

# A powerful force for change

a volunteering  
manifesto

Three-quarters  
of the UK  
population are  
involved in  
volunteering

## Why consider volunteering?

Volunteering is a fundamental part of life in the United Kingdom. Three-quarters of the UK population are involved in volunteering, either through an organisation or group, or on a more informal basis. They make a rich and diverse contribution to society. They are engaged in mutual aid and self-help, participation, advocacy and providing services, as well as helping others. They spot and articulate unmet needs and emerging issues; they campaign as activists.

# Volunteering underpins our civil society

If these volunteers stopped giving their time, then many vital services would collapse, including hospital transport, sea and mountain rescue, magistrates' courts and children's panels. Communities would lose their voice to influence the social, environmental and political structures around them.

This manifesto tells you more about why volunteering matters to you and your constituents, and how you can support its rich diversity. It also gives you key facts about voluntary activity and pointers for further information and involvement.

Your support is essential to promote volunteering and community participation, and encourage a social and fiscal environment in which volunteering can flourish. Please let us know about your commitment by returning the attached form.

Volunteers  
handle over  
6.5 million  
inquiries  
every year

### What volunteers contribute

Research suggests that some 23 million people volunteer each year, with much of this activity taking place locally. The economic value of formal volunteering in the UK has been estimated at more than £40 billion per year, or 7.9% of GDP.

If costed, the time contributed by volunteers to public services would amount to:

Education: **£10 bn**

Health and social services: **£7 bn**

Environment: **£2 bn**

For every £1 of public funding spent to support volunteering, volunteers give £30 worth of work.

Quality of life. In making visible the value of volunteering we must ensure that the

contribution of volunteers is recognised as having more than monetary equivalence.

The contribution of volunteers in all sectors and to all aspects of life needs to be measured, recognised and celebrated.

Health and fitness. An estimated 1.5 million volunteer coaches and trainers, drivers, umpires, fundraisers and others create enjoyable sports and exercise opportunities for millions.

Advice services. Volunteers handle over 6.5 million inquiries every year.

Arts and culture. Twenty million volunteer teachers, producers and activity organisers enable more than half the population to exercise their creative talents and brighten their lives in voluntary arts.

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### How Parliament can promote volunteering

- Volunteering, while freely given, is not cost free. Provide long-term funding security for local Volunteer Centres/Bureaux and other volunteering infrastructure bodies
- Ensure that existing or imminent legislation or regulation is volunteering-literate and volunteer-friendly
- Ensure sufficient funds are allocated when government initiatives rely on voluntary and community involvement
- Ensure that volunteers are not substituted for paid labour or exploited to do work that should be paid
- Ensure government implements the Compact and the voluntary sector scheme in Wales. The Compact is the agreement between the government and the voluntary and community sector to improve their relationship with each other and the communities they serve.
- Count volunteer time as match funding in all public-sector grants
- Ensure that the benefits system presents no barriers to volunteers
- Take all steps to ensure that volunteering is inclusive
- Make visible the value of volunteer contributions – it's a major contribution to the economy

# The Year of the Volunteer aims to raise the profile of the work volunteers are doing nationwide

## Celebrate volunteers

Support Volunteers' Week (1-7 June). Take up the opportunity to do some voluntary work in your constituency – it's great PR, both for you and for volunteering! Contact your local Volunteer Centre/Bureau to find out how to get involved.

For more information see [www.volunteersweek.org.uk](http://www.volunteersweek.org.uk)

The Year of the Volunteer, 2005 is the Year of the Volunteer, a year-long celebration of the amazing work volunteers do and a call to action to get more and more of us volunteering.

The Year's main aims are to:

- Increase the number of volunteers, particularly individuals from marginalised groups and young people
- Open up more volunteering opportunities in the public and voluntary sector
- Raise the profile of the work volunteers are doing nationwide
- Thank volunteers everywhere for their time and commitment

Visit the website to see how you can support the celebrations: [www.yearofthevolunteer.org](http://www.yearofthevolunteer.org)

Over 20% of  
adults volunteer  
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a week

### Who volunteers?

23 million people volunteer each year, providing a workforce equivalent to 180,000 full-time workers

Over 20% adults volunteer at least once a week and 74% regularly help out in their communities on a more informal basis

More than 75% of voluntary organisations are entirely run by volunteers

In 2002 at the XVII Commonwealth Games over 10,000 volunteers took part in a wide range of activities. An estimated 70,000 volunteers are an essential component of the London's bid to host the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in 2012.

Get  
involved

When in government I will promote volunteering



Please send me more information about Volunteers' Week



Please send me more information about the following issue  
that you mention in your manifesto

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Please keep me informed of your organisation's work

Name

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Address

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Tel

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Email

Constituency

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Party

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The manifesto has been produced on behalf of the United Kingdom Volunteer Forum. When returning the form please address it to the organisation in your country:



## England

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London N1 9RL  
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Email: [volunteering@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:volunteering@volunteeringengland.org)



## Scotland

Volunteer Development Scotland  
Stirling Enterprise Park  
Stirling FK7 7RP  
Tel: 01786 479593  
Email [information@vds.org.uk](mailto:information@vds.org.uk)



## Wales

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Baltic House  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff, CF10 5FH  
Tel: 0292043 1700  
Email: [enquiries@wcva.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wcva.org.uk)



## Northern Ireland

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