

## Volunteering

### Background

Volunteering is known for bringing multiple benefits to individuals and much wider benefits to the local community. Through the Local Area Agreement we have agreed to work towards increasing volunteering and will be measured on our success through the place survey, which measures NI 6 "Participation in Regular Volunteering".

In addition, we wish to promote a thriving voluntary and community sector, and what better way to do this than helping to increase its capacity through volunteers.

### National Volunteers Week

An excellent opportunity to recruit volunteers, to thank existing volunteers and raise the profile of volunteering presents itself with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Volunteers Week.

Held every year on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June this is a national festival of volunteering. Through the Stronger Communities Sub-Group a working party has been formed to co-ordinate a programme of events and activities across the borough and promote these widely. This will be led by VAWK, and also involves TCHG and TWBC. TCHG led on this idea last year and produced an excellent leaflet detailing different activities open to the public.

### Key objectives for the LSP:

- To raise the profile of volunteering in the borough
- To recruit volunteers and therefore increase regular volunteer numbers (NI 6)
- To show LSP support for volunteering
- To target priority neighbourhoods to increase volunteering in these areas
- To recognise the contribution of volunteers to the borough

### Potential events:

It is proposed that a range of different events are held across the borough and promoted under the "National Volunteers Week" banner. These may be led by a range of partner agencies.

- A stand in the Royal Victoria Place
- People in "National Volunteers Week" or "Volunteering England" T-shirts recruiting volunteers and giving out information
- Special events to promote different specialisms such as youth; disability etc.
- Volunteer Awards – with categories such as public sector organisation; business; voluntary & community organisation; individual volunteers.
- Reception with high profile speaker

### Publicity:

- Press releases
- Article in Local magazine
- Information on TWBC website and partners websites
- Purchase of Volunteering England promotional material (e.g. T-shirts, balloons)
- Information leaflets and posters about the events planned & volunteering opportunities.

### Funding:

VAWK has already been awarded a grant from TWBC to promote volunteering in the Borough. Other costs will include:

- Purchase of material from Volunteering England
- Venue and catering for reception event

**Expected outcomes:**

- Increased awareness of volunteering
- Increased numbers of regular volunteers, especially in priority neighbourhoods
- Recognition for volunteers
- Understanding of Council and other agency support for volunteering.

**Other volunteering opportunities**

As well as National Volunteers Week there are other ways in which the LSP can help to increase volunteering. For example, through employee volunteering, where organisations allow staff to volunteer in the local community for a number of hours.

Partner agencies may use volunteers in different ways and so by actively promoting these opportunities throughout the year, and linking with the Volunteer Centre Tunbridge Wells (run by VAWK and located in the Gateway) together we can help to increase volunteering.

**Recommendations**

1. That the LSP collectively develops a programme of activities for National Volunteers Week
2. That the LSP works towards setting an example for workplace volunteering
3. That the LSP promotes volunteering opportunities throughout the year.