vinspiredstudents

Bursting the Bubble:

Students, Volunteering and the Community
Full Report

Georgina Brewis, Jennifer Russell and Clare Holdsworth
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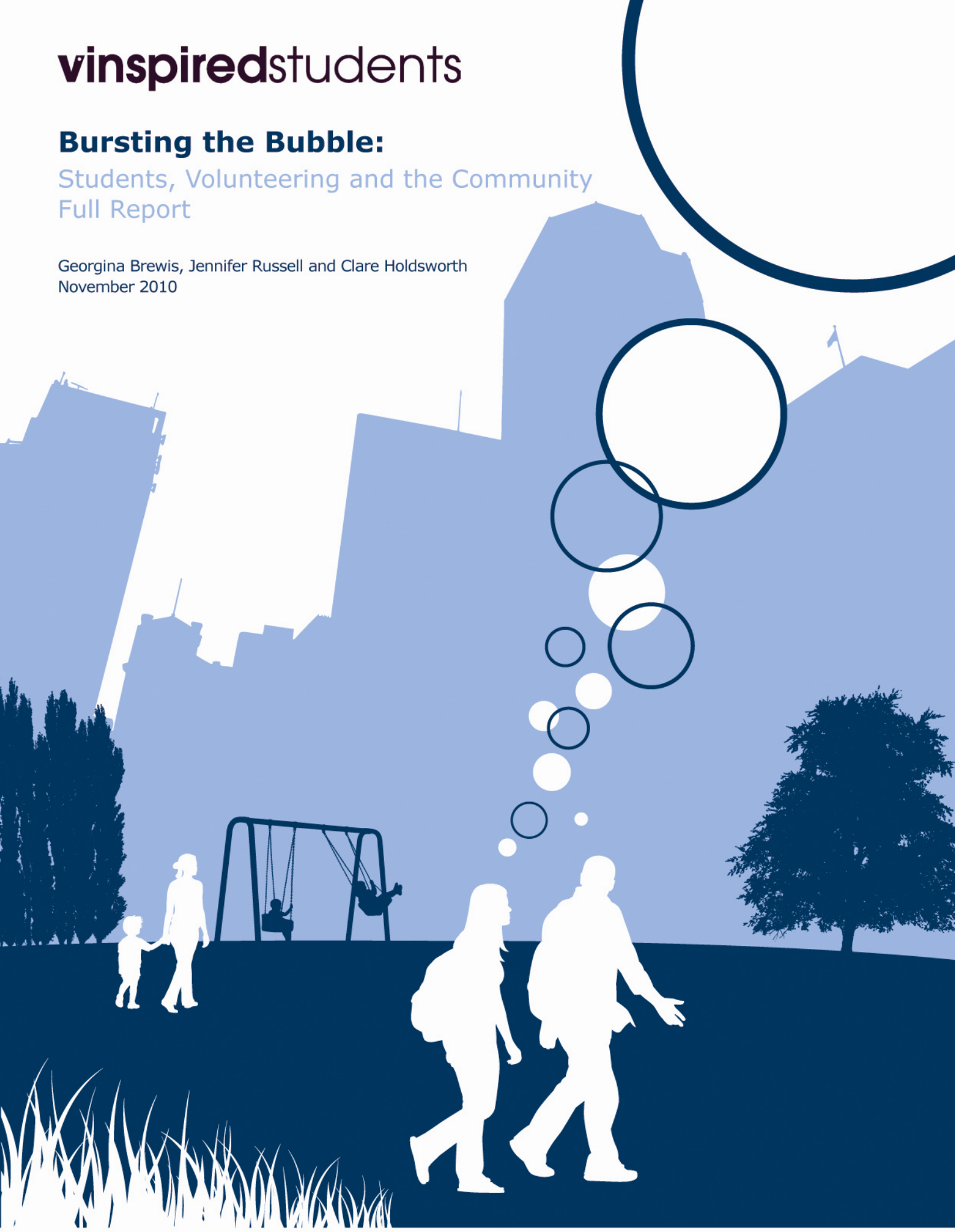

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Foreword by Jon Snow

Channel Four News Presenter and Journalist

Students are far more generous with their time and energy in the interest of the community than is generally recognised. This important national study comes out in the aftermath of Lord Browne's review of higher education. There has never been such a high premium placed on the student experience.

The research finds that students contribute significantly to university life and the wider community through the hours they give to groups and organisations, as well as the informal volunteering they offer. Volunteering plays a vital role in developing students' community awareness, allowing them to break out of what many respondents describe as the 'student bubble'.

I was fortunate as a student at Liverpool University to be involved in a number of active organisations that ranged from raising awareness of poverty in Africa, to working for a community group based in the Toxteth area that provided regular visits by students to isolated elderly people.

Organisations that involve volunteers in their work place high value on university students and see universities as valuable sources of time, talent and enthusiasm. I concur with the report's finding that students experience positive impacts on their own personal development, skills and employability. Frankly there is also the huge satisfaction that flows from volunteering - something this report emphasises. But all this does require support from universities and colleges themselves and students' unions to make the most of the potential benefits.

Higher education has always been about much more than simply getting a degree. Universities have a vital role to play in supporting social, intellectual and cultural life in the UK through their engagement with the public. This report makes a persuasive case for the significant contribution that volunteering can make to the core purposes of higher education. In a time of sweeping cuts to education budgets, it also provides a powerful argument for continued institutional investment in volunteering.

Student activism has been the life blood of organic change in our society. Many of the lessons picked up during student life continue to surface in later life. As the government of the day talks of the 'Big Society', such a movement will be considerably prejudiced if the gene pool of university volunteers is reduced by economic pressures. Student volunteers are the potential NGO and charitable movers and shakers of tomorrow.

About this report

This report presents findings of a research study into student volunteering that is based on case studies of six Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) selected as representative of the diversity of the higher education sector in England. The research was commissioned by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE). It was undertaken by a research team from the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) led by Georgina Brewis, in partnership with Clare Holdsworth at Keele University.

The research adopts a peer-led participatory methodology to enhance the relevance and ownership of the research. The research team worked with teams of student peer-researchers in the six case study HEIs to deliver this work: University of East London, Keele University, University of Gloucestershire, University of Leeds, University of Oxford and University of the West of England.

The report presents the main findings of this research project in full. The executive summary draws out the main messages from the study. Each chapter includes a page highlighting existing research and key findings are summarised in boxes at the start of section. The report includes a number of anonymised case studies of student volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. A full technical report, additional tables and overviews of each case study HEI can be found in the appendix starting on p. 115.

A 16 page summary report highlighting the main findings of this research is available to download from www.publicengagement.ac.uk

An important outcome of the study is the development of a series of tools and case studies that will allow other groups to adapt the methodology of this project. These can be accessed from www.publicengagement.ac.uk

Executive Summary

Student volunteers make a significant contribution

- Student volunteers contribute significantly to university life and the wider community through the hours they volunteer with groups and organisations. Sixty-three per cent of student surveyed took part in formal volunteering since starting university, with 49 per cent taking part in the academic year 2009/2010.
- Sixty-three per cent of students report acting as informal volunteers since starting university. Forty-two per cent of students have taken part in both formal and informal volunteering.
- Over half of students volunteering do so both during term-time and in vacations (57 per cent) and a third (32 per cent) volunteer at least once a week.
- Volunteer-involving organisations place great value on higher education students and see universities as valuable sources of talent, time and enthusiasm. Involving students may broaden the diversity and size of an organisation's volunteer pool.
- Students are welcomed particularly for their youth, enthusiasm, creativity, and dynamism when compared to other volunteers.
- Student volunteering can develop students' community awareness and helps them integrate into the local communities outside the university. Just over three-quarters of student volunteers (77 per cent) indicate that their understanding of other people had increased as a result of volunteering and 74 per cent experience a wider range of friendships.
- Volunteering can also encourage other forms of participation in local communities.

A desire to make a difference

- A large majority of students who volunteer (95 per cent) are motivated by a desire to improve things or help people.
- Developing skills (88 per cent) and gaining work experience (83 per cent) are also important motivating factors, while nearly half (49 per cent) are also looking to enhance learning from their university course through volunteering.
- Further analysis of motivations shows that it is women, younger students and students from less advantaged backgrounds who are more motivated to volunteer

to enhance their employability. BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students, students from post-1992 HEIs, students with dependents and those who did not move away to university are more motivated to volunteer by reasons connected to their personal values.

- Students believe that they make a worthwhile contribution to communities through their volunteering and welcome constructive feedback from organisations: 82 per cent of student volunteers feel that their efforts are appreciated.
- Volunteering at university enhances students' likelihood of volunteering in the future.

High expectations, high rewards

- Students report many positive impacts on their own personal development, skills and employability and derive high levels of satisfaction from taking part.
- Students acknowledge the positive benefits of volunteering for enhancing their employability, though they feel that volunteering increases their employment skills in general (83 per cent), rather than providing more direct career-related benefits such as making contacts (51 per cent), or clarity about future career options (48 per cent).
- Volunteering provides experience that graduates can utilise when looking for work: 82 per cent of recent graduates under 30 years old mentioned volunteering on a CV and 78 per cent talked about it in interview. Half (51 per cent) of recent graduates under 30 who are in paid work say that volunteering helped them to secure employment.
- Students and graduates place greatest value on the personal growth and improvements in confidence and self-esteem they experienced through volunteering.
- Recent graduates aged under 30 years old are more likely to recognise the positive impact of volunteering on personal development and soft skills compared with both their older peers and earlier graduates.
- Students at post-1992 universities are more likely to recognise the benefits of volunteering on their willingness to try new things, self-discipline, confidence and knowledge. Students from BME backgrounds and non-UK students report greater impacts on personal development than other students.

- Impacts on students' feelings about community, organisations or university are less pronounced than the personal development or employability benefits of volunteering. Volunteering can help students feel more part of their university; this applies particularly to male students, students who move away from home to study, and those whose parents have experience of university education.
- Prior experience of volunteering helps students recognise the value of volunteering at university and students who volunteer before university are also more likely to give time more regularly.

A plurality of routes into volunteering

- Students' routes into volunteering are diverse though most begin volunteering before starting university. There remains an important group (38 per cent) whose first experience of volunteering is mediated by their university or students' union.
- The most likely students to volunteer are those who are actively engaged in other extra-curricular activities either on or off campus.
- The plurality of ways to recruit students as volunteers is confusing for volunteer-involving organisations and many volunteer coordinators based in these organisations are frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of access to students.
- Forty-eight per cent of volunteers give their time to formal volunteering activities that benefit the wider community but without receiving any support from their university.

Challenges in volunteer management

- Many student volunteers experience some frustration with the way that their volunteering is managed. Compared to volunteers in the general population, students feel less able to influence the direction of the organisation they help and are more likely to think things are badly organised.
- Volunteers who receive support from their universities are more satisfied with the experience of volunteering and derive greater personal development benefits than those who do not receive such support. Those who volunteer once a week or more also report having better experiences.

- The research highlights a clear need for professional volunteer management in universities, with more consistent approaches to promoting and supporting volunteering.
- Organisations are flexible in their approach to involving students and recognise that there are periods of the year when students will be less available. However, organisations fear becoming overly dependent on students.
- Volunteer-involving organisations report a number of issues with availability and reliability of student volunteers which might be associated with negative stereotypes of students and young people.

Barriers to participation

- The major barrier to volunteering reported by students is lack of time owing to study pressures. This is cited by 70 per cent of students who have never volunteered.
- Forty-nine per cent of students who have not volunteered at university did volunteer prior to coming to university.
- Students who are volunteering recognise barriers such as study pressures and travel difficulties but think most can be overcome. Paid work is not a barrier for these students; indeed, students who work during term-time are more likely also to be volunteering.
- The study confirms that students are put off by not understanding what volunteering entails and not knowing how to get involved in volunteering while at university.

Scope for expansion?

- There is some scope for expansion in student volunteering. However, there remains a group of students who are simply not interested in volunteering.
- A majority (87 per cent) of student volunteers would recommend volunteering to friends.
- There is strong demand from students for universities to help find volunteering opportunities connected with their course or future career: 39 per cent of non-volunteers would welcome such action.

- Senior university staff express a strong commitment to volunteering, but volunteering services are hampered by a lack of secure funding, perceived lack of academic support, and a relatively low profile.
- The study confirms that enhancing employability is a major motivational factor for volunteering, but it is not the only one, and students seem to be tiring of an emphasis on volunteering solely for career development.
- Students feel that volunteering for the ‘right reasons’ is important, and do not like to be told that they should volunteer.

Glossary

Activities at University Alumni Survey	Survey distributed to graduates about their involvement in volunteering and other activities at university which formed a key part of this study
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAB	Citizens' Advice Bureau
Not-supported community volunteering	Defined in this report as volunteering that primarily benefits the community but for which the student receives no support from his or her university
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
Cross-curricular volunteering	Volunteering which contributes to skills and knowledge from a variety of disciplines
e- mentoring	A mentoring relationship established through electronic communication media rather than traditional forms of mentoring
Employability	A person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required
Extra-curricular activities	Any activity undertaken by students outside of time spent studying for their degree, such as clubs and societies, sports etc. In this report we asked student about 16 specific extra-curricular activities (see questionnaire in Technical Appendix)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEACF	Higher Education Active Community Fund
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Informal volunteering	Giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives (i.e. volunteering which is not supported by an organisation or institution)
IVR	Institute for Volunteering Research
Million+	A university think tank which represents a number of post-1992 HEIs, typically former polytechnics
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

NUS	National Union of Students
Participatory mapping	A group-based qualitative research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic with minimal intervention from researchers
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
Pre-1992 HEI	HEIs which had university status before 1992
Post-1992 HEI	HEIs which have obtained university status since 1992 (such as the former polytechnics)
Rag	Student- run charitable fundraising organisations
Russell Group	A group of 20 leading research-intensive universities, mostly older city-based institutions
SCA	Student Community Action (student-run volunteering societies)
Student Activities Survey	The survey devised to capture data about students' involvement in volunteering and other activities, which formed a key part of this study
University Alliance	A group of 22 major, business-focussed universities, mostly former polytechnics
University-supported community volunteering	Defined in this report as volunteering that primarily benefits the wider community and for which the student receives support from his or her university
UEL	University of East London
UWE	The University of the West of England
v	The National Young Volunteers Service. An independent charity dedicated to helping young people volunteer in ways that matter to them
VIO	Volunteer-Involving Organisation
Volunteering England	An independent charity and membership organisation, which supports, enables and celebrates a diverse range of volunteering
WiSCV	Workers in Student Community Volunteering, a support network for anyone working in frontline community volunteering projects in Further or Higher Education (FE or HE)

Chapter One: Introduction

'Students come to university not just for education; they come for a student experience. We believe that helping and encouraging them to engage in volunteering will broaden their experience, give them a better experience and they will benefit from that. [Volunteering] gives them more of the skills that employers actually look to in terms of flexibility, self determination, resilience.'
(Pro-Vice-Chancellor)

1.1 Introduction

The student volunteering sector today is vibrant and diverse. Students volunteer as part of 'leisure' activities, both through Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and independent of them; and as part of their studies, both accredited and unaccredited. Volunteering by higher education students is one key area of university public engagement that has been strongly supported by policy-makers in recent years. Indeed, the past decade has been a period of unprecedented growth, with substantial resources committed through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and latterly through **v**, the National Young Volunteers' Service. Funding for student volunteering has been allocated in a wider context in which volunteering has been high on governments' agendas since at least 1994, when John Major's Make a Difference campaign was launched. Indeed, **v** is one of a series of approximately 30 government-funded initiatives since 1997 aimed at increasing and developing volunteering (NatCen et al, 2010: 20). In 2005 the report of the Russell Commission on youth volunteering recommended 'it should be commonplace for young people to volunteer whilst they are at school, college or in higher education' (Russell, 2005: 43). Yet volunteering by university students has remained an under-researched topic with little reliable national data on the numbers of students involved or on students' motivations, routes into volunteering and the experiences and impacts of volunteering on students, universities or the wider community. Moreover, students' informal unpaid help has rarely, if ever, been considered by previous studies. This report begins to address some of these gaps in our knowledge through a major new study based on case studies of six HEIs selected as representative of the diversity of the higher education sector in England.

1.1.1 Research context

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) was established in 2008 as part of a four year initiative designed to stimulate a culture change in how universities engage with the public. Funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement project, NCCPE's vision is of a higher education sector making a vital, strategic and valued contribution to 21st-century society through its public engagement activity. The work of NCCPE is further supported by **v,** the National Young Volunteers' Service, which has funded the **v**inspired students programme to provide evidence of the benefits of volunteering and to encourage universities to recognise the value of student volunteering as part of their core activity. The research was commissioned in November 2009 with three aims, namely:

a) To explore motivations for, routes into and experiences of volunteering among students, and the impact of participation on students;
b) To explore the motivations, barriers and capacity for community-based organisations to involve student volunteers, and the impact on them from doing so;
c) To develop a peer-led research methodology which makes maximum use of the knowledge and expertise within HEIs of conducting research, with potential for replication in other HEIs, that maximises dissemination opportunities.

The research presented in this report builds on a scoping study of the student volunteering landscape earlier commissioned by NCCPE (Squirrell et al, 2009). This scoping study contributes to the growing evidence base on volunteering by higher education students. In recent years a number of studies have considered student volunteering, looking at volunteering rates and demographic characteristics of students who volunteer, self-reported impacts on students, and motivations for students' involvement. In 2003 a Student Volunteering England survey started to build a profile of the students who volunteered through organised volunteering activities at their students' union and/or university (Student Volunteering England, 2004), a group we refer to as university-supported community volunteers in this report. Analysis of data from Futuretrack, a major study tracking students from the

point of application to a HEI until they leave, has provided new information about the extent of student volunteering with charities in the UK (Holdsworth, 2010). A twelve-nation comparative study conducted in 2006/7 sets some of these UK developments in international context (Handy et al, 2010). Researchers have also paid increased attention to the growing trend of embedding volunteering into the curriculum through accredited community-based research projects and cross-curricular volunteering modules. New work on the history of student volunteering sets these recent developments into longer term perspectives (Brewis, 2010). In addition a number of universities and students' unions have commissioned or undertaken impact assessments of their work (Ruohonen, 2009; Donahue and Russell, 2009). In 2010 a study of the impacts of volunteering on students was undertaken by volunteering units at a group of eight London-based universities (Braime and Ruohonen, 2010). However, like youth volunteering in general, there is a relatively weak tradition of assessing the impacts of student volunteering on service users/beneficiaries, volunteer-involving organisations and local communities (Darwen and Rannard, 2011; Edwards et al, 2001).

1.1.2 Recent developments in student volunteering

Volunteering by university students in England has a long history. Historically, it was an extra-curricular activity that was largely organised by students themselves (Brewis, 2010). The movement has its earliest roots in religious societies formed at universities during the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. The expansion of higher education in the last quarter of the nineteenth century coincided with a new enthusiasm for social service among students who recognised that the privileges of higher education carried social obligations. Such widespread enthusiasm entailed the creation of new models of service such as college missions and university settlements. In the inter-war period a range of new opportunities for student voluntarism opened up, including Rag fundraising for voluntary hospitals; support for international relief efforts; and camps for unemployed men. Student volunteering in the immediate post-war years was marked by continuity as well as innovation, but one important development was the formation of student social service organisations at several universities. Yet by the mid to late 1960s students at some UK universities were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with all these existing models of community

involvement (Barr, 1972). At several universities students began to press for more effective involvement of students with community problems, marking a transition from traditional social 'service' to community 'action' (Brewis, 2010). Between the 1970s and 1990s much of the community volunteering undertaken by university, college and polytechnic students was channelled through independent Student Community Action (SCA) groups. This local network was supported by a by a programme based at the National Union of Students (NUS) until 1978 and after 1981 by an independent charity known initially as the SCA Development Unit and as Student Volunteering England until merger with national infrastructure agency Volunteering England in 2007.

Since the 1990s there has been a shift away from the dominant model of student-led community action, towards university or students' union-based brokerage services alongside a move to accredit student volunteering and integrate it more closely into the curriculum. Despite student pressure aimed at making university curricula more relevant to local community needs during the 1970s and 1980s, the interest of university authorities in directing or supporting students' voluntary action is relatively new. During the 1980s a few universities developed accredited forms of community-based learning (Green and Anderson, 2010). However, Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) funding from 2002, combined with a new recognition of the potential value of volunteering for students' personal development, employability and for improving university-community relations, led to significant developments (Annette, 2005). The HEACF funding was used in a variety of ways, both within students' unions and university departments such as careers and employability, student services or access/community engagement (Squirrell et al, 2009: 63-64). Like the volunteering sector more broadly, student volunteering has become increasingly professionalised and is today supported by a large network of paid staff known as Workers in Student and Community Volunteering (WiSCV).

These changing models of volunteering reflect wider changes in the student experience which see greater numbers of students living at home, studying flexibly and part time, entering university when they are older and working to fund their studies (MillionPlus, 2010). Such changes have important implications for research into student volunteering because they challenge preconceptions that students come

from outside the local community in which they study and that volunteering can bridge the perceived divide between students and communities (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010). However, the diversification of support for student volunteering in the 2000s means that volunteering at universities today can often look 'confused and fragmented' (Squirrell et al, 2009: 64).

1.1.3 Report outline

This report is divided into six chapters plus appendices. Chapter one provides a brief overview of the methodology and a discussion of the merits and challenges of adopting a peer-led participatory approach. Chapter two explores routes into volunteering looking at students, universities and volunteer-involving organisations and chapter three considers barriers to volunteering. Chapter four discusses the experiences of student volunteering from the perspective of students, universities and volunteer-involving organisations. Chapter five focuses on impacts, looking at the self-reported impacts of involvement on current students and alumni as well as seeking to explore the difference student volunteering makes to volunteer-involving organisations and the wider community. Chapter six offers some conclusions and implications for research, policy and practice.

1.2 Methodology

Summary

- The research is based on case studies of six Higher Education Institutions selected to represent the diversity of the higher education sector in England.
- This adds weight to the findings and allows us to generalise from the case study findings to the higher education sector as whole.
- The research design combined facilitated peer-led case studies and in-depth case studies of three of the six HEIs. A peer-led participatory approach was adopted to enhance the relevance and ownership of the research.
- The peer-research methodology resulted in high quality, informative qualitative data from all six case studies, although working across six HEIs provided a number of challenges for the central research team.

- The peer researchers enjoyed being part of a national project and have derived a number of benefits, including gaining experience of a real-life research project.

1.2.1 Case study selection

The research presented in this report is based on case studies of six Higher Education Institutions: University of East London (UEL), University of Gloucestershire, Keele University, University of Leeds, University of Oxford and the University of the West of England (UWE). The six HEIs were selected to represent the diversity of the higher education sector in England and range from one of the oldest universities in the country to one of the newest (a short profile of each university and its volunteering provision is included in Appendix C). The six case studies break down into three pre-1992 universities and three post-1992 universities, including two institutions in the Russell Group, two members of the University Alliance and one MillionPlus institution. They represent a spread of city-based, campus and collegiate universities. They are geographically spread across England and are located in five of the nine government office regions. Moreover, the HEIs selected broadly reflect the most common structures of coordinating volunteering by students, including brokerage services located in Employability or Community Engagement departments and/or students' unions, **v**-funded programmes, volunteering modules/electives, student-led volunteering societies and one of the new-type Student Hub. This diversity adds considerable weight to the findings presented here and allows us to generalise from the case study findings to the higher education sector as whole.

1.2.2 Research design

The research design incorporated two inter-related strands of work, namely facilitated peer-led case studies and in-depth case studies, that are presented in brief in this section and in greater detail in Appendix A. The research methodology successfully passed scrutiny by IVR's ethical review panel and Keele University's ethics committee in February 2010. The six case study universities were selected in January 2010 from a pool of HEIs in England who had expressed interest and completed an application form. In February three of the six were selected to be in-

depth case studies by the research steering group. Those chosen to represent a spread of city/campus, redbrick, 1960s and post-1992, were the University of Leeds, Keele University and UWE.

The first stage of the peer-led research involved designing and administering a central online survey that was sent to all students in the six case study HEIs. This 'Student Activities Survey' was administered between March and May 2010. In total 3,083 useable responses were collected. Comparing the responses with national data on students shows that respondents were more likely to be women - a bias that is common to surveys of students - there was also a higher proportion of non-white respondents and a lower proportion of postgraduates. Therefore modelling techniques, particularly logistic regression, have been used to control for differentials in the sample characteristics in the analysis presented below. A central alumni survey, the 'Activities at University Alumni Survey', was also developed and administered in August and October 2010. A total of 5,242 valid responses were collected.

The second stage of the research involved peer-led qualitative research. Student research teams in each HEI were recruited and then trained to set up, conduct and analyse focus groups and participatory mapping exercises with their peers, including students who were volunteering and those who were not. Participatory mapping is a group-based qualitative research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic with minimal intervention from researchers. Mapping generates a rich understanding of the connections between people, places and organisations over time and space. The peer research teams also conducted focus groups and face-to-face interviews with representatives of volunteer-involving organisations. Throughout the process the peer researchers were encouraged to reflect upon the process of involvement and their learning and development, which is discussed below.

In the third stage of the research the research team conducted in-depth case studies in three of the six HEIs. Each in-depth study comprised a series of biographical interviews with student volunteers, a set of semi-structured interviews with representatives of volunteer-involving organisations and a number of semi-structured

interviews with university stakeholders including academics, pro-vice chancellors and university or students' union-based volunteer coordinators. In order to protect the anonymity of participants we have not attributed any quotations in this report to individuals or organisations and when quoting the biographical interviews we have given each student a pseudonym.

1.2.3 Rationale for peer-led participatory research

The peer-led participatory approach was chosen because participation in research can bring a range of benefits to peer-researchers and involving key stakeholders in the research process may enhance the relevance and ownership of research. The use of students or young people as peer researchers is becoming more popular as the limitations of more traditional research methods are recognised. For example, peer researchers have been used in the formative evaluation of **v** and as peer evaluators in the evaluation of the NCCPE **v**inpsired students programme. Non-participatory research can fail to identify how valuable young people can be to the research process and underestimates the benefits their unique knowledge and enthusiasm can bring (London et al, 2003). As a result young people commonly play the role of research subjects without having the chance to take part in the research process itself (Hill et al, 2004). There are also issues regarding the accuracy and legitimacy of data collected through traditional research methods. Atweh and Leone (1995) question the meaning and potential for participation when 'an adult, with different academic experience and often different social class, attempts to "participate" in the world of young people'. Participatory peer research promotes a more interactive approach to research which redistributes power from the researcher to the research and involves young people in a meaningful way throughout the process (Atweh and Leone, 1995).

The origins of this youth participation agenda stem from the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which sparked a 'culture of participation' that was further fuelled by research programmes and charities (Kilpatrick et al, 2007). Peer research participation can take a variety of forms ranging from minimal involvement to full ownership of the project. Alderson (in Kilpatrick et al, 2007) identifies three ways in which young people can be involved in peer research. The first involves young people applying research methods in formal education, the second in contributing to

adult-led research and the third in approaching and undertaking research from a youth perspective. Hart's ladder of participation puts participation on a spectrum from tokenistic involvement to child- or youth-initiated and directed (Kilpatrick et al, 2007).

Using peer researchers brings benefits both to the research design and to the young people involved as researchers. Firstly, peer researchers are already located in the world of those being researched, in our case student volunteers researching other students. They share a common language and common experiences and are better placed to understand and provide information about it (Burns, 2009). Being similar in age and experience also encourages research participants to open up to peer researchers in a way that power relationships may prevent in traditional research. For example, Scwartz found that students confided in peer researchers where they would not have shared the same information with adult researchers (Schwartz in Atweh and Leone, 1995). Involving individuals strongly linked to the research agenda can also increase the chance that the findings will be useful and acted upon.

Involvement in peer research also benefits young people and higher education students directly by allowing them to develop social and academic skills, to increase confidence, and to enable them to gain 'real life' experience of research (Burns, 2009). Participation in peer research can also encourage young people to become active in their local communities since involvement educates young people about a set of issues and increases their desire to do something about these concerns (Powers and Tiffany, 2006). Peer researchers' involvement enables them to exercise their political rights and increases their desire to become involved (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster, 2003).

However, participation does not come without drawbacks and there may be a fine line between an 'empty ritual of participation' (Arnstein in Kilpatrick et al, 2007) and meaningful involvement. Peer researchers need to be given ample power and influence to make a difference to the research process. They also need to be given sufficient support and guidance to be able to do this. The existence of power relationships between peer researcher and adult researcher also requires careful moderation. Whilst participatory research aims to dispel power imbalances hierarchies can still develop which can affect the research process (Burns, 2009).

In addition, whilst the ability of peer researchers to maintain close proximity to the research subject is valued, care needs to be taken they do not become submerged in the research. Research topics are often emotive and peer researchers need to maintain a level of distance from the subject. Finally the practicalities of undertaking peer research should not be underestimated. Peer researchers require training, ongoing support and management. They need to be encouraged and inspired whilst ensuring the data they collect is robust and accurate. The research process needs to be flexible and to accommodate individuals' differing experience and needs.

1.2.4 Reflections on the peer-led approach

Overall, the peer-research methodology resulted in high quality, informative qualitative data from all six case studies. In this section we discuss some of the benefits and challenges of the peer-research process used in this study. The Technical Appendix from p. 115 gives more details on the peer-led fieldwork.

As was to be expected, reasons for involvement differed between students and across the six case studies, but in general students valued the experience of being part of a national study and of contributing to a 'real-life' research project. Students at most of the case study HEIs were interested in gaining research experience useful for dissertations and future careers rather than in the topic of volunteering per se. This was slightly different at Oxford and to some extent also Leeds, where the role attracted students already engaged in promoting student-led volunteering activities. In general, these students were motivated more by learning about volunteering and how to better promote volunteering at their respective universities. At UEL and Gloucestershire students were keen to put the experience on their CV and took note of how to use the research when looking for work. The peer researchers recruited were a very diverse group: they represented a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students; mature and 'young' students; home and international students; Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and non-BME students; and they were studying a range of degrees ranging from international development to social work; medicine to history.

The research team visited each university for a half-day training session with the peer researchers in March 2010. These visits were in most cases very positive. The students were engaged with the training sessions and reported finding them useful for gaining a better understanding of what mapping and focus groups involved. Most groups were keen to discuss the practicalities of fieldwork, such as incentives, how to recruit participants, recording methods and so on. In general, students were pleased that the topic guides they produced were actually going to be used in fieldwork. However in a couple of cases the peer researchers had little understanding of volunteering or the voluntary sector and because they were new to research they found some of the concepts difficult to grasp which made training challenging. We found peer researchers input into development of research tools such as the topic guide to be invaluable as were students' comments on piloting the survey. Peer researchers were asked to complete a short reflective exercise at the end of the training. Comments included:

> *'I'm excited about the amount of responsibility and the work / analysis we are involved in.'* (Peer researcher)
>
> *'I have really enjoyed learning about mapping as a research process since I have never taken part of conducted this type of research.'* (Peer researcher)
>
> *'I met people from uni who have similar volunteering experience but are very different personalities and courses.'* (Peer researcher)
>
> *'There seems to be a lot of work involved to take the project forward. Whilst I'm not so much concerned about us being able to carry it out till the end, I'm slightly concerned about recruiting organisations and students. But it seems an exciting opportunity.'* (Peer researcher)

Inevitably some of the peer research teams were more committed to the process than others and this depended greatly on the level of day-to-day support they received from staff at the university. In one example weekly catch-up sessions to plan the research seemed effective. The level of support students needed moreover differed quite considerably between the different groups, in some cases students were able to meet independently of the staff and to get on planning the research whereas in others they needed to be more closely supervised by staff. This inevitably put pressure on staff at already busy times. In one HEI a member of staff was employed specifically to manage the project. In a couple of cases, responsibility for

supporting the peer researchers was poorly organised, and seemed to be pushed around between academics, students' union-based staff and university-based staff, causing confusion, delays and frustration on the part of students.

In general, the level of commitment to the project was difficult to sustain over the six month period and this was not helped because of the timing of the project, which ran from February to June. The Easter holidays, exams and end-of-term were particular obstacles. Most of the peer research teams experienced a number of drop-outs between the inception meeting and the training session and between training and fieldwork. Some groups experienced ongoing issues with commitment which was frustrating for the research team, for staff supporting the groups and especially for the students who were most committed to the project. In some cases staff worked very hard to keep the group on track, by arranging regular meetings, booking rooms and refreshments, allocating tasks to think about before each meeting and also asking peer researchers to complete log sheets of work done. In others some peer researchers had to take on more of the work themselves and this caused resentment and poor team relationships in some cases. However, we should stress that many of the peer researchers were strongly committed to the research and were inspiring for the research team to work with.

In each case study the peer research teams successfully facilitated the required number of focus groups, mapping sessions and interviews, eliciting important and useful data from a range of stakeholders. Students succeeded in getting their peers to open up in a way that resulted in data that the research team would not have been able to collect. In addition they gathered stories that shed new light on the relationship between universities and volunteer-involving organisations. Throughout this report we integrate analysis illustrated by quotations taken from these peer-facilitated groups.

However, it must be acknowledged that students found some stages of the research process difficult. For example, recruiting participants for the sessions was particularly tricky and arranging sessions where fewer people than expected turned up was disappointing for the peer researchers. As one student reflected:

> *'Perhaps our greatest problem was the lack of numbers…despite offering incentives of book tokens and lunch vouchers there was not much interest in attending this short mapping session. Having such a small group I think made it difficult to keep a vibrant dynamic going all the time.'* (Peer researcher)

In addition some of the peer researchers were more confident facilitators than others, able to clearly explain the purposes of the research and to encourage participants to get involved. However, not all the groups managed to record their sessions and the notes produced of each session were not very full. For example:

> *'There were issues with recording the session…so a lesson would be to familiarise myself with all the necessary equipment beforehand so no time is wasted or lost.'* (Peer researcher)

Unsurprisingly, the analysis stage was the most challenging part of the project. In general students' relied on the notes they had made during fieldwork and only rarely listened back to recordings. However, where recordings existed we therefore had transcripts produced to make up for this. Overall, with limited training and little time some peer researchers produced excellent write-ups of their fieldwork and five out of the six presentations of results delivered at the analysis day were produced by students. Moreover four of the six case studies managed to have students present findings on the day despite this being held at the end of June. Students' greater involvement in analysis was hampered by limited notes, poor timing (beyond the end of year for some universities) and lack of experience and training in this area. The students who were most engaged in this stage undoubtedly brought fresh perspectives to the analysis of their peers' reflections thus contributing to the overall results.

Despite these many challenges the research team greatly enjoyed the process of working with peer research groups. We feel that the training days were successful and that students learnt a range of new skills. Some of the peer researchers were very engaged and genuinely contributed to every stage of the process. Involvement in the project has been a valuable learning experience for members of the research team as much as the peer researchers, providing greater 'hands-on' knowledge about peer-led participatory methods that complements other research projects IVR is currently involved with. We feel there was great value in bringing students together

from six very different universities. In addition we believe that the volunteering staff at the case study universities also benefited from working with IVR and other HEIs and the opportunities for networking and changing practice as a result of involvement were important, though more keenly valued by some than others. One important outcome is the development of a series of tools and case studies that will allow other groups to adapt the methodology of this study and the involvement of peer researchers in the design of these (see www.publicengagement.ac.uk).

Reflecting on involvement in June 2010, participants reported that the peer-led aspect had allowed the 'student voice' to emerge strongly in the findings and that allowing students themselves to design and ask questions had been insightful. Along the way peer researchers learnt much about 'real-life' research and began to recognise that social research can be 'messy', difficult and challenging. With hindsight, many would have appreciated more training, but also recognise that learning by doing is key to developing research skills. As one explained it:

> *'[It] provided me with a lot of ways of interviewing people, like knowledge of ways of interviewing people and stuff like that, because I've now got experience of running focus groups.…And in a way I've kind of learnt not to expect too much from participants because of that, so again that's something useful. So I suppose recruitment has kind of played a part in this as well, and I've learnt a bit about that, like recruitment for studies and things. So yeah, I do think it's had genuinely a lot of benefit for me.'* (Peer researcher)

Students have enjoyed being part of a national project and are glad to have their names listed in the full report; they have met students from other universities and worked closely together with staff at their own university, students' union or student hub. We hope that participation has helped some explore ideas for future careers in research or development work. Most importantly their involvement has improved the quality of the findings presented in this report and will increase its relevance across the student volunteering sector. Without the involvement of the peer researchers this report would look very different.

Chapter Two: Routes - Who volunteers and why?

'A lot of students are stuck in this student bubble and they don't break free of it and volunteering is a way of getting out and getting into the community. I remember in my first year just thinking that you hardly ever see like, a real person.' (Student volunteer)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores students' routes into volunteering while at university. It discusses rates of volunteering by students and considers profiles of student volunteers. Surveys of students routinely find that altruistic motivations are the most commonly cited as reasons to volunteer, and this chapter confirms this, whilst also breaking motivations down into three dimensions of 'values', 'employability' and 'opportunity' to explore motivations in greater detail. The chapter reveals that most students first find out about volunteering before starting university through friends and family or through their school or college but that a significant group (38 per cent) find out about volunteering for the first time through their university.[1] Senior members of university staff are supportive of promoting students' access to volunteering as way to improve the student experience, increase employability and skills development as well as establishing good relationships with local communities. However, staff running volunteering services suffer from a low profile within institutions.

2.1.1 What we know already

Until very recently there has been a lack of reliable data on the number of and characteristics of students who volunteer in England. For instance, the 2003 national survey of student volunteering estimated that there were 42,000 students who volunteered through organised volunteering activities at their students' union and/or university in England (Student Volunteering England, 2004). However, this figure was likely to have been an under-counting as it represented just two per cent of English higher education students.

[1] To aid readability percentages in the main text of this report have been rounded to whole numbers. Percentages in tables are given to one decimal point. Therefore figures may not always add up to 100 per cent.

More reliable and up-to-date information comes from analysis using the Futuretrack survey (Holdsworth, 2010) which shows that 15 per cent of first year undergraduates in the UK volunteered 'with a charity' in the academic year 2006/7 in the UK (16 per cent of students in England alone). This percentage is comparable to the 2002 Student Experiences Survey of 3,282 students at four universities in Merseyside which found 15 per cent were involved in voluntary work (seven per cent organised through their university and 11 per cent outside their university) (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010). However the question excluded a wide range of forms of volunteering and is also likely to be an underestimation. A much higher figure was found for the English university in the 12-nation study conducted by Handy et al (2010) which found 63 per cent students had participated in formal volunteering during the previous 12 months.

The latest figures from the 2009/10 Citizenship Survey show that 41 per cent of 16-25 year olds had volunteered formally in the previous 12 months and 57 per cent had volunteered informally (Cooper, 2010). In terms of regular volunteering, 23 per cent of the age group took part in formal volunteering at least once a month and 32 per cent in informal volunteering at least once a month. The more detailed breakdowns available for the 2008/2009 period show that 49 per cent of full-time students reported taking part in formal volunteering at least once in the past year, with 30 per cent taking part once a month or more (Drever, 2010: 76). For informal volunteering, the corresponding rates are 69 per cent at least once in the past year and 41 per cent at least once a month.

Surveys of students routinely find that altruistic motivations are the most commonly cited as reason to volunteer. Holdsworth's (2010) analysis of Futuretrack found volunteering to help someone / the community was the most popular reason reported by all students (69 per cent). The 2006/7 12-nation study measured motivations to volunteer on three dimensions (altruism/value-driven, resume building and social) and found that across all 12 countries students expressed strongest support for altruistic reasons for volunteering (Handy et al, 2010). Holdsworth's (2010) analysis found volunteering rates were highest among students studying medicine/dentistry and social sciences; among students at the highest tariff universities; and among

some minority groups (ethnic minority students, students with a disability and those with caring responsibilities).

2.2 Rates of volunteering

Summary

- Rates of volunteering uncovered in the Student Activities Survey are broadly in line with national data: 63 per cent of respondents have taken part in formal volunteering since starting university, with 49 per cent having taken part in the academic year 2009/2010.
- In total 63 per cent of students report informal volunteering since starting university. Forty-two per cent of students have taken part in both formal and informal volunteering.
- Thirty per cent of students take part in formal volunteering that primarily benefits the wider community and 17 per cent take part in university-supported volunteering that primarily benefits the wider community.
- Thirty-eight per cent of volunteers have received some support for volunteering from their university or students' union.
- The most likely students to volunteer are those who are engaged in other extra-curricular activities (on or off campus) and those who work during term-time.
- Students in their second year or more of studies are more likely to volunteer than first years. Students with a disability and those with dependents are more likely to volunteer.
- Students whose volunteering is classed as 'not-supported community volunteering' are more likely not to have moved away to university and less likely to have a parent with a professional or managerial occupation.
- Students who choose 'university-supported community volunteering' are more likely to be female, be non-UK domiciled, younger students and not be studying medicine.

2.2.1 Formal volunteering by students

Respondents to the Student Activities Survey were asked about their involvement in 15 forms of unpaid help ranging from raising money and leading a group, to campaigning and conducting research. Like questions in the national surveys of volunteering on which this question was modelled, the definition captures a very wide range of activities that we define as 'formal volunteering'.[2] In total 63 per cent of students reported taking part in at least one of these activities since starting university; this is the same percentage as found by Handy et al (2010). Forty-nine per cent of students reported volunteering at least once in the academic year 2009/2010 – which corresponds to the 49 per cent figure for formal volunteering by full-time students in the Citizenship Survey (Drever, 2010: 76). These two rates of formal volunteering rate are broken down by institution in table 1. Overall, 38 per cent of formal volunteers reported receiving some support from their university or students' union.

Table 1: Formal volunteering rates by institution

University	% of students who volunteered formally since starting university	% of students who volunteered formally in year 2009/2010	Base (no. of valid responses)
Leeds	68.6	55.7	634
Oxford	80.4	71.0	321
Gloucestershire	67.2	52.3	461
UEL	57.4	40.0	493
UWE	52.6	38.0	835
Keele	64.0	49.1	339
Total	**63.0**	**49.0**	**3,083**

[2] Formal volunteering is defined as giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment.

Table 1 shows there is a lower level of volunteering in two of the post-1992 institutions, though the University of Gloucestershire does not follow this trend. Around one-third (32 per cent) of respondents to the Student Activities Survey reported taking part in just one activity, with just under half (46 per cent) taking part in three or more activities. Though the maximum number of reported activities is 14, there is a tale-off after six or more activities. Three-quarters of volunteers (76 per cent) indicated that they have taken part in volunteering that benefits people in communities outside the university. The remaining quarter (24 per cent) of volunteers indicated that they have been involved in volunteering that primarily benefits other students. Many volunteers (31 per cent) were involved in both types of activity.

In addition to the overall formal volunteering rate we have broken this total down into two further rates. The 'university-supported community volunteering' rate is a sub-category that attempts to capture students engaged in volunteering which primarily benefits the wider community and for which the student receives support from his/her university. The university-supported community volunteering rate is considerably lower than the formal volunteering rate, with 17 per cent of all students who responded to the survey defined as taking part in this type of volunteering. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents defined as taking part in university-supported community volunteering took part in one activity (less than that for all volunteers); but 39 per cent reported three or more activities, which is also less than that for all volunteers. We have also calculated a 'not-supported community volunteering' rate, showing that 30 per cent of the students surveyed take part in volunteering that primarily benefits the wider community but is not supported by the university in any way. These two rates are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Not-supported community and university-supported community volunteering rates by institution

University	Volunteer in community with no support from university (% all students)	Volunteer in community with support from university (% all students)	Base
Leeds	28.7	18.1	634
Oxford	32.1	19.3	321
Gloucestershire	29.3	21.7	461
UEL	34.5	13.4	493
UWE	29.1	13.1	835
Keele	27.2	18.6	339
Total	**30.1**	**17**	**3083**

2.2.2 Characteristics of student volunteers

In order to explore the demographic characteristics of students who volunteer, logistic regression analysis was used to generate a profile of all formal volunteers as well as the different subgroups of volunteers we are calling not-supported community volunteers and university-supported community volunteers. Variables included in the model were information on students' socio-demographic background; their university experience (including the type of university, course studied, whether students had moved away to study or not); and students' engagement in extra-curricular activities.[3] Full details of the modelling results are given in Appendix C, with the main findings summarised in table 3.

The results illustrate that for volunteering, students' university experiences are generally more important than socio-demographic characteristics. The key finding is that students who are actively engaged in other extra-curricular activities either on or off campus are more likely to volunteer, as are those who work during term-time. These variables return the largest odds ratio in the logistic regression model.

Table 3: Significant characteristics of all formal volunteers and 'university-supported community volunteers'

[3] As part of the Student Activities Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they had participated in 16 forms of extra-curricular activity, and whether this took place at university or not. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

All formal volunteers[4]	University-supported community volunteers[5]
Volunteers are more likely to be: (90 % confidence level) Women Non-UK domiciled Have a disability Have at least one parent who has gone to University Have dependents Post-graduate student Studying at a pre-1992 HEI NOT studying sciences (excluding medicine) Work during term-time NOT be in first year of studies Taking part in other University-based activities Taking part in other non-University-based activities	*Volunteers are more likely to be: (90 % confidence level)* Women Non-UK domiciled Studying Medicine or Arts/Social Sciences NOT be in first year of studies Taking part in other University-based activities Taking part in other non-University-based activities

Students at the three pre-1992 universities also have a higher rate of volunteering. Though it is harder to discern the impact of academic subject area due to small numbers, there is a lower rate of volunteering among students studying science subjects (excluding medicine). Students in their second year or more of studies are more likely to volunteer than first years. Women are more likely to volunteer (though the difference in volunteering rates is smaller than might be expected from qualitative or anecdotal data, with 64 per cent of women volunteering, compared to 62 per cent of men).

Students with a disability and those with dependents are more likely to volunteer, a finding also confirmed by Holdsworth's (2010) analysis. Parental occupation was not

[4] The following variables were not significant for all formal volunteers: age; Ethnicity; Parental occupation; Mobility status (moved/not moved away to uni); Gap year.
[5] The following variables were found not to be significant for university-supported community volunteers: Age; Ethnicity; Parental occupation; Mobility status (moved/not moved away to uni); Parental Higher Education; Have/not have Dependents; Disability; Employment during term time status; Student status (UG/PG); Type of University; Gap year.

a significant factor, though there does appear to be a slightly higher rate of volunteering for students whose parents have experience of higher education. This variable is often taken as an indicator of students' cultural capital and suggests the importance of family background in shaping students' orientation to getting involved.

Further analysis was carried out to compare university-supported community volunteers versus other volunteers. This confirms that students who chose university-supported community volunteering were more likely to be female, be non-UK domiciled, younger students and not studying medicine. Furthermore, students engaged in other extra-curricular activities based at their university were also more likely to choose university-supported community volunteering rather than other forms of volunteering. These students are likely to be more aware of the broad range of activities offered by their university or students' union.

We also compared not-supported community volunteers against all other volunteers. This shows that such volunteers were more likely to study medicine in contrast to other sciences and arts and humanities, are less likely to have a parent with a professional or managerial occupation, were more likely not to have moved away to university and more likely to be in their first year of study. Locality is the most significant factor here, indicating the importance of students volunteering in their home communities independent of university support. This may hint at such students having both a greater sense of connection to their local community as well as possessing greater knowledge of local volunteering opportunities and the confidence to get involved. Not surprisingly, these not-supported community volunteers were more likely to take part in non-university based extra-curricular activities and less likely to take part in similar activities on campus. All other variables included in the model (including type of HEI) were not significant.

2.2.3 Informal volunteering by students

We also asked respondents to the Student Activities Survey about informal volunteering (see table 4 below). Informal volunteering is defined as giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives. The Citizenship Survey shows that young people (aged 16-24) have higher rates of informal volunteering than all other age groups. In total 63 per cent of students reported informal volunteering since starting university. Forty-two per cent of students have taken part in both formal and

informal volunteering. Again this corresponds well with similar figures in the Citizenship Survey: 69 per cent of full time students (Drever, 2010) and 57 per cent of 16-25 year olds (Cooper, 2010). Thirty-six per cent of students had offered unpaid practical help such as shopping, gardening, decorating, babysitting, feeding a pet for someone who was not a student. Over a fifth (22 per cent) had visited someone who had difficulty getting out and 19 per cent had written letters or represented someone.

Table: 4 Informal volunteering by students since starting university

	For another student % of all students	**For someone not attending my university % of all students**	**Combined (for students and for non-students) % of all students**
Practical help (e.g. doing shopping, gardening, decorating, babysitting, feeding a pet etc)	25.7	35.6	61.3
Visiting someone who has difficulty getting out and about	9.2	21.6	30.8
Writing letters, filling in forms or representing someone (e.g. speaking to the council on their behalf)	13.6	19.4	33.0
Base (All respondents)	**3,080**		

2.2.4 Formal volunteering by graduates

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey were asked about their involvement in the same 15 forms of unpaid help whilst at university, as indicated in table 5. Although table does show a higher rate of formal volunteering than the Student Activities Survey revealed, we cannot conclude that overall graduates volunteered more than current students because only three of the six universities – all pre-1992 HEIs - took part. However, over half (56 per cent) of graduate volunteers indicated their volunteering at university had only benefited other students, perhaps

reflecting the existence of more restricted opportunities for community volunteering in the past.

Table 5: Graduates who volunteered while at university

University	% graduates who volunteered at university	Base
Leeds	70.2	4359
Oxford	89.2	342
Keele	63.4	541

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey had left university between 1940 and 2010. This range of experiences allows us to consider how volunteering has changed over time, comparing more recent students with those who had graduated some years ago. More recent graduates are clearly more likely to be younger than alumni from the 1970s and 1990s, hence the comparison of volunteering experiences over time conflates both generation and cohort (year of graduation). In order to separate out these two effects a variable on students' life course was computed to distinguish between:

- Younger (29 years old and below) and recent (in the last five years) graduates
- Older (30 years old and above) and recent (in the last five years) graduates
- Earlier graduates (i.e. graduates who graduated more than 5 years ago)

Using this variable we can consider how students' evaluation of volunteering has changed. The overall formal volunteering rate for graduates was 71 per cent. Reported volunteers rates were lowest among recent older graduates, though there was no reported difference between younger/recent and earlier graduates, as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Typology of graduates who volunteered while at university

Type of graduate	% volunteered at university
Younger recent graduate	71.8
Older recent graduate	61.5
Earlier graduate	71.2
Base	**5,242**

2.3 Students' motivations for involvement

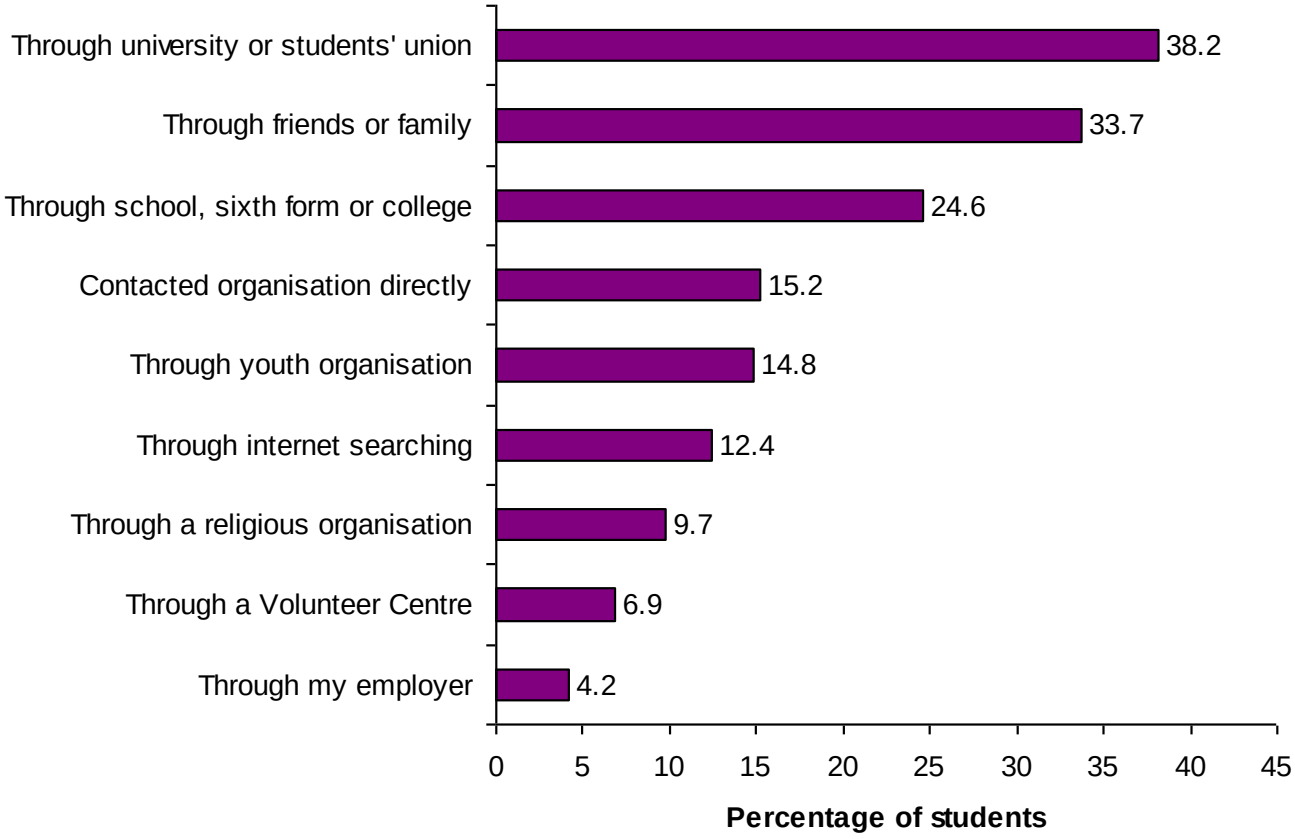
Summary

- Thirty-eight per cent of students first find out about volunteering through universities or students' unions and a quarter through school or college (25 per cent)
- A large majority of student volunteers (95 per cent) report being motivated by a desire to improve things or help people. Developing skills (88 per cent) and gaining work experience (83 per cent) are also important motivating factors.
- Nearly half (49 per cent) of volunteers are looking to enhance learning from their university course through volunteering.
- Students' motivations can be broken down into three dimensions: 'values', 'employability' and 'opportunity'.
- Some groups of students reported higher level of agreement with all three dimensions, particularly BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students, suggesting they are generally more motivated to volunteer.
- Older students, those from post-1992 HEIs, students with dependents and those who did not move away to university are also more likely to agree with the personal values questions, suggesting a group of students with a stronger attachment to local community and family.
- Women, younger students and students from less advantaged backgrounds are more motivated by employability, but employability motives do not map onto students' backgrounds in a clear-cut way.

2.3.1 Ways in to volunteering for students

Students give unpaid help to very wide range of organisations, groups and student-led projects. As part of the Student Activities Survey we asked how students had found out about volunteering in the first place. Chart 1 shows the greater importance of friends, family and school or college as ways of finding out about volunteering compared to university. Methods of recruitment are discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

Chart 1: Method of finding out about volunteering in the first place



Base: 1,942 (All who had volunteered since starting university)
(Respondents could select more than one option)

When discussing their volunteering experiences in greater depth in the qualitative element of this study, students confirmed the importance of school or college and highlighted the important role of family members or friends in helping them access

activities. For a few of those interviewed, the university was the main source of information about volunteering.

2.3.2 Motivating factors

Like all volunteers, students give unpaid help to groups, organisations and societies for a variety of reasons. All respondents to the Student Activities Survey who reported at least one formal volunteering activity were asked a series of questions about their reasons for getting involved as is shown in table 7 below. [6]

Table 7: Students' motivations for volunteering

Motivation	% of students for whom motivation was very or quite important
Improving things/helping people	95.4
Developing skills	88.0
Gaining work experience / developing my CV	83.2
My personal values	80.7
Meeting new people/making friends	78.9
To enhance learning from my university course	48.6
Wanting to fill spare time	33.9
I was asked	29.0
The chance to gain an award, certificate or accreditation	28.9
Feeling there was no-one else to do it	24.3
The fact that my friends/family were volunteering	23.3
My religious beliefs	22.2
It was part of my university course	14.1
Base (All who had volunteered formally since starting university)	**1,942**

[6] Students were asked to indicate their agreement with 13 statements about reasons for involvement on a scale of 1-5. See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.

In order to identify the main groupings of motivations for students' involvement in volunteering, analysis was carried out using principal component analysis (PCA).[7] We identified three dimensions which we have called: 'employability', 'values' and 'opportunity':

- 'Employability' equates with students' advancing their employability though acquiring skills and networking. Questions in this dimension include those on acquiring skills and work experience as well as 'meeting new people and making friends', which is strongly correlated with the employability dimension.
- 'Values', relates to students own personal values, and includes questions on religious beliefs, wanting to improve things and help people. This dimension can be equated with more altruistic motivations.
- 'Opportunity', is more mixed but includes less goal-orientated reasons for getting involved, such as being asked to or that volunteering was part of a student's course. Other reasons include having spare time, knowing family and friends who volunteered, and, interestingly, the opportunity to gain an award was also included in this dimension. This dimension therefore would appear to capture circumstances that students find themselves in, such as knowing other volunteers or been asked or required to volunteer.

These three values are similar to those identified by Handy et al (2010) in their cross-cultural analysis of students' motivations. Table 8 below shows students' motivations grouped according to these three dimensions.

The mean scores for these three components are given in Table B5 in Appendix B, along with how these vary by key socio-demographic variables and students' learning environment. The 'employability' dimension has the highest mean, indicating that more students agreed with the motivational statements associated with their career, while the 'opportunity' dimension recorded the lowest mean.

[7] Mean values were computed for the 13 variables based on all responses. The PCA analysis used a varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization, which assumes that the factors are not inter-correlated.

Table 8: Students' motivations for volunteering grouped according to PCA

Motivation	Dimension identified through PCA	% of students for whom motivation was very or quite important
Developing skills	Employability	88.0
Gaining work experience / developing my CV	Employability	83.2
Meeting new people/making friends	Employability	78.9
To enhance learning from my university course	Employability	48.6
Improving things/helping people	Values	95.4
My personal values	Values	80.7
My religious beliefs	Values	22.2
Wanting to fill spare time	Opportunity	33.9
I was asked	Opportunity	29.0
The chance to gain an award, certificate or accreditation	Opportunity	28.9
Feeling there was no-one else to do it	Opportunity	24.3
The fact that my friends/family were volunteering	Opportunity	23.3
It was part of my university course	Opportunity	14.1
Base **(All who had volunteered formally since starting university)**		**1,942**

2.3.3 Employability, values and opportunity

Looking across all three dimensions some groups of students reported higher level of agreement with all motivations, particularly BME students, suggesting that maybe they are generally more motivated to volunteer.[8] University-supported community volunteers were more likely to be motivated by both employability motives and

[8] The significance of differences between sub-groups has been tested using ANOVA and this is indicated in Table B5 in Appendix B.

personal values than volunteers in general, though there is no difference in the opportunity dimension. Not-supported community volunteers were less likely to be motivated by opportunity or employability considerations, but score higher on the values dimension compared to other volunteers.

If we consider how the employability dimension differs for different sub-groups of students, we can see that women, young students (i.e. not mature students) and those from ethnic minority backgrounds scored higher on this dimension. Students from less advantaged backgrounds, as indicated by parental occupation or level of parental education, were also more likely to report agreement with questions in this dimension. Likewise students from post-1992 HEIs identified with these reasons, but so did medical students from all HEIs. Students with a disability also reported a lower level of acquiescence with these motives. Not surprisingly, students who work during term time were more likely to agree with the employability statements compared to those who did not work.

This suggests a number of trends, firstly that students taking degree subjects such as medicine which have high entry requirements and those entering university straight from school are more motivated by enhancing their employability. This may not be a surprising finding; however we also find that more marginalised groups, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds and students studying at less prestigious universities, also identified with the employability motivations, while in contrast disabled students did not. Employability motives are therefore associated with different groups of students and certainly do not map onto students' backgrounds in a clear-cut way.

Similar findings emerge from the biographical interviews and mapping exercises conducted with students. Students' pathways into volunteering are diverse and multi-faceted. For some, employability featured very little if at all in their motivation to volunteer. For others this is the primary driver for their volunteering. While many students felt they needed some relevant work experience before they completed their degree to give them the best chance of employment, others tended to select specific opportunities, such as teaching or social care, to improve their career prospects.

Even for those students who felt employability was not at all linked to their reasons for volunteering the benefits were apparent. For example:

> *'The main reason I did it is literally for work experience. I wanted to be a vet so I had to get loads of work experience with animals, so I worked on a dairy farm, did animal rescue in Italy. Now I don't want to be a vet, I'm doing psychology, so now I need to get something like work in prison or do victim support.'* (Student, volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

> *'I started volunteering, I think it was between secondary school and college, just because I was like 16 or 17 and I didn't have any work, and so I needed to sort of give myself some experience. I think I knew that I needed more than just a degree to get a job or something after uni.'* (Bluebells, pre-1992 HEI)

> '*Well obviously, I'm not doing it because I want my CV to look good, but it's always a plus point.'* (Afrina, post-1992 HEI)

Turning to consider the values dimension, BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students recorded a higher level of agreement, as did non-UK domiciled students.[9] These findings hint at cultural differences between students' orientation towards volunteering. Students from post-1992 HEIs were also more likely to agree with the personal values questions, as were older students, students with dependents and those who did not move away to university. This suggests a group of students with a stronger attachment to local community and family who are more motivated by personal values. Finally, the opportunity dimension was favoured more by men, as well as BME and overseas students.

When discussing how their personal values had motivated them to take up volunteering, several students described a strong, innate desire to volunteer. For these students volunteering was something they always had and always would be involved in and they derived high levels of satisfaction from involvement. As one noted:

> *'I was always like the person that would want to get involved…I've always been someone who gets stuck in… I looked it up on the students' union website and kind of found a bit more about it...I looked at it and thought wow, this Is like the sort of person that I am, maybe I probably should get*

[9] Further analysis demonstrates that the finding for ethnic minority students is not explained by their nationality, as UK-domiciled ethnic minority students also record a higher level of agreement with the values dimension.

> *involved with this sort of thing you know, because it would benefit me, other people'.* (John, pre-1992 HEI)

Participants in the mapping exercises tended to agree that being interested in an issue or cause, wanting to learn more about the world and wanting to make a difference was an important motivation for many volunteers, students in particular. In particular they saw volunteering as a way to learn more about charities and campaigns that they already support. Students also described feeling that they should take advantage of the opportunities being offered to them whilst at university and saw volunteering as one of these. Students often attributed their motivations to volunteer to parental or family influence. A recurring theme across the qualitative interviews was the existence of motivational figure such as an older friend, sibling or cousin who the student perceived as having made the most of their university experience through volunteering and participation in extra-curricular activities. For example:

> *'I thought, I'm at university, I should be getting involved with as many different things as possible, that seems like a good, positive thing to get involved in, I've got nothing to lose.'* (Rose, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'And I wanted to kind of carry on volunteering, mainly because my friends from when I was Africa kept e-mailing me and asking me what I was doing, and they were doing so much, they'd set up their own charities and things, and they'd really kind of got motivated, and I felt that I had to do something.'* (Katie, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I thought it was a brilliant way to meet new people and socialise really and get involved in the university outreach projects they have and different organisations',* (Whetherby, pre-1992 HEI)

Student case study 1: Mary

Mary is a second year student studying law at a post-1992 university. Mary decided to get into volunteering when she started university however she didn't really get involved until her second year. Mary's main motivation for starting to volunteer was to enhance her CV and to enable her to get the work experience she needed to gain employment with a law firm. Mary described how her tutors had made her aware of the need to gain experience.

'I just literally thought as long as I got over a 2:1 or above that I'd be fine, I could get the career that I wanted and live happily ever after! And then…all the tutors and lecturers suddenly kind of like try and make you hit reality that it's not like that, that you have to get all this other stuff as well'.

As a result Mary chose her volunteering opportunities carefully to ensure she acquired a wide range of relevant experience. Mary heard about a couple of volunteering opportunities through her course and signed up. Mary's decision to volunteer was also influenced by a friend who suggested that volunteering would help Mary in her career:

'It was my friend Carla actually, I worked with her over the summer and she spoke a lot about the things she's been doing and careers and how that's helped her…I think she sort of like sparked me into thinking that's something I should be doing.'

Reflecting on the experience, Mary felt she had gained huge amount from her pro bono volunteering, especially in terms of her CV and personal development.

'Its been really, really good and it's expanded my knowledge of law which has really helped, and I think it looks good on my CV because obviously you've got time management, team working, going into a lot of research.'

Having undertaken some initial volunteering Mary was keen to find out what else she could do to enhance her CV further. She got in touch with a number of people who already worked in law and asked their opinion.

'She [contact] offered to look at my CV for me, so I sent that over to her and her HR department looked at it and said that what was missing was a committee position, on some sort of society, and that would really enhance my CV.'

As a result of this advice Mary became involved in setting up a new university society as a committee member and felt she had put herself in the best possible position for gaining employment after university. She also got involved as a volunteer project manager on an international project sending books to Africa.

Despite originally starting volunteering to enhance her CV, Mary found that she really thrived on the hard work and responsibility that all her roles entailed, so much so that she didn't want to give any of them up as she entered her third year of studies. Furthermore, she had managed to involve her housemates with the work of the international charity, and noted: '*I think volunteering is kind of like something that spreads'.*

2.4 Organisational and institutional perspectives

Key findings

- Senior university staff express a strong commitment to volunteering, citing reasons including increasing employability, promoting skills development, and creating positive community-university relations.
- This does not always translate into funding commitments for volunteering services and volunteering staff at universities feel under-valued.
- Volunteer-involving organisations feel the most committed student volunteers are motivated by personal values and the fact that they had freely chosen to take part in an activity was important.

2.4.1 Promoting volunteering at universities

As discussed in Chapter 1, the diversification of support for student volunteering that occurred after 2002 means that there are a number of different models for student volunteering today which are represented among the six case study HEIs. This research did not set out to map the sector but to explore experiences of volunteering by students at the case study universities and to discuss key stakeholders' views of students volunteering. Senior university staff that we interviewed spoke eloquently in favour of promoting students' access to volunteering for a number of reasons, including increasing employability, skills development, creating positive community-university relations as well as providing opportunities for students to give something back.

> *'We see student volunteering as a key part of involving the students in our strategic commitment to contribute to society on local to global scales. So it's core to what we would want to be able to offer to our students as part of our opportunities that we give them.'* (Pro Vice-Chancellor)

> *'I want every student that has come through this university [to have] some experience of volunteering…because there's belief that that it adds to their experience, it adds to their development, it adds to their sense of connection'* (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)

However, a number of university stakeholders recognised that this high level support did not always translate into funding commitments for volunteering services or attendance at volunteering celebration events. University volunteer coordinators as well as academic organisers of volunteering modules often felt that their work was under-valued by other academics and under-funded by senior university staff.

> *'I don't think there's good enough understanding about what actually happens here [volunteering office] and the amount of work that is needed to make just the little bit happen.'* (Volunteer coordinator, university)

> *'From my perspective, there's not a lot of support from senior management. It's not that they don't care, I think they like it, it's a very nice, it's a nice, pleasant thing…Yeah, everyone likes it, but no one wants anything to do with it.'* (Volunteering module coordinator)

2.4.2 Volunteer-involving organisations' views

As part of this research we sought the views of representatives of organisations that involve students as volunteers through peer-researcher facilitated focus groups and semi-structured interviews conducted by the research team. Volunteer coordinators based in VIOs were conscious of students' varying motivations for volunteering and sought to offer students what they felt they wanted. They felt that most students saw volunteering as a way to 'give something to back' and to make a contribution to a cause or particular organisation that they supported. Meeting people outside the university, having fun and getting a free social life through volunteering were also seen as major attractions for students as was gaining real-world experience, building CVs and securing references. There was recognition that students had multiple demands on their time:

> *'I think to be a student now shows a lot of commitment….Now you've got to, you really have to sort of think about what you're going to get out of it. And it's not just about the studying part; it's about the involvement with different things while you're here. So if you were to spend three years at university without leaving the cosy space of university, you're going to leave with your degree hopefully, but not the experience of being involved in a city.'*
> (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Volunteer coordinators believed that the most regular and committed student volunteers were motivated by more value-driven reasons, although this was not

confirmed by the Student Activities Survey. Coordinators thought that the fact that students had freely chosen to take part in an activity was particularly important and the 'added value' of volunteers having chosen to be there was widely recognised. For example, it was seen to benefit clients/beneficiaries that that student volunteers were choosing to spend time with them, rather than being paid to do so. Comments included:

> *'You get other students who are just absolutely fantastic, come on their own accord, want to volunteer, it's nothing to do with being asked to volunteer, they just want to be able to do something, they're interested in the environment, and in conservation and they'll come along, and they'll come throughout the year.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'Their age and their enthusiasm for life is a real plus point, you know they want to engage, they want to learn, and they're here because it's something that they really want, you know they've chosen to do this, they really want to do this.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

However, volunteer coordinators could be more sceptical about those who they perceived to be solely motivated by gaining course credit or work experience. An issue that recurred across interviewees with coordinators in universities as well as in community organisations was whether volunteering should be accredited or not and they tended to discount placements undertaken as part of a module. Comments included:

> *'I think there's a lot of students who are really keen to build their CV, but I think that can be a negative as well as a positive because the flip side of it is that you might get people who aren't there because they care about the project or care about the community, they're just there because they want to get those points on their CV.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> '*We go to a volunteering awards evening, you can see the students who are doing it for nothing, and I do sometimes think you know is their contribution more because they're doing it without getting it accredited?'*
> (Volunteering module coordinator)

> *'At the moment with the universities the line between what is 'volunteering' and what are 'placements' is starting to blur a little bit, because a lot of them are having these sort of community volunteering modules, which it isn't really volunteering if it's a module, do you know what I mean?'*
> (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Chapter Three: Perceived barriers to student volunteering

'Volunteering is usually promoted as something outside of the student bubble…Volunteering could be put forward as a key part of student life, it's the idea of volunteering in students' minds that counts. More people would do it if they felt it was an essential part of student life.'
(Student volunteer)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the barriers to student volunteering. Existing research shows that lack of time is the most frequently cited factor for not volunteering and this is echoed in the reasons given by students for not volunteering at university. While paid work is not a barrier for students who do volunteer, 37 per of non volunteers report lack of time owing to paid work has prevented them from volunteering. This chapter moreover explores reasons for stopping volunteering: around a quarter (23 per cent) of students responding to the Student Activities Survey who had volunteered since coming to university were no longer volunteering. The chapter also includes a discussion of measures universities could take to promote volunteering more widely, although this is seen to be hampered by a lack of funding and relatively low profile of volunteering services within universities. Moreover, students feel that the value of volunteering is in danger of being undermined and are reluctant to be told that they should be volunteering.

3.1.1 What we know already

Existing research provides an insight into the barriers people face to getting involved in volunteering. In the Helping Out survey, lack of time was the most frequently cited factor for not volunteering (82 per cent). Also important was bureaucracy and being worried about risk and liability (49 per cent and 47 per cent respectively) (Low et al, 2007). Respondents further reported that they did not know how to find out about volunteering opportunities (39 per cent), were concerned that they didn't have the right skills or experience (39 per cent) or they were worried that they wouldn't be able to stop once they got involved (36 per cent).

Information is also available on the reasons that people give for stopping volunteering. Once again, not enough time – in this case related to changing home or work circumstances – was the dominant reason provided (41 per cent). Volunteering

losing relevance (cited by 15 per cent of respondents) and health problems / old age (cited by 14 per cent of respondents) were also referred to (Low et al, 2007).

While this detailed information is not available for students, it is broken down by age group. A higher percentage of respondents in the 16-24 age group were deterred by not having enough spare time (93 per cent compared to 82 per cent for all age groups). Not knowing how to get involved also seemed to apply more to this age group than others (56 per cent compared to 39 per cent).

Other research confirms that young people report that the biggest barriers to volunteering are not knowing how to get involved and to take action on issues they care about (**v**, 2007; Morgan Inquiry, 2008). Moreover young people often have a lack of knowledge about the potential benefits of volunteering (Hill and Russell, 2009). However, research undertaken for the Russell Commission found that young people who do volunteer generally have a wider appreciation of its scope and potential (IVR, 2004).

There is little evidence on specific barriers faced by higher education students because research has generally involved students who were already volunteering. However, Holdsworth's (2010) analysis of Futuretrack found that paid work by students during term time was not a barrier to volunteering.

3.2 Barriers to students' involvement in volunteering

Summary

- The major barrier reported by students who have not volunteered at university is lack of time owing to study pressures (70 per cent of those who had never volunteered).
- 49 per cent of students who have not volunteered at university did volunteer prior to coming to university.
- 37 per cent of non volunteers report that lack of time owing to paid work is a barrier. Students citing work reasons are more likely to be mature students, study at post-1992 HEIs, students with no parental experience of higher

education and students who have not moved away from home to attend university.

- Family barriers are more common among mature students, those studying at post-1992 HEIs, medical students, students with dependents.
- Students who cite time as a barrier to volunteering are more likely to face other commitments and responsibilities, but it may be that those with no family background of higher education are more likely to focus on their studies than take part in other activities.
- An important set of barriers faced by students is connected with a limited understanding of what volunteering actually entails: a fifth of non volunteers did not know what they could offer.
- 'Getting started' is a big psychological barrier to involvement. Nearly one-third of students who were not volunteering (30 per cent) had not become involved at university because they did not know how to.
- The transition to university can result in students dropping out of volunteering because they do not feel part of the community, and friends and family are not involved.
- Around a quarter (23 per cent) of students who had volunteered since coming to university are no longer volunteering.
- The main reasons for stopping volunteering are time-related and very few students cite negative past experiences of volunteering or poor organisation as reasons for stopping volunteering.
- Women, those studying medicine and those from less advantaged socio-economic background are more likely to stop volunteering because of study pressures.

3.2.1 Barriers

The important topic of barriers to involvement or further involvement in volunteering by students was explored in a number of ways in the research through qualitative and quantitative methods including peer-led and researcher-led approaches. The Student Activities Survey asked students who had not volunteered at university about barriers. These students were divided into two groups, those who had volunteered

prior to coming to university (49 per cent of non volunteers) and those who had never volunteered, either before or while at university, as listed in table 9.[10]

Table 9: Reasons for not volunteering, never-volunteered and previous volunteers

Reason	% of non-volunteers who did not volunteer because of this reason	% of previous volunteers who did not volunteer because of this reason
Not enough time - due to pressures of study	69.6	89.6
Not enough time - due to paid work	36.9	45.7
I'm not sure how to get involved	23.6	29.9
I don't know what I could offer	20.3	22.1
I don't think I can afford to volunteer	19.0	-
Not enough time - due to family commitments	16.2	41.6
Not enough time - due to involvement with other clubs, sports or societies	10.0	26.6
I just don't want to volunteer	8.4	-
My family/friends are not involved	6.5	20.0
I don't feel part of the community here	6.0	20.4
Other	2.6	2.6
Language barriers	1.5	1.5
I have an illness or disability that prevents me getting involved	1.2	5.7
I lost interest	-	15.5
I think I've done my fair share of volunteering	-	13.3
I 'd achieved the award or certificate I set out to	-	8.5
Negative experiences in the past	-	7.6
Base	**585**	**556**

[10] Previous volunteers were asked these questions using a likert style design, while students who had stopped volunteering or who had never volunteered were asked just to choose all that applied. Not all questions applied to both groups.

The most popular reason cited for not volunteering was study time pressures. Comparison of these results highlights some key differences which suggest that the transition to university can result in students dropping out of volunteering. Indeed, as noted above, nearly half of non-volunteers have actually volunteered at some point in the past. Few students made an active choice to stop because they have completed an award or certificate, lost interest or believed they'd done their 'fair share of volunteering'. More important in not taking up volunteering at university was not 'feeling part of the community here' and not having friends and family involved.

3.2.2 Time pressures

The first and most important set of barriers relates to time and the major barrier experienced by students is lack of time owing to study pressures. As one non-volunteer commented:

> 'Because volunteering doesn't have like a deadline whereas an essay does or a dissertation does, you're therefore going to stop volunteering and focus on what you need to do!' (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI).

Students reporting study pressures are more likely to study medicine, to work during term time and to have parents with no experience of higher education. Those who felt they do not have enough time owing to paid work include, not surprisingly, those who work during term time, although though this is not a barrier among volunteers themselves. Mature students, those at post-1992 HEIs, students with no parental experience of higher education and students who have not moved away from home to attend university were also more likely to identify work-related time pressures. Finally, family reasons were more common among mature students, those studying at post-1992 HEIs, medical students, and, not surprisingly, students with dependents. Therefore students who cited time reasons for volunteering were more likely to face other commitments and responsibilities. However the finding for parental education is interesting as this could hint at the importance of family background of how students approach university life. It may be that those with no family background of higher education are more likely to focus on their studies than take part in other activities.

3.2.3 Understanding volunteering

A second important set of barriers faced by students is connected with a limited understanding of what volunteering actually entails. Around a fifth of non-volunteers responding to the Student Activity Survey (20 per cent of those who had never volunteered and 22 per cent of previous volunteers) did not know what they could offer. Some students, particularly those who had not moved away to attend university, were in fact already actively involved in their local communities, but they did not always recognise this as 'volunteering', seeing it as helping out family members/friends or offering help to their church, mosque or children's school. The issue of motivation is important here, some students felt that volunteering requires a deliberate choice, rather than simply being something one undertakes as part of one's everyday home or family life. As one student suggested, activities such as helping out at church are not volunteering but are 'working for God.' Others made similar points:

> *'When I've gone in schools and helped I wouldn't have considered it volunteering, I would have just considered myself helping.'*
> (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'There's an elderly lady who's very, very ill, in a nursing home, and I try and ring her once a week…I write to two people on death row, through an organisation called Human Rights. But those are sort of very individual, in your own time, half an hour kind of jobbies…it's not volunteering, but it's still contributing to a community.'*
> (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Moreover, students who described themselves as non-volunteers felt some activities – such as raising money through a sponsored activity or stewarding at a music festival – could not be classed as volunteering because the participants are seen to benefit from their involvement. Similarly, they often felt that many student activities, such as football coaching, were not really volunteering. In the mapping exercises non-volunteers showed scepticism about others' motivations for involvement:

> *'I think there are probably two types of volunteer, there's the people who volunteer because they actually want to help and then there's the people that volunteer because, to get it on their CV because everyone does it like yeah I went and worked at a homeless shelter, and people like you more, getting jobs.'* (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Non-volunteers also expressed fears about the level of commitment, responsibility and experience volunteering might entail. Such concerns are connected with a lack of knowledge about the range of possible activities and roles that existed for volunteers. Many non-volunteers felt that the potential volunteering options that they had heard of, such as tutoring or counselling, seemed too big a responsibility. Some felt that involvement requires a personal connection with a topic or subject:

> *'If you haven't experienced [an issue] though you can feel out of your depth even though you've had training – you might not have experienced it e.g. miscarriage or domestic abuse.*' (Student, non-volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

> *'It's not easy to get involved. If I was sitting at home and thinking I wanted to do something, any adverts indicate you have to be between the ages of 18 to 25 to take advantage of it or you would have to have something like be an ex-nurse or have a social work background, never got the impression I could just say I am an able bodied person who just wants to help.'*
> (Student, non-volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

3.2.4 'Getting started'

The research found that 'getting started' is a big psychological barrier to involvement at university. Nearly one-third of all the students who were not volunteering (27 per cent) had not become involved at university because they did not know how to. Further analysis reveals that these students are more likely to be young (i.e. not classed as mature students), first years, non-white, international students, students who had not moved away to attend university and working during term-time. As one student suggested:

> '*It is easy to play sports at uni, it is harder to find out how to get into things like volunteering*.' (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

In mapping sessions students agreed that they found it difficult to make the first step to volunteer at university because they are afraid of not knowing anyone, of having to travel to new parts of a city they may not know very well and of having to take public transport.

> *'The town, city where all the placements are for volunteering, they're far away. Like if you want to go to [town] to do volunteer, anything which had to do with volunteering, you would spend 50 minutes one way and 50 minutes back….If you had a personal car it would be very accessible, but by public transport it just didn't work. That's why I never had a proper placement, it was just small things* on campus.' (Student volunteer, pre-1992 HEI).

> *'But I think one of the drawbacks from my project is that we're not actually on campus, so although it kind of falls under the umbrella of the University and the Students' Union, it's not, it's actually far for students to come to, even though it's just kind of like a bus ride away. But then actually to come off campus…So it's quite, like psychologically I think for them it's quite a big step!'* (Volunteer coordinator, Students' Union student-led project)

These problems of 'getting started' are reinforced by the perceived bureaucracy that surrounds volunteering including CRB checks, application forms and interviews. Students identified that starting to volunteer can often appear to be too much like applying for a job and this leads to fears about the levels of time and commitment needed. Indeed there is evidence from elsewhere that volunteers in younger age groups (16-24 year olds) are more likely to have been CRB checked than older volunteers (Low et al, 2007: 50). International students faced particular barriers with CRB checks and this could limit the type of activity they could get involved with. Some of these barriers to greater student involvement are recognised by volunteer co-coordinators. As one commented:

> *'Because obviously working with young vulnerable people, they have to get an extensive CRB, we have to have references, it's almost, they have to come for a formal interview. So it's not like, the problem with it is, it's not like a young person can volunteer, I want to do this, start next week. It takes so long to gain access, a lot, some people lose interest I assume'.*
> (Volunteer coordinator, public sector organisation)

Indeed some non volunteers suggested that regular ongoing volunteering seemed such a big commitment that they would rather not try it out at all, for fear of letting down an organisation:

> *'I have plenty of time that I could volunteer but not having time to commit as all the interesting ones require commitment and I would feel bad if I backed out. With uni you have to go in day to day, it is hard to commit a dedicated time.'*
> (Student, non-volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

> *'[Volunteering] just turned out into a much longer process than I thought it would be. They wanted to have me down as an adviser, but that turned out to involve like three whole day training sessions, like somewhere else, like in Birmingham or something as well, and I just couldn't. And then I realised it all clashed with my fieldwork anyway. So again that was the problem of OK I'm a student and I'm available technically with flexible, but I'm out of the country for two months. So that stopped.'*
> (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Transport problems were often seen as a barrier both by students and by volunteer coordinators, especially when students did not drive, had to take more than one bus, or were unwilling to travel to unfamiliar locations. As might be expected, the theme of transport issues and bus routes recurred throughout the discussions at Keele, an out of town campus-based university, but it was also an important issue in Oxford, where students were accustomed to walking or cycling in a very small, central area, and Leeds where the large city and having to change buses was problematic.

3.2.5 Stopping volunteering

As part of the Student Activities Survey respondents who had stopped volunteering since starting university were asked questions about their reasons for stopping (shown in table 10). In total 23 per cent of those who had taken part in at least at least one activity were no longer volunteering. The main reasons for stopping volunteering were time-related, lack of time due to pressures of study was by far the most popular reason selected. It is interesting to compare these responses with the findings from the logistic regression models of volunteering, that demonstrate that involvement in other activities increases the odds of being a volunteer (see section 2.2.2 above).

Focussing on students who stopped because of pressures of study, further analysis reveals the main factors are related to demographic characteristics of students. Thus it is women, those studying medicine and those from less advantaged socio-economic background who are more likely to cite this reason, while overseas students are less likely to (see Table B6 in appendix).

Table 10: Reasons for stopping volunteering

Reason	% of all volunteers who stopped because of this reason
Not enough time - due to pressures of study	67.0
Not enough time - due to paid work	26.9
Not enough time - due to family commitments	14.6
Not enough time - due to involvement with other clubs, sports or societies	14.4
I found myself out of pocket	10.5
I completed the university course or module	9.3
I lost interest	8.7
I felt the organisation was badly organised	6.2
I'd done enough already	5.9
I felt my efforts weren't always appreciated	5.0
I'd achieved the award or certificate I set out to	4.8
I didn't get asked to do the things I'd like to	4.6
Base	**439**

Students we interviewed describe the pressures of workload during their studies and many suggest they don't have enough time to volunteer at certain periods of the year, although they will often return to volunteering after a break to complete a project. Students reported:

> *'I had to stop [volunteering] after Christmas because of my dissertation and I could have found time to do it but I'd be doing this programme and not be doing my dissertation!'* (Bluebells, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'That [volunteering experience] was a challenge to get to because that was a sort of forty minute bus journey either way, and it ran from seven until nine at night on a Thursday, which meant quite a long evening sat at [name] station waiting for a connection. I kept that going because I didn't want to just drop out on them, but I had to give it up at the end of the third year'.*(Ruth, pre-1992 HEI)

3.3 Breaking down barriers

Summary

- Student volunteers acknowledge that barriers such as study pressures and travel difficulties exist but believe most barriers can be overcome.
- Students feel that the value of volunteering is in danger of being undermined, are reluctant to be coerced into volunteering and think volunteering should remain a choice not a requirement.
- There is a group of students who are simply not interested in volunteering: just 28 per cent of those who had never volunteered indicated that they might be interested in volunteering.
- Nearly two-fifths (39 per cent) of non-volunteers think linking volunteering to their academic subject or career would encourage them to become involved in volunteering. There is demand for more one-off volunteering opportunities and taster sessions from non-volunteers.
- Ability to promote volunteering services any more widely is hampered by a lack of secure funding and relative absence of academic support. Volunteer coordinators based in universities or students' unions feel frustrated by the relatively low profile of their service within the university.
- Students think volunteering shouldn't be promoted in isolation but be linked to broader citizenship education.

3.3.1 Student volunteers' views on barriers

Student volunteers acknowledged that a range of potential barriers existed which can prevent them from volunteering or lead them to stop volunteering, but equally felt that most of these can be overcome. For example, transport was a key hurdle identified by student volunteers but very few felt this acted as a true barrier to their volunteering. Most believed that travelling to a different part of the city or district is simply part of the volunteering experience, a necessary part of bursting the student bubble. Some students, both volunteers and non-volunteers, categorised many of the potential barriers as 'excuses'. Some students went further by suggesting that there will always be people who simply will not volunteer and that some people are simply 'lazy' or 'apathetic' about causes and issues. For example, as one suggested:

> *'I think it's an excuse though that, the idea of we're in the middle of nowhere. Because I know people that are in Birmingham, Manchester where there are more enough places they can volunteer easily, but they're not going to.'* (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Students interviewed also suggested that volunteering could play such an important role in their university experience that it could come to take precedence over other aspects of university life such as studying, sports or socialising. As a result people involved in university-wide activities, such as volunteering, have to sacrifice close friendship groups in their college or hall of residence but could alternatively find a wider circle through volunteering. Hence barriers can become opportunities. Some comments included:

> *'I've put a lot of work into my course, but I've probably put more into sort of sport and stuff I do alongside sport [volunteering] that I do into that! It's really been something that I've spent a lot of time doing…it's been something that I've concentrated on quite heavily.'* (Jo, post-1992 HEI)

> *'I know everyone and always bump into people on the street because I do a wide range of charitable activities, but it means that I don't have a particular friendship group at my college.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'My [student-led project] runs over a whole weekend, so there is a lot of work pressure. But it makes you work out your priorities. I can't imagine what you'd actually do with your time if you weren't volunteering.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Student case study 2: Greg

Greg was in his final year student studying computing at a post-1992 university. Greg had not volunteered before starting university because he felt the opportunity had just never really arisen. However, once at university Grey became very involved in a student sports society. This began through an enjoyment of playing the sport but also due to a realisation of the need to enhance his CV and to develop his personal skills.

'I had nothing that really made me stand out. I'd been quite a large part of the club for the last three years and I just decided this year to improve my confidence, my organisation, my leadership skills, I'd just go sort of head first into the club.'

Through his involvement he was exposed to a number of volunteering opportunities:

'The students union here gave you lots and lots of ways to volunteer. I actually ran sports relief for the university this year; that was kind of my volunteering project.'

In his second year Greg was elected president of the society and decided to incorporate volunteering into his role as president:

'Once I took over as president I decided just to take is a bit further. And when I went through my training, we were kind of introduced to what you could do, what's possible'.

Greg gained confidence and developed his skills through volunteering, one of which was giving talks:

'I wasn't very good at public speaking, the first day I had to give a speech in front of about 100 people, so it kind of forced me into that kind of role, which has helped me a lot this year'.

However Greg acknowledged the challenges of volunteering whilst studying and at times found it hard to balance the two:

'I've struggled, there were times when I really struggled and so it did affect my studies. I feel I could have done better in my degree if I'd not done the role. But I would have lost the benefits of it, so it was kind of striking a balance of having an OK degree hopefully and showing employers that I have these extra skills'.

Overall, Greg's experience of volunteering was positive and he was planning on continuing to help out with the sports club after he leaves university in the summer. However, Greg also felt that after university his priority needs to be his career and volunteering may have to take a back seat.

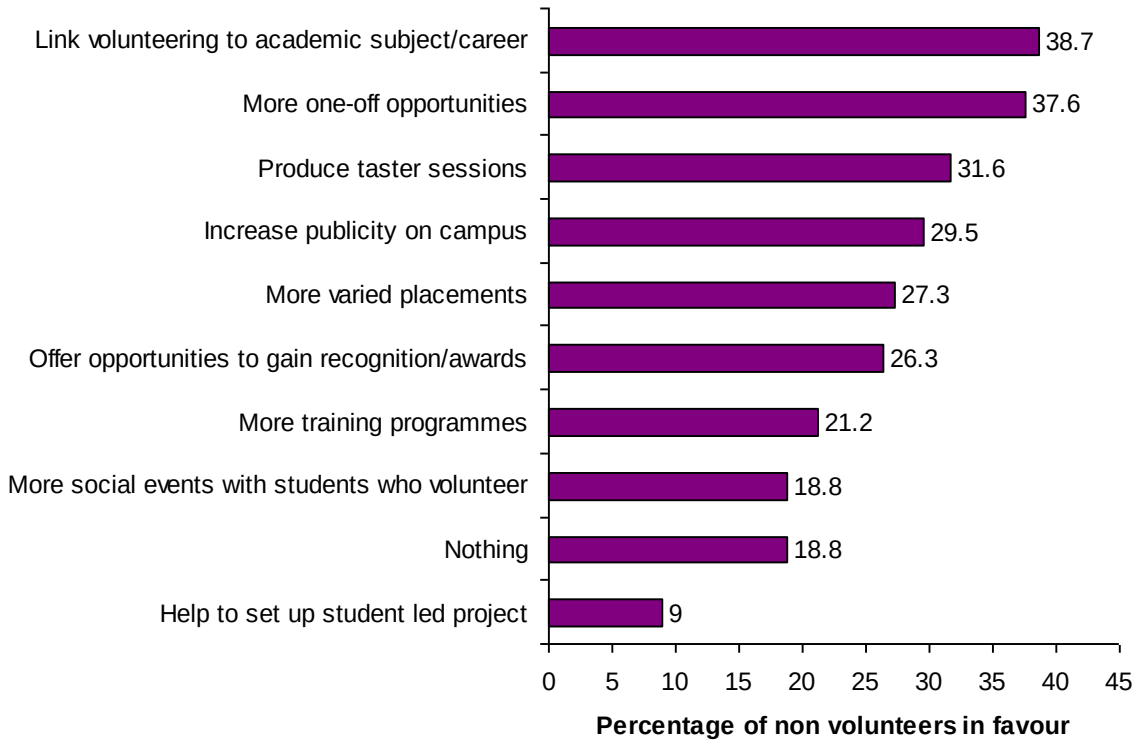
3.3.2 Measures universities could take

Non-volunteers and students who have stopped volunteering were asked what their university or students' union could do to encourage them to give unpaid help or

volunteer in the future. These responses are summarised in Chart 2. Nearly two-fifths (39 per cent) suggested that linking volunteering to students' academic subject or career would be beneficial. This theme also emerged strongly through the focus groups with non-volunteers and the sessions with those already volunteering. As one student suggested:

> *'It would be good to volunteer for something related to your subject. For example, in the US economics students help people with tax forms, so it would be good to do something practical related to your degree. People at Oxford are keen on their subject, so this should work.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI).

Chart 2: Measures that university / students' union could take to promote volunteering



Base: 1,024 (Respondents who had not volunteered at university, including previous volunteers and never-volunteered)

As might be expected, university-based volunteer coordinators had already anticipated a number of these proposed solutions and were already offering the one-off opportunities, taster sessions, training and awards. Ability to promote their service

any more widely is hampered by a lack of funding and relative absence of academic support. As discussed in chapter 2, such staff members are sometimes frustrated by the relatively low profile of their service within the university among both students and staff. As interviewees explained:

> *'The students, not enough of them know about us. I still get a number of students come through the door towards the end of their third year saying I didn't know you were here. And that's frustrating. It's frustrating, especially when people are saying you should do this or you should do that, to try and promote it. I do what I can do! And actually a lot of the things that people recommend we should do we actually do anyway. But again there's always the resource issue'.* (Volunteer coordinator, students' union)

> *'Our biggest challenge is actually how we make volunteering attractive for the majority of students. What we've got to do is to try to get and reach out to those other students that have not done it, and make it attractive to them and actually show them the benefit'.* (Pro-Vice Chancellor)

Indeed, students were well aware of inconsistencies between the high value seemingly placed on volunteering by university leaders and the level of promotion of volunteering services on campus or their capacity to engage with students. As one observed:

> *'Yeah, seeing as it's kind of being pushed down our throats that you need to volunteer to get jobs, you need to do this, do that, it's not as well promoted as you'd expect it to be if they want you to get ahead of the game.'* (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Students who were already volunteering were also keen to offer suggestions about how to get more people involved. Students across all the universities suggested that volunteering was in general better promoted in schools than at university. As one suggested:

> *'In schools there is a culture of volunteering, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award...it would be good to target freshers before they arrived at uni, to make sure they know about volunteering and make it easy to get involved.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Nevertheless, across the peer-led focus groups there was widespread resistance to the idea that young people in general and university students in particular should be

made to volunteer. On the whole students argued that volunteering should be freely chosen, and this idea of compulsion was something they felt applied to other aspects of education. One participant explored this idea:

> *'It's just like another thing for students that you know we have to do now isn't it? Work, work experience, volunteer, all these things for the university.'* (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Indeed part of this reluctance to be coerced into volunteering is because students felt that volunteering for the 'right reasons' is important:

> *'You've got to have motivation to do it, because you've got to do it properly as well, there's no point going in really half arsed and just going for the sake of going. If you go and help out the homeless people and you just sit there, you're not helping them and you're not helping yourself.'* (Student, non-volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Moreover, students believed that volunteering shouldn't be simply promoted in isolation as a good or necessary thing to do, but that it is something that will follow naturally if students feel part of a community and if they understand the broad range of activities that volunteering can encompass. Thus the onus should be on teachers and lecturers to help students develop as well-informed citizens and to see volunteering as one way of expressing this citizenship:

> *'If I look back on it now, from what I know about volunteering, there was no sort of trying to teach about volunteer work, like you could do this in the community, this can make you a better citizen, a better person.'* (Whetherby, pre-1992 HEI)

> '*I think there's a lot to be said for paying your taxes and getting a job. But I don't think student are encouraged to think of it that way.'* (Ruth, pre-1992 HEI)

Indeed some students expressed discomfort that volunteering was often given greater priority by school teachers than paid work or other forms of extra-curricular activity for no other reason than it might help students get into university:

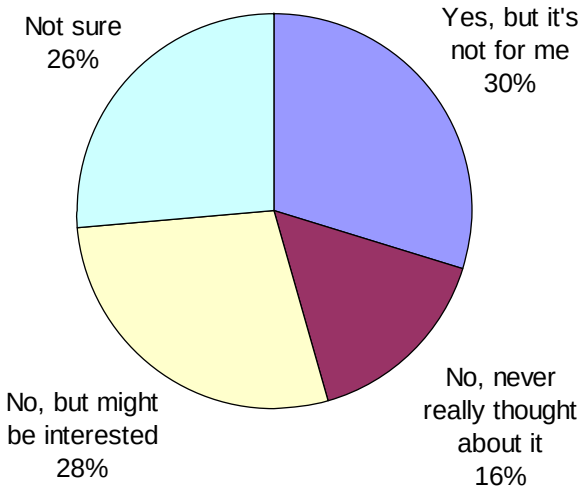
> *'A lot of us [in the mapping session] thought that through school we were encouraged to volunteer because it looks good for us. We didn't really get told about the other benefits, like you get a warm fuzzy feeling or you feel good.*

It's more advertised as being better for your CV than for you.' (Student volunteer, post-1992HEI)

'I don't think I got that much out of volunteering at school that I can remember but what I did get out of it was it started me volunteering. I think it started me off on a kind of volunteering frenzy!' (Katie, pre-1992 HEI)

Students who had never taken part in formal volunteering were asked whether they had ever considered volunteering and the breakdown of responses is shown in chart 3 below. Thirty per cent felt that volunteering was simply not for them, suggesting that while there is considerable scope to expand the numbers of students involved in volunteering, there is a group that are simply not interested.

Chart 3: Have you ever considered volunteering?



Base: 575 (students who had never volunteered)

Chapter Four: Experiences

'I didn't criticise it at the time because - it was very much a sense of not wanting to burst their bubbles…the other students who genuinely felt good about it, or the people who had organised their stuff and put a lot of time and energy and resources into doing something.'
(Student volunteer)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the experiences of student volunteers and of organisations that involve students as volunteers. The chapter discusses the wide range of activities students take part in and the recruitment, induction, training and support they experience as volunteers. For volunteer-involving organisations across the public, voluntary and community sectors the routes to involving students as volunteers are diverse. Although volunteer coordinators see universities as valuable sources of talent, time and enthusiasm they are often frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of access to students. The chapter compares findings with the national survey of volunteering, Helping Out (Low et al, 2007) which suggests that student volunteers feel less well managed than volunteers in the general population. However it also shows that university-supported community volunteers are more satisfied with their experience of volunteering than other types of student volunteers. The chapter also considers a number of issues with the availability and reliability of student volunteers which threaten to perpetuate negative stereotypes of students and young people the consequent need for organisations to remain flexible and realistic about involving students as volunteers.

4.1.1 What we know already

In general we have little robust data about the types of volunteer activities that students take part in (though see Ellis, 2002; Squirrell et al, 2009). The 2003 national survey of student volunteering found that the highest percentage of student volunteers participate in projects involving young people (35 per cent) and children (18 per cent) (Student Volunteering England, 2004). Holdsworth's (2010) analysis of Futuretrack data found that 32 per cent of students volunteered exclusively in activities relating to their course or future career. Students from non-traditional backgrounds were more likely to volunteer in activities related to course or career. The 2008/9 Citizenship Survey identified that the main types of organisation helped

through regular formal volunteering by the 16-25 age group were in the field of sport/exercise (61 per cent); youth/children's activities outside school (46 per cent) and hobbies/recreation (44 per cent) (Drever, 2010: 90).

The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering found that young people reported lower levels of satisfaction with their volunteering experiences (Davis Smith, 1998). It found that nearly nine out of ten 18-24 year olds felt things could be much better organised, higher than any other age group. However, the situation seemed to have improved considerably by the 2007 Helping Out study (Low et al, 2007). A number of other studies have considered the specific support and management needs of young volunteers, emphasising young people's desire for flexibility, variety and ease of access to volunteering (Gaskin, 2004). Such studies have found that they have some clear ideas about how young people would like their volunteering to be organised, for example seeking involvement in planning and decision making (Ellis, 2004).

4.2 Recruitment

Summary

- Routes into volunteering are diverse, though most students who volunteer first find out about volunteering through friends and family, school or college or university. Fifteen per cent discover volunteering through contacting organisations directly and 12 per cent by internet searching.
- Just over a third (38 per cent) of all volunteers receive some support for their volunteering from their university.
- Students value university or students' union brokerage services and there is strong demand from students for the university to help them find volunteering opportunities connected with their course or future career.
- Volunteer coordinators in community organisations place a high value on higher education students as volunteers and will go to considerable lengths to recruit them.
- The plurality of ways to recruit students as volunteers is confusing and often frustrating for volunteer-involving organisations, who complain of lack of 'access' to students.

- Mutually beneficial relationships between universities and schools or community organisations can be built up over a number of years.
- Student volunteers are usually integrated into the general volunteer induction, training and support arrangements at the organisations which they volunteer with.

4.2.1 Recruitment of student volunteers

The Student Activity Survey showed that 38 per cent of volunteers had first found out about volunteering through their students' union or university. Smaller percentages had discovered volunteering through contacting organisations directly (15 per cent) or internet searching (12 per cent). Most of the VIO-based volunteer coordinators that we interviewed had recruited individual student volunteers through universities' or students' unions brokerage services. Others had accessed volunteers through established programmes linking universities with schools and community organisations. In many cases mutually beneficial relationships have been built up over a number of years with the expectation that each year the university will provide a certain number of volunteers for, say, schools, youth clubs or secure learning units.

Volunteer opportunities are promoted to students via e-mail bulletins, postings on websites or opportunities boards, posters and flyers. Another widely used recruitment method is for VIOs to advertise at volunteering fairs or stalls at freshers' fairs held on university premises. Results from such fairs in terms of successful volunteer recruitment are variable. Some organisations reported a high level of interest, followed by a good level of take up. For others, initial interest was good but very few volunteers materialised. Volunteer coordinators acknowledged that it was sometimes difficult to find the time to attend all the potential fairs, campaigns and launches run by all the different universities and colleges from which they recruited volunteers. Despite these drawbacks, such fairs were highly valued, as one explained:

> *'We're not going to get volunteers, students without the support of the universities, we wouldn't know where to go to. And if these universities didn't have these freshers' fairs and these volunteer fairs there's no vehicle for us to go and find them in [town] is there?'*
> (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Students noted that the fairs were useful both in finding specific opportunities and for igniting their interest in volunteering in the first place. As one student suggested:

> *'I first become involved completely on a whim. I was wandering around the society sign up fair and saw it and just thought yeah, why not?'* (Rose, pre-1992 HEI)

The students we spoke to in mapping exercises and biographical interviews had become involved in volunteering through a variety of routes including student societies, university chaplaincies and by approaching organisations directly. However, the university or students' union volunteering scheme was particularly valued. Students saw the value of such brokerage services in helping them find appropriate volunteering activities and in having checked out the organisation as suitable for students. Comments included:

> *'I think the way they [university volunteering office] organise placements for you and like give you that bit of a push and helping hand in it is quite good, because it means you're not just contacting like charity shops or wherever you want to volunteer, care homes or whatever. Like they've got a network of people that you can get involved with or they'll, and they'll help you organise a placement and that kind of thing*.' (Student volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'Well, last summer I decided I wanted to get into volunteering. I'd heard that (university) ran a department for it and you could sign up to emails and they sent you any experiences they had to offer. I think some students can float by a whole uni career and not really make the most of these things, but I kind of looked into it, there's so much they offer you'.* (Rita, post-1992 HEI)

Many of the students interviewed had come into volunteering through a hobby or interest, such as sports or arts, and often through involvement with a related student society. Several students' unions and universities offered support to student-led volunteering schemes. These recruited students in similar ways to community organisations, for example through advertising at freshers' fairs and through students' union mailings. Word of mouth from student to student was also a common recruitment method. As one described it this process:

> *'I suppose it started properly when I got to university. As soon as I got here I became quite heavily involved with sports clubs…And I got involved with going along to schools in the community and giving mini coaching sessions to*

> *younger children. From then on I became President of the club'.* (Jo, post-1992 HEI)

Another important way for VIOs to recruit student volunteers is through academic faculties or departments. Volunteering for an organisation closely related to one's degree subject or chosen career is a well established extra-curricular method of gaining direct experience of a particular field. Indeed, there is considerable demand from students for universities to aid them in finding volunteering opportunities connected with their subject or chosen career: two thirds (39 per cent) of non-volunteers felt that this would be beneficial (see section 3.3.2 above for a discussion). Some of the student volunteers we interviewed had approached lecturers about volunteering. As one explained:

> *'I talked to my tutor, my personal tutor, and I told him I wanted to volunteer and I would like to do something career-related. And he gave me a contact and they accepted me to be a part of their research…I do it almost everyday.'* (Student, volunteer)

Recruitment through academic departments was used by volunteer-involving organisations with varying degrees of success. For example, one CAB regularly received requests for volunteering opportunities from law students and a Saturday School cultivated links with chemistry, maths and PGCE courses at the local university. Such links, mediated through a careers service or academic staff, were valued by students and community organisations alike. Staff based at the university brokerage service or equivalent would direct organisations to specific university departments where appropriate. Positive examples include the case of a city museum and the university's Earth Sciences Department recruiting students to help with an exhibition on rocks and minerals (see organisational case study 2).

Moreover, many volunteer coordinators in community organisations expressed a high level of confidence in the added value of academics encouraging students to volunteer. One summed this up thus:

> *'If you think about it, if you're 18, and you've left home, gone right across the country or whatever, it's pretty damn daunting. So if you hear it straight from your tutor or that faculty that there's this and this and this, you're more likely to want to listen to someone you are looking up to, or being taught by, than*

> *actually going to, you know you may not feel, you still might feel wary about going to, it depends on what kind of personality you are, how confident you are'.* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

In addition to these extra-curricular but course-related volunteering opportunities, most of the universities in our study offered some form of accreditation for volunteering activities, such as credit bearing volunteering module or electives. These could be directly linked to academic courses, for example where a web-design student helps a community organisation with a website, or independent and cross curricular, for example a French student with a passion for hockey volunteering as a hockey coach and getting coaching and first aid qualifications which count towards a module. Academic staff members in charge of these modules on the whole work closely with university volunteering units to find appropriate placement for students although they also often use their personal contacts to do. Fourteen per cent of formal volunteers answering the survey indicated that they had first found out about volunteering as part of their course.

Organisational Case Study 1: Building relationships through volunteering

A city museum worked closely with student volunteers as facilitators for a special science exhibition. The museum curator explained her reasons for involving students:

'So when we had this science project on the horizon, it just seemed obvious to go to university and see how could we work together, how could we make this happen? We'd worked with sort of student facilitators in the past with the photography exhibition, we had some student facilitators who were doing a photography course in the gallery…and that worked really nicely because it just helped to give a human face to some of the pictures.'

The curator approached the university's volunteering team who linked the museum up with the correct academic department. The aim was to recruit students who could help explain the exhibition to visitors:

'This museum is a bit unusual in that we have a lot more visitors who might not attend museums generally, so it was very nice for them to have the sort of academic if you like, but yet they're still young people, happy to have a chat and all the rest of it, they're not sort of dusty academics! So that was really nice, that really helps engage our particular visitor profile.'

The university also lent various items (such as lab coats and microscopes) to enhance the students' interpretation of the exhibition. Around ten students were involved over the course of the exhibition, on a flexible rota to fit in with their classes. Some of the students got very involved:

'And he [student volunteer] came and he absolutely loved it, he kept coming back more and more, more than I'd timetabled him in to come. So, and he was really, really helpful. So he's still coming I think every now and again, and he said he wanted to come until the end of the exhibition, so that's fantastic!'

The curator planned to build on the relationship in the future. Reflecting on the overall benefits she noted:

'[It has brought] closer ties with the university, which is, for us as an institution, is really important. So the next exhibition I will probably be e-mailing them again and seeing if they want to be involved, we're looking at costume and textiles, so if they have a department at the university that will be interested. So it's just a bit, a sort of strengthening of the partnership and the relationship that we have with them, which is a brilliant thing to have.'

4.2.2 Issues with recruitment

Across the six case studies there was a sense that the plurality of routes for recruiting volunteers from universities was confusing. Indeed, despite the many avenues available to them to recruit students, many of the coordinators based in VIOs we interviewed had difficulty recruiting enough volunteers. Staff based in university and students' union brokerage services explained that they needed to balance organisations' demand for volunteers with having a wide enough pool of potential opportunities to cater for students' diverse interests. As one noted:

> *'And I did make it one of my priorities to recruit organisations because I felt as though, despite the difficulties in having a large number of organisations and knowing that I'm not always going to be able to give them volunteers, I did feel it was important that I had a big choice for volunteers, that they could come in, there was a wide choice of organisations for them to be able to volunteer with'.* (Volunteer coordinator, Students' Union)

A further problem was in ensuring a regular supply of volunteers across the academic year. As one volunteer coordinator noted:

> *'We sometimes have a massive influx, it depends on what time of the year it is, suddenly we have, depending on which department and which university, we have students who will suddenly panic and think I've got to do so many hours' volunteering and then there's this flood, we get flooded with them and then we have to sort of like try and struggle to manage that'.* *(*Volunteer co-ordinator, community organisation).

Moreover some of the coordinators of student-led projects that we spoke to reflected on the problems of recruiting enough dedicated students to run the project and the difficulties of ensuring consistency of student leadership year after year. This could be particularly difficult when dynamic students who had created new projects moved on. Comments included:

> *'I'm quite keen on student-led in terms of leadership skills. I have some question marks about the…sustainability of 'student-initiated projects', because yeah they come up with projects, ideas, they do it for the year and then they go and you're not necessarily going to get someone to pick it up in the same way.'* (Volunteer-coordinator, students' union)

> *'I really felt that [university] Nightline service were underperforming in terms of what we could offer…I think it really depends on the commitment of your*

> *committee and how much time they're willing to put in…I would say I put in about 10 hours a week on top of my shifts.'* (Student, volunteer, coordinator of student-led project and sabbatical officer)

Although interviewees praised the efforts of volunteering staff at universities to promote volunteering opportunities and to engage with community groups, such relationships could suffer through frequent changes of staff posts and sometimes problems were encountered with getting in touch with the right person at a university. Several volunteer coordinators in organisations were keen to suggests ways in which they could improve the working relationships with universities, for example by organising fun days to target those students who are unlikely to go to volunteering fairs; delivering workshops by students for students on stress and anxiety management or skills development; or lending their own perceived expertise in areas such as volunteer management, marketing and the design of publicity materials to the university volunteering service. More fundamental was the confusion for volunteer coordinators with perhaps little experience of higher education to understand how best to recruit students. As one explained:

> *'Well I think it is really difficult, if you're not within the university environment, to understand the difference even just between the Students' Union and the University, and the fact that there's a Volunteering Centre, or whatever you call it, within both, who don't, who aren't the same and have different initiatives running…so for the students to understand that, for the staff within each to work together, and then for community organisations to work that out and understand, it's just massively confusing!'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Moreover, volunteer coordinators were often frustrated at the lack of 'access' they felt they had to academic staff or academic departments, whom they viewed as gatekeepers to the best volunteers. They also expressed frustration at inconsistencies of approach between different departments or individual lecturers. Comments included:

> *'It's a massive problem, trying to reach out to students, who should you get in contact with? The lecturers are absolutely flooded with information going into their e-mails accounts, and we're just another e-mail that they haven't got time to deal with'.* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'I tried working with the mathematics department, we didn't get anywhere, had meetings with them, didn't get anywhere at all. You need the support from someone in the department, that's what I've got in the chemistry department, I have support.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Indeed, several volunteer coordinators interviewed for this study had resorted to unconventional routes to access staff at the universities. Examples include:

> *'I literally sneaked into a building, and I got a student what were going through the door with a pass card, and I followed him round and…I walked in and the teachers were having a meeting, and that's how I've actually built up [contacts].'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'I wanted to work with art students, so I actually went down to the block myself and I spoke to the receptionist, and the receptionists were really friendly, because some receptionists can't be bothered even with that, and you just don't even get past the first hurdle. But they put out loads of adverts to the art students, I got loads of interest generated from the students, so much that I actually set up a day so that they come to see me, about fifteen students all at once, and not one of them turned up'.*
> (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Volunteer coordinators identified another drawback to involving students as a perceived reluctance to commit to volunteering in the first instance, although this was not felt to be necessarily more so the case for students than for other young volunteers. Volunteer coordinators in VIOs reported feeling disappointed when students showed great enthusiasm to volunteer and then failed to turn up or to reply to emails and phone calls. However, once they have begun to volunteer students - like other young volunteers - were generally found to be as willing as other volunteers to make a regular commitment.

4.2.3 Induction and training for student volunteers

It was rare for volunteer-involving organisations to employ a formal application or selection procedure for student volunteers recruited by brokerage services, perhaps because they feel that the students have already been recruited in some way by the university. Although some organisations invited volunteers for an informal interview, these processes appeared to be designed to help volunteers clarify their expectations and commitment rather than to positively select individuals. In general, student volunteers were integrated into the general volunteer induction, training and

support arrangements at the organisations which they volunteer with. According to interviews with volunteer coordinators in VIOs it is common to offer a general overview of the organisation's work and a mandatory induction to cover aspects such as health and safety. Most then offer additional training to support the volunteer's specific role. The nature and intensity of the training varies according to the organisation's focus and task. For some, a very simple introduction is thought to suffice. Other organisations take an ad hoc approach to training, depending on the tasks performed by volunteers. Some organisations offer mini-training sessions as required while also seeking to offer support for volunteers' own projects and ideas.

Where volunteers are involved in support work with individuals, families or groups, or in casework requiring the acquisition of a body of knowledge and expertise, training packages are usually more structured and sophisticated. Such training programmes may extend over several weeks or months and lead to recognised qualifications. It is more common, however, for training to be specific to the organisation rather than to be linked to an accredited scheme. Where volunteers have specific interests and needs that will benefit from training – for example youth work – organisations try to make this available. This fits in with what we know about volunteer management more broadly as most training offered to volunteers is of the informal, in-house variety (Brewis et al, 2010). For students recruited specifically for particular skills, such as web design or foreign languages, organisations generally offer little training beyond a general induction as this prior expertise is central to their performance of the role. As one noted:

> *'I have to say, most of it they brought in their own heads. Students were able to answer more advanced questions that our visitors had that I would not have been able to answer because it's not my speciality. So whilst we did train them in the sort of practicalities of working in the gallery, most of the information they brought with them, which was great. And there are some things you can't teach people, how to hold a conversation, you can't teach somebody how to do that, it was, for some of them it was a bit learning on the job.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Students volunteering through student-led groups and committees were also offered training and support from staff members based in students' unions, universities or independent charities. Student committee members and project coordinators need to

be able to support the work of the group's volunteers as well as understanding the needs of the beneficiaries of a project. Hence they were usually given such specific training as implementing health and safety policies and undertaking risk assessments. Students volunteering through a volunteering module or course-related scheme were usually supported by the module leaders. These academics offer regular supervision sessions, encourage students to write reflective accounts of experiences and arrange specific training programmes often leading to qualifications.

4.3 Management and support

Summary

- The most popular activities undertaken by student volunteers are organising/running an event (48 per cent of all volunteers) or leading/being a member of group (39 per cent). These activities are similar for graduates who volunteered when at university.
- Over half (57 per cent) of all student volunteers volunteer all year round and 32 per cent give time once a week or more.
- Respondents who take part in university-supported community volunteering are more likely to do so on a regular basis (once a week or more), as are students who started volunteering before coming to university.
- Organisations face some issues with the availability and reliability of student volunteers. A commonly reported drawback is that students tend to be available for relatively short periods during the year.
- Flexibility is the watchword for most community organisations, and student-led projects and organisations realise that they must not become overly dependent on students.
- Students believe that they make a worthwhile contribution to communities through volunteering: 82 per cent of all volunteers believe their efforts are appreciated and just one in ten (11 per cent) think their 'help is not really needed' by the groups with whom they volunteer.
- A quarter of volunteers (26 per cent) feel that their skills or experience aren't fully utilised.
- Students who had volunteered as part of their degree course were likely to be less satisfied with their experience of volunteering than other volunteers.
- Students feel their volunteering is less well managed than volunteers in the general population, though university-supported volunteers are more satisfied with their experience of volunteering than all other types of student volunteers.
- More than one quarter (28 per cent) of volunteers receive support from lecturers or tutors.
- Volunteer-involving organisations greatly value the relationships with universities that they have built up over a number of years.

4.3.1 Activities

Volunteer activities undertaken by students today are diverse. The students we interviewed for this project were involved in a wide range of activities that form a snapshot of possible activities: work with children and young people, often those with disabilities or other special needs; environmental and conservation work; face-to-face or e-mentoring; charity shops; website design, IT and administrative roles for charities; museum interpretation; campaigns and appeals; help for Churches and religious groups; sports coaching and organising sports; organising events; work for Nightline, Student Community Action / Volunteering Society or Rag.

The types of activities reported by respondents to the Student Activities Survey and the Activities at University Alumni Survey are given in table 11. The most popular type of activity was organising/running an event, followed by leading a group and raising money. There was little difference in the kinds of activities favoured by different volunteers, although teaching/tutoring, visiting people and campaigning were more common activities for university-supported community volunteers than for other students. The activities undertaken by students were broadly similar to the activities undertaken by volunteers of a similar age (16-24 year olds) in the Helping Out survey (Low et al, 2007: 30). The only areas where there seems to be much difference were raising money and representing, both of which were more popular in the Helping Out survey.

Table 11: Activity rates by type of activity, all and graduate volunteers

Activity	(%) All student volunteers	% graduates who volunteered while at university
Organising/running an event	47.8	52.8
Leading/member of group	39.2	42.9
Raising money	37.8	32.4
Teaching/tutoring	23.0	16.3
Befriending/mentoring	22.1	14.4
Giving advice, information or counselling	19.8	12.8
Visiting people	15.4	11.8
Other help	12.8	7.9
Other practical help	12.0	6.3
Campaigning	11.6	9.8
Representing	11.1	7.1
Secretarial/admin	9.3	6.5
Conducting research	9.1	7.0
Transport/driving	8.7	6.2
Coaching or refereeing sports	8.3	7.4
Base	**1,942**	**3,705**

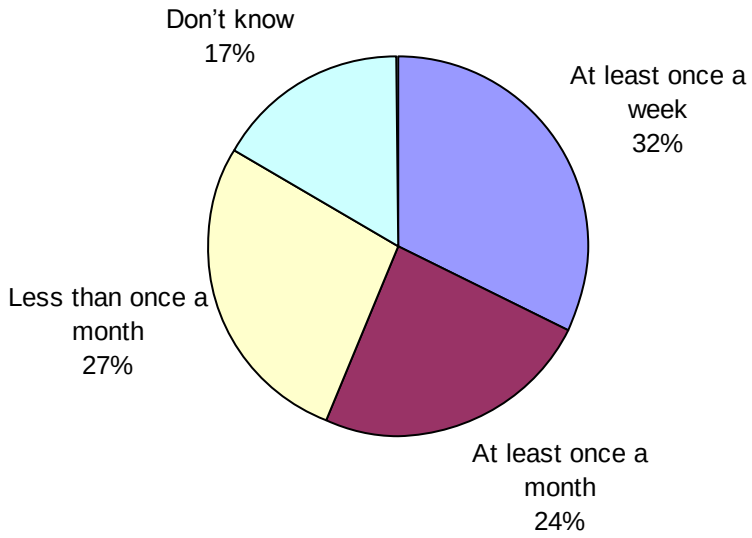
4.3.2 Frequency of volunteering

Around one third (32 per cent) of the volunteers who responded to our Student Activities Survey give time once a week or more (see Chart 4). It is possible to distinguish between regular volunteers - students who volunteered at least once a week - and students whose involvement in volunteering was more sporadic. Additional analysis shows that students who take part in university-supported community volunteering were more likely to do so on a regular basis, as were students who started volunteering before coming to university. [11] The only demographic characteristic that is significant here is students' mobility, as students who had not moved away from home to study were more likely to volunteer at least once a week. This hints at a particular commitment to local community among these students. In addition, students at post-1992 HEIs were less likely to volunteer once a week or more. Students who were more highly motivated by the employability

[11] See logistic regression modelling in Table B3.

dimensions discussed in chapter 2 were more likely to volunteer on a regular basis, while those whose volunteering was influenced by opportunistic circumstances were less likely to do so.

Chart 4: Frequency of volunteering



Base: 1,942 (All volunteers). 'Don't know' was included as an option in this question.

4.3.3 Organisation's views on involving students

When it comes to involving students as volunteers, most volunteer-involving organisations are flexible and keen to accommodate students' needs. The volunteer coordinators we interviewed recognised that students have to fit their volunteering around their studies and that the time they can commit will be seriously reduced during exam and revision periods. At the same time, most coordinators based in VIOs expected students to make a minimum weekly time commitment when they are available. This is usually around three or four hours a week, which is thought to be enough to make the experience worthwhile both for the organisation and the student. This is interesting to compare with the personal development benefits derived from volunteering as discussed in section 5.3.1 below, which show that students derived greater benefits from more regular participation. Some schemes, such as

environmental projects, offered more flexible approaches, allowing volunteers to ring up in advance if they wish to take part in a day's volunteering without making a commitment from week to week.

The most commonly reported drawback to involving students is that they tend to be available for relatively short periods during the year. This often means that volunteering is restricted to the autumn and spring terms. Despite this just over half of (57 per cent) of all volunteers responding to the Student Activities Survey reported that they volunteered all year around. While most organisations are able to work around the restrictions, some projects and organisations have encountered negative attitudes from clients when students disappear during the summer. Likewise, volunteer coordinators managing student-led projects are well aware of the potential difficulties for beneficiaries caused by most projects running in term-time only. As one explained:

> *'We got quite a lot of negative feedback from the families, because they were saying actually the times we really want them are precisely the times they're not here. So particularly the school summer holidays, that's when parents say they need the most help.' (*Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'The problem is really with changing some of the staff perceptions with volunteer students, because some do see it as a quick dash, they're in for two weeks, they're out for two weeks, but obviously if we're structured, if we learn from how we work with volunteer students, then we can get them specific projects to do in the summer!' (*Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Volunteer coordinators based in volunteer-involving organisations also discussed the support and management needs of students. While students' enthusiasm, time and skills are welcomed by organisations, the occasional flip-side is perceived to be a degree of immaturity that can be expressed in an unwillingness to accept guidance, a failure to think through the implications of a volunteer commitment or difficulty in acknowledging that they needed personal support at times. Moreover stereotypes of students as unreliable and difficult to work with persist. While ostensibly reluctant to generalise, several volunteer coordinators in VIOs suggested that students can have unrealistic expectations about organisations' ability to create roles to meet volunteers' own needs. As volunteer coordinators explained:

> *'I think one of the things is with students…but in some cases, they're not actually as open as the might be to guidance, they have got their ideas which is lovely, and we'll listen to them, but the answer might be no, and sometimes they find that a bit difficult.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'I think the other negative thing is probably that the students are more likely than an older person in the community to go out and get drunk the night before and not come, not turn up to something. But I wouldn't say that that's something that happens regularly you know, that's just a bit of a sort of student stereotype I guess, but you know it comes from somewhere.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

In light of the restrictions about involving students as volunteers, some organisations realised that they needed to be realistic about not becoming overly dependent on students. Some volunteer coordinators reported deciding only to use volunteers if they are able to make a yea-round commitment and this tends to be more possible for students who live locally all year round, including postgraduates and those who have not moved away to study. Moreover organisations need to maintain their recruitment of other volunteers. As one described this balancing act:

> *'So you know we've got to be careful. And of course we have people volunteering from, not only students, and of course we've got to give them the chance as well, because if we didn't, we'd lose all the students in the summer and we wouldn't have anybody to deliver the sessions. So we've got to get a fine balance.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Another approach is to develop short-term projects in order to maximise the value of students' time for the periods they are available. Although this requires only a very short-term commitment, student volunteers sometimes do return from year to year (for example for a summer camp or Christmas project). A few organisations have more formalised expectations about the length of time any volunteer will remain involved. In some cases this is linked to the organisation's investment in the training of that individual. For example, groups involving students in 'buddying' and family support usually encouraged a consistent weekly commitment for a minimum of a year. Whatever their level of commitment, all mentioned that it was important that student volunteers turn up when they have promised to. Indeed, some of those we

interviewed felt that the onus was on universities to help students keep their commitments, for example through timetabling. As one suggested:

> *'But I think it would be a really good idea if it was actually part of a student's schedule to have time booked out to volunteer, because they've got such punishing schedules that they'd like to volunteer but it's just too much work they've got to do already. So if there was time allocated, we think, as part of their, you know, learning, then that might be easier for them'.* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

4.3.4 Students' views on organisation and management

As part of the Student Activities Survey, respondents were asked to think about the way their volunteering is organised. Generally, they feel that they are making a worthwhile contribution to communities through their volunteering: 82 per cent of all volunteers believed that their efforts were appreciated while just one-in-ten (11 per cent) felt that their 'help was not really needed' by the groups with whom they volunteer. Yet, one in four (26 per cent) believed that their skills or experience were not fully utilised and over half (56 per cent) of all volunteers said that things could be better organised.

The questions asked were closely aligned to questions included in the national survey of volunteering 'Helping Out' (Low et al, 2007).[12] A comparison of the two datasets can be illuminating and interestingly this analysis suggests that students felt that their volunteering is less well managed than volunteers in the general population, even when compared with volunteers in a similar age group (16-34 years). Table 12 gives a detailed breakdown. In particular, only 31 per cent of Helping Out respondents agreed that their volunteering could be better organised compared to 56 per cent of respondents to the Student Activities Survey. In particular students are much less confident about their ability to influence the development of the organisation than volunteers surveyed for Helping Out, and even less so than the younger age group in Helping Out.

[12] Direct comparison with the precise figures is not possible because in the Student Activities Survey respondents were offered the option of 'neither agreeing nor disagreeing' with the statements on a 5 point scale, whereas in Helping Out respondents were only offered the option to 'definitely agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' or 'definitely disagree' (see survey in Technical Appendix A, from p. 115).

Table 12: Student experiences compared with Helping Out

	% all volunteers (Student Activities Survey) combined agree strongly/ agree	% all volunteers (Helping Out) combined definitely agree/ tend to agree	% volunteers aged 16-34 (Helping Out) combined definitely agree/ tend to agree
I'm given the opportunity to do the sort of things I'd like to do	73	91	92
I get bored or lose interest in my involvement	12	6	10
I can cope with the things I'm asked to do	85	97	98
I feel things could be better organised	56	31	28
My help is not really needed	11	9	10
The organisation has reasonable expectations in terms of workload	65	84	84
My efforts are appreciated	82	95	97
I am given the opportunity to influence the development of the organisation	55	69	73
Base	**1,942**	**Varies 819-833**	**Varies 124-125**

Through further analysis we also explored how various factors affected students' experiences of how their volunteering is organised. The key finding is that the experience is significantly affected by whether the volunteering was university-supported community volunteering, not-supported community volunteering, course-related volunteering or other volunteering rather than by any demographic characteristics of student volunteers. University-supported community volunteers were the most satisfied with the way their volunteering is organised. Fifty-one per cent of university-supported community volunteers felt that 'their volunteering could be better organised' compared to 64 per cent of other volunteers. They were also

more likely to feel that they are ‘given the opportunity to do the sort of things I’d like to do’, to feel they ‘can cope with the things they are asked to do’, to feel that the ‘organisation has reasonable expectations in terms of workload’ and that their ‘efforts are appreciated’ than either volunteers or other volunteers.

Table 13: The percentage of respondents who agreed strongly/ agreed with the following statements about the way their volunteering is organised

	University-supported community volunteers	Not-supported community volunteers	Other volunteers
I'm given the opportunity to do the sort of things I'd like to do	85	66	74
I get bored or lose interest in my involvement	12	11	12
I can cope with the things I'm asked to do	91	82	85
I feel things could be better organised	51	54	64
My help is not really needed	10	11	13
The organisation has reasonable expectations in terms of workload	72	62	62
My efforts are appreciated	87	82	76
I am given the opportunity to influence the development of the organisation	60	50	61
My skills or experience aren't fully utilised	21	28	28
I find myself out of pocket and/or do not know how to claim expenses	19	22	20
Base	**515**	**927**	**500**

Reasons for these differences are unclear but may include volunteer coordinators' negative perceptions about students' abilities or commitment as well as the potentially higher expectations of student volunteers compared to others. In the qualitative research element students discussed their experiences of volunteering, although due to the nature of the biographical narrative interpretive method we did not explore student experiences of volunteer management in great detail. Students did discuss how their expectations of volunteering had not always been met or that the activities differed from how they had been 'sold'. A couple of the students we interviewed expressed frustration at being treated differently to other volunteers, problems with coping with stress, and a sense that levels of training were not

sufficient. Others reported positive experiences of support offered by organisations. Comments included:

> *'For some reason, there was someone who had been there volunteering a shorter time than me, but, yeah they were given more responsibility than me, I don't know why, I never asked, but I felt really frustrated'.* (Bluebells, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I think if you do it for free there's often less training and you feel less responsibility towards your duties there because you're doing this for free. Either that or because of lack of training you get the really dud jobs*.' (Ruth, pre-1992 HEI)

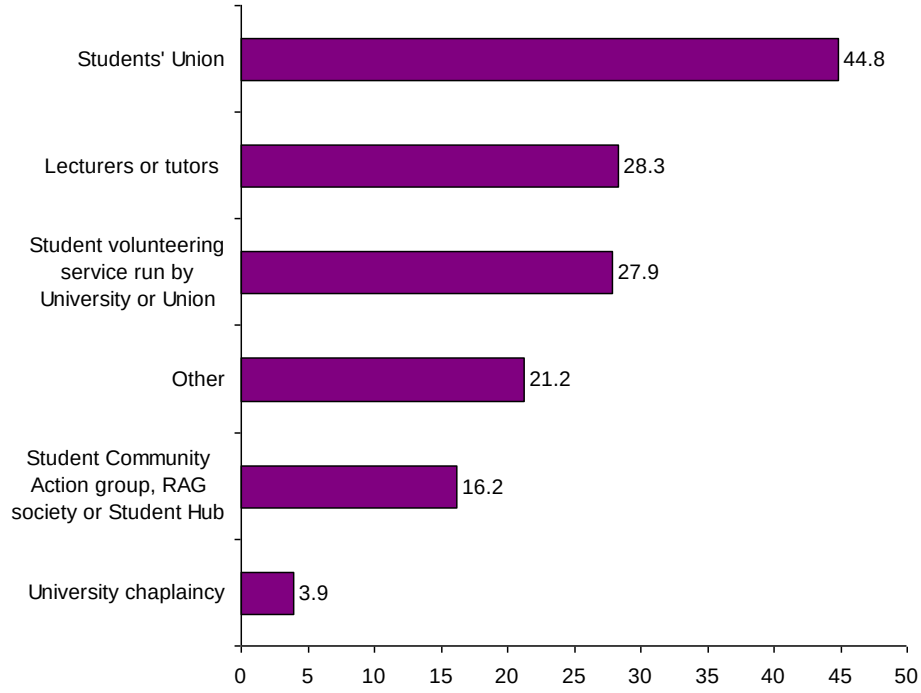
> *'I can always remember that the second shift I was on, a woman died and she had been there for 3 weeks…And I very nearly didn't go back! I very nearly stopped volunteering because I thought I just can't handle this anymore. But obviously with a hospice comes really good counsellors, and they were really good, they rang me, they came to see me, they talked it through with me, which was great'.* (Katie, pre-1992 HEI)

Students discussed at some length the effectiveness of volunteering and whether they felt they were making a difference, a topic we consider in section 5.2 and 5.5 below. Indeed as they gained greater experience of volunteering, several students had come to question the very nature of the volunteering they were asked to undertake, and this was particularly the case for volunteering undertaken at school or as part of a gap year.

4.3.5 University support for volunteering

The reasons why university-supported community volunteers appear to have better experiences merits further research. It may be that they are more positive about their experiences because they are able to seek support for volunteering from their university or students' union and those on student-led volunteering projects may be more closely managed by staff and other students. The main such sources of support are given in Chart 5 below, which highlights the importance of students' unions. Interestingly, although just 14 per cent of students volunteer as part of their course, over one quarter (28 per cent) derive some support or guidance from academic staff.

Chart 5: Sources of support for volunteering



Base: 718 (Volunteers reporting some support from university or union)

In interviews, students discussed the role of their tutors in encouraging voluntary activity and explained the added value of support from university. One articulated this well:

> *'That's what [university] does really well with the [volunteering unit] and the awards, they really make you reflect about your volunteering, about your experiences, and the key things you've learnt from it.'* (Student, volunteer, pre 92)

However students noted that such problems of organisation and poor management were not confined to volunteer-involving organisations but that student-led volunteering projects faced difficulties. As one student noted:

> *'I feel I lack credibility when I'm contacting schools about e-mentoring, because I'm just a student. There's a lack of support from the university.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

Interestingly, students answering the Student Activities Survey who had volunteered as part of their degree course were likely to be less satisfied with their experience of

volunteering than other volunteers. This may be related to the widespread ambivalence about being made to volunteer discussed in section 3.3.2 or to a lack of suitable opportunities. For example, 30 per cent of course-related volunteers reported getting bored compared to nine per cent of other volunteers and 67 per cent think volunteering could be better organised. Over one third (36 per cent) of these volunteers believed that their skills or experience aren't fully utilised.

Chapter Five: Impacts

'Volunteering in the community took me to different parts of the city outside the university 'bubble' and made me feel that I was giving something positive back to the local community.' (Graduate, volunteer)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the impacts of volunteering on students, organisations and the wider community. It discusses the significant contribution students make to organisations - as well as the wider community through informal helping - and explores the vital role of volunteering in developing students' community awareness. Students are highly valued as volunteers by organisations and are sought out for specific skills, knowledge and expertise as well as being valued for their youth and enthusiasm. The chapter has a strong focus on students' self-reported impacts on personal development, skills and employability. In general, impacts on students' feelings about community, organisations or university are less pronounced than the personal developments and employability benefits. As might be expected given their overall more positive experience of volunteering discussed in chapter 4, university-supported volunteers derive greater personal development benefits than other volunteers. Importantly the chapter finds that prior experience of volunteering helps students recognise the benefits of volunteering.

5.1.1 What we know already

In the background study commissioned by NCCPE, Squirrel et al (2009: 163) suggest that 'there is little doubt that student volunteering has a huge impact – on the students, the communities they work with, and the university.' The report does however accept that there is a serious lack of evidence to back up such a bold assertion. Holdsworth and Quinn (2010) present a more critical perspective, arguing 'the assumption of win/win is too simplistic.'

In general, the question of the impact of student or young volunteers on wider society has only recently begun to be addressed (Hill and Russell, 2009). A review undertaken for the Commission on the Future of Volunteering discusses the impacts of volunteering on society, including student volunteering, across five public policy themes (Ockenden, 2007). Recent studies have identified certain activities or fields of work in which students or young people can make a particular impact, for example in

developing sport in local communities (da Souza, 2005). Likewise, the Morgan Inquiry found that young volunteers are particularly vital to the success of organisations that work specifically with/for children and young people (Morgan Inquiry, 2008). The Commission on the Future of Volunteering has also championed the benefits of inter-generational volunteering as an important way to combat ageism and improve community cohesion (Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008). The Citizenship Survey provides data on 'meaningful interaction', the extent to which people mix with people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Formal volunteering is more likely than informal volunteering to encourage this meaningful interaction and those aged 16-25 – and full-time students in particular – are the groups most likely to experience this mixing through volunteering (Drever, 2010: 38). A study by Holdsworth and Quinn moreover suggests that volunteering can, but does not automatically, improve students' awareness of social inequalities and of the role of higher education in the reproduction of such inequalities (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2011).

There is more evidence for the impacts of volunteering on individual young people and students and especially for the value of service learning or 'learning linked' volunteering for enhancing students' employability, skills and self-awareness (Connor, in Squirrell et al, 2009). There is also a growing body of evidence for the long-term impacts of full-time service undertaken by young people, particularly drawn from US and Canadian studies (Hill and Russell, 2009; Hill and Stevens, 2010). In the London study of universities high numbers of students reported agreement with the personal development and employability benefits of volunteering (Braime and Ruohonen, 2010). Interestingly in this study students from the post-1992 institutions reported greater improvements in personal development than those at Russell Group Universities (Braime and Ruohonen, 2010). However, as Quinn and Holdsworth (forthcoming, 2011) highlight, 'volunteering in the context of higher education cannot easily be distinguished from universities' capacity to transform the prospects of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds'.

5.2 Impacts on volunteer-involving organisations

Summary

- Student volunteers have a big impact on organisations and the hours they contribute make a real difference to schools, hospitals, national charities and small community-based organisations.
- Students think they make a difference: 82 per cent of volunteers believe their help is appreciated, rising to 87 per cent of university-supported community volunteers.
- Students are seen as more dynamic and creative than other volunteers. Coming from different parts of the country and from an academic background, students can inject fresh ideas and new perspectives into an organisation.
- Involving student volunteers broadens the diversity of an organisation's volunteer pool and the youth of most student volunteers is seen as a great advantage.
- Higher education students are often the first point of call for organisations looking for specific skills and areas of expertise, such as drama, languages, science and IT skills.
- Students relate especially well to children and young people but they are also valuable in work with older people and on inter-generational projects.
- Volunteering by university students can help change stereotypes of students within volunteer-involving organisations.
- Students recognise that impact can be hard to monitor and some prefer certain types of activity because it is possible to see differences more immediately.

5.2.1 Organisational perspectives

Student volunteers make an important contribution to the work of organisations, ranging from small community groups to national charities as well as public sector bodies such as schools, prisons and hospitals. Volunteer coordinators based in such organisations greatly value the contribution of the students that they involve as volunteers. Nearly all of those we interviewed believed that higher education students contributed something extra compared to their other volunteers, although of course

some saw the main advantage of students as strengthening the overall volunteer effort rather than any special qualities of students. The high value placed on students' volunteering means that all the volunteer coordinators we interviewed were very keen to develop and extend relationships with university or students' union volunteering programmes and academic departments. As one explained:

> *'The student volunteers are what keeps the English lessons alive, as in [the volunteer coordinator] really relies on them…They can commit to a specific lesson every week. And then they have that dedication, I mean they, they are in an academic learning environment, so for them to transfer that is easy, because they find it, I think they find, they seem to find it quite easy to teach.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

In general, involving student volunteers broadens the diversity and size of an organisation's volunteer pool. The youth of most, though not all, student volunteers was generally seen as a great advantage. Indeed, a couple of interviewees felt it was more important that they were young than that they were students. In particular, young students are seen to relate well to children and young people, and this is a very big plus for those organisations that were providing befriending and support services for this age group. There can also be benefits from mixing young volunteers with older service users or patients. As one volunteer coordinator suggested:

> *'I would imagine that a lot of them would say they'd rather have a year with a young funky student, doing exciting stuff, rather than five years with a forty year old, maybe doing more ordinary things! And it's sort of like, they're not embarrassed to go out with them or, do you know what I mean? There's that sort of like, it's like somebody to look up to and that's what I want to be like when I'm twenty.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Volunteers who are students are also more likely to come from different ethnic groups, from different parts of the UK or from other countries. In organisations located in more rural parts of England student volunteers were felt to stand out from the general run of volunteers who often tended to be older and ethnically more homogenous (mostly White British) according to interviewees. In more mixed areas, such as the larger cities, organisations already attracted an ethnically diverse group of volunteers and, in this sense student volunteers were no different. Indeed some organisations based in large cities were under pressure to reach 'hard-to-reach'

groups such as volunteers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and were thus less concerned to recruit students.

Students who brought special knowledge and abilities to their volunteering were particularly valued. In some cases students were recruited specifically because of expertise central to their volunteer role, for example students recruited for possession of up-to-date knowledge of research and best-practice in the field of child development. Coming from an academic background, students can inject fresh ideas and new perspectives into an organisation. Other organisations reported benefiting from more general skills which students are felt to possess such as IT and web design, report writing and project management skills. As one noted:

> *'We're getting talented people, people in education, people with ideas, enthusiasm. So if we're getting the students come in and do the volunteering around the playschemes, you know, this is them give up their own time, which shows enthusiasm and the creativity. And again you know, it's working with people who are sort of at the forefront of new research and new thinking as well.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Students were moreover felt to bring high levels of enthusiasm and fresh perspectives to volunteer roles. They were typically seen as confident, talkative, outgoing, friendly and eager to learn, often more so than other volunteers. Several coordinators described students as more creative and innovative than other volunteers. A further advantage identified was that students usually have flexible timetables and can be available in the day more easily than volunteers in paid work. Volunteering by university students can have the benefit of changing stereotypes of students among staff based in volunteer-involving organisations. For example, in a number of cases volunteer coordinators were impressed with the scale, range and ambition of the volunteering activities undertaken by students and commented on the efficiency and professionalism of students' approaches:

> *'I think all of the staff here have been very impressed by how professional the students were. When they came, they came and they did their job very well, very enthusiastic, pretty much on time you know, they were very, and I think there is this sort of stereotype that students are lazy and turn up late and stay in bed and don't wash and all the rest of it! And I think they've certainly blown that out of the water in this instance, but that's possibly an undeserved*

stereotype in the first place, like all stereotypes!' (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Organisational case study 2: Students befriending disabled young people

This local community organisation was set up to help young disabled adults to socialise with people their own age and become more active in their communities. Volunteers met up with the clients as on both a group and a one-to-one basis. Although the organisation did not use students as befrienders exclusively, about three-quarters of the volunteers were students so they had come to rely quite heavily on universities as source of volunteers. Students were particularly valued as volunteers both because of their youth and enthusiasm and for their diversity:

'It works really well actually because of the fact that they're obviously of that age group that we're, that our members are as well….It's nice for our members because they're able to make those kind of friendships with people from lots of different backgrounds and different parts of the country and part of the world, which you normally do if you go you know to university, but many disabled people don't really you know get the opportunity to do that. So it's nice for them to be able to broaden their range of friendships as it were.'

However, the volunteering coordinator voiced some drawbacks to involving students, particularly because they were likely to leave the locality after their degrees. This could sometimes be problematic for the clients.

'It's very difficult to establish very long term friendships because you know many students are only around for a maximum of four years, and then they move on, sometimes they stay.'

In addition, because so many of their volunteers were university students, the cycle of the academic year could cause problems for the running of the service.

'There are times of the year, like in the summer holidays for instance when they're just not around…which is one of the reasons why we've tried to you know get other, well I've tried to get other volunteers from other you know, not necessarily all students because of the fact that otherwise you know we've got a time, a big time gap you know, that three or four months where there's nothing happening.'

However, on the whole the experience had been very positive and through its connection with the university the charity had recruited a couple of students to rebuild the organisations' website. Indeed, involving students had changed some of the volunteer coordinator's ideas about university students.

But I am surprised, I was surprised at how many young people of that age are interested in volunteering and are interested in volunteering with young disabled people, you know, I'm quite surprised at that. Like I said before, we have quite a lot of medical students volunteering, and a lot of the time the reason they do that is because it's very connected with what they're studying.

5.2.2 Students' perspectives

Students themselves believe they make positive and important contributions to beneficiaries, organisations and causes. Chapter 4 explored students' experiences of volunteering; revealing that 82 per cent of volunteers responding to the Student Activities Survey believed their help was appreciated. This figure was slightly higher for university-supported community volunteers (87 per cent). Indeed, students were proud of the difference they are able to make to individuals and organisations and this contributed to their motivation to carry on volunteering. Students strongly appreciated receiving positive feedback from the people who they volunteered with and recognised that they were often different to other volunteers. Comments included:

> *'It's just to do with the whole situation being rewarding, because it was like a lot of positive feedback from the [patients] about what I was doing, and it made me feel as though it was useful and you know, I don't know really.'* (John, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I just got a bit of pride really…I don't know, just something inside you, you see like the younger lads and you think I was that age once, and like I knew somebody who was like me, volunteering, and they're a real help, they weren't just like the other leaders barking at you, but they were there to guide you.'* (Sam, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'You can kind of see it in their eyes, their appreciation. I think that's the biggest thing, like the biggest achievement I have ever done in my life.'* (Student, volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

> *'Basically the proudest moment I would say was…within the first month of us running under, like, my jurisdiction, we increased our call volume by 800 per cent.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

In mapping sessions and biographical interviews students discussed the idea of impact, and some felt that there was a difference between a cause being 'worthwhile' and 'making a difference.' Some felt that hands-on volunteering, such as at a charity shop or children's play scheme, allowed volunteers to see impacts more immediately and than other activities such as campaigning or e-mentoring. Comments included:

> *'I know this is going to sound cheesy but I sort of felt like I was there promoting the charity and sort of allowing the charity to function, because there were numerous times when my manager was like, "If you hadn't have come in we wouldn't have been open".'* (Bluebells, pre-1992 HEI)

'With Amnesty it's a worthwhile cause but you don't feel like you're having as much impact, but it does feel inclusive to be part of a global movement. RAG is also not as direct as volunteering on the ground, but you do feel it's worthwhile.' (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

'I made someone smile at [student-led project] – you can make a difference in one session unlike say teaching which requires more long-term input.' (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

'Volunteering gave me a sense of responsibility that the academic experience alone could not offer. It really felt like I was improving the student experience for many of my colleagues, and for the wider community as a whole. Furthermore, most of my best friends now were members of that same society.' (Graduate, volunteer, 2007)

Student Case Study 3: Afrina

Afrina is an international student studying biomedical sciences at a post-1992 university. Afrina had always volunteered. For her, volunteering is a way of life. It is something she could not imagine not doing and something she believes very strongly in.

Afrina was encouraged by her parents to volunteer from a very young age and felt it is important to contribute to society. She felt privileged to be in the position where she was able to volunteer wanted to give something back. She saw the value in volunteering and recognising that getting paid to do something is not always a good thing.

'I think volunteering is just doing your bit, no matter if it's big or small, this is what my mum told me…if it wasn't for my mum I might not be talking to you now…my mum's my biggest influence'.

Consequently, volunteering has played a big role in Afrina's university experience and she has been very involved in many of the opportunities her university offers. On arrival at university, Afrina found it easy to find out about volunteering and felt it was made both accessible and convenient for students.

'I can't find a reason why you wouldn't do volunteering…volunteering at [university] is really easy to approach, it's like everywhere. They send us letters regularly and I know the leader quite well. The whole thing is really easy'.

She first got involved with volunteering at her university when she went along to a welcome meeting.

'They [university volunteering] were like oh, we have a meeting in this room, you can come around, have a pizza! That is how I started [volunteering] by eating a pizza!'

Afrina developed a good relationship with her volunteering department and regularly volunteers for a range of projects including a local farm, organising cake sales, swap shops and running sponsored events. She reflected on the impact volunteering had on her:

'You get a sense of achievement, it's like a lot more than you get from doing an exam because it feels like you've done something that means a lot for the community and people.'

Afrina felt that she will always volunteer although worried that it might not be as easy to find opportunities once she has left university.

5.3 Impacts on students' personal development

Summary

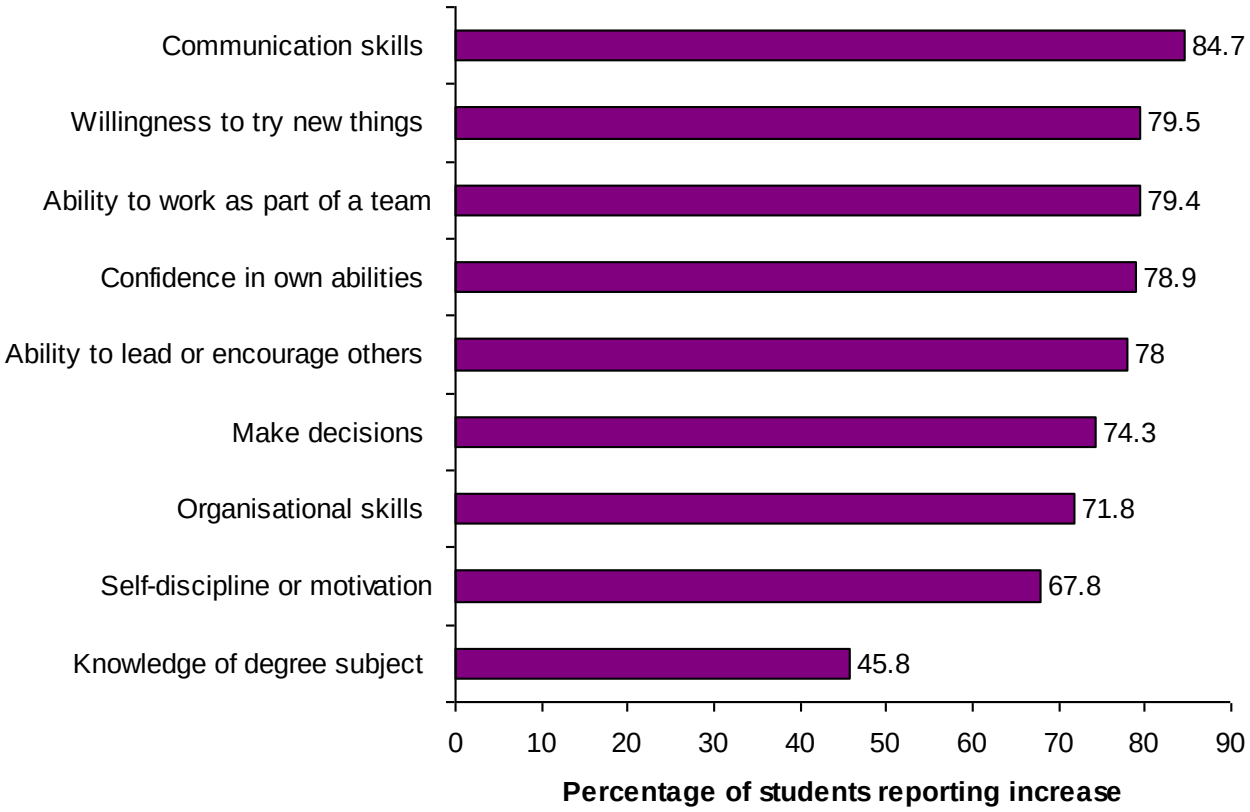
- Students report many positive impacts of volunteering and derive high levels of satisfaction from taking part: 87 per cent would recommend volunteering to their friends.
- Students report the greatest impacts on their communication skills, willingness to try new things confidence and team work.
- Students' evaluation of volunteering is contingent mostly on the type of volunteering they take part in and their overall engagement with university. For example, university-supported community volunteers derive greater personal development benefits than other volunteers.
- Students at post-1992 universities are more likely to recognise the benefits of volunteering on their willingness to try new things, self-discipline, confidence and knowledge.
- Students from BME backgrounds and non-UK students report greater impacts on personal development than other students.
- Younger, recent graduates are more likely to recognise the positive impact of volunteering on personal development and soft skills compared with both their older peers and earlier graduates.
- In qualitative interviews the benefits of learning and developing soft skills were recognised by volunteers but students placed greater value on the personal growth they experienced through volunteering.
- Unprompted, the attribute most commonly highlighted by graduates as having been developed by volunteering was a growth in confidence/self-esteem. They also reported volunteering had made a difference to them by allowing them to develop skills in working with others, negotiation and leadership.

5.3.1 Personal development and soft skills

As part of the Student Activity Survey current students were asked about how their volunteering impacted on nine aspects of personal development and soft skills: communication skills; ability to work as a team; ability to make decisions; ability to lead or encourage others; organisation skills; confidence in own abilities; willingness

to try new things; self-discipline or motivation and knowledge of subject. Students reported a high level of agreement with all of these aspects of personal development, indicating that they viewed their volunteering in a positive way as reported in chart 6.

Chart 6: Impacts on students' personal development



Base: 1,942

In order to explore how these impacts varied by students' characteristics, mean values for different subgroups have been compared. The most striking finding is that it is the type of volunteering that students are engaged in, rather than student characteristics, that impact most on students' subjective evaluations of the impact of volunteering. University-supported volunteers scored higher means on all personal development dimensions compared to general student volunteers. Regularity was also important, as those who volunteered more than once a week also scored higher. The greater benefits of regular, longer term commitment for volunteers were recognised by academics and volunteer coordinators. For example:

> *'I think if they're doing the one off opportunities, there's probably more immediate satisfaction from that and you know that sense that, of feeling good about themselves, and they've done something worthwhile, and they'll get very quickly because they can see the results very quickly. …But I think long term they would probably feel they're getting more out of it because they are developing skills over a longer period of time, and developing relationships with people which you're not going to get so much with one offs.'*
> (Volunteer coordinator, Students' Union)

There are also some interesting differences for type of university, with students at post-1992 universities more likely to recognise the benefits of volunteering on their willingness to try new things, self-discipline, confidence and knowledge. Students from BME backgrounds reported a greater increase across all personal development indicators compared to white students, as did non-UK students.

In biographical interviews, students described how volunteering had affected their personal development in a number of positive ways. In general, the benefits of learning and developing soft skills were acknowledged by all and some identified particular aspects, particularly leadership, communication and project management skills. As students noted:

> *'I think it's definitely helped with my time management. I have friends who don't volunteer but they're struggling a bit…so it's a bit more time management required, so I think it definitely has built on my time management skills, and I think it is also a good thing to have on your CV.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I think I leant how to communicate with people more and I think I realised that my aspirations may be a bit low sometimes.'* (Afrina, post-1992 HEI)

However, in most interviews students focussed more on the personal growth they experienced through volunteering. Indeed, all of those we interviewed reported high levels of enjoyment and satisfaction derived through volunteering and felt that learning more about themselves as individuals had been an important part of volunteering. For example:

> *'I just love doing it. It's something to get outside and do and meet people. It makes me feel good about myself. I've been able to show my real self to people, and they've liked me. And also because you're doing something to help other people.'* (Student, volunteer, post-1992 HEI)

> *'It's improved myself as a person more than I thought it would, and I wish I could do it again.'* (Greg, post-1992 HEI)
>
> *'It was a break from uni work. It used a different part of my brain and a different part of my heart. I think I got a lot more out of it than they did.'* (Ruth, pre-1992 HEI)

Students were also realistic about the potential for volunteering to have a negative as well as a positive impact on both students and beneficiaries, for example if students are overstretched or stressed.

Volunteer coordinators we interviewed both at universities and in volunteer-involving organisations confirmed that volunteering enhances students' time management, communication, team-work and relationship-building skills. Most importantly, learning new skills was seen to result in increases in confidence and self-esteem. They also believed student volunteers experience a sense of satisfaction of having spent time in a worthwhile way to help others.

5.3.2 Graduates' personal development and soft skills

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey were also asked about how volunteering had impacted on their personal development and learning as shown in table 14. As can be seen more recent, younger graduates were more likely to recognise the positive impact of volunteering compared with both their older peers and earlier graduates.

In addition, respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey were asked to describe the difference volunteering had made to them. Analysis of the 1,372 responses received to this free text question reveals the multi-faceted nature of the impact volunteering as a student can have on later life. The attribute most commonly highlighted by graduates was a growth in personal confidence/self-esteem. Leadership and understanding how to work with others, negotiate and manage people were other soft skills frequently cited. A high number of these graduates also pointed to the specific skills they had acquired as student include how to run committees, secretarial skills and minute taking, fundraising and budgeting, event

organising, editing newsletters, managing people and diversity and equalities awareness. Comments included:

> *'I can demonstrate leadership and organisational skills, that I did something outside of academic work (i.e. I am a more "well-rounded student"). When asked to describe a certain situation and how I resolved it, can bring up examples from situations that arose from volunteering.'* (Graduate, 2010)

> *'What I learnt from my experiences of volunteering has equipped me with a huge amount of knowledge in dealing and working with people, organising events and how to deal with certain situations and responsibilities. What I have done since, in my working and personal life, I believe would've been far more challenging for me if I hadn't had those earlier experiences.'* (Graduate, 2006)

Table 14: Impacts on graduates' personal development

Attribute	% Recent, younger graduates	% Recent, older graduates	% Earlier graduates
Confidence in abilities	84.5	80.3	77.7
Willingness to try new things	81.4	72.3	71.5
Ability to lead or encourage others	81.0	75.2	72.6
Self-discipline or motivation	66.4	60.9	54.8
Knowledge of degree subject	32.9	54.6	22.1
Base **(All graduates who had volunteered at university)**	**3,705**		

NB All differences are statistically significant as confirmed by chi-square

5.4 Employability

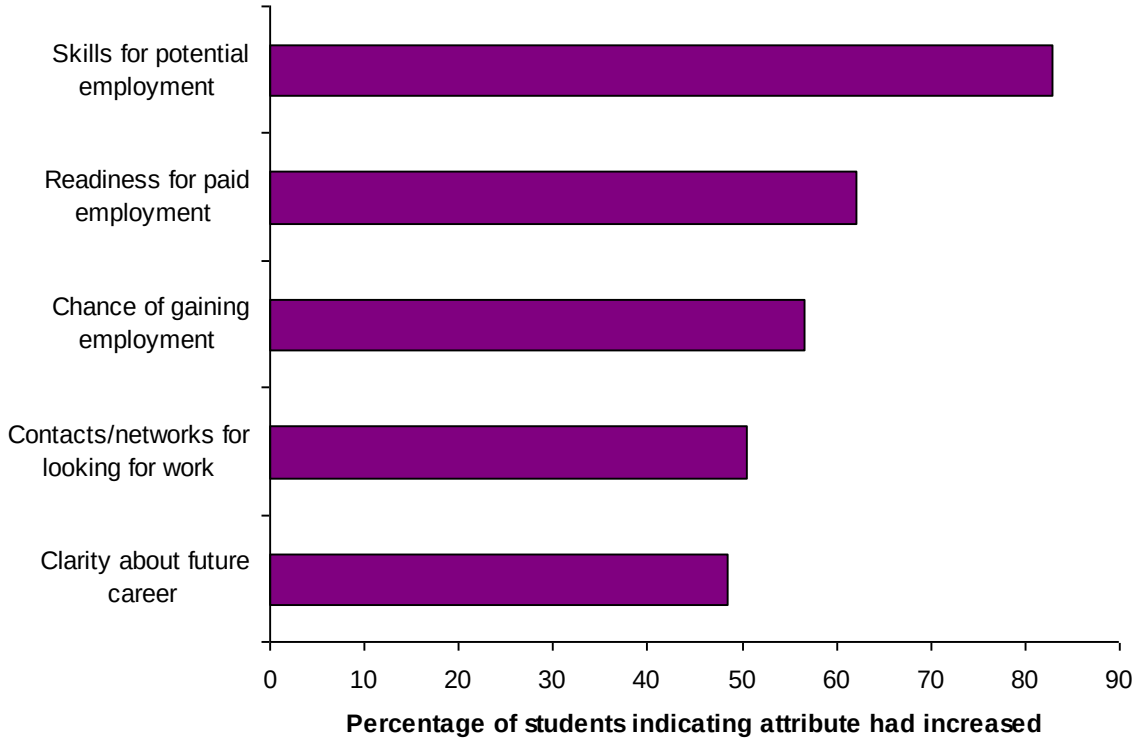
Summary

- Students feel that volunteering increases their employment skills in general, rather than providing more direct career-related benefits such as making contacts, or clarity about future career.
- Students at post-1992 HEIs are more likely to feel that volunteering has helped clarify their future career, improved their chances of gaining employment and making valuable contacts.
- Younger, recent graduates are most likely to identify that their volunteering had a positive impact on finding employment, while older recent graduates are less likely to recognise these benefits, as are earlier graduates.
- Volunteering provides concrete experience that helps recent graduates find work: 82 per cent of younger, recent graduates mentioned volunteering on a CV and 78 per cent talked about it in interviews.
- Half (51 per cent) of recent graduates under 30 years old who are in paid work say that volunteering helped them to secure employment.
- Volunteering can help students feel more part of their university: 61 per cent agree that volunteering changed their experience of being a student for the better. This is particularly the case for male students, younger students, those studying at pre-1992 HEIs, students who move away to study and those who have at least one parent who has gone to university.
- Students report lower impacts on knowledge of degree subject than other aspects of personal development or employability (46 per cent), though 55 per cent of older, recent graduates see the benefits of volunteering for their degree.
- Volunteer coordinators in universities and volunteer-involving organisations see an important benefit of volunteering as giving insight into new areas of work and helping students work out which careers they are less well suited for.
- Graduates identify the longer-term value of having developed skills in committee work, secretarial/minute taking, fundraising, budgeting/accounts, event organising and editing newsletters.

5.4.1 Students' employability

Much of the current policy interest around student volunteering focuses on the perceived impacts of volunteering on employability. In general, student respondents to the Student Activities Survey acknowledged the benefits of volunteering on employability. Notably, students felt that volunteering increases their employment skills in general, rather than providing more direct career-related benefits such as making contacts, or clarity about future career, as illustrated in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Impacts on students' employability



Base: 1,942

Regular volunteers (that is those who give time at least once a week) and university-supported community volunteers were more likely to report positive responses to all these employability questions, as are BME students, though the results for non-UK students were more ambiguous. One interesting finding relates to students who do not move away to study and those who study at post-1992 HEIs, who were more likely to report agreement with the idea that volunteering has helped clarify their future career, improved their chances of gaining employment and helped them make

valuable contacts. It could be that these students were more likely to look for future employment in the locality of where they have studied (and lived) and thus are more inclined to pursue direct employability benefits of volunteering, such as building up contacts and networks where they study. Additionally, the post-1992 universities included in this study place a stronger emphasis on the value of volunteering in enhancing employability than the pre-1992 HEIs and it could be that students are more aware of these potential benefits and more able to recognise them.

Talking to students in-depth uncovered a slightly different slant on employability. Although some employability benefits are seen to derive from all volunteering, with students feeling that their CVs are enhanced by most extra-curricular activities, it is the activities specifically chosen to enhance a CV that they really believe improve employability directly.

> *'I think the skills it's required me to use have increased. So like my organisational skills, its taking on quite a lot. I've had to make sure that I fit everything in, do everything properly. I think I'm a lot more punctual you know, I think my initiative's grown up quite a lot'.* (Mary, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I think it showed me that quite a lot of the job could involve frustrations and trying to get across red tape.'* (Bluebells, pre-1992 HEI)

Volunteer coordinators based in both universities and volunteer-involving organisations believed that students could strengthen their position following university by developing CVs, improving language skills, gaining referees and demonstrating job-related skills. Practical and specific skills such as data-inputting, website design and handling tools and equipment can be improved or learned by students. In addition to these generic benefits coordinators believed volunteering offers an introduction into the realities of working in particular environments, such as a school, hospital or in conservation/environmental work. Similarly, they perceived that one of the important benefits of volunteering is allowing students to have insight into sectors, such as the non-profit sector, which they might otherwise not have had much previous contact with, and importantly, in allowing students to work out which careers they are less well suited for. Comments included:

'[Volunteering] has some side effects on their employability, not the ones they think probably…I think what it really is good at doing is showing them the types of things they hate.' (Volunteering module coordinator)

'Students will come out the other having got a great deal from it, and having given a great deal in many cases, and maybe have made the decision actually that teaching and coaching is not for me, and that is a good decision…It can change, and you know mould them in different ways.' (Volunteering module coordinator)

5.4.2 Graduates' employability

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey were also asked a number of questions about how volunteering had impacted on their skills, employability and learning, as shown in table 15.

Table 15: Impacts on graduate employability

Attribute	% Recent, younger graduates	% Recent, older graduates	% Earlier graduates
Skills developed are useful now	76.3	73.1	67.8
Helped make me ready for paid employment	54.7	41.2	44.3
Increase chance of finding employment in chosen field	46.0	31.5	29.4
Made contacts/networks that have proved useful	41.5	49.6	27.0
Benefit for academic study	34.2	48.3	21.1
Helped clarify career choice	33.8	34.0	21.9
Base **(All graduates who had volunteered at university)**	**3,705**		

NB. All differences are statistically significant as confirmed by chi-square

Table 16 shows that that it is younger, recent graduates who were most likely to identify that their volunteering had a positive impact on finding employment, while older recent graduates were less likely to recognise these benefits, as were earlier graduates. Thus the recent emphasis on employability seems to be more relevant for younger graduates. If this analysis is repeated for those currently in paid work, the percentage of young, recent graduates who endorsed volunteering as helping secure employment increases to 51 per cent.

Table 16: Benefits on employment

Type graduate	% volunteers reporting volunteering beneficial for finding employment[a]
Young recent graduate	40.3
Older recent graduate	20.9
Earlier graduate	27.3
Base (All graduates who had volunteered at university	**3,705**

[a] Results confirmed by chi-square test

In contrast more recent graduates were less likely to agree that their degree qualification had either helped them get a job or was a requirement of their job, as outlined below. Hence for the younger graduates other attributes, such as volunteering, appear to be more important.

Table 17: Volunteers reporting degree necessary for or contributed to their current job

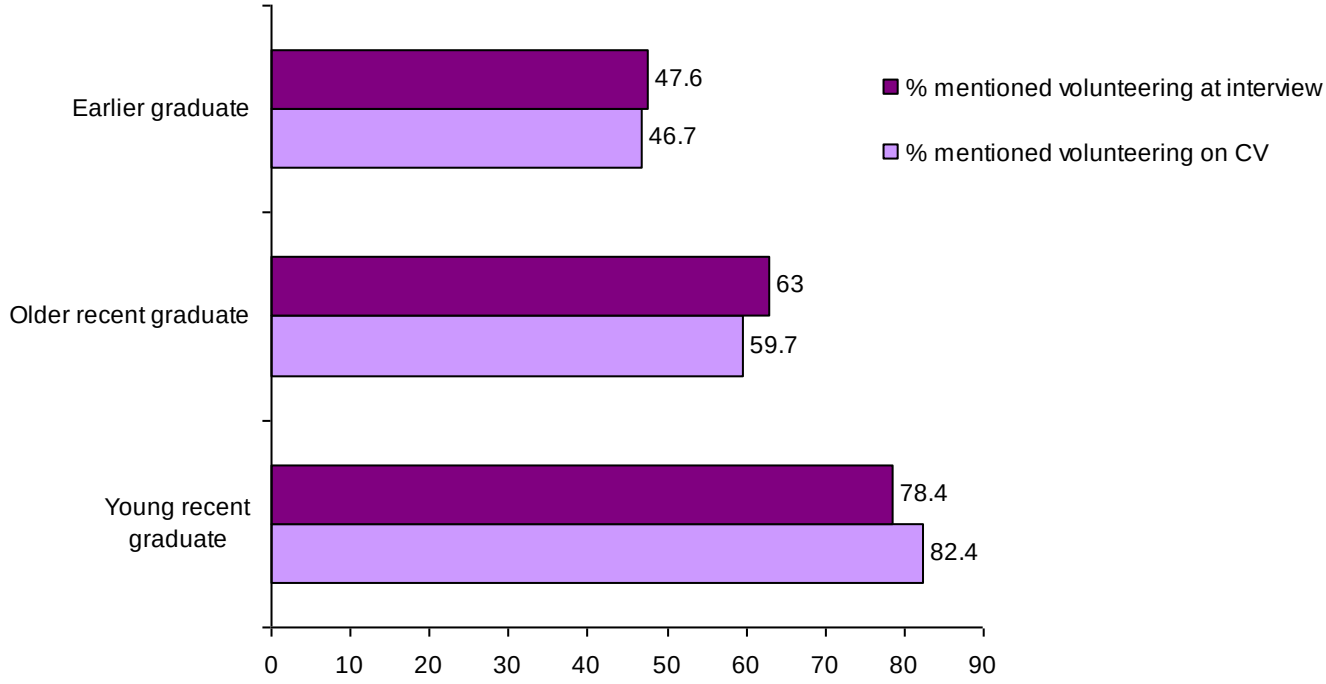
Type graduate	% volunteers reporting degree necessary for or contributed to their current job[a]
Young recent graduate	82.5
Older recent graduate	75.9
Earlier graduate	87.0
Base (All graduates who had volunteered at university)	**3,705**

[a] Results confirmed by chi-square test

In the above table we can see that it is older, recent graduates who were less likely to agree that their qualifications were important in finding employment, and this group were more ambivalent about the relevance of volunteering compared to younger students. To extend this analysis further, respondents were asked if they had included volunteering on the CV or had the opportunity to talk about it at interview, not surprisingly these were again more important for younger, recent graduates as chart 8 shows.

This analysis confirms anecdotal evidence that volunteering helps recent graduates without work-histories gain experience they can utilise when looking for work. Indeed volunteering is relatively more important for recent, younger graduates than their academic qualifications.

Chart 8: Mentioning volunteering on CVs and interviews



Base: 3,705 (All graduates who had volunteered at university)

As one graduate respondent noted:

> *'As a person, I probably got more out of the volunteering than I did from my undergraduate degree! Although I needed the degree too!'*

The value of volunteering is further confirmed by half (51 per cent) of recent graduates under 30 years old in paid work who endorsed volunteering as helping secure employment. As part of the Activities at University Alumni Survey, graduates also provided hundreds of specific examples of how volunteering had enabled them to gain specific work experience in fields such as teaching, journalism/media, charity work/fundraising/volunteer management, arts/music, international development, law, diplomacy/interpreting and sports coaching. Comments from alumni include:

'Volunteering at university made the world of difference to my experience of university. I enjoyed my volunteering so much that I would look forward to going each week. The experience has really helped and I have talked about it in several successful job interviews since then, often in situations where I would have had no examples to give if it weren't for volunteering.'
(Graduate, 2008)

'Whilst at university I was invited to become a Trustee of a charity (a position I still undertake). This position has developed a number of skills, for example giving me insight into governance and management which I think has allowed me to stand out and gain full-time paid employment in a field related to my degree at a time when the job market is incredibly competitive/difficult.'
(Graduate, 2009)

'I am starting the PGCE in Secondary English in September and a lot of my experience was based around the volunteering I was doing and continued to do. The experience has also enabled me to create links with local schools.'
(Graduate, 2010)

5.4.3 Feelings about university

Just over half of student volunteers (55 per cent) indicated that they felt more part of their university as a result of volunteering. When further analysed, this sense of increased belonging varied for different groups;; this was intensified for men, younger students, those studying at pre-1992 HEIs, students who move away to study and those who have at least one parent who has gone to university. Hence it is what we might call 'traditional' students who were more likely to increase their sense of feeling part of the university through volunteering. However, as other research has confirmed, this group are more likely to feel part of their university even if they do not volunteer (Holdsworth, 2006; Tett, 2000). Importantly, prior experience of volunteering helps students recognise the benefits of volunteering. Students who had not volunteered before coming to university were less likely to agree that volunteering whilst at university had changed their experience of being a student for the better.

Just under half of all volunteers (46 per cent) identified positive impacts from volunteering on their knowledge of their degree subject. Considering just 14 per cent of volunteers reported that their volunteering was connected with their university course this figure may seem high. However, 49 per cent were motivated by a desire to enhance the learning from their degree course, so this figure may suggest that

students' expectations about the value of volunteering for their degree are not being fully met. This may be connected with the lack of opportunities that exist for volunteers to reflect upon learning and set it in broader contexts. Table 17 shows that it is recent, older graduates (i.e. those who were mature students) who derived the greatest benefits from volunteering on knowledge of their degree subject compared to their younger peers or earlier graduates. Some graduates even reflected that volunteering had more of a negative than positive result on their degree results due to the amount of time that they put in, but that they believed the benefits of volunteering outweighed this.

> *'It really changed my experience of university too, turning me from a shy and under-confident undergrad in my first term, to someone who was a leader and really involved in university life by the end of my degree (unfortunately it also stopped me getting a 1st, but I would choose the volunteering experience over the 1st anytime).'* (Graduate, 2001)

> *'Volunteering overall gave me confidence in times when I felt things weren't going well with my degree and gave an additional sense of achievement, as well as allowing me to meet new people.'* (Graduate, 2008)

> *'Volunteering made me feel more included at the university. It gave me goals and a sense of achievement outside of my degree programme. It helped me develop skills in a way my degree did not.'* (Graduate, 2009)

However, the volunteering module coordinators we spoke to greatly valued volunteering, particularly structured, curriculum-related volunteering, as providing opportunities for experiential learning:

> *'Its deliberately designed to deliver experiential learning as a complement to classroom didactic teaching…so its out of the classroom, they get the control, they love that autonomy, that's brilliant learning in terms of professional skills, yeah, employability skills.'* (Volunteering module coordinator)

> *'I think because a structured environment enables the students to get more out of it …the common theme is, if I hadn't done this module, I wouldn't have done X, Y or Z, it just gave me the opportunity, or it pushed me, or it made it easy or me, or I just needed that bit of help to actually go and get my football qualification, and now I'm going to America to coach football. It's just that element of structure I think.'* (Volunteering module coordinator)

A further two questions asked volunteers about how volunteering has impacted on their experiences of being a student and if they would recommend it to a friend.

Students reported an overall positive effect, with 61 per cent agreeing that volunteering had changed their experience of being a student for the better (hardly anyone reported that it had changed for the worse) and 87 per cent reporting that they would recommend volunteering to their friends. Logistic regression analysis of these variables confirms that the following are more likely to recommend volunteering: women; university-supported community volunteers; those at pre-1992 HEIs; volunteers who score higher on employability and values dimensions; while disabled students and students who scored higher on the opportunity dimension were less likely to do so.

In terms of improving their experience of being at university, this echoes the finding discussed above, as it was increased for: men; undergraduates (as opposed to post-graduates); those at pre-1992 HEIs; students involved in other university activities; those who volunteer once a week or more and volunteers who scored higher on employability and values dimensions. In contrast, students who started volunteering at university (as opposed to prior to coming to university); those who scored high on the opportunities dimension; and students who have not moved away were less likely to agree that volunteering has changed their experience of being a student for the better. Thus overall it would appear that students' positive evaluation of volunteering is contingent mostly on the type of volunteering and overall engagement with university; though the differences by gender and mobility status are noteworthy.

5.5 Wider impact on communities

Summary

- Student volunteering can play an important role in developing students' community awareness and integration into communities outside the university.
- Volunteering can also encourage other forms of participation in local communities. Just over three-quarters of student volunteers (77 per cent) indicate that their understanding of other people had increased or increased greatly as a result of volunteering and 74 per cent experience a wider range of friendships.
- Students at post-1992 HEIs are more likely to report increased trust in organisations and other people through volunteering, compared to students at pre-1992 HEIs.
- Volunteering by students brings credibility to the university rhetoric on community engagement, and student volunteering can make a small, but positive contribution to dispelling wider concerns about large concentrations of students in particular neighbourhoods.
- Nearly half (48 per cent) of the volunteers who responded to the Student Activities Survey volunteer in communities without any support from the university.
- Volunteering at university enhances students' likelihood of volunteering in the future. A majority (67 per cent) of students think volunteering whilst at university has increased their willingness to volunteer in the future.
- This is confirmed by findings from the Activities at University Alumni Survey: 52 per cent of graduates who volunteered at university are currently volunteering, compared to 32 per cent of those who did not volunteer at university.

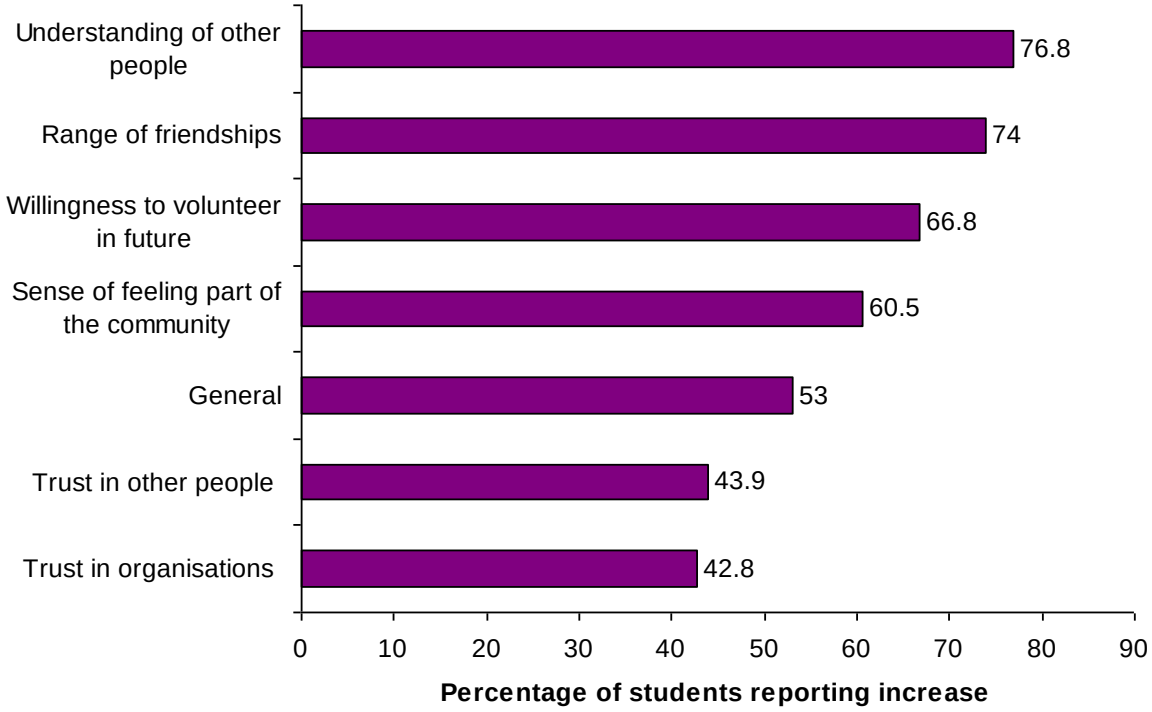
5.5.1 Developing community awareness

Student volunteering can play an important role in developing students' community awareness and also help them integrate into the local communities outside the university. This study reveals the informal help given by students to people in the

wider community as well as to other students (see section 2.2.2). Volunteering can also encourage other forms of participation in local communities. For example, when asked about membership of local groups, 14 per cent of all students responding to the Student Activities Survey indicated they were members of a community or neighbourhood group outside university, a percentage that rose to 17 per cent of all volunteers and 20 per cent of university-supported community volunteers.

We also asked a series of questions about how students' attitudes to the wider community had changed as a result of volunteering, as illustrated in chart 9. The findings indicate slightly less positive impacts than for the personal development or employability aspects of volunteering which are discussed above. However, just over three-quarters (77 per cent) indicated that their understanding of other people had increased or increased greatly as a result of volunteering and 74 per cent experienced a wider range of friendships. Overall, a small percentage of students experienced a decline in trust in organisations (8 per cent) and trust in other people (6 per cent) as a result of volunteering.

Chart 9: Impacts on students' relationship to community



Base: 1,942

Further analysis[13] of responses to these questions on communities shows that taking part in volunteering at least once a week increased students' awareness of all dimensions with the exception of trust in organisations. Interestingly, university-supported community volunteers had a high level of agreement with all of these questions, hinting at the important place of the university in helping students make sense of their experiences. In contrast, it is harder to identify the type of student most likely to feel a greater sense of belonging to their local community, though older students stand out in reporting a higher level of agreement with this question compared to younger students. Students at post-1992 HEIs were more likely to report increased trust in both organisations and people through volunteering, compared to students at pre-1992 institutions. Finally, both BME and non-UK students reported a higher level of agreement with all these questions, these finding confirms those reported elsewhere that these students have an overall more positive interpretation of their volunteering.

In interviews and mapping exercises students identified the chance to burst out of the student 'bubble' or what the Citizenship Survey describes as 'meaningful interaction', as one of the things they most value about volunteering. For many students, volunteering is the only chance they have to meet people from backgrounds that are different to their own. It can also be the only way of meeting people locally other than students or university staff. As students explained:

> *'I think it depends where you come from as well, because I come from Birmingham, I find [university] very isolating and I like to get out of the place as much as humanly possible, so I just go to town just to experience normal people! No offence to anyone here, but you know what I mean!'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'For me volunteering is also a way to know more about the city and the people from the local community – I know a lot more about [the county] as a whole from my conservation work with the university more than I would have known if I had not volunteered for the projects.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

> '*Volunteering with a project gives you a structure to interact with others who you wouldn't feel comfortable approaching otherwise, e.g. the homeless.'* (Student, volunteer, pre-1992 HEI)

[13] Comparisons of means tested using ANOVA.

As one of the barriers discussed above relates to 'getting started' volunteering in an unknown city, this finding illustrates that once involved, students do benefit greatly. The potential transformative effects of volunteering by university students should not be underestimated, although do not result automatically from involvement. Volunteering is a safe and constructive way to develop awareness of social issues and community problems. For example, students reported that volunteering had increased their awareness of issues such as unemployment, homelessness and disability and helped break down stereotypes they held about other people. As students mentioned:

> *'You meet all different people from different ages and backgrounds and stuff. It's changed my opinion about people who haven't been able to get jobs and stuff or who have disabilities and so can't get jobs. Its been really good socialising with people who I wouldn't have otherwise met.'* (Student, volunteer, pre 1992 HEI)

> *'Just going there has changed my opinion completely on homelessness. Before doing this project I knew like nothing, so yeah, my opinions have completely changed, I'm so glad I did it. I've managed to change a lot of my friends' opinions as well. We all know a lot more about it.'* (Student, volunteer, pre 1992 HEI).

> *'It made me more aware of how people felt, when they're abused or when they have disabilities, like how they might feel when people look at them funny or look at them for long periods of time.'* (Katie, pre-1992 HEI)

> *'I learnt that if you get a group of people together you can actually benefit your community.'* (Student, volunteer, post-1992 HEI).

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey were similarly asked questions about how their volunteering had impacted their sense of belonging both in the local communities and at university. The percentage of students in agreement is given in table 18 below, broken down by type of student. While with the employability and personal development impacts discussed above more recent, younger graduates were more likely to recognise the positive impact of volunteering, this relationship was different for feeling part of local community (with highest agreement among older, recent graduates) and sense of belonging at university, which was more evenly spread among the three groups.

Table 18: Impacts on graduates' relationship to community

Attribute	% Recent, younger graduates	% Recent, older graduates	% Earlier graduates
Sense of feeling part of local community	55.4	66.0	49.4
Sense of feeling part of university	76.0	66.0	72.0
Willingness to give unpaid help in future	63.6	60.9	53.6
Base (All graduates who had volunteered at university)	**3,705**		

NB All differences are statistically significant as confirmed by chi-square

Respondents to the Activities at University Alumni Survey suggested that volunteering had helped them to give back to communities and break out of what many described as the 'ivory tower' or 'university bubble'. Graduates valued the opportunities to learn about social and community problems as well as the chance to mix with people of different social-economic and ethnic backgrounds. All of these experiences had been of benefit in later lives. Several gave specific examples of ho

> *'I was anxious to get involved in the community as a whole so actively sought volunteer activities that were just 'town' or 'town and gown'. I volunteered for all four years I was at [university]. These experiences gave me a stronger sense of being part of a wider community and not just a student.'* (Graduate, 1984)
>
> .
>
> *'It increased my sense of community which I think is important for many students when they have moved away from home and their established networks as they have to build the foundations for new ones which can be done by volunteering.'* (Graduate, 2008)
>
> *'It helped me understand the importance of cultural identity for the well-being of immigrants. It helped me realise the importance of finding relevance/values in an alienated post-industrial world as well as the importance of community arts for social cohesiveness for positive and sustainable development.'* (Graduate, 1988)

Volunteer coordinators at universities and volunteer-involving organisations agreed that volunteering develops students' knowledge and understanding about the community local to their university and can help them integrate into the community.

Volunteering gives students the chance to get to know people and places outside the university setting and gain insights into other people's lives. As respondents commented:

> *'You get to understand more about the world, so you kind of get to become a bit more of a well rounded person, because you haven't spent your time at university just studying and drinking, or studying and going to societies or whatever, you've spent the time actually learning about the place that you lived in…I think volunteering helps you to develop who you are, a lot more than just doing your course.'* (Volunteer coordinator)

> '*I think we see that if we've got active volunteering of international students, that then gives them a sense of connection to the UK. And part of what they're coming to the UK is to connect, they don't come here just to be in their little ghettos of foreign students, and it's a way for them to connect.'*
> *(*Pro vice chancellor)

Interestingly, there was a strong feeling among volunteer coordinators that through volunteering students can experience different cultures without needing to travel or take part in expensive overseas volunteering. For instance:

> *'But the university sees that volunteering is one of the ways in which students can have an international experience, even if it's within their home country, even if it's around voluntary opportunities with different cultures and different organisations.'* (Volunteer coordinator)

> *'I think the action day that we had, we had some international students and stuff from that as well. And actually international students quite often are really keen to get involved in that sort of thing, because it means they get to find out a bit more about the place they're living in and stuff.'*
> (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

5.5.2 Improving university-community relations

The involvement of student volunteers can be important in strengthening relationships between universities and the local communities in which they are situated. A number of interviewees recognised that benefits accrue to universities since volunteering brings credibility to the university rhetoric on community engagement. Such ongoing relationships were valued both by university leaders and by staff in organisations in the local community. For example:

> *'So when I go and I talk to the local authorities for example, about what we do…I always say 'Did you know my students put in something like 25,000*

> *hours of volunteer effort into your schools every year?' That immediately gets them to understand the benefit of having us here, it helps their perception of the university as an asset, not as a source of problems.'* (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)

> *'I think it has a benefit to the university, it builds their reputation, because people see that the university is putting money into getting students involved in the area, rather than just getting money from students coming to the area, if you know what I mean?'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

Volunteering by students can moreover be a small, but positive contribution to dispelling wider concerns about large concentrations of students in particular neighbourhoods. Several of the university towns face the issue of 'studentification', in which student neighbourhoods attract crime and cause noise and litter and problems with parking. Comments included:

> *'I think it does have an effect because, especially sort of around the university areas, there's a lot of bad feeling towards students because people see them as coming in and sort of wrecking their home and stuff like that. So when they see they're actually getting involved in doing stuff, then they get to see the right, the nice side of what students can bring to the community.'* (Volunteer coordinator, community organisation)

> *'Old people have like this terrible stereotype of university students…. Yeah, but they don't realise that they go into charity shops, and then they don't realise that we had to do volunteering in the wider community.'* (Student, pre 1992 HEI)

Volunteering by students is routinely invoked at liaison sessions with the residents as a possible solution to some of these problems. For example, some universities have developed particular schemes to bring students together with other local residents such as litter-picking, food growing and gardening projects. Others have developed projects to limit the harmful impact of students such as collecting students' unwanted possessions at the end of the year to reuse, recycle and resell. Such projects can have mixed success because the mixing of students and other volunteers does not happen automatically. As the coordinator of one such scheme explained:

> *'At times like I am quite aware of it, and that sort of there'll be one group of people who will come along for like the Wednesday evening session, and they'll be doing their thing, and the students will just like not talk to them at all, and they'll just carry on like doing their things. And I'm always really conscious to kind of like get the two to make sure they're mixing. But sometimes like there is a bit of a kind of like student versus community feel*

> *and it's, I don't think it should be like that!'* (Volunteer coordinator, students' union)

Moreover, it is important to remember that an important proportion of student volunteers have not moved away from their local community to attend university. Indeed, nearly half (48 per cent) of the volunteers who responded to the Student Activities Survey were volunteering in communities without any support from the university. A further impact of student volunteers, particularly in work in schools or with young people relates to raising aspirations among local communities.

> *'I think it is, it can be, it can be, I'm not saying it is, but it can be aspiration raising on the part of some [school] students who tend to think of the university as being an ivory tower, behind which they'll never go. And they see students who are closer to their own age, who are approachable, very often you know the relationships with the pupils is better.'* (Volunteering module coordinator)

> *'They have had a privileged education, they should feel that this is something they, you know, that they want to give something back, and that's why quite a lot of our volunteering takes place with disadvantaged kids of one sort or another, in some cases you know explicitly involved in encouraging them to think about their, you know, to aspire as much as possible educationally, so that it becomes a virtuous circle.'* (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)

5.5.3 Students' propensity to volunteer in the future

Volunteering at university enhances students' likelihood of volunteering in the future. Students also volunteer more regularly and in roles requiring higher levels of responsibility than at university. Two-thirds (67 per cent) indicated that their willingness to volunteer in the future had increased as a result of volunteering at university. This is confirmed by findings from the Student Activities at University Alumni Survey. Not surprisingly graduates who volunteered at university were more likely to have volunteered since leaving university: 52 per cent of graduates who volunteered at university volunteered after university, compared to 32 per cent of those who did not volunteer at university. Moreover many graduate respondents suggested that a key impact of volunteering at university was instilling them with the desire to carry on. Earlier graduates described how they had developed a 'life-long' commitment to volunteering, causes and charitable organisations through

involvement at university. The theme of fulfilment and self-realisation comes out strongly from many of these responses. Comments included:

> *'Volunteering gave me greater self confidence and a far more fulfilling life outside of work. I still volunteer my time 15 years on.'* (Graduate, 1995)

> *'Definitely it made a lot of difference as this has shaped or moulded me with real international exposure. I was willing to learn and volunteering was the best way to interact and learn with people. Volunteering has become a part of my life today and it makes me complete.'* (Graduate, 2008)

> *'Volunteering is a central part of my life (now and then). I can not see myself not doing something for less fortunate people.'* (Graduate, 2008)

For graduates who had volunteered both at university and after leaving university, most agreed that the level of involvement in their current activities was more intense compared to their university volunteering: 43 per cent reported that their current volunteering activity takes up more time and 64 per cent that they have a higher level of responsibility now than previously. Students who explored this topic in interviews identified that they saw volunteering as part of their future. In particular volunteering had helped them make commitments to particular organisations or causes that they hoped to carry through to later life. However several students commented that they were unsure how to become involved in volunteering after leaving because the university volunteering service had made the experience so easy. Comments included:

> *'I would like to travel a lot more in the future and volunteering is one of the ways you can travel because you can probably see a community or a way of living and things like that.'* (Katie, pre 1992 HEI)

> *'I'm not really exposed to any volunteer information besides the uni. The Uni has lots of information but I'm not sure how I get information like this outside the uni.'* (Afrina, pre 1992 HEI)

Chapter Six: Conclusions and implications

6.1 Introduction

This report has presented the findings of a major study which confirms that students contribute significantly to university life and to the wider community through both formal and informal volunteering. These contributions should be celebrated and built upon. The study also uncovered a number of challenges faced by student volunteering. There is a tendency for some policy makers and practitioners to view student volunteering as an automatic 'win, win, win' – for students, for universities and for communities. However, the study shows that without adequate support, management and opportunities for reflection and placing volunteering in wider social context, student volunteering can fail to realise many of the potential benefits frequently attributed to it. At the most extreme there is the danger that such volunteering can perpetuate negative stereotypes of students; entrench students' views about social problems, social policy and the role of charity; and confirm a vision of universities as 'ivory towers' whose resources are inaccessible to local groups and communities. This final chapter highlights the implications of the study for practice and policy and suggests a number of avenues for further research.

6.2 Key conclusions

6.2.1 Strategic support for volunteering

The research shows the importance of continued strategic support for volunteering by university leaders. Senior members of university staff that we interviewed spoke eloquently in favour of supporting opportunities for students to volunteer, citing a wide range of reasons, including increasing employability, skills development, creating positive community-university relations, as well as providing opportunities for students to give something back. However, further development (or even continuity) is hampered by a lack of secure funding, a perceived lack of academic support, and the relatively low profile of volunteering services within universities and students' unions.

As the study shows, staff in volunteer-involving organisations place great value on higher education students as volunteers and will go to considerable lengths to recruit them. However, volunteer-involving organisations report challenges in working with universities, whose organisational structures they frequently find opaque and confusing. Volunteer coordinators can be frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of access to students and inconsistencies of approach between different academic departments or different HEIs. Volunteer-involving organisations feel that facilitating students' volunteering is an important way for universities to contribute to local communities and therefore should be prioritised. Universities are going some way to help these benefits be realised, but much more could be done through increased investment and strategic support.

6.2.2 Professional volunteer management

The research highlights a clear need for professional volunteer management in universities, with more consistent approaches to promoting and supporting volunteering. An important group of students are introduced to their first experience of volunteering through their university or students' union. The research reveals that university support is vital to give students better experiences of volunteering and to enable them to reflect upon the benefits that accrue through volunteering.

The research suggests that there are many more students involved in volunteering than their universities are aware of. A key group of students are the 48 per cent of volunteers who give their time to organisations in the community without any support from the university. These students demonstrate strong commitment to their local communities and are less likely to engage with activities on campus. We know they are more likely not to have moved away from home to university. However, the study reveals that these students might benefit from additional support.

In general, student volunteers feel less well managed than volunteers in the general population and this is a cause for concern. It may be that students have higher expectations of volunteering and volunteer-involving organisations compared to other groups of volunteers. Or it may be that volunteer-involving organisations face issues

with the availability and reliability of student volunteers that affect how they are managed and supported.

Overall, the management and support of students who volunteer is a key area for future research; in particular, exploration of the impacts of professional volunteer management in universities on students and the volunteering they undertake in communities.

6.2.3 Scope for expansion

This study identified high levels of volunteering among students, yet there remains some scope for expansion. In particular, there is strong demand from students for universities to help find volunteering opportunities connected with their academic course or future career. Volunteering is something students are able to dip in and out of and this flexibility is valued. However, those who volunteered at least once a week see greater benefits from involvement and report better experiences. Likewise, volunteer-involving organisations prefer regular, ongoing volunteering from students. Encouraging more regular commitment would enhance students' experiences and also improve the impacts on volunteer-involving organisations. On the whole, organisations are flexible in their approach to involving students and volunteer coordinators recognise that there are periods of the year when students are less available. Despite some concerns about the availability and reliability of student volunteers, they remain keen to involve greater numbers of higher education students.

In addition the research reveals a problem with high drop-out rates in volunteering between school and university. The study found that nearly half of the students who didn't volunteer whilst at university had been involved in volunteering previously. Students who stop volunteering during the transition to university do so not because they have had enough, but because they do not know how to get involved and because they feel less a part of the community. Addressing this drop-out is particularly important because the study has highlighted the importance of prior experience of volunteering in helping students get the most out of volunteering while at university. Students who volunteered before university were more regular

volunteers at university and more likely to feel that volunteering enhanced their experience of being a student.

This study confirms that students who volunteer are likely to be ‘busy’ students who are involved in other extra-curricular activities. However, this relationship merits further research.

6.2.4 Volunteering for the ‘right reasons’

The study confirms that enhancing employability is a major motivational factor for volunteering, but it is not the only one, and students seem to be tiring of an emphasis on volunteering solely for career development. Students value volunteering for enhancing employment skills in general rather than for more direct benefits such as making contacts, or clarity about future career. Students feel that volunteering for the ‘right reasons’ is important, and do not like to be told that they must volunteer. Indeed, the research shows that volunteering should not be promoted in isolation but that it is more likely to follow if students are encouraged to reflect on their role as members of the communities in which they are studying. This is an area for further research.

However the research also reveals that once students have graduated volunteering experiences can play a vital role in helping students find paid work. Our alumni survey confirmed that volunteering can provide experiences students can list on a CV and talk about in job interviews. Indeed, over half of graduates under thirty years old and in work believe volunteering helped them secure employment after university. For a student generation facing an increasingly competitive graduate jobs market, volunteering is perhaps more important than ever before.

6.2.5 Meaningful contributions

This research paints a picture of students who are keen to burst out of the ‘student bubble’ to make meaningful contributions to organisations and communities through volunteering. Students want to feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to communities and will select volunteering opportunities that enable them to see the

difference they make. They greatly value feedback from the clients and staff with whom they volunteer and have high expectations of volunteer management.

Volunteering whilst at university provides unique opportunities for students to develop social awareness and can instil a lifelong commitment to voluntary action. The research shows that students who volunteer are more likely to join other community organisations as well as to volunteer in the future. With support that is well developed, professional, and tailored to the needs of students and communities, volunteering can result in profound benefits for students themselves and for the wider communities in which they live and study.

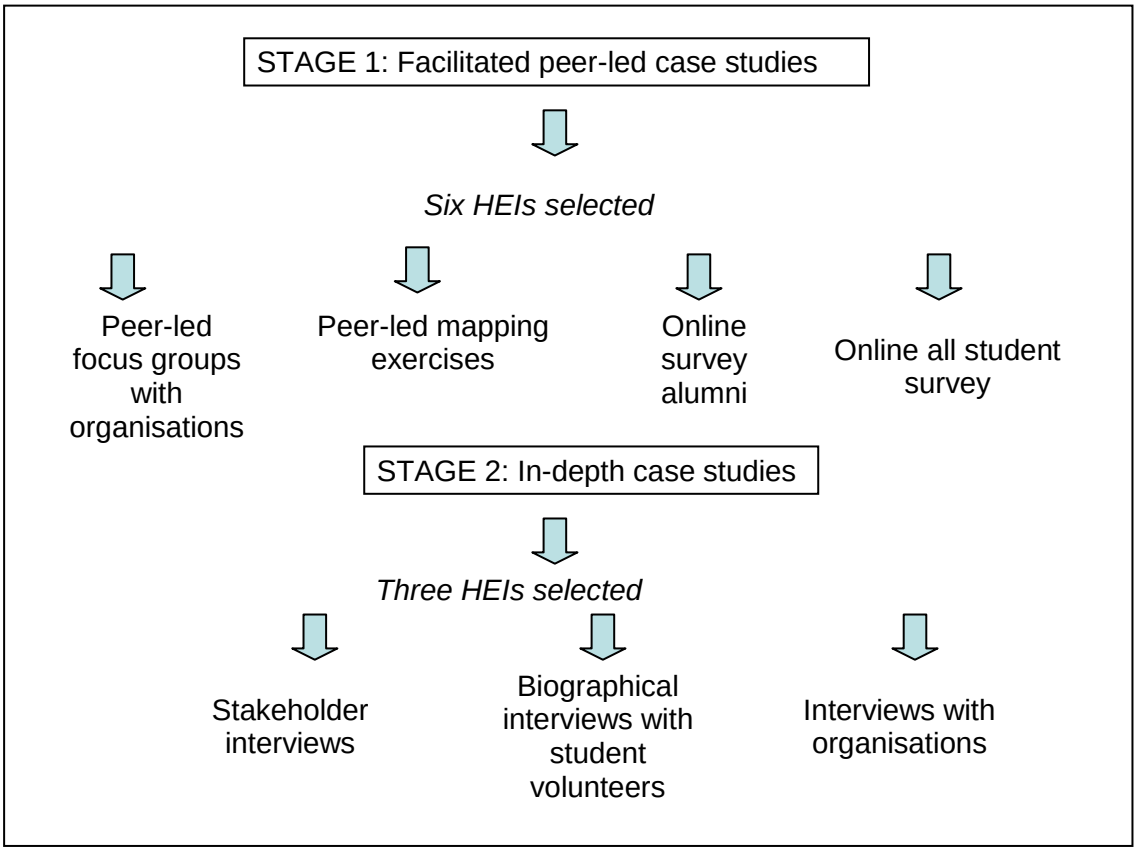
Appendix A: Technical report

1. Overview

The research presented in this report is based on case studies of six Higher Education Institutions: University of East London (UEL), University of Gloucestershire, Keele University, University of Leeds, University of Oxford and the University of the West of England (UWE). This diversity adds considerable weight to the findings presented here and allows us to generalise from the case study findings to the higher education sector as whole.

The research design incorporated two inter-related strands of work, namely facilitated peer-led case studies and in-depth case studies. Each strand included several individual research elements, outlined below.

Figure A1: Summary of methods



The research methodology was put before IVR's ethical review panel in February 2010. This mechanism, which is used to review all research projects carried out by IVR, is overseen by IVR's Institute Advisory Group. The group is an independent group of academics, policy makers and practitioners who oversee and guide the work of IVR. Clare Holdsworth also received consent from Keele University's ethics committee for her involvement with the project.

2. Selection of case studies

Six case study universities were selected in January 2010 from a pool of HEIs in England who had expressed interest and completed an application form. Case studies were selected to represent a spread of different types of university. The criteria included:

- At least one campus based HEI and one non-campus based;
- At least one pre-1992 and at least one post-1992 HEI;
- At least one Russell Group, one Million Plus and one University Alliance HEI;
- At least one with 'Volunteer centre' type function;
- At least one with careers service / employability type function;
- At least one with strong history of student volunteering, eg through SCA and at least one without such a tradition;
- A range of sizes, in terms of student population;
- At least one with a strong track record of recruiting non-traditional students;
- At least one HEI located in London.

Three of the six case studies (University of Leeds, UWE and Keele University) were selected to become in-depth case studies. This decision was approved at the steering group meeting in February.

3. Student Activities Survey

A central online survey was developed by the research team in consultation with NCCPE, **v**, the projecting steering group and staff members at the case study universities, and set up on survey monkey. The survey used tried and tested questions adapted from the Citizenship Survey, the National Survey of Volunteering

and Charitable Giving and the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit. The survey was piloted with 45 students from the six universities who were asked to complete the survey online and then give their feedback. The survey was revised accordingly. A link to the survey was sent out by staff at the six case studies in a number of ways. These methods included mailing contact databases, all student e-mails, posting on intranets and students' union message boards. The survey used a self-selected sample and is not therefore representative of all students across the six universities, although by calling it the 'Student Activities Survey' we tried to avoid attracting only those students with experience of or interest in volunteering. The online survey generated 3,083 valid responses (in total 3,747 started the survey). Valid respondents have been defined as all those who responded to the questions on volunteering and sex (as an indicator of completing most of the survey).

The breakdown by institution is given in table A1. HESA data for student enrolment for 2008-9[14] have been used to estimate response rates. The base population has been taken as all HE students, however in all institutions except for the University of East London, the proportion of postgraduates responding to the survey was much smaller than that for undergraduates, thus response rates vary by type of students.

[14] These data are taken from HESA's annual statistical reports, available at: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_datatables&Itemid=121&task=show_category&catdex=3#institution

Table A1: Student Activities Survey response rates by institution

University	Number of valid responses	HE Student Population 2008/09	Estimated Response Rate %
Leeds	634	32370	2.0
Oxford	321	23760	1.4
Gloucestershire	461	9255	5.0
UEL	493	26315	1.9
UWE	835	31645	2.6
Keele	339	10365	3.3
Total	**3083**	**133710**	**2.3**

Respondents are more likely to be women (68.7 per cent) compared to the UK student population (58.7 per cent according to 2008-09 HESA data); a bias that is common to surveys of students. There are also a higher proportion of non-white respondents (23.8 per cent in survey compared to 17.6 per cent in HESA returns), though this is explained by the higher response among non-UK domiciled students. Among UK domiciled students the proportion of non-white students is 16.1 per cent. As noted above, the proportion of postgraduates is smaller, with 14.6 per cent of respondents, compared to 25.3 per cent in HESA return. Modelling techniques, particularly logistic regression, have therefore been used to control for differentials in the sample characteristics.

Table A2: Student Activities Survey sample characteristic

Characteristic	% all sample
Female	68.7
Postgraduate	14.6
Overseas students	16.4
Non-white	23.8 (16.1 UK domicile)
% with parents of professional / managerial background	38.1 (22.2 missing)
Base (All respondents)	**3,083**

5. Activities at University Alumni Survey

A central online survey was developed by the research team in consultation with NCCPE, **v**, the projecting steering group and staff members at the case study universities. The survey was designed to be much shorter than the other survey in order to elicit a high response rate. A total of 5,242 valid responses were received across three universities (in total 6,291 started the survey). Valid respondents have been defined as all those who respondent to the questions on sex, age and year of leaving university (as an indicator of completing most of the survey). Respondents to the survey had left university between 1940 and 2010.

Table A3: Activities at University Alumni Survey response rates by institution

University	No. of valid responses	% of sample
Leeds	4359	83.2
Oxford	342	6.5
Keele	541	10.3

The survey was administered in different ways at different universities. At the University of Leeds alumni were mailed directly by the head of alumni relations in August 2010, resulting in over 5,000 responses. At the University of Oxford and Keele University a link to the surveys was included in alumni e-newsletters in September and October 2010 resulting in much lower response rates. No valid responses have been included for the three post-1992 universities.

Table A4: Activities at University Alumni Survey sample characteristics

Characteristic	% all sample
Sex	
Male	51.0
Female	49.0
Age	
19-29	36.3
30-39	24.4
40-49	15.9
50+	23.4
Year left university	
2005-10	37.0
1990-2004	34.4
1975-1989	16.7
Pre 1975	12.0
Nationality	
UK	73.1
EU	6.1
Other	20.7
Degree	
Undergraduate	68.3
Postgraduate	31.7
Base (All respondents)	**5,242**

6. Peer-researcher training

Each selected case study was invited to form a project team consisting of one or two staff members and up to six peer researchers (see Appendix C for an overview of each case study). Peer researchers were selected by different methods across each university, but in general this consisted of an application and selection process. Peer researchers came with a variety of motivations but most were keen to develop research skills and to take part in a 'real life' research project. See section 1.2 for a discussion of the rationale behind this methodology and reflections on the challenge and advantages of the method.

A project inception day was held in London in February and was attended by staff from all six universities with two or three of the selected peer researchers. The day provided an opportunity for case studies to learn more about the project, start thinking about the research process and to raise any concerns or issues. Concerns

focused around the practicalities of the research such as recruiting participants for sessions and ensuring high response rates for the student and alumni survey. In response to feedback received at the meeting the research team set up a jiscmail service to facilitate discussion between the case studies.

In March 2010 the research team held half-day training sessions with each peer research team. These sessions covered the theoretical and practical aspects of running focus groups and mapping sessions. At each session students and staff were encouraged to reflect on the process so far. A key difficulty throughout the project was the high dropout rate among peer researchers at some of the universities. In only two cases were the students who attended the February inception day the same as the students who attended the June analysis session.

Following the training the peer research teams were responsible for designing the research tools (such as focus group topic guides) for the peer research stage. Topic guides were reviewed and amended as appropriate by the research team. This involvement in the development of tools was important to allow peer researchers to shape the research and resulted in the development of useful questions and plans. The peer research teams planned and carried out their own focus groups, interviews and mapping sessions. The peer research teams were supported by phone, e-mail and visits from three researchers allocated to support them.

Table A5 shows the breakdown of peer-led fieldwork completed. In May and June 2010 the research team visited each case study university again to conduct an analysis day with the groups.

Table A5: Peer-researcher-led research

	Non-volunteers	**Volunteer mapping**	**Volunteer-involving organisations**
Keele	Focus group with 4 students	7 students over 2 mapping sessions	2 semi-structured interviews
UWE	4 students in focus group	10 students in one session	2 semi-structured interviews
Leeds	5 students in focus group	5 student volunteers, 4 peer researchers in one session	Focus group with 6 participants
UEL	7 students in focus group	Drop in session with 47 students; post mapping discussion 4 participants (2 students; 2 staff)	Joint interview with 2 community organisations
Oxford	5 students (plus 4 peer researchers) in focus group	8 students in one session, split into 3 groups	Focus group with 4 participants
Gloucestershire	5 students in focus group	3 student volunteers	Interview with 2 community organisations

7. In-depth case studies

Volunteer-involving organisations

In total, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with volunteer-involving organisations across the three case studies. They ranged from small schemes run by a single volunteer to large public institutions. In-between was a broad spectrum of voluntary and community organisations. Some were linked to national networks while others had a more local or regional focus. All recruited students from nearby HE and FE institutions. Staffordshire organisations received students from Keele and Staffordshire Universities, local colleges (and occasionally universities in Manchester and Leicester); Leeds organisations from Leeds University, Leeds Metropolitan University and Trinity and All Saints University (and occasionally from Huddersfield University); Bristol/Bath and North East Somerset-based organisations from Bristol University and the University of the West of England.

Stakeholder interviews

In total 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders across the three in-depth case studies. These included academics with responsibility for curriculum-related volunteering programmes, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and volunteering staff based in students' unions and university support services.

Student interviews

Twelve biographical interviews were undertaken with students in the three in-depth case studies to enable in-depth exploration of volunteering stories and experiences. Students were mainly recruited through the volunteering services at the three universities, that is to say they had signed up to a mailing list run by the university or students' union or had found volunteering opportunities through the university. The interview methodology used a biographical narrative approach which involved asking one question at the beginning to elicit the interviewee's volunteering story. This approach allowed the research team to explore routes, experiences and impacts of volunteering. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The interviews were fully transcribed and analysed.

Student Activities Survey

1. Which university do you currently attend?

University of Leeds
University of Oxford
University of Gloucestershire
University of East London
University of the West of England
Keele University

2. Which college are you a member of?

All Souls College
Balliol College
Blackfriars
Brasenose College
Campion Hall
Christ Church
Corpus Christi College
Exeter College
Green Templeton College
Harris Manchester College
Hertford College
Jesus College
Keble College
Kellogg College
Lady Margaret Hall
Linacre College
Lincoln College
Magdalen College
Mansfield College
Merton College
New College
Nuffield College
Oriel College
Pembroke College
The Queen's College
Regent's Park College
St Anne's College
St Antony's College
St Benet's Hall
St Catherine's College
St Cross College
St Edmund Hall
St Hilda's College
St Hugh's College
St John's College
St Peter's College
St Stephen's House
Somerville College
Trinity College
University College
Wadham College
Wolfson College
Worcester College
Wycliffe Hall

3. Which of the following are you enrolled on?
Foundation degree
Three year undergraduate degree
Four year undergraduate degree (including sandwich degrees)
Undergraduate degree lasting more than four years
HND
DipHE
Postgraduate taught degree
Postgraduate research degree
Other

4. What is your registration status?
Full time student
Part time student
Distance learner

5. Which subject area is your degree in? If you are doing a joint honours degree please give the subject area that is closest to your combination of subjects or choose 'interdisciplinary' subjects.
Medicine and Dentistry
Subjects allied to medicine (including psychology)
Biological Sciences
Veterinary Sciences
Agriculture and related subjects
Physical Sciences
Mathematics and Computing
Engineering and technology
Architecture, building and planning
Social sciences (including politics, geography and economics)

Law
Business and administration
Mass communication and documentation
Languages (including English)
Historical, religious and philosophical studies
Creative arts, music and design
Education
'Interdisciplinary' subjects

6. Year of study on current course:
1st year
2nd year
3rd year
4th year
5th year or above

7. In the 2009-2010 academic year, which of the following applies to you during term time?
I live at home with my family or partner
I live at home on my own
I live in a student hall of residence
I live in university-owned self-catering accommodation with other students
I live in other rented self-catering accommodation
I live in rented accommodation where at least some meals are provided
Other (please specify)

8. Which of the following applies to you?
I have moved away from my family home to attend university
I am studying in the same locality as my family (e.g. same town) and have moved out of my family home
I am studying in the same locality as my family (e.g.same town) and continue to live in my family home
I have stayed in my family home and commute to study in a different locality on a daily basis
Other

9. During this academic year (2009/10) have you done or are you planning to do any paid work?
Yes, during vacations and term time
Yes, during vacations only
Yes, during term time only
No

10. Have you taken a gap year? (This may have been a period off between school and university or a gap out of paid work)
Yes
No

11. If yes, what did you do during your gap year? Please tick all that apply.
Paid work in your home country
Paid work outside of your home country
Travel
Education or training
Volunteering in your home country
Volunteering outside of your home country
Other

12. Thinking about the time since you started at this university, which of the following best describes any groups, clubs or organisations you've taken part in, supported or helped?

Please tick ALL that apply and indicate whether this involvement happens at university or outside of university.

	Happens at my university	Happens outside my university
Sports or exercise (e.g. taking part, coaching or going to watch)		
Creative hobbies (e.g. music, drama, photography, debating, book club, journalism)		
Subject or departmental society (e.g. geographical society, history group or maths group)		
Religion or belief (e.g. church, mosque, religious society)		
Politics (e.g. political party, political society)		
Students' Union (e.g. elected officer, course representative, union committee)		
Environment or animals		
Education (for adults or children)		
Youth/children's activities (outside of education)		
Health, disability or social welfare		
Safety or first aid		
Justice or human rights		
Societies based on culture, nationality or language		
Local community or neighbourhood groups		
The elderly		
Citizens' groups		

13. Since starting university, have you given any unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations? This includes volunteering. Please tick the activities which apply below.

Raising money or taking part in sponsored events (including RAG)
Leading a group or being a member of a committee (e.g. student clubs or societies)
Organising or helping to run an activity or event
Visiting people, or providing care or support
Teaching, tutoring or helping with reading or other skills

Befriending or mentoring people
Giving advice, information or counselling
Secretarial, administrative or office work
Providing transport or driving
Coaching or refereeing sports
Other practical help (such as environmental work, gardening, decorating)
Representing
Campaigning
Conducting research
Other
I've not given any unpaid help

14. When do you give unpaid help/volunteer?
Term time only
Out of term time only
All year round

15. How often do you give unpaid help/volunteer?
At least once a week
At least once a month
Less than once a month
Don't know

16. Who would you say primarily benefits from the unpaid help/volunteering you offer?
Other students (e.g. through a student society, Students' Union)
The wider community (e.g. groups, clubs or organisations or people not connected with the university)
Both

17. When did you FIRST get involved with giving unpaid help/volunteering?
Since I've been a student at this university
Whilst studying at a different university
Whist studying at primary/secondary school, sixth form or college
As part of my gap year
Other

18. How did you find out about this activity? Please tick all that apply.
Through my primary/secondary school, sixth form or college
Through my university or Students' Union
Through friends or family
Through a youth organisation
Through a **v**involved team
Through a religious organisation (such as your church or mosque)
Through my employer
Through a volunteer centre
Through internet searching
I contacted an organisation directly
Other

19. Can you indicate which of the following were important to you as reasons for starting giving unpaid help/volunteering?

	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Not very important	Not at all important
Improving things/helping people					
Meeting new people/making friends					

Developing skills					
Gaining work experience / developing my CV					
The fact that my friends/family were volunteering					
To enhance learning from my university course					
My religious beliefs					
My personal values					
Feeling there was no-one else to do it					
The chance to gain an award, certificate or accreditation					
Wanting to fill spare time					
It was part of my university course					
I was asked					

20. Thinking about your involvement in unpaid helping/volunteering activities whilst at university, can you say whether you think the following have increased, decreased or stayed the same?

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly
My communication skills					
My ability to work as part of a team					
My ability to make decisions					
My willingness to try new things					
My ability to lead or encourage others					

My confidence in my own abilities					
My organisational skills					
My self-discipline or motivation					
My knowledge of my degree subject					

21. Please indicate how far you think the following have increased, decreased or stayed the same as a result of giving unpaid help/volunteering whilst at university.

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly
My sense of feeling part of the university					
My understanding of other people					
My sense of feeling part of my local community					
My range of friendships					
My trust in other people					
My trust in organisations					
My general wellbeing					
My willingness to give unpaid help/volunteer in the future					

22. Now, please tell us how far you think the following have increased, decreased or stayed the same as a result of giving unpaid help/volunteering whilst at university.

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly
My readiness for paid employment					

The skills I have that potential employers will value					
My clarity about what I want to do as a career					
My chance of gaining employment in my chosen field					
Contacts/networks that will be useful when looking for employment					

23. Have you received any support for your involvement in giving unpaid help/ volunteering through your university?
Yes
No

24. If yes, where did that support come from? Please tick all that apply.
Students' Union
Student Community Action group, RAG society or Student Hub
Student Volunteering Service run by University or Union
Careers service or employability department
University chaplaincy
Lecturers or tutors
Other
Not applicable

25. Thinking about your experience of volunteering or giving unpaid help as a student, please indicate how far you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
I'm given the opportunity to do the sort of things I'd like to do					
I get bored or lose interest in my involvement					
I can cope with the things I'm asked to do					
I feel things could be better organised					
My help is not really needed					

The organisation has reasonable expectations in terms of workload					
My efforts are appreciated					
I am given the opportunity to influence the development of the organisation					
My skills or experience aren't fully utilised					
I find myself out of pocket and/or do not know how to claim expenses					

26. Would you say giving unpaid help/volunteering has changed your experience of being a student at your university?
Yes, changed it for the better
Yes, changed it for the worse
No change
Not sure

27. Would you recommend giving unpaid help/volunteering to your friends?
Yes
No
Not sure

28. Have you been involved in giving any unpaid help/volunteering during the current academic year (2009/10)?
Yes
No

29. What are the main reasons that you stopped giving unpaid help/volunteering? Please tick all that apply.
I completed the university course or module
I felt my efforts weren't always appreciated
I found myself out of pocket
I didn't get asked to do the things I'd like to
I felt the organisation was badly organised
I'd achieved the award or certificate I set out to
Not enough time-due to pressures of study
Not enough time-due to involvement with other clubs, sports or societies
Not enough time-due to paid work
Not enough time-due to family commitments
I lost interest
I'd done enough already
Other (please specify)

30. Would you consider giving unpaid help/volunteering again in the future?

Yes
No
Not sure

31. What could the university or Students' Union do to encourage you to give unpaid help/volunteer in the future? Please tick all that apply.
Offer more one-off volunteering opportunities
Offer opportunities to gain recognition/awards for volunteering
Offer help for me to set up a student-led project
Increase publicity/awareness of volunteering on campus and/or online
Offer more social events/networking with other students who volunteer
Offer more varied placements with organisations
Link volunteering to my academic subject/career
Offer more training programmes
Nothing
Other (please specify)

32. Before you started at this university did you give any unpaid help to any groups, clubs and organisations? This includes volunteering. Please tick the activities which apply below.
Raising money or taking part in sponsored events
Leading a group or a member of a committee
Organising or helping to run an activity or event
Visiting people
Teaching, tutoring or coaching
Befriending or mentoring people
Giving advice, information or counselling
Secretarial, admin or office work
Providing transport or driving
Representing
Campaigning
Other practical help
Any other help
I didn't give unpaid help

33. Before starting at this university, how often did you give unpaid help/ volunteer?
At least once a week
At least once a month
Less than once a month
Don't know

34. Thinking of the main reasons that you haven't taken part in giving unpaid help/volunteering whilst studying at this university, can you indicate how important the following reasons have been?

Very important Important Not sure Not very important Not at all important

Not enough time-due to pressures of study
Not enough time-due to involvement with other clubs, sports, societies
Not enough time-due to paid work
Not enough time-due to family commitments
I think I've done my fair share of volunteering for the time being
I've lost interest
My family/friends aren't involved
Negative experiences in the past
I'm not sure how to get involved
I'd achieved the award or certificate I set out to
I don't know what I could offer
I don't feel part of the community here
I have an illness or disability that I feel prevents me from getting involved

35. Have you ever considered giving unpaid help/volunteering?
Yes, but I don't really think it is for me
No, I've never really thought about it before
No, I haven't considered it but I might be interested
I'm not sure

36. Are there any reasons that have put you off volunteering/giving unpaid help? Please tick all that apply.
Not enough time-due to pressures of study
Not enough time-due to involvement with other clubs, sports, societies
Not enough time-due to paid work
Not enough time-due to family commitments
My friends/family aren't involved
I'm not sure how to get involved
I just don't want to volunteer
I don't feel part of the community
I don't know what I could offer
Language barriers
I don't think I can afford to volunteer
I have a disability or health problems that I feel prevent me from getting involved
Other (please specify)

37. Is there anything the university or Students' Union could do that might encourage you to volunteer/give unpaid help? Please tick all that apply.
Provide introductory volunteering or 'taster' sessions
Offer more one-off volunteering opportunities
Offer opportunities to gain recognition/awards for volunteering
Offer help for me to set up a student-led project
Increase publicity/awareness of volunteering on campus and/or online
Offer more social events/networking with other students who volunteer
Offer more varied placements with organisations
Link volunteering to my academic subject/career
Offer more training programmes
Nothing
Other (please specify)

38. Now, think about any unpaid help you may have given as an individual since starting university (i.e. not through a group, club or organisation). This could be help for a friend, neighbour or someone else but NOT a relative.

	For another student	For someone not attending my university	Not applicable
Practical help (e.g. doing shopping, gardening, decorating, babysitting, feeding a pet etc)			
Visiting someone who has difficulty getting out and about			
Writing letters, filling in forms or representing someone (e.g. speaking to the council on their behalf)			

Now, we'd like to ask a few final questions about your personal details. This information will be really important in helping understand your answers to the previous questions. These will be entirely confidential. Please provide the following details:

39. What is your gender?
Male
Female

40. What was your age in years on 1st January 2010? Please write the number in the box.

41. Are you:
UK Citizen
Citizen of European Union (EXCLUDING UK)
Citizen of country outside of the European Union
If you are NOT a UK citizen, please indicate which country you are a citizen of?

42. How would you describe your ethnic origin? (please tick the appropriate box):

White (English)
White (Scottish)
White (Irish)
White (Welsh)
White (other White background)
Asian or Asian British (Indian)
Asian or Asian British (Pakistani)
Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi)
Other Asian background
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean)
Mixed (White and Black African)
Mixed (White and Asian)
Other mixed background
Black or Black British (Caribbean)
Black or Black British (African)
Other Black background
Chinese
Other ethnic group

43. Do you consider yourself to have some form of disability?
Yes
No
Prefer not to say

44. Which of the following, if any, apply to you?
I have a child/ children aged under 18 for whom I am responsible living with me some or all of the time
I have adult dependent(s) living with me some or all of the time
I have adult dependents(s) who do not live with me
None of these

45. Which of the following most accurately describes your FATHER'S or guardian's current economic status?

In paid employment
Unemployed and looking for work
Not in paid employment and not looking for work (e.g. providing a caring role at home)
Not in paid employment due to ill health
Retired from paid employment
Student
Not applicable/ Don't know

Other (please specify)
In paid employment
Unemployed and looking for work
Not in paid employment and not looking for work (e.g. providing a caring role at home)
Not in paid employment due to ill health
Retired from paid employment
Student
Not applicable /Don't know
Other (please specify)

46. What is his current or most recent job? Please write your answer in the box:

47. Which of the following most accurately describes your MOTHER'S or guardian's current economic status?

In paid employment
Unemployed and looking for work
Not in paid employment and not looking for work (e.g. providing a caring role at home)
Not in paid employment due to ill health
Retired from paid employment
Student
Not applicable/ Don't know
Other (please specify)
In paid employment
Unemployed and looking for work
Not in paid employment and not looking for work (e.g. providing a caring role at home)
Not in paid employment due to ill health
Retired from paid employment
Student
Not applicable/ Don't know
Other (please specify)

48. What is her current or most recent job? Please write your answer in the box:

49. Which members of your family have attended university? Please tick all that apply.
Mother
Father
Brother/s and sister/s
Grandmother
Grandfather
None/ Don't know

50. Which of these best describes your sexual orientation? Please note this question is included for monitoring purposes only.
Bisexual
Gay
Lesbian
Straight
Other
Prefer not to say

Activities at University Alumni Survey

[Please note not all students answered all these questions owing to routing]

1. You will have received this survey through an alumni mailing, please indicate which of these universities this relates to.
UWE
Leeds
Oxford
UEL
Keele
Gloucestershire

2. What year did you leave this university? Please write in a figure, for example 2006.

3. What level did you study at this university?

Foundation degree
Undergraduate degree (BA, BSc etc.)
HND
Postgraduate diploma or certificate (including PGCE)
Postgraduate taught degree (MA, MSc etc.)
Postgraduate research degree (PhD, DPhil, MPhil etc.)
Other (please specify)

4. Which of these BEST describes what you are doing now (October 2010)? Please tick one only.

I am employed full-time in paid work
I am employed part-time in paid work
I am self-employed/freelance
I am doing voluntary work/other unpaid work
I am permanently unable to work/retired
I am temporarily sick or unable to work
I am looking after the home or family
I am taking time out in order to travel
I am due to start a job within the next few months
I am unemployed and looking for employment, further study or training
I am not employed but NOT looking for employment, further study or training
I am doing something else

5. Which of these following categories BEST represents the area in which you are currently employed?
Marketing, sales or advertising
Commerical, industrial or public sector
Scientific research, analysis or development
Engineering
Health
Education
Charity or development Work
Business or finanical
Information Technology
Arts, design, culture, media and sports
Legal
Social or welfare
Retail or catering
Other

6. Are you currently (October 2010) involved in either full-time or part-time study or training, or registered as a research student?

Yes, full-time
Yes, part-time
No

7. Thinking back to when you were a student at university, did you give any unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations? This includes volunteering. Please tick the activities which apply below.

Raising money or taking part in sponsored events (including RAG)
Leading a group or being a member of a committee (e.g. student clubs or societies)
Organising or helping to run an activity or event
Visiting people, or providing care or support
Teaching, tutoring or helping with reading or other skills
Befriending or mentoring people
Giving advice, information or counselling
Secretarial, administrative or office work
Providing transport or driving
Coaching or refereeing sports
Other practical help (such as environmental work, gardening, decorating)
Representing
Campaigning
Conducting research
Other
I did not give any unpaid help

8. Are you currently engaged in giving unpaid help / volunteering with any groups, clubs or organisations?
Yes
No

9. Have you ever considered giving unpaid help / volunteering?
Yes, but I don't really think it is for me
No, I have never really thought about it before
No, I haven't considered it but I might be interested
I'm not sure

10. Are there any reasons that put you off giving unpaid help / volunteering whilst you were at university?
I had no interest in volunteering
I had tried it in the past and didn't like it
I felt specific barriers prevented me from volunteering (e.g. lack of time, accessibility issues)
None of my friends/family were involved
I wasn't sure how to get involved
I didn't feel part of the university
I wasn't aware of volunteering, it wasn't on my radar
I didn't know what I could offer
I didn't feel part of the community
Other (please specify)

11. Is there anything that your university or students' union could have done that might have encouraged you to volunteer / give unpaid help? Nothing
Provided introductory volunteering or 'taster' sessions
Increased publicity/awareness of volunteering on campus and/or online
Offered more one-off volunteering opportunities
Offered opportunities to gain recognition/awards for volunteering
Offered help for me to set up a student-led project
Offered more training programmes
Linked volunteering to my academic subject/career
Offered more varied placements with organisations

12. Were there any reasons that put you off volunteering/giving unpaid help whilst at university? Please tick all that apply.

Not enough time - due to pressures of study
Not enough time - due to involvement with other clubs, sports or societies
Not enough time - due to paid work
Not enough time - due to family commitments
My friends/family weren't involved
I wasn't sure how to get involved
I just didn't want to volunteer
I didn't feel part of the university
I didn't feel part of the community
I didn't know what I could offer
Language barriers
I didn't think I could afford to volunteer
I have/had a disability or health problems that I felt prevented me from getting involved
Other

14. How often did you give unpaid help/volunteer whilst at university?
At least once a week
At least once a month
Less than once a month
Don't know

15. Who would you say primarily benefited from the unpaid help/volunteering you offered at university ?
Other students (e.g. through a student society, Students' Union)
The wider community (e.g. groups, clubs or organisations or people not connected with the university)
Both

16. Can you say whether you think the following increased, decreased or stayed the same due to your involvement in unpaid help/volunteering activities whilst at university?

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly
My ability to lead or encourage others					
My confidence in my abilities					
My willingness to try new things					
My self-discipline or motivation					
My knowledge of my degree subject					
My sense of feeling part of my local community					
My sense of feeling part of the university					
My willingness to give					

unpaid help/volunteer in the future					

17. Thinking about the unpaid help or volunteering that you gave at university would you say that:

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
It helped make me ready for paid employment					
The skills I developed as a volunteer are useful in my life now					
It helped clarify what I wanted to do as a career					
I made contacts/networks that have proved useful					
It had benefits for my academic studies					
It increased my chance of gaining employment in my chosen field					

18. Are you currently in paid employment?
Yes
No

19. Would you have been able to get your current job without the qualification you gained from university?
Yes (i.e. the qualification made no difference)
Possibly (i.e. the qualification gave me an advantage)
No (i.e. the qualification was a formal requirement/expected)
Don't know

20. Would you have been able to get the job you are doing now without the skills, experiences or contacts gained through giving unpaid help/volunteering while a student?
Yes (i.e. volunteering made no difference)
Possibly (i.e. volunteering gave me an advantage)
Probably not (i.e. volunteering was really important)
Don't know

21. Have you or will you mention your unpaid help or volunteering role on your CV and/or application forms?
Yes

No
Not applicable

22. Have you or will you talk about giving unpaid help or volunteering in an interview?
Yes
No
Not applicable

23. Please add any examples you may have of how volunteering / giving unpaid help while at university made a difference to you:

24. Are you currently engaged in giving unpaid help to / volunteering with any groups, clubs or organisations? This includes volunteering.

25. Thinking of the main reasons that you are not giving unpaid help/volunteering, can you indicate how important the following reasons are?

	Very important	Important	Not sure	Not important	Not at all important
Not enough time-due to pressures of study/work					
Not enough time-due to family commitments					
I think I've done my fair share of volunteering for the time being					
I've lost interest					
My friends/family aren't involved					
Negative experiences in the past					
I'm not sure how to get involved					
I don't know what I could offer					
I don't feel part of the community where I live					
I have an illness or disability that I feel prevents me from getting involved					

25. Are you currently volunteering
Yes
No

26. Please tick the activities which apply below:
Raising money or taking part in sponsored events
Leading a group or being a member of a committee
Organising or helping to run an activity or event
Visiting people, or providing care or support
Teaching, tutoring or helping with reading or other skills
Befriending or mentoring people
Giving advice, information or counselling
Secretarial, administrative or office work
Providing transport or driving
Coaching or refereeing sports
Other practical help (such as environmental work, gardening, decorating)
Representing
Campaigning
Conducting research
Other

27. Would you say that the volunteering/unpaid help you are currently involved in:
Occupies more of your time than it did at university
Occupies about the same amount of time as at university
Occupies less of your time than it did at university
Cannot compare

28. Would you say that the volunteering/unpaid help that you are currently involved in:
Involves a higher level of responsibility than at university
Involves a lower level of responsibility than at university
Involves the same level of responsibility as at university
Cannot compare

29. What is your gender?
Male
Female

30. What was your age in years on 1st January 2010? Please write a number in the box (e.g. figures such as 25 or 34)

31. Are you:
UK citizen
Citizen of European Union (excluding UK)
Citizen of country outside of European Union

Appendix B: Additional tables

Table B1: Characteristics of volunteers

Characteristics	% of students who volunteer	% of students in survey	Characteristics	%of students who volunteer	% of students in survey
Gender			Mobility		
Male	61.6	31.3	Moved away for uni	64.3	70.8
Female	63.6	68.7	Studying at same locality – not living with parents	57.5	4.3
Age			Studying at same locality – living with parents	57.9	11.3
Under 25	63.5	76.8	Commuting to study outside of locality and living at home	59.7	7.3
25 and over	62.1	21.1	Other	65.0	5.9
Parental Occupation			University		
At least one parent with managerial or prof occ.	65.1	47.5	Leeds	68.6	20.3
No parent with managerial or prof occ	60.2	36.6	Oxford	80.4	10.4
Missing/not stated	63.2	15.9	Gloucs	67.2	15.0
Parental experience of HE			UEL	57.4	16.0
At least one parent at HE	69.0	46.1	UWE	52.6	27.1
No parent at HE	61.1	53.3	Keele	64.0	11.0
Ethnic Group			Subject Studied		
White	63.2	76.2	Medicine & Dentistry	72.3	4.6
Asian	60.7	11.5	Subjects allied to Medicine	60.7	10.0
Black	63.1	6.4	Biology, Vet Sci, Agr & related	62.4	5.8
Other/Missing	64.1	5.9	Physical Sciences	66.7	5.0
Dependents			Mathematical & Comp Sci	54.1	3.2
No dependents	62.8	87.2	Engineering, Technologies	57.5	4.1
Has dependents	64.3	12.8	Architecture, Build & Plan	47.9	2.4
Disability			Social Studies	63.8	14.4
No disability	62.2	82.0	Law	66.9	4.9
Disability disclosed	74.3	18.0	Business & Admin studies	54.1	11.4
Work			Languages	73.3	6.1
Work during term and vacation	63.9	41.3	Hist & Philosophical studies	72.0	3.8
Work vacation only	64.5	31.8	Creative Arts & Design	59.3	6.3
Work term only	64.1	4.2	Education	63.8	7.1
No work	58.8	22.6	Interdisciplinary subjects	65.4	10.6
Sexuality			Year of Study		
Straight	62.9	85.2	First year	52.6	42.3
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	65.1	6.3	Second year	69.6	28.0
Other/not stated	62.7	8.4	Third year	69.5	23.3
Gap Year			Fourth year plus	78.5	6.2
No gap year	62.9	68.7	Member of org/society		
Gap year	63.7	31.3	Sports club	67.3	66.4
Nationality			Community organisation	75.2	55.4
UK Domicile	64.1	82.0	Religious society	68.3	46.7
Non UK Domiciled student	58.0	18.0	University/SU society	70.6	31.7
Status			Cultural Society	68.9	60.5
Full-time student	62.8	93.5	University-based activity	69.2	72.9
Part-time student	64.3	4.5	Non-university based activity	69.1	66.6
Distance learner	64.7	1.1			
Type of Student					
Undergraduate	63.6	79.3			
Postgraduate	62.6	14.6			
Other	56.1	6.1			
All Students	**63.0**	**N=3083**			

Logistic Regression Tables

Table B2 Models to predict forms of volunteering

Variable	Model 1: Predicting being a volunteer in general	Model 2: Predicting being a university-supported community volunteer	Model 3: Predicting being a not-supported community volunteer
Female[a]	1.156*	1.455**	1.124
Age 25 and over[a]	1.170	1.053	1.136
Post-1992 HEI[a]	0.567**	0.878	0.773**
Subject: Ref Medicine			
Science (not medicine)	0.788*	1.302	0.564**
Humanities/Social Science	1.088	1.487**	0.792**
Year of study – not First year[a]	2.286**	1.623**	1.188**
Type of Student Ref: Undergrad			
Postgraduate	1.419**	1.050	1.054
Other	0.942	0.864	1.043
Parental Occupation Ref managerial and Prof			
No parent with managerial or professional occupation	0.995	1.023	1.091
Missing/not stated	1.097	0.821	1.048
No parent at HE[a]	0.859*	0.908	0.885
Has dependents[a]	1.406**	1.132	1.330**
Disability disclosed[a]	1.904**	1.188	1.413**
Ethnic Minority[a]	1.041	1.050	1.026
Work during term time[a]	1.223**	1.080	1.087
Has not moved away to study[a]	1.071	1.008	1.465**
Non-UK student[a]	0.672**	1.285*	0.728**
Has taken a gap year[a]	1.023	0.988	1.089
Involved in other university based activities[a]	2.872**	3.983**	0.988
Involved in other non-university based activties[a]	2.315**	1.596**	2.366**
Base (All valid responses)	**3,032**		

[a] For binary variables the reference category is the opposite group
** Significant at 95 per cent level * Significant at 90 per cent level

Table B3: Models to compare type of volunteering

	Model 1: University-supported volunteer versus non-university-supported	Model 2: Community orientated volunteer versus non-community	Model 3: Regular versus not regular
Female[a]	1.307**	1.045	1.037
Age 25 and over[a]	1.282	0.775	1.098
Post-1992 HEI[a]	1.229	0.963	0.802*
Subject: Ref Medicine			
Science (not medicine)	1.566**	0.493**	1.165
Humanities/Social Science	1.627**	0.639**	1.069
Year of study – not First year[a]	1.226*	0.690**	0.939
Type of Student Ref: Undergrad			
Postgraduate	0.860	0.862	0.956
Other	0.805	1.328	1.010
Parental Occupation Ref managerial and Prof			
No parent with managerial or professional occupation	0.931	1.282**	0.918
Missing/not stated	0.762	1.006	0.697**
No parent at HE[a]	0.972	0.893	1.212
Has dependents[a]	0.913	1.143	1.123
Disability disclosed[a]	0.954	1.030	1.204
Ethnic Minority[a]	0.898	1.005	1.006
Work during term time[a]	0.895	1.021	0.856
Has not moved away to study[a]	1.027	1.650**	1.679**
Non-UK student[a]	1.633**	0.848	0.944
Has taken a gap year[a]	0.992	1.010	1.001
Involved in other university based activities[a]	2.648**	0.363**	0.945
Involved in other non-university based acitivties[a]	1.052	1.814**	0.912
Factor scores for Motivations for volunteering[b]			
Employability	1.367**	0.801**	1.125*
Values	1.108*	1.155**	1.072
Opportunity	0.987	0.851**	0.765**
Number of volunteering activities[b]	1.115**	0.889**	1.278**
Base (all who had volunteered since starting university)	**1,942**		

[a] For binary variables the reference category is the opposite group
[b] Fitted as a continuous variable
** Significant at 95 per cent level
* Significant at 90 per cent level

Table B4: Models to predict recommend volunteering

Variable	Student would recommend volunteering versus not recommend/not sure
Female[a]	1.650**
Age 25 and over[a]	1.441
Post-1992 HEI[a]	0.683**
Subject: Ref Medicine	
Science (not medicine)	1.186
Humanities/Social Science	0.861
Year of study – not First year[a]	1.102
Type of Student Ref: Undergrad	
Postgraduate	1.228
Other	0.973
Parental Occupation Ref managerial and Prof	
No parent with managerial or professional occupation	0.854
Missing/not stated	0.720
No parent at HE[a]	0.848
Has dependents[a]	0.942
Disability disclosed[a]	0.567**
Ethnic Minority[a]	0.730
Work during term time[a]	1.037
Has not moved away to study[a]	0.927
Non-UK student[a]	0.828
Has taken a gap year[a]	1.023
Involved in other university based activites[a]	1.410*
Involved in other non-university based activties[a]	1.127
Factor scores for Motivations for volunteering[b]	
Employability	1.388**
Values	1.561**
Opportunity	0.834**
Number of volunteering activities[b]	1.076**
Base (all who had volunteered since starting university)	**1,942**

[a] For binary variables the reference category is the opposite group
[b] Fitted as a continuous variable
** Significant at 95 per cent level
* Significant at 90 per cent level

Table B5: Mean scores for motivation dimensions by students' socio-economic background, type of HEI and course studied

	Employability	Values	Opportunity
Overall mean	**3.88**	**3.58**	**2.84**
Men	3.74*	3.60	2.96*
Women	3.94*	3.57	2.79*
Less than 25 years	3.91*	3.50*	2.86*
25 and older	3.74*	3.85*	2.75*
Parent with professional/managerial occupation	3.84*	3.56*	2.81
No parent with prof/managerial occupation	3.93*	3.54*	2.67
At least one parent gone to HE	3.83*	3.61	2.83
No parent gone to HE	3.92*	3.55	2.85
White	3.82*	3.47*	2.77*
Asian	4.14*	3.95*	3.29*
Black	4.22*	4.31*	2.96*
Other	3.87*	3.55*	2.87*
Disability	3.67*	3.67	2.79
No Disability	3.89*	3.57	2.84
No Dependents	3.88	3.52*	2.81*
Has Dependents	3.85	3.99*	3.04*
UK Domiciled Student	3.87	3.51*	2.79*
Non UK Domiciled Student	3.91	3.92*	3.11*
Pre 1992 HEI	3.73*	3.50*	2.73*
Post-1992 HEI	4.02*	3.65*	2.89*
Course: Medicine	3.96*	3.69*	2.89
Course: Science (not medicine)	3.78*	3.51*	2.91
Course: Humanities and Social Science	3.89*	3.57*	2.81
Moved away to Uni	3.87	3.51*	2.84
Not moved away to Uni	3.89	3.77*	2.83
No work during term time	3.82*	3.58	2.83
Works during term time	3.95*	3.58	2.85
Not a university-supported community volunteer	3.82*	3.55*	2.82
University-supported community volunteer	4.02*	3.65*	2.89

Base: 1,942 (all who had volunteered since starting university)

*Difference between groups is significant at 90 per cent Confidence Level

Table B6: Characteristics of students who stopped volunteering due to time pressures associated with studying.[15]

Characteristics	% of students stopping because of study time pressure
Male	55.9
Female	72.3
Medical student	74.6
Science student (not medicine)	55.3
Arts/Humanities/Social Science	68.3
UK student	68.9
Non UK student	58.2
Parent with professional/managerial occupation	67.8
No Parent with professional/managerial occupation	73.6
Base (Students who had volunteered at least once since starting university but not in the academic year 2009/2010)	**439**

[15] The distinction between year of study is not included, as those first years are less likely to give pressure of study than students in subsequent years, the way the question is worded should in theory exclude first years from having stopped volunteering – as it should only pick up students who have volunteered in previous years but not in their current year of study. Hence the question should only be valid for first years who are repeating a year. For this reason we have not included year of study in table 7.

Appendix C: University profiles

University of East London (UEL)
The University of East London became a university in 1992. It is a member of the MillionPlus university think tank. It is situated in East London on two campuses. Volunteering at the University of East London is organised via three strands. The University team is located within Employability to promote volunteering opportunities and hold special projects including piloting Million Makers next year in conjunction with the Princes Trust. There are three coordinators within the Employability team. UEL is relatively new to promoting volunteering among students. In 2009/2010 just over 100 students volunteered and the Student Volunteering fair had an attendance of over 400 students. In addition the students' union and UEL Sport run volunteering and mentoring schemes in conjunction with the local community and the Olympics. A new Volunteering Module started in the academic year 2010/2011 with 120 students registering interest.

University of Gloucestershire
The University of Gloucestershire has a total of 9,500 students studying on four campuses in the towns of Cheltenham and Gloucester. Formerly a college of higher education it became a university in 2001. The University offers a number of volunteering opportunities including an academic volunteering module, a sustainability volunteering scheme, a students' union volunteering programme and a number of faculty-based volunteering opportunities (largely focused around sport and health and social care).

Keele University
Keele University was established with degree giving powers in 1949 as the University College of North Staffordshire and university status followed in 1962. It is located in the East Midlands and is the UK's largest integrated campus university with 617 acre estate and 10,000 students. Volunteering @ Keele is organised through the Students' Union with funding for the project currently coming from the University. As well as offering a brokerage service, VE @ Keele organises one-off community events such as litter picks, afternoon teas and fundraisers. Volunteers are encouraged to complete a VE @ Keele Award in recognition of their volunteering contribution & skills development. VE @ Keele manages a student volunteering elective module which is administered through Keele School of Politics, International Relations & Philosophy, enabling students to gain valuable credits for their degree. VE @ Keele also works with a volunteering charity to offer international volunteer placements in Thailand.

University of Leeds
The University of Leeds is a research intensive Russell Group University which was founded in 1904. The single-site city centre campus supports the education of 33,000 students. The University provides a comprehensive volunteering programme under the banner of our Leeds for Life programme which supports students to develop their academic and co-curricular skills. Volunteering is underpinned by a core programme

supporting over 120 schools in Leeds providing volunteer mentors, tutors, out of school activity co-ordinators and language assistants. There has also been a growth in accredited volunteering with over 100 students taking part in eight subject specific programmes with schools. In addition the University is part of **v**involved Leeds and provides an additional 1,000 volunteering opportunities every year in a range of community settings. Students are also able to apply to set up their own projects with financial support from generous alumni donations to the Leeds for Life Foundation. Volunteering is also co-ordinated by Leeds University Union who predominantly support local community projects who work with some of the hardest to reach groups in our community. In total over 2,000 students volunteer through this spectrum of volunteering projects.

University of Oxford

The University of Oxford is one of the oldest universities in the English-speaking world. It operates a collegiate system (currently more than 40 colleges and halls) with 24,000 students and is a member of the Russell Group. Neither the university not Oxford University Student Union make much provision to support student volunteering. For many years a number of student-run societies have undertaken voluntary work in the community. In 2007 the Oxford Hub was founded to be focal point for charitable activity and to connect students with causes - whether local, national, or international. Oxford Hub supports about 700 students to volunteer each year and is part of a network of five Student Hubs. In Spring 2010 Oxford Hub and the University launched a new award, the Vice-Chancellor's Civic Award, to recognise individual achievement and personal commitment to improving the state of society and the world.

University of the West of England (UWE)

UWE is the South West's largest higher education provider with 29,300 students studying in excess of 600 courses. UWE became a university in 1992 and is a member of the University Alliance. The university is located on three campuses in the city of Bristol. Volunteering sits within the Employability and Life Skills department and is also represented within the Students' Union. Volunteering at UWE takes a number of forms. Students can take part in one off action days, or make use of the university brokerage service for longer placements. The university also offers faculty-based opportunities as well as supporting students to set up their own projects.

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The NCCPE is part of the national Beacons for Public Engagement initiative, funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust.

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The NCCPE has been funded by **v**, the National Young Volunteers Service, to run the **v**inspired students project. This has been set up to provide compelling evidence of the impact of volunteering on students, universities and communities, and to demonstrate the unique contribution that universities can make through the strategic management of volunteering.

If you would like more information about this project, please write to nccpe.studentvol@uwe.ac.uk

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