

**Article as it appeared in the Birmingham Evening Mail on 17 March 2005**

**The old ones are the best**

BIRMINGHAM is missing out on the support of more than 100,000 older volunteers, according to a new group..

**VITA** (Volunteering Initiative for the Third Age) is calling on the voluntary sector to end discrimination and confront barriers standing in the way of older people wanting to help others.

Age discrimination, poor communication, cost and transport are among the key barriers and the region could see a 53 per cent rise in the number of older volunteers if they were tackled. The new research reveals 13 per cent of people over 65 would like to volunteer, but do not currently do so.

Sheila Windsor, the organisation's programme director, said: "Older people have skills and abilities acquired over a lifetime, which can make a tremendous difference to their communities." People aged over 65 who would like to volunteer can contact 0845 305 6979

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