-represented in the monitoring data compared to their representation in the population as a whole.
3.4 Geographical spread of v volunteering

An established feature of the evidence base on volunteering is that a much higher proportion of people in the most prosperous parts of the country (measured by indices of deprivation) report that they volunteer. To assess the extent to which v’s volunteers followed this pattern, data was collected on the postcodes of the participants in the vcashpoint scheme, and also from the individual monitoring data, though the postcode of volunteers was not collected via the project monitoring data and so is not available for other programmes.

vcashpoint scheme

The postcode of the vcashpoint grant holders have been matched to the output area from the 2001 Census (see appendix for details of analysis in the methodology section). The data from vcashpoint shows that the grants tended to be located in areas which were described as either Multicultural or City Living. In particular, 24.8 per cent of programmes (139) were located in Afro-Caribbean Communities and 23.2 per cent (130) were located in Asian Communities. Afro-Caribbean and Asian Communities make up 5.3 and 7.1 per cent of all areas, respectively. It is therefore clear that vcashpoint programmes reached young people in these Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities to a much greater extent than would be expected if the grants were distributed in line with the distribution of these groups.

The West Midlands and London contained a larger proportion of vcashpoint grant-holders than other locations, also reflecting the concentration of programmes in ethnic communities. Further, 27.1 per cent of programmes were awarded to grant holders in the most deprived areas while, in comparison, 1.6 per cent of programmes were awarded to grant holders in the most affluent areas.

On the basis of these figures, the vcashpoint grants appear to have been successful in stimulating youth-led volunteering activity in areas which were more deprived than average, and in areas which contain a higher proportion than average of minority ethnic populations.

Area of residence from the individual monitoring data

Of those volunteers who responded to the survey to gather individual monitoring data, 1375 cases in which the postcode was provided could be included in the analysis (the remaining postcodes were duplicates and given the numbers involved (sometimes 10 or more) may have referred to the project postcode, or possibly to the respondent’s term-time address (such as a hall of residence). If this exercise were repeated it would be useful to know whether any postcoded information refers to the permanent home address of respondents, or to a term-time address.

From this, volunteers appeared to be overrepresented in the most prosperous 10 per cent of areas according to the census data, although in most of the rest of the different areas, they were evenly distributed. The numbers referring to individual schemes (i.e. the distribution of volunteers volunteering with project teams, Match Fund, etc by types of neighbourhood) were too small to allow comment about differences between them.
although the involved projects appeared to be marginally more successful in terms of recruiting people from deprived areas than other schemes.

These findings do indicate however that vcashpoint, although accounting for a very low overall percentage of the volunteers on the v programme overall, was successful in engaging young people from areas with higher level of social exclusion and higher levels of minority ethnic populations. This was alongside an overall spread across different prosperous and less prosperous areas, indicating a full range of young people benefited from v volunteering.

Section summary
- It is difficult to ascertain from the existing postcode data whether the v programme had any effect in terms of recruiting young people from deprived areas.
- There is some evidence to suggest that vcashpoint has been successful in doing so and also in recruiting young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, to set up their own volunteering activities.

3.5 Implications

Implications for v
- Gathering information on the characteristics of volunteers can be time-consuming and risks generating some resistance or at least non-compliance. Given the relative costs of some schemes (no more than £100 or so per volunteer in some cases) it is easy to see that gathering monitoring data could absorb a significant resource. Extending the coverage of the individual monitoring data would be a relatively low-cost way of obtaining further information on the characteristics of individuals, but there is still something of a digital divide which might mean that responses are skewed towards those with access to the appropriate technology and confidence in using it.
- An alternative to obtaining detailed data from each individual project would be to sample a small number of representative schemes more intensively – with the data perhaps being collected by young people themselves under supervision. If a representative sample of schemes were covered, there could be confidence in estimating totals of the numbers of volunteers with particular characteristics.

Implications for government
- If volunteering initiatives are to be promoted and if their intention is to target the recruitment of particular social groups, then appropriate data need to be obtained by those managing any funded projects. The experience of v may be valuable in this regard. For example, v have actively engaged with difficult questions (e.g. in seeking information about the background characteristics of their volunteers in sensitive areas such as sexual orientation or whether or not volunteers have experienced varying kinds of social exclusion).
- More generally, if the big society is to be truly inclusive and something in which all groups in the population take part, a baseline against which progress can be monitored towards this objective is required. At present the only reliable baseline
which asks questions in sufficient detail about volunteering is the Citizenship Survey which is no longer being commissioned.

Implications for volunteering sector
- Voluntary organisations are often at an early stage in the collection of data about the characteristics of their volunteers. The learning from v’s experience could usefully be passed on to other major providers of volunteering opportunities and that the sharing of good practice between such providers would be very valuable.
4 Experiences of being a v volunteer

As was outlined in the previous chapter, v has created over a million volunteering opportunities. It also appears that v has been able to engage a range of young volunteers in terms of their characteristics (matching that of the general population). Some programmes have also been successful in particularly engaging young people from lower income neighbourhoods, and minority ethnic communities.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rich description of the experiences of young people who have volunteered through the v programmes to better understand the ‘volunteer story’ behind the monitoring figures. The sections provide a step-by-step account of the motivation for and experience of being a v volunteer, drawing on data from depth interviews and focus groups with young volunteers conducted as part of the in depth case studies. Where relevant this is contrasted with experiences of young people in general, from the Citizenship Survey, and survey of young people conducted for this evaluation. This chapter provides a platform for subsequent chapters that describe the impacts of v activities on young people and the implications for organisational processes involving young people in volunteering. It also allows an understanding of the processes that occurred when young people were activated to volunteer via the v programme.

Section 1.1 describes the range of circumstances volunteers were in prior to being involved with v. The next section (1.2) provides an account of the factors that motivated them to become involved and routes taken by young people into volunteering. Section 1.3 explores the experience of the volunteering opportunity young people undertook, illustrating their views on what was valuable, enjoyable and challenging about their experiences.

To summarise, this chapter explores the following process as experienced by young v volunteers:

4.1 Before becoming a v volunteer

As the previous chapter illustrated, v volunteers were drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and different educational levels (which is to be expected given the variety of different volunteering schemes funded by v and the age group in focus, who are inherently at different points in their life course). This section provides further detail on this diversity by exploring what young people interviewed as part of the qualitative case studies were doing before they began volunteering through the v programme. Table 4.1
below summarises the range of volunteers' personal circumstances before becoming involved in v, across four dimensions: employment history, educational attainment, awareness of the role of volunteers and experience of volunteering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment history</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No history of employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional or casual employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous employment with no career progression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous employment with career progression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest educational attainment</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education – A-levels, NVQs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous volunteering experience</th>
<th>Type:</th>
<th>Frequency:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>casual 'helping out</td>
<td></td>
<td>no volunteering history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal but ad hoc volunteering with organisations,</td>
<td></td>
<td>a single volunteering experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal volunteering programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td>multiple experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness of role of volunteers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those with experience of volunteering understood the role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those without experience either had this knowledge through family/friends as volunteers or were unclear on this role of volunteers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these dimensions influenced why young people were attracted to v opportunities, their motivations for volunteering in general, and route into the v opportunity, in particular.

### 4.1.1 Employment and education

The employment history and educational achievement of v volunteers was understandably varied considering the wide range of life stage individuals between the age of 16 and 24 could be at (as was explored in the previous chapter, level of qualifications tends to naturally increase with age from 16 – 25). Despite this variety, three broad types of circumstance of young person that became involved in v could be identified from the qualitative case study interviews: those in or having recently left full-time education; those in work; and those who were out of work or had never had a job.

Young people in or that had recently left full-time education had followed a traditional route through education from GCSE’s, through further education to, in some cases, higher education. Depending on their age, volunteers were either in further education (including studying for A-levels or GNVQs) or higher education at the time of becoming involved with v. Volunteers that were in higher education also had part-time or freelance jobs, and if they had recently left education were looking for employment.

A second group of young people were in work at the point at which they become involved in v. Participants could speak negatively or indifferently about their current employment.
situation however; where volunteers spoke negatively about their work history, their experience was characterised by ad hoc employment and being in and out of jobs that they disliked, with a feeling they had few career prospects:

‘[all that is available] are just lots of rubbish jobs, you can only get like commission-based jobs…you end up not reaching your targets and, so you don’t get paid a minimum wage’ (v[talentyear young volunteer)

There was a feeling amongst this group that they had limited prospects for the future, describing being in a ‘dead-end job’. Positive views on current employment were restricted to young people working part-time at the organisation where they were volunteering at. They hoped volunteering would give them more meaning in life or better career prospects. This is a particularly interesting finding in the context of the currently high levels of youth unemployment and challenging economic situation outlined in Chapter 2.

A third group of young people were out of work and/or had never worked. This group were also not currently in education and included those who been in and out of peripheral paid employment previously (the ‘dead end jobs’ described by the group above). Young people were also out of work being yet to find work since recently leaving full-time education, or had left their employment due to beginning a family.

Thus young people involved in the case studies interviews described limited opportunities for meaningful activity being available in their life, unless they were on a traditional trajectory of full-time higher education, in which case their volunteering tended to be among a spectrum of activities in which they engaged.

4.1.2 Experience and conceptualisations of volunteering

Young people displayed a range of previous experience of volunteering and, related to this, different levels of awareness of the role of volunteers. Participants described examples of previous volunteering opportunities as casual ‘helping out’ with local sports clubs or helping in an organisation with which they had a link through family or friends. More formal volunteering had also been experienced in organisations such as Churches, mental health charities, local youth clubs, leisure centres, social services and army cadets. There were also young people who had experienced other volunteering programmes, such as Rock Corps or the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Where participants had only had limited prior experience of volunteering their conceptualisation of volunteering was based on family and friends’ experience of volunteering.

The young volunteers’ definitions of volunteering are important for understanding what motivated them to volunteer, as it provides a frame of reference for what young people expected from their volunteering. Three criteria were identified by young volunteers as being part of their definition of volunteering: giving up time for free; helping others or a good cause; and, an opportunity to receive some personal benefit/development. Whilst the first two fit within the definition of the Compact outlined in Chapter 2 the third criteria seems somewhat new to the Compact definition, which is an interesting distinction.
So, the first and key characteristic of volunteering identified by young volunteers in the case studies was that it required people to give up their time for free. Participants saw this as a necessary condition for an activity to be defined as volunteering, despite acknowledging that there could be some financial factor, such as payment of expenses, related to the activity. The key criterion was that there is no renumeration for the time given. For young people, just giving up time could be enough to be deemed volunteering:

‘Volunteering is just giving up your time for free, because I’ve been doing lots of volunteering work with different kinds of aims and objects…it doesn’t necessarily have to be helping people’ (vinvolved project young volunteer)

An alternative view stressed the importance of the activity being for a ‘good cause’ or ‘to help others’. Thus, a combination of providing time for free and doing so for a good cause was what defined volunteering, for the young volunteers interviewed. These facets to volunteering mirror those identified in other literature on volunteering, outlined in Chapter 2.

The third set of criteria that participants used to define their volunteering was the opportunity to benefit personally from the experience. There was an acknowledgement from young volunteers and staff interviewed for the case studies that youth volunteering, and the v opportunities in particular, are not only about giving up a portion of your time to help others, but represent an exchange or a transaction in which young people could have fun, develop skills and learn about the world of work, while engaging in meaningful unpaid activity:

‘I’ve had a chance to do all sorts of things through volunteering because I had a chance to [do] The Princes Trust training…I did training with [local volunteering organisation] as well, and I got a chance to do first aid. So, it’s just not volunteering, it’s not like you’re [just] giving something, you’re getting as well – it’s a two-way thing.’ (vinvolved project young volunteer)

Volunteers interviewed described the implications of this. Firstly, that this was ‘changing the perception of volunteering’ among young people. A participant explained that her cultural background encourages a view that volunteering is not useful, however she was overcoming this:

‘They [parents] think you’re not getting paid and so what exactly are you gaining, but I think volunteering can give you a lot of new skills that you never had before… Even though it’s in a charity setting, you’re learning how to behave professionally’. (MyGames young volunteer)

A second implication was illustrated in the view that the balance of the exchange focused on the personal development of the volunteer. Involvement in vtalentyear for example was described as a placement and like ‘work’ rather than volunteering. This reflected the fact that participants saw their involvement with vtalentyear as being structured, with regular
hours and payment of expenses. The aims and objectives of their involvement were directly focussed on personal development:

‘[when asked by friends] I do say I’m going to work; this is a job to me because it’s full-time, I don’t personally like the word volunteer. Volunteer is always associated with old ladies who work in charity shops. So, I always say the actual job title…I’ve always said that despite the fact that the government are trying to make volunteering cool and take away the stigmas it’s still got quite a heavy stigma, so I stick with [job title]’. (vtalent year young volunteer)

These perspectives on volunteering, from the young volunteers, are interesting because they reflect the findings from the stakeholder research discussed briefly in Chapter 2 and in more depth in Chapter 5 and 6 – that the v programme has led to more professionalised youth volunteering, with an emphasis on personal development of the volunteers. This may have generated some success in changing the concept and status of volunteering, but as was also raised by the stakeholder it can be accused of also having shifted focus of volunteering to the needs of the individual rather than community they serve. Personal development may be a key motivation for why young people became involved in v volunteering. However, as is also evident in the next section, it should not be overlooked that altruistic motivations could be significant for groups of young people; or that the stigma of volunteering as something for ‘older people’ or without intrinsic value, has necessarily been overcome among all young people, as the quotes in this section illustrate.

Section Summary

- Young people becoming involved in v volunteering tended to either do so as part of a spectrum of activities they engaged in, whilst making a route through (higher or further) education; or as a meaningful activity in the face of feeling they had few other opportunities to pursue (either long term unemployment or ‘dead end’ jobs).
- Young volunteers interviewed identified key criteria defining an activity as volunteering as:
  - It is unpaid (though expenses may be available)
  - That is may involve helping others and be a meaningful activity
  - That is provides personal development or training for the volunteer.
- There was an indication that v volunteering particularly focused on the third criteria, and that this could have begun to change perceptions of volunteering as being wholly about the first two criteria.
- Young volunteers also described ongoing stigma relating to how volunteering is perceived.

4.2 Recruitment - Becoming involved in a v opportunity

The previous section set out the context of young peoples’ lives before they became involved in v and their perceptions of volunteering (from those interviewed in the qualitative case studies). This section describes young peoples’ motivations for
volunteering and the mechanisms by which they became aware of and involved in volunteering.

4.2.1 Motivations for volunteering

In the Citizenship Survey young people are asked their motivations for volunteering. The most common reasons for young people volunteering were because they wanted to improve things or help people (55% of young people) and they thought it would give them a chance to learn new skills (41%).\textsuperscript{14} During the survey of young people conducted for the evaluation, respondents that had volunteered in any way were asked about their motivations for doing so (Table B3 in appendix). These reasons mirrored those in the Citizenship Survey, with overall, the most common reason for volunteering (given by half of young people who had volunteered) was that they like helping out. Other common reasons given include that they wanted to make a difference or do their bit for society (43%), that they had the opportunity to do it through work, school, college or university (39%), that it sounded like fun (38%), and that they wanted to gain more skills (34%). Thirty per cent of respondents said the reason for volunteering was that it would help them get a job or as work experience and 27 per cent said that they volunteered because their friends were doing it.

Young people included in the Citizenship Survey and survey of young people for the evaluation had not necessarily volunteered via the programme however. Although there is not comparable survey data available in this section, the motivations for volunteering of the volunteers interviewed during the case studies are explored.

In the case studies participants described a combination of motivations for volunteering, although certain motivations had a greater resonance depending on individual circumstances which can be theorised as endogenous (benefiting themselves) or exogenous (benefiting those external to them):

**Endogenous - personal development**

The personal benefits and development that could be enjoyed through volunteering were identified as a primary motivation for volunteering by a range of young people. It was anticipated that acquiring new skills through training and experience and working towards accreditation would help young people progress in work and education. For those looking to make the transition from further to higher education, volunteering was seen as a useful addition to their UCAS application form. Similarly, those currently studying at university felt they were a more attractive candidate to employers with some volunteering experience on their CV, particularly where this was structured and accredited:

‘You’re getting something that’s very relevant towards you your experience of that organisation rather than just dipping in different volunteering areas…I think it’s more useful to put something down on your CV where [it’s] recognised the kind of skills that you have gained.’ (Mygames young volunteer)

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\textsuperscript{14} This question was not asked in the 2009 – 10 Citizenship Survey so these figures refer to the previous year when it was asked.
While in these circumstances, volunteering was seen as adding supplementary value to a young person’s credentials, for those young people not in education or who were struggling to find work, they were motivated to volunteer because it was seen as a fundamental stepping stone to becoming more employable. Those out of work saw the volunteering opportunity they were involved in as potentially leading directly to employment through the host organisation or as providing them with the work experience to gain important generic competencies they may not previously have had the opportunity to develop:

‘[I wanted volunteering that provides] a good environment to be in like a professional environment, so I thought coming here would give me transferable skills, so I could highlight to employers and increase my employability.’ (talentyear young volunteer)

This was of particular relevance for young people that may find it difficult to access mainstream opportunities or need to enter the job market step-by-step, as illustrated by this volunteer who had been suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

‘At least with a volunteer’s position I’m not straight into full-time employment again, which I just couldn’t even face thinking about doing.’ (talentyear young volunteer)

The emphasis on volunteering as a route to gain skills and employability that was evident in the case studies may be somewhat at odds with the data from the Citizenship Survey and young people survey, where, whilst important, employment skills were not the most significant motivation, which was ‘helping out’. However the data from the survey of young people can be used to unpack motivations in a more nuanced manner, showing that certain sub-groups within 16–25 year olds are more likely to be motivated by helping out than by learning skills, while the reverse is true for others groups.

In the survey of young people, the view that volunteering can improve employability was most pronounced for respondents aged 16 to 20 years than those aged 21 to 25, with the younger age group more likely to say that they volunteered because it would help them get a job or work experience (35% of people aged 16-20 compared with 25% of those aged 21-25). Older young people aged 21 to 25 were more likely than those aged 16 to 20 to say that they volunteered because they wanted to make a difference or do their bit for society (49% compared with 38%). Reasons for volunteering reported in the survey of young people also differed according to young people’s employment status - people in part-time employment (42%) and students (41%) were more likely than people who were unemployed (21%), were in full-time employment (18%), or had an ‘other’ employment status (including those with caring commitments) (20%) to say that the reason they volunteered was because it would help them get a job or for work experience. People who were unemployed (44%), students (40%) and people in part-time employment (39%) were also more likely than people in full-time employment (28%) and those with an ‘other’ employment status (including those with caring commitments) (25%) to say that they volunteered because they wanted to gain more skills. Thus there was an indication, perhaps unsurprising that the motivations for volunteering young people had depended on
their employment status and previous experience of the workplace, with those currently looking for employment or that knew they were likely to in the future and lacking skills, volunteering more to gain skills and potential employment. Those already employed seemed less motivated by these factors and more by altruistic motivations, such as helping others. Thus depending on the aim of the volunteering programme, different expected outcomes could be more or less likely to attract certain groups of young people (for example, the opportunity of qualifications being more attractive to those not in employment, or in education, than those who already are employed).

However this finding should not be taken at too reductionist a level – the qualitative case study data in this chapter has indicated that the young volunteers involved in the programme that were in employment tended to describe this as ‘dead end’, and were also volunteering to obtain additional employment opportunities or skills.

Further, motivations for volunteering, as evidenced in the young people and Citizenship Survey and qualitative case studies, are multi-faceted. In the case studies young people also discussed motivations to volunteer not related to employability such as a desire to meet new people, particularly interacting with people of their own age. For young people that were struggling to find work, their desire to mix socially with others reflected a more basic desire to have something to do in their local area:

‘Yeah it just gets you out and saves you sitting around watching TV all day, doing nothing, just slumming around’ (involved team young volunteer)

The extent to which these perceived outcomes (which motivated involvement in volunteering) were achieved, is explored in the next chapter. Whilst this section asserts that primary motivation for volunteering for volunteers were described as personal development, this should be taken as one of a complex set of motivations that encourage individuals to volunteer.

**Exogenous - Community benefit**

In the Citizenship Survey and survey of young people, ‘helping others’/ ‘helping out’ was a key motivation reported. This can be viewed as both a desire to provide a community benefit and also an emotional, altruistic motivation, both of which are explored in more detail below, from the case study data.

Young people in the case studies reported motivations for volunteering that did not relate to personal benefits such as anticipating and seeing the effect of volunteering on other beneficiaries, describing this as ‘helping out the community’, ‘helping other people around us’, ‘just the little hours you put in could help them, benefit them’. Another sense in which the impact on the beneficiaries motivated young people was the acknowledgement of the relative comfort of their own life and situation in relation to others. Participants described a desire to help people considered as less fortunate and more vulnerable than them which moved into altruistic motivations.
Another motivation, closely related to community benefit, was that of altruism and empathy.

**Altruism and empathy**
In the survey of young people, ‘helping out’ was cited as a more common motivation than ‘do their bit for society’, however the distinction is subtle. The qualitative case study data can assist to unpack it. Where the volunteering opportunity or organisation had a specific emotional tie for young people, the motivation to volunteer was reported to have a particular personal resonance. Firstly, participants could feel passionate about helping other young people in order to make sure that their voices were heard and so volunteered on projects that aimed to make young people improve their confidence:

> ‘I enjoy volunteering because it is something that I care about. I want to be involved in making things better for young people and to make sure their voices are heard.’
> (Match Fund young volunteer)

Secondly, young people volunteered out of a desire to help a particular group in society that with which their family had links, such as where a parent or sibling had a disability.

Finally, there were young people who were keen to help others in the same way that they had been helped. For example, for some young people who were asylum seekers, volunteering to help new arrivals was a way of ‘giving back’ when they had also been supported when they first arrived; or as the quote below illustrates young people who had themselves felt their lives were becoming affected by social exclusion, substance use or crime for example, could not only be supported to move away from this, but also to then do the same for others:

> ‘I saw they changed my life around, definitely. I know that young volunteers back then turned my life around…I could have gone down a path that was not pretty. I turned my life around, because of having these positive young people who were influencing me, which included young volunteers as well, and I wanted to do that myself.’ (vinvolved project young volunteer)

What was clear from the case study narratives was that young people have a range of motivations, which relate to their own personal circumstances and desires. Therefore a diverse range of opportunities, rather than a single type of volunteering opportunity, was likely to be most successful in engaging them, and meet expectations in terms of what motivated young people to become involved in volunteering.

### 4.2.2 Routes into v volunteering

This section describes how volunteers became involved in v volunteering – actual routes into volunteering. The first section explores how the routes in experienced by the v volunteers can be conceptualised and then contrasts these with the routes into volunteering evident in other data sources, such as the Citizenship Survey and young people survey.
Young people becoming involved in volunteering could be understood along a continuum between more active to passive routes into a new opportunity or activity, illustrated in the diagram below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly passive</td>
<td>Predominantly active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default option as part of course</td>
<td>Sought out opportunity independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially passive but then agency to choose</td>
<td>Active to seek out opportunities but then relies on links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity put in front of young person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The passive end of the continuum was characterised by the volunteering opportunity being brought directly to young people already engaged in volunteering networks in some way. For example they may already have been attending a youth centre every Wednesday and were asked to start to assist with setting up the group rather than just attending, as an extension of the tasks they already undertook, or they may have attended with a friend and taken part in whatever activity was on without initially realising it was volunteering. The point was that their volunteering was not pre-meditated but tended to occur organically due to them already being in the location or knowing those involved. In this instance, young people were not necessarily able to articulate a motivation to volunteer.

Moving along the continuum, routes in that were more active involved an opportunity being made available or advertised via an organisation that young people were already familiar with but that they then had to decide to actively agree to participate in. They had not sought out a specific opportunity but had decided to take part themselves in an opportunity they knew about and made an active decision to fit other commitments around their volunteering:

‘My sister used to work here as a volunteer but now she actually works here and she told me about it because how much fun she was having like working with other people so I came and did it myself…I now help out Mondays and Fridays’ (Match Fund young volunteer)

At the active end of the continuum volunteers had tended to seek out specific volunteering opportunities, often via a website or volunteer centre. It may involve contact with organisations that were new to them and the volunteers had clear motivations for seeking out the specific type of opportunities that they found.

Those with significant previous experience and or links to existing volunteering opportunities could also be found at the active end of the continuum, as they moved...
outside of their existing networks to actively seek out opportunities in new areas, working with different service users or with different organisations.

It is difficult to be prescriptive in terms of identifying which mode of communication worked most successfully to engage young people to volunteer. However, generally, the less active participants were engaged via existing networks and word of mouth, those in the middle, by a combination of word of mouth, advertisements, and seeking out information via websites, for example, and active participants relied more solely on websites, social media and volunteer centres/contacts/staff from whom they could seek a route into a specific opportunity with. The v website and communication with young people is explored in Chapter 6.

Implications of passive/active routes in
This conceptualisation of routes into volunteering is important because it may be a way in which to unpack the most significant facilitators of volunteering for different young people including those who may have less of a propensity to actively seek out volunteering opportunities.

The influence of friends, word of mouth, being persuaded, and essentially what is opportunistic volunteering, appears to be significant for understanding routes into volunteering, especially for young people who may be less likely to seek out opportunities actively. This can be further evidenced by the young people survey and Citizenship Survey.

In the survey of young people 25 per cent of those who volunteered did so because they were persuaded to, 26 per cent because their friends were doing it, and 40 per cent because they had the opportunity via school, college, university or work. These reasons or routes into volunteering could be perceived to be along the less active side of the continuum – opportunistic volunteering driven by social networks, opportunities and so on.

In the Citizenship Survey too, the most common way for young people to find out about volunteering opportunities was through someone already involved with the group, with 49 per cent of young people who volunteered (formally or informally) saying that they found out about volunteering in this way. Other common routes were through school, college or university (39%), from a friend not involved in the group or word of mouth (19%), through previously using services provided by the group (16%).

Therefore networks of volunteers (virtually or in the real world) and a range of local or easily accessible opportunities that people may ‘happen upon’ appear to be key to bringing into volunteering people that may be less likely to volunteer, to a greater extent than the active routes of seeking out information.

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15 Citizenship Survey 2009 - 10
Clearly volunteer centres and websites remain important for those at the active end of the continuum, and to provide information to others about volunteering opportunities. Volunteers interviewed in the case studies who had accessed the website (vinspired.com) praised the content, in particular, the searchable database of volunteering opportunities which was reported to have been regularly updated. Two features were particularly noted by volunteers to be valuable: the ability to filter searches by the type of volunteering opportunity sought and receiving an electronic alert to remind young people to follow up opportunities. However it may also be important to ensure informal sources of information or champions of volunteering are also encouraged to engage those young people who may be less inclined to use the internet or proactively search for opportunities.

In the next section the different ways in which young people had heard of v and came into contact with v are explored in more detail.

4.2.3 Sources of information about v

In the previous section it was explored how different sources of information may appeal to young people who are more active or passive in seeking out volunteering opportunities. The young peoples’ survey provides information on different sources of information on v that young people report being exposed to.

The young peoples’ survey asked respondents that had heard of v, vinspired, or vinvolved (or that recognised their logos) where they had heard of v. The most common answer (given by 27% of young people that had heard of v) was on the radio. Other commonly given answers include TV (24%), posters (22%), from a teacher, tutor or youth worker (18%), and a website (16%). Nine per cent of young people that had heard of v had done so at a volunteer centre or volunteering organisation, or at an event (for example, a volunteer or careers fair), eight per cent from a magazine, six per cent from a friend, in a newspaper or from a leaflet, five per cent through a careers service, two percent at the cinema, and less than half a per cent from a postcard. Seven per cent said they had heard of v from an ‘other’ source. Seven per cent of respondents said that they had not heard of v in any of these ways.

This data can also be assessed according to age Young people aged 16 to 20 years old were more likely than people aged 21 to 25 to say that they had heard of v from a teacher, tutor or youth worker (23% compared with 11%), from a friend (8% compared with 5%), or from a leaflet (8% compared with 4%). People aged 21 to 25 were more likely than people aged 16 to 20 to have heard of v through TV (28% compared with 20%) or at the cinema (4% compared with less than half a per cent; Table 4.2).

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16 The website is assessed in greater detail in Chapter 5.
Table 4.2  Where young people heard about v, by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Aged 16-20</th>
<th>Aged 21-25</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a teacher, tutor or youth worker</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer centre / Volunteering organisation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At an event - e.g. volunteer or careers fair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a friend</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- = 0
* = less than 0.5%

Data from the qualitative case studies found that volunteers became aware of v through similar sources to young people in the young people survey. Volunteers who were aware of v prior to volunteering on a v funded opportunity first heard about the organisation through marketing and communication activities such as the radio, promotional stalls at festivals or prior volunteering or work experience. Others heard about v when seeking out volunteering opportunities online or through their local volunteering centre.

So as was asserted in the previous section, word of mouth, though not always the key medium for finding out about v, was also clearly important as a means by which to hear about v (and implicitly, about youth volunteering opportunities). This seems to be especially so for younger young people (those aged 16 to 20 years old), when it often came from a teacher or youth worker (accounting for 23% of the younger respondents’ source of hearing about v in the young people survey). These younger people may also have been those who reported they were motivated to engage in volunteering to gain work and life skills, and may have a lacked the skills to seek out opportunities actively.

Thus a range of different information sources seem to have been important in engaging different young people in volunteering opportunities, rather than a single preferred source.
It is also clear that these take both digital and more traditional/informal formats from websites to word of mouth. In Chapter 6 the findings from the evaluation on how successfully v has engaged young people via different forms of communication are outlined.

4.2.4 Facilitators of v volunteering

Young volunteers in the case study interviews also identified a range of practical facilitators that enabled them to become involved in v volunteering that interacted with their motivation and route into volunteering to act as a catalyst for their eventual volunteering activity. These facilitators related to either the nature of the volunteering opportunity and its ‘fit’ with the needs of the young person, or circumstantial factors.

The nature of volunteering opportunities

Different aspects of the nature of the volunteering opportunity available contributed to matching the motivations/interests of the potential volunteer with the volunteering opportunity, so facilitating their involvement:

The type of activity in which the volunteer was involved was influential for a number of reasons:

- It was made easier and more attractive for young people if the opportunity involved an activity relevant to them, that they may already undertake, such as swimming or working with young people.
- It was important for those looking for a particular type of experience or accreditation. The fact that some v opportunities enabled young people to be accredited in a way that improved their educational or employment prospects was a factor in participants choosing to volunteer with that specific programme.
- The nature of the target group could also be influential. Some v opportunities facilitated the desire of young people to provide help to certain groups.

These facilitating factors were identified by young people in the case study interviews. It appears that it was the nature of the volunteering opportunity (rather than volunteering per se) that was a key facilitator and motivator for young people to become engaged in the v programme.

Young people interests were heterogeneous, indicating the need for a diverse range of opportunities, through different host organisations, to be available to meet these diverse needs. Creating a diverse range of volunteering opportunities was one of the aims of the v programme, particularly facilitated by the vinvolved teams and the programme design, with a range of volunteering schemes. Diversity of opportunity seems to have been achieved, and this may also explain why the programme appears to have been successful in attracting young people to the opportunities on offer, as was illustrated in Chapter 3 (with a high level of the opportunities created taken up).

This assertion should be qualified from an evaluative perspective however - the young people interviewed in the case studies were all volunteers involved in different aspects of
the v programme (vtalentyear, vinvolved projects for example) and it therefore may be unsurprising that the process worked for them. This does not account for young people who may not have been able to successfully volunteer via the v programme.

Circumstantial factors
Another set of factors that facilitated young people’s involvement in v volunteering related to the individual’s own circumstances. These factors could be identified as:

- Having enough time - young people who either were not in education or employment or were in university education reported having spare time, to devote to volunteering. This was seen as a more productive use of time than other options open to them, described as fruitless job searches, continuing a dead end job or just ‘sitting around’.
- Having enough income – that vtalentyear offered a financial incentive in terms of a personal development grant and payment of expenses, enabled the young person to choose volunteering over ‘doing nothing’ at no cost.
- Pragmatic opportunity – practical considerations such as the timing and convenience of the opportunity acted as facilitators to becoming involved with a v activity. For example, the volunteering was close by to their home or their college, and the times were suitable.

Whilst these appear wedded to individual circumstance, there were programme design issues that could assist with them. These included for example, ensuring a range of volunteering activities at different times and different levels of intensity; providing expenses on the vtalentyear programme and having a range of different opportunities within local areas so that should a young person wish to become involved in volunteering they could identify one suitable for them (at times, with the support of vinvolved teams).

Barriers to volunteering
The case study interviews were with young people engaged in the v volunteering programme. Therefore they were unable to discuss barriers per se as they were involved in volunteering and therefore not typical of young people who have been unable to volunteer. The Citizenship Survey (2009 – 10) does ask young people about barriers to volunteering - young people who had not volunteered in the last 12 months who said they would like to volunteer were asked about the things which acted as barriers to them volunteering. Forty-four per cent of these young people said they did not volunteer as they had to study, while 37 per cent said they had work commitments. A quarter (25 per cent) of young people said they hadn’t heard about opportunities to volunteer and 24 per cent that they had other things to do with their spare time. So from the Citizenship Survey, a lack of time, and also lack of awareness of opportunities were identified as the key barriers.

In the case study interviews young people alluded to similar barriers, which are converse to the facilitators outlined in the previous two sections. For example, if opportunities were not of interest to young people or involved skills they did not have (such as knowledge of certain sports) then they were not likely to become involved.
If young people did not have time or volunteering involved travel to unfamiliar areas then these were also barriers to participation.

For young people involved in full-time volunteering, such as \textit{talentyear}, the financial implications could act as a barrier to participation, especially if they had caring responsibilities, such as children of their own.

Again these barriers point to the importance of flexibility and diversity in the provision of volunteering opportunities, so that young people are likely to identify or come into contact with an opportunity that engages or motivates them. These \textit{facilitating factors} were cited by young volunteers across different funding schemes and across full, part-time and short-term volunteering opportunities, rather than being specific to certain schemes, unless specified.

\textbf{Section summary}

- Routes into volunteering appeared to be along a continuum of more active and passive involvement.
- Those who were active tended to have specific aims and motivations for volunteering, and sought these opportunities out via websites and volunteer centres such as \textit{involved teams}.
- Those who were less active tended to become involved in volunteering opportunistically due to the activity being on at a time and place where they would already be present; or friends being involved.
- Word of mouth and hearing about volunteering via teachers or youth workers seemed particularly important for younger young people. Those who were unemployed, in education, in part-time employment, and younger people also tended to be motivated by the desire to obtain employment skills or experience, to a greater extent than those volunteers aged over 20 and/or in employment.
- A range of different volunteering activities, with different levels of commitment required seem important for ensuring different motivations for volunteering are catered for.
- Barriers to volunteering include a lack of time, concerns regarding the cost of volunteering and not being able to afford it, and a lack of awareness of opportunities.

\textbf{4.3 Experiences of volunteering}

Having explored routes into volunteering, this section outlines the experiences of young people as they engaged in volunteering activities via the \textit{v} programme. It includes descriptive accounts of the types of volunteering activities undertaken by young people, the training and support they received, accreditation and awards they undertook and other key factors that influenced their experience of volunteering.
4.3.1 The nature of opportunities funded by v

A central element of the remit of v was to increase not only the volume but also the quality and diversity of youth volunteering opportunities. This section describes the type of volunteering that case study participants were involved with, the activities they undertook via the different schemes, and discusses key factors that affected their experience. The section has implications for later chapters that discuss the impact on volunteers, and the implications for good practice, by providing an illustrative account of the different activities undertaken by young volunteers on the v programme.

Table 4.3 illustrates the types of opportunities participants undertook, summarising the sectors in which their volunteering took place, the roles volunteers played and the activities they were involved in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Lifeguard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service provision</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Arts</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Developing websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Creating content for local radio/organisational magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Running drama workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Service provision</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
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<td>Pastoral support</td>
<td>Animal care</td>
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<td>Conservation</td>
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<td>Education/youth work</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching assistant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>Support at youth centres/youth programmes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event organisation</td>
<td>Student services</td>
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<td>Organising student away days, evening entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social care</td>
<td>Pastoral support</td>
<td>Supporting vulnerable adults</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>Befriending new asylum seekers and refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Helping out in homes for the elderly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting activity hub for disabled young people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Fundraising for charities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Designing promotional material for charities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>Promoting volunteering to young people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event organisation</td>
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</table>

The range of sectors in which v volunteers participated was important for young people to be able to find an opportunity that fitted with their current or future interests, an important facilitator to recruiting volunteers, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Similarly, the range of roles on offer for volunteers enabled young people with a range of skills and different time available that they could commit, to be able to volunteer.
Young people involved in talentyear experienced the most structured volunteering opportunities, but for other funding schemes there could be flexibility for young people to determine the extent of their involvement, and the activities they were involved in.

Examples of different types of volunteering opportunities are described in greater detail below:

**Mygames:** Volunteers on the Olympic programme had the opportunity to write articles for print and online media published by the host organisation. As part of the role the volunteer compiled case studies of young service users for inclusion in print or online media. There were also opportunities for volunteers to support the promotion of the funded activity and the host organisation more widely by writing articles for local and regional print media.

**involved project:** A involved project provided opportunities for service users in each of its regional centres to form a steering group to shape the direction and delivery of local service provision. Two representatives from each steering group came together three times a year to attend the national steering group event. The purpose of the event was to enable representatives to inform the management and governance of the host organisation. At one national steering group event the representatives worked together to develop a ‘how to’ resource for running a steering group to be made available to other young people. This involved representatives working together in small groups to identify best practice for running a steering group as well as developing creative and innovative methods for communicating the learning acquired through the funded activity to other young people.

**Match Fund:** A Match Fund project offered opportunities for young people to support the delivery of its provision for young people with disabilities. This included young people who had previously accessed the wheelchair skills training returning as volunteers to provide peer-to-peer support to other young people accessing the training. Volunteers also supported the delivery of campaigning activities undertaken by service users. Volunteering roles included assisting service users to participate in the campaigning activity and supporting service users to develop the skills required to effectively undertake campaigning.

**vcashpoint:** A vcashpoint grant applicant established a parent and child group in their local area. The group ran for two hours once a week and provided opportunities for play as well as craft activities. The role of the grant applicant and other volunteers was set-up and deliver the group each week. This included sourcing resources from the local library, opening and closing the venue, preparing refreshments, leading craft activities and supervising children.
The types of activity that young volunteers described can be conceptualised as:

- **Coaching** involved the broad transfer of knowledge from volunteers to others in the community or service users. This included formal teaching roles in schools, sports coaching or running arts workshops.
- **Providing a service** encompasses activities that were the core task of an organisation, such as gardening, or using the existing skills of young people to fill a specific role in the organisation such as being a lifeguard.
- **Providing support** included administrative support and emotional/pastoral support.
- **Creative roles** allowed young people to take their volunteering opportunity in the direction they chose, by producing new content for a website or magazine or organising events for fundraising or for other young people.
- **Mentoring** differs from the description of coaching or pastoral support above in that it required intensive one-to-one support to across a longer period of time.
- **Youth leadership** this could overlap with other activities such as mentoring or providing support but refers to the specific opportunities for youth led activities and youth leadership such as those represented by vcashpoint.

How opportunities were created by organisations is explored in more detail in Chapter 6. In the next section of this chapter the factors that affected how young people experienced their volunteering are explored. This begins with an exploration of the training and support young people received, then focuses on the awards and accreditation they could undertake, and finally examines some additional factors.

### 4.3.2 Training and support available to volunteers

**Pre-volunteering training and support**
In the interviews with staff conducted for the case studies it was noted that the length of time dedicated to pre-volunteering training and support tended to be proportional to the duration of the volunteering opportunity. More flexible short-term opportunities tended to have shorter induction periods. Where volunteers were involved in full-time opportunities such as the vtalentyear programme the induction took place in a residential setting away from the site of the volunteering activity or was quite intensive in other ways. Pre-volunteering training and support was described as important in the case study interviews because it helped to ensure volunteers were adequately prepared for their role, to allay fears about volunteering and to secure volunteers’ interest and commitment to the opportunity. Where an induction was not received or where the induction was not felt to have been adequate, volunteers were unclear about their role and in some cases lacked confidence to carry it out.

**Ongoing training and support**
On-going training relating to the volunteering activity was also offered to volunteers in areas such as first aid, risk assessment, managing conflict, media and health & well-being. Opportunities for training had arisen either at the request of the volunteer or had
been initiated by the project co-ordinator. Adequate training was important to ensuring that volunteers had the skills and techniques required to effectively carry out their role.

All the courses that I went on which was again funded by v... Some of them were half day, some of them full day and its basically given you all the background and techniques to deal with students with them problems... and that has really helped me… (vtalentyear young volunteer)

Volunteers’ felt their contribution to the v-funded activity was enhanced by drawing upon the resources they had acquired through training. Newly acquired skills were also expected to benefit volunteers beyond their involvement in the v-funded activity. Where volunteers had not received training this was felt in some cases to have limited their involvement in the volunteering opportunity. For example, a volunteer was keen to lead a workshop for young people, but reported that their involvement, at the time of interview, had been limited to supporting staff to deliver workshops due to lack of training.

Ongoing support and guidance for volunteers took two key forms. Project co-ordinators and other staff such as mentors and tutors provided volunteers with support and guidance relating to the volunteering activity and any accreditation undertaken. Personal support may also have been provided by staff when volunteers faced challenges such as arranging childcare, health problems or difficulty in home life. Where support and guidance was more formalised there were planned regular meetings between volunteers and project staff. In other cases support was ad-hoc being sought by volunteers when it was felt to be required. This personal support was cited as important by the young volunteers interviewed and it is important to note there is room for both formal training to be provided, alongside pastoral advice and support to young volunteers to ensure they can continue their involvement and gain from volunteering opportunities.

The importance of the project co-ordinator was particularly pronounced on vtalentyear. A positive and supportive relationship with the project co-ordinator was reported to have secured volunteers’ on-going participation in full-time volunteering and helped them progress towards achieving accreditation.

‘that’s probably been one of the best things about sort of the experience for me, is that I’ve had people to go to, I’ve not felt at all in the dark at any point.’ (vtalentyear young volunteer)

Though not pronounced, when a lack of support and guidance was reported (both on short-term programmes and more structured programmes) young people could have negative experiences such as taking on tasks of which they did not feel fully capable:

‘I'm the youngest in this one and also the, one of the youngest in the other course as well, so I cant really relate to none of the students working in that section…I do help them out as much as I can but I don't really do much other than that...I'm not actually qualified to do what I'm meant to be doing, all I really do is just walk round talking to students, going through their work with them’ (vtalentyear young volunteer)
Volunteers also benefited from discussing experiences and sharing learning with their peers. Peer support was facilitated by formal opportunities for volunteers to come together such as residential trips, ‘buddy’ systems or regular meetings between volunteers. Informally peer support was also enabled by volunteers travelling or socialising together.

Thus training, induction and support was described as important by young volunteers both because it enabled them to fully engage with their volunteering activity, and also allowed them to benefit from increased skills or obtain their accreditation. It was important for ensuring volunteers had a positive experience of volunteering. As project staff alluded to in interviews, managing a volunteering project and supporting young volunteers could be resource intensive, especially if the personal development outcomes for young people were to the fore, but are important facets of ‘successful’ youth volunteering, if personal development objectives are to be met. Projects were asked about the type of support they provided for the young volunteers, this, and the implications for good practice it engenders, are explored Chapter 6.

Financial benefits – payment of expenses

Volunteers could obtain out of pocket expenses on some projects, but these tended not to be discussed as significant for young people. On-going financial support was particularly discussed by volunteers on vtalentyear however. This may have been due to the full-time nature of the programme and how it was explicitly linked to the provision of living expenses to facilitate their involvement. Volunteers who were positive about the vtalentyear expenses felt the level of expenses paid was fair relative to the costs they needed to cover their day to day expenses incurred due to volunteering.

The expenses available for vtalentyear volunteers were felt to be less sufficient when volunteers had caring responsibilities and/or lived independently from parents or had parents with a low income. In these circumstances volunteers may have been required to contribute to household bills that may not appear to fall within the remit of those directly incurred for volunteering such as contributing to gas and electric charges. They therefore needed income for more than their own basic expenses, and faced with a choice between low paid employment or volunteering felt pressure to select the former. As were constrained by government policy as to the level of payment available this may point to the need for a policy change if young people in these circumstances are to be able to engage in volunteering.

Other volunteers who were less satisfied with the expenses available highlighted a perceived lack of parity in pay and conditions between volunteers and other members of staff who were felt to carry out similar activities as those of the vtalentyear volunteer. This indicates that young people could perceive their involvement to be akin to low paid employment, although this is not the anticipation of the scheme. A separate issue was the system for administering subsistence payments to volunteers. Volunteers could report delays in processing payments which had left them out of pocket for a period of time. Improvements however had subsequently been made to the system, resolving the issue, and it was acknowledged to be one that occurred at project, rather than strategic levels.
Post-volunteering support and progression
As well as pre-volunteering and on-going support, volunteers were encouraged by staff to pursue opportunities in education or employment post volunteering. Practical support to enable this was also provided, including help with CV writing, interview skills and searching for opportunities. Volunteers could also access specialist employability services when they were provided by the host organisation.

Volunteers on the vtalentyear programme could also access financial support in the form of the personal development grant to pursue further education, employment or volunteering opportunities. vtalentyear volunteers’ views on the personal development grant were mixed. Where volunteers felt they were able to use the grant to pursue their interests it was valued. Perhaps unsurprisingly the grant was less valued when it was perceived that it could not be spent on activities/items which were felt to be important to the volunteers’ progression. For example, some volunteers entering further or higher education wished to use the grant to purchase a laptop or printer, but reported that this was not enabled by the grant. In this case volunteers found it challenging to identify alternative uses for the grant which were felt to be equally valuable in terms of their future progression.

4.3.3 Accreditation, awards and recognition
Another significant aspect of the v programme, as outlined in Chapter 2, is the opportunity for volunteers to achieve accreditation and recognition through their volunteering. Volunteers are offered different types of accreditation. This includes the vinspired award scheme and vnational awards (see Table 4.3) as well as other types of accreditation such as Youth Achievement Awards, ASDAN awards, AQAs and NVQs.

Volunteers’ contribution was also recognised by funded activities through individual award ceremonies and graduation events. An example of the latter was an event held by a vtalentyear project where the senior managers could formally recognise the contribution that volunteers made to activities during their involvement in the vtalentyear programme. The project co-ordinator also used the graduation event to highlight the distance travelled by each volunteer over the course of their involvement and to encourage and inspire each volunteer to continue on their journey beyond the programme. Volunteers in the case study interviews discussed the significance of such events for cementing the value of their contribution:

‘R1: So that thing we started doing last year... a big award ceremony and it was for service users and the volunteers and it was all nominations... if [a volunteer] got an award ...they got a glass trophy and a big shield. The shield’s been put downstairs engraved with a name on, but [the volunteer] got to keep their glass trophy. We’ve got something they’ve worked for and got. And I think they’re doing it this year

R2: I know the nominations are sort of going in as we speak...it also gives the services users something to work towards because they could get an award as well. And it was a real good day’ (Match Fund young volunteers)
The value of awards and qualifications

In general the opportunity to receive awards, training and qualifications was regarded positively by young people. The case study interviews indicated that awards and qualifications were valued in five identifiable ways by young people:

- Recognition: young people felt that qualifications recognised the commitment and impact of their volunteering.

  ‘I think I definitely feel just more valued, obviously, for the things I do and obviously the time and effort I put in. I do actually feel valued for actually what goes on. I definitely feel it’s opened up a lot of new opportunities for me and I’ve gained a lot of skills and knowledge doing what I’ve done this year’ (v2talentyear young volunteer)

- Reflection on social personal development: where awards were set up to value specifically their volunteering (e.g. v50), young people appreciated having time to reflect on their experience and the skills developed.

- Evidence of experience and skills gained: it provided evidence that young people could provide on a CV or interview to future employers or college/university of the time commitment and dedication to their volunteering activity.

- Re-entry and further training to support entry into education/employment: provided an opportunity for young people who were out of education or wanted to re-train.

- Opportunity to gain further qualifications, move on to their chosen carer, and access higher education.

Volunteers on some of the v funded activities were also given the opportunity to partake in vinspired awards as a source of accreditation. The different awards available are outlined in Table 4.3 below:
Table 4.4 Awards offered by v

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vi Fifty</td>
<td>Gained for completing 50 hours volunteering in the local community. The hours can be spread over more than one volunteer opportunity. Volunteers log their hours online by writing about what they did or providing other types of evidence such as photographs. Once volunteers have recorded 50 hours they are asked to write about what skills they used or developed whilst volunteering and what impacts they volunteering activity had upon other people, the environment or society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi Impact</td>
<td>After completing an award volunteers can begin the vi impact award. This is gained by undertaking an additional 100 hours volunteering. Volunteers are required to plan their involvement in the volunteering activity by thinking about and recording the aims and expected impacts of the activity. Volunteers then record and evidence the hours they have completed. After volunteers have completed 100 hours they are encouraged to reflect on and record the skills they have gained through volunteering and the difference the activity has made to others. Finally, volunteers are asked to share their volunteering story and achievements with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vn National Awards</td>
<td>Volunteers could be nominated for a vn national award at regional level (these awards are open to any young volunteer and they do not have to have completed a vi impact or vi Fifty award). The awards fall into eight different categories: best volunteer newcomer; all round commitment to volunteering; recognising innovative and effective efforts to bring communities together; outstanding leadership; campaigning; overcoming personal adversity or enabling a community to overcome a challenging circumstance; vi involved team activity; outstanding contribution to youth volunteering. The winners of regional awards were shortlisted for the National Awards and a winner was selected by a panel of judges. The winners of the National Awards were announced at a ceremony in London attended by volunteers from across England.</td>
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The grant recipient survey provides information from grant recipients on the rate of take up of the vi inspired awards by volunteers on the Match Fund, vi involved projects and vi involved teams programmes.

Take up was reported to be fairly low, but this may reflect the flexibility of the programme, with young volunteers often not necessarily having to attain accreditation to take part. Amongst these three schemes, when asked about the vi Fifty awards 10 per cent said that all or nearly all of the volunteers on their project had applied for vi Fifty awards, 17 per cent said that more than half had, 57 per cent said less than half had, and 16 per cent said that none had applied. Three per cent said that all or nearly all of the volunteers on their project applied for vi Impact awards, while six per cent said that more than half had done so. Seventy-four per cent said that less than half of the volunteers on their project applied for vi Impact awards, and 17 per cent said that none had done so. It is unsurprising that
less young people were reported to have applied for vimpact compared to v五十 because
the awards were designed to be taken progressively, with young people completing v五十
before deciding to undertake vimpact.

The perceived impact of the awards is explored in Chapter 5, but some barriers to
completing the awards, identified by the young people, are outlined below. Volunteers
were concerned that they would be unable to complete the 50 hours of volunteering
required to achieve the award due to the level of time spent on other commitments such
as education. To address this concern v may wish to emphasise the flexible nature of the
award in terms of time-scales for completion and the number of opportunities it can
encompass. Volunteers also reported facing challenges remembering to log volunteering
hours and activities, which made it difficult to achieve an award. Where volunteers had
recorded 50 hours there were reports they had not received a certificate and had not
followed it up. Addressing these barriers is likely to require host organisations to provide
greater support to volunteers wishing to achieve accreditation. Finally, there were also
volunteers who were unaware of vinpired awards or who lacked clarity about the
difference between the awards or how to achieve them.

Having examined the training and support that young volunteers experienced, and the
different experience of awards and accreditation, the next section outlines some additional
factors that volunteers identified as important in colouring their volunteer experience.

### 4.3.4 Additional factors affecting the experience of v volunteers

There were a range of additional specific factors that affected young peoples’ experience
of volunteering:

- Relationship with project staff at the v funded activity
- Relationship with service users
- Youth-led ethos
- Flexibility of opportunity
- Meeting expectations

#### Relationship with project staff

Firstly, young people identified a friendly and welcoming atmosphere as being important
to their enjoyment of and engagement in their volunteering opportunity. It was explicitly
mentioned that friendly staff make young people feel at ease, and in the case of full-time
opportunities that a positive attitude from staff meant volunteers felt they were a ‘valued
member of the vinvolved team’. Secondly, and linked to this, the attitudes of staff in
relation to the young peoples’ role in the organisation was important. It was seen as
important for young people to feel that the youth-led element of the programme (explored
below) was genuine, and participants that described staff as approachable and helpful felt
that their input and ideas were valued. Alternatively, participants did experience working
with staff that could seem too busy to help them, which affected the level of engagement a
young person could have.

#### Relationship with beneficiaries
Another factor was the relationship of volunteers with service users. Where volunteers built up a positive relationship with service users, it was seen to enrich their experience and promoted volunteering in the future:

‘I loved that, being able to share my story…knowing that I was having a positive effect on these young people…makes me feel like I’m doing something definitely worthwhile…Overall, the whole experience, I love it, definitely. It’s amazing. If I could volunteer for the rest of my life, I would. Really would. I just love it.’ (involved project young volunteer)

However, participants also raised some challenges related to working with service users. Young people reported a lack of respect from students and other volunteers reported receiving verbal abuse when working with other young people.

‘I had problems with the boundaries when I first started. I think it’s more to do with routine with them and they just weren’t listening to me…they all had to be sat down and told [volunteer’s name] is staff, you all listen, and after about a month or two it settled in, and other than that I haven’t really had any problem with the boundaries. I just remind them every now and then that they can’t talk to me like that. Some of them do think they can get away with it because I’m a volunteer’. (vtalentyear young volunteer)

This reflected a need identified by participants to build trust and confidence with service users which, in some cases, the nature of the programme didn’t allow because contact was more infrequent. It also indicates the important of support and training once more, so that young volunteers felt equipped to engage fully with their volunteering experience and beneficiary groups.

‘Obviously with building relationships with young people its important to spend as much time with them as possible, and I felt like I was only sort of having one session here and one session there a week in different situations, and it wasn’t allowing me to build that relationship and get more confident.’ (vtalentyear young volunteer)

Youth-led ethos

Participants in the case study interviews reported distinct experiences regarding the extent to which volunteers had led the design of activities. Youth-led experiences involved volunteers setting-up, designing and implementing the activities with guidance and support from staff. For example, one involved team of volunteers organised a weekend event where young people from different parts of the world came together to give presentations about their own culture:

‘I think [project worker] would give us like a general idea of what is expected of us too and then we decided that we were going to do the cultural weekend and we would work on that…sometimes [staff from project] would come in and pull us in the right direction, if we had doubts we could ask.’ (involved team young volunteer)

Young volunteers in the case studies also reported activities where they had the opportunity to put forward ideas and feed into decision-making processes. This kind of
consultation included regular involved team meeting with staff to discuss ideas on the direction of projects. Despite this, the extent to which these ideas were then taken on board was mixed, with some young people feeling their ideas are valued but are not always put into practice for practical reasons:

‘it’s great that I can get my ideas across. Sometimes they don’t happen, but sometimes they do… It’s just timing and, and stuff like that, or maybe its funding or not enough staff… but, yeah, the people here listen to me and my ideas and they take them on board.’ (involved project young volunteer)

Whether the programme was youth-led was one of a range of factors that affected how young people experienced their volunteering opportunity. Young people valued the youth-led ethos. It was felt that adopting this approach meant it was more likely that the volunteering opportunity would meet the needs and interests of young people. For example, this meant that volunteers could ensure that the activities they took on were not only enjoyable but also that they were within their capabilities:

It was also felt that this approach would make volunteering more attractive to other young people if it was designed by people of the same age. A youth-led approach allowed volunteers to demonstrate independence and take on responsibility. Young people expressed satisfaction that they were not being told what to do, but were the ones in charge.

‘[being involved in decisions] makes us feel part of the involved team… that we’re not just the people at the bottom, the slaves, sort of thing, that do all the dirty jobs…it kind of builds you up as well inside…that you’re worthy of helping us and stuff like that.’ (involved project young volunteer)

Participants felt that a youth-led approach led to more creative designs for activities and suggested that volunteering could be more effective as a result of this. Where young people are able to devise or choose projects that fitted with their needs and wishes volunteers felt more motivated, engaged and comfortable with their role and also gained a sense of self-worth.

Despite these positive views on the youth-led element of the activities, participants also raised concerns about how a youth-led approach should work. Firstly, it was deemed as crucial not to ask too much of young people in terms of designing activities, with participants noting that they were sometimes out of their depth or that they would need more experience to fully lead projects. In fact, this view was also held by young people who currently had limited involvement in the design of their activities, who felt that their level of involvement was appropriate to their level of experience. Secondly, it was felt that if a programme claims to be youth-led it needs to honour that claim and take on board suggestions that the young people put forward. The extent to which grant recipients achieved this and implications for good practice in relation to adopting a youth-led approach is discussed in Chapter 6.
Flexibility of opportunity
Features of the structure of the volunteering programme also affected young peoples' experiences of volunteering. Two main issues were raised by participants, which varied significantly across funding schemes in the case study interviews. Firstly, young people with other commitments outside of their volunteering valued the flexibility of some programmes to accommodate their availability. In particular ‘remote’ (online) volunteering worked particularly well for young people in full-time education and had the potential to make opportunities more inclusive:

‘Also because it’s remote and flexible, I would hope it has brought volunteering opportunities to those who might not otherwise have seized them had the project involved travel to a specific location: for example, as [host-organisation] are in London, it could easily have been a website developed by London young people only, had the opportunity not been online volunteering.’ (Match Fund young volunteer)

vtalentyear volunteers raised some specific issues related to working in schools and colleges. One issue was around the clarity of their role, with some staff assuming they were students and not understanding their role as volunteers.

Participants involved in vtalentyear expressed contrasting views on the structure of their programme. Where participants found it difficult to meet the requirements of the number of hours involved in volunteering, they found the structure of the programme too rigid, which caused stress in terms of completing the programme. An alternative view was participants who valued the structured nature of the programme as it encouraged them to attend every day and take the opportunity ‘seriously’.

Another factor affecting young peoples’ experiences was practical in nature and related to specific procedural issues such as delays incurred from receiving clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau when working with young people. This did lead to volunteers being unable to participate in activities that had been an initial motivating factor to volunteer, but was not one that could be avoided by projects or v.

Meeting expectations
Another factor that affected young peoples’ experiences of volunteering through v funded programmes was the extent to which they felt the opportunity met their expectations. Irrespective of whether it was a motivating factor for taking part, young people reported a positive experience where they felt they had learnt new skills. The types of skills identified are discussed further in Chapter 6 on impacts. Participants spoke critically, if for example they were disappointed that promised opportunities, such as activities, trips or mentoring opportunities did not materialise.

Young people reported positive experiences when they were given more responsibility than they had expected, and interestingly involvement in unexpected activities was seen as a positive aspect of the experience where young people were given the opportunity to get involved in new things.
‘Well, there’s some things that I have got from it that I probably never expected to get…. …I learnt new skills, how to deal with people as well.’ (involved project young volunteer)

Section Summary

- Support and training was very important for young volunteers to be able to engage in the volunteering opportunity fully and with confidence; and also to ensure they were able to personally develop skills and accreditation.
- Without support and training experiences could be reported to be disappointing or negative.
- Additional factors that influenced young volunteers experiences significantly included:
  - Relationship with project staff at the funded activity
  - Relationship with service users
  - Youth-led ethos
  - Flexibility of opportunity
  - Meeting expectations
- Awards were taken up by a mixed number of young people across Match Fund and involved projects, indicating a flexibility of approach being taken.

4.4 Implications

Implications for

- Building links to existing social networks, trusted adults and activities young people are engaged in is particularly important for igniting interest in young people who may be less active in their initial volunteering.
- Social media is an important medium by which young people actively seeking volunteering opportunities find out more.
- Recognition and support for young people who volunteer is important to maintain their engagement. However this should be flexible to incorporate the myriad reasons for volunteering young people have.

Implications for government

- Young people involved in the programme appreciated the diversity of opportunities on offer which helped enable them to identify an opportunity of interest to them. There should continue to be a diverse range of volunteering opportunities for young people (both type of opportunity and length of commitment) supported by the government.
- Concerns about lacking time and income to volunteer remain barriers. The government needs to consider how to ensure young people have adequate resources with which to volunteer in the face of education and employment commitments or a reduction of income if they volunteer.

Implications for the sector
• The sector needs to consider how best to maintain diversity in terms of opportunities on offer to volunteer, and quality standards in terms of how young people are supported and recognised for their volunteering.
5 Impact of v

This chapter focuses on the overall impact of v and activities of the v-funded network. There are key groups of beneficiaries from programmes that increase opportunities for people to volunteer. These are:

- The individual volunteer;
- The beneficiaries of the volunteer activity (who may be volunteers);
- The organisation that hosts the volunteer;
- The local community within which volunteering is based; and,
- Wider society.

There are different kinds of benefits that accrue to each of these different groups and this chapter is split into five sections – the first focussing on the impact of v funded activities on young volunteers, and the second, social impacts that affect the wider community. In section 5.3, the impacts of being part of the grant funded network identified by organisations is explored, and then a short section, 5.4 reflects on the impact of v on the volunteering sector itself – although this is drawn out further in Chapter 6. In 5.5 the outcomes of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis is presented, indicating the costs and benefits of v, by contrasting evidenced impacts, with the cost of the programmes.

From the outset it is worth noting that the term ‘impact’ may have different meanings to different people. Impacts can at times be challenging to accurately measure, quantify or even to conceptualise. Impact can refer to negative as well as positive effects and a direct causal link between one impact and one intervention can be problematic to identify – a number of factors are usually at play in causing an impact that is identified. As was outlined in Chapter 1, there has been a concerted effort in the evaluation to explore impacts, with specific questions in the grant recipient survey, case study interviews, stakeholder interviews and individual monitoring data focussing on this.

In this chapter the evidence that does exist in terms of impacts of v is brought together, to map and discuss the identified impacts that v funded volunteering, and v as an organisation, has thus far had.

5.1 Impacts on young volunteers

In Chapter 3 it was evidenced that v has been successful in creating a high volume of volunteering opportunities, and has been successful in reaching a diverse range of young people, especially those with non-white ethnicities, and socially excluded areas across some funding schemes. Though figures vary depending on the source of data, project and individual monitoring data evidences that at least 40 per cent of these opportunities have been taken up by young people who had not volunteered in the previous 12 months.
Chapter 4 has discussed the actual experiences of \( v \) volunteers, as they take up volunteering opportunities to unpack their routes in and experiences. The next key question, covered in this section, is what does the evidence indicate are the key impacts that this volunteering had on the young people that took part?

An important point to make at this juncture is the distinction between identifying the impact of \( v \) funded activities on young people, and the impact of \( v \) itself. The distinction is subtle but important. The impact of \( v \) funded activities may be related to a number of factors, not solely the input of \( v \). These activities, by definition, occurred due to \( v \) funding, and importantly the way in which the \( v \) programme was designed. Each initiative (talent year, involved teams and so on) were specifically and carefully designed with specific aims in mind. The funding was also targeted at a range of organisations outside of and as well as those traditionally involved in youth volunteering. The strategic design was intended to achieve key aims, such as increase the quality, quantity and diversity of youth volunteering. However because young people tended to volunteer via the grant funded network direct relationships of causation between young people and the impact they experienced cannot be fully asserted. This is because these impacts are related to number of intersecting factors, such as the existing skills of organisations working with the young people as part of the \( v \) funded network, and the personal circumstances of the young people. Thus, while the impacts explored here are crucial for understanding the impact of \( v \) volunteering on young people, and these impacts can only be implicitly attributed to \( v \). The impacts that young people experienced could be understood as the impacts of volunteering \textit{per se}, although they are described here are the impacts of \( v \) volunteering because only the experiences of \( v \) volunteers were explored in the evaluation, and specific structures put in place due to the \( v \) programme may have played a role in generating them. Further, distinct impacts for young volunteers may be identified when contrasting \( v \)'s funded activities, with other activities, such as the impact of \( v \)'s wider campaigns (young peoples perceptions of campaigns are explored in Chapter 6).

So, it should be born in mind that this chapter focuses on impacts experienced by young people who \textit{took part} in the \( v \) programme. As was explored in Chapter 4 there can be barriers to participation, which means young people may not experience these potential impacts or may not have a positive experience volunteering but were not included in the evaluation. There may also be occasions where no discernable impact is identifiable, though here the focus has been on drawing out the impacts there were evident.

### 5.1.1 Impacts reported in the grant recipient survey

Literature on the impacts of volunteering activities for young people tends to identify individual factors, such as skills development or increased confidence (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of contextual literature such as that on the impact of the MV programme). Young people and project staff across the \( v \) funding schemes reported similar impacts as those found in existing literature relating to previous volunteering programmes. Recipients from all funding schemes in the grant recipient survey were asked a series of questions assessing their project's impact on their volunteers. Table 5.1 presents the proportion of recipients that said their project had a positive impact on various aspects of the young volunteers that worked on their projects.
Table 5.1 Proportion of recipients saying that their project improved different things amongst young volunteers (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived impact</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Their levels of self-confidence</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their skill levels</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their attitudes towards volunteering</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their aspirations</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their levels of engagement with the local community</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The likelihood they will volunteer in the future</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their social networks</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their chance of getting a job in the future</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their chance of entering college, university or further education</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their general well being</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their awareness of issues in their local area or society in general</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures exclude people who answered 'Don’t know', and so base sizes vary slightly for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.

Thus as the table illustrates there was a high proportion of grant recipients that reported these impacts among their volunteers - almost all (99%) of recipients said that their funded project had a positive impact on volunteers’ levels of self-confidence and on volunteers’ skill levels. Ninety-six per cent of recipients said that their project had a positive impact on volunteers’ attitudes towards volunteering, and 94 per cent said their project had a positive impact on volunteers’ aspirations and on volunteers’ levels of engagement with the local community. These impacts are explored in more detail in the following section.

Recipients that said their project had some other kind of impact on young volunteers were asked what these were. The most common answer (given by 28% of those that said their project had another kind of impact) related to an improvement in young volunteers’ skills or employability (for example it had improved their team-working skills, or improved their CV). Twenty-one per cent gave answers that related to improving young people’s self-worth, self esteem or confidence, while 15 per cent said that it improved their attitudes to volunteering. Nine per cent said that their project increased young people’s engagement in the local community or local politics, that it improved young people’s social networks (for example, meeting new people), and that it gave them specific knowledge related to the project. Eight per cent of recipients that were asked this question said that their project improved cohesion (for example, that it led to people from different backgrounds getting on better together), and three per cent said that their project improved young people’s well-being.
5.1.2 Impacts as forms of capital

Whilst these illustrate and quantify important and positive impacts, what can be missing in such descriptive accounts of impacts of volunteering on young people is conceptual clarity – what is the implication of these impacts and how may they cumulate in positive outcomes for young people over time? Thus here we are conceptualising the impacts on young people identified through the evaluation as forms of capital, consisting of the interacting resources and assets for future social personal development and educational and employment outcomes that emerge from them. These forms of capital are described below:

**Human/ Knowledge capital** – refers to a young persons knowledge and skills, which were shown to develop directly through the opportunities that activities provided for training and qualifications. They could also assist develop life skills such as budgeting and timekeeping. A young person’s human and knowledge capital also has impact on how secure young people feel about their own skills and capabilities – their ‘ontological security’ (explored below).

**Social capital** – Putnam stated that ‘social capital refers to connections among individuals’ social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them’ (Putnam, 2000: 19). Volunteering allows young people to extend their social capital by forming and developing new social networks built on trust which go beyond family and existing friendships. The ability to form new networks and connections can open access to broader and diverse future opportunities, for example, supportive networks which encourage educational/employment aspirations or knowledge of opportunities to access employment and further training opportunities. Taking up these opportunities will also expand a young person’s human capital. Social capital can also impact on young person’s feeling of belonging, exogenously and endogenously. Further, widening social networks through bridging social capital can help to develop a sense of community and citizenship through the trust and reciprocal relationships developed, and as a result builds greater civic capital.

**Ontological capital** – this is a term coined for this analysis to describe how volunteering provides the tools to support a young persons ‘ontological security’. Ontological security (Giddens, 1984) refers to an internal sense of stability of mental state due to the ability to give meaning and continuity to day-to-day life. Through activities young people were able to give greater meaning to their lives through an experience which encouraged positive feelings of self-worth and stability, and provided a supportive and structured environment, and extended social networks. Young people also found meaning in their lives through the value they recognised in supporting others in the community, which had a knock on effect of developing a greater sense of civic engagement.

**Civic capital** – in drawing on established definitions of social and human capital a concept of civic capital can illustrate how volunteering can influence a wider sense of community/civic engagement among young people. Volunteering allowed young people to develop both a sense of belonging and responsibility to the wider community. activities could act to reaffirm or bring together existing local communities through projects.
which promoted community cohesion and tolerance, or create a strong sense of belonging and identity within ‘micro’ communities of a host organisation or school/LA.

The diagram below summarises these impacts as forms of capital:

**Figure 5.1 Impacts as capital**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human capital</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
<th>Ontological Capital</th>
<th>Civic capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social networks and social awareness:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sense of community and belonging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sense of community and belonging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal</td>
<td>• Development of social capital (bridging) – contact with professionals and wider community</td>
<td>• Sense of belonging within the wider local community</td>
<td>• Sense of belonging within the wider local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>• Development of social capital (bonding) – making new friendships and social networks – peer-peer, peer-service users, and within service user groups with distinct similarities and shared experience (age and social background).</td>
<td>• Sense of citizenship and responsibility to the community</td>
<td>• Sense of citizenship and responsibility to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employability and Educational advancement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Increased confidence and self-esteem</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training and qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interaction with new people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transferable employment skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ownership and responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience of work</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sense of pride and achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Career direction and aspiration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the following sections these impacts, and the evidence that they occurred for young volunteers, is explored in more detail.

### 5.1.3 Development of human capital and employability

As explored in the Chapter 4, a key motivator for young people to become involved in the volunteering programme could be the qualifications or skills that they expected to gain. Such skills could be categorised as employment or educational advancement, qualifications and awards, and life skills. The development of such skills was reported as an impact via the grant recipient survey, with for example 90 per cent of grant recipients saying the funded activities had a positive impact on the volunteers chance of getting a job in the future, and 88 per cent that it had a positive impact on their chance of entering college, university or further education.
Qualifications and awards
As discussed in Chapter 2 and 4, there were a range of training opportunities and qualifications on offer to young people, and access was dependent on the type of scheme and what was offered by the grant recipient organisations. This included vocational training awards and national recognised awards such as, ADSAN and Youth Achievement Award (YAA).

Vtalentyear projects in particular offered qualifications, as part of the conditions of volunteering young people worked towards the completion of a relevant level 2 qualification. Organisations also recognised skills and time spent volunteering through their own certificate and celebratory events and parties and young volunteers had the opportunity to undertake Vfifty and Vimpact awards.

The individual monitoring data indicates that the majority of young people that responded had achieved an award or accreditation of some sort via their volunteering opportunity, thus awards and qualifications were clearly achieved.

Vinspired awards
In the previous chapter the experience of young people who took part in the awards, and the nature of the awards, was explored. It was identified that varying levels of young volunteers took up the awards, indicating perhaps the flexibility of the scheme, with young people not expected to complete an award necessarily. In this section the impact of these awards is discussed using data from the grant recipient survey.

Youth Achievement Awards
Youth Achievement Awards are widely available, and have been funded by V forming a strategic relationship with another organisation, UK Youth, to train the sector in delivering these awards. Amongst Match Fund, Vinvolved teams, and Vinvolved projects, 59 per cent had offered volunteers Youth Achievement Awards. Of these, around half (56%) said that these awards had a mainly positive impact on their project or volunteers. Fourteen per cent said that the awards had some positive and some negative impact on their project or volunteers, while 29 per cent said that they had no impact at all. A very small proportion (1%) said that these awards had a mainly negative impact.

In the grant recipients survey, recipients that said the Youth Achievement Awards had a mainly positive impact on young volunteers, or that they had some positive and some negative impact, were asked what type of positive impact they meant. The most common answers (given by 36% of those asked this question) related to the fact that the awards could improve young people’s CVs, employment opportunities, and so on. Thirty-four per cent said that the awards encouraged or motivated young people to start or continue volunteering or gave them something to work towards. Twenty-six per cent said that the awards increased volunteers’ confidence or self-esteem, and 23 per cent said that

17 A similar question was asked regarding negative impacts, however too few recipients were asked this question to report the answers give.
they gave recognition to the work done by volunteers or showed the importance of their volunteering. Two per cent said that the awards improved the image of young people of certain groups.

**vinspired National Awards**

Across all funding schemes, over half of organisations (59%) said that the national v awards scheme had a mainly positive impact on their project or volunteers. Six per cent said that the national v awards scheme had some positive and some negative impacts, and a third (33%) said that it had no impact at all. The remaining two per cent of organisations said that the national v awards scheme had a mainly negative impact.

Recipients that said the Youth Achievement Awards had a mainly positive impact on young volunteers, or that they had some positive and some negative impact, were asked what type of positive impact they meant. Thirty-three per cent of those asked this question gave answers that related to the awards giving volunteers something to work for or focus on, or more generally motivating volunteers. Twenty-four per cent said that the awards gave recognition for the work volunteers do, 24 per cent said that the awards improved volunteers’ self-esteem or confidence. Eight per cent said that the awards changed the culture of volunteering or made volunteers feel part of something larger, three per cent said that they encourage hard-to-reach groups to volunteer, and one per cent said that they gave volunteers a chance to meet other volunteers.

Those recipients that said the v awards scheme had a mainly negative impact on young volunteers, or that they had some positive and some negative impacts, were asked what type of negative impacts they meant. Some of the answers given to this question include the amount of work involved in the process, that they were discouraging for those that were nominated but did not win awards, that they were poorly advertised or communicated, and that some volunteers did not want the award. There were only 27 responses to this question.

**vimpact/vfifty awards**

In Chapter 4 the prevalence of take up of vimpact and vfifty awards by young volunteers was discussed, and it was found that usually less than half of the volunteers had applied for the awards across the type of awards and funding schemes. When asked about the impact that the vimpact and vfifty awards had on their projects' volunteers however, almost two-thirds (65%) of projects said they had a mainly positive impact. Twelve per cent said that these awards had some positive and some negative impacts, 23 per cent said that they had no impact at all, and less than half a per cent said they had a mainly negative impact.

Those grant recipients that said the vimpact and vfifty awards had a mainly positive impact or some positive and some negative impact were asked what type of impacts
these were. Over half (54%) of those asked this follow-up question gave answers relating to the awards’ impacts on employment opportunities or on young people’s CVs. Thirty-seven per cent said that the awards encouraged or motivated volunteers to start or continue volunteering or gave them something to work towards, and 35 per cent said that the awards give recognition to work done by volunteers or show the importance of volunteering. Eight per cent said that the awards increased the confidence or self-esteem of volunteers.

Table 5.2 below summarises the responses by vinspired award type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award scheme</th>
<th>Youth Achievement Awards</th>
<th>National vAwards Scheme</th>
<th>vimpact/ vfifty awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly positive,</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly negative,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some positive, some negative or</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No impact at all?</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>137^x</td>
<td>343^y</td>
<td>193^z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^x Base: Match Fund, vinvolved projects, vinvolved teams only, ^y Base: all recipients, ^z Base: Match Fund, vinvolved projects, vinvolved teams, * = less than 0.5%

These figures indicate that in the main, vinspired awards were perceived to have a positive impact on young people and projects (with over half of respondents noting this to be the case for each category of award). However there was also a notable percentage that noted they had no impact or some negative and some positive impacts. The qualitative case study data can be used to explore this further.

In the case study interviews concerns were raised by both project workers and young people about the value of awards and accredited qualifications. In particular, participants could have doubts about the awareness and value placed by employers onto specific v awards. Therefore ensuring awards such as this are widely advertised to external bodies such as large companies could be a way to promote the value of them in the future.

Going for an award or accredited qualification was not always felt to be appropriate or the right timing for young people either. This could be for example because they already had existing qualifications, were seeking new skills or were interested in volunteering for altruistic reasons (as explored in the previous chapter on motivations):

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18 A similar question was asked regarding negative impacts, however too few recipients gave a response to report it.
‘...the practical side of this has helped me develop different skills which I didn’t have or, you know, improve them, so I think the practical gives you a lot more experience than sort of sitting down and doing the qualification at the computer.’ (Vproject young volunteer)

In this context it can be understood why awards or qualifications could be described as having no impact or some positive and some negative impacts in the grant recipient survey, although in the main they were described as positive. This also indicates the need for flexibility in terms of what young people value from their volunteering experience with not all young people desiring accreditation but those who do valuing the opportunity.

**Employment skills and experience**

Project staff and young people in the qualitative case studies also discussed how volunteering supported the development of transferable employment skills, within a structured working environment (which as outlined in Chapter 4, could be a key motivation for volunteering rather than attaining an award or qualification). For some young people, their volunteering activities were the first time they had been in a workplace setting or had taken on a role of responsibility, and as a result allowed them to ‘behave professionally’. They discussed developing communication and interpersonal skills, in their interactions with other volunteers, staff and service users.

Additional skills gained that young people reported in the case studies included delivering presentations and public speaking, problem solving and negotiation, creativity, team working, leadership and time management. In the individual monitoring data it was also clear that transferable skills that could be used by young people in employment and training were identified as impacts of their volunteering.

In Table 5.3 a range of areas of skills development identified via the individual monitoring survey with young people are shown. Respondents were likely to identify increases in their communication skills, and in team-work. These kinds of ‘soft skills’ may be particularly important in sustaining employment in the future.
Incorporating those who agreed as well as strongly agreed to these statements, 86 per cent agreed or strongly agreed they were ‘More able to work as a team’ following volunteering; 70 per cent agreed or strongly agreed they were ‘Better able to manage their time’. Only 1 per cent reported that their ability to communicate with others had not improved.

The opportunity to develop such skills was highlighted by project staff in the qualitative case studies as particularly significant for young people who had left education early and wanted to refresh their basic ICT skills and develop transferable skills that would be in demand by employers. For other young people who had been through further and higher education, it provided a distinct experience from formal education, to build and further hone skills in the ‘real’ working world.

As explained in Chapter 4, a key motivation for young people could be gaining work experience via volunteering. v activities did provide opportunities for young people to gain specific work experience in sectors they were interested in pursuing such as youth work, teaching and the charity sector. Gaining this first hand work experience was seen as particularly important (by project staff) in making a young person stand out in a very competitive job market. It was also reported by project staff in the case studies that employers would value young people who could demonstrate personal experiences and interest outside of education and paid employment. In the context of the high unemployment levels that young people are currently experiencing these are significant impacts.

**Aspirations**
Another impact identified was the development of aspirations. In the grant recipient survey it was reported by 94 per cent of respondents that their volunteering opportunities had increased young people’s aspirations. This was further discussed in the case study interviews with staff and young people. Young peoples’ involvement in volunteering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3 Skills development from individual monitoring data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents except short-term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual monitoring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those <strong>strongly agreeing</strong> and <strong>agreeing</strong> with views about skills development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have got better at communicating with other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More able to work as part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to make decisions has improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more able to lead or encourage others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have got better at managing my time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed skills to do a specific job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have improved my reading, writing and maths skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed my technical skills, such as computer skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
provided an environment where they could consider their career direction and be inspired to develop future career paths. They could also come into contact with new ‘trusted adults’ that could assist them to understand the current opportunities available (explored in more detail in the section on social capital).

As outlined in Chapter 2, the v programme operates in a specific social and economic context. Whether young people are then able to attain employment will be heavily influenced by the job market, as discussed in the section below on post-volunteering progression.

5.1.4 Progression into employment

In the previous section the activities that the young people who were interviewed during the case studies anticipated they would be engaging in following their v volunteering were discussed.

Here the figures from the grant recipient survey are presented to give further details as to the post-volunteering progression of the young people involved in v volunteering in terms of employment. Employment outcomes have been examined only for projects offering full-time and vtalentyear programmes, because those offering part-time or short-term opportunities may have worked with young people already in employment, making it difficult to ascertain any difference pre and post volunteering. It could also be assumed that when young people are engaged in part-time or short-term volunteering they may also be involved in employment or education at the same time, and therefore a progression route from one situation to another is more difficult to ascertain.

In the grant recipient survey, organisations that were running vtalentyear projects or that were working with full-time volunteers were asked what proportion of volunteers from these projects were (or will be) in paid employment after the project came to an end. Of the 197 organisations that provided full-time or vtalentyear opportunities, 10 per cent said that all or nearly all were (or will be) in paid employment, 17 per cent said more than half, 48 per cent said less than half, and 24 per cent said none. 19 When looking only at organisations that were running vtalentyear projects,20 most organisations said either that less than half (65%) or none (6%) of their volunteers were (or will be) in paid employment after the project came to an end. Ten per cent said that all or nearly all volunteers were (or will be) in paid employment, and 19 per cent said that more than half were (or will be).

It is difficult to ascertain from these figures how much of the percentage obtaining employment was due to the current economic context and competitive job market or other factors. It may be that young people were in a better position following their volunteering opportunity to obtain employment than those who had not volunteered, but that due to the high level of youth unemployment they could still remain unemployed. However it is

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19 25 organisations answered ‘Don’t know’ to this question – these figures are therefore based on 172 organisations.
20 These figures are based on 31 organisations that ran vtalentyear projects. These figures should therefore be treated as indicative rather than significant.
impossible to assert this for sure without a comparison group of young people who did not volunteer, which is not available.

The vcashpoint recipients were also asked more detailed information about their circumstance pre and post v funded activities. This can be used to further explore post-volunteering progression into employment with their responses outlined in Table 5.4 below.21

| Table 5.4 Proportion of vcashpoint recipients in paid work, in education, and involved in voluntary work, before and after receiving v funding |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Base: vcashpoint recipients (73)                | Before receiving v funding | After end of v funding |
|                                                  | %                | %               |
| Paid work                                        | 30               | 47              |
| Education or study leading to a qualification    | 50               | 38              |
| Voluntary work                                   | 15               | 10              |

So when asked what their single main activity is (or will be) after the end of vcashpoint funding, 47 per cent said paid work and 38 per cent said education or study leading to a qualification. Comparatively, when asked what their main activity was before receiving v funding 30 per cent said paid work, 50 per cent said education or study leading to a qualification. Therefore there was an increased proportion in work and education following their vcashpoint activity.

Again caution has to be exercised when interpreting these figures as is it difficult to ascertain how much attribution can be given to the vcashpoint activity to influencing these outcomes. Although it is clear that looking comparatively across the two waves, a higher percentage were now engaged in education or employment than before the vcashpoint activity, some of this may have been a progression reflecting their increased age, or that motivated young people may have applied for vcashpoint funding and also been successful in finding employment or education. However this is not to say that the related impacts of the v-funded activities identified here (increased confidence, skills, etc) did not contribute to these outcomes, only that attribution cannot be proven.

Respondents in the individual monitoring data were also asked about their post-volunteer progression. Overall, these figures indicate around 15 per cent moved into paid work after volunteering, whilst around one third went to University – this excludes those who were simply returning to university. Around eight per cent went on to do further training (including apprenticeships). A high proportion, three quarters, were currently doing volunteering.
From this it appears that the most prevalent progression was onto university, followed by employment. As noted above caution has to be used in interpreting this and it is not necessarily the case that these outcomes are attributable to volunteering, never the less they provide important information on the post volunteering progression that occurs.

Due to the timing of fieldwork for qualitative case studies volunteers discussed what they expected to do in the future rather than actual outcomes (they were still volunteering at the time of the interview). Expected outcomes were similar to those reported by vcashpoint volunteers and the individual monitoring. They were: employment, education, work-based training, travel and volunteering. Other volunteers were uncertain about their plans post-volunteering.

Where volunteers future plans where influenced by their v volunteering experience volunteers reported that they hoped or expected to secure employment with the host organisation or similar organisation; or that the choice of education or training activity was informed by the type of volunteering activity or the beneficiary group they had worked with.

Where volunteers expected they would continue volunteering this may have been either as a main or supplementary activity. In the first case volunteering was expected to be the main activity until the young person entered employment, training or education.

Please note that the questions asking about respondents’ main activities before and after receiving funding were asked in slightly different ways, and so figures are not directly comparable. However, questions were asked in a similar enough way to give a useful indication of how these proportions compare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v scheme type</th>
<th>Subsequent status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moved into work</td>
<td>Going to University</td>
<td>Further training</td>
<td>Currently a volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cashpoint PT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Fund FT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Fund PT</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved projects FT</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved projects PT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved teams FT</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved teams PT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TalentYear FE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TalentYear LA</td>
<td>[20]</td>
<td>[20]</td>
<td>[29]</td>
<td>[57]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: percentages in [ ] are based on fewer than 50 cases and may be unreliable. Further training includes moves and returns into Further Education.
Volunteers reported that they would continue to help out at the host organisation or they would seek new volunteering opportunities, including overseas volunteering. The decision to continue volunteering at a host organisation or to move on to new opportunities was linked in some cases to motivations for volunteering. For example, volunteers for whom a motivation was personal benefit expected to volunteer in new opportunities aligned with their chosen career. Other volunteers were uncertain about whether they would continue volunteering in the future. Whether this happened was felt to depend upon the nature of opportunities available or whether they were asked to volunteer. A final group of volunteers reported they would not continue volunteering in the immediate or longer term. Those who expected they would not volunteer in the immediate future hoped to secure full-time employment and did not think they would now have time to volunteer.

It is also important to note that as well as qualifications, awards and skills, funded activities also enabled young people to develop and build day-to-day life skills with their increased emotional, social and financial capabilities. Life skills included developing interpersonal skills and accessing social networks both face to face and virtual (Facebook), travelling outside their immediate local area, budgeting and managing money for example. These skills supported a young person’s independence and were highlighted by project staff as being particularly valuable to young people from vulnerable/excluded groups who had experienced barriers to independent living, for example, young people with disabilities and complex issues in their lives. These related impacts (and their implications) are explored in greater detail in the ensuing sections.

### 5.1.5 Increased social capital

In the grant recipient survey 90 per cent of respondents said that volunteering had a positive impact on the young volunteer’s social networks. Changes in levels of some measures of ‘social capital’ that were reported in the individual monitoring data are shown in Table 5.6 – because almost all of the respondents agreed to these statements, these are shown here as a proportion of those *strongly* agreeing to these statements for further clarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.6</th>
<th>Social capital and networks from individual monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strongly agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those <em>strongly agreeing</em> or agreeing with views about networks</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My range of friendships has increased</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to go to social events</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know of organisations I can call on for support and information</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bases</strong></td>
<td>2203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus funded activities opened up opportunities for young people to meet and interact with others. This could include communicating and cooperating with groups of people they had not come in contact with before. The significance of this development of social networks...
as a positive impact on young people can be understood when conceptualised through the social capital it can engender.

- **‘social capital – bonding’**: development of peer social networks. Woolcock (2001) defined bonding social capital as a type of social capital which ‘denotes ties between people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbours’. Volunteers can be seen to be included within this definition as young people of a similar age sharing the same experience and involvement in activities and becoming actively involved in activities within an existing social network (for example, being able to remain involved in a youth group as a volunteer mentoring younger people, even when the volunteer was too old to attend as a service user). The opportunity to develop social networks were particularly praised by those who experienced challenges in making new friendships or accessing social networks, for example, disabled young people who spent the majority of their time with parents/carers. Additionally, young people who had been out of education and employment often had felt isolated, and activities provided social contact.

- **Social capital – bridging.** Development of new nodules of social interaction. It was reported by project staff interviewed in the case studies, that participation in activities (particularly due to the emphasis on targeting hard-to-reach groups) could draw together young people from a variety of backgrounds. This led to the development of new friendships and social networks with ‘people you wouldn’t meet normally’. Young people discussed meeting people from different ethnicities and social backgrounds and as a result learning about different cultures and broadening their existing friendship groups. Bridging social capital may have also had a pronounced effect on how young volunteers were able to come into contact with new ‘trusted’ adults via their volunteering activity, including older young people who could become mentors or role models.

The volunteering programme has already been shown in Chapter 4 to have been successful in engaging a range of young people. It could be inferred that this could bring them into contact with trusted adult figures that could assist them to develop skills, confidence and knowledge of new opportunities or activities that they had not thought of before. This bridging capital, activated via volunteering opportunities could therefore be very significant in assisting young people to make transitions in their lives, and link them into new opportunities, following their volunteering as well as social capital, strengthening existing ties.

In recent research (nef, 2011) it was highlighted that young people greatly value having a ‘trusted adult’ or older young person that they can approach for advice, support and information (who may not have the formal position of a support worker, volunteer manager or teacher for example). This can be pivotal in supporting young people to make successful transitions into adulthood and has been shown to therefore be a cost effective relationship (nef, 2011). The development of social networks engendered by the funded volunteering to a diverse range of young people (including those in socially excluded...
areas) can be viewed as one way in which such links to support may have been created via trusted adults. Professional networks were also bridged and entered through contacts and relationships made with project workers and other agencies through volunteering activities.

Improved social networks may also have impacted on the social awareness of young volunteers. An increased understanding of the needs of different groups and sections of society could be facilitated through volunteering activities which aimed to promote tolerance and understanding, such as cultural awareness days between two cultural groups within a community, for example, which were organised via volunteering activities described in the case studies.

Thus the implications of improved social capital, developed via volunteering activities, cannot be underestimated, and a range of positive outcomes may be inferred from this. However, measuring tangible and directly attributable outcomes from this, remains problematic from an evaluative perspective.

5.1.6 Ontological capital

In section 5.1.2 the concept of ontological capital was introduced as a way to understand the implication of such impacts as increased confidence and self-esteem on young people. Volunteering may have particular benefits to people's personal development, and some areas of change identified by young people in the individual monitoring data survey are shown in Table 5.7. In each case almost all respondents agreed that their skills had improved, so we focus on those who strongly agreed that the change had occurred. There were high proportions saying that they were now more willing to try new things, and had gained confidence in their abilities and felt more motivated. There were also increases in self-esteem and people felt that they had things to look forward to in life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.7 Personal development from individual monitoring data</th>
<th>Individual monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents except short-term</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strongly agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those strongly agreeing or agreeing with views about personal development</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More confident in own ability</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem has increased</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More aware of effects of my actions on others</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel more motivated</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More willing to try new things</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have things to look forward to in my life</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bases</strong></td>
<td>1709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The value could be limited in the case of ‘short-term’ volunteering opportunities, although there was no monitoring conducted to ascertain whether young people who took part in short-term activities remained in contact with other individuals/organisations that were involved.
Different impacts of volunteering on young people also interact - the development of skills in both employment/education and emotional/social areas of their lives could increase young people’s confidence in their capabilities and self-esteem. Young people and project workers in the case studies identified four main ways that volunteering activities directly improved the confidence and self-esteem of the young people involved:

- **Being ‘outside of your comfort zone’**: Involvement in a volunteering activity was seen to push young people into working and interacting in a new environment and undertaking new activities which allowed them to develop belief and value in their own abilities.

- **Interaction with new groups of people**: Young people discussed having a greater confidence in interacting with new groups of people due to the experience that they had of communicating with other volunteers and service users from different backgrounds.

- **Ownership and responsibility**: Young people were given opportunities to take leadership and ownership through youth-led volunteering where they created or led elements or whole projects. This allowed young people to develop a sense of belonging through collective responsibility and active participation in volunteering activities.

  ‘if they’re getting more personal things out of it rather than academic or career, I think that element of feeling accepted and they feel like they belong to something and that they own something…’ (vtalentyear project worker)

- **Sense of pride and achievement**: By volunteering and helping others, young people developed a sense of value in what they had achieved by using their own skills and time to benefit others. Young people often described this as ‘giving back’ and ‘achieving something worthwhile’:

  ‘I come in here during the day and volunteer when I can and it just made me feel so much better about myself because I know I’m giving back and I’m doing something I enjoy’. (Match Fund young volunteer)

For vulnerable groups in particular, having a responsibility for someone else or for an activity could help to increase confidence and encourage engagement:

‘It’s just opened doors, it’s given me as, you know, a disabled person the chance to work and help other people and take on responsibilities.’ (Match Fund young volunteer)

Developing life skills also in turn improved young people’s wellbeing and confidence because they were now able to have greater independence within their lives:
‘I didn’t think I could do half the things that I’ve been doing like cooking. I obviously cook at home, but I’m more confident. I learn tips from here even to go home and cook myself and it’s just had an impact on knowing that I can do lots of things and still go home and still do normal things as well. It’s like made me realise I’ve got routine and I can juggle two things at a time as well’ (vtalentyear young volunteer)

The implication of these impacts – increased confidence, self-esteem, well-being –can be particularly understood when conceptualised as providing the tools required to engender ontological security. Patton and Viner (2007) for example argued that young people increasingly suffer from depression, drug addiction and so on, due to the pressures of modern living (consumption, technology, etc). Having a clear sense of self-esteem and well-being is one way to negate the risk of these activities, and cumulatively, the opportunities afforded young people via the volunteering programme were described in the case studies in positive terms because they allowed them to ‘fit in’, have an additional role, and meaningful purpose to their day-to-day activities. This sense of ‘belonging’ and finding a ‘place’ in the world via volunteering was unsurprisingly particularly alluded to by young people involved in vtalentyear. As a full-time programme this may have had particular bearing on how they utilised their time and described themselves to others, as well as their sense of internal identity.

This impact could be inferred to improve the volunteers ontological security, which has been theorised as a crucial element to making and maintaining positive life transitions (McNaughton, 2008). In the context of the many faceted transitions that young people undertake on the route to adulthood, that volunteering may support them maintain their internal sense of ontological security and positive self-image as they do so, may be a significant impact indeed.

5.1.7 Increasing civic capital

In this section the extent to which volunteering impacted on young peoples’ civic capital is explored. Civic capital can be understood as their ability to engage with and feel part of a community.

In the grant recipient survey, 94 per cent of respondents said their project had a positive impact on volunteers’ levels of engagement with the local community (and on the likelihood that they will volunteer in the future). 84 per cent said that it had a positive impact on their awareness of issues in their local area or society in general. Therefore it could also be argued that engaging in funded activities increased the potential for civic engagement – the civic capital – of the young people who were involved.

From the individual monitoring data the indication of social impact, in terms of how young people had developed following their volunteering, was also very positive. Only 6 per cent of young people who completed the individual monitoring said they did not feel they were part of their local community. 79 per cent agreed or strongly agreed they were more likely to get involved in local activities following volunteering. 69 per cent would look for opportunities to take part in local campaigns or community action and 57 per cent cited being more aware of environmental issues and action.
There is likely to be some bias of normative behaviour apparent here however. People are unlikely to see themselves as not willing to get involved in local activity, for example. Never the less, these are still positive findings in terms of community/civic impact and interesting to see differences between categories, indicating that these are valid responses.

In the case study interviews it was also noted that activities could encourage young people to develop a sense of community and belonging and promoted active citizenship, for example by becoming involved with service users or youth leadership groups. The project staff described young people as having an increased sense of belonging within the wider local community following their activities. This could be in part due to the explicit nature of the activities – for example they could directly promote social cohesion between different cultural groups or involve working with young people who had experienced barriers to fully accessing their local community (for example new asylum seekers and refugees).

The case study interviews with project staff on the impacts on young people also indicated that volunteering may increase a sense of responsibility to the community that young people have. As the grant recipient survey indicates it was felt that young people were more likely to volunteer in the future.

**Section summary**

To summarise the following impacts have been found to occur for young volunteers:

- increased confidence, self-esteem and an opportunity for meaningful occupation, which has been conceptualised as ontological capital
- increased human capital, including qualifications and life skills
- increased social capital, with bridging capital playing a key role in linking young people to new opportunities, support networks and aspirations
- increasing awareness of and engagement with the local community

However there are limits in terms of relationships of attribution inherent in this and also in identifying measurable impacts such as increased employment levels (although cashpoint recipients did appear to have increased level of employment).

- It should also be recalled that not all young people are able to engage in volunteering due to barriers such as childcare or income, although the evidence does indicate the programme has been relatively successful in engaging young people from diverse backgrounds and that are new to volunteering.

### 5.2 Impact on wider community/societal impacts

Having explored the direct impacts on young people, in this section the focus shifts onto a related issue – the impact that funded activities had on the wider community.
It is an on-going challenge for evaluators to measure social impacts. ‘Community’ is intangible (what is being referred to/what is being measured) and community beneficiaries are often removed from the immediate evaluation process, therefore it can be more challenging to ascertain the impacts they have experienced than asking those directly involved (such as grant recipients or young volunteers) what the impact has been on them.

Further, the anticipated outcomes of a programme have to be clear in order to evaluate the extent to which these have been met – the focus from the grant funded network appears to have been young people and their personal development; engaging volunteers from more diverse backgrounds; better quality volunteering opportunities - rather than an explicit focus on the wider society they are supporting, although implicitly the youth volunteering projects could lead to outcomes for the wider community (such as a Christmas party at an care home being organised by young volunteers).

In this section the evidence on social impacts from the evaluation is outlined – and to encapsulate the broader meaning of ‘community’ these are termed as both community and societal impacts. This is because project staff in the case study interviews noted that the two could be conflated – for example community could refer to the population local to their project geographically; the young volunteers and their parents and friends; the beneficiaries of the projects service provision; or other stakeholders who benefitted from the volunteering programme at a national level, for example, politicians who the young people were supported to visit and speak to as part of their v funded activities. The term community could be perceived to relate to the narrower geographical definition, when in effect the ‘community’ impacted upon by the volunteering project could be much more broadly defined as wider society.

**5.2.1 Measurable social impacts**

Having outlined the challenges of evidencing wider community or as they are termed here ‘social impacts’, there are still evaluation findings that demonstrate that social impacts were being achieved.

Recipients in the grant recipient survey were asked about their v-funded project’s impact on their community. Table 5.8 presents the proportions of recipients that said their projects improved or increased various things in the community.
Table 5.8 Proportion of recipients saying that their project improved/increased different things in the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived impact</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access for young people to volunteering opportunities</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links between young volunteers and the wider community</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of youth volunteering in general</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of young people in the local community</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the project or specific issues it raised</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards young people in the local community</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of your organisation*</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships between organisations working with young volunteers</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between organisations working in your local community</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided by young people in your local community</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for young people in your local community</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the project had any other kind of impact on the community as a whole?</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of competition between organisations for young volunteers</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>344%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This question was not asked of v cashpoint recipients, and so the base for this figure is 271

So as the table above illustrated 94 per cent said that it improved access for young people to volunteering opportunities, and 91 per cent that it improved links between young volunteers and the wider community. Only 33 per cent said that their project increased levels of competition between organisations for young volunteers.

Amongst those that said their project had an ‘other’ kind of impact on the community, the most common answer (given by 20% of those giving an ‘other’ answer) was that their project brought the community together (including bringing specific groups together). Ten per cent said that their project had an environmental impact, while six per cent said that their project increased active citizenship (for example by making volunteers or others more willing to engage with community events or the community more generally), that their project made more opportunities available to young people, and that they engaged previously disengaged young people. Other answers given by just a few grant recipients include that their project raised money for charities, that they gave young people something positive to do, that they provided information to the community, that they improved people’s confidence, and that they improved relationships between organisations working in their local community.

The most often cited ‘community/social’ impact in the grant recipient survey - access to volunteering – is explored in the section below. These can also be considered anticipated impacts of the v programme in terms of key aims to engage young people as volunteers, and clearly influenced the lived reality of young people who took part in v volunteering, as opposed to additional beneficiaries. As such as these are clear social impacts but these have less direct influence on those not volunteering, although young volunteers are, by
definition, also part a wider community and society. Impact on young volunteers has been explored separately in the section above, including how volunteering impacted on young people’s civic capital, and figures from the individual monitoring data illustrated specific impacts on young people in terms of how they engage with and are aware of their local community.

Therefore tangible social impacts can be identified, but these tend to focus on the young people, or attitudes to young people themselves that have changed due to the v-funded projects – that young people would be more likely to volunteer; that young people volunteering improved attitudes to young people from adults.

Although still accounting for 64 per cent of the responses, improved levels of services being provided by young people to the local community was not one of the most prevalent responses on the grant recipient survey. This may be due to the perceived focus of the funded network (as already discussed in Chapter 2 and 4, from both stakeholder and young volunteers) being on the personal development of the young people rather than the services their volunteering led to (although these services were clearly an important secondary outcome).

5.2.2 Civic engagement of young people

Even if the primary impact of v-funded activities is on the young volunteers, this does not imply that there are not wider community/societal impacts that could be inferred from this. The most significant impact on the wider community could be argued to be found in the potential externalities of the changes in the young people engaged by v-funded activities. Social capital, while in part something which individual young people gain from, is by definition a shared benefit and the breaking down of barriers and the creation of more constructive relationships between various groups in society can be seen as a significant, if difficult to quantify, social benefit.

In other words the community could benefit from young people with greater propensities to volunteer, social awareness and employability. These implicit ‘secondary’ civic impacts overlap with the explicit impacts identified – for young people they have better self-esteem – with which to be members of their community and interact with others.

5.2.3 Examples of social impacts

The grant recipient survey indicated that 88 per cent of grant recipients thought that the image of young people improved due to their involvement in v volunteering. There was also qualitative evidence that intergenerational social impacts could be identified – young volunteers acted as ambassadors for all young people, and intergenerational volunteering could improve social capital across a community, not just among the young volunteers involved.

‘The [volunteers] do a lot of inter-generational work so we work closely with the local residential home where they go and visit or the residents come here and they will organise like a Christmas tea for them or something along these lines and they organise positive activities’. (Project staff vinvolved project)
Volunteering opportunities which brought together young volunteers and other members of the community were felt to have been mutually beneficial for the different groups involved. The activities helped to engender trust and confidence between the groups. They also challenged perceptions about the capabilities, behaviours and attitudes of young people. This was felt to have been particularly important in redressing perceptions of marginalised groups, such as young people with disabilities:

'It shows that young disabled people do have something to offer and they can be involved in swimming and therefore it does kind of open the minds of the volunteers they're going to be working with within events, and at club level that young people kind of should be given that opportunity to take part in something different'. (Mygames project staff)

Caution is still required however. A key finding from the evaluation has been that the impacts most clearly identifiable have been those relating to young people’s personal development, rather than wider tangible and measurable social impacts. This may be in some part down to difficulty measuring impact, but also means there is a limit to claims regarding social impact that can be made (whilst not indicating it has not occurred). Stakeholder interviews concur a sense that has impacted in terms of young people’s personal development, and a shift towards the focus being on recognising the value of volunteering for this end, rather than volunteering creating social impacts, as already discussed in Chapter 2.

Saying that, there were clear examples of community and service impacts from the qualitative case studies as illustrated above, and by the following examples:

**Environmental impact**
By their very nature volunteering opportunities with a conservation or environmental focus should bring benefit beyond the personal development of volunteers. An example of this was a funded project which engaged young people in a series of one–off volunteering opportunities to clean up the UK’s beaches. The activity provided volunteers with information about the environmental impact of behaviours such as dropping litter, volunteers then spend time cleaning up the beach and have the opportunity to finish the day by trying an sports activity. The importance of the sports activity is both as a draw to help young people to engage in volunteering, but also to demonstrate the reliance of sporting activities upon a clean coastal environment. Project staff and other stakeholders were confident about the effectiveness of the funded activity for raising awareness of environmental issues and engaging young people in protecting their coastline:

'We know from the vox pox we’ve done with life guards who come along to a couple of the events, we know that they all just think this is a great initiative [for] engaging young people in protecting their coastline for the future.' (Mygames project staff)

**Service delivery**
 Volunteers increased an organisation’s capacity to offer new services or extend and enhance the delivery of existing services which in turn provided a service for the local community. For example, a further education college was able to extend the opening hours of its community lounge with the support of volunteers on the vtalentyear programme. Another college participating in vtalentyear reported that the programme had increased the availability of one-to-one support for students with additional learning needs. One example of this was a vtalentyear volunteer developing a book of images to help a student with communication needs interact with others in the classroom:

‘I had great feedback from the teacher saying, [the student] is now paying attention, he is making jokes from his pictures…his vocabulary and his speech that he is using more confidently and they think its as a result of these picture cards, he’s using them off his own back now, whereas before we had to encourage him to even look at any text at all linked with the photocards so he made a difference so that was one.’ (vtalentyear project staff)

 Volunteers also enabled the delivery of new services, such as recycling facilities. This was expected by the programme co-coordinator to have far reaching impact through influencing others in the local area to follow suit by introducing similar facilities.

**Section summary**

Social impacts can be difficult to quantify or measure tangibly. However the evidence from the grant recipient survey, individual monitoring data and case studies indicates the following social impacts:

- Increased propensity for young people to get involved in their local community and have civic responsibility
- An improved image of young people and inter-generational relationships
- Greater awareness of volunteering opportunities and access to volunteering among young people:
  - The latter impact could be considered a direct impact on young people becoming volunteers, rather than a tangible impact for the wider community.
- However it could also be inferred that a broad societal impact of increased volunteering is that of young people being better equipped for adult life due to the various forms of capital they generate via their volunteering – however this cannot be evidenced here, merely inferred.

**5.3 Impacts on the grant funded network – organisational impacts**

Clearly a key impact that v has on the grant funded network is providing funding to the organisations that enabled them to set up their v funded volunteering activity. However the programme and the contractual agreements that came with being a part of the v-funded network were carefully and strategically planned. Intended outcomes of this planning were an increase in the quality, quantity and nature of youth volunteering opportunities.
In this section the extent to which these outcomes were facilitated, and the key identifiable impacts on organisations that being part of the v-funded network brought, are discussed. This is done with a focus on overall organisational impacts, with a specific discussion on the quantity of volunteering opportunities, the quality (with a focus on Reach the quality accreditation framework v instigated) and additional impacts on youth engagement within organisations, and service provision, that being part of the v-funded network brought to organisations. Finally the impact of v campaigns and marketing on organisations is discussed.

5.3.1 Organisational impacts

In the grant recipient survey, organisations were asked about the impacts that their v-funded project had on their organisation. Table 5.8 presents the proportions of organisations that said the v-funded project improved or increased various aspects of their organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived impact</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of young people you work with as volunteers</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s capacity to involve volunteers</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of paperwork that your organisation has to do</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s current service provision for young people</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way your organisation handles youth volunteering</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your workforces skills</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of volunteering within your organisation</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young peoples understanding of what your organisation is about</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s level of engagement with the local community</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s image amongst young people</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role young people have in shaping services your organisation provides</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s relationship with other organisations working in this area</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s level of engagement with young people from hard-to-reach groups</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The support for volunteers within your organisation</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s procedures for volunteer management</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of services provided by your organisation more generally</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s level of engagement with charities or voluntary organisations</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s skills/knowledge in marketing and publicity</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s ability to secure funding for other work in the future</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s sustainability and ability to plan ahead</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has it had any other kind of impact on your organisation?</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation’s level of engagement with private sector organisations</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base (all organisations)</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unsurprisingly perhaps the most often cited impact related to volunteering capacity. Ninety-four per cent of organisations said that their project increased the number of young people they worked with as volunteers, while 88 per cent said that it increased their capacity to involve volunteers. Amongst those that said the v funding had an ‘other’ impact on their organisation, the most common answer was that it raised awareness of volunteering (or of youth volunteering). Other answers include that it expanded the funded organisations’ activities (for example, by providing more services for young people), that it improved the image of the funded organisations, that it increased the contribution of young people to the funded organisations, that it improved the security or sustainability of organisations, and that it helped to secure other funding.

As might be expected, the reported impacts on organisations of the v-funded projects varied by the previous experience organisations had with volunteering. For example, organisations with little or no experience of working with volunteers more commonly reported that the v-funded project improved their organisation’s procedures for volunteer management (92% gave this answer) than those with a lot of experience in this area (67%). Similarly, those with little or no experience of working with volunteers were more likely to report an increase in the support for volunteers within their organisation (92% compared with 73%), the awareness of volunteering within their organisation (96% compared with 79%) and the way their organisation handles youth volunteering specifically (95% compared with 83%).

A similar difference is present between organisations that had a lot of experience with working with young people and those with only a little or no experience of doing so prior to receiving the v funding. For example, organisations with a little or no experience of working with young people more commonly said that the v-funded project led to an improvement in their organisation’s image amongst young people (97% compared with 76%), their organisation’s level of engagement with young people from hard to reach groups (92% compared with 74%), and the way their organisation handles youth volunteering (98% compared with 82%).

These organisational impacts are described in greater detail in the sections below.

5.3.2 Quantity of volunteering opportunities

Clearly (as found in the grant recipient survey) being part of the v funded network allowed organisations the opportunity to work with more young people as volunteers and increased their capacity.

As was explored in Chapter 3, evidenced by the monitoring data from the projects, a key overarching impact of v that had been identified is that they have been successful in, via their funded network, creating a high volume of volunteering opportunities, and this has attracted a diverse range of young people to volunteering (with at least 40 per cent new to volunteering). Seventy-eight per cent of organisations in the grant recipient survey said that the v-funded project increased their level of engagement with young people from
hard-to-reach groups for example, indicating that via the funded network, capacity to work with young people who may not previously have volunteered had increased.

Both the staff from projects directly funded by v but also those who benefit from placements by vinvolved teams reported in the qualitative case study interviews that v funding had expanded their provision and enabled them to involve more volunteers. In addition obtaining the funding had meant they gave more thought to the type of volunteering activities that young people they worked with could become involved in and, as will be discussed in the next section, also allowed for new procedures to be put in place to recruit and support young volunteers, which may have had a tertiary impact of increasing the number of young people that they could make contact with. Indeed in the case of vinvolved teams their key role was to create and broker opportunities, thus increasing the quantity of youth volunteer activities in their local area.

Examining how easy or difficult projects reported it to be to recruit volunteers, it was reported that most grant recipients found it very (26%) or quite easy (51%) to recruit young people for their project. Nineteen per cent said that they found recruiting young people quite difficult, and four per cent found it very difficult. In terms of retention of volunteers the majority of recipients also found it very (14%) or quite easy (49%) to retain volunteers and stop them dropping out from their volunteering opportunity, while around a quarter (26%) of recipients found this quite difficult and three per cent found it very difficult. Processes for recruiting volunteers are explored in Chapter 6, but this finding indicates that the organisations were indeed able to increase their level of youth volunteering, via v funding.

vinvolved teams were also asked about the ease or difficulty with which they carried out their additional roles of helping organisations in their local areas to develop their volunteering capacity and brokering young people into volunteering opportunities. When asked towards the beginning of receiving their funding, 52 per cent of vinvolved teams said that helping organisations to develop their volunteering capacity was quite easy, and seven per cent said this was very easy. Thirty-one per cent said this was quite difficult, and seven per cent said very difficult. When asked again towards the end of their funding, vinvolved teams were more positive about this: 59 per cent said this was quite easy and 10 per cent said very easy, while 29 per cent found this quite difficult. Towards the beginning of their v funding, 57 per cent of vinvolved teams found it quite easy, and 21 per cent found it very easy, to broker young people into volunteering opportunities. Towards the end of their funding, again the majority of vinvolved teams said that they had found it very (26%) or quite easy (55%) to broker young people into volunteering opportunities, while 18 per cent found this quite difficult and one per cent very difficult. This indicates improvement over time as well as an overall level of success at brokering young people into opportunities.

There were differing levels of difficulty reported creating opportunities depending on the nature of the opportunity however (full-time, part-time or short-term) with perhaps unsurprisingly full-time opportunities reported to be the most difficult to create.
So clearly a key, but perhaps unsurprising impact on organisations that made up the grant funded network to take from this chapter is that their capacity to involve a greater number of young people as volunteers, increased. Discussion on the process for recruitment and retention of volunteers is focussed on in Chapter 6.

5.3.3 Quality of volunteering

Another key impacts that was discussed with the grant recipients, both in the case studies and the survey, was whether their involvement with v had supported them to provide better quality volunteering opportunities

Caution should be exercised when interpreting the results however, and they may be better understood in terms of distance travelled. So for example, organisations may have reported that they were able to improve the quality of their youth volunteering programme, but the actual impact this has on an organisation that was already very experienced at supporting volunteers compared to an organisation that had never involved volunteers before, is likely to be marked.

Certainly the grant recipient survey indicated a reasonably high level of improved quality of the volunteering support that could be offered to young people by organisations. Eighty-six per cent of organisations in the grant recipient survey said that the project improved the way they handle youth volunteering, and 84 per cent said the project improved their workforces skills; 83 per cent said that the project increased awareness of volunteering within their organisation; 78 per cent said that the project improved their support for volunteers; and 73 per cent said that it improved their procedures for volunteer management.

The interviews with staff in the qualitative case study also indicated that improved volunteering processes had been an organisational impact. Organisations pushed to upgrade their volunteer management processes to absorb and cater for new groups once they obtained v funding.

Private sector organisations, involved due to their role in Match Fund also noted that the quality of the volunteering opportunities they offered young people improved. Their relationship with v could allow for greater depth of support for young volunteers.

A key aim of v has been to improve the quality of volunteering opportunities in specific relation to the Russell Commission recommendations. One of the strategic ways in which v has tried to achieve this is through the implementation of Reach, which is explored below.

Reach

Reach is a quality assurance accreditation system, established by Youth Action Network (an independent charity), which was rolled out across v’s funded network. v contracted Youth Action Network to turn their existing hard-copy Reach toolkit into an online self-assessment tool, and for their staff to provide tailored capacity building support to the funded network, to enable them to work towards achieving recognised organisational
quality standards for youth action and engagement. This contract flowed from the Russell Commission recommendations around improving quality assurance and v's commitment to ensure that funded organisations delivered a safe, high quality and well-managed volunteering experience for all young people engaged in their work.

involved teams and involved projects were expected to gain Reach Achieved status. The process was based on an online assessment tool, with projects evidencing their ability to reach the expected quality levels in a range of core modules relating to youth volunteering.

All but two of the grant funded organisations obliged to obtain Reach accreditation did so. In the grant recipient survey recipients from involved teams and involved projects were asked what kind of impact the Reach quality assurance framework had on their project. Around three-quarters (74%) of recipients thought that the Reach framework had a positive impact on their project, while 9 per cent thought it had some positive and some negative impact, 15 per cent thought it had no impact at all, and 1 per cent thought it had a negative impact.23

Therefore Reach was generally positive in impact and should have improved the quality of the volunteering processes and policies in place among the teams and projects charged with implementing it. However there was also evidence from the case studies of a duality regarding Reach which can be used to explore why it may have been described as having no impact or a mixed impact by some. Reach could be perceived to cement quality standards, but also in some cases it was felt to be a burden for organisations, whose main thrust did not involve volunteering. They were in effect becoming 'over qualified' in terms of the volunteering processes they put in place, when they did not feel this was justified given the level of volunteering they supported. Organisations that already had quality procedures in place could also note that Reach added additional workloads without actually changing or improving their practice. So the grant recipient survey data tends to indicate an overall positive impact from Reach, though reasons have also been provided that explain why it may have been perceived in less positive terms by a small number of projects.

It is also worth noting that Youth Action Network (YAN), the organisation responsible for establishing and administering Reach, also reported a number of challenges. This included organisations not appreciating its value, seeing YAN as an additional monitoring body, and confusion as to its purpose, with some being unclear whether it was an accreditation or self-assessment tool. YAN also felt that its contractual arrangement with v to support the implementation of Reach had led to sometimes tense and fractious relationships with the organisations completing the accreditation; in some instances they felt they were perceived as the ‘Reach police’ and they felt that their relationship with some organisations had suffered as a result.

23 One per cent of recipients said they had not used the Reach framework
Supporting young volunteers

Another way with which to assess the extent to which an impact of v was increased quality, is to assess the type of support that the v funded network provide to young people.

In the grant recipient survey organisations were asked how they support young volunteers. The most common way of supporting young volunteers, by around three-quarters (78%) of organisations, was that each volunteer has a named supervisor, manager, or advisor. Over half of the organisations supported young volunteers through training (59%) and by having a general manager or advisor available (56%). In 47 per cent of organisations volunteers receive feedback through a volunteer group, and 47 per cent of organisations had volunteer development plans, while in 45 per cent of organisations each volunteer had their own mentor or buddy. Twenty per cent of organisations supported young volunteers in some other way. Sixty-nine per cent of organisations said that some of these ways of supporting young volunteers had been put in place specifically for this project. In the appendix different types of support offered, by funding stream is outlined. Organisations from the different funding streams supported young volunteers in broadly similar ways, with a few exceptions. A smaller proportion of v involved teams (22%) had a system whereby each volunteer had their own mentor or buddy than in organisations from other funding streams (between 50% and 56%). Similarly, 40 per cent of v involved teams offered training to volunteers, compared with between 53 and 74 per cent of organisations in other funding streams. Given the brokerage role that v involved teams have (rather than directly supporting young volunteers longer term) these findings are unsurprising.

Amongst organisations that said they support volunteers in ‘other’ ways, the most common response was that they had general support mechanisms in place (for example, counsellors or volunteer handbooks). Other answers given include employment related support or guidance, and networking opportunities (for example, social events).

Thus over two thirds of the funded network had introduced additional support for young people as a direct impact of the v-funded activity that they undertook. In Chapter 4, the experiences of v volunteers were explored and they expressed how important such support could be to ensure they have meaningful volunteering opportunities and were able to gain the accreditation and skills they were aiming for. That the level of support available increased over time and due to their v-funded project, indicates that involvement in the v-funded network did act to increase the quality of support available to young people when they volunteered via these organisations, which in turn had impacts on young people.

5.3.4 Youth involvement

Another key organisational impact was the extent to which young people were able to become actively involved, or that youth involvement improved/increased due to being part of the v-funded network. Caution again has to be exercised in interpreting these results – organisations funded by v may have already had in place a range of processes for involving young people, or have been youth-led, before they obtained funds from v.
However there were cases where it was clear and explicit that as a direct result of the v funding, organisations felt their capacity and ability to engage young people had improved. For example in the grant recipient survey, eighty per cent of organisations thought that their v-funded project increased the role young people have in shaping services their organisation provides.

In the grant recipient survey organisations were asked ways in which they involve young people. Ninety-six per cent of organisations said that young people had been consulted on aspects of their project. Ninety-three per cent of recipients agreed that young people had taken part in activities planned for them, that young people had reached joint decisions with staff about the project, and that young people had decided aspects of the project.

There was also an indication from the qualitative case studies that youth involvement could have become increasingly embedded within an organisation as a result of their v volunteering activities with for example young people involved in governance and having an on-going role on the board:

'We can skill the young people up so they’re competent to be involved, genuinely, in the decision making. So that’s changing the organisation and changing the young people and giving them opportunities so they build their confidence.' (involved project staff)

In Chapter 6 the implications in terms of involving young people are outlined, and this is accompanied by further discussion of the ways in which organisations involved young people. Of particular note in terms of impact however is that involving young people in all of the ways listed in the grant recipient survey question increased across the two waves. Although as noted before, it is difficult to directly attribute this increase directly to v alone, it is significant that all forms of activities involving young people were increasing over time and clearly an important impact in terms of increasing youth involvement and leadership via v funded projects.

Involving young people in organisations was in itself noted as a positive impact in the case study interviews. Young people were described as being able to make a distinctive contribution bring an ‘energy’ into the organisation, with project staff using language like ‘energy’, vibrancy’, ‘colour’, ‘sparkle’ to describe the particular contribution of young people.

Finally being involved in v could also work to increase the profile of organisations and awareness of organisations among young people. In the grant recipient survey, eighty-three per cent of organisations said that the v-funded project increased young people’s understanding of what their organisation is about, and eighty per cent said that it improved their organisation’s image amongst young people. Whilst this may not have been a pronounced impact for organisations that were already well known by and working with young people, for those with less previous experience in this area, it could have opened up new activities, target groups, and opportunities for future engagement with young
people in significant ways. As one respondent (a staff member from a vinvolved team) noted in the case studies:

‘I think the biggest success [of the programme] is that there is so many more young people in organisations who haven’t had young volunteers before and that the organisations are happy to have v volunteers. It gives them some credibility when they are applying for their own funding and that, to say we are working in partnership with v.’

5.3.5 Service provision

The impact that being part of the v funded network had on organisations in terms of their service provision, day-to-day management and sustainability, was also discussed in the case studies and in the grant recipient survey (see table 5.8).

In terms of direct increases in service provision, 87 per cent of respondents in the grant recipients survey said that their v funded project increased their current service provision for young people. This is to be expected given that they were now funded to involve more young people. However this finding is also slightly at odds with the finding from the qualitative case studies, where the focus on impacts was often on the impacts on the young volunteers themselves, with less tangible impacts in terms of actual increased service provision (beyond that of the v activity) being identified as a result of the v funding. It may be that this was referring to their capacity to engage young people as volunteers (and thus extend provision) rather than additional services being provided.

Community and inter-agency working was also noted as an impact, with 81 per cent of organisations in the grant recipient survey noting that the project increased their level of engagement with the local community, 79 per cent saying it improved their relationship with other organisations working in the area, and 62 per cent saying that it increased their level of engagement with charities or voluntary organisations.

This was a pronounced impact discussed in the qualitative case studies, with broader partnerships or connections with other groups being noted. Being part of the v network, staff felt, could help connect the youth sector and the way they were able to signpost services to young people, particularly when the relationship with the vinvolved teams and other v funded organisations worked well. Practice in terms of how organisations can best be supported to work with each other is explored in Chapter 6. The finding here is that organisations tended to report increased joint working and better links with the wider community as a result of their v funded project, thus improving service provision capacity.

However more negative organisation impacts could also be reported in terms of increased workload and bureaucracy following on from being part of the v funded network. For example, 87 per cent of grant recipients said that the programme increased the amount of paperwork that their organisation had to do. In the interim report a number of tensions and difficulties that grant recipients experienced in terms of implementing their v funded programme were reported. This included the pressure of monitoring their activities and
high levels of paper work. How these issues have developed as the v programme has matured is explored in Chapter 6 and the specific process issues are not outlined again, where the focus is on the overarching impact of the v programme. However it is important to note that there could be additional burdens and difficulties encountered by projects, as well as benefits and positive outcomes, due to their v activities being funded.

5.3.6 Sustainability
In terms of impact, sustainability was also an area where impacts on projects were less pronounced. For example in the grant recipient survey forty-nine per cent of organisations said that the project improved their ability to secure funding for other work in the future, while only 35 per cent said that it improved their sustainability and ability to plan ahead (4% and 3% of organisations respectively said that the project made these worse)

Examining the case study interviews with project staff may indicate why this is reported. Whilst they were glad that the v funding had allowed an expansion of provision both to involve young people and to involve volunteers within the organisation, without continued funding to manage and support the volunteering it was felt that this gain would automatically be lost. Therefore the organisation would actually have to contract, which appeared to have a negative impact, despite the overall positive impacts experienced alongside the v funded volunteering project as they undertook it:

‘If there’s a down side to [the project] having this success is that it has encouraged our dependency on volunteers. So the withdrawal of that money will have a major impact on us as an organisation. And people talk about sustainability, but volunteering in its own right doesn’t generate income, and never will do, so we need government-backed organisations like v to continue to support us.’ (Match fund, project staff)

Grant recipients were explicitly asked about the expected sustainability of projects post funding. Across all funding schemes, 59 per cent of projects were going to continue once v funding came to an end. Unsurprisingly this figure varied greatly across the different funding schemes: 89 per cent of Match Fund projects, 71 per cent of v cashpoint projects, and 64 per cent of v involved projects were going to continue, while 26 per cent of v talentyear projects and 21 per cent of v involved teams were planning to do so (see table 5.10)
Table 5.10 Proportion of projects that were going to continue once v funding comes/came to an end, by funding type (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding type</th>
<th>Match Fund</th>
<th>vinvolved teams</th>
<th>vinvolved projects</th>
<th>vcashpoint</th>
<th>vtalentyear</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>325%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These figures are based on a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative rather than significant.

** Percentages are not shown for groups of less than 30 people.

Of those projects that were going to continue once v funding finished, 45 per cent planned to use their own funds to continue the project, and 11 per cent planned to receive another grant from v. Sixty-three per cent of recipients that planned to continue the project planned to receive funding from another organisation. Of these, 45 per cent planned to receive funding from another charitable organisation (for example, the National Lottery), 18 per cent from the private sector, 17 per cent from local council or local government funding, six per cent from central government (for example, through the National Citizens Service), and five per cent from a school, college or university.

When asked how the project will differ once v funding came to an end, the most common answer (mentioned by 41% of continuing projects) was that it would be the same but on a smaller scale, while 22 per cent said that it would be the same but on a bigger scale. Nineteen per cent said that the project would target different groups in the future. Ten per cent said that there would be no differences, while 25 per cent said that it would be different in other ways. These ‘other’ answers included that the project will have activities with a different emphasis or method, that they will have different volunteering opportunities (for example offering full-time or part-time opportunities). A small proportion said that in the future young people would be classed as employees rather than as volunteers. Almost all (96%) of the projects that did not expect to continue would have liked to continue with their projects.

Grant recipients that said their projects would not be continuing after funding ceased and who said they would have liked to continue with their projects were asked what would have helped them to continue to run the project. The large majority (95%) of these recipients said that the thing that would have helped would be more funding (whether from v or from another source). Three per cent said that more time or people to run the project would have helped, and one per cent said that more training would have helped.

Amongst the organisations that planned to continue with the v-funded project after v funding came to an end the retention of volunteers could be judged to be relatively successful. Thirty-five per cent said that all or nearly all volunteers from the v-funded project in question had continued or planned to continue volunteering on the project once the funding came to an end. Twenty-five per cent said that more than half of the
volunteers would continue volunteering on the project after the end of funding, and 32 per cent said less than half would continue. Eight per cent of organisations said that no volunteers would continue volunteering on the project once funding from v came to an end.

Organisations were also asked how many of their volunteers would still be volunteering for their organisation, even if this was for another project once the v funding comes to an end. Sixteen per cent of organisations said that all or nearly all volunteers will still be (or are still) volunteering for their organisation, including on a different project. Twenty per cent said that more than half would still be volunteering for their organisation, 42 per cent said less than half would be, and 21 per cent said that none would be. The proportion of organisations that were retaining less than half or none of their volunteers from the v-funded project once v-funding finishes was higher amongst vinvolved teams (with 43% retaining less than half and 32% retaining none), vtalentyear projects (53% and 22%), and vcashpoint projects (25% and 39%).

Funded activities were also asked about the level at which they planned to work with young volunteers in the future at a same or different level than currently. Amongst organisations that had received funding from v, half (50%) said that their organisation planned to work with young volunteers at a reduced level in the future. This figure was particularly high amongst vinvolved teams (86% saying they planned to work with young volunteers at a reduced level) and was particularly low amongst Match Fund recipients (18%, with 38% planning to work with young volunteers at the same level and 43% at an increased level). Overall 24 per cent of organisations said that they planned to work with young volunteers at the same level as they currently do in the future, and 26 per cent said they planned to work with young volunteers at an increased level. Given that vinvolved teams tended to be part of organisations that’s core aim is to engage volunteers, and some of the other funded organisations were not, this may indicate a good level of sustainability with some organisations that had not had a core mission to involve young volunteers previously now asserting that they would do so at the same level or an increased level than before.

So sustainability was mixed but there are indications that v funded organisations would continue to involve young people as volunteers. It also differed markedly by scheme, with vinvolved teams reporting the most likely to reduce the level of young volunteers they worked with once their funding ceased.

5.3.7 Marketing and awareness raising

A final impact that being part of the v-funded network could have on organisations was the extent to which this increased awareness of their project and ability to disseminate activities. In the grant recipient survey, 83 per cent of organisations said that the v-funded project increased young people’s understanding of what their organisation is about, and 80 per cent said that it improved their organisation’s image amongst young people. In addition, 52 per cent thought that their project improved their organisation’s skills or knowledge in marketing and publicity, a cross-cutting impact that indicates increased skills for staff, as well as improved ability to market their project.
Grant recipients were also asked about the impact the national campaigns had on their project or volunteers although here there appeared to be a disjuncture, with about half (51 per cent) indicating that the national campaigns had no impact, just over a third (39 per cent) saying there was mainly a positive impact and 10 per cent saying a mix of positive and negative impacts.

Those that said the national campaigns had a mainly positive (or some positive and some negative) impact on their project or volunteers were asked what kind of impacts these were. Thirty-four per cent of those asked this question said that the campaigns raised the awareness of, or the profile of, their project or of volunteering more broadly. Sixteen per cent said that the campaigns led to a change in the culture of volunteering or that they made volunteers feel part of something larger, while 14 per cent said that they increased the number of young people applying to volunteer, 11 per cent said that they gave more young people the opportunity to volunteer, nine per cent said they led to more support from other volunteers, seven per cent said they increased the confidence of volunteers. Other answers given by a smaller proportion of grant recipients include that the national campaigns impacted on young people by encouraging them to gain awards through volunteering, and that they had an impact on the number of people from hard-to-reach groups that volunteered.

So although an impact at the local level seemed to be an increased level of awareness from young people about what projects could offer, and an increased ability for projects to market themselves, they did not associate entirely positive impacts with the national campaigns that also ran, and a high proportion noted that these campaigns had no impact on them (which may have been expected given the national campaigns were targeted at young people directly).

Section summary

Key impacts that organisations identified were:

- Increased quantity of young people involved as volunteers
- Improved quality and support for young people due to the measures put in place due to being part of the network (including Reach)
- Increased involvement of young people and youth-led activities (the level reported increased across the two waves of the grant recipient survey)
- Increased networking and communication with other organisations
- Increased workloads and paper work

‘Distance travelled’ for organisations is important to consider however – for organisations that had previously not involved young people and/or volunteers, these impacts would be more pronounced than for those that already were established in doing so.

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A similar question was asked regarding negative impacts, however too few recipients were asked this question to report the answers given.
• There appeared to be only a limited impact of \textbf{v} national campaigns on organisations.

5.4 Youth volunteering sector

In the previous sections of this chapter, key impacts of \textbf{v} or their funded activities via the grant funded network have been explored, that affected individuals, communities and organisations. In this section the focus shifts on the broader youth and volunteering sector.

Much of the focus of the evaluation has been on gathering data directly from people affected by \textbf{v} – young volunteers, staff, organisations. As such there is less direct data referring to sector impacts, although the stakeholder workshops and interviews do provide a depth of understanding. There are also impacts that can be inferred from the overall impact of \textbf{v} already explored – the high volume of new opportunities created for example, and increased level of professionalised support offered to young volunteers as part of the \textbf{v} programme.

In Chapter 2 the context of \textbf{v} was outlined and it is important to revisit this once more – \textbf{v} developed following on from volunteering programmes such as MV and as such came with particular expectations into an existing youth volunteering sectoral context. In this section, discernable impacts identified by sector stakeholders are outlined.

5.4.1 Impacts on sector - Stakeholders

In the interim report it was discussed that there were tensions during the initial set up of \textbf{v}, with fears that the learning and expertise from previous volunteering programmes, may not be built upon, and suspicion towards new ways of working and new partner organisations that \textbf{v} represented.

Two waves of stakeholder interviews were conducted during the evaluation and interestingly it appears that similar fears are emerging once more in terms of ensuring that, should \textbf{v} not continue as a grant giving body, the expertise and knowledge of \textbf{v} not be lost.

Though stakeholders could find it difficult to conceptualise the impact \textbf{v} has had on the sector, the following key impacts did emerge:

• Professionalization of youth volunteering
• Volunteering increasingly linked to personal development rather than social impacts
• Youth engagement and empowerment agenda more explicitly linked to youth volunteering

For example, the youth-led ethos was described as a ‘big impact’. There was a sense that \textbf{v} has effectively promoted youth-led action and that this overlapped with the youth sector. For example \textbf{v} cashpoint recipients described that young people feel ‘empowered’ by the
experience of setting up and managing their own activities, making them more valuable than regular youth club activities, to them.

However there was less certainty about the impact of v on the concept of ‘volunteering’. It was felt that young people are now more focused on employability benefits than before, and v has created a more ‘consumer’ version of volunteering in which volunteers ‘pick and choose’ based on their aspirations, not on the needs of the community. As volunteers become more ‘picky’ there were concerns reported by stakeholders that important roles could be left unfilled. This consternation however would depend on the ideological stance held regarding the nature and purpose of volunteering – it could be described by stakeholders as a ‘positive’ as well as ‘negative’ impact that v brought a new focus and value to volunteering in terms of ‘personal development’.

Those who felt positive about the development couched it in terms of holistic personal development (generating the different forms of capital explored in section 5.2) rather than a narrow employment outcome focus. Given the current context of high youth unemployment, and v’s focus on supporting youth employability, it would also not be a negative impact if v’s model of youth volunteering related to increased employability for young people, arguably at the expense of the services provided.

Another related impact, to what could be described as a ‘consumer approach’ to youth volunteering development, was also that the sector noted they had to update methods, expectations and skills alongside this.

Thus there seemed to be a paradigmatic issue at stake in terms of the impact v has had on the volunteering sector. For those stakeholders in support of a professionalisation of youth volunteering, with an emphasis on the personal development of young people and tangible benefits and impacts being generated via a structured programme, v had assisted in generating these positive impacts within the sector.

For those who were not in support of this development, and felt that this made youth volunteering overly consumerist, professionalised and focussed on the benefit of the individual volunteer rather than wider community, that v had played a part in the youth volunteering sector developing in this way was viewed as a negative impact.

Certainly there was a sense that v had brought major players together around volunteering, including new partners, which may have helped consolidate the sector. That v has supported the development of a network of volunteering involving organisations was also identified as an impact which is explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

The importance of facilitating new links in this way was also evidenced by the qualitative case studies. According to project workers, delivery in partnerships seemed to work well, with particular emphasis placed on partnerships that brought together different players from within and outside of the youth volunteering environment. For example, a local volunteering infrastructure agency successfully partnered with an established volunteer-
involving organisation, enabling different skills in opportunity creation and opportunity placement to be brought together.

The concern towards the end of the evaluation has been found to be that the sectoral impacts outlined in this section could be lost in the future and should be capitalised on – though the direction this capitalisation takes is likely to be influenced by whichever paradigm of youth volunteering practice wins out politically.

**Section Summary**

Key impact on the sector included:

- Professionalisation of youth volunteering.
- Volunteering increasingly linked to personal development.
- Youth engagement and empowerment agenda more explicitly linked to youth volunteering.

Whether this was viewed as a positive or negative impact related to the paradigm of youth volunteering being supported.

### 5.5 Economic value of impacts

Having in this chapter outlined the key impacts of \( \text{v} \) that could be identified (with a particular emphasis on the young volunteers and the impact of engaging in \( \text{v} \)-funded activities via the network) the final section focuses on the overall cost benefit of the programme. Essentially this section considers whether the impact of \( \text{v} \) represents value for money, using the recognised Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology.

The different programmes funded under \( \text{v} \)'s auspices had varying levels of support and expectations from volunteers. In Table 5.11 the different levels of funding for particular programmes are shown. Overall whilst the average cost was barely £100 for each volunteering opportunity, this was much higher for the full-time \( \text{vTalentYear} \) volunteers. These costs have been calculated using the actual amount \( \text{v} \) spent on each programme in grants and do not take into account any other costs or any grants not taken up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.11</th>
<th>Levels of support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row Description</td>
<td>Number of opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match fund</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinvolved projects</td>
<td>137,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinvolved teams</td>
<td>283,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vTalentYear</td>
<td>73,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (incl flagship)</td>
<td>497,33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The types of individuals who were found on each programme also differ to some degree (see some results in Table 5.11 and the discussion in Chapter 3). In particular, the full-time volunteers who were part of the vtalentyear programme were more likely to be male than on the other programmes, even if they were still a minority on this scheme. They were also older. The vinvolved projects appeared to have a higher than average proportion who said that they had a disability of some kind – at least among the individual monitoring survey respondents. These differences are an important context in looking at the benefits of each scheme. The schemes did not necessarily cover similar groups of young people, and ideally such differences (and with it the concept of ‘distance travelled’) needs to be factored into the consideration of impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.12</th>
<th>Characteristics of those on v volunteering programmes (individual monitoring)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age (years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a disability (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 5.12 we show these key outcomes (from the individual monitoring data), but broken down by four of the main v types of scheme. The vtalentyear schemes delivered the highest rates in terms of personal skills (greater time management and team working self-evaluations) and increased levels of confidence. The Match Fund schemes seemed to deliver most in terms of moving into work, whilst there were fewer differences in rates of starting university – although this proportion was much reduced for those doing the vtalentyear programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.13</th>
<th>Benefits from v volunteering programmes, for individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of change</td>
<td>v Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving into work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to University (not just ‘returning’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better time management*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better team working*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In each case, this represents only those strongly agreeing with this statement.

25 This relates to benefactor data extracted at 30 March 2011.
It is possible to calculate the size of monetary benefits, and hence SROI ratios, for each of these programmes. However, it is also important to remember the SROI guidance advises not making simple comparisons between programmes with different SROI ratios. It is also not really possible to provide valuations of the value of volunteering to service users. It is possible to know that those taking part in the vtalentyear programmes would have generally spent over 1300 hours in a full-time volunteering position. If this service is simply valued at the level of the minimum wage (£5.80 from October 2009 until October 2010), that would form an additional benefit to be added of around £7,540. It would be preferable to have measures of the outputs generated by volunteering rather than simply measuring the inputs, but this estimate provides at least one proxy measure of total benefit to beneficiaries, and one that exceeds the cost of the full-time volunteering by a factor of approaching 1.7:1 alone.

There are a number of steps to calculating the final costs and benefits of the volunteering programmes. Table 5.13 illustrates a simple calculation based on the five areas of individual benefit outlined above – moving into work or going (not returning) to university, and perceived improvements in time management and in team working. These have been selected as they have been given easy quantification via the SROI project database (figures accessed in 2010). The values cited have been based on research by the SROI network, reflecting opportunity costs or the costs of alternative provision to achieve the same ends.

To these monetary values we must also add some allowance for how far the outcome was the result of v, or instead might have happened anyway – or attribution. We have proceeded very cautiously, and assumed that only 10 per cent of the changes in labour market status may be attributed to v, and half of the changes in perceived skills. This is to reflect the fact that many of the young volunteers would have volunteered for only a short amount of their time across the programme, so a 10 per cent attribution rate seemed robust and realistic. Alternative (higher) assumptions would quickly result in higher levels of overall benefit being calculated, and would be justified on the basis of responses to the grant recipient survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of change</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Attribution factor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moving into work</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>£4300</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to University</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>£9250</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better time management</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>£853</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better team working</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>£524</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monetised benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total costs per opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SROI ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.14 Monetised benefits from v volunteering programmes, for individuals
With a cautious overall benefit of £635 per volunteering opportunity, and an average cost per opportunity of £109, this implies an SROI ratio of 5.8. This calculation clearly leaves out some of the key changes in measures of social capital and other skills development, which we know have seen significant increases following participation in a volunteering programme.

This overall figure is sensitive to assumptions about the attribution of any changes to volunteering. If we instead assume that 20 per cent of the movements into paid work or going to university may be attributed to volunteering, then the SROI ratio would increase to 9.3. Conversely an attribution rate of only 5 per cent for these changes in economic status would generate an SROI ratio of 4.1.

To this total could also be added wider benefits for the community, the immediate beneficiaries and any gains accruing to organisations as a result of them supporting volunteering. This figure is also based on the specific programmes funded by volunteering, and does not take into account any wider benefits from having an organisation like volunteering that is able to promote volunteering in general.

5.5.1 Caveats and limitations

There is often interest in the size of the SROI ratio for different organisations. By any standards of current methodology, the benefits delivered by volunteering have a high rate of return. Restricting attention to the five measures above generates a robust SROI ratio of 6:1. If changes in social capital, and in gains to different organisations, plus gains to direct beneficiaries (where relevant) were factored in then the SROI ratio could potentially become very high indeed. However as already noted actual direct attribution and measurement of many impacts is problematic, although some SROI may attempt to include them. In doing so it can be easy to create a very high level of SROI that may not necessarily be robust.

An important lesson from SROI is the need to embed a system of measurement into organisations that provides regular data on how different programmes are performing (Arvidson et al. 2010). The individual monitoring data generated through volunteering are a good example of how the desire for measurement enables better tools to be introduced. The same may be said of questionnaires attempting to measure the impacts on organisations and local communities, although the valuation of such benefits is still at fairly rudimentary stages in terms of actual measurements. This is one reason why the evaluation did not collect data on wider community benefit – with feedback from the summative evaluation indicating that monitoring requirements were felt to be burdensome then additional monitoring requirements on community benefit would have only added to this.

It is important to note that the benefits of volunteering noted here, have been assumed to be short-term as this is a robust way in which to make claims regarding value. Gains to starting work, for instance, have been looked at in terms of its value in the first year. For some people, such a move will deliver benefits far into the future, and perhaps a degree of cumulative benefit if they progress well within their field, however to argue a robust SROI it would be difficult to assert assumed longevity of outcomes.
The SROI here has also not looked in detail at the question of ‘distance travelled’ by volunteers. Each change, such as in confidence, has been valued equally whether or not the person was already relatively confident or was instead from a more vulnerable background associated with low levels of confidence. The latter change might be more valuable, both in terms of organisational objectives and in economic terms, but in this analysis they are counted equally as there is a lack of data to ascertain comparisons across time.

As even the staff of funded projects noted, taking into account the overall impact would be likely to generate high returns:

‘I mean, it costs money to involve volunteers, doesn’t it? It’s not free to involve volunteers. But in truth if you could cost it as social return..... for every pound spend, the amount of social return, must be absolutely immense.’ (involved team project staff)

Section summary

- Overall funded activities generate a robust SROI of 1 to 5.8 in relation to direct impact on young volunteers.
- SROI rates are highly sensitive to factors such as attribution. This figure has been arrived at with a robust attribution rate of 10 per cent applied. It can increase or decrease markedly depending on this, but attribution is difficult to tangibly measure.
- Something about inability to quantify wider societal impacts or more detailed analysis of personal impacts or longevity of impacts

5.6 Implications

Implications for

- Conceptualise impact of volunteering on young people in a manner that illustrates how interconnected each impact can be, to illustrate that volunteering can have unintended impacts.
- Given the success of Reach and increased youth involvement among funded projects should capitalise on their expertise in these areas and offer training, support and advice to volunteer involving organisations in the future.

Implications for government

- Given the challenges organisations face measuring social impact government should consider endorsing a set of methods or evidence base with which this could be done comparably and robustly.
- Ontological capital is closely linked to well-being and the value of volunteering to create a myriad of impacts is closely aligned to the Big Society agenda.

Implications for the volunteering sector
• Implementing new systems of quality and procedures can create increased workload and tensions, however they ultimately lead to positive impacts (for volunteers, organisations and the community) and therefore there should be a culture of supporting such procedures and openness to new ideas.
6 Implications for volunteering processes

The previous chapters of this report have provided a broad contextual overview of youth volunteering in England and the role of v, a detailed picture of the profile of the v volunteers and a rich understanding of their experiences, and identified important evidence of v’s impact in a number of areas. This final chapter draws on all of this to begin to identify the implications of the v programme in terms of learning for the future. This is focussed on six areas:

- Different ways young volunteers have been recruited and engaged by the network
- Learning in terms of monitoring youth volunteering
- v’s communication and accessibility to young people
- Engaging a network of volunteer involving organisations
- How well v is perceived to have funded and supported volunteering opportunities and carried out their role
- Stakeholders perceptions on the future of v

As well as drawing on evidence from the previous chapters, the chapter will also introduce further data from the grant recipient survey.

6.1 Working with v

The interim report for the evaluation provided initial findings on grant recipients' experience of working with v and their views on the support they had received. This section further updates the evidence base, in terms of how the grant funded network reported working with v, and assesses how the situation has changed in the last 18 months.

The grant recipient survey provides data on the levels of satisfaction with different elements of support from v, by recipients of each funding scheme. The results displayed below indicate that individuals receiving vcashpoint funding were more positive about all of the support they received from v than organisations receiving other v funding. However figures are also fairly positive overall, with for example, the majority of grant recipients being very (30%) or fairly (53%) satisfied with the amount of contact that their project had with staff at v.

Table 6.1 below summarises the grant recipients’ views on the various aspects of v’s support:
# Table 6.1 Satisfaction with various aspects of v’s support to projects, by funding type (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding type</th>
<th>Match Fund</th>
<th>v involved teams</th>
<th>v involved projects</th>
<th>v cashpoint</th>
<th>v talentyear</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The amount of contact that projects had with staff at v</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The amount of support that projects had from staff at v in order to understand and meet the requirements of their v funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for staff to feed back their experiences to v</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for staff to feed into developments within v</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Getting information from v about other volunteering projects they fund</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Getting information from v about other types of work they do</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These figures are based on a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative rather than significant.
2 Figures exclude people who answered ‘Don’t know’, and so base sizes vary slightly for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.
- = 0

Implications for understanding future practice

Formative evaluation of v
Data from the qualitative case studies on how vcashpoint recipients described the support they had received from v compared to other funding schemes may provide some insight into the reasons for the survey results. vcashpoint recipients spoke about v’s procedures very favourably, reporting that they would have been put off applying if it was not so clearly laid out and they had not received so much support:

‘[the application process] was really easy. I thought it was quite funny, it was very, very informal as if they were making an effort for it not to be...I can see where they’re coming from in trying to get young people without skills to apply.’ (vcashpoint young volunteer/grant recipient)

Conversely, although other grant recipients did compare v’s support and processes favourably with other sponsors, some were less positive. This may have been due to differing levels of expectations and experience among grant recipient organisations in terms of managing grants such as that provided by v. For organisations well-versed in such activities, the same process that was viewed as onerous by others, could be described as simple. Furthermore, because of the different experience levels of grant recipient organisations (in terms of managing volunteering, engaging young people, and/or managing grants) they may have required differing levels of support from v to complete their project successfully. It could be inferred that because of the homogenous nature of vcashpoint recipients (all were young people) that v was particularly successful in effectively tailoring their support to the level of need the young applicants had, which may account for their highly positive views identified in the survey.26

A second possible explanation relates to the structure of the different funding programmes. Given that vcashpoint funding was provided directly to the volunteer, there was a clear and straightforward link between v and the project. This allowed recipients to receive very personal support:

‘[Project Support Officer has] been really helpful, she was asking me...how the project is going, how I felt about it what could she possibly do to help me and stuff like that. It’s been good to just know that someone’s there to help if I really needed it.’

(vcashpoint young volunteer/grant recipient)

In contrast, v-funded organisations operated under a different structure with potentially more layers of organisational or management processes between v and the volunteering project. Explored at length in the interim report, project workers described communication as being potentially difficult. This was especially if changes in staffing occurred or relevant communication were not passed along, when the grant holder was not actually involved in the implementation of the project, for example. Consequently, communication from v did not always feed through to project workers via organisational processes as it should, though this was seen as having improved over time, as the following quote illustrates:

26 A separate case study on vcashpoint has also been developed to accompany the report.
‘1: *our biggest problems with them is that we weren’t getting the information through, because they insisted on sending it to the grant holder [who] is a busy man…so him constantly having to forward on emails and information and whatnot is just unrealistic. So now they send it directly to you, don’t they?*

2: *Yeah, and I send it on.*

1: *But communication is on and off. Communicating with all the **v** involved Teams at once, they’re reasonably okay at, but in terms of individual teams, every time I phone up they don’t know who we are.*

2: *No, you’ve got to explain who you are and what your issues are, and remind them of conversations you’ve had’* (involved team project workers)

The quote above may also indicate an ongoing tension identified in the interim report relating to a lack of understanding from the funded network as to the scale of **v** and size of the staff team. Grant recipients often understandably seek a personalised approach from **v**, without realising this may be impossible given the resources **v** has and the number of grants they manage.

Thus ensuring that information flows operate effectively (both within organisations and to grant giving bodies) is an important learning point for the future in funded volunteering programmes. This is especially so when the grant holder may not be the person actually delivering the activity.

So too is the need to recognise that different organisations may have different capacities and experiences in terms of ability to manage grants and projects, and therefore have differing levels of support needs. Screening support needs from the outset or asking projects to identify where they may require additional support (whilst making clear this will not affect their funding) would also be important for future programmes.

Certainly, the evidence points to **v**cashpoint as having been particularly successful in implementation and a model of youth volunteering that may benefit from further implementation.

### 6.1.1 Learning for volunteer organisations

This evaluation has drawn on a range of experiences of involving young people in volunteering. The next three sections draw out some wider implications for organisational processes in relation to activities in key areas:

- Creating new opportunities for young people to volunteer
- Establishing quality
- Youth-led and supportive projects

Following this, the chapter focuses on practice in terms of recruiting and engaging young people in volunteering activities.
6.1.2 Creating new opportunities

As explored in Chapter 5, the grant recipient provides evidence on how easy or difficult the organisation found creating different types of volunteering opportunity and in the main found these reported to be fairly easy, although this varied significantly depending on the nature of the opportunity. Perhaps unsurprisingly, creating full-time volunteering opportunities presented the most difficulties to organisations: 17 per cent of organisations found creating full-time volunteering opportunities very difficult and 23 per cent found it quite difficult, while 23 per cent found it quite easy and 12 per cent very easy.\(^{27}\) Comparatively, a majority of organisations found creating part-time volunteering opportunities very (36%) or quite easy (45%), with 10 per cent finding this quite difficult and one per cent finding it very difficult.\(^{28}\) Similar proportions of organisations reported that creating short-term volunteering opportunities for young people was very (39%) or quite easy (40%), with seven per cent finding this quite difficult and one per cent finding it very difficult (Table 6.2).\(^{29}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-time volunteering opportunities</th>
<th>Part-time volunteering opportunities</th>
<th>Short-term volunteering opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite easy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite difficult</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous only - Not applicable</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative data from the in-depth case studies provides further richness to these findings. Echoing the findings above, project staff reported that the hardest opportunities to identify were the longer, full-time positions because this required a significant investment from the host organisations. As these positions also required a significant investment of time from volunteers, project workers noted that it was challenging to develop recruitment and publicity strategies to adequately market such opportunities – in other words it could be more difficult to ‘sell’ the benefits of full-time volunteering when compared to the costs. This may also have been influenced by full-time volunteering being conflated with ‘work like’ activities (particularly due to the time commitment and also level of skill and effort it may take) therefore posing the question to young people would they rather be paid for taking part in the activity than ‘work for free’?  

\(^{27}\) Twenty-six per cent of organisations said that this question was not applicable.

\(^{28}\) Eight per cent of organisations said that this question was not applicable.

\(^{29}\) Fourteen per cent of organisations said that this question was not applicable.
Conversely part-time and short-term opportunities were easier to identify and recruit for as they involved less intensive commitment or investment (and with it risk) than full-time opportunities for both organisations and volunteers.

Grant recipients that said that creating full-time volunteering opportunities was quite or very difficult were asked what the challenges they faced were. The most common answer (given by 39% of those answering this question) was that young people were reluctant to commit to full-time hours (although this answer relates more to recruitment than to creating positions). Twenty-nine per cent said that they found it hard to find placement providers or activities for full-time hours, and 23 per cent said that organisations were unwilling or unable to pay expense costs for full-time hours. Twelve per cent said that young people couldn’t afford it or mentioned that they still needed an income if volunteering full time, while four per cent said that young people risked losing their benefits if they volunteered full-time.

Opportunities meeting expectations
The qualitative case studies provide interesting data on some of the difficulties faced in terms of defining and delivering quality opportunities by project staff.

Firstly as described in Chapter 4 from the point of view of young people, they were more likely to become involved in volunteering if the opportunity represented an interesting activity relating to an existing skill or interest they had. Creating such opportunities - to meet need - was not without a great deal of effort on project workers part however, which should be recognised. For example, young people often wanted to volunteer with animals but the number of such opportunities can be limited. Conversely, a traditional volunteering opportunity such as assisting in a charity shop was less obviously attractive to young people, as identified in Chapter 4, but often where there was a need. Overcoming the challenge of this mismatch between opportunities and expectations involved considerable outreach work, particularly by involved teams, to help local organisations create opportunities that attracted and sustained the interest of young people. However, it was reported that ‘saturation’ point was being reached for some involved teams in finding new opportunities. Furthermore, there was not always sufficient staff time for this to be done as extensively as staff aspired to.

involved teams could be considered particularly significant in terms of supporting the development of both quantity and quality in youth volunteering at a local level. The more time that involved team staff had to work with staff at host volunteering organisations, the more they felt they could raise the quality of the opportunity available by raising awareness among the organisation in terms of what they could reasonably offer, and ensuring a diversity of opportunities were available.

30 A similar question was asked regarding creating part-time and short-term opportunities, however too few recipients were asked this question to report the answers given.
6.1.3 Establishing quality

The impact of Reach, the quality assurance accreditation system rolled out across v’s funded network was explored in Chapter 5. This reflects a clear improvement from attitudes to Reach reported during the interim report, where it was noted that while there had been tangible benefits in terms of embedding good practice, there had also ‘appeared to be confusion regarding the purpose of Reach with it being referred to as an additional monitoring body’ (p. 56). Having developed the tool, and having been contracted by v to support its implementation, there was also concern on the part of Youth Action Network that what was originally a self assessment tool for members of a network had been turned into a quite arduous requirement.

Despite these concerns, and those of YAN, the rolling out of Reach has now been identified as having a welcome impact on the youth volunteering sector in terms of reinforcing good practices and promoting principles of youth-led volunteering. As noted in Chapter 5, almost three-quarters of respondents to the grant recipient survey felt that Reach had a positive impact on projects. Qualitative data from the case studies suggests that as projects became more familiar with Reach the benefits became clearer. Projects noted for example how they had initially thought the idea ‘ridiculous’ but then found it ‘interesting’ and believed it had improved the quality of the projects. While the identified benefits of working within the Reach framework were seen as considerable, there remained a concern about the burden it had placed on staff in some projects and some confusion about whether it was a self-assessment or accreditation tool.

Overall though, Reach seemed to have been successful in providing a quality framework despite the reported misgivings. Another concern reported was that with the ending of the Youth Action Network the learning from Reach could be lost in the future rather than sustainable, as new staff and projects come into place.

Therefore learning for the future could include measures to maintain and protect a similar process as the Reach standards and a system whereby they could be implemented by organisations new to volunteering.

6.1.4 Delivering youth-led opportunities

In order to overcome some of the challenges of creating ‘quality’ opportunities, project staff interviewed as part of the case studies noted that they found it helpful to engage young people in the design of attractive opportunities by, for example, setting up focus groups or consultations with young people, or steering groups with youth ‘experts’. In one case a vinvolved team set up a ‘consultation’ exercise with a local organisation which was having trouble attracting young volunteers:

‘the young people fed in quite a structured session in terms of what they needed to do if they wanted to draw in young volunteers. That was really useful. Out of that has come, as well, a number of other group volunteering roles specifically for groups of young people that are going to pull them in’. (vinvolved team project worker)
Involving young people in this way (to inform the design and set up of volunteering opportunities for them) is another learning point that could be taken forward by volunteer involving organisations.

Respondents in the grant recipient survey were asked at both interview stages (i.e. towards the beginning and towards the end of their v funding) about the specific ways in which young people had been involved in their project’s work (Table 6.3). As outlined in Chapter 5, the number of organisations that involved young people in all of the ways that were asked about increased between these two stages. For example, when asked towards the end of their v funding, 93 per cent of organisations involved young people in publicity, promotion or media campaigns about their project (compared with 85% when asked towards the beginning of their funding), while 91 per cent involved young people in developing activities and target groups for their project or team (compared with 86%). Differences by funding scheme are provided in the appendix (though there did not appear to be a great deal of difference evident). As has been stressed throughout the report, direct attribution is difficult to assert. However it is a clear finding of the grant recipients survey that involving young people increased in each of the ways asked about over the two waves that the survey took place. It would be reasonable to infer that v had directly impacted on this, with for example the implementation of Reach encouraging youth involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Survey wave</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 1</td>
<td>Wave 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In publicity, promotion or media campaigns for the project</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In developing activities and target groups for the project</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In recruiting volunteers</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As part of any Advisory Group for the project</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In identifying the overall project aims or strategy</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In administration or finance matters</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In any other ways?</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td><strong>266</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Figures exclude people who answered 'Don't know', and so base sizes vary slightly for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.

When those that said they involved young people in ‘other’ ways were asked at wave two what these ways of involving young people were, the most common answer was that young people were involved in organising events, while other answers included developing activities and target groups for the project, delivering training or mentoring other volunteers, recruiting staff, and publicity, promotion or media campaigns. Other recipients said that young people were involved as part of an Advisory Group for the project or team, that they were involved in fundraising, that they were involved in fundraising, that they were involved in fundraising, that they were involved in fundraising, that they were involved in fundraising.
identifying the overall aims or strategy of the team or project, and that they were involved in administration or finance matters.

While there was a view amongst project workers that this focus has influenced the broader youth volunteering culture in a positive sense, the emphasis on youth-led approaches may have also played some part in the volunteering opportunities created being focussed on youth interests rather than necessarily responding to perceived community need. For example, youth-led activities would tend towards setting up a fashion show and media skills residential that particularly benefited young people in terms of their development of skills and experiences. v-funded projects came from across a spectrum of organisations however, including those with a specific community focus such as the Red Cross and RNLI. Therefore the finding is that v-funded projects within a spectrum of organisations enabled additional youth centred activity to be undertaken by them and with it an increase in the number and diversity of young people they engaged.

When asked about the challenges to involving young people in work, the most common challenge cited (by 28% of organisations) was the availability of volunteers, while 27 per cent said that keeping volunteers interested was a challenge. Eleven per cent gave an answer relating to the range of abilities (or lack of knowledge or skills) amongst volunteers, nine per cent mentioned staff time as an obstacle, and eight per cent said that geographical area presented a challenge. Eight per cent of organisations said that there were no challenges or that involving young people in this way worked well.

So as illustrated in Chapter 4 and 5, young people were broadly positive about the youth-led ethos in relation to making volunteering more attractive to other young people, more enjoyable to take part in and as a way of ensuring the tasks involved were within the capabilities of those involved. This fits with the empowerment agenda advocated by v as it ensures that young people feel they have been able to achieve what they set out to do. A key learning point for the future is that involving young people in developing the volunteering opportunities that they become involved in is likely to heighten their engagement in the activity and ensure that activity meets their needs or aspirations. Though already a fairly integral part of the v-funded projects activities, youth-led volunteering should continue to be considered best practice for the future.

There were also concerns that the youth-led ethos is not always followed though in practice however. For example young people may feel their ideas were not actually implemented without explanation or support not being adequate to enable youth led activities to develop fully. It is crucial, therefore, for organisations adopting this ethos to ensure that the ideas of young people are taken on board, but that they are also provided with the necessary support mechanisms so they do not feel isolated when leading the development of volunteering opportunities.

6.1.5 Supporting and training young volunteers
Another aspect of quality in youth volunteering processes is the type and level of support available to young volunteers. As explored in Chapter 5, grant recipient organisations reported implementing specific support mechanisms for young people due to their v-
funded project. This indicates that v did have a role to play in implementing changing practices in terms of how volunteers are supported. Young volunteers also identified (in Chapter 4) that adequate support and training is essential for them to be able to fully engage in their volunteering opportunity and feel they have personally benefited from it. Without such support the volunteering opportunity may be perceived negatively. Support for young volunteers was also identified as particularly important when they had additional barriers to volunteering, such as chaotic home lives – conversely these young people also may particularly benefit from the influence of a supportive, consistent trusted adult (nef, 2011).

The proportions of organisations from different schemes saying they supported young volunteers in various ways are presented in Table 6.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of supporting young volunteers</th>
<th>Funding type</th>
<th>Match Fund</th>
<th>v involved teams</th>
<th>v involved projects</th>
<th>vtalentyear</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each volunteer has named supervisor/manager/advisor</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General manager/advisor available</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each volunteer has own mentor/buddy</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback through volunteer group</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer development plans</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (including induction)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>32^</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These figures are based on a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative rather than significant.

Interestingly levels of support are highest among v involved projects compared to Match Fund. As the monitoring data indicated Match Fund volunteers tend to be older, and have higher qualifications, this may reflect the higher level of need for support among volunteers in these other projects, being met.

The key learning point for organisations is that if the aim of their project is to support the personal development of young people, or work with hard-to-reach groups, one-to-one support is likely to be very important. This may be resource intensive however, and if it
cannot be provided, organisations may wish to consider the realistic scope of which young people they can involve as volunteers and what they will actually be able to gain from it.

In the next section on engaging young volunteers, the recruitment and support processes for volunteers are further outlined.

**Section summary**
- Grant recipients are satisfied with the support they have had from v, and this is particularly pronounced among v cashpoint recipients.
- Organisations with different levels of need or experience may have required more or less support.
- Creating opportunities was noted to be fairly easy though full-time opportunities were most challenging.
- Reach appears to have been successful in establishing quality among the grant recipients.
- Creating youth-led activities and consulting young people may be particularly successful in identifying relevant opportunities for young volunteers and how best to recruit them.
- Young volunteers having a named manager/advisor was the most prevalent form of support provided.

### 6.2 Engaging young volunteers

One of v’s main objectives is to influence young people’s attitudes and understanding of volunteering, and increase access to a range of young people. The evaluation has found that v has been relatively successful in this respect, although levels of youth volunteering continue to drop overall according to the Citizenship Survey, by October 2010 over 700,000 young people had become involved in v volunteering activities since v commenced.

This section draws out implications from the experiences of v and grant recipients in delivering a wide range of new, youth-led volunteering opportunities, aiming for greater involvement of young people as volunteers. Once opportunities are created, volunteers need to be recruited. In Chapter 4 perspectives from young people have been presented on their route into volunteering. Here the findings from the case studies provide an insight into approaches to recruitment that were felt to be effective in terms of publicising opportunities and establishing and meeting recruitment targets, in particular for hard-to-reach groups, from the project staff. This section also provides an overview of factors affecting recruitment of young volunteers and the monitoring of project activity.

#### 6.2.1 Recruiting young volunteers

In the grant recipient survey, it was reported by grant recipients that they had been relatively successful in recruiting volunteers across the programme - most grant recipients found it very (26%) or quite easy (51%) to recruit young people for their project. Here methods to recruit young people are explored.
Grant recipients that said recruiting volunteers was quite or very difficult were asked what challenges they faced. Other than mentioning that recruiting volunteers was difficult or presented a challenge, common answers given to this question include the commitment or motivation of young people, that the projects’ target groups were difficult to reach or appeal to, challenges relating to physical geography (for example, getting people together in one place or problems with transport), and keeping hold of volunteers. A small number of recipients said that not being able to offer payment for young people presented a challenge.

For funding schemes other than v-cashpoint, v-funded activities choose to publicise their opportunities both internally and externally. Internal approaches focused on young people who had previously accessed or were accessing services delivered by the host organisation or an affiliated organisation/consortium partner. They may have been young people already involved as service users, volunteers or staff members. They may have been young people who actively sought out or designed the volunteering opportunity funding had been received for, or may have been those more passive in their initial involvement, who become volunteers because the opportunity arose.

External recruitment drew from young people not already in contact with the host or affiliated organisation and often required more active outreach or advertising. If the young people were actively seeking an opportunity then websites could be successful. Portals such as the do.it website could be used to advertise opportunities for example. If the project was looking to recruit hard-to-reach groups, external recruitment may have involved outreach and using networks of trusted adults – explored in more detail later in the section.

The balance between internal/external promotion of opportunities varied, with v-funded projects providing services for marginalised young people combining these approaches in order to create a social mix of volunteers. This was seen to be important to avoid further contributing to the marginalisation of the young people they worked with:

‘[v] asked us to clarify the target number of young the target number of volunteer opportunities that we said we would deliver young people with pre-existing […] problems, they were highly likely to be clients. But what we said was we didn’t want to make it a ghetto project…a lot of this is about getting the young people feeling that they’re not labelled exclusively by […] problems…so it makes much more sense for the projects to have to draw from as wide a group of young people as possible.’
(Mygames project worker)

Relying on a predominantly internal recruitment was driven by the immediate availability of young people whose interests matched the opportunity, and who were already in contact with the organisation; if the activity became oversubscribed with young people recruited internally it was not felt to be a need to recruit more actively externally.

So when young people were recruited externally, qualitative data suggests that this was to meet specific diversity targets in particular or to widen the pool of young people an
organisation was in contact with. This indicates that specifying that projects had targets was therefore an important mechanism for ensuring young people new to the organisation or hard-to-reach groups were actively engaged, leading to a mix of young people being involved. However as was also illustrated in Chapter 4, where young volunteers routes into volunteering were outlined is that young people who were already involved in an organisation, but not as volunteers, may also have entered volunteering fairly passively – and then benefited from it. Therefore it should not be assumed active outreach will necessarily be engaging with young people less likely to volunteer, only that it may increase the diversity within organisations. Internal recruitment may be important in encouraging young people already in contact with organisations – perhaps as service users for example – to become volunteers and take more active roles in the organisation.

Having noted this external recruitment is clearly important, especially for organisations that may not work with young people already. A range of approaches, described in the subsequent sections and identified in the case study interviews, were used to support external recruitment of young people to volunteering opportunities.

Approaching gatekeeper organisations
Targeting other organisations working with specific groups of young people (e.g. with a disability) was seen as a valuable way to attract a diverse range of young people. Opportunities could also be successfully publicised through generic organisations engaging with a wider range of young people, such as further / higher education institutions, community organisations and charities youth organisations, volunteer centres, involved teams.

This may have been one way in which young people heard about opportunities via trusted adults, such as teachers or youth workers. It has already been identified that word of mouth can be an important facilitator in young people becoming involved in volunteering. The point for future planning is recognising how important informal links and networks between staff at organisations involving young people or volunteers are for creating a network of trusted adults that can publicise opportunities for young people in this way.

Word of mouth
Another way in which word of mouth may be significant for young people to become engaged in volunteering is peer to peer contact. Volunteers recommended opportunities to friends and acquaintances who then became volunteers. Young people noted that they were able to explain the benefits of volunteering that they had perhaps not anticipated and challenge the attitudes of friends and family about what volunteering is and how it can benefit young people. The visible presence of volunteers in an organisation was also perceived to have attracted other young people accessing the organisation to volunteer. Where volunteering opportunities were a short-term activity, this could be considered even more useful, given that recruitment for these opportunities also took place on the day by directly approaching young people. Organisations providing this kind of opportunity or aiming to recruit young people with a more passive interest in volunteering, with less experience or understanding of volunteering, may want to consider involving current or former volunteers more directly in recruitment in the future.
6.2.2 Engaging hard-to-reach groups and social mixing

The monitoring data illustrates (Chapter 3 and Table B2 in appendix B) that the v programme did engage a diverse population of young volunteers including those from a range of target groups that could be considered hard-to-reach. In this section ways in which these young volunteers were engaged and how easy or difficult this was reported to be is outlined. Many of the projects worked with existing groups of young people and the effort made to engage new groups of young people also led to social mixing among young people who may not have previously done so. The engagement of hard-to-reach young people was an important process to aid this.

As part of the grant recipient survey, respondents were also asked how easy or difficult it was to engage young people from various hard-to-reach groups as volunteers for their project. These groups may have been among their target groups. Amongst projects working with specific hard-to-reach groups, the most difficult group to engage were young people who are refugees, which 69 per cent of recipients said were difficult to engage for their project. This is likely to reflect the fact that refugees are a highly dispersed population and more likely to speak English as a second language, which other research has identified as a potential barrier to volunteering. Conversely, most recipients said that young people who are not in employment, education or training (77%), young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (70%), and young people with physical disabilities or learning disabilities (61%) were easy to engage. This may be reflected in the monitoring data, where it has been found the v programme has been relatively successful overall in engaging minority ethnic groups and those from low income areas.
Table 6.5 How easy or difficult recipients found it to engage young people from hard-to-reach groups (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard-to-reach group</th>
<th>Very easy</th>
<th>Quite easy</th>
<th>Quite difficult</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who are refugees</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young offenders or ex-offenders</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people living in rural areas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who are in care or leaving care</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who are lone parents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people with physical disabilities or learning disabilities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people from any other hard to reach groups</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all recipients (322)

1 Figures exclude people who answered ‘Don’t know’ and who said they did not work with each group, and so base sizes vary for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.

It is difficult to infer why these groups may have been more problematic to engage than others. These groups can also make up a very small proportion of the overall population which could make it difficult to try to engage them, especially in rural areas with little diversity. For example, over the past 5 years, some 100,000 applications for asylum have been heard in the UK, of which approximately 30% received a favourable hearing, but even if all of these had been accepted, that would only constitute 0.2% of the population. In terms of homelessness some 0.1% of the young population are recorded as experiencing homelessness in any one year though this may not take into account the numbers who experience hidden homelessness or some form of housing insecurity. In any one year up to 60,000 children in England are in care, but that would represent less than 0.5% of children of all ages.

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32 http://www.york.ac.uk/res/ukhr/ukhr0708/compendium.htm#homelessness1
Reasons for how easy or difficult it is to engage young people from hard-to-reach groups are also likely to differ depending on the expertise of the project – thus if they already work with refugee groups it may not be difficult for individual projects to engage them as volunteers. However some of the hard-to-reach groups identified as more difficult to engage may also represent those that are less visible or smaller populations.

Recipients that said they had found it either easy or difficult to engage other hard-to-reach groups were asked what groups they meant. Amongst those that said engaging other hard-to-reach groups had been either very or quite easy, the most common answer was homeless young people, while other common answers included young people who were from the traveller community and young people with low incomes or from low income families. Other answers include people with mental health problems, people with drug or alcohol problems, females, young people who were carers, and people from other geographical areas. Amongst those that said engaging other hard-to-reach groups was either quite or very difficult, the most common groups mentioned were young people from the traveller community and young people who were homeless. Other groups mentioned included people with drug or alcohol problems, people from other geographical areas, people with mental health problems, people who were carers, people from particular faith groups or religions, and people with low incomes of from low income families.

The qualitative case studies also provided examples of how projects had engaged hard to reach groups, a few of which are outlined below.

**Viral recruitment:** An organisation delivering one-off volunteering opportunities to improve the coastline, engaged a small number of young people during the set up phase. The young people then acted as ‘lead volunteers’ promoting opportunities to other young people in the run up to activities. Peer-to-peer promotion included lead volunteers displaying posters in venues where young people hung out and emailing friends and acquaintances to tell them about the opportunity. Peer-to-peer promotion in combination with on-line marketing, such as the use of Facebook, and other outreach activities, were felt to have been successful in engaging young people in volunteering. At the time of the case study visit the funded activity was on track to meet their target for the number of young people engaged in volunteering. This was felt by the funded activity to be a particularly significant achievement given the challenges which can be faced in engaging the demographic:

’I mean we’re delighted with that outcome already, I don’t think it’s any mystery to anyone involved with v, on any of the projects, that the 16 to 25 year old age group is a particularly difficult age group to reach. And so we felt very pleased with where we’ve got to already with the sort of numbers we’ve attracted through the events we’ve done.’ (MyGames project staff)

**Approaching gatekeeper organisations:** An organisation which historically had limited experience of working with young people or volunteers appointed a staff member to support the recruitment of young volunteers to v funded opportunities. Given the organisation’s limited experience of working with young people, developing new
relationships with youth involving organisations was felt by the staff member to be a key aspect of a successful recruitment strategy:

‘I talk at the meetings and there doesn’t seem to be anything else; there’s no other way of getting volunteers unless you know people locally or through partnerships’. (Match Fund project staff)

Using gatekeeper organisations could be a form of viral recruitment. For example, a funded activity reported that an effective partnership with one organisation generated new contacts with other youth involving organisations which were then be used to promote volunteering opportunities more widely:

‘I think its meeting contacts through contacts… if we do a good job, it then comes back to us.’ (Match Fund project staff)

The use of gatekeeper organisations was also found to be effective when seeking to promote opportunities to specific groups of young people. An example of this was a funded activity promoting opportunities to help out an intergenerational tea dance through an organization working with young people with disabilities. Similarly, the talentyear programme publicised opportunities to specific groups of young people such as those not in education, employment or training, young offenders and young people leaving care through statutory and third sector organizations in contact with these groups:

‘We also targeted organisations. So we sent information sheets to organisations. So not only the Connexions centre, the youth service, the job centre, job centre plus. We just went to a range of organisations that work with children and younger adults, or work with young people and just targeted those saying here’s an initiative, this is what’s going on. So it went in the press, it went locally to young people’s homes and it went to organisations, so we tried to get a spread across so that they could then talk to the young people if they’re in contact’. (talentyear project staff)

For organisations who traditionally worked with hard-to-reach young people this involved targeting organisations working with a broader range of young people. An example of this was a disability charity which wanted to attract a range of volunteers. This was achieved through promoting opportunities to beneficiaries of the charity as well as through gatekeeper organisations, such as special schools and colleges and also by promoting opportunities to students working in the NHS. Over time this strategy was successful in attracting a range of volunteers, including both those with disabilities and those without.

Projects were asked to set diversity targets as part of their funding contract with v, to work with certain numbers of hard-to-reach groups. Setting these targets may have been instrumental in engaging in outreach with these groups, and increasing the diversity of the volunteers engaged through the programme using some of the methods outlined above.

Meeting these targets has not been without some concern or discussion from the grant funded network however, and the process is further discussed below.
6.2.3 Meeting recruitment targets

Most v-funded projects worked towards specific targets in relation to overall numbers and diversity that they set as part of their funding agreement with v. Understanding if and how these targets were met are important for understanding the impetus behind recruitment and the groups being targeted, as well as explaining some of the diversity illustrated within the volunteer characteristics in Chapter 3 (though it could be argued even greater diversity may have been expected given the explicit focus on recruiting some groups of young people as volunteers).

As reported in Chapter 3, there has been a relatively high level of success in projects meeting their targets thus far: across all funding schemes in the grant recipient survey, 88 per cent of organisations reported they had met or were on target to meet their original targets for the total number of volunteers they would work with. The number of opportunities taken up has also exceeded the Russell Commission recommendations.

The profile of a project’s target group, the projects ability to draw from a wide pool of young people, the location of the project and the organisation’s willingness to prioritise targets and monitoring generated distinct experiences in relation to meeting targets, explored via the case study qualitative data.

Firstly, if projects were able to draw from a large pool of potential volunteers or had a very specific target group that overlapped with their service user profile, all targets were met. For example they may already work in an area with a high minority ethnic population and not report a need to specifically target this group to engage a high number of young volunteers with this characteristic. This group viewed the use of targets as useful to ensure the diversity and social mix of their volunteers, but also to aid the monitoring and evaluation of their recruitment but did not describe them as problematic.

A variation on this experience was that projects met some targets but not others. Targets relating to overall numbers of volunteers were considered easier to achieve than targets relating to specific demographics. Where project targets required recruitment externally mixing new volunteers, projects found this more challenging, though this could be dependent upon the location of the project and described as an important outcome for bringing in new young people to the organisation or creating a greater mix of young people. For example, the experience of recruiting NEETs was mixed, with some projects finding young people in their area who had few other options than joining the programme, making it straightforward to recruit NEETS; it was more difficult to engage NEETs and other groups where the area in which the project was based was relatively homogenous in terms of social-economic for example, where there may be high levels of non-NEET young people who wished to take part and much more resource intensive outreach was required to make contact with this group of young people. In these cases the precedent was on meeting overall targets in terms of numbers rather than diversity, though active measures were put in place to try to also achieve diversity.

For a similar set of reasons, projects reported they found it difficult to meet any of their targets. Within this group, however, there was a further sub-group that did not meet their
targets because of ambivalence to the value of targets per se. As a consequence of this, projects did not adopt any strategies to achieve their targets. This issue was discussed at length in the interim report but is worth revising, given the relative success that having targets seems to have had in ensuring a mix of young people are recruited to projects. These participants reported three criticisms of targets. First, there was a view that pursuing targets was ‘arbitrary’ and that ‘equality of opportunity’ was more important. Secondly, it was felt that the process of collecting data can be off-putting for young people, who may find it intrusive to be asked about their ethnicity, faith or sexuality, particularly where the volunteering opportunity was short-term and project staff did not have time to build rapport or trust with volunteers. Finally, and related to this, collecting the data also made staff feel uncomfortable for the same reasons.

Part of the rationale for targets and collecting monitoring data was to establish whether opportunities had reached a diverse group of young people. The monitoring information data presented in Chapter 3 certainly suggests this is the case for a number of key characteristics such as ethnicity. It also appears that targets acted to create a momentum to encourage active outreach and create a mix of young people within volunteering projects. As outlined in Chapter 5, this could also assist with the impact of developing young peoples’ social networks and social awareness of others. Therefore for the limited number of organisations that did not value targets, perhaps on-going and continued dissemination of the significance of these would assist with a culture change in how targets are perceived. In the next section the process whereby project staff collected the monitoring information is outlined. It is also important to note that existing datasets on volunteering such as the Citizenship Survey will not exist in the future. The ensuing discussion of monitoring processes should also be considered within a broader context of assessing how best the volume and profiles of young volunteers could be monitored or assessed in the future.

### 6.2.4 Monitoring processes

As part of the funding agreement, grant recipients were required to undertake monitoring activities (the grant recipients discussion of meeting targets outlined above is closely linked to an understanding of the monitoring and evaluation processes of the funded network). Monitoring information when attached to government funding has to meet government requirements and v’s stipulation that this information had to be gathered was driven by this imperative. The results of the monitoring data are outlined in Chapter 3. In this section the types of monitoring activities conducted (with which to ascertain the profile of their volunteers) are outlined.

The most common method of collecting monitoring information, used by 89 per cent of organisations responding to the grant recipients survey, was volunteer questionnaires. These questionnaires were commonly made up of questions that the projects’ staff had adapted or used from elsewhere (this applied to 77% of organisations that conducted volunteer questionnaires), while 62 per cent said that their volunteer questionnaires were based on the wording in v’s monitoring guidelines, suggesting that a mixture of questions from the monitoring guidelines and questions adapted from elsewhere were used in questionnaires. Twenty-five per cent of organisations that used volunteer questionnaires
said that these were very effective at collecting monitoring information, and 61 per cent said these were fairly effective. Thirteen per cent said these were not very effective, and one per cent said they were not effective at all.

Seventy-seven per cent of organisations collected monitoring information through staff observation. Of these, a majority (55%) said that this was very effective in collecting monitoring information, while 40 per cent said it was fairly effective, five per cent said it was not very effective and less than half a per cent said it was not effective at all. Seventy-seven per cent used other ways to collect monitoring information – of these, 59 per cent said these were very effective, 39 per cent said they were fairly effective, and two per cent said they were not very effective.

As discussed in the interim evaluation report, v introduced a number of changes to their monitoring systems in response to the challenges faced by some funded activities. These included reducing the frequency of monitoring reports to every 6 months for some organisations, revised guidance, one-to-one group support meetings involving Project Support Officers and adjusting the format of the monitoring reports to incorporate Excel. These changes were well received by the grant funded network.

Data from the qualitative case studies provides further detail on grant recipients’ views on the monitoring procedures.

- v-funded projects were supportive of the need for monitoring information. In some cases it was felt to have brought benefit to the organisation by encouraging reflection upon the number of opportunities delivered and the types of young people engaged in volunteering. Despite this, concerns were raised over the intrusive nature of certain aspects of the process of collecting this data.
- Adjustments to the report format and a reduction in the frequency of reporting improved funded activities experience of monitoring. Where views were positive about monitoring procedures they were felt to have been straightforward, flexible and had struck a balance between gathering information without ‘stifling' organisations.
- Contrastingly, changes to the monitoring system presented new challenges for funded activities who found the adjusted report format was not user-friendly or was incompatible with their computer system.
- Similar concerns to those reported in the interim report were also raised in follow-up interviews with qualitative case studies. These related to concerns about the frequency of monitoring, the time required to collect information, the perceived complexity of the monitoring process and lack of feedback from v after reports had been submitted. Miscommunication about monitoring had also meant that some funded activities felt they had under reported the number of opportunities they had created.
- A final concern was that the monitoring process did not enable funded activities to present a full picture of the work they did. It was important to funded activities to have the opportunity to evidence that they had created high quality opportunities and to demonstrate the benefits of volunteering to the individual and community.
Where this was a concern, funded activities welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate success in these areas in the end of year report. End of year reports were adapted to provide further scope for feedback to be provided as the programme developed, in response to this.

Given the on-going challenge to obtain accurate and complete monitoring information on the young volunteers (which has led to some limits to what can be understood about volunteers from the monitoring information, Chapter 3) a process for individual monitoring information to be collected directly from volunteers was implemented during the evaluation.

This involved young volunteers completing a short online survey of their experiences, using a unique code to log in to ensure each volunteer completed only one questionnaire. Whilst there were limits to this approach (namely that it relies on young people opting in to completing the information) this did provide much better quality monitoring information. A combination of basic project level monitoring and more detailed individual level monitoring may provide best practice in the future in terms of how to accurately monitor volunteering programmes.

Whilst the limits to the monitoring data have been made clear in this report, the monitoring data (both project level and individual) has been essential to evidencing the impact and reach of the programme, and the quality of the data did improve over time. A lesson for the future would be to recommend that youth volunteer projects set up or have access to some form of individual monitoring process with which to continue to map and understand the profile of young volunteers. Whether this would be possible with a myriad of different projects in place, is questionable however. Even with the programme, the diversity of schemes and types of opportunity (full-time, part-time, short-term) made it difficult to design an integrated individual monitoring system. However it remains, that whilst it can be perceived as onerous by projects, monitoring the characteristics, numbers and impact of youth volunteering is important, and requires resources. Considering how best to monitor youth volunteering in the future may also benefit from input and consultation of young volunteers themselves.

6.2.5 Retaining volunteers

As was reported in Chapter 5, the evidence from the grant recipient survey and case studies suggest that projects were largely successful in retaining as well as recruiting volunteers.

In the grant recipient survey, 49 per cent of recipients said that retaining volunteers was quite easy, while 14 per cent said that this was very easy. Around a quarter (26%) of the recipients said that retaining volunteers was quite difficult, and three per cent said this was very difficult. When those that said retaining volunteers was very or quite difficult were asked what challenges they faced, the most common answers (given by 42% of those asked this question) related to young people’s changing circumstances, other commitments or lack of time. Thirty-seven per cent said that maintaining the commitment or engagement of young people presented a challenge, while 16 per cent mentioned
competing with paid employment and ten per cent said that maintaining the level of support necessary was a challenge.

As part of the qualitative case studies, project workers also identified a range of reasons for young people not completing their volunteering opportunity as planned. These can be categorised into three groups relating to time, changes in the project or personal reasons. Young people with changing circumstances in relation to education or employment, such as moving into employment or onto a course had dropped out due to lack of time. These relate to the barriers to volunteering identified in Chapter 4, using the Citizenship Survey data. Clearly, where a bigger time commitment is required to volunteer there is more likelihood that young people may find they do not have the time to continue with their volunteering. Project workers reported volunteers dropping out from longer term opportunities without a change in circumstances for example, because ‘talentyear was ‘too long’.

Two reasons for young people dropping out were related to changes within the project. Firstly, project workers reported young people dropping out following a change in the peer group of volunteers, particularly if a close friend of a volunteer left or moved on. Similarly, where a key worker with which a young person has built a close relationship had left the project, some young people no longer felt comfortable or fully supported to continue. In either of these cases, project workers could work to mitigate the likelihood of this happening by ensuring that volunteers are not over-reliant on a single peer or worker and encourage and facilitate wider mixing through diversifying roles. Again social networks and trusted adults seem to play a role in cementing positive volunteering opportunities on the ground.

Personal reasons for dropping out of volunteering opportunities were seen as particularly likely to affect those from high risk backgrounds. In the qualitative case studies, project workers identified that these young people had dropped out for reasons such as housing issues, difficulties with family relations and new or worsening drug problems; it is also clear that young people could face more than one of these difficulties. In addition, where young people had responsibilities at home, it became a financial imperative for some to find employment in order to pay rent or for childcare. This suggests that organisations engaging young people in volunteering need to carry out baseline assessments of volunteers to understand their personal circumstances with the aim of being able to build in flexibility around when and how to volunteer and, where possible and appropriate, adopt processes for providing support or referral for personal problems.

6.2.6 Factors affecting recruitment and retention

Factors that were felt to be important for retaining volunteers by project staff mirrored those identified by young volunteers as creating a positive experience of volunteering, in Chapter 4.

- The types of opportunity led to more or less interest from volunteers depending on where they were located and whether the organisation had a user group to recruit from and expert knowledge in delivering these types of opportunity.
• A welcoming atmosphere and the inclusion of other young people as volunteers or staff was also felt by young people and project staff to make a project more attractive.

• The inclusion of some form of accreditation was also important, but this also generated some practical problems for projects as the type of accreditation affected the types of young person the opportunity attracted.

For successful recruitment, it is clear that organisational strength is important: the resources and specialist knowledge held by organisations and the networks they are ‘plugged’ into will influence how successfully they can recruit a diverse range of young people. Considering the atmosphere of the project and how staff interact with young volunteers is also an important consideration that could have significant influence on engaging young people or assisting them to feel comfortable and wish to continue volunteering. Some continuity in terms of a trusted adult being available for young volunteers also appears important for retention of volunteers.

Drawing on the description in Chapter 4 of the motivations and expectations of young people a central theme running through these external factors is the importance of fitting opportunities and recruitment approaches to needs of young people.

Project workers noted that they did face the challenge of overcoming apathy and a lack of commitment to the goals of volunteering amongst some young people, particularly in relation to attracting volunteers that might not otherwise consider volunteering. It was also considered important for projects to acknowledge and be sensitive to competing priorities young people might have and flexible where possible in terms of what they would require of volunteers.

Another issue raised was related to incentives and accreditation. Project workers and young people identified the importance of clear communication relating to the benefits of volunteering, financial or otherwise, and accreditation on offer for each opportunity.

Finally, in designing recruitment materials, it was cited as important to be aware of the perceptions of some young people that volunteering is a ‘service’ or working for free. The tone and structure of recruitment materials should be sensitive to this view and highlight the wider benefits young people can gain from volunteering, particularly those that are less likely to be primary motivations for volunteering. As noted in Chapter 4 and 5, young people reported a range of unanticipated positive consequences of volunteering and an accruing benefit of the interactions of various forms of capital generated due to their volunteering activity. Participants highlighted the importance of disseminating these unintended impacts, and having young people themselves to communicate these benefits to potential new volunteers. As word of mouth can be an important facet to recruitment, encouraging young people to speak to each other about their experiences and the benefits of volunteering is clearly an important aspect of both recruiting new volunteering and improving the image of youth volunteering in the future.

Section summary
Formative evaluation of v
Grant recipients report being successful in recruiting young volunteers. Recruitment occurred both internally (drawing from young people already involved with the organisation) and externally.

Key methods of recruitment included:
- Contact with youth organisations
- Word of mouth
- Online tools

NEETs, minority ethnic young people and people with disabilities were reported to be the hard-to-reach groups that it was easiest to recruit.

Targets set by projects tended to be met, however a minority did not appreciate the value of such targets.

Generally there was support for monitoring processes and the process had improved, however as the quality of the existing monitoring data indicates more could be done to continue to improve ways to monitor youth volunteering.

Welcoming atmospheres, support from project staff (especially with personal issues) and opportunities matching needs and interests were the key factors in retaining and recruiting volunteers.

6.3 Young peoples’ awareness of v and accessibility of information

In this section the focus shifts from considering organisations and how they have worked within the v programme, to examining young volunteer’s perception of v and some of the ways in which v has communicated with young volunteers. This also includes an analysis of the v inspired website and perceptions of campaigns.

An aim of v has been to raise the profile of and access to youth volunteering. The grant recipient survey results in Chapter 5 (on social impacts) indicated some success with this via the funded network, with the two of the three most prevalent responses in terms of the social impacts being increased access to young people to volunteering, and increased awareness of volunteering.

In this section the extent to which there is evidence that v has directly impacted on young peoples’ awareness of volunteering and young people’s access to information on v is explored. The data used for this includes the survey of young people conducted for the evaluation, case studies, individual monitoring data and the marketing and communication review.

6.3.1 Awareness of v as a volunteering organisation

In the survey young people (most of whom were not involved in v volunteering) were asked their overall awareness of youth volunteering opportunities in their local area and these have been discussed.

v was understood, by those volunteers with a high level of awareness, to be a national organisation that provided funding for youth volunteering opportunities. Volunteers could see v as an organisation that provided opportunities for particular groups of young people:
‘It’s a government-based fund that is obviously willing to help younger people who haven’t obviously had good opportunities or haven’t ever stepped up to go to one. I believe that they’ve obviously helped those people get back into things…’ (involved project young volunteer)

Volunteers with more limited awareness of v’s activities could be uncertain about the relationship between the host organisation and v. Limited awareness of v was not felt by volunteers to be problematic when the focal point of the young person’s experience was the volunteering activity itself however:

‘It’s just what we’re doing really isn’t it? That’s the only thing that matters. Like I’m not saying that v isn’t important, I’m just saying like it wouldn’t matter what the name is of who we’re doing it for’. (involved project young volunteer)

As was reported in the interim report and Chapter 4, awareness of v among the young people engaged in v volunteering could vary. There were v volunteers who reported pride in v-branded material associated with their volunteering opportunity (such as t-shirts). There were also examples of v funded activities being perceived to have a distinct identity for young people within the organisation they volunteered within because they were the v volunteers. However young volunteers also (perhaps unsurprisingly) associate their v funded volunteering with the organisation through which they volunteered rather than v. There could be confusion over who v are – with, for example, young people confusing v with the organisers of the v music festival held each year in the UK (but unrelated to v the volunteering organisation). This suggests that v was not always successful at establishing its brand through the funded network and that it would benefit from a more effective brand strategy in future, so that all young people are clear about the role of v in relation to partners who are delivering volunteering opportunities on v’s behalf.

As explored in Chapter 4, young people reported hearing about v from friends, trusted adults such as teachers, and also seeing posters or hearing adverts on the radio. However the qualitative data from the case studies indicated a mixed picture, with varying degrees of awareness of v as an organisation evident from the young volunteers involved in v activities. When young volunteers were aware of v as an organisation, a generally positive picture emerged from the case study interviews with young people with v described as the ‘face’ of youth volunteering. v’s marketing and communication activities to promote youth volunteering were felt by volunteers to have been successful in establishing v in this way. So young volunteers interviewed, where they were aware of v, were generally positive about the v brand and felt it was in touch with what young people wanted. Effective branding was interpreted by volunteers to signify that v was an organisation that was in touch with young people in this way:

‘I think v is quite good in terms of like the whole marketing and the whole like branding kind of thing I think it’s quite good…. I went to….the v headquarters that’s near Victoria or somewhere like that? I went there for a meeting and like the whole office there was very like colourful.’ (involved team young volunteer)
Though it should still be caveated that not all of the young volunteers interviewed during the case studies were aware of v as an organisation or necessarily held positive views.

It was also perceived in the case study interviews that awareness of v had increased amongst friends and family members during the duration of volunteers’ involvement in the v funded activity. Volunteers’ identified that they themselves had a played a role in publicising v to friends and family and other young people, again emphasising the significance of word of mouth.

6.3.2 Views on direct communication with v

Volunteers interviewed in the case studies were asked about direct communication they had with v.

On one hand volunteers described being satisfied with the level of direct communication with v and they were aware that the project co-ordinator was in contact with v and would keep them updated. Alternatively, other volunteers expressed a preference for greater contact with v because it would provide the opportunity to voice their appreciation, and to demonstrate the contribution they made to the v funded activity:

‘I just think it makes you feel sort of more appreciated as, as a volunteer as well, I mean we’ve had a lot of the college staff and the college manager and sort of thanking us and saying, its great you’ve done this, great this, but obviously we’re here for v and to sort of promote v and volunteering in general, so I think for them to come down, it shows, that you’re not sort of just forgotten and you’re not just another name on a sort of sheet of statistics’. (vinvolved project young volunteer)

Similarly, contact with other volunteers throughout the funded network was also valued by volunteers, where it was occurring. There were volunteers who would have liked greater face-to-face or online interaction with the funded network (including other volunteers) as it would help to foster a sense of a ‘v community’ amongst volunteers. These participants tended to be unaware of existing forums through which they could already do so (for example the vinspired page on Facebook which indicates that they could have benefited from greater dissemination of these functions via their project staff or v). Volunteers were particularly interested to find out about the experiences of other volunteers:

‘It’d be nice to have contact with other vTalent. I’ve not met anybody else that volunteers for v apart from us [number of volunteers’ on programme] on this, so it’d be nice maybe if we met up with another I know there’s one in [name of area], it’d be nice to go and meet them and have the support through them as well. But no, we’ve been completely disconnected from them’. (vtalentyear young volunteer)

Volunteers can create profiles of themselves on the vinspired.com website so that other volunteers can read about them and find out what volunteering opportunities they are doing (but cannot make contact). Those volunteers that were aware of this feature were positive about this, though would have liked to be able to make contact with each other.
(however this has implications in terms of online safety for under 18s and moderation processes which is why it has not yet been introduced by v).

It was also recognised by some volunteers that v already have a ‘good’ online presence, which has been expanding, explored in more detail in the social media listening report that accompanies the main report:

‘But I think as time goes by v’s sort of getting bigger so the advertising sort of networks getting bigger as well. And I’ve noticed basically on Facebook and, a new social network and that obviously it’s a good way of getting through to youngsters’ (v involved project young volunteer)

A lack of enthusiasm for online communication was reported by other volunteers however. This was driven by not having ready access to a computer, concerns about data security or a preference for face to face communication.

An implication here, first raised in Chapter 4, is that effectively engaging with different audiences of young people requires using a combination of online and off-line modes.

A particularly positive finding relating to this, and to how young people perceived their v volunteering, can be found in the individual monitoring data. It is clear from this that there was particularly strong support for the schemes funded by v, with most respondents saying that they would recommend v to other young people – amounting to some 97 per cent of responses, outlined in Table 6.6.
### Table 6.6 Whether would recommend v to other young people? (individual monitoring)

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<td>Match Fund PT</td>
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<td>Match Fund ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>vinvolved projects FT</td>
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<td>vTalentYear FE</td>
<td>98</td>
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<tr>
<td>vTalentYear LA</td>
<td>[84]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weighted total</td>
<td>97</td>
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Note: percentages in [ ] are based on fewer than 50 cases and may be unreliable.
The figures for the tables in this section are weighted by the size of each programme.
FT = full-time; PT = part-time; ST = short-term.

Word of mouth has been identified as a significant but informal activator of youth volunteering (in Chapter 4). Therefore it is good that young people were willing to recommend v to a friend. This may also indicate that more emphasis could be placed on ensuring channels of communication between young people are promoted or supported.

### 6.3.3 Awareness of young people in general

Data on young peoples’ awareness of v also comes from the survey of young people. Young people were asked to name (unprompted) a local or national organisation that gives volunteering opportunities. From this, forty-six per cent of young people were able to name at least one local or national organisation that gives young people opportunities for volunteering. Four per cent of young people named v or vinspired in this context. There did not appear to be differences in levels of awareness by age or gender - the proportion of young people that named v or vinspired was similar amongst young people aged 16 to 20 years old and those aged 21 to 25 years old, and amongst men and women. However, young people from black or minority ethnic groups (8%) were more likely than white respondents (3%) to mention v or vinspired in this way. Students (8%) and people in part-time employment (6%) were more likely than people who were unemployed (3%), people in full-time employment (2%), and people with an ‘other’ employment status (including those with caring commitments; 2%) to mention v or vinspired.34

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34 Other volunteering organisations mentioned (unprompted) by young people included: Duke of Edinburgh (15%), Guides and Scouts (12%), Prince’s Trust (9%), Connexions (9%), Community Service Volunteers (3%), VSO (2%), Millennium Volunteers (2%), and Do-it.org.uk (1%).

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When asked (prompted), around quarter (23%) of young people said that they had heard of v, vinspired, or vinvolved (or that they recognised their logos). People aged 16 to 20 years old (27%) were more likely than those aged 21 to 25 (19%) to say that they had heard of v (prompted). People who were in part-time employment (30%) and students (30%) were the most likely to say that they had heard of v. This compares with 19 per cent of people in full-time employment, 17 per cent of people who were unemployed, and 13 per cent of people with an ‘other’ employment status (including those with caring commitments). There were no differences by gender or ethnicity in the proportion of people saying that they had heard of v or had seen the v logos.

Levels of awareness (when prompted, and to a lesser extent unprompted) in the survey of young people appear to have increased in January to September 2010, as Figure 6.1 below shows, although this begins to drop again in the most recent waves data is available for.35

**Figure 6.1** Levels of awareness

![Bar chart showing levels of awareness](chart)

Base sizes for each wave: Unprompted awareness (Jul-Aug 09, 231; Oct-Nov 09, 114; Jan-Feb 10, 282; May-Jun 10, 161; Jul-Sep 10, 139; Feb-Mar 11, 279); Prompted awareness (Jul-Aug 09, 229; Oct-Nov 09, 112; Jan-Feb 10, 280; May-Jun 10, 161; Jul-Sep 10, 136; Feb-Mar 11, 278)

Please note that, as base sizes are small when broken down by survey wave in this way, findings should be treated as indicative rather than significant.

Thus awareness of v was found to occur (especially given v are a relatively new organisation) and the figures seemed to be increasing, slightly, over time although this drops once more for the more recent data collected. Interestingly during the latter time period (Feb – March 2011) v were not engaged in any national campaigns. That the level of awareness remained fairly constant during the second year that campaigns were running, before dropping in 2011, may indicate that the campaigns had a fair degree of success in raising awareness, though this was short lived, and that constant awareness raising is required to sustain levels of awareness over time.
6.3.4 Accessing information via the website

In Chapter 4 the way in which young people had heard of v and obtained information was discussed. The v website is clearly one important gateway to this information and was generally described positively. Of those respondents in the survey of young people that had heard of v, vinspired, or vinvolved (or that they recognised their logos), 13 per cent had visited the vinspired website. This figure was higher for young women (16%) than for young men (10%). Of those young people that had visited the vinspired website, 42 per cent had registered.

In this section the findings from the marketing and communication analysis, are presented to ascertain whether there is any indication that the website was playing a role in generating awareness of v among young people and providing an accessible gateway to gain information.

On the 26th November 2009, v’s website, vinspired.com was redesigned and launched following feedback from users about issues with navigating the site. Last year’s interim report used a number of performance indicators for website usage over the 12 month period leading up to the re-launch, which can act as a benchmark for performance on the new site.

Comparing figures taken from the same period (24th November 2008 to 25th November 2009 and 26th November 2009 to 27th November 2010) with the previous and current v website the following was found in terms of changes to website statistics:

- Visitor levels were up by 60 per cent (to 979,660 from 608,947)
- Unique visitor levels were up 55 per cent (to 647,803 from 416,784)
- Average time spent on the website had decreased by 1 minute 11 seconds (to 4 minute 40 seconds, from 5 minutes 51 seconds)
- The bounce rate (people leaving site within 5 seconds) was down by 3.8 per cent (to 28% of visitors).

This demonstrates a marked increase of traffic to the new site, which may indicate better promotion of the site (through, for instance, improved search engine optimisation, more effective marketing or greater word of mouth about the site among young people).

Across the current year, 20 per cent of all site visits came from referrals from other sites. One of the top referring sites was Facebook, which demonstrates the power of social media to drive traffic back to the website and how important v’s presence is on platforms such as Facebook that are popular with young people. (Engagement with v via social media was explored in greater detail in Chapter 4 in the second iteration of the report.)

Google.co.uk (and other Google services) is also one of the top referring sites, reflecting the success of v’s Google paid for search campaign.

Moreover, compared to the previous period, organic searches (unpaid searches on Google) increased from one fifth of all traffic to just under one third. The top five keywords were ‘vinspired’ (85,765), ‘vinvolved’ (28,474), ‘v inspired’, ‘work experience’ (24,167) and...
‘volunteering’ (17,114). This suggests brand awareness of v but, perhaps more importantly, that young people who are looking for information about work experience and volunteering online are finding v. This demonstrates that, in a competitive marketplace, the website’s performance in search engines around vital keywords such as ‘volunteering’ is improving.

The new website also proved to be more ‘sticky’ with a bounce rate (the amount of people who leave the site in under five seconds of entering it) down 3.8 per cent, from 32 per cent to 28.2 per cent, implying the content of pages was more recognisably relevant and that the user experience improved. The average time spent on the site decreased, which could indicate that navigating the site had improved (people were finding the information that they required in less time) or that people were leaving after a shorter period because they were less engaged or couldn’t find what they were looking for. The evaluators conclude that it is less likely to be the latter given that 4 minutes 40 seconds is a good amount of time to spend on a website and indicates a good level of engagement.

These findings do indicate that the new v website was being more successful as a gateway than the previous website and was allowing for a high volume of visitors to access information on v, via the internet.

The design and usability of the v website received mixed reviews from volunteers in the case study interviews however. When volunteers were less positive this was because the website was not perceived to be very ‘cool’; aspects of the website could be difficult to navigate e.g. logging volunteering hours; and, the website could be slow to load (which could be due to their internet connection as opposed to the site). Contrastingly, other volunteer’s did not report challenges with the design or usability of the website. The project staff interviewed during the case studies also noted that the website could be difficult for them to navigate, perhaps in part due it being aimed at young people. So the qualitative data from the case studies indicates a more complex picture but still one generally positive about the website.

Having explored awareness of v among young people, the relative success of the website and focussed on how v has impacted (successfully or otherwise) on the awareness that young people have of v, and of volunteering, in the final section young peoples’ reactions to two v national campaigns are presented.

6.3.5 Young people’s reaction to campaigns

In the interim report it was discussed that project staff interviewed as part of the initial light touch case studies expressed some concerns regarding the marketing material and campaigns that they were disseminating to young people and the content of national campaigns. This was mainly related to how appropriate it was for the young people they worked with, for example if it indicated sexual innuendo. These concerns may have been fuelled by a lack of awareness on the part of the project staff that the marketing material was intended to be segmented to appropriate groups of young people, and not to be appropriate for all.
In this section the young people survey data is reviewed to assess the relative success of the three campaigns included in the survey of young people. As part of the survey of young people, respondents were shown a poster for a particular campaign and asked questions about this. Respondents taking part in the survey between July 2009 and February 2010 were shown a poster for the *A Big Hand Goes a Long Way* campaign (hereafter referred to as the *Big Hand* campaign), respondents taking part in the survey between May and September 2010 were shown a poster for the *Summer of Give* campaign, and respondents taking part between February and March 2011 were shown a poster for the *Gift of Time* campaign. The posters for the campaigns are in appendix E. The survey of young people asked the same question each time regarding the different posters and was not therefore intending to ascertain the extent to which the posters met their aim (each of which were slightly different) but the overall perceptions of the posters that young people held.

Six per cent of young people had seen the campaign materials before. A higher proportion of people that were shown the *Summer of Give* poster (10%) had seen it before than amongst people that were shown the *Big Hand* or *Make the Team* posters (5% for each).

Of those young people that had seen the posters before the interview, eight per cent had visited the *vinspired* website as a result. (This was higher amongst people who had been shown the *Summer of Give* poster than amongst people who had been shown the *Big Hand* and *Make the Team* posters, however this question was asked of relatively few respondents and so this finding should be treated as indicative rather than significant). Four per cent of people who had seen the posters before had volunteered as a result – again, amongst the relatively small number of people asked this question, this proportion was higher amongst people who had been shown the *Summer of Give* poster. Responses given by young respondents relating to their reaction to the posters, when shown them, are outlined in Table 6.7 below:

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36There was no fieldwork between October 2010 and January 2011.
Table 6.7 Proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with statements about marketing materials (young people survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Big Hand</th>
<th>Summer of Give</th>
<th>Make the Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It grabs my attention</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is aimed at people like me</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has a clear message</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It sticks in my mind</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has told me something new</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes me interested in vinspired</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the sort of thing I would talk to my friends about</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it boring</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it's irritating</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td><strong>625</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>278</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences significant at the 95% level are highlighted.

Thus on almost all measures, young people’s reactions to the Summer of Give campaign materials were more positive than to the Big Hand and Make the Team materials. For example, 83 per cent of respondents agreed that the Summer of Give poster grabbed their attention, compared with 75 per cent for the Big Hand campaign and 69 per cent for the Make the Team campaign. Seventy-one per cent of respondents agreed that the Summer of Give poster was aimed at people like them (compared with 53% for the Big Hand campaign and 50% for the Make the Team campaign), and 62 per cent said that the Summer of Give poster has a clear message (compared with 49% for the Big Hand campaign and 57% for the Make the Team campaign). Fifty-nine per cent of young people said that the Summer of Give poster told them something new (compared with 47% for the Big Hand campaign and 52% for Make the Team), and 57 per cent said that it made them interested in vinspired (compared with 43% for the Big Hand campaign and 41% for the Make the Team campaign). Forty-seven per cent of respondents agreed that the Summer of Give poster covered “the sort of thing I would talk to my friends about,” compared with 28 per cent for both other campaigns.

These figures indicate that for young people the Summer of Give campaign was deemed more successful and appropriate for them than the Big Hand and Make the Team campaigns. In the appendix a breakdown of differences in responses by key demographics is given. Though not a significant difference, it is of note that while the Summer of Give campaign was more successful, it was rated highest by young people who are white, those aged 16 to 20, and (to some extent) young people who are students or in part-time employment. Thus different campaigns may be more or less successful depending on which types of young people are the intended audience and how that group responds to them.

Having explored the impacts of v funded volunteering activities on young people, the impacts that could be identified as affecting the wider community or society stemming
from these activities, and the extent to which v was able to impact on the awareness and accessibility of their opportunities, via marketing, communication and the website, the next two sections shifts focus to the funded network and wider volunteering sector.

Section summary
- Young volunteers appreciated opportunities for direct contact with v, and in particular with other v volunteers.

In terms of how successful v has been in communicating with young people and ensuring they can access information on volunteering the evidence indicates the following impacts:

- Mixed awareness of v as a volunteering organisation with it rising and then falling again over time.
- Improvements to the website usability, and increased website traffic.
- More positive reactions to the Summer of Give campaign than the earlier Big Hand or recent Make the Team campaigns.

Overall there is a mixed awareness of the v brand, although it is important to note differences between groups of young people and that different mediums may be more effective for communicating to some than others.

6.4 Engaging a volunteer involving network

In addition to funding and supporting the delivery of volunteering opportunities, and promoting volunteering to young people, v has also aimed to act as a network for organisations involving young people as volunteers. The network aims to provide a platform for new local, regional or virtual partnerships to develop amongst a wide range of organisation, particularly the private sectors and other less traditionally involved in youth volunteering. This section shifts focus away from the young volunteers to reflect on organisations' experiences of being involved in this network and developing partnerships in order to further opportunities for young people to volunteer in the future.

6.4.1 Working as a network

Publicising the network
In order for a network to be successful, a first step is to make it as visible and widely accessible as possible. As part of the grant recipient survey, respondents were asked in what ways they had heard about other projects funded by v or of other work that v do (Table 6.8). The most common way of hearing about v’s work was through newsletters or e-mail updated from v (70% often heard about v in this way, and 26% sometimes did). Forty-four per cent of recipients often (and 44% sometimes) heard of v’s work by browsing on the vinspired.com main website. Around a third (32%) of recipients often (and 47% sometimes) heard of v’s work through their Project Support Officer or another member of v staff. Forty-one per cent of recipients often (and 38% sometimes) heard of v’s work through regional meetings organised by v, while 22 per cent often (and 47% sometimes) did so through national conferences organised by v. Eighteen per cent often (and 48%
sometimes) heard of v’s work by browsing on the vinspired.com members area, 18 per cent (and 52%) through word of mouth, and 11 per cent (and 56%) through national or local press coverage. Six per cent of recipients often (and 23% sometimes) heard of v’s work in other ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.8 How often recipients heard about v in various ways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: All recipients (344)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means of hearing about v</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters or e-mail updates from v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing on the vinspired.com main website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional meetings organised by v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through your Project Support officer or other member of v staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National conferences organised by v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing on the vinspired.com members area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By word of mouth (e.g. through friends, colleagues, other contacts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through national or local press coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other ways you hear/heard about v’s work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Figures exclude people who answered 'Don’t know', and so base sizes vary slightly for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.

The results of this suggest that respondents most frequently heard about v through v’s own communications. While this offers some evidence of success on this front it also suggests that in order to widen and further diversify the network more could be done to encourage more peer-to-peer discussion of v’s activities.

Encouraging links between host organisations
Thirty-two per cent of recipients thought that v did very well at networking and creating positive relationships for the volunteering sector, while 49 per cent said that it did quite well at this, 14 per cent said not very well, and two per cent said not at all well.

One aim of the network was to facilitate links with other youth volunteering projects. Grant recipients were asked about their contact with other v-funded projects. Overall 26 per cent said they had a lot of contact with other v-funded projects, half (51%) had a little contact, and 22 per cent had no contact at all. vinvolved teams unsurprisingly kept in contact with other v-funded projects more often than recipients from other schemes; nearly half of vinvolved teams (49%) had a lot of contact with other projects while a similar proportion (48%) had a little contact. Contact with other v-funded projects was a lot less frequent for vcashpoint recipients; seven per cent had a lot of contact with other v-funded projects, 27 per cent had a little contact, and 66 per cent had no contact at all.
The most common way in which recipients had contact with other v-funded projects was through regional networking meetings (mentioned by 67% of recipients that had some contact with other projects). Fifty-nine per cent of recipients that had some contact with other projects did so through visits to each others projects, and 38 per cent did so through the v National Network Conference. Twenty-seven per cent had contact with other v-funded projects in other ways. The most common other ways of contacting other v-funded projects mentioned by e-mails or telephone and through informal networking or personal networks. Other reasons mentioned included at local or sub-regional meetings, through other volunteering groups or youth organisation projects, through hosting or running joint events, and through schools.

**Mechanisms for linking organisations**

A range of mechanisms were available for organisations to make contact with each other. As part of the grant recipient survey, respondents were asked about how often they had used these opportunities.

Despite the range of new and creative ways of making links that were available to organisations, face-to-face meetings appear to have been the most used and most effective. Most grant recipients that had attended a regional networking meeting found them very useful (41%) or quite useful (52%). Five per cent said that they found the regional networking meetings not very useful, and one per cent found them not useful at all. Despite this, online mechanisms were also well used, most regularly by vinvolved teams. When asked about the vinspired.com website, 29 per cent of recipients said that they visited it at least once a week (54% for vinvolved teams), 35 per cent visited it at least once a month (39% for vinvolved teams), and 19 per cent at least once every 2–3 months. Most of those that had visited the website found it quite (47%) or very (15%) useful in helping their project work with young people on the project. However, in contrast with the regional meeting, a quarter (26%) of recipients found the website not very useful for this purpose, and 12 per cent found it not useful at all. Ten per cent of recipients found the website very useful more generally, while 51 per cent found it quite useful, 31 per cent found it not very useful, and eight per cent found it not useful at all.

**Private sector engagement**

Finally, an interesting juncture can be made in examining the relationship that v had with private sector organisations and bringing them into contact with volunteer involving organisations from the voluntary sector. v involved private sector organisations in the funded network via the Match Fund programme, which generated additional Match Funded revenue to support youth volunteering programmes.

Whilst only 32 per cent of respondents in the grant recipient survey said that the project increased their level of engagement with private sector organisations. This accounted for 44 per cent Match Fund organisations, 22 per cent vinvolved teams, 34 per cent vinvolved projects and 16 per cent vtalentyear. Thus these networks were being extended across the programme not only with Match Fund as may have been most anticipated.
As the following section indicates, v has developed successful working relationships with private sector organisations.

Throughout the v programme, v has made efforts to work with the private/corporate sector, and promote youth volunteering opportunities via the private sector. The key funding scheme in this respect has been Match Fund. As part of the evaluation Match Fund partners, including those from the private sector, and key private sector stakeholders, have been interviewed. Findings regarding the impact v has working with the private sector are reflected on in this section.

Generally private sector partners reported positively on their relationship with v, noting for example good collaborative working, provision of expertise, and that v had a degree of commercialism and professionalism that they required from their partners for effective working:

‘At best they [v] are proactive, positive, finding solutions and making an effort to bridge the cultural divide between private sector and charity’ (Private sector stakeholder interview)

This quote is telling in belaying the sense that there is a perceived cultural divide between the private and charity sector that can make joint working and partnerships difficult.

Tensions were reported by private sector stakeholders regarding their relationships with v, but in the main this was just due to v working at a slightly slower pace than the companies involved, and corporate organisations could also describe their ability to ‘keep pace’ as a strength – thus views were mixed.

There was also a sense that v had improved its relationship with the private sector over time, moving on from being a funder to an active partner, whom the corporate sector learn from and work with to enhance the volunteering programmes that they engaged in as part of their social responsibility schemes. It was therefore felt by private sector partners that the relationship with v worked well in the sense that Match Fund did not just double the scale of existing private sector projects, but introduced volunteering elements in ways that seemed to enhance the programmes quality.

Having examined a number of practice issues in the previous four sections, in the final two the report concludes by considering the extent to which v has met their overall objectives and stakeholder views for the future of v.

Section summary
- The grant recipients’ most prevalent contact with v was via newsletter or email updates.
- Face to face meetings appear to have been the most used and effective ways in which networking was facilitated.
- Private sector engagement has been particularly successfully facilitated by v - The private sector reported positive relationships with v in terms of increasing funding,
increasing volunteering and their improving capacity to support young people, in a good working partnership.

6.5 The role of v in supporting volunteering opportunities

This section presents evidence from the grant recipient survey and the qualitative case studies to assess the effectiveness of the various roles carried out by v as the central youth volunteering agency.

6.5.1 v’s core activities

Table 6.9, containing the responses of grant recipients when asked how well they thought v carried out various aspects of its role, illustrates a broadly positive picture of the efficacy of the v’s model in relation to specific outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Very well %</th>
<th>Quite well %</th>
<th>Not very well %</th>
<th>Not at all well %</th>
<th>Not part of v’s role %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing grants and funding for other organisations and individuals</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving young peoples’ attitudes, interest in and access to volunteering</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging a wider mix of young people to volunteer</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the way young people think about volunteering</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a one-stop virtual shop for volunteering</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing leadership on youth volunteering</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking and creating positive relationships for the volunteering sector</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a voice for young people</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Figures exclude people who answered ‘Don’t know’, and so base sizes vary slightly for each question presented in this table. Base sizes shown are the largest from all of the questions.

These findings are positive, indicating that grant recipients feel v has successfully met their objectives in terms of not only providing grants, but also improving access and interest in youth volunteering, increasing diversity and changing the way volunteering is delivered (though as noted in the previous chapter, this change could be perceived in both positive and negative terms depending on the perspective of the stakeholder). These findings have also been concurred within the evaluation of v’s programme – despite some
procedural challenges the v programme appears to have increased the quantity, quality and diversity of youth volunteering opportunities in England.37

Three key elements of v’s work, as identified by the grant recipients are discussed in greater detail below:

Providing funding
Most recipients thought that v did quite (38%) or very (56%) well at providing grants and funding for other organisations and individuals. As discussed at length in the interim report, and in Chapter 5, the v funding has allowed an expansion of provision that was welcomed among project staff. The two waves of data collection in the evaluation in the qualitative case studies also indicate an improvement in terms of communication and implementation of these grants. This is perhaps a reflection of the recognised challenge that faced v having to distribute the first set of grants shortly after their set up. Tensions were raised at these early stages in terms of the pressure on projects to recruit staff and volunteers, without clear processes being place. This tension seems to have dissipated over time as projects and schemes have ‘bedded in’. These changes may provide some insight into why the small proportion of grant recipients felt v carried out this role less well.

Changing the organisation and delivery of youth volunteering
When asked about v’s performance in changing the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered, 42 per cent of recipients said very well and 44 per cent said quite well, while nine per cent said not very well, three per cent said not at all well, and one per cent said that this was not part of v’s role.

As already explored in this report, one of the key sectoral impacts of v may be the professionalisation of youth volunteering, linking it to more structured activities with an emphasis on the personal or skill development of the young person. Reach has been positively endorsed by the grant recipients that implemented it, despite initial challenges, and projects report increased levels of structured support being in place for young volunteers, to improve the quality of their volunteering experience and enhancing the personal development aspect of youth volunteering.

There are mixed views from stakeholders as to how positive this change is, but certainly v seems to have some success in changing how youth volunteering is delivered, as is explored later in the chapter.

Influencing young people attitudes, definitions and experiences of volunteering
Grant recipients were very positive about v’s ability to influence young peoples’ attitudes regarding volunteering. Forty-nine per cent said that v did very well (and 41% said quite well) at improving young people’s attitudes, interest in and access to volunteering. Forty-five per cent of recipients said that v did very well (and 43% said quite well) at changing the way young people think about volunteering.

37 In the appendix differences by funding scheme is also presented for this question.
The data from the survey of young people and qualitative research with v volunteers (Chapter 4 and 5) illustrates that young peoples’ attitudes to volunteering are largely positive, but that negative attitudes can be associated with narrow or traditional definitions of volunteering. The v programme allowed for an expansion of youth volunteering opportunities well beyond the traditional remit, allowing for diverse motivations for volunteering to be met, by identifying engaging opportunities and creating youth-led opportunities within organisations. Whilst, as noted, there has been some criticism from sector stakeholders in terms of the new way in which youth volunteering may be perceived (in a consumerist model, based on the personal development of young people) conversely this may also be appealing to young people, or certainly indicates that definitions of youth volunteering may have changed. How they continue to evolve in the future however, with the new more homogenous NCS programme in place, remains to be seen.

In this report it has also been illustrated that v has had some success in creating a youth brand, raising awareness of youth volunteering and beginning to change the attitude that young people hold to youth volunteering. However it has also been noted that marketing such as this is likely to come with mixed views – young people may be turned off an activity by the same campaign that ignites interest in another; marketing material should be carefully segmented to avoid inadvertent offence.

Word of mouth has also been identified as an important activating mechanism creating an initial interest in volunteering among young people, and thus altering young people’s views of volunteering and creating a grass roots ‘buzz’ about it that spreads from young person to young person, may be particularly successful in the future to promote youth volunteering, as opposed to ‘top down’ national campaigns.

In the final section the future of v (reflecting on stakeholder interviews) is explored, beginning with a general discussion around the future of young volunteering per se.

**Section summary**

- Grant recipients reported that they felt v has met their aims and objectives thus far.
  - This includes:
    - Providing funding
    - Changing the organisation and delivery of youth volunteering
    - Influencing young people’s attitudes and experiences of volunteering

**6.6 The future of v**

**6.6.1 Perceptions around the future of youth volunteering**

As discussed in Chapter 2 organisations involving and supporting volunteers are currently experiencing unprecedented funding cuts. There was widespread concern amongst stakeholders that this would be sustained and likely worsen in the future:
‘There’s a lot of things being cut away that are…essential in infrastructure to enable volunteering.’ (Private sector stakeholder)

Similarly, there was concern that increased competition for smaller amounts of funding would not help the sector:

‘[It] feels more and more crowded the more the days go on; we’re all going to be bickering over the same pots.’ (Participant at youth sector deliberative workshop)

Stakeholders described a variety of possible impacts, such as reduced investment in volunteer management, or tensions around job substitution arising from the involvement of volunteers as a cost-cutting mechanism. However while this inevitably presented a challenging environment, opportunities were also identified, such as developing new and creative approaches for funding or developing greater independence from government investment. There was also a sense that volunteering would survive the current spending cuts. Various stakeholders described an in-built resilience and a sense that volunteering had experienced and survived such challenges before:

‘It doesn’t look like volunteering is going away; it just looks like the money to support volunteering or the resources to support [it] is going away’

(Participant at youth sector deliberative workshop)

In order for volunteering to continue, however, stakeholders felt that certain aspects would need to adapt or change focus. This included the possible need to incentivise volunteering in order to attract a new and more diverse audience; and discussions around the need for volunteer support to become more commercial and profit-based, including introducing fees for previously free services such as volunteer brokerage or membership. There were subsequent concerns about how such developments could risk blurring boundaries and definitions of volunteering.

Stakeholders also felt that volunteering and government agendas could become more closely aligned in the future. This was often rooted in the perception that volunteering can be seen by government as ‘a panacea to society’s ills’ (participant at volunteering sector deliberative workshop) but was most commonly understood in relation to the government’s interest in citizenship. Concern was also expressed in several instances that the dominance of programmes such as the National Citizen Service pilots could limit the diversity of volunteering opportunities for young people, with such highly structured opportunities not being seen as appropriate or attractive to everyone. As is explored in Chapter 4, young volunteers seemed to agree with this sentiment, highlighting the need for diverse volunteering opportunities to match expectation, aspirations and circumstances.

6.6.2 The future development and direction of v

While the Coalition government and the Big Society policy agenda has raised the profile of volunteering in numerous ways, the breadth and depth of the spending cuts inevitably present organisations such as v with a challenge not seen for several generations.
Indeed, v has already implemented a major organisational restructure involving significant redundancies and has subsequently responded by developing new work programmes, such as involvement in the National Citizen Service pilots. In this context, this section explores stakeholder opinion about the future options for v and the possible paths it could take.

Stakeholders expressed differing views about the need for a national youth volunteering body, whether this be v or another organisation. Multiple advantages to such a body were described, including: promotion and brokerage of youth volunteering; ensuring quality standards; possessing a national view of marketing; unifying networks; and providing a hub for volunteers to access information and opportunities. These are identified as impacts and outcomes of v in this report. Questions were also raised about whether it was useful to have an organisation focusing explicitly on youth volunteering, and whether this risked creating a false segmentation of age groups. Alternative options suggested included incorporating such support into one element of a generic volunteer support body.

Recognising the severity of the funding environment, stakeholders did express concerns that v may not exist in five years’ time.

Should v come to an end, opinion was that the learning, knowledge and experience should not be lost. There was a reluctance to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and a desire to see any possible replacement build on what already exists; echoing earlier concerns about the transition between MV and v. Furthermore, several stakeholders indicated that should v come to an end, they did not want the new government’s message to be that it had failed, given the lengths that v had taken to develop and support youth volunteering, but rather that this was another evolution of programmes. The evidence from the evaluation indicates that v has been relatively successful in meeting the aims they set out to, in terms of impacting on the quality, quantity and diversity of young volunteering and engaging young people. This is perceived to have been part of a professionalization of youth volunteering.

Despite views that v may not exist in the future, there was a general sense that it would. Stakeholders described opportunities such as a perceived fit between v’s aims and objectives and the government’s citizenship agenda and the National Citizen Service pilots, as well as the potential link to the employability agenda. The challenges posed by funding cuts were also seen positively, allowing v to diversify its income sources and increase its independence.

There was, however, acknowledgement that it will be more challenging for v in the future. In the context of reduced funding, stakeholders noted v could lose much of what made it distinctive in the first place; it would no longer be so big, have such a high profile, or have the same ability to fund the sector through grants:

‘They’ll just be another charity, promoting youth volunteering, and doing all sorts of things opportunistically.’ (Participant at volunteering sector deliberative workshop)
As a result, stakeholders felt that it ‘needs to be better than anybody else’ at what it does in the future, and build on what makes it unique (Private sector stakeholder).

Stakeholders described a wide variety of different paths that v could take. Recognising that v had achieved a great deal, there was a strong desire for it to build on its strengths and consolidate. This included, for example: marketing and promoting youth volunteering; fundraising and accessing income from other sources such as the private sector; and giving grants. This also meant enhancing certain areas of its work, such as developing a more proactive, influencing role with government, raising its profile, and continuing ‘to make a noise’ (Private sector partner):

An area that stakeholders discussed was whether or not v should or could move into service delivery. There was particular support among private sector partners for v to move in this direction, directly running volunteering programmes. This perhaps reflects the direct and practical nature of relationships that v has had with private sector companies through its Match Fund programme.

Reflecting concerns that communication of its aims and objectives could be improved (outlined in Chapter 2) stakeholders emphasised that v should effectively communicate decisions about its future direction to the sector. There was some concern that while much had already changed, the flow of information had not been as good as it could have been, or had not started early enough indicating wider concerns about the need to preserve the trust, confidence and respect that v has effectively built up over the past few years.

Section summary

- Stakeholders described a challenging environment for volunteering, primarily due to the depth and breadth of the spending cuts. There was, however, a feeling that volunteering, albeit in a changed form, would survive this period.
- Opinion about the future of v varied, with some feeling that it would not exist in five years’ time and others being far more positive.
- Whatever form v’s future would take there was a strong desire for its learning and expertise not to be lost or for v to become a tool of political point-scoring.
- There was a desire to see v build on its strengths, including funding the sector and marketing and promoting youth volunteering, and mixed views expressed about the extent to which it could or should become involved in direct service delivery.
- Stakeholders expressed a desire to see v effectively communicate decisions about its future direction to the sector.

6.7 Implications

Implications for government

- To achieve successful social mixing, strategies for engaging hard-to-reach groups remain key as they enable young people already engaged in pro-social activities to mix with those newer to them.

Implications for v

Formative evaluation of v
• Campaigns to promote v and volunteering have been successful but this needs to be sustained for awareness to do so.
• Using their existing skills and knowledge v could be well-placed to provide a tool kit or support for volunteer involving organisations in terms of best practice for youth led activities and quality standards (following Reach).

Implications for the sector
• There is a need for an on-going resource that enables organisations involving volunteers to meet and maintain quality standards.
• Youth-led activities have increased among v funded organisations but the legacy of this should be maintained to ensure youth led volunteering activities continue. Youth-led activities are credited with assisting with the engagement of young people.
7 Conclusion

In a relatively short period of time, v invested in a large and diverse network of organisations to support the growth of youth volunteering in England. This report has outlined in detail the results of the formative evaluation of the v programme that took place over the duration of the v funded network (2008 - 2011).

The v funding programme was carefully designed, with different investment programmes addressing different objectives, within an overarching aim to inspire young people to volunteer. These programmes included generating income from the private sector (Match Fund), engaging NEET young people, to provide them with education, training and employment experience (v'talentyear) and programmes directly providing funding to young people to set up their own youth volunteering projects (vcashpoint).

Evidence gathered throughout the independent formative evaluation demonstrates that this investment enabled over a million volunteering opportunities to be created and filled by young people between 2008 and 2011. The characteristics of the young people who took part broadly mirror that of the general population of young people in the UK which is of note because volunteering has traditionally been taken up to greater extent by more affluent sections of the youth population (as demonstrated by the Citizenship Survey). The evaluation found that v’s programmes engaged a high level of young people from ethnic minorities, and vcashpoint activities in particular took place in areas of high deprivation and social exclusion. However this is not a story solely of engaging young people less traditionally likely to volunteer, but one that also reflects the success of recruitment strategies in achieving a social mix of participants from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Funded projects have recounted that the programme encouraged them to actively seek out harder-to-reach groups, and support them to engage with volunteering, alongside those young people already likely to do so. The routes that young people take to become volunteers were outlined in Chapter 4, and illustrated that the programme design played an important role in ensuring v programmes reached a range of young people.

v’s funding supported a range of different organisations, covering diverse areas of interest for young people, and included those organisations that did and did not already work with young people or support volunteer activities. This diversity appealed to the range of interests and motivations of young volunteers, improving access and providing a mixed selection of opportunities across the country.

However, there were a number of challenges experienced by v during this period of investment. Many organisations funded by v initially expressed concerns and were unsupportive of what was felt to be an overly target driven programme design. A lack of effective communication between v and the funded network was also highlighted. The diversity of the programme could also make it difficult to tangibly measure outcomes that followed on from volunteering and attribute these to v’s investments or programme design. Indeed a key learning aspect of the formative evaluation has been putting in place improved processes to adequately evaluate and measure outcomes, with a dearth of quantifiable data on aspects such as community or social impacts available. Learning
gained through the formative evaluation enabled $v$ to introduce new approaches to data collection, such as individualised monitoring which is completed by participating volunteers. This approach helped to provide a richer and more detailed dataset around the demographics of young volunteers participating in $v$ programmes and could become an effective template for future evaluations of volunteering and other youth focussed programmes.

While young people are at the heart of the $v$ programme, the funded network has been the conduit through which $v$’s engagement with young people most often occurred. This could bring benefits as well as challenges. The benefits include the impact that being part of the $v$ funded network had on organisations, enabling them to expand provision, engage with more young people, improve the quality of the volunteering processes and adopt more youth involvement activities. All of these qualities were evidenced in the evaluation. However, this programme design also resulted in decreased awareness of $v$ programmes, with many young people instead attributing their volunteering experience and the outcome of this to the organisations they volunteered with. This diluted $v$’s impact at local level, although it is clear that the design and structure of $v$’s funding enabled organisations to work with young volunteers in new ways. The programme also secured a number of additional impacts, as outlined in Chapter 5.

Due to recent cuts in public sector funding $v$ has been unable to sustain its investments in a network of volunteer involving organisations. Looking to the future, $v$ will aim to continue to champion youth volunteering and youth-led action, and engage in a range of activities to do so. $v$ will for example deliver aspects of the new National Citizen Service.

Criticism levied at $v$ when they were set up was that they took over from a previous programme and not enough was done by government to harness the learning from that programme. It is interesting to see that this concern is being raised once more with a desire to ensure the learning and legacy of the $v$ funded network is fully realised among stakeholders.

$v$’s commitment to undertaking a large scale, formative evaluation of its work, and to share this learning in a open, transparent and collaborative way, is an important step towards ensuring that the voluntary and public sectors in particular, can learn about how to effectively engage young volunteers in their work. With volunteering an integral component of the Big Society ethos, and young people facing a difficult economic and employment period, these lessons are important ones, with key social and policy implications.
Too often evaluation reports are briefly heralded before being confined to the dusty annals of an organisation’s history alongside a collection of Annual Reports from yesteryear. At v, learning has always been an intrinsic part of our DNA and, whilst we will never profess to having all the answers, we are always prepared to learn from our experiences. It is for this reason that I am writing an Afterword for this report, which represents both a reflection on our impact and a valuable reference point for our future.

This report offers significant insight for all and we hope you will take the time to absorb it. The findings are helping us to shape our future activities by building on strong foundations and enhancing areas we can improve. We have learnt a great deal about our impact but more importantly what we need to do to be able to tell an even more persuasive story.

Our (minimum) social return on investment ratio of £5.80 for every £1 invested is robust and compelling and yet it only relates to a fraction of our overall impact. Collectively, we have to improve how we monitor the personal impact of young peoples’ volunteering journeys, particularly over the longer term. We need to strengthen the case for the role that volunteering plays in boosting employability and developing key capabilities which help young people succeed and flourish. We must persuade a broad cross section of investors that continued investment in opportunities for young people will aid our communities, help our economic recovery and assist those experiencing the negative and damaging impacts of high youth unemployment. We need to devise and develop new ways of measuring the community impact that these opportunities generate, shifting away from anecdotal stories and towards a more robust and quantifiable evidence base. This is a challenge we all must rise to.

We are proud of our achievements including: creating and filling over one million volunteering opportunities; engaging a diverse range of young people within which no group was under-represented; and improving the quality of their volunteering experience, but of course, there is more to do.
The financial climate is certainly more challenging than at any time in the recent past, but there has never been a more important time to dedicate resources to accurately measuring impact. I can testify that we have learnt as much about how to collect data, as we have from the data that we collected and I can vouch for the power of an iterative evaluation approach in changing our organisation for the better.

As v embarks on delivering its new five year plan, we will build on what we do best: developing the confidence and self-esteem of the young; building their capabilities for work; helping them to turn their passions and cares into enterprises that bring about change for the better; and inspiring them to become fully engaged citizens and leaders of the future.


Terry Ryall
Chief Executive, v
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Appendix A

Evaluation Methodology
A brief overview of the purpose and methodology for each of the nine evaluation strands is given below.

Grant recipient survey

Overview of strand
This strand of the evaluation comprises two waves of telephone surveys with v grant recipients. Interviews are taking place with vinvolved teams and projects, vtalent year projects, Match Fund projects and vcashpoint recipients.

The main aims of this strand are to:
- measure and track experiences of the application process and engaging with v in fulfilment of grant-funded activities;
- measure (anticipated and actual) outcomes and impacts of grants on organisations and young people, and plans for sustainability;
- compare experiences of the funded organisations across funding schemes and across time; and
- link this information with case study and cost-benefit analysis strands.

Methodology
Due to the nature of the questions covered in the interview, organisations/young people whose grants had already ended when the evaluation commenced were not covered by the study. It was therefore agreed only to sample ongoing projects, namely:

- all vinvolved teams and projects, and vtalent year projects;
- Match Fund projects still running at the time of the first interview;
- vcashpoint recipients whose projects were still running at the time of the first interview.
- Due to the small number of MyGame projects commissioned they were not included as they would not have been statistically significant.

Contact details of grant recipients were given to us by v, excluding any who had opted out at the start of the evaluation. Interviewers from NatCen’s Telephone Unit were briefed by researchers about v, the evaluation and the interview. An advance letter was sent to all selected projects notifying them about the study, what the interview would cover and that an interviewer would be calling.

The first wave of fieldwork took place between August and September 2009. For some grants, this was close to the start of the funding, while for others (for example, vinvolved teams and projects) this was mid-way through their funding. A few projects were already towards the end of their grant-funded period (primarily from vcashpoint and Match Fund
projects). Subsequent (smaller) batches of Wave One interviews were conducted approximately every three months, mainly to capture later rounds of cashpoint grants.

Results from the Wave Two interviews were only available in May 2011. The majority of Wave Two interviews took place early in 2011, when the involved funding scheme projects came to an end. In this version of the report some of the figures reported from the grant recipient survey remain interim.

Young people survey

Overview of strand
This strand of the evaluation comprises a survey of young people in England, which is being run over two years on the NatCen Omnibus.

The main aims of the survey are to:
- track young people’s general awareness of and attitudes towards volunteering;
- provide supplementary information on awareness of and attitudes towards v; and
- enable comparisons between young people who volunteer and those who do not.

This strand was designed to shed light on the extent of, and attitudes towards, volunteering among young people in England. It also provides information about young people’s awareness of v, and their reactions to v branding.

As the Omnibus study was running over two years, we are also able to provide some measures of change over time, for example, in relation to levels of awareness of v. We should note the limitation here, however, that any changes identified will only be found to be significant if they are relatively large (for example, over five to nine per cent). The survey will not have the power to pick up smaller changes such as a couple of percentage points.

About the NatCen Omnibus and how it works
The NatCen Omnibus incorporates:
- a random sample of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain (of which around ten per cent are aged 16 to 25 years old);
- around 1,600 face-to-face achieved interviews per wave (four a year) in total, with approximately 150 young people aged 16-25 per wave;
- Computer-Assisted Interviewing (CAI) in respondents’ own homes; and
- data weighted for selection probabilities and non-response

Why we chose it
- The Omnibus represents a cost-effective way of identifying a high-quality sample of young people (the alternative of screening would be extremely time- and resource-intensive).

Methodology

Formative evaluation of v
The Omnibus questions were developed in partnership with consortium members and v staff and covered the following topics:

- whether young people volunteer and, if so, what sort of volunteering activities they are involved in;
- attitudes towards volunteering for example, what young people see as the benefits of volunteering;
- whether people would like to volunteer in the future and, if so, what areas they would be interested in getting involved in;
- whether young people have heard of v; and
- what they think of v’s branding and marketing campaigns.

The questions were piloted in March 2009; twenty-eight young people were interviewed in order to test how well the questions worked. As well as the main set of Omnibus questions, respondents also answered a ‘debrief questionnaire’, which asked them to reflect on the questions they had been asked in the study and about the answers they had given.

Following the pilot, amendments were made to the questionnaire, taking on board the feedback received from the young people and the interviewers. In particular, the questionnaire was shortened and the section on v’s branding and marketing campaigns was simplified.

The first wave of the Omnibus on which the questions were set to run (April to May 2009) and a later wave were cancelled, so an alternative solution was sought to meet the requirements of the evaluation. The alternative proposal was in effect to boost the sample of younger people in the second, fourth and eighth waves of the Omnibus by interviewing additional eligible household members from the same household as the ‘core’ respondents in order to compensate (in terms of numbers) for the cancelled waves.

The young people’s survey on the Omnibus thus ran over six waves, with three of these waves boosted in this way, in order to generate around 1,200 interviews over two years.

**Secondary analysis of the Citizenship Survey**

**Overview of strand**

This strand of the evaluation is secondary analysis of Citizenship Survey data, focusing on the prevalence of volunteering among young people in England over the period of v’s activities, the profile of young volunteers and views or experiences of volunteering.

The main aims of this strand are to:

- look at the proportion of young people volunteering in England since 2005;
- provide a profile of who is volunteering in terms of key demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity, gender and disability; and
- look at the types of things young people feel act as barriers to participation in volunteering and what young people get out of volunteering.

**Methodology**

Formative evaluation of v
The analysis was designed to provide headline findings from the 2003 to 2009-10 Citizenship Surveys for the following measures of volunteering:

- any formal volunteering in the last 12 months;
- any informal volunteering in the last 12 months; and
- any formal or informal volunteering in the last 12 months.

**Defining volunteering in the Citizenship Survey**

Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefit others or the environment. People were asked firstly about any groups, clubs or organisations that they had taken part in, supported or helped over the last 12 months and were presented with a set of examples to help them choose. They were then asked whether they gave unpaid help to any of these groups, using a showcard listing possible ways of giving unpaid help. Informal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as an individual to someone who is not a relative. Respondents were asked whether they had given unpaid help (apart from any help given through a group, club or organisation) to anyone who is not a relative. A showcard was used listing possible ways of giving help.

The Citizenship Survey provides measures of yearly and monthly participation in formal and informal volunteering. ‘Regular’ participation is defined as taking part ‘at least once a month’ in the 12 months before interview. ‘Yearly’ participation is defined as taking part ‘at least once a year’ and includes everyone who had participated on at least one occasion during the 12 months before interview, including those who took part at least once a month.

This strand focuses on whether people have volunteered formally or informally over the last 12 months.

**Prevalence of volunteering**

The first section of analysis examined whether there have been statistically significant differences in the proportion of young people participating in formal volunteering in the 12 months prior to interview since 2005. The 2005 data was used as the baseline for this analysis as this year of the Citizenship Survey was the closest to the inception of v. However, it is important to acknowledge that 2005 was ‘The Year of the Volunteer’. During 2005 an increased effort was made by volunteering organisations and the government to encourage more people to volunteer and on some measures of

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38 These are: children’s education/schools; youth/children’s activities (outside school); education for adults; sports/exercise (taking part, coaching or going to watch); religion; politics; the elderly; health, disability and social welfare; safety, first aid; the environment, animals; justice and human rights; local community or neighbourhood groups; citizens’ groups; hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs; trade union activity; other.

39 These are: raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events; leading the group/member of a committee; organising or helping to run an activity or event; visiting people; befriending or mentoring people; giving advice/information/counselling; secretarial, admin or clerical work; providing transport/driving; representing; campaigning; other practical help (e.g. helping out at school, shopping); any other help.

40 These are: keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about (visiting in person, telephoning or e-mailing); doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills; cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs; decorating, or doing any kind of home or car repairs; babysitting or caring for children; sitting with or providing personal care (e.g. washing, dressing) for someone who is sick or frail; looking after a property or a pet for someone who is away; giving advice; writing letters or filling in forms; representing someone (for example talking to a council dept, or to a doctor); transporting or escorting someone (for example to a hospital, or on an outing); anything else.
volunteering there was an increase in the prevalence of young people participating. Therefore, it is also useful to show figures for 2003 where available to put into context any changes since 2005.

This part of the analysis is designed to break down the prevalence of volunteering among different age groups, for teenagers (16 to 19 years) and those in their twenties (20 to 25 years). The analysis also looks at the figures for all respondents to the Citizenship Survey (i.e. people of all ages) in order to provide some context for any changes in the prevalence of volunteering among the general population.

The profile of young volunteers since 2005
The analysis will provide details of the profile of volunteers in 2005 and examine whether this has changed over time. The profile will include a breakdown of the proportion of young volunteers by age group, gender, ethnicity, whether people have a long-term limiting illness or disability, economic status and highest educational qualification.

Data are also available from 2007-08 onwards about sexual orientation and whether people have any caring responsibilities for a member of their immediate family or a close relative outside of their household who has any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity. Therefore, these data will be included in the profile analysis of 2007-08 onwards.

The analysis will also present the findings from the multi-variate analysis included in the 2008-09 Volunteering and Charitable Giving topic report. This will indicate which groups of people aged 16 to 25 are more likely to volunteer.

Views and experiences of volunteering
The Citizenship Survey can also provide some information about barriers to volunteering, how people found out about volunteering opportunities and what people think they get from volunteering (for example, satisfaction or increased skills). The analysis will include the key findings from these additional questions for young volunteers.

Secondary analysis of administrative data

Overview of strand
The analysis of administrative data involves looking at statistics gathered as part of the project monitoring process on the demographics of those recruited as volunteers to programmes funded by v.

The main aims of this strand are to:
- understand the extent to which v's projects are recruiting volunteers from groups of the population which previously have not engaged with volunteering; and
- understand the relationship between the distribution of projects funded by v and the distribution of third sector organisations and resources.

Methodology
This analysis uses monitoring report returns provided by v funded projects which give information about the numbers and characteristics of young people engaged as volunteers, and which also includes information about the location of activities funded by v. The research team used the data to assess the numbers of volunteers compared to the numbers of volunteering opportunities. The data is also used to determine whether or not the characteristics of volunteers on v’s programmes are similar to those of the population of young people as a whole, and whether their characteristics are similar to or different from those of young people who are already engaged in volunteering. The statistics derived from the monitoring data are compared with information from the 2001 Census, from survey datasets such as the Citizenship Survey, and from statistics from other sources on the characteristics of particular groups of the population such as young offenders or lone parents.

The administrative data was found to be of quite poor quality early in the evaluation and concerted efforts have been made to improve this. The quality of returns did improve over time and is reported in this report. This data set has been analysed by the evaluation team.

Individual monitoring
In order to generate better quality monitoring data the evaluation team suggested that v collect more detailed individual-level data directly from the young volunteers. As a result of this a brief questionnaire was designed (with slightly different questions depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity – full-time, part-time etc). This was set up as an online questionnaire and volunteers involved in the latter part of the programme were asked to log in and complete monitoring data relating to themselves and their experience of volunteering.

This generated data based on returns by 2021 individuals which has been used throughout this report and has been linked to the project level monitoring and SROI evaluation (see below). The advantage of this data is that it gives an independent source of verification of the broad picture given by the monitoring data supplied by projects. We have also gained more detailed information on the area of residence of individuals because we have postcoded data for 1500 individuals. It is also possible to a limited degree to crosstabulate the responses.

Post code data analysis
The postcode data from the project monitoring relating to vcashpoint was also analysed (other project postcode data would not have explained anything about the profile of the volunteers are they may have travelled to attend the activity, whereas it could be assumed vcashpoint recipient postcodes referred to their home post code. The postcode of the vcashpoint grant holder was matched to the output area from the 2001 Census. Output areas (OAs) are geographical areas with an average population of around 300 and were defined using the outputs from the 2001 Census. In order to describe the social characteristics of output areas, the ONS Output Area Classification was attached to the data. This is a multidimensional classification which groups output areas into different types of place. The classification is available at three levels of detail and the sample size
allows us to use the group (21 area types) and supergroup (7 area types) level classifications. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the lower super output area (LSOA; average population 1500 people) was also attached to the data. The IMD is a uni-dimensional index which allows areas to be ranked against each other in terms of their level of deprivation. For the purposes of this work the IMD was split into deciles at a national level.

**Cost-benefit analysis**

**Overview of strand**
The cost-benefit analysis (CBA) aims to establish the cost-effectiveness of projects funded by v. This includes their overall benefits to young people and host organisations. Therefore, the main aim is to estimate the overall impact that v is having for each £1 invested.

**Methodology**
A full cost-benefit analysis requires a great deal of information, covering the differences generated for individuals over time, and the input they make to the different projects. This data is not easily available from any particular source. This element will therefore involve drawing on a range of resources.

First, we take data on costs as provided by v in the form of the grants database established for internal monitoring. The cost data that we use is the actual spending data, what the projects have cost v, rather some other metric such as the original level of grant or projected spending.

The key source on the benefits of v is derived from innovative individual monitoring data, which was completed by volunteers online. This new data collection method was a particularly important development during the evaluation, and is strongly in keeping with the formative nature of the evaluation. The respondents provided information on changes to their personal and technical skills, and their involvement in local communities. They also indicated their original economic activity, and that following their period of volunteering. Various social and demographic characteristics were also collected. This data enables us to calculate monetary values for many of these outcomes, using past examples of SROI evaluations.

**Qualitative case studies**

**Overview of strand**
This strand comprises 42 ‘light touch’ and 18 ‘in-depth’ case studies of v funded activities drawn from across v’s funding schemes.

The main aims of this strand are:
• to explore the experiences of v’s grant recipients, project staff and young volunteers; and
• to explore the impact of v on organisations, young volunteers and the local community.

Stage 1 light touch case studies
The aim of the light touch case studies was to explore the set-up, delivery and impact of a broad range of v funded activities.

Sample design and selection
Forty-two qualitative light touch case studies were completed in two cohorts. The funded activities included as case studies were selected from a sample frame of v funded activities. The aim was to include funded activities with a range of characteristics. These included as primary criteria:
• The funding scheme
• Whether the activity was funded pre or post September 2008
• Geography

The achieved sample for these primary criteria is (please note data for one of the 42 is still to be entered):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding scheme</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match Fund</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinvolved teams</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinvolved projects</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashpoint</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talentlyear</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When activity funded</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre- September 08</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post- September 08</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England wide</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sample was also monitored to ensure diversity in terms of the level of funding granted, the types of volunteering opportunities offered and the profile of volunteers the activity aimed to attract.

**Data collection**
In order to understand set-up, delivery and impact of funded activities depth or paired interviews were carried out with two key staff members: the grant recipient and project coordinator. Where necessary however, the team adopted a flexible approach meaning that in some cases interviews were carried out with fewer or a greater number of participants. Additionally, a more in-depth approach was taken with cashpoint projects to ensure that timely and rigorous data were collected. This included, where appropriate, interviews with volunteers on cashpoint projects.

Interviews were conducted using a topic guide. Interviews with grant recipients and other project staff focused on applying for funding, setting up and delivering the funded activity including, identifying opportunities and recruiting volunteers, support and accreditation, relationship and communication with and impacts of the funded activity upon organisations, young people and communities. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis using the framework method (see below).

**In-depth case studies**
The purpose of in-depth case studies was to furnish a longitudinal viewpoint on the delivery and impact of funded activities as well as to gain additional perspectives on the funded activity.

**Sample design and selection**
In order to capture a longitudinal perspective fourteen of the forty two original light touch case studies were followed up as in-depth case studies. Additionally, four funded activities not included at the light touch stage were included as an in-depth case study thus bringing the total to eighteen. The projects not included as light touch case studies were selected to incorporate activities from the new Mygames funding scheme and to help ensure diversity in the sample.

The primary and secondary sampling criteria for the case studies are outlined above. The table below shows the achieved sample for the primary criteria for the in-depth case studies.
Appendix Table A.2  Primary sampling criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding scheme</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match Fund</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved teams</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved projects</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olympic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talentyear</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When activity funded</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre- September 08</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post- September 08</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England wide</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp;Humberside</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection
In order to capture the perspectives of young people depth interviews or focus groups were carried out with volunteers on funded activities. Follow-up depth or paired interviews were also carried with original participants from the light touch case studies. Observations of funded activities and depth interviews with local stakeholders were also conducted where appropriate. A total of 157 participants took part in 75 data collection encounters broken down as follows:

- 38 depth interviews or focus groups with 111 volunteers
- 37 depth or paired interviews with 46 staff or stakeholders

Additionally, 16 observations of funded activities were carried out. Thus, in total 91 data collection encounters were carried out for the in-depth case studies.

In-depth interviews were also carried out using a topic guide. Follow-up interviews with grant recipients and/or project staff focused on similar themes as covered during the light-touch phase with an additional focus upon changes to delivery of the funded activity over-time. Interviews with volunteers focused on routes into volunteering, young peoples’ experiences of volunteering on a funded activity and impacts and outcomes of volunteering for young people and other beneficiaries. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis using the framework method (see below).

Formative evaluation of \( v \)
Data analysis

All interviews and focus groups from light touch and in-depth phases were digitally recorded with participants’ permission and later transcribed verbatim. The data was managed using ‘Framework’, a method developed by the Qualitative Research Unit at NatCen and analysed thematically.

The first stage of analysis involves familiarisation with the transcribed data and identification of emerging issues to inform the development of a thematic framework. This is a series of thematic matrices or charts, each chart representing one key theme. The column headings on each theme chart relate to key sub-topics, and the rows to individual respondents. Data from each case is them summarised in the relevant cell. The context of the information is retained and the page of the transcript from which it comes is noted, so that it is possible to return to a transcript to explore a point in more detail or extract text for verbatim quotation. This approach ensures that the analysis is comprehensive and consistent and that links with the verbatim data are retained. Organising the data in this way enables the views, circumstances and experiences of all respondents to be explored within an analytical framework that is both grounded in, and driven by, their own accounts. The thematic charts allow for the full range of views and experiences to be compared and contrasted both across and within cases, and for patterns and themes to be identified and explored.

To accommodate the different experiences of participant groups separate analytical frameworks were developed for project staff and volunteers.

Building a team of young researchers

In response to v’s youth-led ethos and initial requirement that the evaluation should provide opportunities for young people to be directly engaged in reviewing and evaluating v’s work, a team of 12 peer researchers have been recruited and trained to assist with the evaluation and lead on the research with young volunteers during the in-depth case studies. A residential training event held in January 2010 was used to train the young researchers in some core principles of research methods and ethics, and to allow them to build as a team and learn about the evaluation. Each young peer researcher then had a dedicated mentor from the evaluation team to support them in conducting their planned research during the course of 2010 and 2011.

Three additional training events have been held and peer researchers each had opportunities to conduct fieldwork, become involved in analysis and comment on the findings. To enable their over experiences to be included this is outlined in appendix D.
Stakeholder consultation

Overview of strand
This strand comprises in-depth interviews and deliberative workshops with a range of stakeholders from across government and the private, youth and volunteering sectors. Stakeholders have been identified in the evaluation as key senior government, voluntary sector, youth sector and business sector staff who are influenced by, or may influence, v’s work and the context they operate within. Therefore in the report, the term ‘stakeholder’ refers explicitly to stakeholder participants who have been interviewed as part of the evaluation. Clearly individuals and agencies that have a stake in the work that v undertake are wide ranging and diverse and not all have been included in the evaluation. To make clear this distinction, those with a general interest in v are referred to as v’s ‘audiences’ and not stakeholders. v’s audiences, as referred to in this way, is a general term and includes those both involved in the evaluation and not.

Two waves of fieldwork were carried out for both the interviews and workshops, a year apart, during the course of the evaluation. This enabled both a monitoring of changes in attitudes and perceptions of v over the evaluation period and a monitoring on the changing environment in which v operates. Where possible the individuals and organisations spoken to in wave one were invited to take part in wave two; where this was not feasible, an alternative individual or supplementary organisation was involved.

The main aims of this strand are:

- to gather views on the external environment in which v operates; and
- to review attitudes towards v and its performance among key stakeholder groups.

Methodology

In-depth interviews
Wave one took place during the summer and autumn of 2009 and the autumn of 2010. The first wave involved 11 interviews, including five representatives from government departments, one representative on behalf of local government, and five representatives from key volunteering sector infrastructure organisations. Nine interviews were completed in wave two, all of which were with individuals who were interviewed in wave one. This included four representatives from government departments, one representative on behalf of local government, and four representatives from key volunteering sector infrastructure organisations. In each case interviews lasted for between 45 to 60 minutes and were transcribed for analysis using the computer programme Framework.

Deliberative workshops
The two waves took place in autumn 2009 and autumn 2010. Each workshop was designed to focus on a particular stakeholder group: volunteering organisations; youth organisations; and private sector organisations. A wide range of individuals were invited to each workshop and as with the in-depth interviews, those participants who attended wave one workshops were invited to attend wave two. A very low response rate to the private
sector workshop in year one (with only one respondent agreeing to participate) led us to review the methodology and to replace the workshop in both waves with a series of semi-structured telephone interviews (six were completed in wave one and five in wave two). While the remaining workshops had lower than anticipated turnouts, they were, in both waves, highly productive and insightful. Details of attendance are provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Autumn 2009</th>
<th>Autumn 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth sector</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering sector</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews with v staff**

Group discussions were also carried out with v project support staff and programme managers. The purpose of interviews was to gather contextual information used to shape the direction and focus of the end of evaluation report. Interviews were carried out using a topic guide and focused upon the implementation and delivery of funded activities and project/programme management such as monitoring activities. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Discourse analysis**

**Overview of strand**

This strand involves an analysis of youth volunteering discourse within the UK print media. This strand was developed following the initial scoping study as it was felt that any evaluation of v’s activities should take full account of the political and media context in which it operates.

The main aims of this strand are:

- to explore the media and political discourse around youth volunteering;
- to explore the impact that external discourse may have on v; and
- to provide contextual information for the rest of the evaluation.

**Methodology**

The analysis is focused upon five key time frames: the launch of the Russell Commission and the publication of the Commission’s recommendations (2004, 2005), the launch of v (2006), the party conference period in 2009, the general election period 2010 and the Prime Minister’s announcement of the National Citizen Service Pilots. The fifth time period was unspecified at the design stage of the media analysis. However, flexibility in the design was important to ensure that events or outputs during the lifetime of the evaluation, which generate significant discourse around youth volunteering, were also captured.

The scope of the analysis has been limited to the specified time periods and to media discourse in order to ensure that the data generated is both manageable and provides depth of coverage. In addition, the analysis provides a snapshot of the salient viewpoints.
and debates on youth volunteering and will allow for comparison of any changes in discourse between timeframes.

Media discourse was monitored using Lexis Nexis UK, a global news and business information tool. Previous work undertaken by IVR indicated that there is varied and interchangeable use of the concept of volunteering. Therefore, a proxy list of terms was developed and was used in monitoring discourse via Lexis Nexis UK.

The scope of the analysis extends to the full range of information sources covered by Lexis Nexis UK for articles which discuss youth volunteering. For proxy terms the scope was limited to National UK newspapers and major regional newspapers within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Articles were then manually sifted for relevance. Further information about methodology is contained in Appendix A.

**Media sources**

The scope of the analysis extends to the full range of information sources covered by Lexis Nexis UK for articles which discuss youth volunteering. For proxy terms the scope was limited to National UK newspapers and major regional newspapers within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland available through Lexis Nexis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix Table A.3</th>
<th>Media Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>• Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Independent and Independent on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Morning Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Daily Star and Sunday Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Express and The Sunday Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Mirror and The Sunday Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The News of the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scotland</strong></td>
<td>• Daily Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Herald and Sunday Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scotsman and Scotsman on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sunday Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>• Belfast Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Belfast Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sunday Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Irish news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wales</strong></td>
<td>• Western Mail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time periods
Searches were run during the six key time periods illustrated in Table 3.

Appendix Table A.4  Time periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/ Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Launch of Russell Commission</td>
<td>May 2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Commission report findings</td>
<td>March 2005</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v is launched</td>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party conference season</td>
<td>19th September- 8th October</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General election campaign</td>
<td>6th April – 12th May</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch of NCS pilots</td>
<td>22nd July – 22nd August</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proxy search terms
Searches were run using 17 ‘proxy’ terms for volunteering.

Appendix Table A.5  Proxy search terms

- Volunteering
- Youth Volunteering
- Active citizenship
- Community development
- Community work
- Unpaid work
- Civic participation
- Civic engagement
- Unpaid volunteering
- Civic service
- Voluntary action
- Voluntary work
- Voluntary activity
- Community engagement
- Community service
- Citizen Service
- Participant involvement
- Unpaid activism

Marketing and communications evaluation

Overview of strand
This strand comprises a range of activities designed to evaluate and inform v’s communications and campaigns.

The main aims of this strand are to:
- assess the impact of v’s marketing communications on its audiences’ awareness, attitudes and behaviour; and
- assess the return on investment of v’s marketing communications activity.

A further aim is to:
Formative evaluation of v

- assist v’s Marketing & Communications team to plan and implement campaign evaluation internally so that they can more effectively measure the success of campaigns as they happen and adapt their tactics accordingly

Methodology

We are using a number of measures to assess the effectiveness of v’s marketing communications activity. We are examining v’s campaigning planning and management practices through interviews with head office staff and by reviewing relevant documentation. Intermediate measures to assess people’s awareness and attitudes towards v are being tracked through the Omnibus survey of young people, feedback forms collected at v events, and comments posted on v’s website and social media platforms. v’s impact on behaviour is being measured through tracking of searches on the Do-It National Volunteering Database, the number of volunteering opportunities being taken and interviews with young people and grant recipients. By ‘impact on behaviour’, we mean the direct behavioural response that young people have to v’s communication activities- as a result of being exposed to v’s communication campaigns or activities, do young people go to the website and search for a volunteering opportunity, apply for a volunteering opportunity (for example, to man the bigvbus), tell their friends about v, and so on.

A detailed examination/case study of one campaign was undertaken to highlight best practice and areas for improvement. A case study of the bigvbus has been carried out and was presented in the interim report.

An analysis of website statistics (for both the previous and existing v website) was also undertaken. A framework for evaluation has also been prepared for v to help it design its own evaluation practices internally.

Finally a social media listening exercise was completed.

The methodology for this involved tracking the following keywords (and their variations) but were unable to track the letter ‘v’ because the system returned an overwhelming number of mentions. This is a sample of v’s brands and initiatives rather than an exhaustive list.
We also looked at a combination of indirect keywords such as ‘Big Society’ and ‘London 2012’ used in conjunction with ‘Youth Volunteering’.

Keywords were refined to exclude unrelated or off-topic mentions and ensure that we were only tracking mentions from appropriate and relevant sources. This process continued throughout the duration of the listening to ensure the output was relevant.

When the listening period was complete all mentions were downloaded and manually analysed for themes and sentiment.

**CONDUCTING AN SROI**

One of the major benefits of SROI is the processes it puts in place, not just the overall SROI ratio achieved, even if the latter often receives the most attention. By implementing systems that enable SROI calculations, organisations can become more evidence-based, and can establish access to streams of information that outlast evaluations of social return. SROI investigations tend to be irregular, and one-off, and completed by external researchers. The mechanisms that SROI research helps to put in place may have longer lasting beneficial effects, and be sustained by staff continuing to work within the organisation. In particular the SROI process should provide scrutiny of what data is being collected, what other information might be worthwhile collecting, and how this information relates to the objectives that organisations are seeking to achieve.

At the start of this formative evaluation, the main data available to the research team was the administrative database devised to help manage projects. This contained good detail on the costs of different programmes, which is essential for SROI which requires both benefits and costs. Whilst primarily generated for internal reasons, this source also covered data on the different kinds of volunteers recruited, and limited information on their social background. However it included relatively little information on the wider benefits achieved by v programmes – the changes in confidence, self-esteem and economic status achieved by individual volunteers, the benefits obtained within organisations, and the benefits accruing to communities and society more generally.
To conduct the SROI, a new monitoring system was put in place that was focused on the individual level, and on those changes likely to be related to the experience of volunteering. An online questionnaire was devised and implemented, where individual volunteers were able to record changes that were likely to arisen from their volunteering experience. These questionnaires covered difference in economic activity, qualifications and volunteering behaviour. The respondents were asked to consider changes in their levels of self-esteem and confidence, their local engagement, how they had developed team-working skills, and so on, following their experience of volunteering. Among the most important questions, at least in calculating social returns, were those asking about economic activity – whether working, in training, or going to university – and how they had changed following the programme attended. Some final questions concerned the different characteristics of young people, their age, sex, health status and so on, that provides further insight into the groups attracted into volunteering and their diversity compared with young people as a whole.

Discussions of wider community impact produced some new ideas on how these might be measured, including community impact questionnaires that might be completed within projects. This is an ongoing process, and we are not able to report on the implications at this stage. The estimates presented in this report should therefore be regarded as cautious, as they do not include consideration of these potential important sources of social value.

talentyear
The full-time talentyear programme is clearly rather more expensive than the other programmes supported by v. A separate analysis of this programme requires more detailed consideration of the long hours of volunteering required over the 30 weeks of these programmes. This should mean a total of over 1300 hours of volunteering delivered during this time. Even assuming an shadow level of wages equal to the national minimum wage, this input of volunteering time is likely to have generated over £7500 of value to the direct beneficiaries.

Using the same techniques as in the main part of the chapter, and the same source of data, this longer programme would show a lower SROI. However, it would be premature to reach the conclusion that this programme is less effective than the shorter programmes without considering the sustainability of the longer term effects. A more intensive programme may have similar shorter-term benefits, but generate further impacts in the long-run. It may also be addressing a different group of young people, with a greater ‘distance travelled’ for those moving into work or starting at university. The SROI calculation used in this section has only included the shorter-term benefits – the SROI ratio would be much higher if these effects were assumed to persist over several years. This is certainly plausible, but it is not an area where we have appropriate data to demonstrate this.
## Appendix B

### Appendix Table B.1  Theory of change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DELIVER:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- vcashtpoint</td>
<td>- 1 million more young people are volunteering</td>
<td>- Increase in the propensity to volunteer among all young people</td>
<td>- Increasing numbers of young people are volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Match Fund</td>
<td>- Increasing local and national media coverage of v events and programmes</td>
<td>- Volunteering is regarded as a ‘normal’ activity by all young people</td>
<td>- Increasing numbers of youth-led activities and organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National Youth Volunteering Programme</td>
<td>- Accessing volunteering opportunities is easier</td>
<td>- Creation of new partnerships and working arrangements</td>
<td>- Greater participation of young people in mainstream organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFORM:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocacy through media</td>
<td>- v messages are increasingly picked up by local and national media</td>
<td>- Quality assurance standards widely used in the sector</td>
<td>- v becomes sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Website development</td>
<td>- increasing use of the v website</td>
<td>- Improved reputation and awareness of v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Establish partnerships to build awareness and use</td>
<td>- Increasing traffic to the v website to partner agencies</td>
<td>- v has raised sufficient funds to continue beyond 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLLABORATE:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Partnership formation with other volunteering organisations</td>
<td>- Participating organisations are promoting the v campaign</td>
<td>- Partner institutions and policy makers become advocates of v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Catalyse and create new youth-led volunteering opportunities</td>
<td>- Youth-led activities and organisations are growing</td>
<td>- Changes in how youth volunteering opportunities are provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Establish relationships and programmes with corporates</td>
<td>- Mobilise the resources of partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Maximise the match fund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFLUENCE:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conduct and disseminate research into youth volunteering</td>
<td>- Key sector institutions are supporting the v campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy development activities</td>
<td>- Key policy makers participating in v policy meetings and events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Partnership development with other volunteering support agencies</td>
<td>- Emergence of a consensus on changes needed to improve youth volunteering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Specify good practice standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative evaluation of v
### Appendix Table B.2  Summary statistics from monitoring data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Volunteers</th>
<th>% of total responses</th>
<th>% of total valid responses</th>
<th>Individual monitoring data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>175373</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>244497</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>1403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>421367</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total valid responses</strong></td>
<td>420035</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-17</td>
<td>167376</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-19</td>
<td>104478</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 20-25</td>
<td>461813</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>733667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>15127</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and White</td>
<td>2793</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>5327</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African and White</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Caribbean and White</td>
<td>5468</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>9841</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5819</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>13989</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Traveller</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian background</td>
<td>8076</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>6167</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Traveller</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other White background</td>
<td>12090</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other black background</td>
<td>4429</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other dual heritage background</td>
<td>1734</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>16811</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix Table B.2 Summary statistics from monitoring data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Volunteers</th>
<th>% of total responses</th>
<th>% of total valid responses</th>
<th>Individual monitoring data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>253665</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>3801</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>24164</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>391796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total valid response</td>
<td>367632</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economic Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Activity</th>
<th>Number of Volunteers</th>
<th>% of total responses</th>
<th>% of total valid responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>56404</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>2372</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEET</td>
<td>55274</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In education</td>
<td>215399</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In training</td>
<td>11398</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>6585</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>22005</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>369437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total valid responses</td>
<td>347432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Number of Volunteers</th>
<th>% of total responses</th>
<th>% of total valid responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>4817</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>27405</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Level</td>
<td>53658</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Level 2</td>
<td>78716</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Level 2</td>
<td>37353</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ or equivalent</td>
<td>17777</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Not completed)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>25806</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>11848</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>34196</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>291667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total valid responses</td>
<td>257471</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disability
## Appendix Table B.2 Summary statistics from monitoring data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Volunteers</th>
<th>% of total responses</th>
<th>% of total valid responses</th>
<th>Individual monitoring data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning difficulty</td>
<td>18623</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Learning difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>7874</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Learning disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term or life-limiting illness</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>Long term or life-limiting illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health issues</td>
<td>4564</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>210748</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical disability</td>
<td>3700</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Physical disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory disability</td>
<td>1561</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Sensory disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>36088</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>286569</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total valid responses</td>
<td>250481</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total valid responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>201511</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>4447</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>3552</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>3805</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>None of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not completed</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>54897</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total valid responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At risk of exclusion</td>
<td>9747</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>3374</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In or leaving care</td>
<td>3573</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent</td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>48583</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>13259</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender/Ex-offender</td>
<td>6629</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (not completed)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obtaining data on some other categories of social exclusion is problematic because of the difficulties of identifying the numbers in the “target” group, both in the population as a whole, and in the monitoring data. An additional complication is that the same individual may appear more than once – both in monitoring data, and in data on the various categories exclusion: a young person with a criminal record may have been in care and been homeless, for example. Much of the relevant information is not present in the monitoring data and individuals may not be willing to reveal it. Nevertheless the following points should be made.
Refugees or asylum seekers: around 2.2% of v’s volunteers (2958) are stated to be refugees or asylum seekers, but that is based on only 131000 cases; if we calculate the proportion on the total number of volunteers for which we had monitoring data (730 000) it would fall to 0.4% of the total. This is still likely to be greater than the proportion of refugees and asylum seekers in the population. For example, over the past 5 years, some 100 000 applications for asylum have been heard in the UK, of which approximately 30% received a favourable hearing, but even if all of these had been accepted, that would only constitute 0.2% of the population, compared to the 0.4% of this group in the monitoring data.41

Ex-offenders: around 2% of 18-20 year olds have been found guilty of indictable offences, whereas the monitoring data report 6629 people who were offenders or ex-offenders. This is 5% of those for whom information on the “target group” category was available, but about 1.25% of those for whom any monitoring data were available.42

Homelessness: some 3300 volunteers recorded homelessness which represents 0.5% of the total on which we had any monitoring data and is higher than the national figures (according to which some 0.1% of the young population experience homelessness in any one year).43

In or leaving care: in any one year up to 60 000 children in England are in care, but that would represent less than 0.5% of children of all ages; so against that background the figure in the monitoring data of 3573 volunteers in or leaving care is at least comparable with what we would expect from published statistics and (purely as a proportion of those who supplied data on the “target group” category) somewhat higher than might be expected.44

Young carers: estimates of this group of the population vary greatly – from 175 000 in the 2001 Census, to around 700 000 according to a BBC survey;45 however, we do not have a breakdown of how many are in the target age range for v’s projects, so we do not feel that we can make valid comparisons with the background population here.

42 http://www.poverty.org.uk/33/index.shtml
43 http://www.york.ac.uk/res/ukhr/ukhr0708/compendium.htm#homelessness1
45 http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/nov/16/hidden-army-carers-disabled
Distribution of volunteers across programmes

This section explores whether characteristics of volunteers are evenly distributed across the programmes, to provide some assessment of whether particular characteristics are associated with certain programmes. Most of the comparisons drawn here are between the Match Fund projects and other projects, because of relatively small numbers of volunteers on other schemes.

Looking at the distribution of particular age groups in the project data, the data showed that although 63 per cent of young people in v’s programme are aged 20 to 25, most of the people in this age group (85%) came from the Match Fund projects. Conversely, nearly half of those in the vinvolved teams were aged 16 to 17, and this program accounts for 44% of participants at that age.

In terms of ethnicity, the vinvolved projects appear to be responsible for attracting a larger share of particular ethnic groups, accounting for 12 per cent and 4 per cent of those volunteers for whom monitoring data are available (for the large and small grants programmes respectively), but for 14 per cent and 9 per cent respectively of those volunteers who are non-white. Conversely however, vinvolved teams had 33 per cent of those for whom monitoring data are recorded, but only 8 per cent of those who were recorded as non-white.

In relation to gender, a more equal balance emerges on the smaller projects and on the vinvolved projects large and small projects. However, the Match Fund, which accounts for 48 per cent of the total number of volunteers, has a gender balance which is very similar to the wider volunteering population, in that about 60 per cent of volunteers were female.

In relation to categories of economic activity, 56,000 of the volunteers for whom monitoring data was available were in employment and 56 per cent of these were in Match Fund projects, followed by 28 per cent in vinvolved teams – though the Match Fund accounts for 46 per cent of the cases for which there was monitoring data, suggesting an overrepresentation of the employed in Match Fund. Conversely only 41% of NEETs were in Match Fund projects, an under representation compared to those projects’ share of the monitoring data on economic activity as a whole.

A similar pattern emerges with the data on educational qualifications. Once again the main difference is between the vinvolved teams and projects, and the Match programmes – the Match Fund has 33 per cent of those volunteers for whom some monitoring data was provided (although it also has 55% of the “prefer not to say” responses), but 44 per cent of those with higher education qualifications were recruited through the Match Fund. Conversely the vinvolved teams had 43% of volunteers for which monitoring data were available, but 30% of those with higher education qualifications. This also reflects the different age structure - there is a relationship between age and qualifications in the target age group of 16 to 25; very few people under the age of 21 have a degree, and since many of the Match Fund volunteers are aged 20 to 25, one would expect more of them to have higher level qualifications. Conversely, the vinvolved projects have a higher
proportion of those with no qualifications (24% of those volunteers with no qualifications were found in these projects, although they only account for 15% of the numbers of volunteers to which monitoring data was available on educational qualifications).

**Appendix Table B.3  Motivations for volunteering (survey of young people)**

*Base: Respondents that had volunteered in any way (522)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for volunteering</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like helping out</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to make a difference/ do my bit for society</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had the opportunity to do it through work/ school/ college/ university</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It sounded like fun</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to gain more skills</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would help me get a job / work experience</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends were doing it</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was persuaded or encouraged to do it by somebody / an organisation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to meet new people</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It might make me be more confident</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another reason</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the these</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix Table B.4 Proportions of organisations saying that they involved young volunteers in different ways, by funding type and wave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way of involving young volunteers in project work</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match Fund</td>
<td><strong>v</strong> involved teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In publicity, promotion or media campaigns for the project</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In developing activities and target groups for the project</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In recruiting volunteers</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As part of any Advisory Group for the project</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In identifying the overall project aims or strategy</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In administration or finance matters</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In any other ways?</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix Table B.5 How often recipients heard about **v** in various ways, by funding type (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding type</th>
<th>Match Fund</th>
<th><strong>v</strong> involved teams</th>
<th><strong>v</strong> involved projects</th>
<th><strong>v</strong> cashpoint</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters or e-mail updates from <strong>v</strong></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing on the vinspired.com main website</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional meetings organised by <strong>v</strong></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through your Project Support officer or other member of <strong>v</strong> staff</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National conferences organised by <strong>v</strong></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing on the vinspired.com members area</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix Table B.6  How well recipients thought v carries out various roles, by funding type (grant recipient survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding type</th>
<th>Match Fund</th>
<th>(v) involved teams</th>
<th>(v) involved projects</th>
<th>(v) cashpoint</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing grants and funding for other organisations and individuals</td>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite well</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all well</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not part of (v) role</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving young peoples attitudes, interest in and access to volunteering</td>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
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### By word of mouth (e.g. through friends, colleagues, other contacts)

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### Any other ways you hear/heard about \(v\)’s work?

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Formative evaluation of **v**
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<td>76</td>
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</table>

1. Bases shown are for ‘encouraging a wider mix of young people to volunteer’ for which the largest number of people gave answers.
Appendix C

Responses to v campaigns by characteristics – survey of young people

The young peoples’ survey illuminates differences in reactions to the campaigns according to age, employment status, gender and ethnicity. For all three posters, young people aged 16 to 20 years old were more likely than people aged 21 to 25 to say that the poster was aimed at people like them – for the Big Hand campaign, 64 per cent of people aged 16 to 20 and 43 per cent of people aged 21 to 25 agreed with this statement, as did 63 per cent of people aged 16 to 20 and 39 per cent of people aged 21 to 25 for the Make the Team campaign, while for the Summer of Give campaign 77 per cent of people aged 16 to 20 and 64 per cent of people aged 21 to 25 agreed. For the Summer of Give campaign, people aged 16 to 20 (88%) were also more likely than people aged 21 to 25 (78%) to say that the poster grabs their attention. For the Make the Team campaign, people aged 16 to 20 were more likely to say that the poster sticks in their mind (52% compared with 38%) and that it makes them interested in vinspired (48% compared with 34%).

Perhaps reflecting the relationship between age and employment status, for the Big Hand campaign students (64%) and people in part-time employment (61%) were more likely than people who were unemployed (50%), were in full-time employment (47%), or were in an ‘other’ employment group (included those with caring commitments; 45%) to say that the poster was aimed at people like them. People in part-time employment were also the group that most commonly said the Big Hand poster has a clear message (58%), and that least commonly found it irritating (20%). For the Summer of Give campaign, people in part-time employment were less likely to think the poster was boring (4%, compared with between 16% and 27% of people in other groups).

Young men were more likely than young women to agree that the Big Hand poster has a clear message (54% compared with 45%), but were also more likely to say they found the poster boring (32% compared with 22%). For the Summer of Give campaign, young men and young women agreed or disagreed with all of the statements in similar proportions although young women (88%) were more likely to say that the poster grabs their attention than young men (79%). For the Make the Team campaign, young men were more positive than young women: young men were more likely to say that the poster grabs their attention (76% compared with 62%), that it is aimed at people like them (60% compared with 41%), that it sticks in their mind (56% compared with 34%), that it told them something new (59% compared with 45%), and that it is the sort of thing they would talk to their friends about (38% compared with 18%). Young men were also less likely to say that they found it boring (28%) than were young women (46%)

For the Big Hand and Summer of Give campaigns, white people were more likely than people from black or minority ethnic groups to agree that the poster grabs their attention
(76% compared with 64% for the Big Hand campaign, 86% compared with 65% for the Summer of Give campaign). For the Big Hand campaign, white people (56%) were more likely than people from black or minority ethnic groups (41%) to agree that the poster was aimed at people like them. For the Big Hand and Make the Team campaigns, people from black or minority ethnic groups were more likely than white people to say that the poster was the kind of thing they would talk to their friends about (43% compared with 26 for Big Hand, 58% compared with 24% for Make the Team). For the Big Hand campaign, white people (26%) were more likely than people from black or minority ethnic groups to say that they found the poster irritating, while for Make the Team people from black or minority ethnic groups (21%) were more likely than white people (10%) to give this answer.

White people were more likely than people from black or minority ethnic groups to find the Make the Team poster boring (40% compared with 18%), but were less likely to find the Summer of Give poster boring (14% compared with 27%). Similarly, white people were less likely than people from black or minority ethnic groups to say that the Make the Team poster makes them interested in vinspired (35% compared with 79%), but were more likely to say that the Summer of Give poster makes them interested in vinspired (60% compared with 40%). People from black or minority ethnic groups (71%) were more likely than white people (49%) to say that the Make the Team poster told them something new.

### Appendix Table C.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Big Hand goes a Long Way</th>
<th>Summer of Give</th>
<th>Make the Team</th>
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<td>It grabs my attention</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is aimed at people like me</td>
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<tr>
<td>It has a clear message</td>
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<td>It sticks in my mind</td>
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<td>It has told me something new</td>
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<td>It makes me interested in vinspired</td>
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**Base** 293 332 134 166 138 140

Differences significant at the 95% level are highlighted.
Appendix Table C.2  Proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with statements about marketing materials, by age

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<td>50  54</td>
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<td>It makes me interested in vinspired</td>
<td>44  42</td>
<td>58  56</td>
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<td>I think it's irritating</td>
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<td><strong>142 158</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 148</strong></td>
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</table>

Differences significant at the 95% level are highlighted.
Formative evaluation of \textit{Posters}
Formative evaluation of V
Appendix D

Peer Researcher Reflections

12 peer researchers aged 16 – 25 were recruited and trained to assist and help conduct the qualitative in depth case studies. The peer researcher role provided training and experience in the following areas:

- Ethical considerations of qualitative research
- Research design: contributing to the design of how best to collect information about \( v \) activities
- Data collection: shadowing and undertaking depth interviewing and observation of with both the staff and volunteers involved in \( v \) projects.
- Basic thematic qualitative analysis: contributing to discussions about the information collected from the case studies to feed into the overall analysis of the evaluation

As a research team we set out to achieve five mains in using a peer to peer approach: accountability; quality; reflexivity; different perspectives; and, learning. This section will present peer researcher's reflections of their involvement in the research through their own accounts exploring the motivations to become a peer researcher, training and support provided, the experience of being a peer researcher; and, overall reflections of the value and difference made to the research through the use of peer research.

**Accountability:** that the research was accountable and responsive to research population by the genuine engagement of young peer researchers and listening and we want to hear their views.

**Quality:** to enhance the quality of the evaluation through young people's input into development and design of research tools methods which would be appropriate for engaging with young people.

**Reflexivity:** the research team would develop learning and awareness of issues involved in working with young people through working with young research team

**Different perspectives:** to explore differences in interaction between young researchers and young research participants & members of research team & young participants.

**Learning:** for the research team to learn and reflect on benefits and challenges of involving subjects of research in design and delivery of research.

1. ‘Motivations to become a peer researcher’

My main motivations for becoming a peer researcher were related to an ongoing fascination with links between young people and volunteering. Having had a variety of volunteering experiences at university, and using youth volunteering as the subject of my undergraduate dissertation, I found the opportunity provided by NatCen to be almost invaluable in terms of real life research and analysis experience. Being able to see volunteering research in action was incredibly helpful to strengthening my understanding of the way the volunteering world works, and further solidified a desire to remain within the voluntary sector after graduation.

I first came across the recruitment notice by means of a Google search: broadly looking for youth volunteering research pages as research for my dissertation. Through the IVR website I discovered a link to the job advertisement and applied on the basis of wanting to improve my research skills, have a practical involvement in social research, and having the opportunity to meet people already working in the sector. Other peer researchers heard about the position through various means,
including word of mouth, and applied as the role appeared interesting and contained real experience of research, the peer aspect was also being a contributing factor.

The recruitment for the role was smooth and decently timed, with the interviews being formal enough to represent that this was a serious employment process but comfortable enough that we were at ease throughout. Hearing from the organisation between each step of the recruitment was quick and by hearing of the offer only a few days after the interview, and before the Christmas break started, allowed for enough time to be able to organise to attend the residential training weekend. The nature of the work, one off days stretched over a year, was a key point in accepting the job offer as it allowed the role to fit into active lives without having any negative impacts on studying or other employment.

The research itself intrigued me as, while my main interest is in people's motivations, the operational side of providing placements, training and support for volunteers and staff involved interests me from both an admin and volunteer perspective. My motivations for initially volunteering as a young person were on both a practical and social level, and that extended to my involvement with the peer researcher role. The concept of peer research is one that interested me about the role; the idea of using people of similar generations / interests / backgrounds to further enrich response within research is something that I was curious as to how it would work, particularly with regard to keeping impartiality and non-bias but retaining the essence of the peer connection.

As a group we were varied in our experiences, ages, levels of study and home locations. Collectively we spanned from A-levels to postgraduate studies and from being new to volunteering to seasoned volunteers involved in a variety of activities. People's interests were different but seemed to centre on interests in motivations and impacts relating to young people volunteering. There was also an interest in being a large, national organisation and how that would affect the way it works, looking at the difference between top-down and grass-roots approaches.

Initial expectations of the process were vague; the role had been sufficiently defined for recruitment and employment purposes but had still been left as flexible enough to be open to adaptation. Prior to the training weekend the main expectations were of being part of the physical research and getting to interact with both volunteers and researchers, after the training this broadened to encompass being a part of the reflective and analysis processes as well.

The experience has, for the vast majority of the time, met my initial expectations, with only a few times along the way when things didn't go as expected. However these were often things out of people's control, such as the large time gap between the first training and the next training/field week. Involvement in the analysis part of the project has been on an additional basis almost, with the opportunities presented as separate to the initial involvement, where I had seen them all as a part of what we signed up for. Overall it has been a successful and pleasant experience, and one that has matched up to my motivations for becoming involved.

2. ‘My experience of being a peer research’ – Ania Ryszkowska

As a peer researcher I feel I have benefited from the experience and I learnt what it was like to be a social researcher. The two experiences I had of interviewing were both very positive and enjoyable. My first day of interviewing was with a group of talent year volunteers where I had to help lead two focus groups and carry out an interview. There was quite a range of volunteers from different backgrounds and it was interesting to hear why they became involved in V-talent year and the impact it had on their lives. It was challenging leading a focus group of volunteers as some of them
were reluctant to share their views and some were over dominating, making it a challenge to ensure all participants gained an equal input.

My most rewarding experience as peer researcher was when I was involved in leading interviews and focus groups with a group of volunteers from an economically deprived area who were involved in helping disabled children and adults in a range of fun-filled activities. It was a really eye-opening experience and it was uplifting to see how much volunteering had benefited the disabled community and the individuals that took part in it. I would have liked to have conducted more interviews with the volunteers because most of the interviews were with the project staff and stakeholders but I also helped to lead a section or two of the topic guide which I found challenging but rewarding and I received positive feedback from my lead researcher. I also took part in some observations in a Sports Centre where the disabled children took part in activities such as curling, martial arts and fitness.

As a peer researcher, I feel I have gained some interviewing skills, such as using open questions, probing techniques and active listening in-order to gain the best response from participants. I have learnt how to effectively use a topic guide and I have had some involvement in the design of the topic guides, in-terms of suggesting appropriate questions or themes which could be covered. I have also learnt in the training sessions, the methods used to analyse the data, such as charting which is used to create the overall summary and evaluation. This has been very useful as I am currently analysing interview transcripts for my Psychology degree.

There has been opportunities for peer researchers to be involved in the charting of the data, although it was felt by myself and other peer researchers that we would have benefited the research by being more deeply involved in the analysis of the data by contributing a different perspective which could not be perceived by qualified researchers, who might be more regimented and structured in their methods of analysis. Also it was felt that it would have been beneficial if we were involved in the analysis of the interview transcripts that we took part in, in-order to engage fully in the research and enable us to give our thoughts and perspective based on our experience.

Overall the experience has met my expectations and I felt I was able to relate to the volunteers as a peer, especially in the first experience. I was able to have conversations with the volunteers over lunch and we had many things in common. Some of the volunteers had been to University and were doing the volunteering as a way to gain more qualifications or experience in their selected field, whereas others didn’t have any qualifications and were doing the volunteering to gain experience. I could relate to all of them because I knew people from similar backgrounds and I could understand all of their circumstances. This was harder in the second experience, due to the volunteers coming from a deprived area and facing a lot of underlying issues such as low self-esteem and confidence which made them reluctant to open up. Although I had conversations with some of them and we were able to develop a rapport. I think with a bit more time I could have broken down the barriers with others.

3. ‘Views on Training and Support Received’ - Jon Phillips

Training was useful, accessible and well grounded in examples and exercises, laying a solid foundation in the research aims and ensuring that the context of peer researchers’ work was emphasised. An initial training weekend was useful for everybody to get to know each other and there were significant social benefits gained from spending two days together as a group. During this weekend, training dealt well with the potential difficulties of working with a group of peer researchers who brought a range of experience in both research and volunteering.
Peer researchers commented that training exercises were very useful in preparation for the realities that we would encounter in a range of tasks. This is especially the case for training on interview techniques, which provided a good mental reference to return to when undertaking fieldwork. The research staffs were well used in this respect, providing examples of good practice while never adopting a prescriptive presentation style.

Subsequent training sessions provided a good opportunity for peer researchers to meet and discuss fieldwork and to learn from each others experiences. Following a long period of inactivity (due to a period of purdah during the 2010 general election), we discussed how social networking could have been developed between the peer researchers, providing updates on the latest fieldwork and filling some of the information gaps that emerged around opportunities for fieldwork.

Wherever I was required to put training into practice I found it a valuable resource. Some fellow peer researchers reported experiences of fieldwork in which peer researchers shadowed research staff. My personal experience was that I was in a better position to contribute to the direction of interviews and focus groups after gaining confidence in the initial fieldwork; greater autonomy came with confidence and experience in using my training.

Further improvements could come from extending the use of training into other areas of the research process beyond the focus on interviewing. I feel that this could have greater benefits for both the peer researcher’s skill set and create the conditions for the perspectives of peer researchers to potentially diverge from those of core research staff. For example, some peer researchers felt that their views of the analysis of interviews that they had conducted and charted could have been given greater voice in the project. From a peer researcher perspective, this could have improved the evaluation project and the youth perspective on it; from the perspective of the core research team, this will touch on discussions of the appropriate level and mode of peer researcher participation to achieve the end of greater youth perspective in data collection. The training and support provided for this aspect of the project was excellent, with considerable personal commitment from the core research team, and many peer researchers felt that their understanding of evaluative research was furthered significantly. Personally, I feel that the project could have used the skills that of peer researchers further in data analysis, building on a solid foundation in training and ongoing support for data collection.

4. ‘Overall views and benefits of the experience of being a peer researcher’

Peer researchers worked together to reflect on their overall contribution to research. The following highlights their shared thoughts and views on three key areas: how far they felt they were a ‘peer’ to the volunteers that they had researched, and the benefits of having a peer researcher involvement.

What we have learnt/gained from the experience:

- How to use research skills in practise
- That research needs to be adaptable and flexible but remain structured and targeted
- Best methods for interviewing, running focus groups and basic analysis
- What an extensive research process really means
Experience of big projects

**How far we felt like a ‘peer’ of the volunteers we have been researching:**

- Difficulties in balancing professionalism and being a young researcher in an employment setting
- Time needed to establish a connection for peer relations with volunteers
- Not necessarily viewed as separate from lead researcher by the volunteers
- Age not always relevant: geographic peers more helpful sometimes
- Peer researchers diverse in nature and may have different experiences and backgrounds to the volunteers
- There can be difficulties developing a connection with project workers in interviews when a peer researcher

‘Certainly were times when I felt that there was not a new perspective brought by my involvement. Other axes such as location, social background, or something like experience of volunteering may have been more important; to the point where considering the researcher a peer had little practical meaning. In interview cases I felt that age was less important than the skills of the interviewer in terms of creating an environment for the respondent to reply with confidence and to open up. These issues will always be there and I don’t think anyone involved was every under any delusions that we would be creating equals. So I suppose the question is whether involving peer researchers significantly acknowledges these issues and provides a different perspective. In practice, I feel that this could be done through other means. Greater input into the research design, or observation of it could create the more holistic picture of the process that I felt I was lacking, by grounding my experience in the data at every stage of the research. The times when I felt that I was contributing most and learning most were complimentary; this was when I was able to conduct different stages of the research process using the same data, such as charting focus groups and interviews that I had been involved in. If this could be extended into analysis – importantly, supported by the case study coordinator and in conversation with other staff conducting analysis – then I feel that a lot could be gained for the project and peer researcher from a relatively small additional input of time/resources.

Peer researchers cannot have the overview of the whole project that research staff can, but by following a slice of the research from beginning to end it is possible to gain some in depth knowledge of one area, allowing peer researcher work to be considered in the context of others’. Greater involvement in the research *design* may provide practical help for peer researchers (e.g. a solid foundation in topic guides), but may also allow for one the main potential benefits of peer researchers (i.e. a youth perspective) to be more prominent throughout the rest of the research process’

*(Jon Phillips).*

**Research benefit:**

- Difficult to assess overall impact to the research of having peer researchers, but there are areas where we felt that we made a difference.
- If a peer connection was established then a greater depth of personal story often came from the interviews/focus groups
- Peer to peer working allowed for more informal observations and joining in group discussions
- A peer to peer rapport was significant in building trust and a good dynamic when interviewing
- Previous youth volunteering helped build a peer connection

‘I think the research has benefited from having peer researchers because as peers we can relate better to the participants since we may have more in common with them. However this also depends on each other’s individual circumstances and the amount of time that is available to break down barriers. In the interviewing stage, peer researchers can make the participants more comfortable by having someone there their own age that is not seen as an ‘authority’ figure. I feel the research has also benefited from having peer researchers, in-terms of helping to devise the topic guides because as peers we may be able to anticipate what issues the participants may be facing and think of appropriate questions to ask the participants, as well as maybe having a better understanding of the viewpoint the volunteers are trying to communicate in the interviewing stage.’

(Ania Ryszkowska)