



## **Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services**

### **The development and design of a pre-retirement volunteer recruitment module for inclusion in public sector training**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

FJ Consultancy was appointed by Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS) to undertake the development of a pre-retirement volunteering module in the public sector. In the first instance it was agreed to survey current activity within volunteer centres to ascertain the nature of the contribution currently made to pre-retirement courses in order to identify best practice. The results of this enquiry can be found in the **Appendix six, VITA, interim report.**

## **2. NEGOTIATING THE PILOTS**

Following analysis of the data, FJ Consultancy made contact with the Continuing Training and Development (CTD) section of Norfolk County Council and negotiated the piloting phase of a newly designed module. Pre-retirement courses are run monthly and it was agreed that June and July should be used as the pilots. A meeting was convened so that we could establish the current content of the programme and understand a little more about the expectations of the provider and likely response of the participants. We also negotiated the most appropriate hour time slot, ie day two just before coffee in order to maximize the opportunity for participants to ask questions during the break and to ensure that participant priorities of financial information had been dealt with on day one.

## **3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODULE**

NVS had already established a history of delivering an input on this programme so we were fortunate to be able to draw upon previous experience. We liaised constantly in the planning process with staff members responsible for delivery to ensure that we incorporated the key messages from the research phase in both content and method.

The research identified the following indicative content:

- How people will use their time in retirement.
- Why volunteer?
- Statistics on the contribution of volunteering both locally and nationally.
- Barriers to volunteering.
- The range of opportunities available.
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Where to go for further information.

In addition, we felt it important to acknowledge the range of current or previous experience of volunteering from amongst the participants and the benefits of volunteering for older people drawn from a growing research base. The range of methods incorporated is identified below:

- Draw out people's experience of volunteering.
- Presentation.
- Experience of an older volunteer.
- Group work activity.
- Time for questions and answers.

The group work activity was designed to stimulate discussion as well as making participants aware of the wide variety of potential opportunities. NVS supplied us with the current vacancy list and we subsequently devised the table to be found in **Appendix five, Opportunity table**. This was divided into sections indicating the time commitment required and whether or not volunteers would be expected to undertake training.

#### 4. THE DELIVERY OF THE PILOT MODULE

The first module was delivered to 16 participants on 20 June 2006. The delivery team comprised of Pam Cranston, NVS, Eric Bainbridge, a volunteer in his 80s, and Fiona Factor from FJ Consultancy.

The programme was as follows:

10:00am	Welcome/introductions Who we are and VITA
10:05am	NVS presentation
10:15am	Questions
10:30am	A volunteer's experience
10:40am	Opportunity table
10:55am	Contact details sheet/participant packs/evaluation forms and close

The opportunity to mingle with participants during coffee was advantageous as it allowed us to check out participants' views on our delivery whilst also allowing individuals the opportunity to raise other questions about potential volunteering opportunities. In particular, Eric the older volunteer was very warmly received.

The evaluation forms indicated a positive experience for participants and on this basis we decided to retain the same format for pilot module two on 18 July 2006.

A different member of staff from NVS was delivering the presentation on this occasion and therefore time was spent ensuring that the consistent key messages would be conveyed. Seventeen participants were in attendance for the second pilot. A copy of the

PowerPoint presentation and accompanying notes can be found in **Appendix two, Presentation**.

## **5. LIAISON WITH VITA EMPLOYEES**

Between pilots we were able to meet with Kate Hill from VITA to update the progress made since the interim report in April 2006. A useful meeting was held which also clarified the nature of the final documentation to be received. It was agreed as follows:

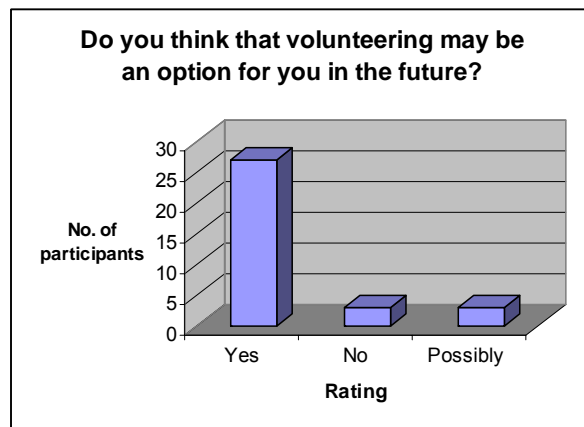
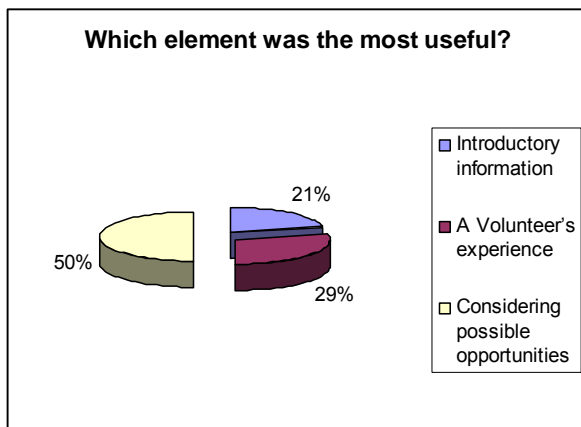
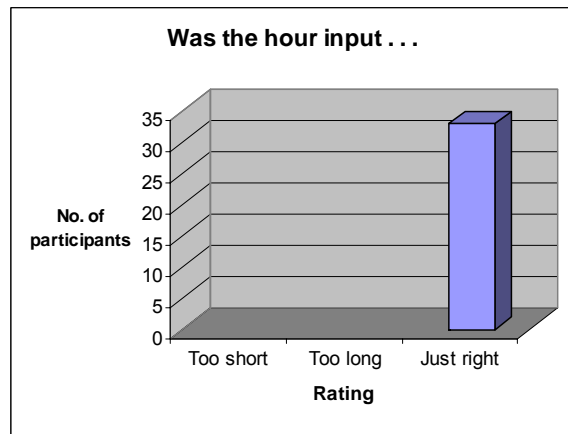
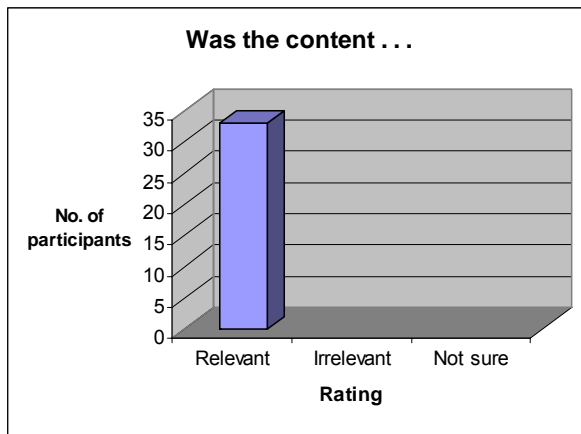
- (i) A 'How to' document to advise volunteer centres new to this area of work on how to establish an effective contribution to pre-retirement programmes in their region in pdf format by 8 September 2006. **Appendix one**.
- (ii) A PowerPoint presentation that would be for generic use but could be customised accordingly to incorporate local variation by the end of September 2006. **Appendix three, Narrative to accompany presentation**.
- (iii) A final report, (this document) outlining the process and outcomes of the project by the end of September 2006.

In addition, we were asked by VITA to consult with a number of volunteer centres that had originally tendered for the work or had demonstrated interest in the project. As a result, we e-mailed the contacts given and enclosed copies of the draft materials for their consideration. Unfortunately, we received no feedback from these organisations.

## **6. EVALUATION**

Immediate indications demonstrated a good degree of satisfaction from both participants and the trainer responsible for the pre-retirement programme from the county council.

Additionally, participants were asked to complete a very brief evaluation form, **Appendix four**, the results of which are illustrated below:



The group work exercise was particularly effective in generating discussion and also widening the perceptions amongst participants of the available range of opportunities and this is reflected in the evaluation above where 50 per cent of participants indicated that this was the most useful element of the module.

In addition, participants made the following observations:

- Excellent module
- Lively and enthusiastic speakers
- I'm surprised at the reference and CRB check requirements
- We are not over 65! (**See Section 7 (iii), Conclusion**)

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The project has been successfully completed and the required materials produced within the timescale for distribution across the sector as intended. We offer the following observations of the process:

- (i) As indicated in the interim report, there is a high level of interest across the sector in this area of work and we are therefore hopeful that the materials produced will give organisations the impetus required to establish the work.
- (ii) There are key recommendations in the 'How to' document which need to be considered in the initial establishment of the work to ensure the most effective outcome, eg timing, methods, content etc.
- (iii) VITA is intending to recruit volunteers from the 65 plus age group and yet participants on the pre-retirement programmes, especially within the public sector are normally under this age. As a result, the focus upon the 65 plus age group within the presentation materials may not always be relevant.
- (iv) The research suggested that retired people do not normally consider volunteering as an option until six to 18 months post retirement. Where possible, organisations that do have the capacity should ask participants on these programmes to complete a contact sheet and follow up participants six months later.
- (v) There is no doubt that the contribution of a retired volunteer is most highly valued by participants and where possible, organisations should find a suitable volunteer to share their experience on the module.

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## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- Jane Clarke and Barbara Strudwick from CTD Training and Development, Norfolk County Council.
- Eric Bainbridge, retired volunteer.
- Employees of Norfolk County Council who participated in the pilot modules.
- Kate Hill, VITA.

## **APPENDIX ONE – ‘HOW TO’ DOCUMENT**

How to establish an effective contribution to pre-retirement programmes in order to enhance the level of volunteer recruitment from older people.

### **Making initial contact**

- Identify the larger employers (both statutory and private sector) in your area.
- Make contact with the HR department to ascertain whether they run pre-retirement programmes.
- Make contact with the training department to identify appropriate staff member responsible.
- Offer your contribution to their programme explaining the virtues of volunteering in retirement to sell your message to the provider.
- Offer your contribution in the first instance as a pilot – to be reviewed after delivery.
- Confirm dates and time for your input (bear in mind guidelines five, six and seven below).
- Find out if there is any payment for your input. Remind the provider that you too are a busy professional and your expenses at the very least could be paid.
- Arrange a meeting/telephone call prior to delivery to gather information with regard to the guidelines below.

### **Pre-delivery - questions to explore....**

- Are you aware of the content of the whole programme so that you can draw links between modules if appropriate?
- Have you identified who else is invited into the programme to ensure that you will not be repeating or duplicating information?
- If another allied voluntary sector organisation is involved eg Reach – have you negotiated shared input/alternative slots?
- Find out if there is a process of staggered retirement options as this could mean that individuals could start doing something pre-retirement on a voluntary basis.
- Research has suggested that an hour is the most appropriate amount of time for the input – try and ensure you have at least this amount of time.
- Have you negotiated the most appropriate hour slot? Make sure it is after financial/pension information is covered, as this is normally the participants' priority.
- If possible, arrange your input prior to a coffee/tea break so that you have a chance to mingle with participants during the break, as this is a useful opportunity to respond to unanswered questions that participants may have.
- Have you checked where participants are drawn from geographically, to ensure that you are providing inclusive information covering the areas identified? eg location of local volunteer centres.

- Have you checked whether the participants have any particular needs that you need to address in terms of delivery style and materials eg large print, audiotape?
- Have you confirmed all arrangements in writing for your module including time of arrival and length of module and equipment availability with the relevant person responsible for the pre-retirement programme you are contributing to?
- Can you take an older volunteer with you to share their experience? If so, have you confirmed times and travel arrangements with the individual concerned and checked access requirements where appropriate?
- Can you find a volunteer to actually deliver the module? Benefits include capacity saving for volunteer centre and good promotion of the variety of opportunities available.
- Have you agreed methods of evaluation/feedback from the participants or course provider where appropriate?

### **Input preparation - Questions to consider....**

- Have you checked to ensure that your presentation is up-to-date and that the statistics/research base is still credible?
- Have you ensured that your presentation is local and specific where possible? eg give specific examples from the retired volunteers you have placed.
- If you are taking a retired volunteer with you have you have briefed them on their input? eg what personal benefits have they derived from becoming a volunteer once retired?
- Are you using real and current opportunities on your books at the time of the input?
- Have you discovered the range of professions from which audience is drawn in order that you can match potential opportunities?
- Have you got back up OHP's and access to an overhead projector in the event of PowerPoint equipment failure?
- Have you prepared participant packs including a copy of your PowerPoint presentation and details of useful follow-up website addresses? eg Do it! Personal details contact sheet for follow-up in six months time and contact details of your centre?


### **Delivery dos and don'ts**

- Don't assume those present have not already been involved – or are not already current volunteers whether informally or formally – ensure that you define these terms.
- Do use the knowledge in the room to generate a discussion about the participants' experience of volunteering – both positive and negative.
- Do reassure would-be volunteers that if their experience doesn't match their expectations you would manage their exit from an organisation appropriately. This is particularly important for those that have been put off volunteering due to previous poor experiences.

- Do make the audience aware that most retired people don't engage in volunteering until at least six – 18 months post retirement and that your presentation is about providing options for the future.
- Do make it interactive – limit the amount of input/presentation delivered.
- Do use PowerPoint where possible to show that the volunteer centre you are representing is a modern and professional organisation – no clip art please!
- Do tell people about CRB checks and references – no surprise is the best policy.
- Don't give out information packs until the end of your input – earlier distribution will distract participants from your input.
- Do ask participants if they are prepared to give their personal details now for follow-up contact in six months time – have contact sheets in the packs.
- Do thank them for their time and participation and wish them well in their retirement!

## APPENDIX TWO - PRESENTATION

Slide 1



NORWICH & NORFOLK  
VOLUNTARY SERVICES

### Volunteering

...an option for retirement

Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services

Slide 2

### Volunteering

Volunteering is defined as.....

An activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.

(Compact, Volunteering England 2005)

Slide 3

### Good Value

- Over half the adult population volunteer (20 million people)
- Economic value of volunteering is said to be in the region of £40 bn per year
- 4/10 people active in formal volunteering
- 7/10 people active in informal volunteering

Slide 4

### Fun facts!

According to new research by ICM, commissioned by CSV Make a Difference Day and Barclays, in a survey of 600 volunteers:

- 47% say volunteering has improved their physical health and fitness
- 15% say volunteering had led them to eat less chocolate
- 17% of 18 to 24 year olds say volunteering has improved their sex life!

Slide 5

### Facts and figures about the 65+ age group

- 27% of the 65 and over age group are volunteers
- 76% of 65-74 year olds have been involved more than once a month in volunteering
- This group is most active in informal volunteering
- If people can be introduced to the idea of volunteering before they retire there is an increased likelihood that they will volunteer.

(Sources: HO Citizenship Survey, 2001, Atwood et al 2003, Harvard 2004)

Slide 6

### Benefits for the 65 + age group

Research has established that older people derive a multitude of benefits from volunteering, e.g.

- The feeling of making a difference/giving something back
- Enhanced physical and mental well-being
- Improved confidence and self-esteem (Ellis 2003)
- Personal development
- Meeting new people (Rochester and Hutchinson 2002)

Slide 7

**By volunteering you could:**

- Develop new skills
- Use existing skills and experience
- Do something worthwhile
- Make friends
- Keep a structure to the day
- Maintain confidence
- Enjoy yourself!

Slide 8

**It's your choice!**

- Time – how much?
- Regular or occasional
- Training – yes or no?
- Challenging or easy
- Something old – something new
- With a group or on your own
- With an organisation or with an individual

## **APPENDIX THREE - NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY PRESENTATION**

10-15 minutes

### **Introductions**

Give participants your name, organisation and thank them for their time today. Start by asking how long until they retire (there will be a range) and then ask how they are feeling about it (this can help to break the ice).

### **Purpose of presentation**

Today is about sowing a seed of an idea for the future, as at some point down the line they might find they:

- have time on their hands
- would like to do something different
- want to give something back

Hope that they remember today and will consider doing voluntary work as an option when that time comes.

### **Key messages for today**

- That voluntary work is about doing what you want to do, when you want to do it (explain how different that can feel from doing paid work)
- The huge variety of voluntary opportunities available
- How NVS/volunteer centre can help with info, advice and support.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Slide one**

*INTRODUCTORY SLIDE WITH CENTRE LOGO ON IT*

- Ask participants if they have heard of your organisation or seen the logo?
- Explain where you are based and other volunteer centres around the geographical spread of the area from where participants are drawn.
- Explain how your centre acts as a broker for a range of organisations.
- Explain what volunteering in your community might mean, eg working with organisations like CAB, Witness Support etc and then alternatives like working one-to-one in someone's home

Examples are;

- Brenda who works one morning with Witness Support (what she gets out of it) and one afternoon walking with a client who has lost confidence due to a knee replacement.
- Michael goes to gym with man in his 40s who is disabled through illness
- Jo gardens with an elderly client they get to know each other by working together

- Gail does one morning with CAB and one afternoon sitting with an elderly lady who has short-term memory loss, so husband can have free time and relax.

**Slide two**  
**DEFINE VOLUNTEERING**

**Slide three**  
**GOOD VALUE**

Talk through the points revealing them one at a time. Explain the difference between formal and informal volunteering.

Ask who has been a volunteer and what their experience has been?

**Slide four**  
**FUN FACTS**

Talk through the ICM poll

**Slide five**  
**GIVE FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE 65 plus AGE GROUP**

**Slide six**  
**BENEFITS FOR THE 65 PLUS AGE GROUP**

**Slide seven**  
**BY VOLUNTEERING YOU COULD.....**

Go through point by point

- Enjoy yourself is most important
- Do something worthwhile – talk about the feel good factor and say that your guest volunteer will be saying more about this later
- Meet people/make friends - say how easy it is to lose touch and feel isolated
- Use existing skills - say they have a lifetime of skills gained in so many ways, illustrate with female volunteer who is supporting a woman with learning disabilities, helping her to budget and organise her week etc
- Develop new skills – say they might have wished to do something different in past but family and financial commitments prevented them. Volunteering could give them the opportunity
- Keep structure to the day – say most of us need this to plan our lives
- Enhance physical and mental well-being – feeling good
- Maintain confidence – easy to lose identity as we are often known more for the job that we do.

You may want to add another point verbally –

- Space from your partner.

**Slide eight**

**IT'S YOUR CHOICE**

- Talk through each point
- When you reach 'challenging or easy' you can illustrate the challenge bit with an example like the Appropriate Adult scheme.

**END BY reiterating your 3 points to remember**

- There is a wide choice of opportunities
- There is freedom to choose what you want to do
- Please come and talk to us

**ASK FOR ANY QUESTIONS**

## **APPENDIX FOUR - EVALUATION FORM**

### **Pre-retirement module – Norfolk County Council**

#### **Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services input as part of the VITA Project July 2006**

**VITA is a two-year Home Office funded project running until November 2006.  
VITA's remit is to promote volunteering by people aged 65 and over and  
encourage more voluntary groups to recruit from this age group.**

Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS) has been awarded a grant by VITA to develop a pre-retirement volunteer module for inclusion in public sector training. NVS has asked FJ Consultancy to undertake the research to design and evaluate such a module. You are the second participants to experience the module today and as a result we would appreciate your feedback. Please answer the following questions:

1. Was the hour input..... (please tick)  
  
Too short?  
  
Too long?  
  
Just right?
2. Was the content.....(please tick)  
  
Relevant?  
  
Irrelevant?  
  
Not sure?
3. Which element was the most useful? (Please tick)  
  
a) Introductory information  
b) A Volunteer's experience  
c) Considering possible opportunities
4. Do you have any other suggestions for improvement, eg was there anything missing you'd like to know about?
5. Do you think that volunteering may be an option for you in the future?  
  
Yes/No

## APPENDIX FIVE – OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Pre-retirement module – Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services Input  
VITA, June 2006

*Below you will find a range of opportunities currently available at Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS). Please consider each in turn and identify if it would be something you would be interested in, and if so why? The time commitment column is divided into a 'little' (less than a day a week) and a 'lot' (a day a week or more). Once you have considered this, please tell your group why you chose the particular opportunity.*

Opportunity <i>Role descriptions</i>	Time commitment				Training		
	A lot	A little	Regular	Flexible	A lot	A little	None
<b>Community befriender</b> Visiting someone at home who is at risk of social isolation because of old age, disability or lack of transport. Volunteer asked to commit to visiting for an hour once a week or to suit.		√		√			√
<b>Conservation volunteer</b> Weekly activity to carry out a variety of tasks such as pond maintenance, footpath construction and scrub clearance. Bring old clothes and a packed lunch. Come when you can!		√	√				√
<b>Fundraiser</b> Volunteers wanted for annual street collection. Collecting buckets and ID cards provided.		√		√			√
<b>Residential placement</b> Opportunities exist to be a full-time volunteer for a while, for example in conservation with the RSPB or National Trust, in development work abroad with VSO or a similar organisation, or in social care at a holiday home for people with disabilities.	√		√			√	
<b>Door to door</b> Volunteer bus drivers needed from 9:30am to 11:00am on Wednesdays to enable older people to go to a local day centre. A patient and good humoured approach required.		√	√				√

Opportunity	Time commitment				Training		
	A lot	A little	Regular	Flexible	A lot	A little	None
<i>Role descriptions</i>							
<b>Victim support</b> Train to offer support to people living near you who have become victims of crime. Some need a sympathetic ear, some need advice on personal safety or signposting to further sources of help. We call you when we need you and you arrange your own appointments with the client.		√		√		√	
<b>Red Cross Home from Hospital</b> Imagine being discharged from hospital and going home to an empty house. Wouldn't it be nice if someone had been in to put the heating on and get some bread and milk? And if someone could call round for a few days to check you were getting on OK? Could you be that someone for people in your area?		√		√			√
<b>Volunteer classroom assistants</b> Extra help with reading, art and craft or basic IT is always needed at local primary schools. Come and hear a child practice their reading – they love to show off to a new face!		√	√				√
<b>Talking newspapers</b> Volunteers needed to join a weekly rota to help unpack returned tapes and re-pack newly recorded tapes for sending to visually impaired people. We have a small friendly team who would make you feel really welcome.		√	√				√
<b>CAB adviser</b> Cabx provide a vital information and advice service to the general public. General advisers undergo a structured training course and supervised advice modules before being let loose – which is only right. Volunteers up to 70 years of age are accepted for training.	√		√		√		
<b>IT support</b> Could you help us install and maintain a small computer network? We need someone who can get our system up and running and show us how to share documents and a calendar. Proven experience required.	√			√			√
<b>Escort for community bus</b> Come and help us run our vital community transport scheme. We need escorts to help older and physically disabled people get on and off our community bus. No experience needed – just a friendly attitude and a willingness to help.		√		√			√

Opportunity	Time commitment				Training		
	A lot	A little	Regular	Flexible	A lot	A little	None
<i>Role descriptions</i>							
<b>Magazine production</b> Join a small group producing a magazine to promote writing by people with mental health issues. Enthusiasm and creative ideas more important than experience. Volunteers needed to write and edit copy, plan production, decide on layout and liaise with printers.	√			√			√
<b>Trustee</b> A small voluntary organisation requires trustees to take on business planning and strategic oversight for the organisation. Monthly meetings plus finance sub-group. Activities between meetings include fundraising, volunteer recruitment, providing support to staff, occasional office cover and attending training.	√		√			√	
<b>School governor</b> School governors are responsible for strategic decision making in schools. They need time, common sense and an appreciation of trends in education. Commitments include preparing for and attending Governors' meetings, sub-committee meetings, and training modules and supporting the school's events.	√		√		√		
<b>Charity shop volunteer</b> Help needed with sorting donated goods and working on the till in a busy charity shop. Join our friendly team for a couple of hours a week – we specially need extra help on Thursday afternoons.		√	√			√	
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau</b> Friday morning receptionist required to answer telephone and act as first point of contact for clients with appointments or dropping in. Busy office environment, some admin duties.		√	√			√	
<b>Events organiser</b> Could you take on the organisation of our annual street festival? This exciting role combines co-ordinating stallholders, entertainment, health and safety and publicity, with overall budget responsibility	√			√			√

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Time commitment</b>				<b>Training</b>		
	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Flexible</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Refreshments volunteer</b> Help serve tea and biscuits to the older people at your local day centre. A friendly face who has time to chat or play a game of draughts or scrabble is always welcome.		√	√				√
<b>Room steward</b> The National Trust uses volunteers to act as guides and information points in its stately homes to help visitors interpret what they see. Volunteer stewards will need to have an interest in historical artefacts and to learn about the furniture and furnishings in 'their' property. Volunteers also need to have a friendly and outgoing approach.	√		√			√	
<b>Probation mentor</b> Could you mentor an adult offender to help him or her get back on track and reduce the risk of re-offending? Many offenders have poor support systems and the intervention of a stable outsider can be invaluable. The training given leads to an accreditation in Mentoring Studies.	√			√	√		
<b>Carer's support</b> Could you spare an hour a week to sit with a disabled older person while her carer goes to the shops or has her hair done? This valuable task may well enable the carer to continue. No personal care or nursing involved.		√	√				√
<b>Treasurer</b> Volunteer with financial experience wanted to be treasurer of medium sized voluntary organisation and registered charity. Should be able to produce end of year accounts to comply with company and charity law.	√			√			√
<b>Museum volunteer</b> Discover a new subject – we need volunteers to help supervise parties of children visiting our interactive science museum. Learn as you provide that 'extra pair of hands' to make sure the children all get the most from their visit.	√		√			√	

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Time commitment</b>				<b>Training</b>		
	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Flexible</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>None</b>
<i>Role descriptions</i>							
<b>Riding for the disabled</b> Like horses? Why not volunteer to help people with disabilities take riding lessons. You need to be confident around horses but don't need to ride yourself.		√	√				√
<b>Teacher</b> Teach your arts, crafts and media skills at the community workshop. We put on a range of practical courses for unemployed adults who are taking the first step to re-entering more formal training or paid work.		√	√				√
<b>Walking for health</b> Take small groups of people for weekly easy one or two mile walk near your home. Walking for health is a programme that encourages people to start some physical exercise to help with weight loss and improved mental and physical fitness.		√	√				√
<b>Carlink driver</b> Drivers use their own cars to provide pre-planned journeys for people with no access to private or public transport. Journeys are booked through the Carlink office using the nearest available driver to the client. Expenses paid.		√		√			√
<b>Appropriate adult</b> Learn how to support someone with a mental health issue or a learning difficulty through the process of being arrested and questioned by the police. Volunteers need to be available day or night and assertive enough to challenge police procedure if necessary, as well as maintaining a non-judgemental and impartial approach to the situation.							

# APPENDIX SIX – VITA, INTERIM REPORT

## Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS)

**VITA**  
**Pre-retirement volunteer recruitment module for inclusion in public sector training**

Interim research report

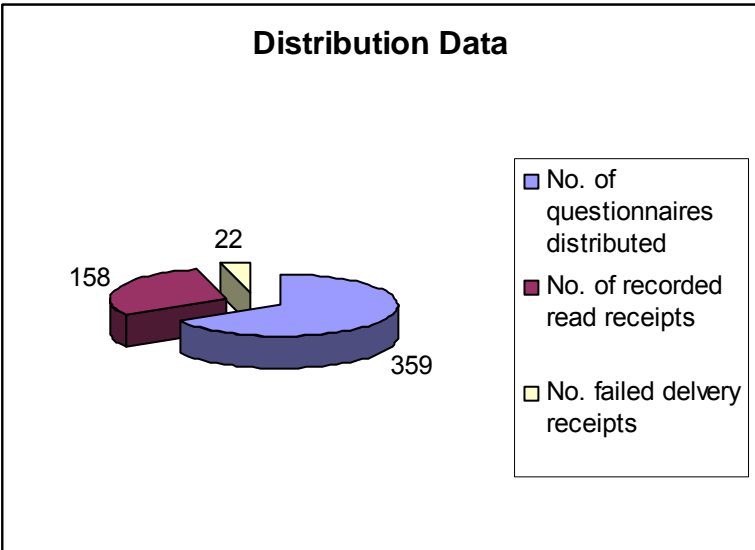
April 2006

### INTRODUCTION

FJ Consultancy was appointed by NVS to undertake developing a pre-retirement volunteering module in the public sector. In the first instance it was agreed to survey current activity within volunteer centres in order to ascertain the nature of the contribution currently made to pre-retirement courses in order to identify best practice. An introductory letter and questionnaire was distributed to volunteer centres across the country. A copy of these can be found in the appendices. What follows is an analysis of the data gathered through this process.

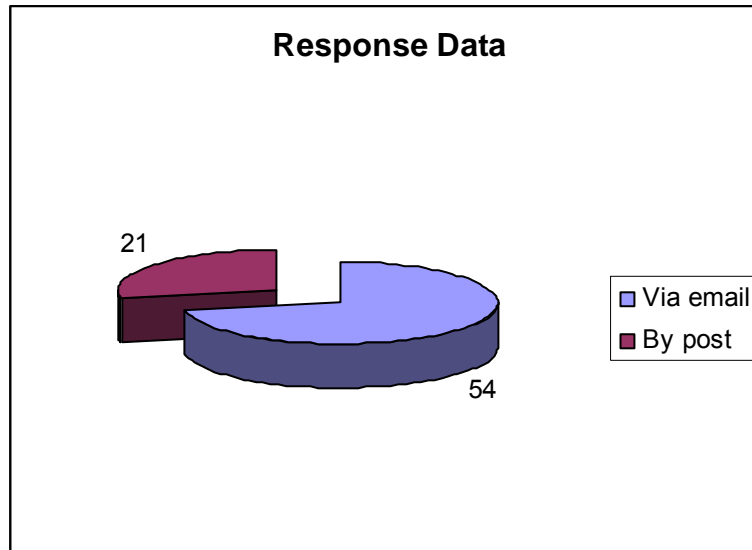
### DISTRIBUTION DATA

E-mail addresses were used to distribute the questionnaire in the first instance. 354 questionnaires were sent via email, and of these, 22 failed to be delivered to the address. Additionally, five were sent by post. Of the emails sent, 158 recorded read receipts.



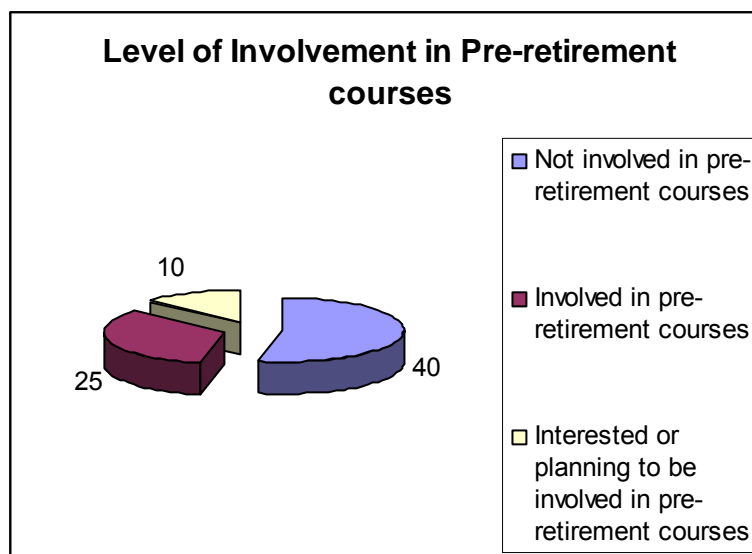
## RESPONSE DATA

The final date for responses to the questionnaire was 7 April 2006. At this point, there had been a total of 75 responses. Of these, 54 were received via email and 21 by post. This constitutes a response rate of 47 per cent (when calculated against the 158 read receipts). This is very high return rate for a questionnaire of this type and by implication would suggest a considerable degree of interest in this area of activity.



## FINDINGS

Of the 75 responses received, 40 volunteer centres indicated that they are not involved in contributing to pre-retirement courses in their local vicinity. However 25 volunteer centres are engaged in this way. In addition, four out of the 25 also attend local promotional events targeted at older people to encourage volunteering. Ten are either very interested or are currently planning to undertake such work. However, issues of funding and capacity to deliver the work were identified by seven of the respondents.



## RANGE OF CLIENTS

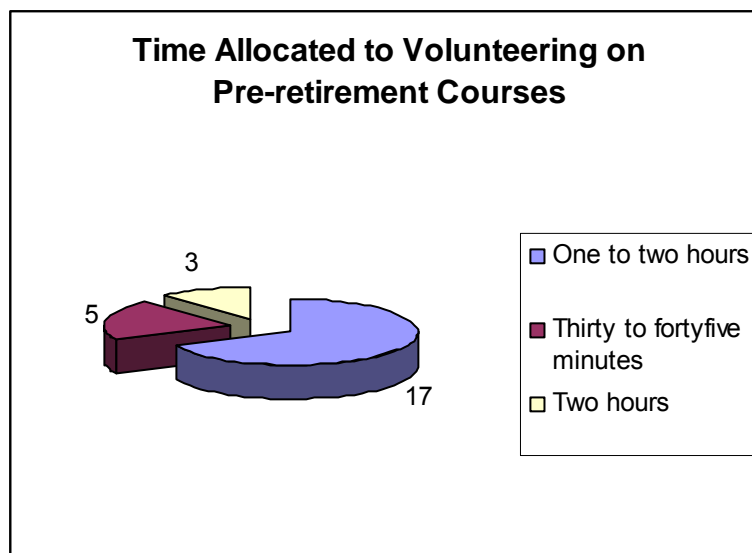
In the main, the majority of the work is delivered to the public sector, examples including county and local/district councils, housing and education departments, the National Health Service and the local constabulary. Delivery within the private sector was less apparent although a couple of respondents do engage with local businesses. Three respondents engage through working in partnership with their local pre-retirement councils/associations.

## TIME AVAILABLE FOR INPUT

Of the 25 volunteer centres that do deliver input to pre-retirement courses:

- 17 have a one-two hour slot
- five have 30 –45 minutes
- three have two hours

The issue of having insufficient time to cover the material was highlighted by some organisations, as was the timing of the input, see section 5.2.



## INDICATIVE CONTENT OF COURSES

The following list is a collation of the topics covered in the input:

- How people will use their time
- Why volunteer?
- Statistics on the contribution of volunteering both locally and nationally
- Barriers to volunteering
- The range of opportunities available
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- Where to go for further information

Additionally, most organisations leave participants with an information pack/leaflets giving supplementary details.

## **METHODS**

Respondents were asked to identify the range of methods used in their input. As one would expect these were varied and often dependent upon the amount of time available. Several felt quite strongly that the session should be lively and interactive, avoiding lengthy presentations. The range of methods is identified below:

- Draw out people's experience of volunteering.
- Use photos of local volunteers in action.
- Presentations.
- People-centred and lively.
- Taking retired volunteer along to contribute to input (volunteer champions).
- Link opportunities to skills and experience of group, eg social worker tired of working within the system but could become a trustee of organisation.
- Group work activities, eg cards of different opportunities – small group discussion – what would you want to know?
- Time for questions and answers.

## **EVALUATION**

The volunteer centres themselves rarely evaluated individual sessions; instead feedback was derived from participants within the broader host organisation's own evaluation process. Feedback that was received indicated that the sessions were found to be interesting and informative. Internally, organisations did undertake their own review and regularly up dated their materials to ensure relevance and currency.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Respondents were asked to comment upon their experience of contributing to pre-retirement courses and also whether they felt this was a useful initiative to recruit older volunteers.

Many identified that there is a real need to use such opportunities to break down the stereotype of volunteering being working in a charity shop and often participants were surprised at the range of opportunities available.

Often the timing of the session within the wider programme was not conducive to maximising the effectiveness of the desired message, e.g. being given the last slot in the day when participants were tired and wanting to go home.

Many participants were obviously more interested in the financial planning elements of the programme than the session offered by the volunteer centre, as this was their immediate priority.

Increasingly, evidence suggests that increasingly many participants are already committed to becoming carers for either elderly relatives or grandchildren and therefore will not be available post-retirement.

Where evidence does exist of participants being interested in volunteering, they do not generally come forward for at least six months to a year, as their initial focus is upon having a break and pursuing individual hobbies and interests.

More recent experience suggests that often, potential volunteers need to hear about the experience from several sources before committing themselves. However, once engaged, occasionally the benefits filter down to younger family members, who subsequently also become volunteers.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was apparent from the respondents that at least ten volunteer centres are keen or are actually involved in planning their contribution to public sector pre-retirement programmes. However, whilst the desire exists, funding and capacity issues sometimes preclude this. Several organisations that are currently involved were uncertain of the effectiveness of their contribution in generating new volunteers, as it appears to take a long time for individuals to come forward. Where funding was available, the use of an outreach worker contacting local voluntary organisations working with the over 50 age group was deemed more effective.

## **APPENDIX SEVEN: LETTER TO VOLUNTEER CENTRES**

23 March 2006

Dear colleague,

### **VITA to promote volunteering by older people National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service**

VITA (Volunteering in the Third Age) is a two-year Home Office funded project running until September 2006. VITA's remit is to promote volunteering by people aged 65 and over and encourage more voluntary groups to recruit from this age group.

Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS) has been awarded a grant by VITA to develop a pre-retirement volunteer module for inclusion in public sector training. NVS has asked FJ Consultancy to undertake the research to identify best practice in this area.

As a result we are contacting the 358 volunteer bureaux across the country to gather information about the range of work taking place. The intention is that once the data has been collected and analysed a new training module will be written and piloted within Norfolk County Council's pre-retirement course. Upon evaluation the final version will be produced and distributed throughout the sector in the autumn of 2006.

We would therefore appreciate you sharing your practice with regard to your contribution to pre-retirement courses in your local area by completing the attached questionnaire. If you do not currently engage in this area of work, please advise us accordingly as this will also help us with the data analysis. We would also like to see a copy of the programme and materials that you currently use. Obviously, any materials that are eventually incorporated into the final version will be credited accordingly.

We are working to a tight deadline and would therefore appreciate your response ASAP, but by no later than 7 April 2006 as we are intending to roll out the first pilot module in May.

We hope that you are prepared to contribute to this research, and look forward to receiving your response. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail to [fiona.factor@fjconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:fiona.factor@fjconsultancy.co.uk) or call 07775 853028.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona Factor  
FJ Consultancy

**APPENDIX EIGHT: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**VITA to promote volunteering by older people  
Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS)**

Name of organisation: .....

Name of contact person: .....

Contact details

.....  
.....  
.....

1. Do you currently run/contribute to pre-retirement courses in your area?

Yes

No

2. Who do you deliver these courses to?  
Please tick

a) Public sector   
Give details

b) Private sector   
Give details

c) Voluntary sector   
Give details

d) Other?

**Please state**

3. How frequently do you deliver these courses?  
Please tick

a) Weekly

b) Fortnightly

c) Monthly

d) Quarterly

e) Other?   
Please state

4. How long does the input last for?  
Please tick

a) 1-2 hours

b) 2-3 hours

c) 4-5 hours

d) Other?   
Please state

5. Can you tell us the key topics that you cover in your input?

6. Can you attach or send a copy of the programme and materials that you deliver?

Yes

No

7. Have you evaluated this programme?

Yes

(If 'yes' can you forward a copy of the evaluation?)

No

8. What have you learnt from this experience?  
eg are they effective in promoting volunteering in the older age group?

9. What recommendations would you make about the future delivery of these programmes?

**Many thanks for contributing to this research. Please forward your completed questionnaire and attachments either by e mail to [fiona.factor@fjconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:fiona.factor@fjconsultancy.co.uk) or by post to:**

**Fiona Factor  
197 Biggleswade Road,  
Upper Caldecote,  
Bedfordshire SG18 9BJ**



**CabinetOffice**  
Office of the **Third Sector**

VITA is a project funded by the Cabinet Office and co-ordinated by WRVS.