



**Volunteering England update for Greater London Volunteering Networking Day
15 June 2011, London**

Volunteering England would like to update the GLV Networking Day members with a written update. Key additional information from Volunteering England is attached.

Restructure and office move update

Volunteering England has now completed its restructuring exercise, which has seen our staff team reduce in number (from 59 to 29) and staff take on new roles. We have provided an updated version of our staff contact list which reflects this new structure (please see attached).

One key change is the introduction of our new Infrastructure Development Team, which will provide support to a range of sectors including Volunteer Centres, grass roots volunteer involving organisations, Further and Higher Education, and business. Please do contact the team with any queries:

- Andrea Grace Rannard, Head of Infrastructure Development, continues to be the main contact for any queries relating to Further and Higher Education and student volunteering. You can email Andrea at Andrea.Rannard@volunteering.org.uk or telephone her on 020 7520 8922.

- Simon Richards, the previous Infrastructure Development Manager, left Volunteering England on Tuesday 10 May. However, we are pleased to welcome our new Infrastructure Development Manager, John Carlin, who will be the main contact for Volunteer Centres, including queries relating to VCQA. You can email John at John.Carlin@volunteering.org.uk or telephone him on 020 7520 8935.

- Stephen Ince, Sports Volunteering Development Manager, continues to be the main contact for any queries regarding sports and volunteering. You can email Stephen at Stephen.Ince@volunteering.org.uk or telephone him on 07946 487 078.

- Charlotte Wright, Infrastructure Development Assistant, is the administrative contact for the team and can help with queries relating to Further and Higher education, VCQA and Regional EVDC. You can email Charlotte at Charlotte.Wright@volunteering.org.uk or telephone her on 0207 520 8939.

We are currently finalising our work plan and new three-year strategic plan, and once this is complete we will share specific details on our future activity. However, we can confirm that we will be focusing on development of membership and services to members, representation of our membership and the volunteering movement in policy and growth of research to underpin our work.

Other key information from Volunteering England that might be useful

Background to the changes to Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA)

Following a reduction in Volunteering England's funding, we have been working hard to identify cost efficiencies across our activity, which includes administering VCQA. We have therefore made what we believe are minimal changes to the way we assess each VCQA portfolio, which makes a significant difference to our expenditure.

The key revision relates to essential evidence requirements for assessing parts 13 a, b and c of the core function of 'developing volunteering opportunities'. In addition to completing forms A, B and C (attached) as per the current process, Volunteer Centres will now need to provide a testimonial from one organisation in each of the three areas. Suggested templates for testimonials are available (attached).

As a result of this additional evidence, assessors will be able to provide a more detailed report to Volunteer Centres which we hope you will find useful. All other aspects will remain unaffected. While we recognise that changing the evidence requirements is not ideal, we are committed to supporting Volunteer Centres to achieve VCQA and these changes were necessary for us to continue to do so.

This change took effect on Monday 9 May 2011, and was reported in Volunteering England's Members eNewsletter on 27 April and is on the Members' area of the website (<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/exeres/0DEDF67D-FC44-4C17-B2F9-7511552CC409.htm>).

Simon Richards, Infrastructure Development Manager and main point of contact for Volunteer Centres and VCQA queries, left the organisation on 10 May. John Carlin, Simon's replacement, started the organisation on 5 May, working through a handover with Simon and Latifa Laanatza (previous lead on VCQA). John (John.Carlin@volunteering.org.uk) is your main contact for any Volunteer Centre and VCQA queries, and Charlotte Wright, Infrastructure Development Assistant is your main point of contact for any administrative queries (Charlotte.Wright@volunteering.org.uk).

Update on progress on the points raised at the Volunteer Centre Question & Answer session at Volunteering England's Volunteer Management Conference, 25 March 2011, York

The following actions were allocated to Volunteering England employees and trustee at the session:

- 1. How do people sign up to Volunteering England's Policy & Information eNewsletter?**
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/Policy+News>
- 2. A Volunteer Centre VC is not receiving the Members' eNewsletter. Please could you check this?**
The Volunteer Centre in question is receiving the eNewsletter and Roxanne McLean, Senior Communications Officer has emailed the Volunteer Centre directly to just double check this. If anyone is experiencing problems receiving the eNewsletter, please email the Membership Team (membership@volunteering.org.uk).
- 3. Do we have any information about Slivers of Time on the website the website?**
See information below, which was sent by Rob Jackson to Volunteer Centre Google group earlier in the year. We are currently looking at how we can best place this on the website given our current task in reducing the number of web pages we have.
- 4. Is the letter Justin sent to Local Authorities and any follow-up information on the website? If so, where?**
Information is on the website:
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/whatwearesaying/2010/Letter+from+Justin+Davis+Smith+to+Council+Chief+Executives+regarding+the+CSR.htm>
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/Funding+cuts/Information+from+local+authorities>
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/Funding+cuts/experiences.htm>
Volunteering England will send a follow-up letter to Local Authority CEOs within the next six weeks to find out about final budget settlements. Information will be added to the website accordingly.
- 5. Is Justin planning to meet with Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government?**
Justin has no meetings planned with Eric Pickles in the near future. Justin sits on the Department for Communities and Local Government's Partnership Board; and continues to meet with key government representatives, including Ministers and senior civil servants

as part of our ongoing relationship with Government and as part of Volunteering England's Strategic Partner relationship.

6. Not all Volunteer Centres are on the Volunteer Centre Google Group, with a particular reference to Volunteer Centres in Yorkshire not on the Group. How can Volunteering England better communicate with Volunteer Centres, especially in Yorkshire?

As an organisation, Volunteering England is working on our approach to communications with members and external stakeholders to ensure we communicate more effectively. Staff across Volunteering England met on Tuesday 3 May 2011 to discuss communications, and it was raised by Andrea Grace Rannard, Head of Infrastructure Development at the Management Team meeting on Wednesday 11 May 2011. Other staff and I have also been working on other mechanisms we can use to articulate our work more proactively to stakeholders.

Volunteering England takes communication with members, including Volunteer Centres, very seriously and will update Volunteer Centres accordingly when we finalise our communications procedures as it will directly impact on the way we communicate with members and external groups. One possibility we are exploring is developing quarterly organisational updates for members and key network as a structured and regular snapshot of our work for our members, and which will be distributed for regional networks and other groups to utilise as they prefer. We are also exploring how such an update could best update stakeholders on forthcoming work/meetings and enable stakeholders to input.

We are also considering how, following the restructure of the organisation, we can effectively input in-person with the diverse range of networks, including regional Volunteer Centre network meetings, which we previously attended as a larger organisation. Again, we are working through these areas at present and will update you accordingly.

Other key areas we consulted Volunteer Centres on during the Q&A session:

Other key questions we consulted Volunteer Centres on during the session are below, which we are factoring into our work programme. Since 31 March 2011, we have made some progress on these points (key relevant points covered above), but would like to reinforce that we are in the very early stages of developing team plans as an organisation as part of our wider corporate plan, **following a significant restructure and changes to our funding**. We are also **in the process of an office move impacting on every member of staff**. We are working hard to factor in to our corporate plan and team plans the consultation feedback we have received from Volunteer Centres and other members and stakeholders, and will update you on our corporate plan once this is finalised.

Question 1:

Given Volunteering England's restructuring, what are the key services/resources that you would want from the organisation from April 2011 onwards?

Feedback from Volunteer Centres:

- More support for VCQA – feel support has been diluted:
 - not just signposting to website, with particular support for those doing W3 in partnership;
 - evidence about why VCs should do things in certain ways to justify this process and approach;
 - Take action against those that fail;
 - Branding support – answer questions.
- Improved communication –
 - Inform VCs about what VE doing on their behalf;
 - Regular updates;
 - VCs could do more to support VE if they know what we were doing – they could lobby on a local level, but feel out of loop and less important at present;
 - Diversify how you communicate with us;
 - Update VCs pre events/key mtgs, so they can input;
- Engage with Eric Pickles more;
- Encourage YouthNet to make a statement on vBase version 3;

- Sort out VE database – not all VCs are on VC Google Group, so out of the loop. Contact them via CARE;
 - Greater influence of VC's within VE –
 - If possible, let VCs know before we meet with Govt so they can input;
 - Influence strategy – VC feel far removed from VE, and cite EYV and Big Society as lost opportunities;
 - VE should be more critical of gov't;
 - More clarity around future of EVDV –
 - is National continuing?
 - Regional – if regional ends, then the voice of the smaller organisations is lost as National represents national orgs only.
 - Stronger voice for VC's;
 - Consider promoting the loss of VCs impact on VIOs – look at number of VIOs VCs work with;
 - Annual VC meeting organised by VCs, which could input into;
- 2012 – information on how can VCs and wider support unsuccessful applicants

Question 2 VC's

Given that Volunteering England will need to prioritise what it does, is there any aspect of our infrastructure work that you think could be scaled down?

Feedback from Volunteer Centres:
None given to this question.

Question 3 VC's

With the likelihood of a small Infrastructure team that covers FE and HE, as well as businesses and Volunteer Centres, etc, what do you consider to be the benefits of Volunteering England linking your work with the work of business, Volunteer Centres, volunteer-involving organisations?

- Networking across sectors – like the Common Purpose events;
- It is a “good thing” VE is doing that;
- Improved understanding of each other (inc FHE availability);
- Events;
- Fact sheets on collaboration;
- Members post their events on VE's website so can encourage other sectors to attend.

Question 4 VC's

The new structure may require a change in the number and composition of Volunteering England's advisory groups to better reflect the organisation of its work. In addition to advisory groups, what ways are open to Volunteering England for consulting with Volunteer Centres?

Feedback from Volunteer Centres:
Have a split advisory group – sectors to meet separately in the morning and come together in the afternoon; VE to facilitate coming together of VC managers once a year.