

Formative evaluation of v, The National Young Volunteers' Service Interim Report

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Foreword



Since our launch in 2006, I have maintained a passionate commitment to the robust and independent evaluation of v's work. I strongly believe that external analysis of our performance is vital in enabling us to deliver an honest and transparent account of v's role in investing public and private sector funds in young people and communities across England.

The decision to commission a formative evaluation of our work is deliberate and responds directly to our ambitions to be a reflective and responsive learning organisation. The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) has provided the intellectual and academic rigour required to independently evaluate v's work, bringing together nine separate qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and engaging a wide range of key stakeholders to fully assess the impact of v's activities on the youth volunteering landscape in England.

The results presented in this interim formative report provide compelling evidence of v's outstanding achievements in delivering a coherent and inclusive national young volunteers' service. The evaluation confirms that through our national network of delivery partners, v has exceeded the youth volunteering opportunities target originally set out in the Russell Commission report. Perhaps more importantly, the report provides strong evidence that v's programmes have engaged a diverse cohort of young people to participate in community service opportunities, including socially excluded groups.

v has also played a key role in building the capacity of the public and charity sectors to engage young people effectively in their work. From grassroots community organisations to large national charities and Local Authorities, v has engaged a wide range of partners, including those with previously little experience of volunteering. A strong brand and innovative programme design, combined with an unwavering commitment to youth-led action has enabled v to drive real change across the youth volunteering landscape, affording young people real opportunities to transform their communities.

v remains committed to forging exciting partnerships between government, business and charities, creating national policy solutions which maximise our shared investment in the next generation of young people. Indeed, helping young people to stay connected to society and develop the leadership and employability skills that will support their successful transitions to adulthood is one of the most urgent and critical tasks of the next decade.



This interim report provides an important and timely opportunity for v to reflect on its successes and plan for the future. I would like to extend my thanks to all those who have participated in the evaluation, sharing their views about our work, and I would also like to pay tribute to the outstanding contributions of all our partners who share our achievements and will join v in acting on the learning and insights contained in this report.

I greatly value the resources entrusted to us by our funders and supporters, and I sincerely hope that this formative evaluation demonstrates the ways in which v has maximised the impact of these investments to benefit young people and society.

Terry Ryall

Chief Executive Officer

v, The National Young Volunteers' Service



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Glossary of research terms used in this report

Deliberative workshop: a research event that is used to bring together key people that may have an interest in or knowledge of the subject of the research. The event provides the opportunity to discuss and debate the subject and views on it in an open manner and to reach an informed decision at the end.

Discourse: a body of knowledge, belief or views on a particularly phenomenon.

Methodology: the different types of research that are used. The research approaches that are used to answer research questions are referred to as the methodology.

Sample: the people who are selected to take part in research or evaluations. They are usually carefully selected to ensure they are either representative of the wider population being researched or that they cover the potential diversity of the population.

Survey: questioning a sample of people using the exact set of questions for each participant.

Qualitative research: research that is used to explore views and opinions in an open manner using interviews and focus groups for example. It does not measure prevalence but explores issues in-depth.

Quantitative research: research that can quantify the subject being investigated, often, but not always by conducting a survey. It can be used to measure prevalence but may not be able to explore issues in-depth. In this evaluation the quantitative methods include the young people's survey and the Grant Recipient Survey.





Executive summary

In 2004 the Russell Commission was launched to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. The Commission's headline recommendation was the creation of a dedicated, young person-led, independent, implementation body to deliver this framework. This body is now known as **v** - The National Young Volunteers' Service.

v was launched in 2006 and was tasked with implementing 12 of the Russell Commission's 16 recommendations. Together, the recommendations were designed to deliver a step change in the quantity, quality and diversity of youth volunteering in England. In response to one of these recommendations, **v** commissioned two evaluations of its activities. This report presents interim findings from the second, formative evaluation of **v**. Formative evaluation is designed to help with the development of the programme it is evaluating by sharing learning that can be incorporated into future design and development. This report presents findings from the first year of the evaluation only. Full and final findings will be published in summer 2011.

This summary gives an overview of the key successes and challenges highlighted by the evaluation so far and draws out the implications of the research for **v** and its audiences.

Key successes

Engaging with young volunteers

- **v** has exceeded the targets for the number of youth volunteering opportunities set for it by the Russell Commission. The Russell Commission report suggested that a step change in volunteering could be defined as 'an additional 700,000 to 1 million young people volunteering at least once per year'. It also indicated that **v** would need to directly commission a total of 412,160 youth volunteering opportunities over five years. Monitoring data indicate a total of 930,000 opportunities have been commissioned by **v** to date; outcome data in February 2010 indicated that 637,000 opportunities had been taken up (out of 930,000 commissioned).
- Recruitment of volunteers has been highly successful, indicating a desire of young people to become involved in activities made possible by **v** funding. Accreditation is also offered to volunteers at the majority of projects, although it is not compulsory.
- **v**'s activities have attracted a diverse group of young people particularly in relation to ethnicity. **v**'s activities are also reaching young people who experience various dimensions of social exclusion. The proportions of volunteers who are or have been homeless, in the care system, lone parents, low income, offenders, and refugees, are significantly higher than would be expected. This positive finding indicates that

v's model of funding has been successful in cascading volunteering opportunities to young people less likely to volunteer.

- Very positive impacts on young volunteers engaging with v funded opportunities have been identified. These include the development of work skills; the development of life skills (such as ability to communicate with diverse groups of people); and increased confidence and self esteem. A sense of enjoyment from engaging in volunteering activities and a sense of belonging to a community were also reported. These outcomes could have a significant impact on young people who are experiencing a dimension of social exclusion.
- There appears to be a relatively good awareness of v among young people aged 16 to 25 with almost a fifth of young people surveyed having heard of v or v-inspired.
- The digital media v uses to communicate with young people (including the website) is generally liked and well received by young people. The logo and overall identity of v are successful and popular and quality of marketing material is identified by grant recipients as being high.

Developing and supporting volunteering

- Organisations have benefited from v funding. Key benefits identified include greater capacity to involve young people and volunteers in a structured manner.
- Being involved in a v project has been reported to open new doors to local partnership working among v funded organisations. Levels and impact of youth involvement / youth-led activity are also developing positively within organisations as a result of v funding.
- Experiences of v's grant application process and help and guidance received were very positive. Eighty-five to 94 per cent of grant recipients (depending on funding stream) were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the application process.
- Local networking events with other v funded project staff were viewed very favourably by grant recipients. v facilitates and supports this networking.
- v has also implemented **Reach**, an organisation-wide quality accreditation. Grant recipients identified the value of such accreditation for improving their volunteering practice.
- v's monitoring processes for the funded network were initially felt to be onerous. However, in response to the first evaluation commissioned by v, the frequency was reduced. The new system has been praised by grant recipients and the process indicates v's willingness to adapt and listen to their network.

- Projects are confident about the future impacts of v's investments on their organisations, and additional funding has been secured on the basis of v funded activity.
- The Match Fund programme has allowed links from the volunteering to the corporate sector to develop and funds of over £42 million to be generated from the corporate sector to support volunteering.

Key challenges

For project implementation

- v funded organisations identified several challenges with project set-up stage, including recruitment of staff, a lack of funding for management of projects and getting to grips with and understanding project targets. In relation to overcoming these challenges mixed views about communications and the levels of support available from v were reported. In some cases the advice assisted, but in others was felt to be heavy handed and unhelpful. This suggests that the funded network has diverse needs that can not always be adequately addressed by v.
- v's perceived focus on numbers of new volunteers, created concerns for grant recipients, including: squeezing time and quality of service and disincentivising work with harder-to-engage groups. This was especially felt to be the case with vinvolved teams, who are particularly charged with brokering new opportunities.

For v to address

- There was a tension reported by grant recipients regarding the need to incorporate diversity *and* to recruit a certain number of volunteers. Achieving one outcome (overall numbers) could be seen as being at the expense of another (diversity, including the recruitment of harder-to-reach groups). This perception indicated that greater awareness of the importance of explicitly promoting diversity could be disseminated to the grant funded network.
- There are concerns from grant recipients and project staff that the marketing campaigns are not appropriate for all young people and can inadvertently alienate or exclude (for example, if they are overtly sexual). Given the high quality of material, staff feel it is a 'wasted opportunity' if the material is not appropriate. This points to a need for greater segmentation of marketing material to different audiences of young people.
- **Reach**, is not yet fully implemented among grant recipient organisations and there was confusion regarding the extent to which organisations have to achieve the **Reach** quality standards.

For the evaluation

- Despite reported improvements in the monitoring system it appears to remain a challenge for project staff to monitor the characteristics and activities of volunteers. This has led to poorer quality monitoring data being available than may have been anticipated with which to evaluate v.
- Measuring qualitative impacts on the wider community remains difficult and grant recipients struggled to identify tangible benefits despite implicitly sensing they do occur.

Emerging implications for v

- v could benefit from adopting a greater degree of openness in its communications with stakeholders and grant recipients. This also includes communicating organisational and network success. This would help v's diverse audience to 'buy in' to its future vision and promote collaborative working between v and youth organisations.
- Experience from existing projects is fundamental to help grant recipients overcome challenges. v may want to consider routes for further enhancing information sharing and networking between members of the funded network.
- v may want to consider adopting online monitoring tools for individual data alongside existing monitoring arrangements. This would assist with providing more individual data on volunteers and provide opportunities for more feedback to projects on the uses and outcomes of volunteer monitoring.
- Volunteer retention, rather than recruitment, is time-consuming and challenging. v may want to consider allowing flexibility on the funding available for management activities to support this. This could ensure projects build in enough time to work retaining young people rather than focus on recruitment targets. v may also want to consider lobbying government about the need for more flexible financial support for young volunteers.
- The youth-led element of v's funded projects is emerging as very positive. Given the success so far in this area, v may want to dedicate resources to supporting projects in defining and progressing their youth-led activities.
- Young people are not an homogenous group. Further segmentation of marketing and communications to young people could maximise the positive impact v has when communicating to young people and lower the risk of negative impacts. This segmentation could be cascaded via the funded network by promoting:
 - A budget for local marketing materials being provided alongside project funding;

- Templates for projects to adapt themselves provided alongside this;

And providing:

- Simple, basic but high quality, generic material being provided alongside targeted campaigns.
- **v** has innovative and high quality material and campaigns with which to communicate with young people, however, there is a need to plan campaigns well in advance and segment audiences to ensure maximum impact. This includes:
 - Ensuring the potential of the internet is exploited by, for example, tapping into conversations about **v** related events elsewhere on the web.
 - Supporting grant recipients to acquire new skills regarding their marketing and communication.
 - Cultivating young people, actively giving them the tools to bring people to the **v** cause ('deputising to the willing'). To do this, **v** needs to understand what prompted young people to get involved in distinct campaigns such as the bigvbus, what might motivate them to campaign for **v** and how they can be rewarded for their efforts.
 - While **v** projects are successfully achieving diversity in a number of areas there is a view across the funded network that there is too much emphasis on numbers of volunteers. **v** should consider communicating its overall success in engaging a diverse group of volunteers to the funded network and also to disseminate that the focus on numbers of volunteers recruited has come from the government directives rather than directly from **v**. The ongoing evaluation will also need to probe this issue in more detail to understand why grant recipients feel that there is too much onus on numbers of volunteers, given **v**'s attempts to promote quality and diversity.
 - **v** is already working closely with the private sector through the Match Fund scheme. However, doing more work directly with employers to promote the value of volunteering in acquiring skills that are transferable to the workplace may be of value.

Emerging implications for grant recipients

- There is some evidence that internal communication within projects is not always working. Volunteering projects applying for grants may want to be clearer about roles and responsibilities from the outset.
- The project set-up phase and volunteer retention are emerging as time-consuming, challenging aspects of running projects. Grant recipients may want to consider

requesting additional funding to support these areas in future applications to **v** or other funding bodies.

- The evidence suggests that being stretched by targets and ambitious project planning from the outset can have the effect of developing organisations and lead to positive outcomes and capacity building that otherwise may not have occurred. Targets may therefore be viewed as an asset rather than an obstacle to progress.
- While it can be an additional challenge to ensure that monitoring and diversity data for volunteers is of high quality, this is vitally important for both demonstrating the impact and progress made by funded projects and for identifying areas for future development. This is the key measure of how successful both individual projects and the funded network as a whole has been in reaching a range of volunteers.
- **v** can provide a range of high quality marketing material and provide digital media and information for young volunteers. Exploiting these materials involves active engagement from grant recipients. This engagement includes having an awareness of what is available from **v**, providing advice and insight to ensure that material is targeted appropriately at young people, and informing young people of the **v** brand and website.
- **v**'s funded network is well placed to work with local employers to educate them about the benefits of volunteering. There may be opportunities to share good practice around this at regional meetings and other networking events.

Emerging implications for government

- The context in which youth volunteering operates has changed since the Russell Commission objectives were set. Within this context, government has a role in articulating how volunteering and national service initiatives can continue to support young people's skills development, citizenship and community cohesion by drawing on achievements to date.
- Given the success **v** has had in engaging a diverse range of young people not usually associated with volunteering (such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, different ethnicities, young people who have been homeless), **v** provides a model for working with young people who may be deemed harder to reach. Engaging with these young people as a route to tackling social exclusion is likely to continue to be a key policy priority in the future. **v** could play a role in building a model that extends this engagement to even greater numbers of young people.
- The **v** implementation model illustrates how funding can be streamlined via one coherent programme rather than a number of competing programmes, and the

extent to which charities can develop significant programmes of youth engagement in a relatively short time scale, given the resources and freedom to do so.

Concluding summary

With high expectations from the outset from government and the third sector, and a challenging context of short timescales, **v** has delivered a coherent, nationwide youth volunteering service. **v** has exceeded its targets for volunteering opportunities set by the Russell Commission and there is strong evidence that **v** funded volunteering opportunities are being taken up by a greater diversity of young people than is normally the case, including socially excluded groups.

However, challenges remain, and with a relatively small staff team **v** has ambitious aims to achieve, centering on the Russell Commission key words of quantity, quality and diversity. The implications set out in this report (the first of two from the formative evaluation of **v**) provide a framework from which **v** can identify and develop priority areas to focus on and move forward in a manner that maximises successes and begins to address the most pressing challenges.

The report has also set out implications and findings that have resonance for **v**'s key stakeholders, ensuring that the achievements and learning identified through this formative evaluation can be shared and influence those who are committed to the future of youth action and engagement in England.

1 Introduction

1.1 The formative evaluation of v – The National Young Volunteers' Service

This report presents interim findings of the formative evaluation of v. The evaluation was commissioned in December 2008 and runs until June 2011. This interim report presents the findings that have emerged from the evaluation from December 2008 to February 2010 and therefore provides a necessarily partial view of v's achievements and learning to date. A final report will be published in the summer of 2011, which will provide a fuller picture of v's work.

v, The National Young Volunteers' Service, is an independent charity dedicated to helping young people volunteer in ways that matter to them. It was established in 2006 to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission which found that there was a *'need for a new national framework for youth action and engagement'*. The commission made 16 recommendations, 12 of which became v's responsibility (detailed further in Chapter 2). Among them was the recommendation that *'the implementation body (v) will need to measure the impact of the framework and ensure that there is constant learning and evaluation.'* To meet this recommendation, v chose to commission two separate evaluations of its activities. The first was a summative evaluation that was carried out between 2006 and 2008 by WM Enterprise (WM Enterprise 2009). Summative evaluation is designed to assess the effects and effectiveness of a programme and to report on these (Robson, 2002).

This second, formative, evaluation of v was commissioned in December 2008 and runs until June 2011. A formative evaluation is slightly different to a summative evaluation in that it is designed to help with the development of the programme it is evaluating by sharing learning that can be incorporated into future design and decisions (Robson 2002). v has taken an unusual step in commissioning a formative evaluation as the process involves continuous scrutiny, and ongoing recommendations for learning and development.

This formative evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of independent organisations led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and comprising the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR), the Third Sector Research Centre (represented by Birmingham and Southampton Universities) and Public Zone. The consortium were selected to undertake the evaluation following a procurement process that took place between July 2008 and December 2008 and which was governed by the rules of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

1.2 Evaluation aims and objectives

Aims for the evaluation were defined by v and OTS prior to commissioning the evaluation. Following the scoping study and the initial phase of evaluation, the research team proposed a slight change in the scope and balance of these aims and objectives. The current agreed objectives are outlined below.

Objectives for the evaluation

1. To review the development and delivery of v, in context:

- the position of v in the volunteering landscape;
- the organisation of v; and,
- the delivery of v (including: partnership working and sector engagement).

2. To review the process of commissioning and supporting activities:

- the 'fit' of v activities with the Russell Commission recommendations;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of v's commissioning process;
- the quality of support provided by v to funded projects; and
- the quality of communication with v funded projects.

3. Analyse the impact of v's commissioned activities, in terms of:

- young people (including: propensity to volunteer; attitudes towards volunteering; skills development; personal development; employability; community engagement; social integration);
- organisations (including: ease of recruiting young volunteers; enhanced standards of volunteer management; enhanced skills for developing a young-person led approach);
- communities (including: development of social capital; enhanced levels of participation; enhanced intergenerational relations; enhanced attitudes towards young people);
- volunteering (including: the development of good practice in youth volunteering; delivery of a step change in youth engagement; the development of youth-led volunteering activities); and
- the value for money of each programme and 'strand' of commissioned activity.

4. To provide recommendations for the ongoing development of youth volunteering.

- recommendations to **v** about its ongoing development and implementation of the Russell Commission recommendations; and,
- ideas for developing and sharing knowledge and good practice in youth volunteering.

1.3 Evaluation scope

This is a large-scale evaluation which forms a comprehensive assessment of **v**'s activities rather than focussing on specific elements. The evaluation draws on nine methodological strands to do this and these are detailed in sections 1.4 and 1.6 below. It is worth pointing out, however, that while the methodology for this evaluation has been designed to give broad and robust evidence on **v**'s activities, given the scope of what **v** does, the range of audiences it engages and **v**'s own evolution as an organisation, there are inevitably some activities that are not included in the evaluation. For example, while the evaluation incorporates the views of some of **v**'s stakeholders on **v**'s activities and communication with them, the evaluation does not include a full audit and assessment of **v**'s communication activity with its stakeholders.

The main challenge in an evaluation of this nature is measuring impact. While scientists can carry out experiments in laboratories which allow them to carefully control a range of variables, social researchers can rarely, if ever, do this in real-world settings. For example, youth volunteering will simultaneously be affected by **v**'s efforts and also by wider social changes. This makes it difficult – and sometimes impossible - to isolate changes in volunteering that can be attributed **solely** to **v** and its partners.

In considering what would have happened in the absence of **v**'s initiatives, we have sought to make use of existing data sources – where possible pre-dating the formation of **v** - to identify suitable baselines or groups with which (some) comparison can be drawn with **v**-funded volunteers or organisations. For example, we can look at the demographics of **v** volunteers compared to the general population using UK census data. We can conduct similar work using survey data about volunteering: for example, is the profile of **v**'s volunteers comparable with that revealed by these other surveys? However, for other impacts defining a baseline is less straightforward. We do not have easily comparable statistics on, for example, the comparative costs of providing volunteering opportunities, nor is there much in the way of survey evidence on the impact of volunteering on individuals or on the ways in which volunteering is managed by organisations. Therefore, saying something about the value of **v**'s initiatives or how they have impacted on individuals or organisations is more challenging. To address these gaps we have included qualitative research that aims to unpick some of these issues. This means that while in some cases we cannot quantify **v**'s impact, we can give qualitative evidence about **v**'s impact as reported by individuals or organisations.

The methodological design for this evaluation focuses on the perspectives of some of **v**'s key audiences including young people and the youth sector, government and policy makers, **v**'s funded network and the broader volunteering community. The primary data

findings presented in this interim report are largely based on the views and experiences of these key audiences.

Strong evaluative research brings together differing perspectives, from participants with a range of political, personal and professional standpoints. Therefore, as with any evaluation, there are instances here where participants' views may be at odds with v's perceived organisational reality. Where possible we have tried to indicate where there is a disjuncture between v's perceptions and those of its audiences, and to offer an explanation as to why this might be the case.

The views of young people and young volunteers are central to this evaluation. However, some of the key data collection methods for mapping young people's views do not take place until the second year of the evaluation, so this interim report has relatively little on young people's views. These views will be covered in more detail in the final report.

1.4 Evaluation design

There are nine core strands to the evaluation which are:

- 1) a survey of recipients of grants from v;
- 2) a random sample survey of young people;
- 3) an analysis of the volunteering data in the Citizenship Survey;
- 4) an analysis of v's administrative and monitoring data;
- 5) a cost-benefit analysis including Social Return on Investment;
- 6) case study explorations of activities funded by v;
- 7) interviews and workshops with v's stakeholders;
- 8) a policy and media discourse analysis; and
- 9) a marketing and communications evaluation.

Details of the methodology for each strand are given in Appendix A. In addition to the nine core strands of the evaluation there was also a short scoping study undertaken during the first three months of the evaluation. This comprised:

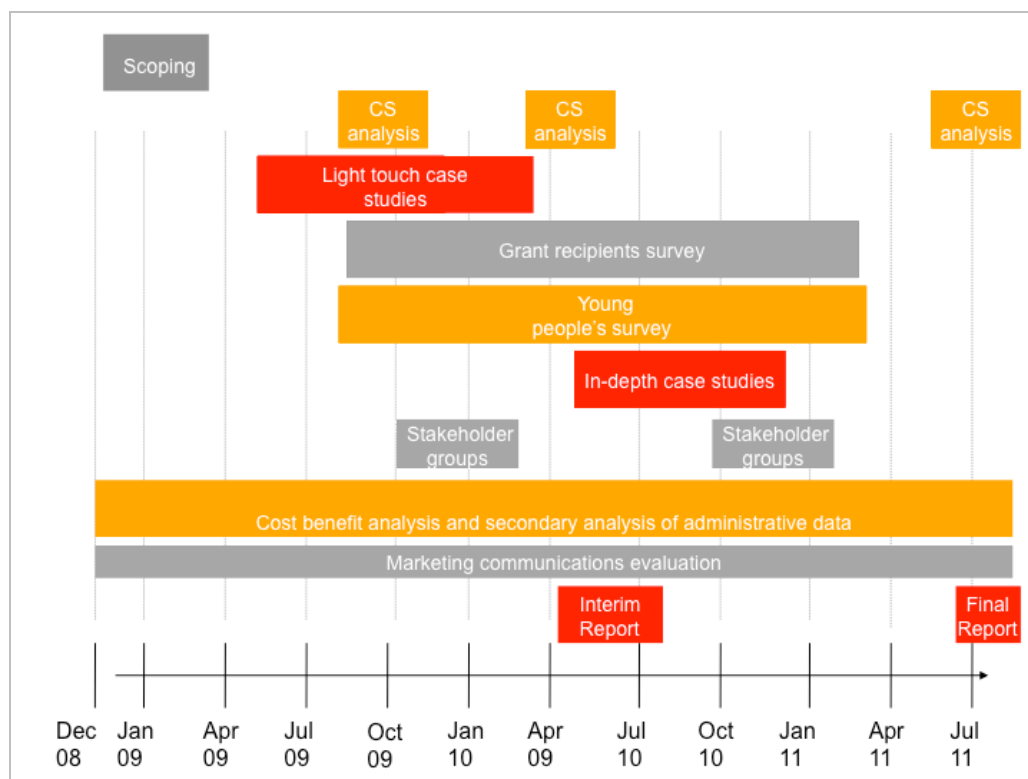
- a short literature review of recent research on youth volunteering;
- orientation interviews with v staff;
- familiarisation with v's data and processes; and
- familiarisation with the existing evidence base on v.

The findings from the scoping phase were used to refine the final methodology for the evaluation. Findings from this stage, specifically data from the literature review and orientation interviews, are also included in this report.

This report draws on findings from all strands of the research except the Cost Benefit Analysis which cannot provide interim data in the same way as the other strands. All strands of the research are ongoing and will continue over the final year of the evaluation.

The findings presented in this report are based on interim data. Full findings will be presented in the final report which is due to be published in summer 2011.

The timeline below outlines the broad stages of the evaluation, and when they fall.



1.5 Report outline

The rest of this report presents the results of the evaluation so far. **Chapter 2** gives an overview of the background to **v** and outlines its aims and targets as well as detailing some of the context in which **v** is operating. **Chapter 3** looks at how the organisations that **v** funds are delivering their projects with a specific focus on grant recipients' experiences of applying for and delivering on **v** funding objectives. **Chapter 4** looks at how **v** communicates with its multiple audiences and includes a case study of a **v** campaign, following it from inception through to delivery. **Chapter 5** looks at the impact that **v** is having on volunteering, on young people and on organisations delivering volunteering projects. Finally **Chapter 6** will set out the conclusions from the interim evaluation activities undertaken so far and the implications of the conclusions for **v** and its stakeholders. There is a chapter summary at the beginning of each chapter and a set of implications provided at the end.

Throughout the report, verbatim quotations are used to illustrate the qualitative findings. They are labelled to show either only the **v** funding stream that they are associated with or

the area they work in, or job title they hold. This is to ensure that all research respondents remain fully anonymous. Quotes are drawn from across the sample.

Each chapter uses data from across the evaluation. In each case the source of the data is given. Where no source is given this indicates that the source is the same as the last listed source. Where data from several sources have been triangulated or compared this is also made clear.

2 Introducing v

2.1 Chapter Summary

- v was established in 2006 as a result of the recommendations of the Russell Commission.
- To resource its work, v has received significant levels of government funding (£117 m for the 2008 to 2011 period), has raised over £42m of match funding, and employs a relatively small staff team.
- v's mission is to *'make volunteering opportunities so diverse, compelling and easy to get involved with that giving up your time to help others becomes a natural lifestyle choice for 16 to 25 year olds in England'*.
- Expectations of v were high from the start, both from government and from other stakeholders. Furthermore, there was an expectation that v would be fully functional and allocate funding immediately. At the same time, a number of major challenges around organisational set-up were being resolved, which predominantly remained outside of the control of v.
- v is working in a wider context of static levels of volunteering, despite significant investment from government, and of considerable economic and social change which together is creating a new operating environment for the organisation and for volunteering more generally.
- There is support among v's stakeholders and grant recipients for its broad aims in as far as these are understood throughout the sector. However, stakeholders demonstrate an underlying lack of awareness and clarity as to its specific remit, ambition or objectives.
- There are mixed views about the transition of the Millennium Volunteers programme and how effectively this was managed by government and v, with some inevitable concerns about the transition as well as praise for building on good practice.
- Expectations of youth volunteering generally are very high with many seeing it as a remedy for 'social ills' and means by which to address unemployment and skills gaps. However, concerns were raised by stakeholders about the sustainability of current government investment in volunteering.

This chapter looks at the background to v and the wider context within which it developed and currently operates in order to explore the factors that contribute to its aims, objectives,

pressures, priorities and challenges. The chapter starts with an exploration of the background to **v**, exploring the volunteering, political, and economic and social contexts in which it developed. It then goes on to look at the work of the Russell Commission and the role that **v** has been tasked to deliver. Section 2.3 examines the transition from Millennium Volunteers to the launch of **v**. The next section discusses the delivery of **v**, exploring its aims, objectives and structure, and how these are perceived by stakeholders and the wider audience. The final section discusses what some of these internal and external factors might mean for **v** in the future.

The findings in the chapter are taken from a variety of sources: the literature review, stakeholder interviews, case study interviews and grant recipient survey.

2.2 The context of **v**

To understand why and how **v** developed in the way that it did, the wider challenges it faced and the expectations placed upon it, it is important to look at the environment within which it evolved. This section looks at how the volunteering sector has and is developing, at public policy surrounding volunteering, at the focus of youth volunteering policy in recent years and at broader key social and economic trends which are impacting on volunteering.

Volunteering in context

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 Code of Good Practice on Volunteering)

It is often divided into ‘formal volunteering’, which takes place within or through a group or organisation, and ‘informal volunteering’, which take place between individuals.

Levels of volunteering in England are relatively high compared to other countries in the UK, many European countries and other ‘western’ countries such as the USA (Rochester et al, 2009). What’s more, participation in volunteering appears static. Despite a few small fluctuations, both shorter-term (see the Citizenship Survey series) and longer-term (see the British Household Panel data – TSRC, forthcoming) trend data suggests that there has not been much change in terms of the proportion of the population who volunteer. Across the adult population, the same proportion of people (73 per cent) volunteered in 2007/08 as in 2003. Between 2003 and 2005 levels of youth volunteering had been increasing slowly, but they were still lower than for certain other age groups, at least as far as formal volunteering was concerned (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Engagement in volunteering, 2003 to 2007/08

England, 2003, 2005, 2007/08				
	Proportion of respondents (percentage)			Significance of change 05–07/08
	2003	2005	2007/08	
Formal volunteering at least once in last year				
16 to 25	40	46	41	*
All	42	44	43	NS
Informal volunteering at least once in last year				
16 to 25	68	76	66	**
All	63	68	64	**
Formal or informal volunteering at least once in last year				
16 to 25	77	83	75	**
All	73	76	73	**

All figures based on core sample only

* = significant at 95 per cent ($p = <0.05$); ** = significant at 99 per cent ($p = <0.01$); NS = Not significant.

Source: Evaluation consortium analysis of the Citizenship Survey data

There are differences in volunteering trends according to key demographics. Women, for example, are more likely to volunteer than men (CLG, 2008). Broadly speaking, there is also a positive relationship between education, employment and income with participation in volunteering (Hill and Russell, 2009). As already noted, age also makes a difference (see Table 2.2), with 16 to 25 years being one of the age groups that are least likely to participate in regular (once a month or more) formal volunteering, but at the same time the most likely to get involved in regular informal volunteering.

Underlying these different patterns of engagement are different attitudes towards and experiences of volunteering. While all age groups cite wanting to ‘improve things, help people’ as the most significant reason for volunteering, young people are more likely than other age groups to cite wanting to develop new skills and enhance their employability as a reason for volunteering (Low et al, 2007). Although these more self-orientated motivations have been found to be replaced by community-orientated motivations once young people actually start volunteering (Eley, 2003). While young people on the whole have been found to have largely positive views of volunteering and volunteers (v, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Davis Smith, 1998), there is a tendency for this age group (and others) to have quite narrow, stereotyped views. However, views are influenced by background and demographics - young women, for example, tend to have more positive views of volunteering than young men (v, 2008).

Table 2.2 Percentage of English adults' participation in volunteering, 2007/08, by age

	Once a month*		At least once in last year*			Respondents
	Informal Volunteer	Formal Volunteer	Informal Volunteer	Formal Volunteer	Informal or Formal volunteer	
Age						
16-25	41	23	66	41	75	826
26-34	35	22	69	40	76	1,220
35-49	37	29	70	50	79	2,449
50-64	31	29	62	44	72	2,084
65-74	35	31	60	41	69	1,148
75+	28	24	46	31	55	1,072
All¹	35	27	64	43	73	8,804

¹ Respondents with missing age data are included in the 'All' row.

* Participation in volunteering in twelve months before interview

Source: Evaluation consortium analysis of the Citizenship Survey data

Volunteering takes place across the voluntary, public and private sector, although a large proportion of it happens within voluntary and community organisations (Low et al, 2007). It is supported by a sizeable infrastructure, that operates at national, regional and local level and which has developed over the past 40 years or so (Rochester et al, 2009). Indeed, the volunteering infrastructure is now reasonably complex, consisting of generalist bodies such as Volunteering England operating at a national level, Greater London Volunteering at a regional level and a network of Volunteer Centres at a local level. These operate alongside a whole host of specialist bodies which focus on developing volunteering either within specific demographic groups (such as young people), specific forms of volunteering (such as employer-supported volunteering), or through specific recruitment mechanisms (such as the internet).

The development of the volunteering infrastructure coincides and is associated with the move towards a more formalised approach to volunteering, through the development of volunteer management practices (Rochester et al, 2009). As we shall go on to explore below, the development of the volunteering infrastructure and of volunteer-involvement has been facilitated in part through government investment in a series of volunteering initiatives.

Political context

It is a common perception that government involvement in and support for volunteering is experiencing something of a high (see for example, Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008; confirmed through stakeholder consultation). It is not new for governments to support volunteering - they have been doing so since at least the 1960s – but what is new is the level of sustained interest that has been demonstrated (Rochester et al, 2009). Since 1997 government has been ‘hyper-active’ (Kendall, 2005) in its support for volunteering and for the third sector more generally, seen through the development of numerous initiatives, programmes, events, reviews, consultations and policies. Driven by concerns for developing a mixed economy of welfare provision, for creating civil renewal and more recently for addressing rising unemployment, these developments can be grouped into three categories, as suggested by Zimmeck (2009):

- Creating a positive climate for volunteering: for example, developing performance measures on volunteering at national and local level; funding volunteering projects and programmes; sponsoring promotional campaigns; and appointing a special advisor on volunteering.
- Rationalising and improving the capacity of the volunteering infrastructure: for example, providing strategic funding for infrastructure bodies at national level and support for the infrastructure at local level.
- Working to incorporate good practice in its relationships with volunteers: for example, promoting employer-supported volunteering schemes for civil servants; supporting clients, such as benefits claimants, who wish to volunteer.

v is itself one of a series of approximately 30 government funded initiatives since 1997 aimed at promoting and enabling volunteering (Ellis Paine, 2009). Indeed, even since its inception in 2006, at least ten new government funded volunteering initiatives have been launched, with five of these coming into existence in 2009 alone with combined funding of over £20m (see Table 2.3). A common aim across these initiatives has been increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of youth volunteering, with many focusing on increasing volunteering among specific sections of the population (for example, young people, unemployed people or disabled people) and a smaller number have focused on developing and disseminating good practice in volunteer involvement.

Table 2.3 Selected volunteer programmes funded by government since 2006

Programme	Funding dept	Duration of agreed funding	Agreed gov. fund level	Broad aims
v	OTS	2006-2011	£117m, for 2008-2011	To deliver step change in the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities for young people
Volunteering for All	OTS	2006-2009	£4.5m	To identify and tackle barriers to volunteering through funding high quality 'exemplar' volunteering opportunities and raise positive awareness of voluntary activities
Platform 2	DFID	2008-2011	£10m	To engage 18 to 25 year olds in international volunteering.
Diaspora Volunteer Scheme	DFID	2008-2011	£3m	To use the potential of diaspora communities to actively contribute to fighting poverty through international volunteering and development awareness.
Modernising Volunteer Support Service	OTS/ Capacity Builders	2008-2011	£1.4m	Part of the National Support Services Programme. Equipping support providers to help volunteer-involving organisations to involve and engage more diverse volunteers
Recruit into Coaching	DCMS	2008-2011	£5m	To recruit and deploy 10,000 new volunteer coaches by 2011
2012 Legacy Programme	OTS	2009-2011	£1.6m	Building a volunteering legacy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
Generations Together	OTS, with DoH, DCFS and DWP	2009-2011	£5.5m	Generate wider interest, thinking and evidence of the value of intergenerational work and increase the number of volunteers involved in intergenerational activities
Volunteer Brokerage Scheme	DWP	2009 – 2011	£8m	To match 34,000 jobseekers with volunteer placements
Access to Volunteering Scheme	OTS	2009-2011	£2m (pilot scheme)	To reduce barriers to disabled people volunteering
Volunteer Managers Programme	OTS	2009-2011	£3m	Grants programme providing support to people who manage volunteering.

Source: Adapted from Ellis Paine, 2009

One of the most significant developments in youth volunteering policy of recent years has been the Millennium Volunteers (MV) programme. It was set up in 1999 by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with the intention of promoting and recognising volunteering among 16 to 25 year olds. The programme provided volunteers with an excellence award on completion of 100 hours and 200 hours of volunteering, delivered through voluntary organisations or a self-designed project. This did not represent full-time volunteering, but aggregated time given over a period of one year (Hill and Russell, 2009). The MV programme was the precursor to **v**, and the transition between the two programmes is explored later in this chapter,

Linking in with the growth of volunteering policy, there have been several key developments within youth policy that are also directly relevant to **v** and its work. The last decade of youth policy has been characterised by an ongoing concern for the (purported) 'disaffection' of young people, reinforced by concerns for rising levels of unemployment among young people, and wider fears of social fragmentation, the rise of celebrity culture and the breakdown of community (Sodha and Leighton, 2009). This has resulted in a range of ideas including the development of youth civic service. The idea of creating a civic service programme has proven popular across all political parties, although the exact form it should take is less agreed upon. Although distinct from youth volunteering, not least in the level of obligation and/or coercion associated with more traditional models of civic service, the links are clear and volunteering is likely to be a significant part of any civic service programme to emerge.

Social and economic context

Broad societal trends such as changing demographics (for example, the ageing population; household composition; patterns of employment; growing wealth and inequality); changing relationships between individuals and society (for example, growing focus on the individual; loss of trust in the political process); globalisation and technological transformation all have implications for volunteering and how it is perceived and engaged with (Hill and Russell, 2009; Rochester et al, 2009).

The recent recession has been one of the key factors driving change in volunteering over the past couple of years. In particular, growing levels of unemployment seem to be stimulating an increased interest in volunteering, with emerging evidence suggesting that more people are putting themselves forward to volunteer (Rochester, 2009). With young people being the worst affected by the rising unemployment and also the group most likely to say they got involved in volunteering in order to enhance their skills and employability (Low et al, 2007), it is reasonable to assume that young people might be a significant cohort within the growing number of people enquiring about volunteering.

During the stakeholder interviews, two further factors driving change in volunteering were identified. First, stakeholders felt that volunteering is not only being seen as a route to employment, but that, since the recent recession, it is also a way of focusing more on community and the importance of relationships and less on individual concerns and consumerism. Second, while levels of interest in volunteering are growing, it was felt that resources for its support and development are, if anything, being reduced. As the demand for services (alongside volunteering opportunities) from third sector organisations increase, their funding bases remain static or decrease.

Perceptions of volunteering

A general perception among stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation was that government policy developments around volunteering had been positive. As a result of some of the initiatives aimed at young people, including v, there was a sense that the profile of volunteering had been raised among young people and that negative attitudes towards young people had been challenged to some extent.

The 'real' significance of such policy developments has, however, been questioned (Zimmeck, 2009), as has the assumption that increased government involvement in volunteering is necessarily a good thing (Rochester et al, 2009).

Both stakeholders and grant recipients had words of caution about too close a relationship between government and volunteering. This connected to a broad concern for the independence of volunteering, with comments made about potential changes to the very nature of volunteering as a result of government involvement. A more general concern was also expressed by some grant recipients and sector stakeholders that government might be viewing volunteering as a 'cheap option'; that they see volunteering as a cost-saving mechanism, especially for public services, which raises concerns of job substitution and job replacement by involving volunteers. Specific concerns were also raised about the sustainability of the current level of interest and investment in volunteering. Stakeholders asked questions such as: can volunteering ever deliver on all that it is expected to, especially as the current expectations are often vague? How much of a priority will volunteering continue to be in the face of imminent public funding cuts? What is the likely future for volunteering if there is a change of government in 2010?

2.3 The Russell Commission

One of the most significant recent developments in youth volunteering has been the launch and reporting of the Russell Commission. Established in May 2004 by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown and the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, the Russell Commission set out to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. The Commission was headed by Ian Russell, CEO of ScottishPower, and aimed to deliver a step change in the diversity, quality and quantity of volunteering opportunities available to young people aged 16 to 25 in the UK (Russell, 2005:9).

The Commission engaged a wide range of stakeholders including young people, the voluntary sector, business and the media, and received over 700 responses from voluntary and community sector organisations, and a further 6,000 responses from young people.

The Russell Commission findings

Ian Russell presented his final set of 16 recommendations to the Chancellor and Home Secretary in March 2005, which were accepted by the Government. The Commission's headline recommendation was the creation of a dedicated implementation body, which would take the lead in delivering the new framework. A small Home Office team was appointed to work alongside Ian Russell to set up the new charity, which would bring together young people, business, the voluntary and community sector and government in a shared purpose; to make volunteering a valued part of young people's lives. In May 2006, v was launched with a remit of creating a step change in youth volunteering. Of the 16 recommendations to come out of the Russell Commission (as summarised in Box 1), 12 became the responsibility of v, while government retained responsibility for the remaining four (indicated by red text). The recommendations varied from specific targets to broad aspirations that are less measurable.

Russell Commission Recommendations

1. A series of campaigns should promote awareness of volunteering.
2. A national volunteering portal will ensure that young people have ready access to information on volunteering opportunities.
3. To ensure that young people receive high quality advice and guidance on volunteering, the implementation body should contract to put in place 200 Youth Volunteer Advisers. To build the capacity of volunteer-involving organisations to engage and support young volunteers, the implementation body should contract to put in place a further 200 Youth Development Managers.
- 4. It should be commonplace for young people to volunteer while they are at school, college or in higher education.**
5. To celebrate the achievements of young volunteers, the implementation body should facilitate an annual youth volunteering award ceremony, to recognise and reward young people for their contributions to UK society.
6. Young people should have access to a 'menu of opportunity', with details of the full range of volunteering activities.
7. There should be a step change in the number of young people volunteering and the diversity of young volunteers. This will require a significant expansion in the number of available opportunities – short-term, part-time and full-time – with effective targeting to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to volunteer:
 - a. Up to 300,000 short-term, group-based volunteering opportunities per annum within the first five years of the national framework
 - b. Up to 80,000 part-time volunteering opportunities per annum
 - c. Up to 12,000 full-time volunteering opportunities per annum delivered within the first five years of the framework.
8. A national framework should recognise the popularity and worth of international volunteering, by offering up to 1,000 overseas volunteering opportunities.
- 9. There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy.**
10. The quality of volunteering opportunities would benefit from greater assurance on a set of clearly stated criteria. Volunteering organisations should be encouraged to meet minimum standards governing access, involvement, development and reward of young volunteers.

11. The opportunity to improve skills and employability is a powerful incentive for young people to volunteer. It is important to mark the contribution made by young volunteers, and to recognise the skills they learn in the course of their activity.

12. Young people on benefits, and their families, should not suffer a financial barrier when they volunteer.

13. In order to build the capacity of organisations to engage groups which historically have found it difficult to access volunteering, specifically disabled volunteers, the commission recommends that government explore the case for the establishment of a cross-departmental initiative.

14. A dedicated implementation body should commission, through a series of contracts, the delivery of the framework.

15. A series of recommendations are made on funding, including channelling funding for youth volunteering through the implementation body and working to attract private sector funding.

16. The implementation body will need to measure the impact of the framework and ensure that there is constant learning and evaluation.

The recommendations in red (4, 9, 12, 13) are the responsibility of government, all others are the responsibility of v.

Adapted from Russell (2005)

Perceptions of volunteering in 2005

Our discourse analysis of the media coverage of youth volunteering around the time at which the Russell Commission was reporting provides an insight into how volunteering was perceived and portrayed. Coverage in 2005 presents a mixed picture. On the whole, the regional and local press coverage of volunteering was positive, highlighting the benefits of volunteering to young people and broadly welcoming the commitment made within the 2005 budget to the implementation of the Russell Commission findings. There was greater cynicism reflected in the national press. When talking about the benefits of volunteering there was less of a focus on the impact on young people themselves and greater comment on the potential (or not) of volunteering to tackle different issues, such as enhancing public service delivery, addressing the *'erosion of civic society'*, and enhancing social inclusion. There was greatest scepticism about the possibility of *'persuading'* young people to volunteer, and this led to questions about the 'value' of government investing in the implementation of the Russell Commission recommendations. The use of terminology such as an 'army' of young volunteers, or 'youth service' reflect a particular model of volunteering portrayed in the media as being associated with the Russell Commission.

Further analysis of future periods of media coverage of youth volunteering to be conducted throughout the evaluation will provide evidence of whether these views have been challenged and changed.

The launch of the national implementation body

v was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and independent of government. The majority of its income was provided through grants from the Office of the Third Sector (OTS), within the Cabinet Office. In 2008 to 2011 this amounted to £117m, of which £45m equates to the long-term financing of the legacy of the MV programme, and £72m relates to the step change activities articulated in the Russell Commission report.

(http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/volunteering/youth_volunteering.aspx).

v was also tasked with raising a further £50m from the private sector, which could be matched on a pound for pound basis by the Exchequer, providing a total of up to £150m to support implementation. Over 150 companies, trusts, foundations and individuals (<http://vinspired.com/about-us/about-us>) have invested in youth volunteering under v, with over £42m being raised to date through match funding initiatives (<http://vinspired.com/about-us/matchfund>). v's 2008/09 annual accounts show a total income of £48.47m, with £46.88m raised through charitable activities, £1.03m from investments and £0.56m from voluntary sources (Charity Commission).

v has a relatively small staff of 51, which is supported by a board of 13 trustees and the annually appointed v20 Youth Advisory Board, four of whom are selected to join the Trustee Board. It operates across the whole of England and in addition to its London head office, maintains a strong local and regional presence throughout the country. This takes the form of 107 vinvolved teams, which have been commissioned by v as a central feature of its infrastructure, working with young people and organisations to provide expert help and advice on youth volunteering. Complementing this is a network of 107 Youth Action Teams (YATs) which have been set up to support and advise on the work of the vinvolved teams.

Expectations and challenges

It is clear that v has a large task on its hands. The ambitions for the organisation were high from the start, with a broad ranging remit set for it through the Commission's recommendations and subsequently enshrined within its key performance indicators and then enacted through its programmes of work. Expectations were high, both from government and from other stakeholders especially as over a year had elapsed between the publishing of the Russell Commission report and the launch of the new charity. One organisation we spoke to, for example, noted that due to the previous success of the Millennium Volunteers programme, v effectively had to achieve more in order to be noticed. Furthermore, there was an expectation from government and the sector that v would act like a mature organisation and allocate funding immediately.

v staff reported that they were expected to begin allocating funds through the new programmes, while also facing a number of challenges associated with setting up a new organisation. They were, for example, still resolving logistical issues such as installing IT systems and securing office space (v moved into their own offices almost one year after they were formed, before which they had been sharing office space and IT systems with the Home Office). This has been attributed by v to limited consideration having been given to organisation set-up. In addition v reported how its set-up was further hampered by the lack of a separate budget for start up and implementation costs.

2.4 The transition to v

MV was still in operation at the time of v's launch in 2006, with the Russell Commission recommendations leading to its incorporation into the new body. There was a subsequent period of transition between MV and v, and in many instances, a period of time when the activities of MV and v overlapped. The transition period lasted 12 months.

This section explores the implications of this for v, and stakeholder and grant recipient perceptions of how effectively the transition was managed.

Perceptions of the Millennium Volunteers programme

MV was generally considered to be a successful programme (see for example Davis Smith et al, 2002). It effectively involved volunteers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and recruited large numbers of unemployed young people. Participants reported a wide range of benefits, including an increase in confidence and improved employability (Hill and Russell, 2009). While large in itself, the MV programme operated on a somewhat smaller scale to that of v; at the time of the national evaluation of MV in 2002, 50,000 young people had taken part in the programme and over 10,000 awards had been issued. Stakeholders and case studies frequently reflected positively on MV as a programme, speaking highly of the level of resourcing, the flexibility and the emphasis on an individual's progression and development. Praise was also offered of the overall approach of MV, one respondent describing it as:

'...exciting, creative, innovative; it tried to break the mould of what a volunteer was in modern day Britain around the turn of the century.'
(involved team, grant recipient)

As discussed in section 2.2, the actual and perceived success of MV has potentially contributed to high expectations being placed upon v from the day of its launch.

Perceptions of the transition period

It is perhaps inevitable that there have been mixed views among all stakeholders consulted in the evaluation about the success of **v** in bringing the new **v** and MV initiatives together. A proportion of **v**'s current grant recipients, particularly within the **v**involved teams, had previously been MV organisations and it is among this cohort that the strongest views were voiced; in some cases, there was an overlap period when organisations were involved with both MV and **v**. Positive comments were made about the strategic development of youth volunteering under **v** and the learning that was taken from MV:

'They didn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. They built on the successes of the previous programme. They've adapted it to move it forward.'

(stakeholder, government department)

Concerns were however raised, for example, as to the management of the transition from MV to **v**. In particular, people felt that delays in wider (government) decision-making about funding and what was to come after MV had been damaging to the work already achieved by the programme, it had meant that staff and volunteers had been left in limbo, and that there had been a loss a loss of momentum, knowledge and good will (case studies):

'..they [those who worked on MV] seemed to feel like they were basically shut down, swept to one side and that's it, out the door.'

(**v**involved team, grant recipient)

Beyond questioning the effectiveness of the process, criticism was also levied at Government for driving the change. Some felt frustration at what they felt was a redevelopment of something they considered to already be working well and considered the change unnecessary. There was also criticism of the change in emphasis across the two programmes with **v** perceived as being particularly concerned about the volumes of young people starting to volunteer rather than the sustainability of young people volunteering. It is important to acknowledge that while there were challenges identified in the transition from MV to **v**, these may not have been related to the form **v** took, rather a more general resistance to change from some.

The delivery of **v**

While the aims, objectives and activities of **v** are broad-ranging, they remain focused on, and are shaped by, the need to implement the 12 of the 16 Russell Commission's recommendations **v** was originally tasked with. This section examines these aims and objectives, as well as the structure and activities of **v**, and how these are perceived by stakeholders and grant recipients.

Scope, aims and objectives

v's website (www.vinspired.com) describes its overall mission as to:

'make volunteering opportunities so diverse, compelling and easy to get involved with that giving up your time to help others becomes a natural lifestyle choice for 16 to 25 year olds in England.'

It has reported its initial aims to be to:

'engage one million more young people aged 16 to 25 in volunteering and community action, and to create a lasting step-change in the quality, quantity and diversity of youth volunteering in England.'
(v formative evaluation tender specification document).

v's aims have been updated as it reaches key targets and as the context for young people shifts. v's Board of Trustees agreed the following specific objectives for v in February 2010:

- To foster an ethos of active citizenship and community engagement among the young.
- To maximise opportunities for volunteering and community action programmes that address directly unemployment/worklessness among the young.
- To encourage skills development through volunteering/community action as a means of improving employment prospects for young people.
- To encourage activity that strengthens the bonds between young people and the communities they live in (young people at the heart of stronger communities).
- To encourage youth-led community action and the development of enterprising young leaders.
- To encourage fresh thinking and innovation in engaging young people in community action in such a way as it becomes an integral lifestyle choice.
- To challenge negative perceptions of volunteering among the young and promote a more positive image.
- To raise the profile and value of volunteering/community action among all young people and organisations, including employers.

The theory of change model as outlined by v in 2008 (see Appendix B) provides an overview of its activities, anticipated outputs, outcomes and goals.

Throughout its short life, however, v's exact focus has changed slightly, as the organisation has worked towards meeting the Russell Commission recommendations, looked to extend beyond them, and adapted to the changing external environment. The key performance indicators agreed between v and its main funder, the OTS, gives an indication of what it is working towards and how this has changed. The boxes below summarise the key performance indicators and outcome measures agreed between v and OTS for the 2007/08 and 2009/10 periods respectively. Looking across the two sets of key performance indicators gives an indication of how the emphasis within v's work has begun to change.

Key performance indicators for the 2007/08 period

Quantity:

- The number of volunteering opportunities created either directly or indirectly by v's activity

Quality:

- The number of organisations signing up to the Youth Achievement Awards and/or other recognised achievement systems
- The number of organisations implementing externally validated quality assurance systems
- The degree to which organisations shape their work to take a youth-led approach
- The personal experience of young people in their volunteering and their endorsement of the experience and the host organisation
- The degree to which organisations not traditionally involved with youth volunteering create volunteering programmes for young people

Choice and diversity:

- The profile and diversity of new volunteers
- The range and choice of volunteering opportunities for young people
- The extent of the use of the Portal
- The range of partners supported by and supporting v

External validation (three to five years):

- The quality and range of media coverage devoted to v
- The level of public recognition of v
- The perception of v as a charity independent of government
- The number and extent of private sector funding commitments from companies and charitable trusts
- The range of charity partners that v attracts
- The degree of cross-party support for v
- Approval of v's work by young people

Source: v tender documents for the formative evaluation of investments made by the Russell Commission Implementation Body, September 2008

Intended outcomes and related key performance indicators for v 2009/10

Recognition [each of the following outcomes and key performance indicators have specific success measures associated with them]:

- Implemented a system of accreditation and awards
 - Number of young people completing vifty and vimpact
 - Number of young people and funded organisations undertaking and using vimpact and vinspired awards online
 - Number of non funded organisations kite marked to use vinspired awards online
 - National Awards – opened for nomination, promoted, selected at regional and national level, and event held
 - Number of young people achieving Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze UK Youth Achievement Awards

Strategic [each of the following outcomes has a number of specific key performance indicators and success measures associated with it]:

- Good governance
- Good staff management
- Good resource management
- Good external communication
- Good brand awareness among 16 to 25 year olds
- Demonstrate diversity of opportunities available
- Raise awareness of v products
- Good media coverage

Marketing [the following outcome has a number of specific key performance indicators and success measures associated with it]:

- Digital communications used to engage young people

Partnership [each of the following outcomes has a number of specific key performance indicators associated with it]:

- [Successful partnership working to deliver] Volunteering England National Support Services Project
- [Successful partnership working to deliver] National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement higher education project
- [Successful partnership working with] YouthNet

Source: Summarised from v's 'Key Performance Indicators 2009-2010' document

Funding streams and activities

In order to meet its aims, objectives, key performance indicators and the Russell Commission recommendations, v constructed a number of work programmes. These include several funding programmes, as well as wider programmes of work around, for

example, marketing and communications. They are distinctive and deliberate in design, but share core programme principles, which v describe as:

- embracing youth involvement;
- delivering high quality volunteering experiences;
- embedding equality and diversity;
- enabling creativity and innovation;
- supporting skills development;
- encouraging partnership working;
- maximising community impact.

The principal work programmes to date include:

vinvolved teams

Both the vinvolved teams and the vinvolved projects were developed as a response to the Russell Commission recommendation for a reform, rebrand and expansion of the MV programme.

The creation of a network of 107 vinvolved teams is a direct response to Russell Commission Report Recommendation Three to:

- Ensure that all young people have access to information, advice and guidance on youth volunteering; and
- To build the capacity of volunteer involving organisations.

Each vinvolved team comprises staff with expertise in recruiting and placing young volunteers, training, capacity building and partnership working. The vinvolved teams have three main roles:

- Creating new volunteering opportunities in the public and third sectors;
- Brokering young people into opportunities;
- Championing youth-led action.

vinvolved projects

This programme was deliberately split into two tiers (large and small organisations), thereby ensuring a more equitable grant award process where organisations were only competing for funding against others of similar turnover, size and scale. The grants enabled both large and small organisations opportunities to access funding to create and directly deliver innovative short-term, part-time and full-time youth volunteering opportunities.

Organisations with a strong track record of youth volunteering, and those with no experience at all, were encouraged to apply for this funding stream in order to diversify the range of providers offering opportunities to young people, and in turn, to reach new target groups of young people. At the time of writing, v had commissioned a total of 153 vinvolved projects.

Match Fund (August 2008 to March 2011)¹

The Match Fund grants programme aims to inspire greater levels of investment in youth volunteering from private companies, charitable trusts and foundations and individuals. Through this scheme, v provides grants that match up to 100 per cent of any new private sector investment for youth volunteering projects in England. Organisations can apply under six themes: health and well being; environment; supporting children and young people; community cohesion; poverty; and, human rights.

vtalent year (2009 - ongoing)

vtalent year is a £10.5m national full time volunteering programme for young people. The scheme is currently being piloted with 33 local authorities and 28 Further Education colleges offering 44 week long placements in Children's and Young People's Services.

The aim is to give 2,000 volunteers aged 16 to 25 the opportunity to directly influence and enhance public sector services and gain skills to improve their employability. At least 40% of the places are taken up by young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The structured placements are delivered in areas such as nursery education, play, youth work and supported learning. Participants work towards completion of a relevant level 2 qualification and participants who complete their placement are offered personal development grants of up to £1,500.

vcashpoint²

Developed by the first cohort of v20 Youth Advisory Board, vcashpoint provides young people with the opportunity to design and deliver their own youth volunteering project. Investing £1m in 16 to 25 year olds in England over four years, to date vcashpoint has provided over 600 young people with the opportunity to improve their community, with a grant of up to £2,500 to bring their ideas to life. Young people can also seek support from the vinvolved team network to develop their ideas.

In addition to their funding programmes, v delivers a number of other streams of work in order to meet its objectives. These include:

- Marketing and communications activity: this includes developing a dedicated web-based portal for youth volunteering (www.vinspired.com) where volunteering opportunities are advertised; there are marketing activities to promote volunteering to young people; and there is offline advertising (see Chapter 4 for a detailed outline of v's marketing and communications activity).

Investing in the sector: this includes working in partnership to develop a quality assurance self-assessment framework for youth volunteering (**Reach**); developing a programme of volunteer recognition (including vfifty award and vimpact award); supporting youth involvement; and public affairs activities such as lobbying government on behalf of youth volunteering.

¹ Some elements of the Match Fund programme were the subject of the summative evaluation.

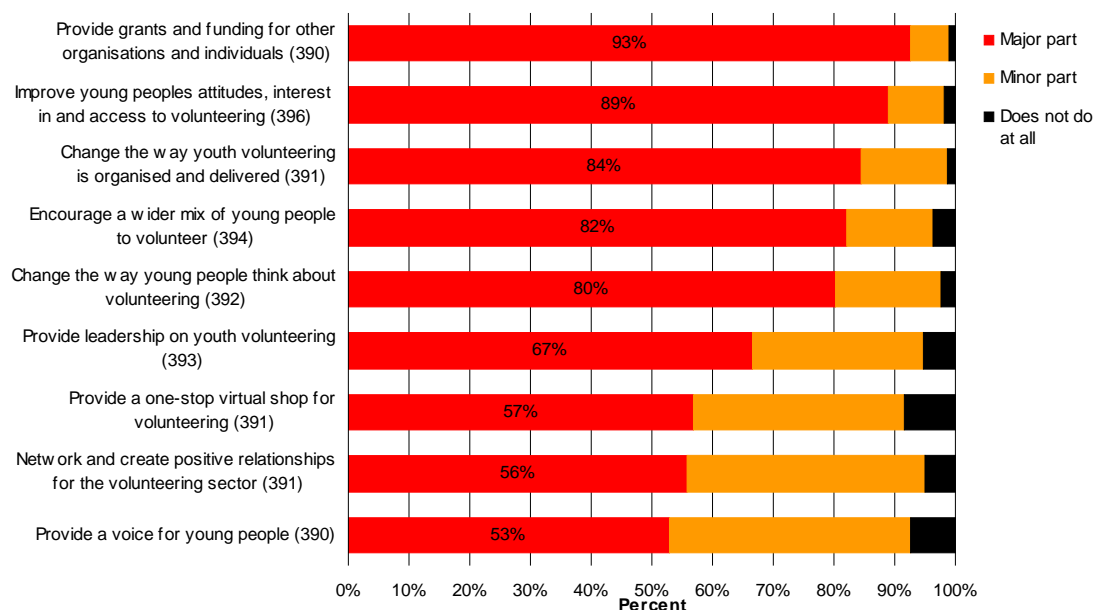
² This evaluation covers round two onwards of vcashpoint.

Perceptions of v's aims and objectives

Our research so far indicates that, perhaps unsurprisingly, grant recipients were positive about v's overall aims and objectives (case studies). Frequently raised points included that v was 'making youth volunteering the norm' and making 'things possible that weren't possible before'. On closer inspection, however, it appears that there was a lack of clarity as to what v actually does. Research participants frequently found it hard to pin down exactly what v as an organisation has been charged with achieving, beyond the very wide brief of creating a step change in youth volunteering. Among those it funds, v was primarily seen as an organisation that provides funding for youth volunteering (see figure 2.1). There was also general agreement that v's role is to improve young people's attitudes, interest and access to volunteering; change the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered; encourage a wider mix of young people to volunteer; and change the way young people think about volunteering. In terms of other (actual or potential roles) there was less agreement (see Figure 2.1).

The type of funding received made a difference to what grant recipients saw as v's role (see Appendix B). For example, 91 per cent of v talent year projects and 90 per cent of v involved teams felt that a major part of what v did was to change the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered. By comparison, 79 per cent of Match Fund projects, 83 per cent of v involved projects and 80 per cent of young people receiving v cashpoint funding felt the same. In terms of providing leadership on youth volunteering, 81 per cent of v talent year projects were likely to think that this was a major part of what v does compared with 70 per cent of v cashpoint projects, 69 per cent of v involved projects, 61 per cent of v involved teams and 56 per cent Match Fund projects. This difference across funding streams is perhaps unsurprising given their slightly different remits. The v involved teams have been directly commissioned in part to change the way in which youth volunteering is organised and delivered and to provide leadership at a local level on youth volunteering. Whereas the other funding streams have more of a focus on funding projects to engage young volunteers directly.

Figure 2.1 Grant recipients' views about the roles v undertakes



Source: Grant recipient survey, Wave One (Batches 1 to 4). Total number responding in brackets.

This broad support for the overall aims of and aspirations for v paired with a lack of clarity as to its specific remit, ambition or objectives extended to stakeholders – including those in government and within the volunteering and youth sectors. Indeed there was general reluctance among stakeholders interviewed to comment on v’s specific aims or objectives, due to a lack of knowledge. Those that had greater direct contact with v (either through being funded by v or by having regular ‘conversations’ with staff) had a far clearer understanding, although questions were still raised about its remit. There was wider recognition of the existence of the ‘one million target’, but even this apparently clear target has proved somewhat opaque as there is a lack of clarity among stakeholders and grant recipients as to what this refers to.

While there is confusion among stakeholder and grant recipients about v’s role, interviews with v staff indicate that v itself is very clear about its remit.

As has previously been discussed, the Russell Commission recommendations have guided the aims and objectives of v since its formation. They have shaped a broad range of activities, and required v to work with a wide range of audiences and target groups. While these aims and activities have been clearly set out and understood by v itself, there remains limited awareness and some confusion among grant recipients and wider stakeholders as to what v is trying to achieve, or more precisely what type of organisation it aspires to become. It is not surprising that v’s stakeholders do not fully understand the extent and nature of v’s complex and diverse activities, and in many cases this lack of clarity may not be an issue. However, research so far indicates that there are instances where confusion about v’s identity and remit is preventing a sense of buy-in among v’s

audiences. Clearer, more systematic communication between **v** and its audiences both about **v**'s direction and about its various stakeholders' part in that direction would assist in increasing this buy-in. This communication will need to be consistent and ongoing as **v** reassesses and evolves its aims in response to ever changing external environments and demands and as it establishes itself and looks to create its own self-identity beyond that imposed by the Russell Commission and its funders.

Perception of v's structure and functioning

More generally, **v** was reported by stakeholders to be a 'credible' organisation that 'complemented' the work of others in the field, with a generally 'well regarded' local infrastructure provided through the **v**involved teams. Government stakeholders generally felt that **v** was starting to make good links with partners, had a good awareness of policies and agendas affecting young people, and was becoming increasingly effective at making links with policy makers. Questions were however raised as to the uniqueness of **v**, with a particular concern that it did not duplicate the role of other infrastructure bodies or voluntary sector organisations in what was perceived to be an already crowded field. With an awareness of the level of government funding invested in **v**, questions were also raised as to its independence, as illustrated in the following comments:

'We perceive it to be very much a sort of government set-up...so, although it's a charity there is a feeling that it is very much a sort of government-directed charity.'

(Infrastructure body stakeholder)

Within government departments there was generally less concern about issues of independence:

'They clearly are acting very much as an independent organisation. The direction may be coming via OTS, but there doesn't appear to be too much in the steerage.'

(Stakeholder, government department)

Similarly, although there was a general awareness among stakeholders of **v**20 and of **v**'s promotion of youth leadership, there was a lack of detailed knowledge as to how this was working in practice. This led some to speak positively of **v**'s commitment to involving young people and to developing a young person-led approach; it led others to believe that **v** was more 'youth-influenced' than 'youth-led'.

2.5 Summarising progress and development

So, **v** has a big agenda. It has a large and diverse audience to answer to and a wide remit to deliver on. The environment in which it is operating is changing relatively rapidly. It has been set up in the context of growing interest in volunteering from both government and the general public, but static levels of participation and generally low levels of engagement among young people. It is one of many government initiatives funded to develop volunteering, but is the recipient of one of the largest grants to do so. It has been established in an already busy 'market place' both for volunteering generally and youth volunteering specifically, with a remit to create a step change in youth engagement but with such broad aims that objective measures of success are hard. This has created both opportunities and challenges. It has a large financial resource base, but a small team tasked with getting most of the funding 'out of the door', leading to a perception among grant recipients and stakeholders that it is often 'over stretched'. From the day of launch it was charged with delivering its grants programme, with challenging targets set for both itself and its grant recipients. As with all new organisations, it has taken time to get set up, to establish itself and its relationships and to develop its operating principles and practices. But it is learning. Stakeholders and grant recipients both recognised developments already made, with improvements in monitoring requirements, changes to the awards schemes, the introduction of regional meetings, and relationship building being particularly commented upon. As one respondent put it:

'I think they're getting their act together now. ... since **v** took everything in-house it's been a lot better.'
(**v** Match Fund, grant recipient)

The following chapters provide a detailed look at how **v** might move forward.

In general, however, looking at the context in which **v** is operating suggests that the volunteering environment should continue to see a healthy level of interest from government, across the sectors and among the public, although levels of funding to support its development are a concern. The general view is that the proliferation of volunteering initiatives under the current government is unlikely to continue should there be a change of government, and indeed there is little support for yet more volunteering initiatives or more specifically for the invention of new initiatives at the expense of investing in sustaining existing ones (stakeholder consultation and case studies). There is a sense that what is needed is consolidation – building on existing learning and enhancing 'what works well' - rather than challenge, innovation and change. For **v** itself there is a need and demand for it to clarify and communicate how 'it sees itself' – the type of organisation it considers itself to be – and within that what its aims and objectives are likely to be over the coming years. Trying to be all things to all people is never an easy task and being clearer about who **v** is and what it does may have the dual benefit of giving external stakeholders something distinct to buy into and position themselves alongside, and also make **v**'s own job a little easier. A key challenge remains for **v** to define itself in a way that takes all the key audiences with it.

2.6 Implications

Implications for v

- There is a lack of clarity among v's audience about the exact nature and direction of v's aims and strategic role within youth volunteering. This appears to be an issue of perception and awareness among stakeholders, rather than being indicative of a lack of focus from v. v would benefit, however, from refining and more clearly communicating its aims, remit and key messages to these audiences, as well as adopting a greater degree of transparency and openness in its communications. This also includes the need to better communicate organisational and network success. This would not only help v's audience to buy in to its future vision and promote collaborative working between v and youth organisations, but also help v to plan for its future.

Implications for government

- As v moves towards completion of the Russell Commission recommendations there is a role for government, as its main funder, in supporting v to clarify its remit and aims.
- The context in which youth volunteering operates has changed since the Russell Commission objectives were set. Within this context, government has a role in articulating how volunteering and national service initiatives can continue to support young people's skills development, citizenship and community cohesion by drawing on achievements to date.

Implications for the volunteering sector

- The world of volunteering is changing as a result of both developments in the sector and in the wider political, social and economic environment. The current economic climate is also likely to mean funding cuts for volunteering. In the context of change, working together, between agencies across the sector, will be more important than ever.

3 Delivering v

3.1 Chapter Summary

- Experiences of the grant application process were generally positive and there tended to be high satisfaction with help and guidance provided during the application process.
- Challenges in managing the transition between application and delivery were identified. These related to the project contact for the application being different to the delivery contact and to insufficient resources either budgeted for or available for project costs and staff time.
- Several challenges were identified at the set-up stage including recruitment of staff, a lack of funding for management of projects and getting to grips with and understanding project targets. Being able to draw on existing links or support helped to mitigate these challenges
- Recruitment of volunteers was only cited as 'difficult' by a minority of organisations in the survey. However, retention was seen as more challenging.
- There were mixed views of targets. While seen as useful in driving projects forward there were concerns about the focus on numbers, a resulting squeeze on time and quality of service and relationships and a potential disincentive to working with harder-to-engage groups.
- There is a perceived tension between the 'overall number' and 'diversity' targets, and that achieving one may be at the expense of the other. Projects set their own diversity targets however these can then be misconstrued as a desire to target certain populations.
- There is evidence of relatively low levels of full implementation of **Reach** at the point of the grant recipient survey taking place but those who used it generally found it useful in their work and this will continue to be reviewed.
- Accreditation was widely provided by projects. Numbers of volunteers choosing to take it up or to complete it varied.
- There is positive evidence about the levels and impact of youth involvement / youth-led activity. However, across the funding streams there were questions about what meaningful youth involvement was, and a coherent definition they could work to.

- Changes to the monitoring process have been welcomed. However, concerns remain around monitoring the personal details of the young volunteers, in particular ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- There were mixed views about communications and the levels of support available from v suggesting that the funded network has diverse needs.
- Networking events were viewed very favourably by grant recipients.

In this chapter we look in depth at the process of delivering v funded projects. Section 3.1 provides an overview of the profile of v's funding. In section 3.2, we cover grant recipients' experiences of the application process and in section 3.3 particular issues related to the set-up phase of projects. The next three sections then cover the successes and challenges encountered so far in delivering on some of v's key aims, namely the number and diversity of youth volunteers (section 3.4), the quality of the volunteering experience (section 3.5) and the promotion of youth-led activities (section 3.6). Section 3.7 looks at monitoring and evaluation, while section 3.8 examines the support and communication provided to v projects.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the process of delivering v's activities and grant recipients' views of delivering projects. For a discussion of the outcome and impact of v's activities, please see Chapter 5. Findings are based primarily on the survey of grant recipients (covering results for vinvolved teams and vinvolved, Match Fund, vtalent year and vcashpoint projects) and initial analysis of the first round of case studies (covering all funding streams). There were differences reported by grant recipients depending on the funding stream in focus, and where relevant these differences have been highlighted in the chapter.

3.2 The profile of v's funding

Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of v funding based on applications in the period August 2006 to September 2009. vinvolved teams, vinvolved projects and Match Fund projects accounted for the lion's share of v funding, with vinvolved teams awards per project generally larger than for vinvolved or Match Fund projects. vtalent year awards also tended to be larger (around £300,000 per project) than either of these, but due to the small-scale of the initiative accounted for only ten per cent of total funding. vcashpoint awards accounted for around one per cent of the total funding, involving generally small awards in line with the criteria for funding (see Chapter 2 for background on each of v's funding streams).

Table 3.1 Profile of v funding

Funding stream	Number of projects	Average award per project (£000)		Total funding for stream (£000)	per cent of total funding
		Mean	Median		
vinvolved teams	107	390	300	41,692	32
vinvolved projects (large grants)	114	236	261	26,866	20
vinvolved projects (small grants)	43	159	150	6,824	5
Match Fund	185	200	82	36,967	28
vtalent year	44	303	288	13,353	10
vcashpoint (R3)	69	2	2	120	<0.5
vcashpoint (R4)	130	2	2	219	<0.5
vcashpoint (R5)	174	2	2	320	<0.5
All funding	885			131,467	100

Notes: All funding includes additional internally managed projects. The funding streams itemised above account for 96 per cent of the total funding available.

The evaluation team had access to information on about two-thirds of vinvolved projects (accounting for 56 per cent of the total funding). The main activities were related to environment and heritage (accounting for nine per cent of the total pot of funding), education and training (eight per cent), advocacy and campaigning (eight per cent), mentoring (seven per cent), sports (seven per cent), arts (six per cent) and the media (five per cent).

The grant recipient survey provided details of the types of organisations being funded by v. Funded projects varied greatly both in terms of the scale of the funded organisation (in terms of number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees), and the scale of the organisations' work with volunteers (in terms of the number of FTE volunteers) although this may not be surprising given the distinct differences between types of activities delivered between the different funding streams. However it was found that all funding streams contained both large and small-scale organisations. Broadly, Match Fund projects were more likely to come from larger organisations (30 per cent had more than 100 FTE employees) working with higher numbers of volunteers (41 per cent involved more than 100 FTE volunteers). As vtalent year projects were hosted by local authorities and colleges, the size of organisation also tended to be large (75 per cent had more than 100 FTE employees) but most were only involved with volunteers to a modest extent (73 per cent of organisations said they worked with between 6 and 20 FTE volunteers). Forty per cent of vinvolved teams came from organisations employing between 6 and 20 people, with 42 per cent working with five or fewer volunteers, although interestingly a quarter (27 per cent) involved more than 100 volunteers. Forty-two per cent of vinvolved projects were based in organisations with 5 or fewer employees, with 33 per cent saying the organisation worked

with 5 or fewer volunteers and 28 per cent with between 6 and 20. **v** funding was therefore reaching a range of larger and smaller organisations.

Further exploration of the organisations funded by **v**, including details of previous experience of both volunteering and working with young people, is covered in Chapter 5.

3.3 The application process

Avenues to application

Although many sources of initial information about **v** funding were mentioned in the grant recipient survey, there were four main avenues through which organisations had first heard about **v** funding. These were: through working on an existing **v** project; via colleagues or work contacts; through **v** contacting them directly; and through a website. **vcashpoint** recipients were also likely to mention hearing about the funding through a friend.

The key reasons for organisations applying for funding were: because the project they had in mind fitted in with **v**'s aims and criteria (between 41 and 67 per cent of projects); and because it provided an opportunity for the organisation to expand its activities (between 36 and 56 per cent of projects). Other reasons mentioned by projects were: the receipt of previous funding from **v** (11 per cent of Match Fund, 15 per cent of **v**involved teams); because existing projects were coming to an end (13 per cent of **v**involved teams); income/finance-related reasons (ten per cent of Match Fund); and because the organisation wanted to work more with young people (11 per cent of **v**involved projects). **vcashpoint** recipients most commonly mentioned wanting to start a new project (58 per cent) or to 'do their bit for society' (31 per cent).

Experiences and views of the application process

The application process is designed differently and involves different components for each funding stream. Among organisations who had received a grant from **v**, overall views of the application process were very positive. The large majority of survey respondents (85 to 94 per cent) were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the application process. Participants in the case studies generally reported the process to be straightforward and not overly complicated (in comparison to procedures for other funding bodies).

However, about half the Match Fund and **v**involved teams (which completed a form) found completing the form 'very' or 'fairly' difficult, as did 39 per cent of the **v**involved projects. Interestingly this was not often mentioned by **v**talent year projects - only eight per cent found completing the form difficult. By far, the most common complaints (across the Match Fund, **v**involved project and team funding streams reporting difficulties) were that the forms were too long (44 to 48 per cent of projects finding it difficult to fill out the form) and too complicated (21 to 26 per cent). Other issues included: problems with the forms being too repetitive (38 per cent of Match Fund, 11 per cent of **v**involved teams and 33 per cent of **v**involved projects); finding it difficult to supply the required information (ten per cent, three per cent and ten per cent); difficulties understanding the language used in the forms (seven per cent, 17 per cent and 15 per cent); and, specifically for **v**involved teams, the multiple

stages of the application process (17 per cent) and a lack of examples of how to complete the form (11 per cent). Participants in the case study also mentioned a lack of clarity regarding definitions of volunteers or opportunities (for example the distinction between short and long-term volunteering), and that any requests for clarification received a slow response.

Nevertheless it is important to stress once more the points made above, **v** was not perceived to be any more difficult than other funding bodies to apply for funds from and then deliver projects for. Indeed there were cases where **v** was praised for being relatively straightforward. The types of funders that grant recipients are used to working with may also have affected the level of difficulty or ease reported. For those used to working with complex grant funding, **v** appeared relatively straightforward; for those less used to the funding process, applying to **v** could be more challenging. Thus the vantage point of the grant applicant rather than the process itself may have been the issue:

'To be fair v haven't been too bad with the paperwork. I've run projects for [central government funder] and its seven pieces of paper for each thing.'

(vTalent Year, strategic staff)

As mentioned above, the provision of information for the application was difficult for some projects, particularly in relation to providing: project target information (between 24 and 33 per cent finding it 'very' or 'fairly' difficult); the types of volunteers expected (23 to 31 per cent); and costs and budget information (19 to 34 per cent). The case studies found that project plans drawn up as part of the application became irrelevant as the project was being implemented as they did not reflect what needed to happen in reality. In particular, **v**involved teams reported that it was not always practical or relevant to refer to the three year project plans as the project commenced. This was because the projects could have developed in unexpected ways, or new opportunities arisen for young volunteers that had not been anticipated in the project plans. Therefore completing these was not necessarily seen as a worthwhile exercise. **v** may want to consider one year plans be developed as each year of funding commences with a 'skeleton' three year plan provided when obtaining the grant. This could provide the opportunity for the project to review and update on progress and ensure the plans are relevant. Another solution may be to encourage organisations to draft realistic and flexible three year plans from the beginning. Project plans still do have value however, and the requirement to submit a detailed project plan was welcomed as a useful project management tool by **v**talent year projects.

Both **v**inspired projects and Match Fund projects felt that it was difficult at the bidding stage to identify what targets would be realistic for their project. This could be because they had not worked with young people before or particular diversity groups, and therefore had limited knowledge to draw on to consider what realistic targets may be for their project. There was sense that when applying for funding, projects needed to 'sell' themselves and what they could achieve to **v**, which may have led to unrealistic targets and claims being

made by the person writing the application. The effect of this was the project staff then had a very difficult job to be able to meet the requirements that their organisation had set out for them when they had to deliver the project.

Applicants reported a general disjuncture within their organisations between the application stage and project delivery. This was attributed to the fact that staff writing the application often differed from those implementing the project. This could be difficult to avoid – for example staff leaving a post due to illness, maternity leave or a new position. However, it raised specific issues, including communication barriers caused by the applicant remaining as the main contact for **v** even though they were not involved in the ongoing delivery of the project; and project workers feeling that the application had underestimated project costs or time, or bound them to unrealistic targets. It was suggested that projects are given explicit guidance to ensure that **v** are informed of both who is managing the operational aspect of the project and who is managing the strategic elements such as budgets and grant funding, so that communicating to these key stakeholders can be streamlined and operational staff remain informed of the aims of their work and new campaigns by **v**. The onus on ensuring that **v** is informed of who to contact about the project lies with the organisation obtaining funding from **v**. However, there were times when this responsibility was not met. A number of measures could be adopted to try to avoid this in the future. **v** provided two contact forms for **v**involved projects - one for the marketing contact and another for the project officer. However, specifying that a wider range of contacts be provided, asking also for the contact details of the operational staff working with the volunteers, as well as the contact details of those named on the application as managing the budget/monitoring, could help minimise the risk of such a breakdown in communication.

This finding also has implications for grant holding organisations. They need to consider how they apply for grant funding and the need to ensure that operational staff could have input at this stage, or, should the person writing the application move on, that there are specific protocols in place to adequately hand over the project to the new staff member. The need to ensure that the tasks set out in the grant application are achievable is important, and responsibility for this lies with the organisation writing the application.

As noted previously, there was a view that **v** was generally on a par with other funders and in some cases better, and this was suggested in each funding stream. A range of more specific issues relating to the application process were reported for each funding stream, these are reported below.

vinvolved teams reported that tight timescales could be problematic. They were also more affected by the transition from the MV programme (discussed in Chapter 2) and felt a lack of support in this process. Funding for **v**involved teams was perceived to be limited to front-line staff delivering the programme, meaning that no funds would be available for project management or to cover management costs. However, the **v** application guidance notes state that management and overhead costs can be covered within the **v** grant, suggesting a need for further clarification for applicants. **v**involved teams also perceived that partnership working was encouraged by **v** and that they should therefore try to involve consortiums in their applications. This created additional pressure when developing applications and may

indicate a lack of understanding regarding the guidance notes. However, fostering such contacts could lead to better partnership working the future as the project developed. Finally, there was ambiguity about the relationship between v and its vinvolved teams: for example, are they part of v, more like a franchise or simply funded by them?

Match Fund projects expressed a concern that the application process was the same no matter what the size of the grant being sought.

Among vtalent year projects, the pre-application process was praised for being well thought out and efficient. However, projects found specific aspects challenging, including the short timescale to complete their bid, the volume of information needed, and specific requirements, such as getting 'sign off' from their Board of Governors.

The application procedures for vcashpoint are very different from those used for organisations, with a much shorter application form. Participants in the case study praised the vcashpoint application process overall for being straightforward and well-designed. This was backed up by the survey findings, where 83 per cent of vcashpoint recipients were 'very satisfied' with the application process with a further 16 per cent 'fairly satisfied'. Ninety-two per cent said it was easy to complete the application form. The simplicity of the procedure was cited as a reason for applying to v rather than other organisations funding similar activities. Having support for the application from professionals such as teachers or support workers also facilitated the process. However, some participants reported that they found costing and budgeting particularly difficult for categories such as equipment or refreshments. In addition, having only one young person named on the application form could place a great deal of responsibility on that individual, which was seen as more difficult for applicants who lacked prior experience of managing funds or who may have vulnerabilities such as learning difficulties.

The need for v to have a contract with a named individual before providing grant funding is understandable. However, where young people may lack confidence in their abilities, this requirement could inadvertently exclude them from applying. The young people who had gained vcashpoint funds said it had improved their skills and confidence. The outcome of a vcashpoint grant could therefore be of particular value for young people who lack confidence and it may be especially important to consider potential barriers to applying for vulnerable young people. Suggestions for future rounds to rectify this could be to allow 'grant holders by proxy' in special cases, whereby another person or organisation would be able to hold overall responsibility for the contract. To ensure the youth-led nature of vcashpoint was sustained, this could be agreed in 'special cases' only, with the proxy grant holder completing a separate form outlining why the young person whose vcashpoint project it was, were unable or unwilling to hold the contract. In this manner young people who may have particular vulnerabilities, such as those with learning difficulties, may be enabled to have the confidence to apply, and young people already confident in their abilities could continue to hold the vcashpoint contact entirely in their name.

Support and guidance during the application process

Nearly all projects said they had read the application guidance documents and the majority found them 'very' or 'quite' helpful (at least 79 per cent of organisations and 96 per cent of individuals receiving vashpoint grants). Projects that did not find the guidance helpful would have liked clearer guidance or personal contact with someone from v.

Applicants often contacted v during the application process. Most often, this was through ringing the call centre, e-mailing a dedicated address or contacting v staff directly. Staff from v also often got in touch, usually the Project Support Officer or Programme Administrator, to discuss applications.

vinvolved teams and vinvolved projects were asked about post-application consultancy support available to them. Post-application consultancy support was offered to applicants who the grants decision panel decided needed the support. Match Fund projects were asked about pre-application workshops that they could attend. Pre-application workshops were offered to all Match Fund applicants from April 2009. About three in ten vinvolved teams and projects said they were offered post-application consultancy support and of these, the majority (about eight in ten) took the offer up (particularly among vinvolved projects). 14 per cent of Match Fund projects had attended an application workshop. Virtually all the projects who had received these types of support said it had helped with the application. The reasons for non-attendance at Match Fund workshops were probed in more detail: the key reasons given were that applicants had enough experience of applications already but also that they had not known that the workshops were available. In the case studies, Match Fund projects reported that they felt supported in the application process, for example, by being able to submit draft bids, although there were those who felt the process was rather 'hands off'.

Overall satisfaction with help and guidance during the application process was high, particularly for the Match Fund, vtalent year and vashpoint funding streams, where at least 92 per cent were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied. In slight contrast, 19 per cent of vinvolved teams reported that they were 'fairly dissatisfied', as were nine per cent of vinvolved projects, while six per cent were 'very dissatisfied'. This dissatisfaction was more apparent among those projects which were not offered post-application support.

In this section the application process has been explored. The majority of applicants reported that they were satisfied with the process, the support and guidance received was good, and that the process compared favourably with that of other funders. However, a number of potential problems were also discussed. In particular, a disjuncture between the writer of the application and the project staff could lead to a sense from the latter that the targets and project plans were unrealistic or challenging. This was not the fault of v but indicates that organisations making applications could be encouraged to consider this in future rounds and perhaps include the views of operational staff and service users in the design of their bids to ensure they are achievable and realistic from the outset. Providing a greater length of time to write the applications before decisions are made by v could assist to support this process.

3.4 Setting up the project

Case study participants were glad of the opportunity the v funding provided to develop their volunteering and youth-led activities. However, there were particular challenges at the set up stage. These included the need to recruit new staff within a short time frame and to learn new skills in order to recruit and support young people.

The issues raised in the last section about the discontinuity between application and delivery, and the resulting difficulties for communication and working within already prescribed parameters over which project staff had no control should also be borne in mind. These parameters were set by the person who wrote the application to v for the organisation. The implication of this is that organisations should be realistic when developing applications and try to involve the operational staff that will actually deliver the project if possible. When targets were not clearly understood by operational staff from the outset, this could also be challenging. This could result in the projects being unprepared for the development of their new volunteering project, or to them not communicating effectively internally. Therefore project staff were trying to meet targets without understanding why they had been set or how achievable they are. This may also have been due to perceived challenging parameters set by v, who wanted the projects to achieve as much as they could with young volunteers.

However, ambitious targets and challenging project plans could also be capacity building for the organisation and lead to high levels of achievement. As projects managed to successfully set up their volunteering programme, the setting of stringent parameters from the outset could also be viewed as a reason for why the project had successfully 'stretched' the organisation into new areas, such as youth involvement. It could also lead to them conducting greater outreach with new groups of young people as they tried to meet their diversity targets – a key aim of setting such targets.

There were distinct differences by funding stream noted from the case studies in relation to project set up. Negative experiences were reported particularly by vinvolved teams. A key set-up (and delivery) issue was the lack of funded management time for such projects (vinvolved projects also commented on a mismatch between the amount of strategic management time funded and actually required). v was seen by vinvolved teams as fairly prescriptive in terms of target and staffing requirements, which were felt to provide insufficient time and resources to serve both volunteers and organisations. However, these challenges did abate somewhat over time as teams 'settled in', identified improved ways of working (for example, more targeted promotions or partnerships across sectors) and became more established so that young people and organisations were now approaching them directly. The situation has also improved as targets have been met. Therefore the initial sense that targets were too prescriptive could have been a 'teething problem' experienced before vinvolved teams became fully operational rather than an indication that the targets set were unrealistic. Indeed, setting such targets may have led to positive developments as vinvolved teams strove to achieve them.

involved projects identified a number of facilitators to set up, including the ability to build on existing organisational support (projects in organisations with a track record of youth/volunteer work could more easily build on this). Difficulties were reported with staff not understanding or not being aware of project targets, or being reluctant to target particular groups. In some cases, staff may have misconstrued the monitoring and target requirements to mean that they should only target particular groups of young people and exclude those not in these target groups. This points to a need for more clarity over the rationale for targets and monitoring to ensure that diversity is promoted within projects and that active outreach is considered by project staff, which will help ensure that young people who may not normally volunteer get the opportunity to do so. This difficulty appears to be an internal issue for the projects rather than the fault of v. However, v could provide information to encourage projects to ensure staff are made fully aware of the purpose of targets, to support projects to overcome this difficulty.

There were particular challenges to set up identified by v talent year projects because of the short timescale between application and the start of the programme. This impacted upon the creation of volunteering opportunities, recruitment of young people and the overall capacity to deliver the v talent year project as originally outlined in the application. For example, some projects reported that it was not possible to recruit staff required for the project, which delayed the timetable for implementation. Participants did note however that this could be due to the local authority or college implementing v talent year rather than v. The implication of this is that it is crucial for new projects to allow enough time to recruit staff and prioritise this if they intend to implement the service on schedule. Other difficulties with v talent year were linked to a single worker being responsible for both project management and co-ordination. Challenges were also identified with a co-ordinator inheriting the programme from colleagues as this could result in a lack of information about or contact with v which only had contact details for the original staff member.

In common with v involved projects, v cashpoint participants reported that pre-existing links (such as those to a school/youth group or voluntary organisation) were extremely helpful in achieving a successful set up (and delivery). They also found support and guidance from a range of sources including family/friends, professionals or other volunteers helpful in setting up a project. This included support with issues such as venue hire, health and safety and child protection.

Overall, the set up of projects had proceeded well. Challenges reported during the set up process were underpinned by a lack of clear communication or understanding within grant recipient organisations as to the vision set out within their application and tight timescales between receiving confirmation of the grant and project set up. The former may be more an issue for individual organisations or government grant giving bodies, than v, to address, especially given v faced a government directive to commit to spending funds within a short time frame. However, providing a longer set up period before projects are operational could lead to organisations having the time to consider and communicate the project goals to all staff.

3.5 Meeting targets for opportunities and volunteers

This section covers general issues related to creating opportunities and recruiting and retaining volunteers. It then moves on to look at diversity within volunteer recruitment, particularly in terms of involving young people in traditionally harder to reach groups.

Creating opportunities and recruiting and retaining volunteers

Most organisations (between 77 and 88 per cent) found the process of creating *part-time* opportunities 'very' or 'fairly' easy. However, the creation of *full-time* opportunities was perceived as more difficult: 83 per cent of involved teams which were involved in this said this was difficult - although this is perhaps unsurprising given they have no funding to support full-time placements - as did about half of Match Fund, v_{talent} year and v_{involved} projects. This finding is entirely consistent with the Russell Commission report, which found that full-time volunteering opportunities were the least well-developed part of the youth volunteering 'menu' of opportunities – due to the complexity and cost of this type of volunteering. v_{involved} teams had an additional role of working with local organisations to develop their volunteering capacity and two-fifths (40 per cent) reported finding this difficult.

Match Fund, v_{talent} year and v_{involved} projects used many different means of recruiting volunteers. Key avenues were via word of mouth, leaflets/flyers through local organisations, outreach work, the National Volunteer database or the host organisation. However, many organisations (at least ten per cent) also recruited volunteers through YAT, other v_{funded} projects, through online sources (for example, websites, including social networking sites), educational institutions or advertising/marketing campaigns. Although many different methods of recruitment were also mentioned by v_{cashpoint} projects, they were also distinctive in recruiting primarily through word of mouth or via leaflets/flyers.

In the case studies, the level of ongoing recruitment that was required during the initial period of v_{talent} year projects was noted as an additional difficulty. Rather than complete just one round of recruitment, due to volunteers dropping out of the programme, the staff had to continue to recruit young volunteers throughout the initial set up stage and throughout the project.

The process of recruiting volunteers - or brokering volunteers into opportunities for v_{involved} teams was successful and only cited as 'difficult' by around a quarter of projects in the survey. In the case studies, v_{involved} projects attributed the ease of recruiting volunteers to the interesting nature of the volunteering opportunities that the v_{funding} afforded. They noted that young people often were not making an 'active' choice to volunteer but had been referred from another agency, had a prior interest in the activity or prior experience of involvement with the organisation. v_{cashpoint} participants reported a number of factors behind young people's participation in their projects, including wanting to help others or give something back to the community, being passionate about the activity, a friend's involvement, wanting to meet other young people, and to improve their employability or help their career development. v_{cashpoint} projects were viewed as positive

because they often involved existing friendship groups as well as new young people; this overcame the potential barrier that a volunteering activity might prevent young people from socialising with friends.

In contrast to recruitment, retaining volunteers and stopping them from dropping out was seen as much more challenging: 53 per cent of involved teams, 43 per cent of Match Fund projects and 36 per cent of involved projects said this was 'very' or 'fairly' difficult.

Although projects do provide full-time opportunities, there was little input on this provided during the case study interviews. The exception to this was the experiences of vtalent year projects which is unsurprising given that the programme involves only full-time placements. A range of specific barriers both to recruitment and retention for these full time placements were explored in the case studies and are discussed below:

Financial. One view was that volunteering was not a financially viable option for all young people. This was highlighted as a particular issue for young people living independently. The transition from benefits to subsistence payments was also problematic for some young people involved in this programme. This is an issue with wider credence than v can address and sits with the government departments such as the Department of Work and Pensions. The point raised, however, acts as a reminder of the significance of ensuring young people are provided with adequate financial support when they enter programmes such as vtalent year, if they are to be able to successfully engage with the opportunity. It also highlights that the current government position on this can act to exclude vulnerable young people from such opportunities because of the risk of this adversely affecting their income.

The length of the programme. The duration of the programme could act as a barrier to involvement to young people. If it was too long it had the potential to interfere with other activities such as college or work and there was more likelihood of enthusiasm for the programme waning.

Rewards and recognition. There was concern that the rewards and recognition built into the programme may not be sufficient to engage some young people. One view was that some young people were attracted to shorter-term rewards rather than the longer-term rewards associated with accreditation.

Alongside these barriers to recruitment, four key factors emerged as impacting on projects' ability to retain volunteers. The first was the pull of other opportunities such as paid employment or training/education. Second, personal factors were identified as having an influence. These included health-related issues (such as poor health or bereavement) and more contextual factors (such as inadequate transport links). Third, subsistence payments were cited as causing challenges. The specific difficulty was around the lack of clarity over the regulations and administrative processes governing payments. This lack of clarity created 'teething problems' during the programme set up. For example, young volunteers would present receipts for invalid expenses, and the process would have to be continually reiterated to each of the young volunteers on each occasion they attended to claim expenses. This led to the process being highly labour-intensive for the staff, which was not

planned for. Finally, there were cases where inadequate staffing resulted in insufficient support for the volunteers. This could also relate to the tasks that were required (such as paying expenses) taking up a greater extent of staff time than had been anticipated or indicated during the funding application process.

Therefore there was a higher level of staffing required to both manage the project and support the young volunteers than had been planned or budgeted for. While these difficulties were not necessarily due to v, it is an important point to recognise for future rounds or similar projects that a higher level of staff support may be required. That the young volunteers were limited to claiming for only certain items, rather than being able to claim for the entire £100 potentially entitled to, was also cited as a factor for a high level of drop outs. For example, for some young people living at home with parents there was an expectation that they would pay towards household bills and it could be complicated for them to claim back these legitimate living expenses. Although they were entitled to do this, it was very difficult for the project staff to work out and could lead to the young people being concerned they would not be able to obtain enough to cover their expenses. The v talent staff were highly committed to the young people and tried to remain as flexible and helpful as possible when paying expenses to encourage the young volunteers to remain within the project. However, they reported this to be the most challenging aspect of the programme, despite the allowances that were made. It was suggested by staff that providing a flat rate of £100 expenses would be a far more facilitative approach that would allow more young volunteers to remain on the programme. This is not currently possible due to existing government legislation on the payment of volunteers, however is clearly an issue that requires further lobbying. The evidence from the evaluation illustrates a strong desire to be able to provide young people in v talent year schemes with a flat rate payment, a Youth Development Wage for example, and that this would enable a greater number of young people to successfully engage with the programmes such as this.

v may have made an effort to address financial barriers which may impact upon the participation of young people from low income backgrounds, however, these measures could only be implemented within the context of existing government legislation. While outside of a remit v can control, this is an important policy point that could be raised with the government, as current legislation acts to exclude the harder to reach and vulnerable groups that may benefit particularly from full time volunteering.

Meeting targets

Meeting targets for volunteer numbers was a key area of discussion for all funding streams within the case studies. Among those who reported challenges in meeting targets, it was felt that, although having targets was useful, the application and monitoring process was designed to count numbers, rather than reflect quality. There were also greater challenges in meeting the targets for certain types of volunteering opportunities such as short-term or full-time. Concerns were voiced by v involved teams about a mismatch between opportunities and numbers of volunteers actually recruited, with more opportunities than volunteers recruited to match.

While vinvolved teams are exceeding their targets they found the target-driven ethos and 'way of working' challenging. The research team hypothesised that the vinvolved team staff resented the need to focus their work on meeting targets and wished to spend their time working on the ground with young people without this focus. vinvolved teams reported that meeting their targets could cause a number of difficulties around the quality of opportunities generated. These included a lack of recognition that brokering some types of young people requires more time or resources than others; a lack of time to support or revisit organisations they worked with, and a disincentive to creating ongoing and sustained relationships. It was felt that the target approach encouraged 'quick wins' (meaning working with young people or organisations that were easier to engage with to ensure successful outcomes for targets). A target-focused approach also shortened the contact time with volunteers and organisations which reduced the project team's capacity to support those with greater need. However, it was also recognised that having limited time focussed on individual volunteers improved the sustainability of the vinvolved team and helped to build the capacity of local organisations, as teams were not so '*intrinsically involved in hand holding of volunteers*'.

Thus the target driven ethos may have benefited the overall outcome, but a flexible approach that takes into account the length of time taken to broker young people with differing levels of needs into volunteering could act to reduce the pressure the targets may inadvertently create to work with 'easier' to engage young people.

Achieving diversity in volunteers

v has an ambition for a diverse group of young people to participate in volunteering. This area was explored in most detail in the case studies. While there were grant recipients who were able to attract target groups, there were others who found this more challenging. Grant recipients that reported the targets not to be challenging, reported this to be a natural 'side effect' of the demographics of the young people they worked with and the type of opportunity on offer. This was especially so in the vTalent year programme where it was felt that, by definition, only young people who were NEET would be attempting to access full time volunteering opportunities:

'That is just so easy [meeting targets]. Here it wasn't a problem. Anybody that is free to come in is a NEET mostly.'
(vTalent year, grant recipient)

It was noted that despite specific guidance being issued by v, further clarification around what was meant by NEET from v could be useful. Grant recipients reported that young people who wish to get involved in volunteering may be NEET but display no further disadvantage. There was a sense that the NEET category was trying to encourage volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds to take part in volunteering, for example those from low income households and those with few or no qualification, but that the categorisation of this as a target group could be misleading and lead to the targets being met without disadvantaged young people becoming engaged:

'There's a bit of further clarification that we need to have with v at some point actually, the kind of terminology they use is something like 50 per cent of the young people should be from the NEET group. I'm second guessing what they're trying to say because the vast majority, if not all young people who are actually ready and willing to go on a full time volunteering opportunity are highly likely to be unemployed. They could be unemployed graduates. Whereas I think what v are actually trying to say is that you should get a balance of young people in terms of 50 per cent of those who might be more accurately described as vulnerable or disadvantaged or disengaged, so yes they're unemployed, they're NEET but they've also got additional problems whether its offending or care leavers or young mothers.'

(vTalent year, grant recipient)

Projects that exceeded their targets for young people who were NEET also raised this as a challenge to project delivery because of the higher levels of support required to engage this group. Therefore engaging a number of young people who were NEET and had additional support needs or vulnerabilities could take up a great deal more of the project staff's time than supporting the same number of young people who did not have these needs. It was not always felt that the level of work required to successfully engage hard to reach young people was reflected in the targets. That projects are collectively exceeding their targets indicates a high level of success in engaging different and challenging groups, however there are two implications of this. The first is that projects may appreciate greater recognition of challenges faced when conducting work with different groups. The second is the need to ensure that the desire to meet targets, on the part of project workers, does not come at the expense of refusing to work with the most excluded or difficult to engage young people as volunteers.

Projects perceived that they were set diversity targets and when these were considered challenging, the programme timetable and short timescale available to complete recruitment were cited as general barriers. However, projects could also be reluctant to be seen to limit their recruitment through targeting and preferred to work with any young person that came to them, rather than base it on particular characteristics and felt that the

diversity targets were of lower priority than overall performance targets regarding number of volunteers. Where it existed, an ethos of 'working with whoever comes to them', especially if overall performance is good, indicates a lack of understanding of group-based inequality. Successful targeting of particular groups may be necessary to promote equality. Promoting awareness to staff of why this engagement is important, and not just a 'paper exercise', is recommended for v, although this finding also illustrates the challenge v faces in this area.

In this section the process of creating opportunities, recruiting and retaining volunteers has been explored. Generally the process of recruitment was successful, however retention could be challenging. This was especially the case with v talent year. The reason for this was cited as the lack of financial support available to young people engaging in the programme. This is due to the existing limitations and barriers created by government legislation and outside of the remit of v, however could indicate an area that requires further campaigning or lobbying to address. Meeting targets could also prove challenging, particularly when the young people being worked with had additional or complex support needs. These young people required more intensive working and support than those without additional needs, which was not necessarily reflected in the outcomes that the project staff could report. However, targets were also important because achieving them evidenced the progress being made by grant recipients.

3.6 The quality of youth volunteering

In this section, we explore a number of factors related to the improvement of the quality of young people's volunteering experience.

Quality assurance (*Reach*)

Reach is a quality assurance accreditation system, established by Youth Action Network (an independent charity), which was rolled out across v's funded network. v contracted Youth Action Network to turn their existing hard-copy **Reach** toolkit into an online self-assessment tool, and for their staff to provide tailored capacity building support to the funded network, to enable them to work towards achieving recognised organisational quality standards for youth action and engagement. This contract flowed from the Russell Commission recommendations around improving quality assurance and v's commitment to ensure that funded organisations delivered a safe, high quality and well-managed volunteering experience for all young people engaged in their work.

vinvolved teams and vinvolved projects are expected to gain **Reach Achieved** status. The process is based on an online assessment tool, with projects evidencing their ability to reach the expected quality levels in a range of core modules relating to youth volunteering.

vinvolved teams and vinvolved projects responding to the grant recipient survey were asked about their use of the **Reach** quality assurance procedures, and their views towards them. Around a quarter said they had fully implemented **Reach**, while just under three-quarters said they had partly implemented the procedures. Despite the relatively low levels

of full implementation, the majority of projects (84 per cent) said that **Reach** was 'very' or 'fairly' useful in their work. The figures will be reported on again in the next stage of the evaluation.

A number of reasons were given for having not fully implemented **Reach** at the time of the survey. By far the most commonly cited were lack of staff/time (57 per cent of vinvolved teams and 65 per cent of vinvolved projects which had not fully implemented **Reach**) or that it was too early in the project (21 and 15 per cent). Ten per cent of vinvolved teams and seven per cent of vinvolved projects said they were still in the process of implementing **Reach**.

Other less commonly mentioned reasons were that organisations already had their own quality assurance procedures, that they did not find **Reach** useful, that internal issues had hampered implementation, that staff needed training to use the framework or that it was difficult to use.

Similar findings came from the case study research. Participants reported that the **Reach** framework, when they had begun to implement it, had been useful:

'The **Reach** assessment has set a series of benchmarks or standards to be met that go beyond youth volunteering. They are about volunteering within the organisation. So in that sense, you know, the **Reach** benchmark has benefited the whole organization.'
(v Match Fund, grant recipient)

However, it was also felt that despite the benefits, implementing **Reach** was labour intensive and also could replicate existing frameworks or monitoring in place, while continuing to add to staff workloads. This was cited as a reason for having not completely implemented **Reach**. There also appeared to be confusion regarding the purpose of **Reach** with it being referred to as an additional monitoring body.

Therefore the benefits of **Reach**, when recognised, were reported to be tangible. All organisations receiving a grant from v agreed to undertake a quality assurance process as part of their contract. However from a pragmatic perspective when this was implemented it could be reported as an additional burden on the project staff, which could also replicate existing efforts.

Recognition and Accreditation

Virtually all Match Fund, v talent year, vinvolved team and vinvolved projects said that accreditation was available to volunteers as part of the project. (Accreditation is automatically part of the offer for v talent year projects.)

The accreditation offered primarily came in the form of vInspired (vifty and vimpact) awards (69 to 98 per cent of projects), certificates awarded by the organisation itself for volunteering (79 to 82 per cent), certificates awarded by external organisations (such as First Aid, OCN or ASDAN, 64 to 88 per cent), qualifications (for example, NVQs, GCSEs, City and Guilds, 52 to 81 per cent) or the vNational awards (50 to 78 per cent).

The levels of volunteers who chose to work towards some form of accreditation varied somewhat. While 57 per cent of vInvolved projects said that more than half of their volunteers did this, the figure was 50 per cent for Match Fund projects and 36 per cent for vInvolved teams. 15 per cent of Match Fund projects said that no volunteers worked towards accreditation (the figure was negligible for other funding streams). There was further attrition as some volunteers undertaking accreditation did not actually receive any: 56 to 65 per cent of projects said that more than half the volunteers undertaking accreditation actually received it. Very few (one to five per cent) said that none of the volunteers received accreditation having started towards it.

That accreditation offered through v funded activities was viewed as a 'selling point' by vInvolved teams' staff. This could raise the status of v opportunities above others offered to young people and benefit the young people themselves by gaining formal recognition. However, there was also scepticism reported from staff regarding the motivation that young people may have to gain accreditation and a need to recognise that some young people may wish to become involved with volunteering for other reasons, such as altruism, and therefore be less interested in accreditation.

A lack of understanding of the v awards was reported by vInvolved projects during the case studies. Staff often only found out about the awards after they were asked how many the young volunteers had achieved, as part of the project monitoring process; once they were aware of the awards they had encouraged young people to take part. While this lack of awareness may be due in part to the way that v communicates information about the awards, it may also be a reflection of the priorities of staff setting up new projects and a tendency to focus on day-to-day tasks rather than reflect on the information being provided by v. Grant recipients did acknowledge that information was often available from v but may not have been incorporated into the implementation of the project until some time later, once they reviewed their progress via the v monitoring system.

Overall, regarding quality and accreditation the following key points emerged. Grant recipients did recognise the value of **Reach**, however achieving it could also add to their workload and could be felt to duplicate existing organisational quality standards.

Accreditation is also being offered to young volunteers at the majority of v funded projects, with high variation between the number of young people who wished to take this up. There appeared however to be a lack of understanding and awareness of the vInspired awards, which may have been improving over time, but indicates that there could be additional information and advice on these provided to operational staff to ensure they encourage young people to achieve these awards, when appropriate.

3.7 Delivering youth-led activities

The grant recipient survey found high reported levels of youth involvement in a number of areas. These were in publicity, promotion or media campaigns (86 to 97 per cent of projects), in developing activities and target groups for the project (85 to 93 per cent), as part of the Advisory Group (78 to 95 per cent), in recruiting volunteers (83 to 93 per cent), in identifying the overall project aims and strategy (67 to 81 per cent), in managing or working with volunteers (71 to 78 per cent) and in administration or finance (47 to 64 per cent).

The case study data highlighted positive developments regarding youth involvement within v funded activities. It was felt that v's support for the ethos of youth involvement had shifted organisational attitudes and led to more focus on youth-led activities and decision-making. Organisations varied in how much progress they had made in this respect but this is not surprising given the diversity of organisations that v funds. It is also important to note that there is a distinction to be made between youth involvement (which was widespread) and youth-led activities (which appeared to be adopted to varying degrees and with less certainty of the meaning of the term from the funded network).

By definition, v's activities displayed a high degree of youth-led activities, with young people responsible for identifying, delivering and managing volunteering opportunities. v's talent year activities displayed varying degrees of youth involvement; ranging from lower levels in placing young people into volunteering opportunities to a higher degree of involvement at both a project and program level. This higher involvement included tasking young people with the development of volunteering opportunities and with the recruitment of volunteers.

From the v involved projects participating in the case studies there was a sense that they had to include a 'youth-led' element, although the challenges faced in meeting targets and providing quality opportunities meant that they did not necessarily have the capacity to formalise this. Where v involved projects lacked existing structures to provide for youth-led activity, the youth-led aspects of their project more often took the form of ad hoc input on a day-to-day basis. The capacity to develop youth-led work was higher if the v funding explicitly provided for this.

More generally across the funding streams there were questions about what meaningful youth involvement was. Although v has a youth involvement policy the network appeared to lack a coherent definition they worked to. Organisations also questioned how progression towards full youth involvement was understood by them, suggesting this could be further mapped out and supported by v, even if they hold existing documents focussing on this.

Despite guidance having been provided, v involved teams reported a lack of clarity about the role of YATs: was this to provide youth-led activity or just to manage smaller discrete projects such as celebration events? Participants questioned whether staff in the v involved teams had the knowledge, understanding and skills to carry out such demanding youth work:

'I think there are a lot of people coming in who got employed into the v funded network who probably did have a lot of knowledge around young people, and a lot of knowledge about volunteering, but may not have had the experience around how to facilitate youth-led work.'
(involved team, grant recipient)

This may explain why staff found it difficult to absorb or identify the myriad of guidance provided and points to the need for greater support from v for some staff to support them to tangibly implement abstract guidance documents. Perhaps concerningly for v, given their 'youth-led' ethos, staff from the vinvolved teams also questioned the wisdom of completely youth-led projects. It was seen as unfair on the young people, as the staff should be responsible for certain elements that young people may have less of an interest or the time to achieve. This view may also indicate the ongoing uncertainty that was reported from grant recipients regarding the meaning of 'youth-led':

'You can have certain things youth-led, certain things just can't be and it's not right to put a young person in the position of right we've got targets to hit, you've got to help us do it.'
(involved team, grant recipient)

Overall, it was found that organisational youth involvement had been promoted and enhanced via the v funded activities that were undertaken and this was a positive outcome for the organisations involved. However, there may have been a lack of clarity regarding the meaning of 'youth-led' activities, which could in turn lead to a greater level of youth involvement than youth leadership. Youth-led activities and measures to promote them could therefore be further disseminated, should the extension of youth-led activities be a goal of v.

3.8 Monitoring and evaluation

The summative evaluation raised several issues about the monitoring procedures used by v during the period 2006 to 2008. This included concerns from some organisations that the monitoring procedures were overly complex and bureaucratic (especially for smaller organisations), the requirements had been difficult to interpret and had changed in some cases and that the monitoring forms did not allow projects to demonstrate their successes. There was particular and widespread concern about some of the more personal and sensitive questions required as part of the monitoring, for example on sexual orientation. However, publicly funded organisations are increasingly expected to monitor for such information (especially in line with the forthcoming Equality Act 2010). Therefore a

reluctance to do so may indicate the need for ongoing culture change within organisations. Such change may also continue to occur if monitoring factors such as sexual orientation becomes a normal practice, rather than ongoing avoidance.

As a result, v introduced a number of changes to the system. These included reducing the frequency of monitoring reports to every six months for some organisations, revised guidance, one-to-one or group support meetings involving Project Support Officers, and adjusting the format of the monitoring reports to incorporate Excel.

Respondents were supportive of the need for monitoring data with over nine in ten projects saying they were clear about why there were asked to provide such information to v. Respondents to the survey were asked their views about the current situation. Most organisations said the amount and frequency of monitoring were about (or less than) what they would have expected (although 33 to 40 per cent of projects said the amount was more than they expected).

These relatively positive findings were echoed by the case studies where participants welcomed the move to six monthly reporting for those who were on track and the improved co-ordination of monitoring.

In cases where monitoring continued to cause challenges these were related to ongoing concerns about monitoring the personal details of the young volunteers, in particular ethnicity and sexual orientation. These concerns were echoed in the survey where 66 per cent of Match Fund, 59 per cent of vinvolved teams and 50 per cent of vinvolved projects said that personal information was difficult to provide. This was attributed to: young people being reluctant to share this information, or becoming upset by it (73 to 81 per cent of those citing difficulties); too much information to report (23 to 28 per cent); a lack of time (12 to 18 per cent); staff being reluctant to ask for the information (11 to 23 per cent, particularly an issue for Match Fund projects); or staff being unclear why the information was required (five to 17 per cent, particularly an issue for Match Fund and vinvolved projects). The challenges that grant recipients reported around collecting this information are not surprising. Even with continued support and guidance from v this is likely to remain a challenge not least because staff at funded projects necessarily build a rapport with the volunteers and this rapport makes it harder for the young people to share such personal data. The research team has suggested to v that one way to overcome this challenge may be to also collect monitoring information directly from the young volunteers through an online survey which does not identify volunteers by name. v is exploring this option for future programmes.

There was also evidence that projects were finding it hard to keep track of volunteer numbers with between 12 and 29 per cent of projects finding this information difficult to provide. In contrast, financial information appeared easier to provide with only 11 to 15 per cent of projects finding this difficult to submit.

Additional concerns emerged from the case studies. As mentioned above, monitoring was not felt to capture everything about a project, and projects felt there was no opportunity to provide feedback to v about wider issues. Projects also commented on a lack of feedback

from v after monitoring forms were submitted, and concerns that they were not being read. There was a desire for more feedback on performance and recognition of the work that the monitoring required. vinvolved projects also reported concerns that they were unable to monitor projects accurately due to the pressure to restrict their time to delivering the project.

Therefore the overall value of monitoring and evaluation was recognised by grant recipients. However, ensuring good quality monitoring information can bring challenges, particularly collecting personal information from young people. For example, the collection of sexuality monitoring data is a relatively new legal requirement for providers of activities or services, and there may remain significant cultural taboos around sexuality which may impact on the attitudes of staff and organisations responsible for collecting this data. This leads to certain monitoring practices being reportedly more difficult than others, without reducing the importance of such monitoring practices. It also points to further awareness-raising being required among the funded network to ensure there is a genuine understanding of the importance of monitoring. The monitoring process is vital for providing v and its wider audience with a clear picture of who is taking up volunteering opportunities.

3.9 Support and communication

In this section we look in more detail at the support and communication provided by v, firstly for the v funded network as a whole, and then at the individual project level. This section focuses only on support and communication for v's funded network. A wider exploration of v's communication activities can be found in Chapter 4.

General communication and support

There were two opposing views of v's communication with grant recipients. There were those who reported a lack of communication from v and difficulties communicating with v staff. This was articulated as a barrier to engaging with any v network. Participants reported a lack of opportunities to feed into development, a lack of explanation behind decisions and that v responded poorly to suggestions and criticisms, appearing 'defensive' and unapproachable. Some communication was considered very 'top down', for example being obliged to use particular marketing materials.

Other project staff did feel able to feed their thoughts into v and said that there was a two way relationship:

'They're really good on some occasions and they really do listen and they take that knowledge and those suggestions from people and you can see them within pieces of practice.'

(vinvolved project, grant recipient)

Other general issues about communication arose from the case studies. As referred to earlier, communications were generally channelled through the contract holder or applicant rather than staff delivering the project. Participants felt that while lots of resources were

available, staff often found out about them by chance. In general, it was felt that v could focus on developing internal communications and not just on external communications.

The survey explored use of general communication channels in more detail, in particular the v-inspired website and 'The v' newsletter. (Please note the survey took place prior to the relaunch of the website).

The majority of v-involved teams (61 per cent) visited the v-inspired website at least once a week and a further 28 per cent at least once a month. v-involved projects were also likely to visit the website, 43 per cent doing so once a week, 30 per cent once a month and 17 per cent once every two to three months. Match Fund projects were less likely to visit the website, with only 15 per cent doing so once a week, 39 per cent once a month and 28 per cent every two to three months – nine per cent said they never visited the website. Of those who visited the website, between 61 and 72 per cent said it was useful. v-cashpoint projects' perceptions of the website are explored in Chapter 4.

Nearly all (97 per cent) of v-involved teams and v-involved projects received 'The v' newsletter (primarily through e-mail) as did most Match Fund projects (75 per cent). However, over a fifth of Match Fund projects (23 per cent) claimed not to receive it. Of those who received it, most (95 to 98 per cent) said they read it at least sometimes. Of those who read it, between 62 and 84 per cent said it was useful (this was highest among v-involved teams). Ideas for improving 'The v' included more regional and local content, providing projects with the opportunity to feedback and contribute to the content or providing examples of other projects.

Participants in the case studies also praised the annual conference for its high energy and glossy presentation. The opportunity to informally network and share learning points on difficulties that projects had faced, with each other, was very useful. However, there was a concern that the conference was image-driven and there was little opportunity for projects to discuss any challenges they may have been facing to v or in organised forums operating as explicit aspects of the conference agenda. This was mentioned as a reason for non-attendance.

Project communication and support

The projects funded by v articulated a range of differing needs and views of what v already provided in terms of communication and support and there was a mix of positive and negative experiences. There was much variation between projects, not only between but also within individual funding streams. Although projects could articulate their unmet needs and a range of solutions, the tasks for v are to establish how far these can or cannot be met, how much it can target different projects and how to manage project expectations about the support it can give.

Nearly all respondents to the survey were in contact with v staff in some way. This was principally with a Project Support Officer (77 to 95 per cent of projects) and to a lesser extent a Programme Administrator (17 to 29 per cent). 20 per cent of v-involved teams and 14 per cent of Match Fund projects also had contact with a Marketing Manager.

Over half (52 per cent) of vinvolved teams were in contact with staff at v at least once a month, as were 45 per cent of Match Fund projects and 40 per cent of vinvolved projects. Most other projects were in contact less often than this but at least once every two to three months. (This excluded sending monitoring and report information.)

Both the survey and case studies uncovered mixed views about different aspects of communication with v staff. The survey found that vinvolved teams were notably more negative than Match Fund or vinvolved projects. The case studies unearthed mixed views from vinvolved teams with participants reporting v to be flexible and helpful, alongside others suggesting v was not flexible or in contact enough.

On a very positive note, most projects found that:

- v staff were approachable (89 to 98 per cent);
- offered support when it was needed (63 to 86 per cent);
- made it clear what was expected (67 to 84 per cent); and,
- did not ask them for too much information (55 to 66 per cent).

Match Fund and vinvolved projects also held positive views on the following aspects:

- that staff were easy to get hold of (77 and 71 per cent);
- got back to them promptly (77 and 68 per cent);
- knew what was going on with their projects (61 and 61 per cent); and,
- had the right information to answer questions (88 and 67 per cent).

In contrast, only two fifths (40 per cent) of the vinvolved teams found staff easy to get hold of, 49 per cent that staff got back to them promptly, 48 per cent thought that staff knew what was going on in their projects and 41 per cent felt that staff had the right information to answer their questions.

Case study participants reported that in general project workers were helpful and responsive (*'trying their best, but up against lots of pressures'*), with particular praise for Project Support Officers. There were those who felt that v was too London- or v-centric and not outward facing enough, as evidenced by the fact that they rarely visited projects. This may have indicated a lack of awareness of the size of the v staff team or have been indicative of parochial stereotyping, however it does indicate a desire for local networks and communication to be especially prioritised.

Participants also reported difficulties with not knowing who to contact in v. They received different answers from different contacts within v, suggesting an inconsistent approach or policy on some issues, although, internally, v staff manage a policy log for each investment programme, the intention of which is to ensure issues and decisions are recorded to maintain consistency.

There was a sense from some projects that project workers were generally too short of time to provide full support; this criticism was mainly of the structure, rather than individual staff. Some had expected v to take a 'hands on' approach and wanted more support and regular

contact. However, others appreciated the 'hands-off' approach. These participants did not necessarily have much day-to-day contact with v but felt support was available should they require it.

There was a range of different support needs articulated by different funding streams. vinvolved teams asked for more support in engaging hard to reach groups and setting up YATs. It was felt that this needed additional skills, a gap that was recognised but not supported by v. Match Fund projects would have liked more support from v at the 'operational level', particularly in providing introductions and initiating partnerships with other local organisations that were funded by v or were more generally involved in youth volunteering.

vinvolved projects presented a range of views on their support and communication with v. Some projects had not required (or sought) a great deal of advice or support from v but felt it was available should they require it. Another view was that while the relationship with v had been initially problematic, it had improved over time and projects had been able to access the guidance they required. A third view was that projects were frustrated when an issue had not been resolved despite repeated contact with v.

It was suggested that communication and support could be improved through more personal contact with vinvolved projects in the form of visits. One reason why this was regarded as important was that it would allow v staff to better understand the particular challenges a project may be encountering and would provide an opportunity to discuss these challenges face-to-face. There was acknowledgment however, that due to the geographical spread of vinvolved projects v could not be expected to visit each of them.

Networking between projects

The majority (64 per cent) of vinvolved teams had 'a lot' of contact with other v funded projects, while 36 per cent had 'a little' contact. In contrast, most Match Fund (67 per cent) and vinvolved projects (53 per cent) had 'a little' contact with other v funded projects. About a fifth of Match Fund projects (19 per cent) had no contact, as did nine per cent of vinvolved projects.

The key forms of communication with other projects were regional networking meetings, organised jointly by v and funded organisations, the national conference, through e-mails and phone calls, or visits to each other's projects. Between 13 and 19 per cent of those in contact with others did so through the members' area of the v-inspired website, while nine per cent of Match Fund projects were in contact through other volunteering groups. Such contact usually took place every month or two to three months, although a fifth of vinvolved teams said they were in contact at least once a week.

Both the survey and case studies found very positive views of these networking events. Most respondents to the survey (77-93 per cent) who attended them found them 'very' or 'fairly' useful. Case study participants also reported networking events to be especially useful. However there was a sense that there could be scope for more project

representatives to be involved, especially for consortia. As there were restrictions on who could attend regional meetings and the national conference, some projects found this frustrating and limited engagement to staff members only. It was recognised that from a practical point of view not all of the project staff could attend however greater flexibility was suggested and a mean to ensure operational staff could meet and share practice regarding their actual work with young volunteers, as well as strategic staff.

Projects suggested that there could be more face-to-face regional contact. Members of the v network reported ‘accidentally’ coming across other v funded projects, but had found support from such projects helpful. v talent year projects praised the inception meeting as it allowed them to establish relationships with other v talent year initiatives operating in their region.

In summary, mixed views regarding communication and support emerged. Contact with v could be well received and satisfactory, however there were grant recipients that appeared to desire a higher level of contact or greater promotion of local networks. This was backed up by a very positive view of the project networking events facilitated by v. v staff visiting projects was noted to be particularly useful because it was felt they would ‘understand what we do’ well if they did, however given the size of the staff team responsible for managing grants and number of funded projects across England there is a mismatch in v’s capacity to respond. However it indicates a desire for one to one and personalised contacts between v and the projects they fund.

3.10 The key challenges to projects

The preceding sections have looked at a number of different aspects of delivery and described the challenges and successes achieved within each of them. In the survey of grant recipients, projects were also asked to identify what they saw as the main challenges to the project so far (Table 3.2).

Unsurprisingly, issues specifically related to the delivery of the project’s activities, were most commonly mentioned, particularly around recruitment and the creation of opportunities. However, more general issues related to managing and budgeting for the project were also seen as key challenges, particularly for v cashpoint grant recipients.

The table also shows the relative importance of communication with v and the supply of monitoring information among v involved teams and projects and Match Fund projects.

Table 3.2 Key challenges to projects				
involved teams	involved projects	Match Fund	v talent year	vcashpoint
Creating opportunities/ placements (31%)	Recruiting enough young people (14%)	Recruiting enough young people (16%)	Managing the project (e.g. setup, premises)	Recruiting enough young people (19%)

			(22%)	
High targets set by v (23%)	Retaining volunteers (12%)	Supplying monitoring information (15%)	Recruiting enough young people (15%)	Budget management (13%)
Communication with v (22%)	Creating opportunities/placements (11%)	Administrative burden (11%)	Maintaining enthusiasm/interest among young people (13%)	Communication with v (10%) Retaining volunteers (10%) Supporting different needs of volunteers (e.g. disability) (10%)
Staffing issues (e.g. high turnover, covering maternity/sickness absence) (16%)	Supplying monitoring information (15%)	Getting the funding (15%) Maintaining enthusiasm/interest among young people (15%)	Budget management (11%)	
Getting the funding (13%)	Managing the project (e.g. setup, premises) (9%)		Too early to say (8%)	

Notes: Base for percentages: v Match Fund 74, vinvolved team 88, vinvolved project 117, vtalent year 48, vcashpoint 72.

3.11 Implications

Implications for v

- Experience from existing projects is emerging as fundamental in helping grant recipients to overcome challenges. v may want to consider routes to enhancing information sharing between its funded network that are both clear to grant recipients and sustainable.
- The ongoing challenges with monitoring data may not be surmountable even with support and advice. v may want to consider adopting online monitoring tools for individual data alongside existing monitoring arrangements.
- There is evidence that projects feel they have limited feedback from the monitoring data they supply. v could consider new routes to disseminating this across the funded network.
- Volunteer retention is emerging as a time-consuming and challenging aspect of running projects. v may want to consider allowing more flexibility on the funding

available for management activities to support this. **v** may wish to lobby government about the need for more flexibility in the financial support available to young volunteers.

- **v** should be aware of the tension between quantity and diversity targets. This tension may lead to diversity not being achieved in some cases and **v** may want to review how projects are prioritising targets and/or clarify the role of these targets with the funded network.
- There is confusion about the levels of support that **v** can provide to its funded projects. As outlined in Chapter 2, this points to a need for greater clarity on **v**'s role as an organisation, specifically the extent to which it can pursue capacity building among the funded network and beyond.
- The youth-led element of **v**'s funded projects is emerging as positive despite a lack of clarity on objectives around this. Given the success so far in this area, **v** may want to dedicate resource to supporting projects in defining and progressing their youth-led activities.

Implications for grant recipients

- There is some evidence that internal communications within projects is not always working. Volunteering projects applying for funding may want to be clearer about roles and responsibilities from the outset.
- The set-up phase and volunteer retention are emerging as time-consuming and challenging aspects of running projects. Grant recipients may want to consider requesting additional funding to support these areas in future applications to **v** or other funding bodies.
- Being stretched by targets and ambitious project planning from the outset can be challenging, but it can also act to capacity build for organisations, and lead to positive outcomes and development, that otherwise may not have occurred. Targets should therefore be viewed as an asset as well as a challenge.
- The skills required to undertake youth-led activities are different to those needed to run a volunteering project. Potential grant applicants may want to consider whether they have the skills necessary at the point of application.
- While it can be an additional challenge to ensure that monitoring and diversity data for volunteers is of high quality this is vitally important to be able to illustrate the impact and progress made by the grant funding and be able to identify areas for future development.

Implications for government

- The v implementation model illustrates how funding can be streamlined via one coherent programme rather than a number of competing programmes, and the extent to which charities can develop significant programmes of youth engagement in a relatively short timescale, given the resources and freedom to do so.
- The challenges with retaining young volunteers indicate a need to consider more flexible financial support particularly for those on full-time placements. This would assist with supporting diversity in youth volunteering.

4 Marketing, communication and awareness of v

4.1 Chapter Summary

- v has a wide range of audiences to appeal to and communicate with, and utilises various channels including website, newsletters, conferences and meetings to reach them.
- There is relatively good awareness of v to be found among young people aged 16 to 25. However, v still has a long way to go in terms of establishing its brand and becoming a household name among young people.
- The website was well-received by young people but difficult for grant recipients to navigate. As a result a new website was launched in November 2009.
- The digital media v uses to communicate with young people have been well received, however levels of engagement with digital media may vary across young people.
- The logo and overall identity of v is successful and popular, and the quality of marketing material is considered high.
- There are concerns from the funded network that the marketing campaigns are not appropriate for all young people and can inadvertently alienate or exclude.
- Projects feel it is a 'wasted opportunity' if the material is not appropriate as they cannot afford marketing of such high quality.
- The bigvbus campaign illustrated both good practice regarding communication and campaigns, and practice that could benefit from further development.
- v has innovative and high quality material with which to communicate with young people, however there is a need to plan in campaigns well in advance and segment audiences to ensure maximum impact.

This chapter examines how v communicates to young people and a range of other audiences, including its grant recipient network. The chapter begins with a general overview of the audiences v may serve and the means by which v currently communicates to these audiences. It goes on to look at how v communicates with young people, including a discussion of young people's awareness of v and an exploration of views on v's marketing

material aimed at young people. To illustrate the life cycle of a **v** campaign, a case study of the 'big**v**bus' is then detailed.

4.2 Overview of different audiences for **v** communications

To meet its objectives, **v** communicates with a wide range of target audiences. Key groups within **v**'s target audiences can be summarised as being:

- **v grant recipients** (to help them improve the quality, quantity and diversity of volunteering locally and to promote volunteering on the ground);
- **young people**, aged 16 to 25 (to encourage those with or without experience of volunteering, with high and low propensity to volunteer, to take up an opportunity, and to work with **v** to guide its activities);
- **young volunteers** (to encourage them to continue to volunteer and to spread the word about **v** and volunteering among their friends);
- **politicians, policy makers, local government** (to encourage them to support and remove barriers to volunteering through policy making) and think tanks/opinion formers;
- **the volunteering and youth sectors** (to encourage them to work in partnership with **v** to promote youth volunteering);
- **the wider third sector** (to strengthen **v**'s reputation in the sector and encourage partnership working);
- **the media** (to generate publicity for **v**, its campaigns and to promote positive perceptions of volunteering and young people);
- **the general public** (to promote positive perceptions of volunteering, particularly among people who influence 16 to 25 year olds such as parents and teachers); and,
- **business** (to encourage employers to value volunteering and to fund/work in partnership with **v**).

This diverse range of audiences is not unusual for third sector organisations, which often perform multiple roles: giving grants, providing support services, campaigning for policy change and trying to influence behaviour. A wide and disparate range of audiences presents a significant challenge in three areas: financially, in terms of where to concentrate resources to deliver maximum return on investment; strategically, in terms of how to position the organisation and campaign to each group and integrate communications to

each for maximum effect; and tactically, in terms of what methods of communication will prompt each group to respond in the desired way.

Overview of how v communicates with its target audiences

Following is a brief overview of the ways in which v communicates with its target audiences as well as a summary of some of its key campaigns.

Communication channels

Website

(www.vinspired.com - for the purposes of this report we are referring to the version of the website that was live for 12 months leading up to November 2009 when it was re-launched.) The primary purpose of the website is to inspire and inform young people about volunteering and provide access to a searchable database of opportunities (the Do-It database run by YouthNet). The site also provides information to existing and potential v grant recipients about what v is doing, funding opportunities and research, and provides access to a document library.

The v newsletter

'The v' is a pdf newsletter that is distributed to v grant recipients quarterly. It features news, a spotlight (featured case study) on a v project, details of upcoming events and opportunities for grant recipients to get involved in v's activities.

The vinspired newsletter

This is sent to young people who have subscribed to the newsletter via the website. It is a monthly news bulletin in HTML format, featuring highlights of news stories with links to drive traffic back to vinspired.com

Regional meetings

v holds a series of regional meetings across the year for the grant recipient networks. These provide grant recipients networking opportunities, the change to share best practice and explore issues, and to provide feedback on current and future initiatives.

Face to face meetings

v has a programme of regular face-to-face meetings with Ministers, local government and policy-makers throughout the year, raising awareness, for instance, among MPs about volunteering activity in their Constituency and issuing briefings ahead of parliamentary debates about volunteering. v has also held fringe events at all the Party Conferences in 2008 and 2009 focusing on specific issues such as skills. v also meets regularly with key influencers such as the Confederation of British Industry and Chartered Institute of Professional Development.

Lectures and conferences

v held its first national conference for grant recipients in Birmingham in June 2009 over two days. Delegates had the opportunity to choose between two campaigns for 2009/10, explore the bigvbus, network with each other, participate in workshops and observe a question and answer session with v's Chief Executive, Terry Ryall and Chairman, Sir Rod Aldridge. In October 2009, v held a lecture at the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA) entitled 'Lost Generation? Recession and the Young', using the event to call for funding and cross-party political support to implement a unified national public service scheme.

Media and public relations

In addition to supporting v's youth campaigns with media relations and PR activity, v also makes regular announcements to the media in response to the news agenda and to promote other v activity (for example promoting the v RSA Lecture in October 2009).

Communication campaigns

The following campaigns are aimed primarily at young people (but are likely to be consumed by other audiences too):

Favours campaign

v launched its Favours campaign in September 2008 to transform the face of volunteering among 16 to 25 year olds. It was conceived off the back of a survey among 2000 16 to 25 year olds (conducted by One Poll in July 2008) showing that 66 per cent of young people found the term 'volunteering' off-putting, yet 80 per cent said they had done someone a favour outside their family or friends. The aim was to show people that volunteering is as easy and accessible as doing someone a favour, by using language that 16 to 25 year olds can relate to.

Voicebox

(<http://voicebox.vinspired.com>)

Voicebox is v's online youth insight project. Using interactive online surveys, the project aims to engage young people and get them to share their views on a variety of social issues from crime to the community. The data collected is available for anyone to use and evolves constantly as more young people participate. v placed a Voicebot robot in the Houses of Parliament in October 2009 which automatically transcribed people's comments posted to the Voicebox microsite.

The bigvbus

The bigvbus is an extension of the Favours campaign. The aim of the bus was to connect with young people in their own environment and communicate the benefits of volunteering in an offline environment. The bus appeared at festivals across the UK over the summer 2009, with the aim of raising the profile of vinspired.com and communicating v's message directly to young people - that it's good to do someone a favour. Grant recipients also applied to use the bus at local events. A detailed exploration of the bigvbus campaign can be found later on in this chapter.

Good for Nothing campaign

This campaign challenges the idea that young people are associated with anti-social behaviour and crime and asks the public to pause for thought before judging young people based on their age or appearance. The campaign features four volunteers who have all been victims of negative stereotyping yet give their time for the benefit of the community, or in simple terms doing “good” for “nothing”. Advertisements appeared on London Underground tube cars, buses, phone booths and in newspapers during November and December 2009.

Gift of Time campaign

This Christmas 2009 campaign asked people to do a good deed instead of buying friends and family a present. The campaign kicked off with the ‘Gift of Time’ Store opening in central London in early December for four days, where young people could make their ‘Gift of Time’ pledge through a gift wrapped ‘time token’. This was followed by the opening of regional ‘pop-up’ stores and regional “Goodie Hoodie” squads in over 40 locations across the country.

4.3 Communications with young people

In this section the impacts of some of v’s communications with young people are discussed. The data presented in this section comes from a variety of sources including monitoring data on website traffic, a Brand Awareness Tracker (the survey of young peoples awareness of various brand identities, produced by youth research agency, Dubit, three times a year), the Omnibus survey of young people, the grant recipient survey (where recipients were asked about v campaigns targeted at young people) and the qualitative data collected with grant recipients and project staff during the light touch case studies. At this stage in the evaluation there is very limited data available on the views of young people themselves although where this does exist (such as vcashpoint recipients and Omnibus survey respondents) it is explicitly reflected upon.

General awareness of v

The Omnibus survey has so far involved interviews with 345 young people about their awareness of volunteering, v and v-inspired.com. Findings from this indicate that 44 per cent of respondents were aware of opportunities for volunteering in their local area and 39 per cent were able to name at least one local or national organisation that provides volunteering opportunities for young people, with two per cent naming v or v-inspired (unprompted).

Other volunteering organisations mentioned (unprompted) by young people included: Guides and Scouts (eight per cent), Duke of Edinburgh (seven per cent), the Princes Trust (seven per cent), Connexions (five per cent), Community Service Volunteers (two per cent), Millennium Volunteers (one per cent) and VSO (one per cent).

The Brand Tracker Questionnaire completed by Dubit over five waves for v has previously found similar rates of unprompted awareness of v. Unprompted awareness of any v brand

was 4.2 per cent at the most recent wave of Brand Tracker, up from 2.1 per cent from the wave before. In comparison to the long-term established organisations such as Duke of Edinburgh (established in 1956), given that **v** has been in operation only since 2006, the two per cent unprompted awareness is relatively good, and awareness appears to be increasing which is a positive. However, two per cent suggests that **v** still has a long way to go in terms of establishing its brand and becoming a household name among young people.

When asked whether they had heard of **v** or **vinspired** (or whether they recognised the **v** or **vinspired** logos) 19 per cent of young people surveyed for the Omnibus said they had. This compares to the similar rate of prompted awareness of **v** found in the Brand Tracker sample, which was 18 per cent - nearly double the rate of unprompted awareness in Wave One when it was 9.6 per cent and up from 15 per cent at the previous wave. This upward trend is a sign that **v**'s campaigning activity is working in terms of raising the profile of **v** and its brands among young people, with the most marked shift in awareness occurring over the most recent wave.

Of those Omnibus respondents who had heard of **v** or **vinspired**, 32 per cent had done so on the radio; 29 per cent on the television; 25 per cent through a teacher, tutor or youth worker; while 18 per cent had seen posters promoting **v**. These findings are supported by qualitative data collected from **vcashpoint** recipients who were asked how they first heard of **v**. While the young people themselves heard about **v** through word of mouth from contacts such as friends, teachers and support workers, these contacts themselves heard about **v** from radio adverts or via emails.

At this stage of the evaluation there is a relatively small sample of young people in the Omnibus survey so these findings are only indicative. However, they do suggest that **v**'s targeted advertising is reaching its intended audience. Indeed one participant from a Match Fund project noted:

'If you talk to people about young people volunteering, they think about **v**. No question of that.'

(Match Fund, strategic staff)

Once the **vcashpoint** recipients interviewed during the case studies were involved with **v**, they noted that hearing radio adverts for **v** and also seeing **v** promoted on television or public transport was '*quite nice, quite cool*'. That **v** (an organisation that advertised in mainstream media) had funded *their* activity enhanced the sense of pride and value that they attached to their **vcashpoint** activities and their associations with **v**. Staff interviewed during the case studies also reported that the young people they worked with had a sense of pride from being associated with the '**v**' brand. This was especially so after seeing or hearing advertisements.

However, there were volunteers on v_{cashpoint} activities who reported never having heard of v and associated the activity they took part in only with the young person who was running the project or organisation supporting the project, such as those providing a venue. It could however be argued that it doesn't matter if an opportunity is not associated with v provided it is taken up and successfully completed; however, there are obvious benefits in building a credible, national volunteering brand (to remove stigma, promote positive perceptions of volunteering), so it would be beneficial for all young people who volunteer through v to be aware of the association.

Digital media – website

v's website was reported by the v_{cashpoint} recipients to be a useful source of information. This was where they had found out additional information about v_{cashpoint} funding. Ninety-three per cent of v_{cashpoint} recipients who visited the website said this was very or quite useful. Staff interviewed during the case studies also reported that young people found the v website appealing although they themselves (staff) often found it difficult to navigate. A good use of social networking sites that appeal to young people such as Facebook was also reported by grant recipients in the case study interviews. Of the young people surveyed in the Omnibus, two per cent had visited the v website.

Statistics for website use for the 12 months (24 November 2008 to 25 November 2009) prior to the launch of the new (current) website were as follows:

- 608,947 visitors
- 416,784 absolute unique visitors
- 32 per cent bounce rate (people leaving the site within five seconds or leave from the landing page)
- 5 minutes 51 seconds spent on the site per visit on average

Traffic levels throughout the year remained relatively static, peaking around May and June. They were up from the previous year and the site demonstrated improved 'stickiness', meaning that visitors were remaining on the site for longer periods of time and visiting more pages.

Good brand awareness was evidenced by an analysis of the site traffic; for example, over a quarter of visits came from organic sources (unpaid for searches on Google) and one fifth from entering the URL directly into the site.

Brand awareness was also evident in the listing of top five keywords entered into search engines that resulted in a visit to the site. Three of these five were v brands – v_{inspired} (one word), v_{inspired} (two words) and v_{involved} - meaning that people were entering these words into search engines and therefore demonstrating prior knowledge of these brands.

The bounce rate of 32 per cent is satisfactory. While the target bounce rate can differ depending on the type of website, typically 25 to 30 per cent is considered good by industry practitioners and 20 to 25 per cent very good.

In November 2009 v launched a new website. This was in response to feedback from grant recipients regarding how difficult the existing site was to navigate. The new site also allows

for the volunteering opportunities applied for via the v site to be monitored instead of routed to the Do-It site. This is a huge improvement because it means that v will be able to track not only the numbers of young people who search and apply for volunteering activities through the website, but also whether their applications are responded to and opportunities successfully fulfilled through v funded projects. This tangible measurement of impact was not previously possible through the Do-It database.

As mentioned above, the previous website had been responded to well and praised for being appealing to young people, however, the newly launched website aims to address previous feedback regarding difficulty navigating the site. The use of and views on the new site will be monitored over the next year of the evaluation and discussed in the 2011 report.

Successes and challenges of digital media use

The findings in this section indicate that v has been relatively successful in engaging young people with digital media in terms of using it to raise awareness of volunteering and reach young people. However, there were also concerns reported from grant recipients and project staff in the case study interviews that an emphasis on communication and information coming from digital media can act to exclude young people who do not have the resources, knowledge or aspiration to regularly access these (such as the internet).

vcashpoint recipients also reported that they preferred to use more 'traditional' digital means of communication with v (such as email) than newer methods such as blogs, for example. This was because they had concerns regarding confidentiality when using such methods (they are accessible to everyone) or because they did not have the time to try to navigate new methods of communication. This variation in how young people engaged with digital media - with some very positive and others less so - indicates the challenge that v has in attempting to meet the diverse needs and interests of young people.

Overall, there appeared to be a reasonably high level of awareness of v from young people involved in volunteering and a positive association made with the mainstream advertising that v promotes and the v brand,.

However, as becomes clear in the next section there are mixed views regarding specific campaigns and the appropriateness of the marketing material available to young people taking part in v funded activities.

Campaigns and marketing material

In this section there is specific focus on some of the campaigns and related marketing material that v has released which is aimed at young people. It is important to caution that at this point there is limited data from young people regarding these campaigns themselves and the data used in this section comes primarily from the grant recipient survey and interviews with grant recipients and project staff that were case study participants. However, important themes regarding the marketing material emerged from these data sources and are reported later in this section.

Currently the only data on actual views from young people about v campaigns and marketing comes from the Omnibus survey of young people and vcashpoint recipients.

As part of the Omnibus, survey respondents were shown a poster advertising the v-inspired awards 2009 ('A big hand goes a long way') and were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with various statements about it. A copy of this poster can be found in Appendix C. It was found that:

- Seventy-nine per cent of young people agreed that the poster grabbed their attention, while 55 per cent agreed that it stuck in their mind;
- Thirty-two per cent of young people agreed that the poster was irritating; only 27 per cent agreed it was boring;
- Forty-seven per cent of young people agreed that the poster had a clear message, compared with 44 per cent of young people who disagreed;
- Forty-nine per cent of young people agreed that the poster was aimed at people like them, compared with 41 per cent who disagreed;
- Forty per cent of young people agreed that the poster made them interested in v-inspired, compared with 54 per cent of people who disagreed; and
- Twenty-four per cent agreed that they would tell their friends about it; while 69 per cent disagreed.

These findings indicate a positive overall impact of the poster with over three quarters of those surveyed reporting that it 'grabbed their attention'. However, the data indicated mixed messages about the salience that this advert holds for young people and highlights once more the challenges faced by v in attempting to engage a diverse audience. The same marketing strategy could be viewed positively or negatively by what appear to be relatively similar audiences, and 'young person' does not represent a homogenous marketing category. Had the young respondents in the Omnibus survey been presented with an alternative poster they may have reported differently on their views. This will be tested in ongoing waves of the Omnibus.

From the grant recipient survey it was found there was a high level of awareness about v's campaigns among organisations receiving grants. Most organisations had heard of some of the campaigns they were asked about and there were particularly high levels of awareness of the bigvbus (ranging from 69 to 94 per cent), a big hand goes a long way (69 to 95 per cent) and the vinvolved launch (74 to 79 per cent) campaigns. Awareness of campaigns was lower among young people receiving vcashpoint funding. This group had higher levels of awareness of the 'a big hand goes a long way' (56 per cent) and vinvolved launch (51 per cent) campaigns than any other campaigns. However, 18 per cent of vcashpoint respondents had not heard of any of these campaigns (see Table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1 Awareness of v's campaigns						
<i>Percentage</i>	All	Match Fund	vinvolved teams	vinvolved projects	vtalent year	vcashpoint
Favours campaigns	66	65	97	80	50	19
What's your v?	58	51	85	74	17	31
vinspired awards - a big hand goes a long way	77	72	95	83	69	56
bigvbus	77	69	94	91	85	36
vinvolved launch	72	74	75	79	75	51
Any other campaign run by v	13	14	14	5	31	11
No campaigns	4	1	1	0	2	18
<i>Number</i>	398	74	87	117	48	72

Source: Grant recipient survey, wave one, batches 1 to 4.

In the grant recipient survey, the impact that the campaigns were felt to have had on young volunteers and projects was also asked of grant recipients (see Table 4.2 below). The results again indicated the challenge that v faces in attempting to appeal to diverse audiences, and segment their campaigns to do so, with variation in impacts reported:

Table 4.2 Impact of campaigns						
Organisations that had heard of any v campaigns						
<i>Percentage</i>	All	Match Fund	vinvolved teams	vinvolved projects	vtalent year	vcashpoint
Mainly positive	32	26	27	23	44	57
Mainly negative	2	0	2	4	0	0
Some positive and some negative	25	14	49	22	16	13
No impact at all	41	59	22	51	40	30
<i>Number</i>	369	69	86	115	45	54

Source: Grant recipient survey, wave one, batches 1 to 4.

Of those who had heard of v campaigns, high proportions of vcashpoint (57 per cent) and vtalent year (44 per cent) projects thought that these campaigns had a mainly positive

impact on their project or volunteers. Table 4.2 indicates that similar proportions of vinvolved teams (27 per cent), vinvolved projects (23 per cent) and Match Fund projects (26 per cent) said these campaigns had a mainly positive impact on their project or volunteers. Higher proportions of vinvolved projects (51 per cent) and Match Fund projects (59 per cent) felt that the campaigns had no impact on their project or volunteers however.

It is difficult to speculate at this point in the evaluation as to why this may have been. However, vinvolved and Match Fund projects involve an array of organisations. They had received funds from v to support volunteering but often had additional funders, and operated in sectors outside of youth volunteering. It may be important for these projects to maintain a strong identity within their own sector or relating to the overall aims of the organisation. vinvolved teams which did not have a pre-v existence or additional funders may therefore have been more able to utilise and promote a single v related identity, thus reporting that v campaigns had a greater impact on their project or volunteers. The positive findings from the vcashpoint recipients also indicate v’s success at engaging some young people.

The most positive messages to emerge from the grant recipient survey regarding v campaigns was that, generally, grant recipient organisations felt well informed about the campaigns that were running and supported these types of campaigns. This was inverted with vcashpoint recipients however, who had the lowest level of awareness of campaigns, despite a desire to participate in them. Table 4.3 (below) summarises views on the campaigns:

Table 4.3 Views about campaigns))						
<i>Percentage</i>	All	Match Fund	vinvolved teams	vinvolved projects	vtalent year	vcashpoint
Know about what campaigns are running	75	80	85	95	74	26
Support these types of campaigns	74	79	76	75	83	55
Would like to participate actively in these campaigns	81	86	81	74	87	83
Able to link into these campaigns locally	69	79	62	65	77	66
<i>Number</i>	396	74	87	116	47	72

Source: Grant recipient survey, wave one, batches 1 to 4.

So, in total, 75 per cent of projects felt that they knew about what campaigns were running, between 74 and 95 per cent of organisations from each funding stream said this, while 26 per cent of vcashpoint grant recipients said this. 76 per cent of vinvolved teams, 75 per cent of vinvolved projects, 79 per cent of Match Fund projects, 83 per cent of vtalent year projects and 55 per cent of vcashpoint projects said they supported the campaigns v run.

Most projects (between 74 and 87 per cent) would like to actively participate in campaigns and feel able to link into these locally (between 62 and 79 per cent).

Crucially, around a third of projects (across all strands) thought that the campaigns increased the number of young people who approach their project.

While the grant recipient survey data paints a positive portrait of projects' awareness of v's campaigns among organisations there were mixed views regarding the impact these campaigns had. The qualitative data can be used to investigate this further, as this also indicated mixed views on specific marketing material that v uses.

The high quality of v's marketing material for young people attracted praise from grant recipients and staff interviewed during the case studies. However, there were also concerns articulated about the appropriateness of the materials for diverse groups of young people. The sexualised nature of some of the campaigns (particularly those relating to postcards with slogans such as 'I'm a giver not a taker') was raised as a concern. Teachers and youth groups had in some cases banned the use of material to promote v to the young people in their facilities. Projects working with socially excluded young people described materials sporting sexualised and attractive young models as alienating and difficult for their young volunteers to relate to. Staff therefore felt that they could not disseminate this material to the young people that they were trying to reach. As the quote below from a staff member explains:

'If I had huge amounts of problems with a marketing campaign where they did quite sexually innuendo postcards and they were 'I am a giver, not a taker'. I work with some young Muslim girls, I have to sit there with their fathers, talking to them about volunteering, persuading them that their daughters are going to be respected, they are going to be able to wear the hijab, that this is a safe activity, that we are inclusive. And then to have that behind me, 'I am a giver not a taker', it just doesn't work for me at all. With the diverse group of young people I work with, it confuses the image. We are not trying to sell young people Coca-Cola, we don't need to use sex to sell volunteering.'

(involved team, project staff)

There were also concerns that young people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities could be alienated by campaigns such as the Big Hand or lack understanding of the 'double meaning' of some campaigns such as Good for Nothing.

Indeed the Good for Nothing campaign was singled out as being misguided. It was reported that this could devalue volunteering and that for young people that perhaps had low self esteem or were already marginalised the irony would be lost:

'It's like "I'm good for nothing". "Oh, thanks, great, cheers, I've been told that all my life, I'm good for nothing".'

(involved project, project staff)

Staff working with young people were also unsure of which young people the marketing materials were aimed at. It was felt that the tone of the existing campaigns indicated a desire to appeal to middle class, educated young people such as university students and also belayed an urban, new media bias that assumed modern and urban cultural references were all that would appeal to young people and did not incorporate diversity.

The lack of continuity was also noted as confusing with for example, the Favours campaign being viewed as at odds with v's drive to promote the quality of volunteering if volunteering was 'just' doing a favour:

'I think they [v] can send some confusing messages to young people about what volunteering is.'

(involved team, grant recipient)

Given that the Favours campaign was aimed at young people who were not interested in volunteering, with the intention of them considering volunteering in a new way, the criticism of the campaign indicates that it was not segmented to the correct audience adequately, rather than being a poor campaign *per se*. Young people already engaged in volunteering felt inadvertently devalued by the message. This illustrates the challenge of reaching different audiences, but the unintended consequences of such messages reaching different audiences from those they were designed for (as was the case with the post cards designed to be provocative to young people who perceive volunteering to be boring) is important as they act to discourage, as well as encourage, volunteering, if not adequately segmented.

Participants praised the quality of the material but were disheartened if it was not suitable for the young people they worked with. Project staff reported that they rarely could afford high quality marketing material. Therefore, being unable to use the v material because it was not deemed appropriate felt like a 'wasted opportunity' and left them with a continuing lack of material to use. This again points to the need to segment material adequately, and that v need to explain to the funded network their intentions for each marketing campaign, so they can understand the material and decide if it is appropriate for their project based on this understanding. It was acknowledged that the material was not necessarily aimed at all young people but also noted that this still meant there were gaps in appealing to some groups and gave mixed signals regarding who v (and implicitly, volunteering) is for. Suggested solutions to this included: v providing a budget for marketing materials alongside project funding; templates for projects to adapt themselves; and to provide simple, basic but high quality material that could be provided across the board to young people and not be deemed inappropriate for some. It is important to note however that participants that had

utilised the templates available from v viewed these positively, therefore it may have been awareness of these resources that was lacking rather than templates to use.

The branding of v (for example, its logo) was viewed very positively. This was despite some initial concerns regarding an early change of colour, which occurred after some v funded projects had already ordered material in the previous colour.

The v logo was noted as appealing to young people, who took pride in receiving materials with it stamped on such as t-shirts, bags and pens, and there was enthusiasm as well as criticism for some of the advertising campaigns.

Overall, it was reported that v has been positive in terms of making resources available for marketing volunteering, getting messages out to young people and generally raising the profile of volunteering, and volunteering projects, but that the materials were more relevant and appropriate for some young people than others:

'I think on the good side it seems like they [v] have a really talented team of people who have a lot of expertise in marketing, and it's marketing of a level that I've never seen before as far as youth volunteering is concerned.'

(v involved team, grant recipient)

'They've done fantastic with promoting it [v] on a national level.'

(v involved team, grant recipient)

Identifying gaps - Local and national resources

A lack of local level communication tools was identified by grant recipients and project staff during the case study research. Despite the positive results of the grant recipient survey regarding positive impact, the v involved teams in particular noted that they were not necessarily empowered to market themselves locally, and the v materials were not necessarily useful for their area. Generally it was also felt that there could be further consultation and preparation time before a new campaign was launched and assistance for the funded network to tailor high quality material to appeal to the young people they worked with.

It is important to note however, that utilising marketing materials so that they have a positive impact on young volunteers and project image requires active engagement from grant recipients, and is not merely due to the efforts of v. Projects that had accessed the resources section of the website and used templates of material available for their funding stream (such as v talent year and vinvolved teams participants) praised these for their quality and saw them as a valuable resource that could then be adapted to fit local needs and audiences:

This section of the chapter has outlined findings regarding v's communication with young people, including general awareness of v and views of v campaigns. This has reported that awareness and quality of material is generally good. However there are areas that could be improved. As was noted in the introductory section, v adopts a wide range of methods with which to communicate with young people. Each campaign also has a 'life cycle' from idea, inception, implementation and review that could be subject to evaluative scrutiny. One such 'life cycle' is examined in the following case study of the bigvbus to illustrate this process and generate recommendations for the development of future campaigns.

4.4 bigvbus case study

In this section a case study of one high profile campaign, the bigvbus, is outlined in detail. The aim is to present the entire process of a campaign and also assess the impact of the campaign as well as identifying where alternative routes could have been taken and the potential impact these alternatives may have had. The intention is to provide learning points for the development of future campaigns such as this to both v and organisations with similar audiences to v.

How the campaign was planned and developed

The bigvbus was conceived following the suggestion by members of v's Youth Advisory Board (v20) that v needed a mobile unit to help promote its work to young people in their environment. This was reinforced at the YAT Challenge event in February 2009, where a number of YAT members, representing vinvolved teams from across England, suggested developing a bus which could tour the country. Recommendations eight and nine of the v summative evaluation also highlighted the importance of improving local promotion of volunteering through the funded network, supporting projects and teams to more effectively market opportunities and celebrate young people's achievements. v's own research also highlighted that 16 to 25 year olds are particularly interested in helping out at festivals and events.

The following is an overview of the process v went through to deliver the bus.

i. The brief

v prepared a brief for its agency (Cake). The brief stated that:

- young people have nowhere motivating/credible to be "driven" offline to witness volunteering in a credible light;
- the solution is an offline motivating destination to find out about cool volunteering opportunities and to engage with the v-inspired brand;

- the primary objective is to support and engage the network of 107 vinvolved teams and 154 vinvolved projects around the country; and
- v requires a promotional vehicle that had the propensity to tour to support the vinvolved teams.

The target audiences and aims of the bus were stated as follows:

- 16 to 25 year olds (categorised through prior audience segmentation work into three groups: Goodie Hoodies, the Can Do Gang and Down and Digitised) to elicit the following response:
 - I didn't realise what volunteering was. It's cool.
 - It's as easy as doing a favour.
 - I'm proud that I volunteer, now I'll start telling my mates more about it.
- vinspired stakeholders (for example politicians, vinvolved teams, corporate sponsors, charity partners), to elicit the following response:
 - vinspired is actively engaging with 16 to 25s and creating change.
 - vinspired celebrates and supports local offices.

ii: Consultation with grant recipients

Once the concept for the bus had taken shape, v sent a questionnaire to 408 contacts through the grant recipient network, receiving 67 responses (16 per cent response rate). The questionnaire asked people whether they thought the bus was a good idea, whether they were likely to use it, how they would use it and what facilities they would prefer to be onboard. A majority (85 per cent) thought the bus was a good idea; 69 per cent said they were very likely to use it.

iii: Inviting the grant recipients to apply to borrow the bus

Grant recipients were invited to apply to borrow the bus for events and activities in their local area. To aid the application process v prepared a briefing pack for grant recipients explaining the rationale for the bus in detail and outlining the application process.

v anticipated being able to award the bus to about 45 organisations over 56 days (as some events would last more than one day). It received 90 applications from grant recipients over two rounds, 20 of which were successful (borrowing the bus for 25 days).

Some of applications had been joint applications from more than one grant recipient, therefore v estimated that 30 to 35 grant recipient organisations benefited from using the bus in 2009. v did not award the bus to more applicants as the applications did not sufficiently meet its published criteria.

Despite giving grant recipients four weeks to apply, v only gave itself one week to judge applications, which meant that v did not have time to give applicants individual feedback. Contact details were given for grant recipients to call to obtain feedback but the generic email that was sent to unsuccessful applicants only prompted a small number of critical responses.

iv: Recruiting volunteers to man the bus

v offered young people the chance to volunteer (by manning the bus) at the events, advertising in areas local to the festivals, through ads and PR in local newspapers. This was a strategic decision to minimise travel and accommodation costs. Young people could apply via the website and flyers were handed out at the events to encourage people who had already bought tickets to the events to volunteer.

However, with the exception of the v20 Youth Advisory Board, v had no prior experience of actually creating volunteer opportunities (this responsibility lies only with the v funded network) and therefore the bigvbus team encountered problems in recruiting and managing volunteers.

The marketing and communications team had to perform multiple roles - recruiting volunteers to man the bus, implementing procedures to allow v to manage these volunteers appropriately, marketing the bus to young people and managing the event logistics, including legal issues – which placed them under considerable pressure. In the end, it was only possible to offer young people short-term opportunities to man the bus as the challenges around fulfilling longer-term opportunities were too great.

iv: Launching the bus

The bus was launched at the v National Conference in June 2009, and delegates were invited to inspect it. It then went on to tour six festivals (attended by a total of 206,000 16 to 25 year olds according to figures supplied by the festival organisers) around England at 'marketing' events organised by v. Attendance figures were captured by the v teams who manned the bus at each event and were as follows:

- 3,000 young people (16 to 25 year olds) passed through the bus
- 206 young people attended film workshops
- 238 young people volunteered on the bus at these events

Grant recipients arranged for the bus to appear at a further 12 events across the country. Attendance was as follows:

- 1,326 young people (16 to 25 year olds) passed through the bus
- 159 young people (16 to 25 year olds) attended film workshops
- 23 young people volunteered on the bus at these events

v: Promoting the bus

v promoted the bus to young people through a range of channels including the v-inspired website, local advertising, competitions, flyers at events, a website, social media and PR. Young people liked the campaign materials: 81 per cent of young people surveyed by Dubit in its quarterly brand awareness tracker (October 2009) responded positively to campaign materials (versus 18 per cent who had a negative response) when presented with a choice of positive or negative words to describe the campaign. This is better than any other v campaign tested by Dubit so far through its Brand Awareness Tracker.

i) Website: a separate website was built to support the bigvbus tour (www.bigvbus.vinspired.com). Its primary purpose was to tell people where the bus was

going on its tour, what it was about and enable them to apply to volunteer. It also featured content created by young people who interacted with the bus along the way.

From 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 site statistics were as follows:

- Absolutely unique visitors to site: 6,704.
- Bounce rate: 43 per cent.
- Average time on site: 2:45 min.
- Traffic sources: 13 per cent direct traffic; 72 per cent referring sites (vinspired.com most popular source of traffic with 49 per cent of visitors), 15.02 per cent search engines (primarily Google).
- Most popular search terms (keywords): All the most popular key words were variations of the bigvbus indicating that people knew what they were looking for. This signals good awareness and recall of the name among this proportion of visitors.
- Most popular pages: Homepage (33 per cent of traffic), About the bus (five per cent of traffic).

ii) Social media: v took the positive step of exploiting social media, setting up a YouTube channel, Twitter feed and Flickr gallery to feature content about the bigvbus. However, these tools appear to be used only as a channel to broadcast content about the bus (often unrelated to volunteering), rather than maximizing the potential of social media as an amplifier (this is why there are only 243 Twitter followers and nine Youtube Channel subscribers). By including more links to relevant content elsewhere on the web, tapping into conversations going on around the festivals/events elsewhere on the web and ensuring all content relates to volunteering/favours, v's messages could reach a wider audience.

iii) Media relations: v's PR agency Shine generated publicity for the bigvbus tour, creating the (successful) World's Longest Back Massage Chain Guinness Book of Records attempt, the Favour Man (a man carrying everything anyone could need at a festival including toothpaste, wet wipes, emergency blanket and mirror), sourcing Festival Favour kits as competition prizes, and setting up a press office to field media enquiries.

Overall there were:

- 81 pieces of coverage were secured (zero nationals, three consumer, nine regional, 59 online, ten broadcast)
- Four competitions (in Yorkshire Evening Post, Isle of Wight Radio, I Like Music and Mirror Online)
- £106,000 in advertising equivalent value

This coverage reached an estimated audience of 10,088,000 (according to figures independently evaluated by Media Proof.)

It is hard to say what proportion of this publicity was seen by v's target audiences, especially 16 to 25 year olds. In future, v could consider setting up a unique URL, code or similar tracking device to measure the response to calls to action featured in media

coverage. Looking at the site analytics, online PR did not generate any traffic to the bigvbus website.

Few articles about the Guinness World Record attempt featured the www.vinspired.com URL and a call to action to visit it (which was in the original press release) – but the message about how easy it is to do someone a favour was prominent in all coverage.

iv) Stakeholder relations

Four MPs and several Mayors visited the bus including:

- Tim Loughton, Shadow Children's Minister
- Justine Greening, MP for Putney, Roehampton and Southfields
- Graham Stuart, MP for East Riding of Yorkshire
- Joan Humble, MP for Blackpool North and Fleetwood

Analysis of bigvbus

Quality of experiences of volunteers and young people

All 77 entries to the bus Visitors Book were positive and suggested that young people had a good time going through it and many found it helpful. The v marketing manager who organised the events was convinced the bus had a positive impact on young people, saying:

'It was so rewarding to see young people's perceptions change. While it [affected] only a small group of young people, [the experience] was transformational.'

In the future v may want to build into campaigns the capacity for future evaluation with participants. Collecting the contact details and consent to contact for young people who become aware of v on the bus would enable v to contact them in the future and find out about their engagement in volunteering activities and whether they have spread the word about v.

This would help understand whether their experience on the bigvbus has altered their perception/behaviour in the long-term.

Quality of experience of grant recipients

v collected feedback from ten grant recipients who had borrowed the bigvbus. Of these, nine were very positive, perceiving that it added real value to their activities:

'The bigvbus enhanced the experience for the volunteers and the film created a great souvenir of the Games to demonstrate the impact young people can have. It promoted the volunteering project to young people and to key stakeholders who have given more support to the project which means it grows over the next year. This is a tangible result that I don't believe would have been achieved otherwise. We had great comments and it made the young people working on our film feel really special – well done to whoever had the idea!'

(v grant recipient)

The bus was fitted with a range of high-tech equipment. Success of the bus visits therefore depended on the quality of the technical crew and this was not always consistent across the events. The one negative comment received from grant recipients suggested that the crew was not properly briefed and seemed disengaged. v has already noted that it will hone and simplify the messages that volunteers are briefed to communicate so that they can explain clearly to visitors what the bus is about and the link with volunteering. Young people were not given a script deliberately so that they felt free to communicate the bus and their own experience in their own way; however greater clarity around key messages would be of benefit in future.

Capacity building

Although 20 grant recipients successfully applied for the bus, only 12 events were held. This is because v felt that the events were not working well enough to justify the cost and resources required. This was largely down to poor event management skills; the marketing manager responsible for liaising with grant recipients about the bus said that "we assumed a skillset that they didn't have". In response to this, v will charge a fee to loan the bus to grant recipients in 2010 to encourage only those who are confident the event will work to apply. v will also expand the tour to visit more places and invite grant recipients to attend the nearest event for free.

The benefit of this is that v can ensure that every event goes as well as possible. However, the research team noted that, in the spirit of capacity building, it would be good to help grant recipients acquire new skills (rather than simply running events for them) so any steps to involve grant recipients in the event management and promotion would be positive.

Building a movement/'deputising to the willing'

The evidence suggests that those young people who interacted with the bigvbus generally had a positive experience, will have registered on vinspired.com and subscribed to the monthly newsletter. However, a proportion of these young people, particularly those who volunteered on the bus, have the potential to become devoted supporters of v, and they

could be the key to unlocking a wider support base. As such, the research team recommends **v** develops a strategy to cultivate these young people more actively, giving them the tools to create their own actions and bring people to the cause ('deputising to the willing'). To do this, **v** needs to understand what drove these young people to get involved, what might motivate them to campaign for **v** and how they can be rewarded for their efforts. It needs to treat these young people like friends, keeping in touch regularly (with personalised emails, rather than generic newsletters), being honest with them about how things are going, and rewarding them (sometimes publicly) for their support. By empowering them to adopt the issue as their own, they may start to discuss volunteering publicly, talk to the media, and comment online. This will help the campaign gather strength and credibility and reach audiences that **v** might otherwise never reach. By way of example, Freecycle (www.freecycle.org) encourages local activists to set up groups in their area, trusting them to work towards the organisation's goals in a way that suits local needs and habits. At the last count there were 4,860 groups with 6,784,000 members.

As was found in the earlier analysis of marketing campaigns and material, the quality and nature of the big**v**bus are highly positive for the youth volunteering sector. However there were concerns regarding the relevance, appropriateness and value of the bus to all.

The big**v**bus case study has demonstrated the life cycle of a **v** campaign. This case also demonstrated a key finding of this chapter: **v** has innovative and high quality material with which to communicate with young people, however there is a need to plan in campaigns well in advance and segment audiences to ensure maximum impact.

4.5 Implications

Implications for **v**

- Young people are not a homogenous group and it is challenging to communicate in a manner that is deemed appropriate and engaging for all. Further segmentation of marketing and communications to young people could maximise the positive impact **v** has when communicating to young people and lower the risk of negative impacts.
- This segmentation could be cascaded via the funded network by:
 - A budget for local marketing materials being provided alongside project funding;
 - Templates for projects to adapt themselves provided alongside this;
 - Simple, basic but high quality material appropriate for all young people being provided.
- It could be argued that it does not matter if an opportunity is not associated with **v** provided it is taken up and completed. However, there are benefits in building a credible, national volunteering brand (to remove stigma, promote positive perceptions of volunteering), therefore it would be beneficial for all young people who volunteer through **v** to be aware of the association.

bigvbus learning points:

- Digital media is well-used by **v**, however more could be done to ensure the potential of the internet is exploited by, for example, tapping into conversations about **v** related events elsewhere on the web.
- **v** may want to build into campaigns the capacity for future evaluation with participants. This would help understand whether the experience of the campaign altered perception/behaviour in the long-term.
- To promote capacity-building, grant recipients should be supported to acquire new skills. Steps to involve grant recipients in campaign and event management and promotion would be positive.
- **v** should develop a strategy to cultivate young people, actively giving them the tools to bring people to the **v** cause ('deputising to the willing').
- To do this, **v** needs to understand what drove young people to get involved, what might motivate them to campaign for **v** and how they can be rewarded for their efforts.

Implications for grant recipients

- **v** can provide a range of high quality marketing material and provide digital media and information for young volunteers.
- Exploiting these materials involves active engagement from grant recipients. This engagement includes having an awareness of what is available from **v**, gatekeeping to ensure that material is targeted appropriately at young people, and informing young people of the **v** brand and website.

5 The Impact of v

5.1 Chapter Summary

- From the data available v appears to have exceeded the targets for number of volunteering opportunities set for it by the Russell Commission.
- It is not possible to demonstrate that v has created a step change in volunteering through national datasets on volunteering such as the Citizenship Survey because such large numbers of new volunteers would be needed to register a change on the Citizenship Survey.
- There is clear evidence that v's activities have attracted a diverse group of the young adult population particularly in relation to ethnicity, because the proportion of v's volunteers who are from BME groups is significantly higher than in national survey datasets.
- v's activities are disproportionately attracting young people who have been homeless, in the care system, offenders, single parents, in low-income households, or refugees, suggesting that v is achieving diversity in terms of socially excluded groups.
- The evidence also indicates that v funded activities are attracting a high proportion of new young volunteers.
- Grant recipients have identified a range of benefits of v funded activities on the young volunteers. Impacts are falling into three categories: psychological and emotional impacts, life skills and knowledge, and future employment and training.
- While the majority of organisations funded by v have worked in volunteering and/or with young people before, v is attracting some new organisations into volunteering.
- There is evidence that volunteer management activities are improving as a result of v funding.
- Four categories of outcome on organisations were identified by grant recipients:
 - 1) An increased status and positioning for volunteering within organisations.
 - 2) Enhanced volunteer management capacity and practices.
 - 3) Enhanced partnership working.
 - 4) Enhanced organisational sustainability.
- Projects are very confident about the likely future impacts of v's investments on their organisations.

v has been tasked with achieving a step change in the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities in England. This chapter explores how far v has achieved this goal so far, based on the available data. It is divided into two sections. The first explores the impact of v on young people and young volunteers. This includes a discussion of the extent of youth volunteering as well as a look at v's impact on the diversity of youth volunteering and an exploration of the impact of volunteering on young people's lives. The second section looks at what is known about the impact of v on organisations and the volunteering sector with a focus on the impact that v is having on the diversity and quality of opportunities that organisations can provide.

This chapter draws principally on monitoring data provided by the projects funded by v. This tells us about the characteristics of the young people involved as volunteers, and about the costs and distribution of projects. Wherever possible, we compare findings from analyses of this data with other appropriate datasets. These include the Citizenship Survey and the Census. We also present information from surveys of grant recipients and from the initial analysis of the light-touch case studies.

5.2 Number of opportunities to volunteer and number of volunteers

The Russell Commission report suggested that a step change in volunteering could be defined as 'an additional 700,000 to one million young people volunteering at least once per year'. It also indicated that v would need to directly commission a total of 412,160 youth volunteering opportunities over five years. The annual reports produced by v also consistently refer to its aim being "to inspire a million more young people aged 16 to 25 to volunteer".

So to what extent is v on track to achieve its targets? According to v's published annual reports, by March 2009, 898,000 opportunities had been commissioned, of which 456,000 had already been delivered. Figures reported for previous years were 100,000 (to March 2007) and 650,000 (to March 2008). In this section, we update these figures and go into more detail about their interpretation, using data provided by v for projects which are actually running or which have been commissioned. It is worth noting that the primary source for these data is the monitoring reports provided to v by its funded projects and that the research team has no way of independently verifying the data contained within the monitoring reports.

Monitoring data indicate a total of 930,000 opportunities commissioned to date. Of these, 690,000 opportunities have been commissioned through various directly-funded programmes with a further 240,000 through match funding. These numbers clearly exceed the scenario of 412,160 commissioned opportunities envisaged in the Russell Commission report.

Not all these opportunities will have been taken up as yet. Many opportunities are delivered by projects which are funded for several years at a time and will therefore continue to

commission new opportunities up to March 2011. As a result, numbers commissioned to date will not equate to that total but from data made available it appears that v is well on the way to commissioning the required numbers of opportunities and that an increasing proportion of opportunities have been taken up over time. For example, outcome data in February 2010 indicated that 637,000 opportunities had been taken up (out of 930,000 commissioned) which indicates rapid progress on the annual report of 456,000 (out of 898,000 commissioned) for March 2009. The convergence between numbers commissioned and numbers taken up would be expected over time.

The figures mentioned above relate to volunteering opportunities created, and the number of those that have been filled. Data available so far indicate that the number of opportunities filled exceeds the number of actual volunteers. At present monitoring data indicate that there is a combined total 469,000 actual recruited volunteers. This figure will be updated as more data become available and so may increase over time. However, the gap between the number of opportunities taken up and the number of actual volunteers could, in part, be because individuals volunteer in a succession of short-term placements, and then go on to a part-time or full-time opportunity. The only way we would know this would be if each volunteer is successfully tracked through their engagement with v which is not currently done. However, the emphasis in the Russell Commission is clearly on creating volunteering *opportunities*. In those terms, very large numbers of opportunities have been commissioned.

We also know that v is attracting large numbers of people who are new to volunteering. Participants are asked by funded projects whether or not they have been a volunteer in the previous 12 months and the response to this question suggests that 74 per cent of participants have not.

Thus there is a clear impact in terms of creating volunteering opportunities and in terms of attracting people who are new to volunteering. But what about the Russell Commission's aim of delivering a step change in *levels* of volunteering? The available evidence is inconclusive. It is possible to track national levels of volunteering through the Citizenship Survey. Looking at the difference between 2005 (the year before v was set up) and 2007/08, the Citizenship Survey indicates that there was a significant decrease among 16 to 25 year olds in both formal and informal volunteering, while among all age groups informal volunteering declined and formal volunteering remained static (Table 5.1). It is worth noting however that 2005 was The Year of the Volunteer. During 2005 an increased effort was made by volunteering organisations and the government to encourage more people to volunteer and on some measures of volunteering there was an increase in the prevalence of young people participating.

Table 5.1 Trends in volunteering 2003 to 2007/8 for all and 16 to 25 year olds

Percentages					England, 2003, 2005, 2007/08	
	Proportion of respondents				Estimated minimum change detectable 2005 to 2007/08	
	2003	2005	2007/08		per cent	Equivalent no. of young people
Formal volunteering at least once in last year						
16 to 25	40	46	41	*	6-7per cent	400,000
All	42	44	43	NS		
Informal volunteering at least once in last year						
16 to 25	68	76	66	**	6-7per cent	400,000
All	63	68	64	**		
Formal or informal volunteering at least once in last year						
16 to 25	77	83	75	**	5-6per cent	340,000
All	72	76	73	**		

All figures based on core sample only. Number of respondents: All 2003=8,922; All 2005 = 9,195; All 2007/08 = 8,804; 16-25 2003 = 793; 16-25 2005 = 903; 16-25 2007/08 = 826.

* = significant at 95 per cent (p = <0.05); ** = significant at 99 per cent (p = <0.01); NS = Not significant.

There has clearly been no ‘step change’ in youth volunteering, but the fact that levels of volunteering do not appear to have increased during v’s lifetime is not conclusive proof that v has not had an impact on overall levels of youth volunteering.

Firstly, it is not possible to determine ‘cause and effect’ between the existence of v and the observed levels of youth volunteering in the survey. The national levels will be affected by a number of different factors (including for example trends in youth unemployment or education). Secondly, even if v was fulfilling the targets set for it, it is unlikely the survey would be able to register a change of this kind. Table 5.2 also gives estimates of the minimum levels of change³ detectable by the survey among young people aged 16-25. For measures of annual volunteering, changes would need to be around 5-7 per cent or higher (equivalent to around 340,000-400,000⁴ additional young people volunteering compared to the 2005 figures) to have a reasonable chance of detection. Given that it has taken time for v’s initiatives to build up, it is highly unlikely that by the time of the last Citizenship Survey there would have been enough v-funded volunteers to register a statistically significant change on the survey data. Even if the 900,000 or so commissioned opportunities were

³ Power test carried out using 95per cent significance level, 80per cent power, assuming simple random samples which might be expected to under-estimate the minimum level of change detectable.

⁴ Using mid-2006 Population Estimates for England, ONS; 6,711,000 people aged 16 to 25 years.

spread equally over five years the likelihood is that this would not be detected by that survey.

For the same reasons, it is not possible to read the significant decrease in young people's volunteering as evidence of v's failure. It is possible, for example, that the reduction would have even been bigger without the activities of v.

Our conclusion is therefore that while there is evidence that v is fulfilling the targets set for it, the Citizenship Survey trends do not shed much light on what impact v is having on the national levels of youth volunteering. Given that there are no other tools available for measuring its impact, most of our attention now turns therefore to the quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities funded by v.

5.3 Diversity of volunteers

What are the characteristics of the young people taking up opportunities for volunteering? Monitoring data made available to the research team as of autumn 2009 indicate that projects report a combined total of 469,000 recruited volunteers. For around 275,000 of these volunteers we also have some demographic data, which enables us to say more about the characteristics of those involved in v's programmes.

This section uses the monitoring data to explore what we know about the diversity of v funded volunteers and the extent to which v projects attract young people who might not ordinarily get involved in volunteering.

To explore the diversity of v's volunteers, we can compare the monitoring data it collects from its funded projects against national demographic statistics. The 2001 census provides the most appropriate baseline and allows us to compare v's volunteers against national statistics on ethnicity and other socio-demographic characteristics. The main challenge here is that the data that is supplied to v by its funded projects is incomplete (please see Chapter 3 for an exploration of the challenges associated with collecting monitoring data), but we believe it to be broadly representative.

Table 5.2 compares the overall numbers and characteristics of volunteers with corresponding figures on the characteristics of the general population from the Census and the population of volunteers from the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys. A fuller version of this table including ethnicity and employment status data can be found in Appendix B (Table B3).

Age and gender

Overall, v volunteers were significantly more likely to be female than male (which reflects the general picture in the Citizenship Survey) and were more likely to be either in the 16 to 17 year age group or the 20 to 24 year age group than in the 18 to 19 year age group. Comparison with the age breakdown of volunteers in the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys shows that volunteers on v funded projects tend to be younger than volunteers in the general population. In the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys respectively 25 and 23 per cent of volunteers were between 16 and 17 years of age whereas 37 per cent of the v

volunteers were in this age range. These comparisons need to be treated with some caution. As can be seen from the table, the numbers of respondents to the Citizenship Surveys in the relevant age group are small, particularly when broken down by age or gender, and the percentages reported from that survey fluctuate from year to year.

Table 5.2 Overall characteristics of volunteers in monitoring data and corresponding figures on the general population from 2001 census and the population of volunteers between the ages of 16 and 24 from the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys

	Total			Census 2001		Citizenship Survey 2005		Citizenship Survey 2007	
	No. of volunteers	No. of projects	% of valid responses	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gender									
Male	109173	(444)	39.5	2699692	50.4	137	41.5	191	48.0
Female	167302	(446)	60.5	2661864	49.6	193	58.5	207	52.0
Transgender	79	(39)	0.0						
Not Completed	411	(20)							
Prefer not to say	1332	(110)							
Total	278297								
Total valid responses	276554								
Age Group									
Age 16-17	102906	(425)	37.3	1231266	23.0	83	25.2	91	22.9
Age 18-19	65994	(445)	23.9	1177571	22.0	63	19.1	79	19.8
Age 20-25	107246	(440)	38.8	2952719	55.1	184	55.8	228	57.3
Not Completed	504	(2)							
Total	276650								
Total valid responses	276146								

Ethnicity

The percentage of v volunteers reporting their ethnicity as White British (69 per cent) is significantly lower than percentage in this group in the 2001 Census and is also lower than the percentage of volunteers in this group in the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys (80 and 83 per cent respectively). In comparison to the 2001 Census the ethnic groups which were over-represented among v project volunteers by a factor of at least two were: African, Black African and White, Caribbean, Other Asian, Other and Other Black. In total these groups contributed 13 per cent of volunteers reporting ethnicity whereas they made up four per cent of the 2001 Census population suggesting that v has been successful in increasing participation among these ethnic groups. There are too few non-White respondents in the Citizenship Survey to allow us to compare the ethnicity of v volunteers and volunteers in general.

Employment and education status of volunteers

The measurement of economic activity status and educational qualification is less straightforward than that of demographic variables such as age group, gender and ethnicity and we would therefore expect more variation between different data sources for these characteristics. The questions and response categories used to measure these characteristics also differ between the Census and Citizenship Survey.

The monitoring data shows that the three categories employed (n = 39,702), in education (n = 134,087) and NEET (33,714) between them account for nearly ninety-five per cent of volunteers. From the comparisons we can make, volunteers on v projects were more likely to be in education and less likely to be in employment when compared to both young people overall and young people involved in volunteering. Over 60 per cent of volunteers on v projects are in the 'in education' category and fewer than 20 per cent are in employment, in comparison to less than 30 per cent in education and greater than 50 per cent in employment in the results from both the 2001 Census and both Citizenship Surveys.

The difference between data sources in the measurement of educational qualifications again means that we must be cautious in the interpretation of results. The figures from the different data sources on volunteering are in agreement, however, in finding that young people with no qualifications are under-represented among volunteers in comparison to the overall population. Such people accounted for 15 per cent of the population in 2001 but for between eight and ten per cent of volunteers in programmes run by v and of volunteers recorded in the Citizenship Survey. The implication is that people without qualifications are less likely to be volunteers than the population as a whole, and we find evidence for this both from survey data and from v's monitoring data.

Socially excluded groups, disability and sexual orientation

Please see Appendix B for Table B4 showing the number of young people and the percentage of the total number in each response category in the monitoring data for the indicators: progression, particular socially-excluded groups, disability and sexual orientation. The table also shows the number of v projects which reported information for each category.

Because there is no other source of data against which we could assess whether the proportions in each category are what we might expect from population data, the reliability of the information is a matter of individual judgment. The total number of responses to the questions on sexual orientation, disability and target group are substantially lower in comparison to the number of responses to the questions on demographic characteristics. It is highly likely that many volunteers chose not to provide this information although a 'None of the above' or 'Not completed' response category was available.

The responses to the question on sexual orientation show that a large majority of v's young volunteers declare themselves to be heterosexual (93 per cent). The lowest number of responses was in the category lesbian and this may have been confused with gay by some respondents. We do not have reliable estimates of the proportion of the population who are

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) although the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is including questions in its national surveys and results should be available during 2010.

The large majority of respondents did not report a disability but among those who did the most frequent responses were learning difficulty, learning disability, mental health and physical disability. In total 21,507 volunteers reported a disability of some type. This represents approximately eight per cent of the overall number of volunteers but is just under 15 per cent of the total number of valid responses. For comparison, approximately 18 per cent of people of working age have a disability. This suggests that the proportion of people with disabilities who volunteer on projects run by v is broadly comparable with that in the population as a whole.

The response rate for the question on whether the volunteer belongs to one of a number of socially-excluded groups is low, but from what data we do have, there is a positive story to be told about socially excluded groups. Projects funded by v do appear to be attracting young people who are experiencing various forms of social exclusion. For example, around four per cent of the young adult population are offenders or ex-offenders whereas seven per cent of those in the monitoring data are in this category; four per cent of these volunteers have experienced homelessness whereas approximately 0.6 per cent of households do so at any one time; approximately four per cent of v's volunteers have been in or are leaving care compared to a national proportion of around two per cent; five per cent of volunteers were lone parents compared to three per cent of the young adult population as a whole; and 52 per cent of volunteers were reported as being low income whereas national estimates are in the order of 25 to 30 per cent.⁵ These figures do not just reflect very specific initiatives to attract these groups, because the monitoring data we have refers to large numbers of projects.

Volunteer progression

Monitoring data also provide some information on where young people went after they had been involved in volunteering. We are interested in this question because ultimately we would want to be able to assess whether volunteering has resulted in hard outcomes such as education, employment or training. The indicator on volunteer progression is assumed to be asked only of volunteers who had moved on from volunteering with v. In total 78,291 responses were present in the data representing approximately one in four of the total number of volunteers. The most frequent response is 'unknown' illustrating the difficulty of obtaining data from volunteers who had stopped volunteering. Of the volunteers for whom

⁵ Sources for these figures are as follows: Young offenders:

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/youth/youth076.ht>; homelessness:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnessstatistics/publicationhomelessness/>; young people in care:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000741/index.shtml>; lone parents and young carers:

2001 Census; refugees: http://www.unhcr.org.uk/info/briefings/asylum_issues/myths.html; low

income: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/04/index.shtml>.

the progression status is known the most frequent destinations were either another volunteering opportunity or into education, each accounting for around 17 per cent of the number of transitions for which data was available. However, to draw robust conclusions about the effects of volunteering on young people, a more substantial study would be needed, which compared volunteers with non-volunteers over time.

In summary, the information obtained on the age, gender and ethnicity of volunteers appears reasonably robust. There are some difficulties in comparing measurements of economic activity and educational qualifications between datasets. The information on sexual orientation, target group and progression is less complete and may not be representative of volunteers overall.

Where we have demographic data summarising the characteristics of people involved in v's projects, there is some evidence that, compared to national demographic patterns, programmes are being successful in recruiting females and young people under 20 years of age. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds (particularly black ethnic groups) are over represented among volunteers compared to the distribution in the population. This is based on comparisons with the 2001 census and with the demographics of the volunteering population as revealed in national survey datasets. Comparisons show that the proportions in v's programmes who lack qualifications, who report disabilities, or who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) are broadly similar to the population as a whole. It is particularly clear that v's programmes are reaching young people who experience various dimensions of social exclusion where, as far as we can reliably judge, the proportions of volunteers who are or have been homeless, in the care system, lone parents, low income, offenders, and refugees, are significantly higher than would be expected.

5.4 Impacts on young volunteers

This section explores what we know so far about the impact that v funded activities are having on the young volunteers. We are unable to demonstrate any quantitative impact so this section draws on the qualitative case studies. It is worth noting that little data has so far been collected from young people themselves and considerably more will be included in the final evaluation report once the in-depth case studies have taken place.

The research team are finding a very positive story from case studies of funded organisations and evidence suggests that there is overwhelming agreement on the positive impact on those young people who have engaged in volunteering, particularly disadvantaged young people. The range of impacts is diverse but can be categorised into three groups: Psychological and emotional impacts, life skills and knowledge, and future employment and training. We explore each of these types of impact in turn below.

Psychological and emotional Impacts

Both project staff and young people involved in vcashpoint reported that volunteering had positive psychological and emotional impacts. Two broad categories of psychological

impact are emerging from the data so far: impacts associated with confidence and self esteem and impacts associated with identity and belonging.

Young people engaged in vcashpoint activities spoke of the positive effect that volunteering had upon their confidence. This view was shared by project staff - across funding streams - who also reported additional impacts upon young people's well-being. Benefits mentioned included increased self-esteem and higher aspirations, which were reflected in a willingness to consider a broader range of career choices and engage with people from a wide range of social backgrounds. These psychological and emotional impacts were attributed to young people having ownership over their activities, being treated as equals rather than troublemakers, and receiving praise and encouragement (in some cases this was the first time they had experienced this level of respect).

'I would say it's really made them grow and develop. It's increased their empathy with other people; they understand other people's problems. And I think they understand that people show their problems in different ways.'

(vcashpoint)

In addition to benefits of confidence and self esteem, young people reported a sense of enjoyment from engaging in volunteering activities and a sense of belonging to a community. For example, one participant had been searching for volunteering opportunities for a number of years but had been told that their disability was a barrier to their participation:

'It took me so long and then I got into volunteer{ing}. ... I know this sounds a bit cheesy - but it makes... me feel wanted.'

(vcashpoint)

Another view was that participation in volunteering can facilitate young people's involvement in cross-community activities. It was felt that by supporting young people to develop leadership skills through participation in community projects they will be better placed to overcome barriers to joint working which may exist between communities. It was reported that this was already underway.

Volunteering was also found to have positive impacts upon self identity. For example, it was reported that as a result of engaging in a volunteering project focusing upon body image and self esteem, young women felt more positively about themselves and therefore felt less pressure to conform to the expectations of their peers.

Life skills and knowledge

Both young people and project workers spoke positively about the range of skills that young

people developed through volunteering. These skills ranged from basic, but nonetheless significant, life skills such as exercising choice within day-to-day life to organisational, financial and emotional skills. The development of the skills essential for independent living was regarded as hugely significant for young people who had previously led very restricted lives:

'The impact that we've had on young peoples lives is massive. The young people here at [organisation] and also the people in the partner organisations without this volunteering, the majority of them would be at home with no opportunities.'

(involved)

In addition to essential independent living skills, volunteering also provided young people who had previously had limited engagement in meaningful opportunities to gain cultural knowledge and develop IT skills. For example, some young volunteers had never encountered social networking sites or were unfamiliar with other forms of digital communication. However, through their engagement in volunteering they developed the requisite knowledge and skills to utilise this technology.

Socialising with other young people and the development of interpersonal skills were also regarded as a positive impact. An example of this included young people expanding their social network through coming into contact with young people with social backgrounds very different to their own.

Furthermore, vashpoint grant recipients reported developing financial skills through responsibility for managing the project budget:

'I would have spent money like no tomorrow...but it's ... been great because money's not here to be spent like water... I've realised I take taxis for granted because luckily my parents... can normally sort my taxi out. But, if it weren't for this money and me keeping to the budget [volunteer's name] would not be able to come.'

(vashpoint)

Future employment and training

Young people who had received vashpoint grants viewed volunteering as contributing positively to their future life course – for example, through enhancing their CV and therefore improving future employment prospects. There was a strong consensus among project workers about the impact of volunteering on employability. Feedback suggested a high

level of confidence in the view that volunteering enhanced young people's skills and provided them with experience of operating within a structured environment. It also offered opportunities to network and helped to orientate young people and refine career choices. However, while there was broad agreement that volunteering experiences could enhance a young person's employability, there were concerns about the value employers assign to the skills gained through volunteering. It may be the case that value is attached to the initiative through which young people volunteer rather than the volunteering activity *per se*. It was therefore suggested that there could be more marketing aimed at businesses to raise the status of v to employers.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive qualitative impacts reported there were concerns that programmes were not reaching those young people who could potentially benefit the most. These concerns were encapsulated in suggestions that volunteering would still only be accessible to young people that can afford it and as a consequence added value would be limited as programmes targeted those young people who are already motivated and engaged. However, from the monitoring data there are signs that volunteering programmes run by v are reaching excluded groups. It would therefore be useful to explore whether these concerns are shared by other interviewees or not as the programmes develop.

5.5 Impacts on organisations

This section looks at the impact that v is having on organisations that run youth volunteering. It starts by exploring the extent to which v is attracting organisations which do not have previous experience of involving volunteers or working with young people. It then looks at what recipients of grants say would have happened to volunteering projects if v had not existed.

Across the vinvolved team, vinvolved project and Match Fund funding streams, most organisations had 'a lot' of prior experience of working with volunteers (ranging between 76 and 91 per cent) or young people (ranging between 73 and 81 per cent). Only five per cent of Match Fund projects said they had no experience of working with volunteers prior to their v funding. In contrast, vtalent year projects were more likely to say they had 'a little' prior experience of working with volunteers (60 per cent) with just over a third (36 per cent) saying they had 'a lot' of experience in this area. Almost all (98 per cent) of vtalent year projects had previously worked with young people. Nearly all projects (97 to 100 per cent) had previously worked with (other) third sector organisations. About 49 per cent of the vinvolved teams said their current v project had been a partnership application with another organisation, as was the case for 22 per cent of vinvolved projects.

Most commonly, vinvolved projects (47 per cent) and vinvolved teams (66 per cent) indicated that their organisation was a first-time applicant to v. However, a substantial proportion had received a prior grant from v (26 and 38 per cent respectively). The remainder had unsuccessfully applied to v in the past. About half (48 per cent) the Match Fund projects had previously received a grant from v, while 42 per cent were first-time applicants to v. Just over a quarter of Match Fund and vinvolved projects said it was the

first time their organisation had applied for any kind of volunteering project (27 per cent of both funding streams compared to six per cent of vinvolved teams).

The evidence indicates that although few of the organisations were new to working with volunteers and/or young people, a significant minority of Match Fund and vinvolved projects had not received volunteering grants previously. While they may be few in number, it is important to note that new organisations are being drawn into volunteering by v and that v is therefore having an impact on the diversity of organisations involved in youth volunteering.

Table 5.3 below, presents data on organisations' previous experience of working with young people

Table 5.3 Organisations' previous experience working with young people					
Grant Recipient Survey Wave One (Batches 1 to 4)					
<i>Percentage</i>	All	Match Fund	vinvolved teams	vinvolved projects	vtalent year
Finding or recruiting young volunteers	87	77	95	90	83
Working with young people as volunteers	88	80	92	88	92
Providing public services for young people, including education or training	83	88	73	81	98
Providing advice, support or guidance to young people	84	78	89	79	100
Working with (other) third sector organisations	98	97	100	97	98
<i>Number</i>	325	74	87	117	47

Would these projects have happened if v had not existed? This is important if we are interested in the question of whether v is simply substituting or displacing existing funding streams or whether it is creating entirely new volunteering opportunities which could not have existed without its presence. We asked recipients what they thought would have happened in the absence of v funding. Between 49 and 85 per cent of grant recipients said that their projects would not have taken place without funding from v. Of those who said the project would have gone ahead without the v funding, around half (55 per cent of all projects) said the project would have been funded by another organisation; 25 per cent said the funding would have come from their own organisation. Just under three-quarters (72 per cent) of vinvolved teams who said their project would have gone ahead without funding claimed that their project had been in existence in some form before receiving the funding from v; 43 per cent of Match Fund and 40 per cent of vinvolved projects said this. However, over half (58 per cent) of these projects in existence previously were now running on a bigger scale.

In short, the majority grant of recipients have said that their projects would not have taken place without funding from **v** which suggests that new projects to involve young people have come into existence as a result of **v** and, as the comments in the previous paragraph make clear, existing projects have been scaled up. This is based entirely on respondents' perceptions as there is not really another way of knowing what would have happened if **v** had not been in existence.

Improving practice within volunteer involving organisations

Alongside achieving a step change in the quantity and diversity of youth volunteering, **v** is also mandated to enhance the quality of volunteering. One way of assessing this is to consider how **v** has affected practices within the organisations it funds, and in particular the outcomes it has led to in terms of improving volunteer management practices.

In terms of anticipated outcomes from grant recipients, expectations were high (grant recipient survey). Around nine out of ten grant recipient organisations felt the **v** funding would improve young people's understanding of their organisation, improve their service provision for young people, and increase the number of young people their organisation worked with as volunteers.

A considerable number of grant recipients also felt that the awareness of volunteering within the organisation would increase (82 per cent), the role of young people in shaping services would be enhanced (85 per cent), and that their engagement with hard to reach groups (80 per cent) would improve. Although not all organisations anticipated these outcomes, the proportion that did is high particularly given that a large proportion of the organisations were already involving volunteers and/or young people prior to receiving funding from **v**.

Early findings from the evaluation suggest that these expectations are being met and that volunteer management practices are improving within grant recipient organisations. In terms of the management practices that organisations had put in place, the research team found a varied range of initiatives. Assigning each volunteer with a named supervisor (66 per cent) and providing training (57 per cent) were common across all funding streams. Around half of **v**involved projects (54 per cent) and Match Fund projects (55 per cent) said each volunteer had a mentor or buddy while this was less common among **v**involved teams (34 per cent). Three-quarters (73 per cent) of **v**involved teams and projects had partly implemented the **Reach** quality assurance framework, and 24 per cent had fully implemented this according to the grant recipient survey (please see Chapter 3 for more discussion of **Reach**)

In addition to these management practices, as already mentioned in Chapter 3, organisations had put in place mechanisms to ensure the involvement of young people, such as involvement in the publicity, promotion or media campaigns (85 per cent of all projects), developing activities or target groups for the project (87 per cent), membership of an advisory group (80 per cent); and involvement in volunteer recruitment (79 per cent). Nine per cent of **v**involved projects said that young people were involved in all aspects of

the project; this was lower for vinvolved teams (one per cent) and Match Fund projects (four per cent).

The case studies found general enthusiasm for the impact of v funding on organisations. Four categories of outcome can be identified:

- **An increased status and positioning for volunteering within organisations.** This included challenging organisational cultures and perceptions on involving volunteers and particularly involving young volunteers. Volunteering had moved up organisational agendas and was a higher priority for organisations as a result of the v funded projects. For example, there were discussions regarding volunteering being included in strategic plans for the first time, and being part of the agenda for the Senior Management Team. For some, this was about the role of volunteering in general, for others it was specifically about embedding and prioritising youth volunteering. Comments included:

'It's kind of changing the culture of the organisation, that managers and staff now think about young people, when they didn't [before].'

(v Match Fund)

'With the opportunity to apply for a v grant, I think that changed our perception of volunteering. I don't think we'd ever seen young people as a vibrant recruiting ground for volunteering. And we have never looked back. I would think now probably 80 per cent of our volunteers are young people.'

(v Match Fund, grant recipient)

- **Enhanced volunteer management capacity and practices.** More specifically, there was a sense that delivering v funded projects had led to an improvement in volunteer management practices. This did not necessarily mean a radical change or the introduction of volunteer management practices for the first time (although this was true in some cases), rather there were signs of a general 'tightening up' and consolidation of existing practices - doing what they felt they already should have been doing better. Volunteer handbooks, policies, procedures, awards and volunteer-led forums were all mentioned as practices that had been introduced for the first time, or strengthened, as a result of v funding. For some, v funding had meant the recruitment of a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator for the first time, and this could lead to considerable change. As one respondent said:

'I think having a designated individual makes a big difference. Prior to having v funding in place, whoever managed the project managed those volunteers on that project. Whereas now everything is directed through one person and that's good because the volunteers know who to go to.'

(v Match Fund, grant recipient)

It should be noted that the enhanced volunteer management capacity and practices could come at a 'cost' (particularly in terms of staff time) to some of the organisations, as the intensity of work needed to develop and support youth volunteering had been greater than anticipated or budgeted for within grant applications (please see Chapter 3 for further discussion of this).

- **Enhanced partnership working:** A rather different outcome was seen to be enhanced partnership working. This was discussed in a number of different ways. Simply being part of a national initiative was significant for some organisations. More often, organisations talked about an increased capacity for working in partnership with other organisations on a local basis – a sense that being involved in a v project had opened new doors to local joint-working. Funded organisations reported working together with organisations to: recruit volunteers; place volunteers; and to share practices and experiences. It should be noted that although organisations were on the whole positive about the range of partnerships that had developed through their v funding, there was a sense that as v could have done more to directly facilitate those relationships by more actively bringing together local/regional networks of funded organisations, rather than leaving grant recipients to develop their own contacts (see Chapter 3 for discussion of this).
- **Enhanced organisational sustainability.** There were reports from within the case studies of organisations generally becoming more sustainable as a result of v funding. This was either as a direct result of the funding stream, or a more indirect result of having recruited a new and more diverse volunteer base which in turn enabled organisations to provide new or additional services. For some there was also a sense that their organisational profile had been raised as they had greater opportunities to promote and publicise their work. Furthermore, that the success of their v funding application and project delivery had meant they were in a better position to apply for future funding from other sources. For example, an organisation with funding for a vinvolved project, had applied for and successfully gained funds to develop similar volunteering work to that which they were doing with the vinvolved project, to a younger age group (11+). They directly attributed obtaining this funding to the success of the vinvolved project they operated and the evidence of their capacity to manage volunteers it provided. Another respondent from Match Fund said:

'I think v have been quite instrumental in helping us sustain our growth, without question of a doubt. And certainly our current phase of growth is all down to v.'

(v Match Fund, grant recipient)

5.6 Implications

Implications for v

- While v projects are successfully achieving diversity in a number of areas this research indicates that there is a view among the funded network that volunteering opportunities are only available to those that can afford it and that there is too much emphasis on numbers of volunteers with not enough on diversity and quality of opportunities. v should consider communicating with the funded network to inform it of its overall success in engaging a diverse group of volunteers. The ongoing evaluation will also need to probe this issue in more detail to understand why grant recipients feel that this is the case.
- v is already working closely with the private sector through the Match Fund scheme. However it may also want to consider doing more work directly with employers to promote the value of volunteering in acquiring skills that are transferable to the workplace.

Implications for grant recipients

- v's funded network would be well placed to work with local employers to educate them about the benefits of volunteering. There may be opportunities to share good practice around this at regional meetings and other networking events.
- Where at all possible grant recipients should provide v with complete monitoring data as this is the key measure of how successful both individual projects and the funded network as a whole has been in reaching a range of volunteers.

Implications for government

- Evidence from the evaluation so far indicates strong positive messages about the benefits of volunteering on young people including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Government should explore ways of formally recognising the role that volunteering plays in building skills and confidence including further exploring routes for these benefits to be recognised by employers.
- Given the success v has had in engaging a diverse range of young people not usually associated with volunteering (such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, different ethnicities, young people who have been homeless or are in or leaving care), v provides a model for working with young people who may be

deemed harder to reach. Engaging with these young people as a route to tackling social exclusion is likely to continue to be a key policy priority in the future. v could play a role in building a model that extends this engagement to even greater numbers of young people.

6 Conclusions

v has been charged, from the outset, with a challenging task. The 12 Russell Commission recommendations that v is responsible for provide ambitious aims, but were actually relatively ill-defined. The development of v has also occurred within a challenging context of organisational, societal and political change.

v has positioned itself as a change manager for the sector, building capacity and influencing practice. v's willingness to push sectoral and organisational boundaries has been encapsulated in the commissioning of a robust and substantial formative evaluation of its work, which provides ongoing scrutiny, and suggestions for reform and change.

Despite the challenging context and history that v operates within, findings from the evaluation so far indicate some key successes for v. Available data indicate that v has exceeded its targets for volunteering opportunities set by the Russell Commission. Perhaps even more significantly there is strong evidence that v funded volunteering opportunities are being taken up by a greater diversity of young people than is normally the case, including traditionally socially excluded groups.

Grant recipients report that v funding has led to very positive developments for their organisations in terms of the capacity they have to both work with young people and provide structured youth volunteering opportunities. The impact such volunteering has on young people is reportedly multifaceted and includes positive interpersonal and educational outcomes. The impact that v has had on the volunteering sector also has positive aspects – the incorporation of structured national volunteering programmes implemented locally across England within organisations that have little previous experience of volunteering; a strong brand image for volunteering; and the extension of new types of opportunities for young people via programmes such as vcashpoint and vtalent year. The commissioning process has therefore clearly extended youth volunteering into new areas, and the **Reach** accreditation provides guidelines for quality.

Youth engagement has also reportedly increased in quality and scope in organisations funded by v, young people have a sense of pride being involved in v funded activities and an appreciation of the digital media v communicates through.

However, there have been and remain substantial challenges for v. From the outset there has been sectoral distrust of v as a new and substantial player in the volunteering field. The need to drive forward new volunteering opportunities and funding within short timescales led to grant recipients feeling that the programmes were rushed, and the aims unclear. Indeed the role and remit of v can be lost within the need to submit an application and set up in a short period of time. Although not directly the fault of v, a disjuncture between grant

applicant and project staff has at times exacerbated a sense of distance from v a lack of buy-in from the volunteering sector and strong concerns regarding the targets and deliverability of projects.

Each of the funding streams – vinvolved teams, vinvolved projects, Match Fund, v talent year and vcashpoint – is distinctly different. Therefore, unsurprisingly, there were been distinctly different findings from each stream in the evaluation. Grant recipients from vinvolved teams reported particularly high levels of dissatisfaction regarding the nature and scope of communication and support from v and the target driven ethos of their work. Indeed there appears to be a desire across the funded network for the facilitation of even stronger local networks and a ‘two-way’ flow of communication whereby they can have meaningful input to the vision and strategy of v, yet achieving this is challenging. For this communication to be successful, ample time and an ethos of partnership and deliberation with the funded network and the young people the funded network support is required.

Despite the positive development of youth engagement facilitated by v and praise for the manner in which v has promoted volunteering to young people there are also concerns from project staff that young people may be viewed as a homogenous group by v. This is felt to be encapsulated in their marketing material and the perception that this is aimed at one ‘type’ of young person, at the exclusion and alienation of others. So there appears to be a desire for a ‘back to basics’ approach, engaging with young people and the funded network in order to achieve the right balance between nationally co-ordinated campaigns which can be executed meaningfully at the local level.

Finally, from an evaluative perspective, despite an indication of positive outcomes, it remains a challenge to adequately measure the true impact v has on volunteering, young people, organisations and wider communities. This may be remedied in future work as new data becomes available.

Having noted both the successes and challenges v faces it is important to highlight that v’s audiences are also active participants in the ongoing development of v, and the extent to which this leads to success or not. Some of the difficulties reported by grant recipients regarding the set up of projects, for example, indicate a failure of internal communication outside of v’s control.

With a relatively small staff team v has ambitious aims to achieve. The implications set out in this report provide a framework from which to begin to identify and develop priority areas for v to focus on and move forward in a manner that maximises its successes and begins to address the most pressing challenges. The report has also set out implications and findings that have resonance for v’s audiences, to promote their understanding of the challenges, and possible impacts, that the development of youth volunteering programmes present.

The final year of the evaluation will involve further and more detailed data collection which will allow more nuanced exploration of v's activities. The final report on the research to be published in the summer of 2011 will return to the implications and potential priorities outlined above and explore where developments have been made and reassess priorities for the future for v, its funded network and wider audiences.

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Appendix A

Evaluation Methodology

A brief overview of the purpose and methodology for each of the nine evaluation strands is given below.

Grant recipient survey

Overview of strand

This strand of the evaluation comprises two waves of telephone surveys with **v** grant recipients. Interviews are taking place with **vinvolved** teams and projects, **vtalent** year projects, Match Fund projects and **vcashpoint** recipients.

The main aims of this strand are to:

- measure and track experiences of the application process and engaging with **v** in fulfilment of grant-funded activities;
- measure (anticipated and actual) outcomes and impacts of grants on organisations and young people, and plans for sustainability;
- compare experiences of the funded organisations across funding streams and across time; and
- link this information with case study and cost-benefit analysis strands.

Methodology

Due to the nature of the questions covered in the interview, organisations/young people whose grants had already ended were not covered by the study. It was therefore agreed only to sample ongoing projects, namely:

- all **vinvolved** teams and projects, and **vtalent** year projects;
- Match Fund projects still running at the time of the first interview;
- **vcashpoint** recipients whose projects were still running at the time of the first interview.

Contact details of grant recipients were given to us by **v**, excluding any who had opted out at the start of the evaluation. Interviewers from NatCen's Telephone Unit were briefed by researchers about **v**, the evaluation and the interview. An advance letter was sent to all selected projects notifying them about the study, what the interview would cover and that an interviewer would be calling.

The first wave of fieldwork took place between August and September 2009. For some grants, this was close to the start of the funding, while for others (for example, **vinvolved** teams and projects) this was mid-way through their funding. A few projects were already

towards the end of their grant-funded period (primarily from v_{cashpoint} and Match Fund projects).

The first main batch of Wave One interviews has now been completed. Subsequent (smaller) batches of Wave One interviews will be conducted approximately every three months, mainly to capture later rounds of v_{cashpoint} grants.

Interim findings from five of the funding streams - v_{involved} projects and teams, and Match Fund projects are included in this report. Emerging findings from interviews with v_{cashpoint} recipients and v_{talent} year projects in Further Education colleges are also included.

Results from the first Wave Two interviews will be available by May 2011. These will primarily be from the shorter Match Fund and v_{cashpoint} projects. The majority of Wave Two interviews will take place early in 2011, when the v_{involved} funding streams come to an end.

Young people survey

Overview of strand

This strand of the evaluation comprises a survey of young people in England, which is being run over two years on the NatCen Omnibus. Interim headline findings from the first year of the survey are used in this report.

The main aims of the survey are to:

- track young people's general awareness of and attitudes towards volunteering;
- provide supplementary information on awareness of and attitudes towards **v**; and
- enable comparisons between young people who volunteer and those who do not.

This strand was designed to shed light on the extent of, and attitudes towards, volunteering among young people in England. It also provides information about young people's awareness of **v**, and their reactions to **v** branding.

As the Omnibus study is running over two years, we will also be able to provide some measures of change over time, for example, in relation to levels of awareness of **v**. We should note the limitation here, however, that any changes identified will only be found to be significant if they are relatively large (for example, over five to nine per cent). The survey will not have the power to pick up smaller changes such as a couple of percentage points.

About the NatCen Omnibus and how it works

The NatCen Omnibus incorporates:

- a random sample of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain (of which around ten per cent are aged 16 to 25 years old);
- around 1,600 face-to-face achieved interviews per wave (four a year) in total, with approximately 150 young people aged 16-25 per wave;
- Computer-Assisted Interviewing (CAI) in respondents' own homes; and
- data weighted for selection probabilities and non-response

Why we chose it

- The Omnibus represents a cost-effective way of identifying a high-quality sample of young people (the alternative of screening would be extremely time- and resource-intensive).

Methodology

The Omnibus questions were developed in partnership with consortium members and **v** staff and covered the following topics:

- whether young people volunteer and, if so, what sort of volunteering activities they are involved in;
- attitudes towards volunteering for example, what young people see as the benefits of volunteering;
- whether people would like to volunteer in the future and, if so, what areas they would be interested in getting involved in;
- whether young people have heard of **v**; and

- what they think of v's branding and marketing campaigns.

The questions were piloted in March 2009; twenty-eight young people were interviewed in order to test how well the questions worked. As well as the main set of Omnibus questions, respondents also answered a 'debrief questionnaire', which asked them to reflect on the questions they had been asked in the study and about the answers they had given.

Following the pilot, amendments were made to the questionnaire, taking on board the feedback received from the young people and the interviewers. In particular, the questionnaire was shortened and the section on v's branding and marketing campaigns was simplified.

Our intention was to run the young people's survey on the Omnibus over eight waves, in order to generate around 1,200 interviews over two years.

The first wave of the Omnibus on which the questions were set to run (April to May 2009) was cancelled, so an alternative solution was sought to meet the requirements of the evaluation. The alternative proposal was in effect to boost the sample of younger people in the second and fourth waves of the Omnibus by interviewing additional eligible household members from the same household as the 'core' respondents in order to compensate (in terms of numbers) for the cancelled wave.

Secondary analysis of the Citizenship Survey

Overview of strand

This strand of the evaluation is secondary analysis of Citizenship Survey data, focusing on the prevalence of volunteering among young people in England over the period of v's activities, the profile of young volunteers and views or experiences of volunteering.

The main aims of this strand are to:

- look at the proportion of young people volunteering in England since 2005;
- provide a profile of who is volunteering in terms of key demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity, gender and disability; and
- look at the types of things young people feel act as barriers to participation in volunteering and what young people get out of volunteering.

Methodology

The analysis was designed to provide headline findings from the 2003 to 2009/10 Citizenship Surveys for the following measures of volunteering:

- any formal volunteering in the last 12 months;
- any informal volunteering in the last 12 months; and
- any formal or informal volunteering in the last 12 months.

Prevalence of volunteering

The first section of analysis examined whether there have been statistically significant differences in the proportion of young people participating in formal volunteering in the 12 months prior to interview since 2005. The 2005 data was used as the baseline for this analysis as this year of the Citizenship Survey was the closest to the inception of v. However, it is important to acknowledge that 2005 was 'The Year of the Volunteer'. During 2005 an increased effort was made by volunteering organisations and the government to encourage more people to volunteer and on some measures of volunteering there was an increase in the prevalence of young people participating. Therefore, it is also useful to show figures for 2003 where available to put into context any changes since 2005.

This part of the analysis is designed to break down the prevalence of volunteering among different age groups, for teenagers (16 to 19 years) and those in their twenties (20 to 25 years). The analysis also looks at the figures for all respondents to the Citizenship Survey (i.e. people of all ages) in order to provide some context for any changes in the prevalence of volunteering among the general population.

The profile of young volunteers since 2005

The analysis will provide details of the profile of volunteers in 2005 and examine whether this has changed over time. The profile will include a breakdown of the proportion of young volunteers by age group, gender, ethnicity, whether people have a long-term limiting illness or disability, economic status and highest educational qualification.

Data are also available from 2007/08 onwards about sexual orientation and whether people have any caring responsibilities for a member of their immediate family or a close relative outside of their household who has any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity. Therefore, these data will be included in the profile analysis of 2007/08 onwards.

The analysis will also present the findings from the multi-variate analysis included in the 2007/08 Volunteering and Charitable Giving topic report. This will indicate which groups of people aged 16 to 25 are more likely to volunteer.

Views and experiences of volunteering

The Citizenship Survey can also provide some information about barriers to volunteering, how people found out about volunteering opportunities and what people think they get from volunteering (for example, satisfaction or increased skills). The analysis will include the key findings from these additional questions for young volunteers.

Secondary analysis of administrative data

Overview of strand

The analysis of administrative data involves looking at statistics gathered as part of the project monitoring process on the demographics of those recruited as volunteers to programmes funded by v.

The main aims of this strand are to:

- understand the extent to which v's projects are recruiting volunteers from groups of the population which previously have not engaged with volunteering; and
- understand the relationship between the distribution of projects funded by v and the distribution of third sector organisations and resources.

Methodology

This analysis uses monitoring report returns provided by v funded projects which give information about the numbers and characteristics of young people engaged as volunteers, and which also includes information about the location of activities funded by v. The research team used the data to assess the numbers of volunteers compared to the numbers of volunteering opportunities. The data is also used to determine whether or not the characteristics of volunteers on v's programmes are similar to those of the population of young people as a whole, and whether their characteristics are similar to or different from those of young people who are already engaged in volunteering. The statistics derived from the monitoring data are compared with information from the 2001 Census, from survey datasets such as the Citizenship Survey, and from statistics from other sources on the characteristics of particular groups of the population such as young offenders or lone parents.

Cost-benefit analysis

Overview of strand

The cost-benefit analysis (CBA) aims to establish the cost-effectiveness of projects funded by v. This includes their overall benefits to young people and host organisations. Therefore, the main aim is to estimate the overall impact that v is having for each £1 invested.

Methodology

A full cost-benefit analysis requires a great deal of information, covering the differences generated for individuals over time, and the input they make to the different projects. This data is not easily available from any particular source. This element will therefore involve drawing on a range of resources.

First, we will consider what it is possible to learn from existing national datasets on the value of youth volunteering *in general*, that is, not linked directly to v. Some analysis of this kind has already been produced.

Second, we will look at data on costs as provided by v in the form of the grants database established for internal monitoring. Over time, this database will also incorporate some measures of labour market status, which should enable us to provide rough estimates of whether there are employment gains to those volunteering. Other data on benefits (numbers and impacts) is mostly derived from the surveys of grant recipients, albeit in a relatively crude form. Over the next year of the evaluation, survey data from grant recipients will be matched against the monitoring data. The ongoing programme of

quantitative analysis should assist in providing estimates of the 'additionality' of v's activities – that is, the number of additional volunteers recruited who would not have been if v had not existed. A final area we will explore is the use of case studies to provide in-depth information on costs and benefits for particular projects.

This report does not contain findings from the Cost Benefit Analysis as the analysis needs to be completed before conclusions can be drawn. This data will be included in the final report in summer 2011.

Qualitative case studies

Overview of strand

This strand comprises 42 'light touch' and 18 'in-depth' case studies of v funded activities drawn from across v's funding streams.

The main aims of this strand are:

- to explore the experiences of v's grant recipients, project staff and young volunteers; and
- to explore the impact of v on organisations, young volunteers and the local community.

Methodology

Forty-two qualitative light touch case studies are being completed in two cohorts to incorporate activities funded pre and post September 2008. The case studies are drawn from across five funding streams – vinvolved teams, vinvolved projects, vcashpoint, Match Fund and vtalent year. The research team is also planning to include a couple of case studies from the new Olympic inspired programme when this is set up. The 42 cases primarily involved a light touch approach involving interviews with two key members of staff. Where necessary however, the team adopted a flexible approach and where a project was near completion at the time of the case study a more in-depth approach was taken to ensure that timely and rigorous data were collected. The first cohort of light touch case studies has been completed and an initial analysis of these interviews is included in this report. A full analysis will not be available until later reports. At the time of writing this report, the second cohort is two-thirds complete.

In-depth case studies

In May 2010 we will begin in-depth case studies that follow up on 18 of the original 42 light touch case studies. This in-depth research will include observations, work with young volunteers (led by the evaluation teams' young peer researchers) and interviews with local stakeholders. This will be alongside additional 'catch up' interviews with the original interviewees. All material collected during the light touch phase will be included in the in-depth analysis. Approximately eight data collection encounters will be completed for each in-depth case study. As for the light touch case studies this in-depth phase will draw a sample from across v's funding streams.

Building a team of young researchers

In response to v's youth-led ethos and initial requirement that the evaluation should provide opportunities for young people to be directly engaged in reviewing and evaluating v's work, a team of 12 peer researchers has been recruited and trained to assist with the evaluation and lead on the research with young volunteers during the in-depth case studies. A residential training event held in January 2010 was used to train the young researchers in some core principles of research methods and ethics, and to allow them to build as a team and learn about the evaluation. Each young peer researcher has now been assigned a dedicated mentor from the evaluation team to support them in conducting their planned research during the course of 2010.

Two additional training events will also be held. One will take place during the fieldwork to act as a 'refresher' and to develop analysis and dissemination plans. The second will take place on completion of the research and allow the opportunity for emerging findings to be discussed. This event will also provide the opportunity to discuss with the peer researchers how they can use their research skills in the future, identify opportunities with them, and award certificates of research skills. Opportunities to remain involved in the evaluation will be discussed and if appropriate, offered to those young people who are interested.

Stakeholder consultation

Overview of strand

This strand comprises interviews and workshops with a range of stakeholders from across government and the private, youth and volunteering sectors. Stakeholders have been identified in the evaluation as key senior government, voluntary sector, youth sector and business sector staff who are influenced by, or may influence, v's work and the context they operate within. Therefore in the report, the term 'stakeholder' refers explicitly to stakeholder participants who have been interviewed as part of the evaluation. Clearly individuals and agencies that have a stake in the work that v undertake are wide ranging and diverse and not all have been included in the evaluation. To make clear this distinction, those with a general interest in v are referred to as v's 'audiences' and not stakeholders. v's audiences, as referred to in this way, is a general term and includes those both involved in the evaluation and not.

The main aims of this strand are:

- to gather views on the external environment in which v operates; and
- to review attitudes towards v and its performance among key stakeholder groups.

Methodology

Eleven in-depth interviews have been conducted with senior representatives within key government departments and national volunteering infrastructure organisations. This included five representatives from government departments, one representative on behalf of local government, and five representatives from key volunteering sector infrastructure organisations. Interviews lasted for between 45 to 60 minutes; they have been transcribed and an interim analysis is included in this report.

Three deliberative workshops were also planned in order to explore the views of a wide range of stakeholders. Each workshop was designed to focus on a particular stakeholder group: volunteering organisations; youth organisations; and private sector organisations.

Wave One deliberative workshops have been undertaken. Invites were sent out to 31 volunteering organisations, 20 youth organisations and 21 private sector organisations. Responses, however, were low for all three groups, but particularly for the private sector workshop, leading to a revision of approach. The volunteering sector workshop was conducted on 19 October 2009 and included eight participants. The youth sector workshop was conducted on 20 October 2009 and included six participants. Both workshops had lower than anticipated turnouts, but both were productive and insightful. The workshops were supplemented with a small number (three) of telephone interviews with key stakeholders who had been included in either the depth interviews or workshops. A very low response to the private sector workshop (with only one respondent agreeing to participate) has led us to review the methodology and to replace the workshop with a series of up to ten semi-structured telephone interviews. These are currently being carried out.

Each of the above elements will be conducted twice, a year apart, during the course of the evaluation. This will enable both a monitor of changes in attitudes and perceptions of v over the evaluation period and a monitoring on the changing environment in which v operates. Wave Two stakeholder interviews will be conducted in September 2010, with Wave Two deliberative workshops and private sector interviews being conducted October to December 2010.

Discourse analysis

Overview of strand

This strand involves an analysis of youth volunteering discourse within the UK print media. This strand was developed following the initial scoping study as it was felt that any evaluation of v's activities should take full account of the political and media context in which it operates.

The main aims of this strand are:

- to explore the media and political discourse around youth volunteering;
- to explore the impact that external discourse may have on v; and
- to provide contextual information for the rest of the evaluation.

Methodology

The analysis is focused upon three key time frames: the launch of v, the party conference period in both 2009, and the time leading up to the general election. In addition, in order that the analysis can be responsive to any unanticipated events, a fourth, unspecified, timeframe can be included, if necessary, within the discourse analysis. It is anticipated that this event may be, for example a major policy announcement in relation to youth volunteering or a major national story. The duration of each period of analysis is relatively

short at around one to two weeks. This flexibility will ensure that events or outputs during the lifetime of the evaluation, which generate significant discourse around youth volunteering, are also captured.

The scope of the analysis has been limited to the specified time periods and to media discourse in order to ensure that the data generated is both manageable and provides depth of coverage. In addition it will provide a snapshot of the salient viewpoints and debates on youth volunteering and will allow for comparison of any changes in discourse between timeframes.

Media discourse is being monitored using Lexis Nexis UK, which is a global news and business information tool. Previous work undertaken by IVR indicates that there is varied and interchangeable use of the concept of volunteering. Therefore, a proxy list of terms has been developed which will be used in monitoring discourse via Lexis Nexis UK. It is anticipated that the terms will evolve in response to emerging findings.

The scope of the analysis extends to the full range of information sources covered by Lexis Nexis UK for articles which discuss *youth volunteering*. The scope will be limited to National UK newspapers and major regional newspapers within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for proxy terms.

Some initial findings from the 2005 time period are incorporated into this report. The remainder of the analysis is ongoing and will be included in the final report.

Marketing and communications evaluation

Overview of strand

This strand comprises a range of activities designed to evaluate and inform v's communications and campaigns.

The main aims of this strand are to:

- assess the impact of v's marketing communications on its audiences' awareness, attitudes and behaviour; and
- assess the return on investment of v's marketing communications activity.

A further aim is to:

- assist v's Marketing & Communications team to plan and implement campaign evaluation internally so that they can more effectively measure the success of campaigns as they happen and adapt their tactics accordingly

Methodology

We are using a number of measures to assess the effectiveness of v's marketing communications activity. We are examining v's campaigning planning and management practices through interviews with head office staff and by reviewing relevant documentation. Intermediate measures to assess people's awareness and attitudes towards v are being tracked through the Omnibus survey of young people, feedback

forms collected at v events, and comments posted on v's website and social media platforms. v's impact on behaviour is being measured through tracking of searches on the Do-It National Volunteering Database, the number of volunteering opportunities being taken and interviews with young people and grant recipients. By 'impact on behaviour', we mean the direct behavioural response that young people have to v's communication activities- as a result of being exposed to v's communication campaigns or activities, do young people go to the website and search for a volunteering opportunity, apply for a volunteering opportunity (for example, to man the bigvbus), tell their friends about v, and so on.

A detailed examination/case study of one campaign is also undertaken every year to highlight best practice and areas for improvement. A case study of the bigvbus has been carried out for this report.

A framework for evaluation has also been prepared for v to help it design its own evaluation practices internally.

Appendix B

Table B1 Views about the roles v undertakes

<i>Percentages</i>	All	Match Fund	involved teams	involved projects	valent year	vcashpoint
<i>Provide grants and funding for other organisations and individuals</i>						
Major part	93	96	92	94	98	84
Minor part	6	4	7	3	2	16
Does not do at all	1	0	1	3	0	0
<i>Number</i>	390	74	85	116	46	69
<i>Change the way youth volunteering is organised and delivered</i>						
Major part	84	79	90	83	91	80
Minor part	14	19	10	15	6	19
Does not do at all	1	1	0	2	2	1
<i>Number</i>	391	73	86	115	47	70
<i>Improve young peoples' attitudes, interest in and access to volunteering</i>						
Major part	89	89	86	84	94	97
Minor part	9	9	12	13	6	3
Does not do at all	2	1	2	3	0	0
<i>Number</i>	396	74	85	117	48	72
<i>Change the way young people think about volunteering</i>						
Major part	80	82	83	76	90	76
Minor part	17	15	14	20	10	24
Does not do at all	2	3	2	4	0	0
<i>Number</i>	392	74	84	115	48	71
<i>Network and create positive relationships for the volunteering sector</i>						
Major part	56	47	53	52	70	66
Minor part	239	51	34	44	30	31
Does not do at all	5	3	13	4	0	3
<i>Number</i>	391	73	86	116	46	70
<i>Provide leadership on youth volunteering</i>						
Major part	67	56	61	69	81	70
Minor part	28	40	27	26	17	27
Does not do at all	5	4	12	4	2	3
<i>Number</i>	393	73	85	117	48	70
<i>Provide a voice for young people</i>						
Major part	53	37	52	47	63	73
Minor part	40	59	34	44	33	24
Does not do at all	7	4	14	9	4	3
<i>Number</i>	390	71	85	115	48	71
<i>Encourage a wider mix of young people to volunteer</i>						
Major part	82	86	78	80	85	85
Minor part	14	14	12	16	15	14
Does not do at all	4	0	10	4	0	1
<i>Number</i>	394	73	86	116	47	72

<i>Provide a one-stop virtual shop for volunteering</i>						
Major part	57	47	62	60	57	55
Minor part	35	34	26	34	40	44
Does not do at all	8	19	12	6	2	1
<i>Number</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>71</i>

Source: Grant recipient survey, wave one, batches 1 to 4

Box B2: v's theory of change model

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	GOALS
DELIVER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vcashpoint - Match Fund - National Youth Volunteering Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 million more young people are volunteering - Increasing local and national media coverage of v events and programmes - Accessing volunteering opportunities is easier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the propensity to volunteer among all young people - Volunteering is regarded as a 'normal' activity by all young people - Creation of new partnerships and working arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing numbers of young people are volunteering - Increasing numbers of youth-led activities and organisations - Greater participation of young people in mainstream organisations
INFORM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy through media - Website development - Establish partnerships to build awareness and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - v messages are increasingly picked up by local and national media - increasing use of the v website - Increasing traffic to the v website to partner agencies - Improved brand awareness and allegiance among young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality assurance standards widely used in the sector - Improved reputation and awareness of v - v has raised sufficient funds to continue beyond 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - v becomes sustainable
COLLABORATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership formation with other volunteering organisations - Catalyse and create new youth-led volunteering opportunities - Establish relationships and programmes with corporates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating organisations are promoting the v campaign - Youth-led activities and organisations are growing - Mobilise the resources of partners - Maximise the match fund 		
INFLUENCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct and disseminate research into youth volunteering - Policy development activities - Partnership development with other volunteering support agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key sector institutions are supporting the v campaign - Key policy makers participating in v policy meetings and events - Emergence of a consensus on changes needed to improve youth volunteering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify good practice standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner institutions and policy makers become advocates of v - Changes in how youth volunteering opportunities are provided 	

Table B3 Overall characteristics of volunteers in monitoring data and corresponding figures on the general population from 2001 census and the population of volunteers between the ages of 16 and 24 from the 2005 and 2007 Citizenship Surveys

	Total			Census 2001		Citizenship Survey 2005		Citizenship Survey 2007		
	No. of volunteers	No. of projects	% of valid responses	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Gender										
Male	109173	(444)	39.5	2699692	50.4	137	41.5	191	48.0	
Female	167302	(446)	60.5	2661864	49.6	193	58.5	207	52.0	
Transgender	79	(39)	0.0							
Not Completed	411	(20)								
Prefer not to say	1332	(110)								
Total	278297									
Total valid responses	276554									
Age Group										
Age 16-17	102906	(425)	37.3	1231266	23.0	83	25.2	91	22.9	
Age 18-19	65994	(445)	23.9	1177571	22.0	63	19.1	79	19.8	
Age 20-25	107246	(440)	38.8	2952719	55.1	184	55.8	228	57.3	
Not Completed	504	(2)								
Total	276650									
Total valid responses	276146									
Ethnicity										
African	10588	(302)	4.4	69276	1.3	4	1.0	3	0.9	
Asian and White	1735	(220)	0.7	29610	0.6	4	1.0	2	0.6	
Bangladeshi	3530	(204)	1.5	54158	1.0	4	1.0	5	1.5	
Black African White	1107	(191)	0.5	11846	0.2	2	0.5	1	0.3	
Black Caribbean White	3207	(266)	1.3	36855	0.7	6	1.5	5	1.5	
Caribbean	6129	(267)	2.6	60456	1.1	6	1.5	5	1.5	
Chinese	3563	(230)	1.5	50288	0.9	4	1.0	3	0.9	
Indian	9180	(282)	3.8	162421	3.0	13	3.3	8	2.4	
Irish Traveller	72	(41)	0.0							

Other Asian	5174	(295)	2.2	35627	0.7	2	0.5	3	0.9
Other	4016	(261)	1.7	33257	0.6	4	1.0		
Other Traveller	53	(32)	0.0						
Other White	8647	(307)	3.6	186193	3.5	10	2.5	10	3.0
Other Black	2980	(240)	1.2	15479	0.3			1	0.3
Other Dual	1678	(69)	0.7	25696	0.5	6	1.5	2	0.6
Pakistani	9211	(255)	3.9	136235	2.5	9	2.3	6	1.8
Roma	87	(28)	0.0						
White British	165157	(429)	69.2	4414945	82.3	320	80.4	274	83.0
White Irish	2720	(212)	1.1	39214	0.7	4	1.0	2	0.6
Not Completed	2067	(53)							
Prefer not to say	20062	(255)							
Total	260963								
Total valid responses	238834								
Economic Activity									
Employed	39702	(394)	18.0	3105085	57.9	262	65.8	185	56.1
Self-employed	1444	(177)	0.7	87597	1.6	16	4.0	9	2.7
Unemployed				305452	5.7	24	6.0	31	9.4
In education	134087	(415)	60.9	1420194	26.5	76	19.1	70	21.2
In training	6608	(297)	3.0						
NEET	33714	(413)	15.3						
Other	4540	(256)	2.1	443228	8.3	19	4.8	33	10.0
Not Completed	3652	(89)							
Prefer not to say	17737	(273)							
Total	241484								
Total valid responses	220095								
Qualifications									
Postgraduate	2830	(229)	2.0						
Degree	16788	(357)	11.8	621445	11.6	69	17.3	56	17.0
NVQ	10136	(357)	7.1	1178111	22.0	33	8.3	17	5.2
A Level	31381	(383)	22.1	1787631	33.3	140	35.2	107	32.4
Above Level 2	41270	(396)	29.0	837171	15.6	104	26.1	87	26.4

Below Level 2	19574	(391)	13.8			11	2.8	17	5.2
Other	6662	(284)	4.7	92689	1.7	4	1.0	5	1.5
No qualifications	13555	(351)	9.5	844509	15.8	32	8.0	35	10.6
Prefer not to say	25944	(293)							
Not Completed	4514	(98)							
Total	172654								
Total valid responses	142196								

Table B4: Characteristics of volunteers in monitoring data: Progression, target groups, disability and sexual orientation. Trends in volunteering 2003 to 2007/08 for all and 16-25 year olds.

	Number of Volunteers	% of valid responses	Number of projects
Progression			
Another volunteering opportunity	12133	17.6	(258)
Into education	11196	16.2	(237)
Into employment	4858	7.0	(256)
Into training	2332	3.4	(171)
No longer volunteering	3931	5.7	(174)
Other	3420	5.0	(151)
Unknown	31184	45.2	(226)
Not Completed	3585		(63)
Prefer not to say	5652		(110)
Total	78291		
Total valid responses	69054		
Target Group			
At risk of exclusion	3767	7.5	(211)
Homeless	1854	3.7	(216)
In or leaving care	2027	4.0	(250)
Lone-parent	2466	4.9	(270)
Low income	26462	52.5	(386)
Young carer	1541	3.1	(222)
Offender	3446	6.8	(262)
Refugee	1789	3.5	(166)
Other	7073	14.0	(224)
None of the above	17433	34.6	(157)
Prefer not to say	24492		(304)
Not Completed	6292		(82)
Total	98642		
Total valid responses	50425		
Disability			
Learning difficulty	10489	7.0	(332)
Learning disability	4246	2.9	(305)
Long-term illness	840	0.6	(187)
Mental health	2466	1.7	(244)
Multiple disabilities	654	0.4	(133)
Physical disability	2017	1.4	(252)
Sensory disability	795	0.5	(198)
None of the above	127332	85.6	(314)
Not Completed	6719		(96)
Prefer not to say	26801		(289)
Total	182359		
Total valid responses	148839		
Sexual Orientation			
Bisexual	2221	2.0	(260)
Gay	2082	1.9	(231)
Heterosexual	103288	93.4	(398)
Lesbian	1055	1.0	(205)
Other	1931	1.7	(190)
Prefer not to say	35020		(375)
Not Completed	5932		(103)
Total	151529		

