

3.2.05 Active Citizenship and Volunteering

Introduction: why is this important?

Why active citizenship matters to health and wellbeing:

- Active Citizens contribute to the delivery of a wide range of activities and voluntary services that support health and social care
- Being an Active Citizen contributes to people's physical and mental wellbeing
- High levels of community engagement can make a significant contribution to care reform and support personalised services

Active citizenship includes:

- People volunteering, including large numbers in health and social care
- People campaigning to improve services
- Member of a community group
- Undertaking civic roles, for example as a Councillor or Magistrate
- Member of a voluntary sector management committee
- Participation in locality planning
- Local activist
- Organiser of a Neighbourhood Watch
- Member of a self-help group, such as a Mums and Tots Group
- Member of a voluntary emergency support group or reserve, such as the St John's Ambulance
- Involvement in Wellbeing Cafes

The benefits are:

- Active Citizens contribute to achieving many of the District outcomes
- Up to 100,000 Bradford District citizens engage in activities that they find rewarding with a positive impact on their self-esteem and mental wellbeing
- An army of reserves able to deal with civil emergencies
- Increased awareness of health and wellbeing, particularly in relation to neighbourhood and community of interest specific issues
- Networks that can help the support and care needs of individuals

What do the facts and figures tell us?

Bradford has a diverse population and remains a District where people are active in their communities and in civic life. There are high levels of volunteering when compared to the national average, including in regular volunteering and civic participation in the local area.

Organisations Advertising Opportunities via Bradford and Keighley Voluntary Community Services (VCS) 2014-15:

Organisations – 808

Opportunities – 2,343

What strategies, policies and best practice have been developed locally and nationally?

The Stronger Communities Partnership Delivery Plan

A year long Active Communities campaign, 'People Can', has been proposed by the New Deal outcome group: Safe, Clean and Active Communities. The group is seeking ways to develop strong communities as a way of filling the gap created by significant reductions in public sector funding. The 'People Can' campaign aims to highlight the contributions of communities within Bradford District and build on these strengths as part of the New Deal. Volunteering and Active Citizenship are key priorities within the campaign.

The Volunteer Centres of Bradford and Keighley have a joint development plan for volunteering in the District. They have been recently successfully externally accredited by the national Council of Voluntary Organisations.

The Warmer Healthy Homes Partnership has been instrumental in supporting and developing opportunities in promoting sustainable communities and volunteering. One example of a project is the Tool Libraries. These will include tools for growing projects such as Incredible Edible and also tools for winter like snow shovels etc. These will be based in community hubs, with one in each constituency in Bradford. Although the equipment will be provided it will be the local community who will be producing the projects and volunteering to undertake any action, for example clearing snow etc.

The new Compact for the Bradford District maintains all the volunteering commitments in the 2010 Compact and in particular about reimbursing volunteer expenses. It ensures there is no job substitution and volunteers have a positive experience.

Bradford was one of only two cities researched in a ground breaking report on Employer Supported Volunteering. In June 2015, 11 community groups at the Volunteer Centre were part of a national research project by the Institute for Volunteering Research looking at employer-backed volunteering. This was commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and looked at volunteering from both the employer and voluntary organisations' perspectives. In this workshop the 11 Bradford groups were able to feedback on best practice approaches when engaging with employer supported volunteering. Bradford Volunteer Centre delivers these Employer Supported Volunteering projects and feedback will develop local practice. It also influences national research and recent research. The workshop also dealt with practical issues, for example properly reimbursing charities for their time and expense and the importance of matching the right skills from business to the right charities.

What challenges have been identified in a local context?

Bradford Volunteer Centre's work to support volunteering in a diverse range of over 656 community organisations in Bradford and has been recognised as a good practice case study by an international academic conference. In June 2015 the University Of Bradford hosted the 5th Annual International Conference "Making Diversity Interventions Count". The Volunteer Centre's work was showcased at the event.

Volunteer managers have identified training needs in using the newly update national volunteering database (www.do-it.org). They also prioritise volunteer recruitment and volunteer management training as the top three training needs.

Demand for volunteers is increase as a result on budget pressures. As an example several previously staffed libraries are now run entirely by volunteers.

Reimbursement of volunteer expenses is also an issue locally. Given 80% of volunteers registered with the volunteer centres are unemployed people or students on low incomes, expenses are an important equal opportunities issue locally.

What do our stakeholders tell us?

The Volunteer Centres run regular programmes of training to address key support needs of local VCS organisations which is matched to a training needs assessment. Some of the training is developed in a proactive way as the Volunteer Centres recognise a potential training need. This was the case with do-it online volunteering recruitment training in 2014-15. Training was developed to ensure local groups were able to use the new do-it website. Other training is developed in response to the needs of local groups, based on an annual training needs analysis. For example, a three day accredited course based around volunteer management aimed to give volunteer managers a range of core skills to enable them to be as effective as possible.

With the People Can campaign a number of stakeholders have taken a role to support a theme over the year. Health and Wellbeing is in February and an initiative called Rally Round will be launched which can

provide a tool for residents to support people in their homes. We will also be promoting the tool libraries set up through the Warmer Healthy Homes Partnership.

Month	Lead	Area/ Theme	Contact
Jan	VCS Assembly/ Stronger	Area: Launch	Paul Stephens/ Arshad Mahmood
Feb	Public health	Theme: Health & Wellbeing	Julie Robinson Joyce/ Sarah Possingham
March	Bradford South Area Committee	Area: Bradford South	Mick Charlton
April	Community Safety Partnership	Theme: Safer	Insp Mike Bonner/ Rebecca Trueman
May	Shipley Area Committee	Area: Shipley	Damian Fisher
June	Environment Forum	Theme: Cleaner, Greener	Jen White (BCEP)
July	Keighley Area Committee	Area: Keighley	Jonathan Hayes
August	Bradford East Area Committee	Area: Bradford East	Louise Williams
Sept	Sport/ HWB	Theme: HWB/ Sport/ Parks	Bob Thorpe
Oct	Community Safety Partnership	Theme: Safer	Mike Bonner/ Rebecca Trueman
Nov	Bradford West Area Committee	Bradford West	Bhulla Singh
Dec	Volunteer Centre	Celebration	Dave Forrest

Recommendations: What do we need to do? How do we ensure this remains a priority?

Support the New Deal Active Communities Group. The group has developed a People Can Campaign. This campaign will include a focus on community support and supporting initiatives that aim to work with communities to create preventative and early intervention support. It will also:

- Celebrate the strengths of Bradford District's communities and active citizens
- Develop safe, active and supportive communities
- Support a strong and vibrant community sector to flourish

References

https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/about_us/media-centre/CIPD-on-the-brink-of-a-game-changer.pdf

Bradford District Plan 2016-2020

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/2312/bradford-district-plan-final.pdf>

People can make a difference

<http://peoplecanbradforddistrict.org.uk/>