

# Next Steps on Volunteering and Giving in the UK

**A Discussion Document**



HM TREASURY



**Home Office**  
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST  
AND THRIVING SOCIETY

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# NEXT STEPS ON VOLUNTEERING AND GIVING IN THE UK

A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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December 2002  
**Her Majesty's Treasury**  
**The Home Office**

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## FOREWORD

The Government believes passionately in a strong and independent voluntary and community sector and a thriving culture of volunteering and giving. At the heart of voluntary activity is the desire to give and to create a better society. And it is this desire, the voluntary principle, that motivates individuals at all levels of society to give freely of their time and money; and that has inspired the creation of voluntary and community groups across the country. This spirit was evident in the early days of mutuality, where communities themselves came together to meet needs, and to engage in participation in wider democratic structures.

In Britain today there are around half a million voluntary organisations and millions of volunteers and we thank them all for the dedication they show, the service they give and the contribution they make.

It is estimated that voluntary organisations contribute £5.8 billion to GDP<sup>1</sup> and that the economic value of volunteering is over £15 billion. Individual donations, corporate donations, and tax relief, are together worth about £9 billion. In economic terms this contribution is hugely impressive.

And this does not take account of the deeper social impact of volunteering and giving – of the personal fulfilment felt by volunteers and the staff of voluntary organisations; or of the huge contribution they make by improving the lives of others in their communities.

The Government is committed to ensuring that voluntary and community groups are able to play a full role in our society of the future, helping them to grow bigger, stronger and more confident. We have done much since 1997. But to make a difference to our communities requires each and every one of us to think what we can contribute and to get involved.

We are looking for a debate on nothing short of a new relationship between individuals, communities and government. This paper sets out how we intend to continue promoting a culture of giving and volunteering for all, strengthening and empowering our communities to play their part in the forging of a modern Britain.



GORDON BROWN



DAVID BLUNKETT

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<sup>1</sup>ONS estimates for National Council of Voluntary Organisations, 2001.



# THE GOVERNMENT'S PHILOSOPHY

## INTRODUCTION

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**1.1** A great strength of society today is that so many people are motivated by a genuine concern for others. Countless acts of kindness characterise every family, school and hospital every day. Little of this is seen to be newsworthy – perhaps because it is accepted as commonplace. But without that basic concern society would be immeasurably poorer. This Government rejects the view that society is composed of selfish individuals each pursuing solely their own ends. There *is* such a thing as society, and everybody, young and old, can make a contribution to it.

**1.2** The practical fruits of this concern for others – often called the voluntary principle – range from people informally helping their neighbours, to formal volunteering in schools, hospitals and other public services, to working within a voluntary organisation or charity dedicated to improving the welfare of others. And volunteering is complemented by donations of money to charities, particularly by those who face time constraints which make volunteering difficult for them, or when financial resources are the most appropriate response to a need.

## THE EFFECTS OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY AND GIVING

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**1.3** We believe there are three broad effects of volunteering and giving. All of these contribute towards achieving the goal of a more inclusive society made up of individuals who are aware of, and act upon, their rights and responsibilities.

**1.4** First, there is the effect of improving the welfare of others. For many people, this may be stimulated by the needs of a friend, a member of the family or a group in the local community or the needs of poorer people in developing countries. Volunteering and giving are chances to give something back and to have a positive impact on the lives of others. This motive is altruistic and is usually based on the beliefs of the donor. Taken together, the impacts are enormous.

**1.5** Second, there is the effect on the individual volunteer. His or her own personal development is bound up with the welfare of others. Through volunteering individuals add to the welfare of those helped but also benefit enormously from the experience themselves. The benefit may come in many forms – simple personal satisfaction, new skills or knowledge, an understanding of different lives and cultures. Charity is not just about bestowing some benefit on others less fortunate than oneself. Its practice leads to the recognition that making the lives of others better is bound up with realisation of one's own potential.

**1.6** Third, there is an effect on society as a whole. Volunteers and those donating money to charities enhance the common good, helping to build a healthy civil society – with all that entails for the level of crime and anti-social behaviour, participation and democracy. For example, in Balsall Health, Birmingham, there are 56 voluntary organisations and 4,000 people out of a population of 12,000 who regularly participate in caring activities which improve the quality of life of the neighbourhood. Out of this vibrant civil society has arisen new ideas on how to regenerate the area, new forms of engagement with local government and public services and a renewed sense of collective confidence. Such civil renewal is an essential element of the Government's vision for a more democratic and cohesive society.

**1.7** Contributing to development in poor countries can have an impact there as well as at home. Voluntary Service Overseas, for example, has sent over 28,000 volunteers – nurses, teachers, small business advisors – to Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and to Eastern Europe, sharing their skills and experience with local communities in the developing world and returning home to contribute to our community in new ways.

## THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

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**1.8** Our role in government is to be an enabler – to help communities develop through providing a framework within which volunteering and giving can thrive. There are many areas where central government has to take the lead, such as education, health and crime, if we are to ensure that all individuals have equal access to opportunities in life. By investing more than ever before in public services, by better managing the economy so as to create opportunity and prosperity for all and by refocusing the Criminal Justice System to redress the balance in favour of victims and communities, we have now put in place strong foundations for social progress.

**1.9** This social progress is as necessary here as it is abroad. In an increasingly globalised world, what happens to the poorest citizen in the poorest country can directly affect the richest citizen in the richest country. As we work together to fight international terrorism, so we must work together to address the causes of poverty – not just because to do so is central to long term national security and peace, but because to do so is right – a moral imperative, an economic necessity and a social duty.

**1.10** But there is a limit to what government can and should seek to achieve on its own. Making communities better places in which to live and work and improving the welfare of all citizens demands a society in which the voluntary principle can thrive. Civil renewal requires local people to take control of their lives. Building a compassionate society from the roots up is not something we in government can achieve alone. It is simply not in our gift. Yet government action does have the potential to help or hinder the development of a culture of volunteering and giving.

**1.11** We can, for example, play an important role in supporting local leaders. Action at the very local level requires strong leadership and where people with these leadership skills are identified, they can be nurtured and helped in their role of bringing together citizens in their communities.

**1.12** Being a good partner is, therefore, central to the role of government. If we are to play our part in building the capacity of local communities, we must ensure that communities have the right kind of support and opportunities to develop from the bottom up. Government at all levels, acting in partnership with others, particularly employers and a strong, independent voluntary and community sector, can work to support people in achieving not only success at an individual level, but in building powerful communities. Only by doing this can we, as a society, achieve sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all citizens.

**1.13** Partnership starts from the recognition that voluntary and community organisations often do things differently. Their ethos is fired by the voluntary principle and their structures are quite unlike those of government. Volunteers are used creatively, motivation and personal commitment highly valued – and the aims of the organisation are the aims of the staff, trustees and volunteers. Voluntary and community groups often show a flexibility, freedom and a closeness to their target groups and clients which cannot easily be replicated. As a result, they are often the source of innovative solutions to long-term problems. On issues as diverse as the recycling of household waste to preventing drug abuse, the voluntary and community sector has led the way. It has also provided residents of communities and clients of its services with a voice which otherwise would go unheard. As we in government work with voluntary and community groups we want to respect and nurture these different approaches.

**I.14** Partnership also requires ceding power to those who know better. The days when the centre knew best are long gone. Now we in government need to look outwards – away from the centres of power and influence – to those who know about services and understand those for whom services are designed. Real practical knowledge about what works is not to be found in textbooks; it is found embodied in the lives and work of active citizens the length of the country. Voluntary and community organisations have for years specialised in providing services to those whom the state and the market have failed. If we are to realise our goal of world class public services we must tap into the accumulated wisdom of the voluntary and community sector and unlock the potential of volunteers and communities across the land.

**I.15** Finally, we must develop a new relationship with the voluntary and community sector which avoids the confusions and mistakes of the past. Some on the Right argue that government action “crowds out” voluntary sector activity. And there are those on the Left who still argue that the welfare of the poor and the need for universal public services are too important to leave to “charity” or to the market. We reject both these views. They are based on the mistaken premise that the interests of the voluntary and community sector and the state conflict – they do not. If the framework is right the roles can be complementary and mutually reinforcing. And that means we must work together if the unique contribution which the voluntary and community sector can bring to the table is to be fully realised. By working together we can achieve some common goals which neither of us can achieve on our own.



## INTRODUCTION

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**2.1** The last chapter outlined our vision of a strong and healthy partnership between government and a strong and independent voluntary and community sector. Since 1997 the Government has put this philosophy into practice through a range of policies which, taken together, have focused on:

- **increasing resources** going to the sector through a mix of tax and spending measures;
- **getting the right incentives in place** to encourage giving – of time and money – and thereby contributing to the Government's wider agenda of building strong communities, devolving power to local people and finding new and better ways for people to volunteer;
- **building a strong partnership** based on mutual understanding and respect – beginning with the Compact<sup>2</sup> and its associated Codes of Good Practice and culminating in the recommendations of the cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery<sup>3</sup>;
- **increasing opportunities to volunteer** and make a difference.

**2.2** We believe that the next steps must be to build on this solid foundation – because all the evidence suggests that this combination of policies to promote giving is **right**. There is no robust and thriving voluntary and community sector in any country which does not have the active support of government. We have put in place one of the most generous fiscal regimes for charities in the world and the Compact – an agreement between the Government and the voluntary and community sector to build the partnership relationship for mutual advantage – and its associated Codes of Good Practice are seen as a model of excellence elsewhere. (Canada has modelled their “Accord” and its codes directly on the Compact.<sup>4</sup>) Our task now is to ensure that everything is done to make individual citizens and the wider voluntary and community sector more aware of our policies, to ensure effective implementation locally as well as nationally and to map out the next steps.

## FISCAL INCENTIVES

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**2.3** The tax system, and in particular, the range of reliefs available, supports our commitment to the voluntary and community sector in a number of ways. There are two principal policy objectives:

- to increase the revenue of charities; and
- to provide the right incentives for taxpayers.

**2.4** For this system to be fully effective and to work efficiently taxpayers need clear information on how far their giving is being supported by government. And charities need to know how to organise and market themselves to maximise their income. We are aware that information is crucial to an efficient tax system.

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<sup>2</sup> *Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*, Cm 4100, Home Office, November 1998.

<sup>3</sup> *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review*, The Stationery Office, September 2002.

<sup>4</sup> See, *An Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector*, December 2001.

## INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

**2.5** There are a range of reliefs available to charities themselves:

- exemption from tax on most forms of income and capital gains if they are applied to charitable purposes;
- where a charity trades through a subsidiary company, the trading profits can be applied for charitable purposes tax-free;
- premises used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes benefit from mandatory 80 per cent business rates relief which local authorities may top up to 100 per cent;
- VAT exemption, zero-rating or relief for imports on certain supplies to or by charities, and VAT refunds on new buildings for charities;

and on charitable donations:

- where an individual donates to charity using the Gift Aid scheme, the charity can claim back the basic rate of tax (increasing the value of the donation by 28%, based on current tax rates) and individuals who are higher rate taxpayers can reclaim the difference between the basic and higher rate through their tax return;
- employees can also give to charities through their payroll (Payroll Giving), giving out of pre-tax income;
- gifts to charity, whether in lifetime or bequests, are exempt from inheritance tax;
- individuals and companies who donate listed shares or securities or real property receive tax relief for doing so;
- an individual can buy at the VAT zero rate any goods for donation to a charity for sale, export or letting or hire by a charity;
- medical equipment and certain other goods are zero rated for VAT purposes.

**2.6** The changes made in successive Budgets since 1997 have made a material difference to the income of charities and had a significant effect on the amount given. The amount donated to charities has risen from average monthly donations of around £8 in 1997 to £12 in 2001 – with the annual total standing at £6.75 billion. The reforms announced in Budget 2000 made the fiscal regime both more generous and more inclusive. We abolished the £250 minimum limit on Gift Aid and the £1,200 maximum limit on Payroll Giving donations. And we introduced a new tax relief on gifts of quoted shares and securities.

**2.7** Of course, our help through the tax system goes wider than charities. In Budget 2002, for example, we underlined our commitment to supporting the positive contribution Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) make to their communities. As well as having the option to register as a charity, they now have the alternative option of registering with the Inland Revenue CASC scheme to benefit from a tailored package of tax reliefs.

## CORPORATE DONATIONS

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**2.8** There is also a range of reliefs supporting corporate donations to charities:

- cash donations to charity can be made from pre-tax profits;
- relief for the costs of employee volunteering (e.g. payroll and administrative expenses);
- relief for donations of trading assets, plant and machinery.
- the same VAT reliefs as those available to individual donors.

**2.9** Companies have an important role to play in working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. Businesses can donate money, assets and time to charities in a variety of ways, all supported by the tax system. The Directory of Social Change estimates that the corporate support for community giving by the top 400 companies was worth an estimated £499 million in 2000-01.

**2.10** The system for making **corporate donations of money** has been simplified for both companies and charities. Before the Budget 2000 changes, companies had to deduct income tax from their charitable donations and charities recovered that tax from the Inland Revenue. Companies now make their donations from gross income so that the charities do not have to claim the tax on the donation, reducing the administrative burden and freeing up resources. The average corporate donation is 0.2 per cent of pre-tax profits but this masks a great variation in actual corporate giving to charity. In the last year alone, the top 100 UK registered companies (measured by turnover in 2000) included those giving anything from £2,500 to £9 million. The level of corporate donations has remained about constant in real terms over the last decade – despite the recent downturn in world stock markets which had been expected to hit corporate cash donations. It is estimated that total corporate donations made using Gift Aid for 2000/01 were worth around £280 million.

**2.11** Businesses also have a role to play in supporting employees' giving of time and money. Businesses can claim a tax deduction for the cost of employees' volunteering in work time. This means that for the time employees are volunteering they are treated for tax purposes as if they are working for their employer. The Payroll Giving scheme allows employees to give through their payroll from pre-tax earnings. This is gradually becoming better embedded in the workplace. **The amount given in 2001-02 exceeded the Budget 2000 target of £60 million by 2003 with a record £72.5 million donated.** This was helped by government initiatives – the 10 per cent Payroll Giving supplement and the associated publicity campaign. In the last two years over 2,500 new schemes have been set up giving 1.3 million employees access to Payroll Giving for the first time.

**2.12** There are, however, over 25 million employees so there is considerable potential for further expansion. Only around 1 in 5 employees have access to Payroll Giving schemes and fewer than 600,000 give through Payroll Giving. There is evidence that where schemes are championed from within an organisation they are well supported by employees. Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive has a third of employees giving and a London law firm has achieved a participation rate of 40 per cent.

**2.13** These figures demonstrate what can be achieved when employers and charities work together. Yet there is much more that can and should be done. We want now to facilitate a step change in the relationship between the corporate and voluntary and community sectors. Our proposals for developing that relationship further are at paragraphs 2.21ff below.

## THE VALUE OF THE CURRENT INCENTIVES

**2.14** Following the Budget 2000 reforms, the support and incentives offered through the tax system have been increasingly used by donors and charities and are now worth around £2 billion. The breakdown for 2001-02 includes:

	£ million
Inheritance tax foregone on charitable bequests	360
Business rates relief	600 <sup>5</sup>
VAT	200
Income tax reliefs	850
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,010</b>

**2.15** These tax reliefs include those available to support gifts to charity of shares and, from 2002-03, land and real property. The potential of the reliefs has not yet been fully realised. This might be because donors are not conscious of all the options to give in a tax efficient way or because charities are not fully geared up to take full advantage of the reliefs in their fundraising activities.

**2.16** Gift Aid alone is now worth about £400 million to charities, a rise in tax-efficient donations of several hundred millions compared with 1999-00. Repayments under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant are claimed by around 45,000 charities – only a quarter of the 180,000 registered charities. Even discounting for year-on-year variation (reflecting the volatility of giving patterns) **there remains considerable untapped potential for charities to increase their income.** And there is a greater prize – if an additional 2% of employees were encouraged to start giving to charity through Payroll Giving schemes, this would generate (on current giving patterns) up to £100 million a year extra income for charities. We hope this discussion document will bring home to charities the enormous potential for increasing income that lies in the unclaimed tax reliefs.

## GETTING THE INCENTIVES RIGHT

**2.17** The tax reliefs available for individual and corporate donors offer a range of incentives for giving money, assets and time. The Getting Britain Giving package announced in Budget 2000 introduced generous reliefs for donors. The upper annual limit on Payroll Giving donations was removed and Payroll Giving was supported by a promotional campaign and a 10 per cent supplement on donations for three years. The regime for corporate donations of money was simplified and for individual Gift Aid donations the minimum level of donation was removed. A new tax relief for gifts of listed shares was introduced, worth £100 million in 2000-01, and this was expanded to include gifts of real property in 2002.

**2.18** All these measures have already contributed to increased levels of giving to charities. Individual Gift Aid donations now bring over £400 million per year in tax claimed by charities and Payroll Giving levels have more than doubled. But we need to work together to ensure that these measures are more widely used. The first thing that must be done is to provide more and better information about the existence and potential value of the reliefs. The Giving Campaign, a partnership between government and the voluntary sector, was established to promote tax-efficient giving by all donors. It has already done much to raise awareness of these measures amongst charities, donors and influential groups such as financial advisers, using a range of approaches which provides training workshops, guidance materials, advertising and building exercises. As a result many charities are now making better use of tax effective giving.

<sup>5</sup> Estimate: business rates figures not published for the UK.

## BETTER INFORMATION

**2.19** It is not enough merely to provide incentives for people to give; potential donors also need information about charities and the wider voluntary and community sector. They need to know what charities do, how efficient they are and how they work with others in the sector and with government. Research has shown that relationships between the public and charities have shifted from being trust-based to being confidence-based.<sup>6</sup> Donors want to see not only how their donation is being spent but what the outcomes of the organisation's activities are. The recent Cabinet Office Strategy Unit's report on the legislative and regulatory framework for charities pointed out that, "it is particularly difficult to find credible information about performance and outcome, and particularly anything which enables meaningful comparison between similar organisations."<sup>7</sup> The Strategy Unit report also cites a poll which reported that 73 per cent of people would be more likely to give to a charity if they had independent information about its performance.<sup>8</sup>

**2.20** There is, therefore, enormous potential to provide better information for potential donors. **We in government would like to do further work on how best to do this, building on the Strategy Unit report.** In America the GuideStar database, which is freely accessible online, provides detailed information on more than 850,000 not-for-profit organisations. **The Government is interested in whether and how a similar database might be established in the UK.**

### GuideStar

The GuideStar website is produced by Philanthropic Research Inc, a public charity founded in 1994. It was developed to enable more efficient giving by getting better information to prospective donors. GuideStar's funding comes from charitable foundations and individual donors. Detailed information about over 850,000 charities is available on a searchable website. Registration is free so coverage is excellent. Information on the operations and finances of charities are readily accessible. Donors can compare charities, monitor their performance and give more efficiently and with greater confidence. And charities pursue more effective operating practices, embrace greater accountability, and enjoy lower fund-raising costs. Finally, wider society benefits from a more efficient, generous, and well-targeted allocation of resources to the charitable sector.

Research carried out for the Institute for Philanthropy (IFP) earlier this year identified demand for a similar database in the UK. The IFP has provided office space and finance to begin work on a feasibility study for GuideStar UK and hope to complete the feasibility work by the end of December 2002.

## THE CORPORATE CHALLENGE

**2.21** The corporate sector is increasingly aware of its important role in the community. This is seen in the prominence of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives which link companies into the communities around them. We support this development and are keen to ensure that the tax system and other government mechanisms support charitable giving and involvement with the wider voluntary and community sector.

<sup>6</sup> NCVO Almanac 2002, pp 55/103 (NCVO 2002).

<sup>7</sup> *Private action, Public Benefit: A Review of Charities and the Wider Not-For-Profit Sector*, p61, Crown Copyright, September 2002.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

**2.22** In the Pre-Budget Report the Chancellor announced that the 10% government supplement on donations to charity through Payroll Giving is to be extended for one further year – until April 2004. This will build on the success of the existing scheme. It will also provide an opportunity for employers to promote Payroll Giving by their staff. The Chancellor also announced that we will work with the voluntary and corporate sectors to promote a culture of giving and volunteering. **This work will, over the coming months, take the form of a Corporate Challenge. The Corporate Challenge will be developed in close consultation with business and the voluntary sector.**

**2.23** The Corporate Challenge will bring together government, the corporate and voluntary sectors to develop a package to encourage businesses to support their communities. This will involve looking at:

- how best to **promote the current tax incentives** for giving and how to make them work;
- how best to promote and **make the most of initiatives for employee volunteering;**
- how to **share best practice** and identify how the two sectors and others can benefit from the relationship.

**2.24** For the Corporate Challenge to work will require real effort on the part of government, businesses and the voluntary and community sector. HM Treasury, the Home Office, the Inland Revenue, businesses and the voluntary sector will work in partnership over the next six months to develop the idea and put firm proposals to Ministers.

**2.25** Many businesses already contribute to their communities – with a combination of an effective Payroll Giving scheme, support for employee volunteering and sponsorship of community development projects. The example below illustrates what can be achieved when these come together within a business.

#### **Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBSG)**

The RBSG believes in investing in local communities and supporting employees' charitable giving. For every pound donated by staff from their monthly pay, the Group makes an additional matching contribution of £2 (up to a maximum monthly donation from the Group of £200). This means that for a basic rate taxpayer every 78 pence given by staff becomes £3.10 when the Government and employer contributions are added. Over 11,500 staff participate in Payroll Giving (a participation rate in the UK of over 12%) and in 2001 the Group matched their contributions with over £2.5 million.

Many employees from across the RBSG also give their time, energy and skills to help local community groups, schools and charities. In recognition of their efforts, they can apply for a Community Cashback Award for their organisation. Awards are paid to the organisations where employees are actively involved as volunteers, or to the charities staff have raised funds for. Staff can apply for awards of £100, £250, £500 or £1,000 for their good cause.

Finally, the RBSG encourages employees to get involved with community partners in projects that are funded by the Group's Community Investment Programme. The approach is to develop wide-ranging relationships with the organisations that are funded and wherever possible, to encourage employees to make a contribution to the success of these partnerships.

## THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT ON SPENDING

**2.26** In the Spending Review White Paper, published in July, we announced a substantial increase in resources for the voluntary and community sector – bringing levels of central government spending on the sector to an all time high. The report of cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary sector in public service delivery<sup>9</sup> was submitted to Ministers in time for full consideration as part of the Spending Review.

**2.27** The Government accepted that report in full and published, with the recommendations, a detailed implementation plan which sets out who, within government or the voluntary and community sector, is responsible for delivering each recommendation and a timetable within which the Government expects these recommendations to be delivered.

**2.28 Implementation of the review is being backed with resources.** The Active Community Unit in the Home Office, which has the Whitehall lead in overseeing implementation, has been given £188 million to invest in local communities, with £93 million of this being set aside for full implementation of the review by 2006.

**2.29 In addition to these resources, we have also provided £125 million for a new investment fund, *futurebuilders*, to help voluntary organisations in their public service work.** This one off investment in the voluntary sector is intended to:

- remove obstacles to service delivery;
- modernise the service delivery part of the sector for the long term; and
- increase the scale and scope of public service delivery.

**2.30** The fund will harness the vision, specialist knowledge and expertise of service providers to transform their capability, capitalise on the sector's ability for innovation, and, most importantly, **improve service outcomes**. High quality schemes that exemplify good practice, encourage partnership working and help to replicate success, and which can demonstrate that they can deliver sustainable services on the ground, will be candidates for funding.

**2.31** This will be targeted investment to provide exemplars that can point the way ahead for the voluntary and community sector in its service delivery role. There will be a programme of dissemination following the completion of the schemes and the closure of the fund.

**2.32** The purpose of *futurebuilders* is consistent with the overall theme of the Spending Review of **investing resources to bring about reforms to deliver results**. The implementation of the recommendations of the cross cutting review will put in place a new framework for the working relationship between government and the voluntary and community sector. The *futurebuilders* fund will allow front line organisations to take advantage of the opportunities that this new framework should create.

## SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

**2.33** *Futurebuilders* was created in response to representations during the cross cutting review about the lack of sustainable funding for the voluntary and community sector. This, coupled with the increasing difficulty in some key areas in recruiting and retaining volunteers, can affect the ability of voluntary sector organisations to play their full part in partnership with government.

<sup>9</sup> *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review*, HM Treasury, September 2002.

**2.34** The *futurebuilders* fund will be available until 2006, when the Spending Review period ends. The Government knows, however, that the needs of the sector for capital funding are likely to be ongoing. It is important, therefore, to think creatively about how best to maximise the resources available to the voluntary and community sector.

## UNCLAIMED ASSETS

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**2.35** Legacies can provide an important sustainable income stream for voluntary sector organisations. Charities are currently gifted about £1 in every £20 of the value of estates. Yet all too often these legacies do not reach the charities for whom they were intended as estates are often undervalued and not all the assets are taken into account. It has been estimated that, in total, around £1 billion of the assets of deceased persons lies unclaimed. This is exactly the amount that UK charities currently receive from legacies each year. If a way could be found to make it easier for charities to receive the money always intended for them it could mean a significant increase in charitable income.

**2.36** There already exists a voluntary Unclaimed Assets Register. However, searching costs money which few charities can easily spare and coverage is limited to the financial institutions that have chosen to participate. The British Bankers Association and Building Society Association operate a joint search facility and National Savings and Investments and the Bank of England gilts Registrar also offer search facilities and helplines. These initiatives represent a good start and a foundation on which we might build further.

**2.37** **We believe that a more comprehensive scheme has considerable attractions. It would enable charities and individuals to find out what assets they have a claim on and has clear potential to boost the income of charities.** We would not want to lose what has already been achieved by the Unclaimed Assets Register or by the banks. Any comprehensive scheme would, therefore, build on this work and tap into the existing expertise in this area. We want to work constructively with the banks, financial institutions and the voluntary and community sector to reach a shared understanding of how things can be improved and **how a comprehensive database might be achieved that would lead to a significant increase in charities' income.**

# 3

## FROM PRINCIPLES TO ACTION II: VOLUNTEERING

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### THE LAST FIVE YEARS

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**3.1** We are committed to promoting volunteering. Volunteers make an enormous contribution to our society. They help meet a range of needs, from millions informally supporting others in their community, to the 30,000 magistrates trying the vast majority of criminal cases. And from school governors who give of their own time to raise standards in schools to millions of parents who tirelessly participate in fund raising and help with school activities. Taken together these contributions enhance the capacity of communities to solve problems collectively. Volunteers contribute ideas as well as time and effort, providing new perspectives on social and environmental challenges, and are often stimulated to participate more in local decision making.

**3.2** Volunteering also benefits individual volunteers. It provides opportunities to widen skills and increase confidence. People benefit through new experiences and different perspectives. And through volunteering, people from different backgrounds come together in new ways and develop bonds of trust and understanding.

**3.3** Over the last five years we have sought to provide better support for volunteering, through new and better targeted resources, through partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations and through a new volunteering ethos in the public sector. Our approach has focused on three pillars of support:

- **promoting** volunteering;
- **investing** in volunteering for young people;
- **developing** volunteering opportunities in public services.

### NEW WAYS TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEERING

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**3.4** Many local schemes such as volunteer bureaux have long sought to match volunteers and opportunities. The Government is committed to ensuring a strong local infrastructure of volunteer support – and that commitment remains. It is essential that policies to develop volunteering opportunities take into account the importance of effective local networks and the importance of the personal approach. But local provision is patchy, some volunteer bureaux have difficulty in finding funding, and provision is of varying effectiveness. The cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery recommended a strategic review of the capacity of local communities with a view to identifying and plugging the gaps. It would be wrong to pre-empt the outcome of that capacity review. **But the specific outcome does not affect our vision of a robust network of local volunteering bureaux offering first class services and the full range of volunteering opportunities.** By working closely with local communities we are convinced that this can be delivered.

**3.5** To complement local activity we have also sought to harness the benefits of technology and national infrastructure to bring volunteers and opportunities together. So we funded TimeBank and Do-It – virtual markets bringing potential volunteers and opportunities together.

**TimeBank**

**TimeBank**, which receives funding of £1.5 million a year, aims to raise awareness of the value of giving time and to inspire people to volunteer. It is supported locally by a network of over 400 organisations and approximately 40,000 people have registered with TimeBank. It is involved in a number of campaigns, including Changing Streets, which encourages neighbours to work together to improve their neighbourhoods.

**Do-It**

**Do-It** is a brand name for YouthNet UK, a charity behind the award winning youth site, TheSite.org. The website makes available to the public as many volunteering opportunities as possible from one central online database. Opportunities can be searched which are directly relevant to the prospective volunteer's interests and location. No charge is made to organisations which wish to register their opportunities. There are currently around 480,000 opportunities available online.

**3.6** We have also used £4.5 million to support a number of Active Community Demonstration Projects which test innovative ways of encouraging people to get more involved in community life. For example, the "Get Active!" project in Brighton and Hove has involved working with minority ethnic communities to explore providing information about opportunities in languages other than English and they are working with the Federation of Disabled People to address barriers for people with disabilities.

## INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

**3.7** Over the last five years we have attached great importance to making available volunteering opportunities to young people. Young people can make an enormous contribution to their local communities, both practically and by providing ideas on how problems should be tackled and services delivered. And by coming together through voluntary projects, such as the Bradford Youth Parliament, trust and understanding can grow between young people from different cultural backgrounds.

**The Bradford Youth Parliament**

**Bradford** is one of the UK's most diverse places with as many as 92 separate communities contributing to its population of over 300,000 people. Significant divisions developed between the races living in the city, in particular between those from Asian and White communities, and last year in April and July disturbances occurred. Young people in Bradford felt that their views were being ignored by local politicians and their potential to help solve their own problems unrealised.

In September elections took place for the first time for the first Bradford Youth Parliament. Young people between the ages of 11 and 25 elected 26 of their peers to a Parliament which will give a real voice to young people in Bradford and address their core concerns over crime, drugs and their environment.

**3.8** Early experience of volunteering also tends to encourage volunteering later in life. It is estimated that around a third of schools in England have school councils. The Government is actively encouraging more schools to set them up and has funded Schools Council UK to produce primary and secondary school toolkits to help schools set them up effectively. Ofsted inspections ensure that young people's participation is being actively encouraged and supported. In addition, an increasing number of local authorities are showing their commitment to working with young people. Many have established Youth Forums and Councils as a way of sustaining the involvement of young people in the generation of ideas for both long-term policy and delivery.

**3.9** The Millennium Volunteers scheme is aimed at encouraging more 16 to 24 year olds to volunteer their time for the benefit of others and now has an annual budget of £15 million. It involves young people in designing the programmes and focuses on enabling young people to help in their local communities. So far, more than 160 projects nationally have provided a wide range of volunteering opportunities for over 80,000 young people and the scheme is on course to reach 100,000 participants by the end of 2003. Over 23,000 young people have completed 200 hours and 36,000 have completed 100 hours of voluntary activity.

#### **Millennium Volunteers Summer Sports Academy**

**When Mimbar Ali, an 18 year-old from Milton Keynes, was about to complete his A levels at the Leon School & Sports College, he spent five weeks of his summer holiday organising events and activities for local children at Leon School's sports academy. During what was left of his holiday he assisted at a football academy for six to ten year olds and during term-time helps out in the PE department whenever he can. Katy Roberts, a sports development officer at Leon School & Sports College – an area with its own social problems, one of which is racism – explained that Mimbar was an inspiration and role model to all the children he worked with: "Mimbar is of Bangladeshi origin and I believe his work as a MV has communicated the message that you can pull together as a community and have fun, whatever your background."**

**Mimbar, himself, explains how MV fits in with both his studies and his belief in contributing to the community: "I've got a lot of interests, but really enjoy sports. Our tutor suggested doing MV. The summer sports academy was great way to get some practical coaching experience while putting something back into the community. I aimed to do at least 100 hours but ended up there every day because it was such a great experience and I absolutely loved it. I believe in being grateful for the opportunities you have in life. By being useful and putting something back, everyone can do their bit towards making their own community a better place."**

**3.10** The second plank of our commitment to investing in young people has been through citizenship education in the National Curriculum. Young people learn by doing. And so rather than confine the new citizenship education programme to the classroom, every young person now has the chance to participate in his local community or a voluntary organisation as part of the curriculum. For example, Farnborough Grange School has an array of projects run under citizenship education, including growing organic vegetables at school and harvesting some for sale to the local community, the profits of which go to help local homeless people and keeping some to use for cooking meals for older people.

**3.11** In order to encourage more of this, the Department for Education and Skills has funded the Community Service Volunteers (CSV) to produce the community partners website – [www.csv.communitypartners.org.uk](http://www.csv.communitypartners.org.uk). It provides a database of local volunteering opportunities and partners enabling individuals to match their interests with what is available in their local community.

## VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

**3.12** Volunteers have an increasingly important role to play in delivering public services. The cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery examined a number of case studies where volunteers added value to mainstream service delivery. But proper co-ordination and encouragement is needed if government departments are to use volunteers to best effect. To ensure that departments examine where and how volunteers might add value to their core service agenda all departments must now publish volunteering strategies. And this new obligation is backed by resources – £40 million has been invested centrally to support these strategies. (See para 3.46).

## NEXT STEPS

**3.13** We believe that the significant investment we have made to date has strengthened volunteering and helped provide unparalleled opportunities for new groups of people to get involved. But we know that there are lessons to be learnt and we now want to reflect on how best to develop our support for volunteering further. To help maintain a clear focus on this work, the Government has set the following PSA target:

*“To increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation, by 5% by 2006.”*

**3.14** Historically, data on levels of volunteering is not available in a form which helps us to understand the impact of financial support on overall levels of volunteering. However, the Citizenship Survey, established by the Home Office, does provide a more comprehensive analysis of volunteering. It shows that in 2001, 39% of the population were involved in formal volunteering and 67% in informal volunteering at least once in the last twelve months. Those who volunteer formally give an average of 106 hours a year and those who volunteer informally give an average of 63 hours. The numbers volunteering in the UK exceed that in most other European countries, such as Germany, Spain and Italy, as well as the United States and Australia.

**3.15** Over the coming months the Active Community Unit in the Home Office will be seeking views on the success of different projects and consider also the research which they have commissioned. This review will involve:

- **a stocktake of progress** to date;
- **consideration of the relative performance of different types of intervention**, drawing on the pilot projects and assessments of the major programmes, such as the Experience Corps, TimeBank and Do-It;
- **working to achieve**, over the coming years, **a far closer alignment of the available resources with our key priorities.**

**3.16** The stocktake will involve consulting closely with all those with an interest in successful volunteering projects including employers, local authorities and volunteers themselves. Our clear view is that while the broad approach so far has been right, we need to learn all the lessons. For example, we know that there is no substitute for local centres to broker the volunteering relationship and it is clear that most people who volunteer do so following a personal approach. So we need to ensure that national schemes work creatively with existing local projects and aim to develop a personal approach, as TimeBank is doing through TimePartners.

**3.17** There are indications that overall demand for volunteers is increasing. Demand appears particularly strong for volunteers who are able to take on significant responsibilities but such volunteers may be in short supply. For example, volunteers for the Samaritans are now at their lowest number since 1974 and the Citizens Advice Bureaux are looking for an additional 6,000 volunteers. **The Active Community Unit will examine the extent to which the current supply of volunteers is meeting demand and consider how these specific challenges can be overcome, including considering whether specific forms of support for particular types of volunteers are required.**

**3.18** Finally, we believe strongly that, as support for volunteering evolves, resources must be firmly aligned with our priorities to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from the considerable resources we are committing. We shall, therefore, be looking to focus available resources on the priority areas:

- volunteering among **young people**;
- promoting **employee volunteering**;
- increasing participation amongst **disadvantaged communities**;
- supporting a culture of **volunteering in public services**.

## **FURTHER SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

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**3.19** We are convinced of the positive contribution young people can make to their communities through volunteering and of the benefits young people can gain in terms of self esteem, confidence and communication skills. Volunteering is a way of harnessing and engaging the talents and interests of many of our young people.

**3.20** We believe that every young person can be an active citizen and so make a difference to their local community, gain recognition for their achievements, enhance their self-development and work-related skills and retain an interest in voluntary activity throughout their lives.

**3.21** The Department for Education and Skills is piloting Active Citizens in Schools (ACIS) which aims to connect 11–15 year olds and their schools with their communities. ACIS aims to create opportunities for that connection to take place, reinforce the citizenship curriculum and offer young people recognition for what they achieve. Other initiatives include mentoring schemes in schools and work on student volunteering where the Government, together with the Higher Education Funding Council, is supporting volunteering among students and staff and actively involving young people in Connexions. Outside of government, there is also much encouragement for young people to volunteer through organisations such as Community Service Volunteers and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

**3.22** However, we must not be complacent. There is a challenge to maintain the participation of young people in voluntary activities and to ensure that the new generation is able to develop a culture and experience of volunteering from a relatively young age, helping them shape their communities and the services which they use.

**3.23** There is the potential to ensure that new summer activities for young people also encourage volunteering and participation. Over the last three years we have introduced a number of such activities. Through the New Opportunities Fund, money from the National Lottery is supporting activities for school leavers linked to advice on further learning and employment from the Connexions Service. Connexions also led on a programme – Summer Plus – which provided diversionary activities and key worker support towards re-engaging young people in learning. Through the Youth Justice Board we are supporting work which helps divert young people away from crime, including Youth Inclusion Programmes, Community Merit Award schemes and the Splash project.

**3.24** These programmes already provide many opportunities for young people to make a contribution – as mentors for other participants in the future, or as volunteers on, for example, activity programmes for younger children. **The New Opportunities Fund, Connexions Service, and Youth Justice Board will consider how young people participating in summer activities can be better informed about and encouraged to participate in local volunteering opportunities.**

**3.25** Universities and employers value the personal and social skills which are developed through Gap Year activities. But only around 8 per cent of eighteen year olds take up such opportunities and participation is weighted towards those leaving the independent school sector and the south of England. **We are determined that the benefits of a ‘year out’ – particularly where this involves voluntary activity for the benefit of the community – should be more widely understood and more widely available.** It is also essential that young people have access to accurate information about these opportunities.

**3.26** The Department for Education and Skills has, therefore, initiated a review of Gap Year provision. **It will consult all those with an interest through an advisory group and develop an action plan for widening participation.** The review will consider ways in which Gap Years might contribute towards the Government’s plans to expand higher education and its vision on community participation. The review aims to improve and co-ordinate sources of information about the benefits of Gap Years. It will draw on the ingredients of success of Millennium Volunteers and consider the role which the Connexions Service can play in offering information and advice, working closely with the voluntary and community sector. Above all, it will look at how, within existing structures, the advantages of Gap Year volunteering could be opened up to a wider social mix of young people.

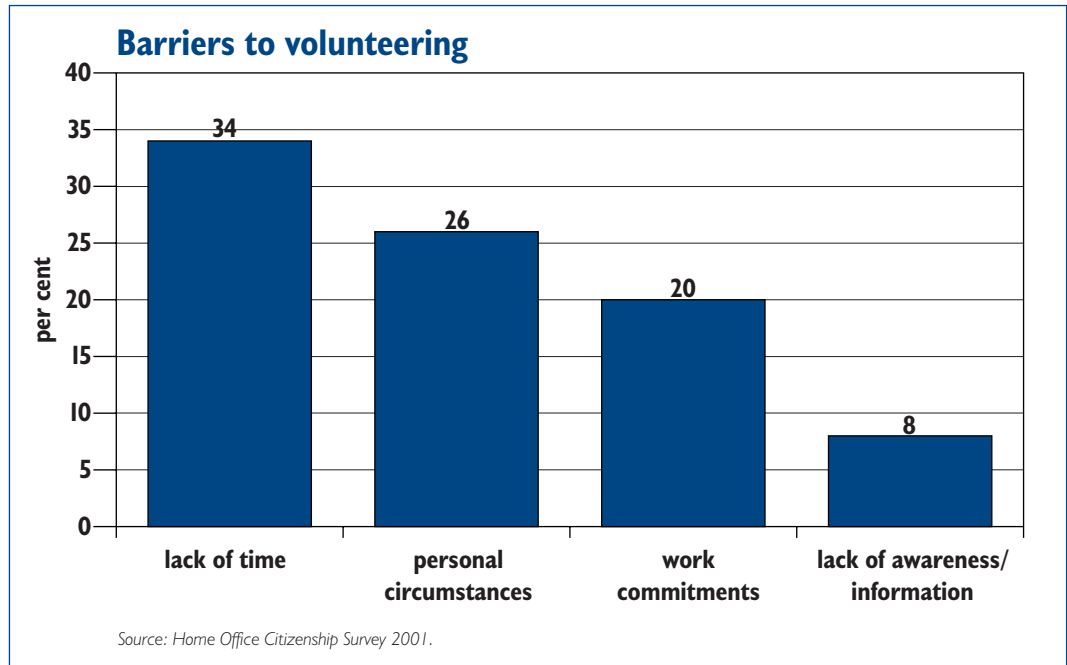
**3.27** We are committed to widening opportunity so that a more diverse range of young people can be encouraged to take a year out after school, college or training. As a first step, **the Department for Education and Skills will be piloting a Gap Year Scheme for young people from disadvantaged communities which will seek to provide a structured, developmental experience for young people** and also provide us with a basis for effective evaluations of the funding mechanisms to support young people who choose full-time volunteering.

## **EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING**

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**3.28** Building a more cohesive society based on strong communities is not purely the responsibility of individuals, the voluntary and community sector or government. Employers and their employees also have a vital role to play. Many businesses are already encouraging voluntary activity among employees and the Government supports this.

**3.29** A key challenge for government and for the wider voluntary and community sector is how to reduce the barriers to volunteering. The Home Office Citizenship Survey is the most comprehensive analysis of volunteering undertaken in the UK to date. It indicates that although a third of people say that they would like to spend more time volunteering, there are some significant barriers. The principal barriers are set out in the chart below.



**3.30** Many people feel that they just do not have the time to juggle work, family commitments and leisure with volunteering. Work commitments are a particularly serious constraint on volunteers. Even if the voluntary activity usually takes place outside work hours, people may need time off for training associated with volunteering. As was noted above, this is especially true for organisations where there is a shortage of volunteers. As the chart above indicates, 20 per cent of respondents to the Citizenship Survey 2001 cited work commitments as a reason for not volunteering. **We believe that employers can make a real difference in this area. They can provide flexibility, opportunities and encouragement.**

**3.31** The introduction of employee volunteering schemes raises volunteering among the workforce by an average of 16 per cent. Many employers are introducing innovative ways to encourage volunteering. They are seeing real benefits to their staff, both in skills and motivation, as well as meeting social needs and raising their profile as corporate citizens.

#### **Connex – British Transport Police (BTP) Specials**

Connex approached BTP to see if they could help increase the uniformed presence on the Railway. Connex agreed to give their employees 16 hours per month of work time to be a Special (200 paid hours a year/4 hours per week) and reward employees with £1000 paid in 3 monthly instalments to recognise their additional skills. Connex staff can be subject to physical or verbal abuse so extra negotiating skills and people skills are a real asset. Connex also agreed to pay BTP for additional Regular PC hours to accompany these officers to increase visibility. This is viewed as a pilot scheme and the hope is to encourage other operators to consider adopting similar schemes in their own areas. South West Trains, Arriva Buses, West Midlands Trains and Virgin Trains are all looking at the initiative.

**3.32** Cares, a Business in the Community programme, provides details of opportunities to enable employees to undertake a wide range of community volunteering activity at times that suit a working person. Local partnerships are now active in fifteen areas and are also in pilot phase in five others. Private sector employers play the major role in funding the Cares programme and encouraging participation from their employees. Business in the Community is also rolling out Community Mark – a tool to assess and recognise the contribution small businesses make to their local communities – in disadvantaged communities and the running of capacity building workshops for small businesses to support their understanding of, and engagement in, corporate community involvement.

#### **Yorkshire Water**

**Yorkshire Water, part of the Kelda Group, has developed a community engagement strategy based on the principle that a company has a responsibility to maintain close links with the community it serves. The strategy is entrenched in the company's business plan. The focus is on a programme of employee volunteering – this helps build close links with community groups and the business itself benefits as its people see community engagement as part of their personal development.**

**Yorkshire Water has set a target of 20 per cent of its workforce to be involved in company based community programmes at any one time. This target is largely met. Community involvement is a mandatory part of the graduate training programme and for all staff is recognised as part of the performance management process.**

**The company has also provided accommodation and other support for Reading Matters – an initiative aimed at improving literacy standards at Key Stage 3.**

**3.33** We welcome these initiatives but believe that more can be done. Currently, only 18 per cent of employees work for an employer who has a volunteering scheme and this at a time when there are an increasing number of opportunities for employee volunteering. More people are in employment than ever before and the workplace is important both as a social hub and as a place where certain types of behaviour that benefit society can be supported by employers.

**3.34** Employee volunteering benefits businesses, individuals and the wider community. We believe that as we work with business on the Corporate Challenge **we need to find the best way to enable the growth and development of employee volunteering schemes.** We are sure that the knowledge and experience of Cares will contribute to the success of this work.

**3.35** As people are increasingly retiring earlier and living longer healthier lives, the opportunities to engage older citizens in volunteering have increased. Some companies are already focusing their efforts on people at this stage in their lives. For example, at Ford, employees who have retired are invited to get involved in community programmes, such as becoming a driver for a hospice or working in an educational establishment to help students with engineering. **We shall encourage this trend by ensuring that information on volunteering opportunities is available to all people approaching retirement age.**

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

**3.36** Empowering individuals to volunteer within their communities, particularly the most disadvantaged communities, can help produce sustainable solutions to crime, drug misuse, anti-social behaviour, and poor health. But formal volunteering is lower in the areas which need it most and many of these deprived communities do not have the resources to fund their own volunteering infrastructure.

**3.37** Those in the highest socio-economic group are twice as likely to volunteer formally than those in the lowest socio-economic group, and 47 per cent of those living in the least deprived areas formally volunteered compared with 29 per cent in the most deprived areas. Research also indicates lower levels of formal volunteering among unemployed people – 30 per cent in comparison to 42 per cent of people who were in employment. There can also be additional barriers to volunteering for members of minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.

**3.38** The Home Office has already started to focus support on participation among disadvantaged groups. For example, they have funded the Black and Minority Ethnic Twinning Initiative. This encourages mainstream organisations to twin with at least two black and minority ethnic organisations in order to raise awareness of current good practice, improve the level and quality of volunteering opportunities and provide black and minority ethnic organisations access to mainstream and strategic funding. These projects covered youth volunteering, health and community projects around England.

**3.39** We have been encouraged by the role of credit unions in helping to build strong local communities. Most credit unions are largely run by unpaid volunteers and provide basic savings and loan facilities to their members. Credit unions demonstrate that co-operative principles can offer an effective way for many thousands of people to manage their financial affairs. They provide greater choice in financial services while ensuring that members are not charged exorbitant interest rates on the loans they provide. We believe the credit union movement can also play a vital role in our shared agenda to improve access to financial services, particularly amongst low income groups.

**3.40** Credit union membership in Great Britain has risen rapidly over the last five years. We would like to see this continue and we have been involved in a number of initiatives to help foster further growth. For example, **we are delivering a programme of deregulation measures to enable credit unions to offer a greater range of services to their members and to give them more operational flexibility.** And since July this year credit union members now benefit from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme – for the first time giving similar protection to members' savings as provided to bank and building society depositors.

**3.41** But much remains to be done. For example, the untapped potential faith-based groups have has not been fully recognised. The Home Office Citizenship Survey showing that 39 per cent of black female volunteers and 31 per cent of Asian male volunteers found out about the opportunity through a place of worship.<sup>10</sup> More generally, it will be important to continue to ensure that a wider cross section of society are represented in key volunteering roles such as magistrates, where the situation is improving but varies considerably between localities, and school governors, where the Department for Education and Skills has already started work to widen participation.

**3.42** Those on certain state benefits could be better encouraged to volunteer. Some people on disability related benefits might be concerned that volunteering would put into question their benefit entitlement. Front line staff dealing with clients in receipt of Incapacity Benefit are well placed to reassure recipients of the benefit that volunteering is compatible with receipt. Not only would such voluntary activity be to the advantage of those receiving help and their local community but it may also be the first step on the road back to economic activity for the individual where appropriate.

**3.43 Re-focusing resources on disadvantaged groups and communities will therefore be a key element of the Active Community Unit review of existing support.**

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<sup>10</sup> Home Office Citizenship Survey, 2001. Results are only indicative at present.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

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**3.44** There is much to be gained from engaging the public in the delivery of public services. Public institutions are able to gain a better understanding of the needs of their end users, the presence of volunteers on committees leads to greater accountability and participants feel more connected to society. Engaging with citizens to discover how they would like to contribute is crucial. Volunteers are also able to enhance and complement the delivery of public services in positions as varied as Special Constables, school governors and the Territorial Army.

**3.45** Our significant investment in public services goes hand in hand with reform. Part of this involves ensuring that the voluntary and community sector are closely involved in the planning and delivery of services and the potential of volunteers is fully considered. Reform will continue to generate significant opportunities for involving local people in partnership. For example, the commitment to refocus the Criminal Justice System on the needs of victims and communities will benefit from the participation of people through groups such as Victim Support and in community panels working with young offenders to address their behaviour.

**3.46** Funding of over £40 million for the years 2001-04 has been made available from the Active Community Unit to support new volunteering opportunities in the public sector, matched with a further £42 million by other government departments. £41 million has been awarded for 18 projects that will create about 100,000 volunteering opportunities in schools, prisons and hospitals. **From 2004-05 the Active Community Unit will cease funding these projects but the funding will continue to be met *in full* from departmental budgets.**

**3.47** We recognise that some specific volunteering opportunities in the public sector require greater publicity, training and support. The Home Office are, for example, developing better support for Special Constables whose numbers have reduced from over 19,000 to fewer than 12,000 over the last few years. We are committed to exploring imaginative solutions to specific problems. The new Corporate Challenge provides an opportunity to link an assessment of the need for volunteers in specific public service areas to businesses who accept the Challenge. Individual departments are also looking at the appropriate way to cover volunteers' expenses and how best to recognise the significant responsibilities which some volunteers take on.

**3.48** The Active Community Unit is committed to a review of the demand for and supply of volunteers – see para 3.17. **As part of that review, they will also consider how far the programmes of government departments affect demand and supply.** This assessment will help departments understand their needs and consider what strategic action may be required to address specific shortages.

# 4

## CONCLUSION

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**4.1** The success of Gift Aid, Payroll Giving, Millennium Volunteers – and the unprecedented resources made available for the voluntary and community sector in the Spending Review – all demonstrate the Government’s continuing commitment to a deepening culture of volunteering and giving. That is a commitment we are happy to make.

**4.2** But we want to do more. We know we need to get the focus of our volunteering commitments right and to make more widely available the full range of opportunities to give something back which are now too often available only to the few. We want to continue to build a culture of volunteering and giving and reap the benefits that such a culture brings in its wake. To realise our ambition we need to get the framework right. The foundations are already in place. We now need to set out the next steps towards realising our ambitions.

**4.3** So we will:

- **seek to find ways of enabling charities to search successfully for unclaimed assets on which they may have a claim** – so that they may be used for the public good;
- **work with business and the voluntary sector to develop a Corporate Challenge**, building on the practice of the best employers, and focused on helping businesses invest in local communities and enabling their employees to give both time and money;
- **pilot new ways of allowing young people from poorer backgrounds to have the once-in-a-lifetime experience of a Gap Year**;
- **review the architecture of the existing system for recruiting and supporting volunteers**, identify what works best and consider how government can best use its funding and support to promote an effective national and local infrastructure;
- **monitor and review central government’s demand for volunteers** as well as the growth in demand from the voluntary and community sector and civil society and consider the implications this has for future development;
- **raise the profile and recognition of volunteers and volunteering** in national and local life;
- **focus the resources going to volunteering on our priorities of disadvantaged communities, young people, employee volunteering and public services**; and
- **increase partnership working** not simply with the voluntary and community sector, but also **with businesses and local government**, to improve the coherence of our support for voluntary activity and civil engagement.

