

Executive Summary

**EVALUATION OF V'S
PROGRAMMES 2006-2008**

V

April 2009



Executive summary

Background

This report presents the main findings and recommendations from an independent, objective evaluation study of the activities of v (the Russell Commission Implementation Body) in investing in the creation of volunteering opportunities for young people between 2006 and 2008. The evaluation was undertaken by WM Enterprise (WME), a social and economic consultancy, and comprised:

- Review and analysis of management and financial information
- In-depth interviews with key v staff and stakeholders
- Detailed case studies of 19 vfunded projects, comprising site visits, interviews and focus groups with project managers, volunteers and community beneficiaries
- Telephone survey of participants in the vashpoint initiative

The evaluation was guided by a highly successful **Youth Evaluation Panel**, in order to ensure that the youth-led nature of v was replicated in the evaluation process.

Key findings

The evaluation considered the activities and impact of v over the 2006-2008 period, during which around £23 million was invested by v in the creation of volunteering opportunities for young people across England through four 'grant rounds', aimed at addressing several of the recommendations of the **Russell Commission**, which, in effect, called for a step-change in the quality, quantity and diversity of youth volunteering opportunities.

Key findings were as follows:

- v funding has enabled the creation of **large numbers of volunteering opportunities** for young people that would not otherwise have been created. This has led to a step change in the quantity of youth volunteering.
- This step change has been accompanied by an associated advancement in the **variety** of volunteering opportunities, including the development of a range of innovative initiatives. In summary, v has provided a broader set of opportunities for a wider audience. In many cases this has also led to the provision of high quality volunteering opportunities.
- Opportunities have been filled by a **relatively diverse group of young people**, many of whom had not volunteered previously or in many cases had not previously considered volunteering.
- The evaluation case studies contain a number of examples where vfunded activities have reached **disadvantaged young people**, although it is clear that more work is required in order to ensure that this group of young people engages effectively in volunteering activities.

- Opportunities have been created by **established organisations** and also by a wide range of **new, small and community-based organisations** that previously had limited capacity to accommodate young volunteers.
- Some larger, more established organisations have been able to make **changes in their approach to engaging with young people**, utilising them as volunteers, beneficiaries and stakeholders within their organisations.
- v-supported volunteering opportunities have started to make a **noticeable positive difference to young people**. This particularly relates to 'soft' skills such as confidence and self-esteem, raised aspirations, enhanced social skills and networks, communication and leadership skills, many of which provide the ability for young people to access new opportunities linked to **education, training or employment**.
- It is clear that v's investments have led to a range of **social and community-focused benefits**, directly (e.g. environmental improvements) and/or indirectly (e.g. health and environmental awareness, or diversionary activities for young people).
- **Quality** is a relative concept and incorporates the implementation of quality standards as well as providing effective choice for young people. Whilst it is clear that wide ranging and innovative projects have been developed through v, including the provision of a wider choice of volunteering opportunities, a specific definition for quality in the context of youth volunteering would be beneficial.
- The extent to which projects are **youth-led** and/or youth involved varies. v20 provides clear youth involvement and leadership at the strategic level, and all projects emphasised the importance of youth engagement and the research identified several good practice examples. vcashpoint represents an excellent example of a youth-led approach as the young people design, manage and deliver initiatives. The **Otesha project** provided young volunteers with the opportunity to be heavily involved in its design. The project has an advisory group that is made up of young people, including those who are over 25 but were previously involved in the project. Many projects have a less direct focus on the youth-led approach, for example by asking young volunteers what types of activities they would like to undertake.
- **Each grant round forming part of this evaluation demonstrates its own strengths.** Grants Round 1 in terms of engaging effectively with a wide range of different Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO), providing specific short-term opportunities for young people, and providing effective brokering to raise the quality of opportunities (through vteams); Grants Round 1.5 through its significant and effective focus on enhancing diversity within youth volunteering; the Match Fund through its effectiveness in stimulating innovation and links with the private sector; and vcashpoint in respect of its unique youth-led approach.
- There is very little deadweight¹ within v's investments, with approximately 85% of case study organisations (VIOs) stating that their projects would not have taken place without v funding,

1 Deadweight refers to the degree to which project activities would have occurred anyway through statutory and other funding, regardless of funding provided by v

- Stakeholders and project managers acknowledged the role of **v in promoting the benefits** of volunteering for young people and in funding a considerable number of new opportunities.
- Small organisations in particular struggled with the intensity of **v's monitoring requirements** and there is a clear need to effectively communicate (to VIOs) the reasons why data is required and provide support with how to effectively collect such data.
- **v's approach to contract management** is described as being relatively 'hands-off' by most project organisations consulted as part of the case studies. There is normally only limited contact (for example phone discussions if there are any issues relating to monitoring returns) between projects and **v**, although this has improved over time after initially being inhibited by staffing constraints (particularly for Grants Round 1).
- **Sustainability** of projects varies and appears to be ad hoc. Some projects will not, or have not, obtained ongoing funding from any other sources and have had to be terminated or have continued on a much reduced scale.
- **v** has provided **significant progress towards addressing the Russell Commission recommendations** subject to this evaluation, namely recommendations 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15 and 16.
- Through its delivery of grant rounds, **v** has provided **increased co-ordination** to the youth volunteering sector. Whilst it has had mixed success to date, **v** is increasingly addressing its challenge to 'lead the sector' and is now in an enhanced position to achieve this. However, it still requires development of improved links with key stakeholder organisations.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations, based on the findings of the evaluation, are set out in the report and are outlined below. It should be recognised that v is already working to address some of these recommendations.

1. It would be useful to explore the possibility of establishing a dedicated fund, to **encourage small organisations to participate** in v's grant programmes. This would build on the experiences of Grants Round 1.5
2. Along similar lines, there is a case for establishing a ring-fenced programme to **support innovative projects** that are targeting specific groups, deprived areas, or testing new ways to engage young people.
3. A **review of monitoring arrangements and reporting requirements** should be undertaken with a view to making them more straightforward. This may include increased support and discussion with VIOs in terms of the rationale for collecting such data. Whilst some project organisations found the limited contact with v favourable, additional visits by v staff to projects would be welcomed overall and would allow v to develop a greater awareness of the progress and focus of projects.
4. A sample of projects should be supported to **track their volunteers post-involvement** for evaluation and monitoring purposes. This would also assist measurement of long-term impact and quality. In addition, a specific **definition for quality** in the context of v's investments would be beneficial.
5. There needs to be more explicit recognition of '**distance travelled**' – building existing approaches to recording 'soft' outcomes such as self-esteem - to recognise the potentially high impact of working with hard to reach groups, despite higher unit costs
6. It will be important to build on the under-exploited potential of the projects themselves as a means to **market and promote what v is doing** through projects, perhaps entailing the creation of a network of 'v advocates'.
7. There is definite scope for such project activities to be **promoted more effectively within local communities**, not just for project recruitment purposes, but also to highlight the positive work undertaken by young people and enhance the image of volunteering.
8. Greater **direct involvement with projects** by v grant officers and other staff would enable a greater understanding of project successes and create more opportunity for two-way feedback and learning.
9. There should be more opportunities for greater connection **and networking between projects**. It is recognised that a national conference is to occur, but regular regional events/showcasing activities would also be beneficial.
10. There is scope to share achievements more readily with **strategic stakeholders**. In particular, there is a need to keep Match Funders informed of v, its role and its successes.

11. There is a need to do more with regards to **stakeholder engagement**. The proposed appointment of a Stakeholder Engagement Manager which will be a positive step to increasing visibility with strategic stakeholders.
12. Additional provision of v-led or v-supported **succession advice and guidance** would enable projects to enhance their opportunities for continuing their activities. Succession advice workshops and information sheets/updates would be helpful, particularly for smaller organisations with lower awareness of or access to funding sources. It must be recognised that detailed one-to-one succession support would represent a significant resource implication to v, and it may be appropriate for organisations such as Capacity Builders to take a lead role.
13. There is scope to build on the success of individual projects in order to **influence the policies and behaviour of key institutions** such as local authorities, Connexions and Jobcentre Plus.

A basis for future formative evaluation

This evaluation has brought together a substantial evidence base that has demonstrated the progress made by v within a relatively short time period, working within a complex institutional and policy environment. The report makes a number of suggestions for ensuring that the ongoing formative evaluation provides equally valuable feedback to ensure that v is able to build on the successes identified in this report. It also ensures that v is in a position to address the challenges that will no doubt emerge as the drive continues to transform the landscape of youth volunteering.

In particular it will be important to openly **disseminate** the findings of the evaluation and to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to discuss, debate and make constructive inputs into the formative evaluation going forward. In particular, it will be important to build the success of the Youth Evaluation Panel and the goodwill generated through the successful case study phase of the evaluation. It will also be crucial to ensure that VIOs and young people in particular feel that they have a real ownership of and influence over the future activities of v.

v's response to the summative evaluation of v's programmes between 2006-2008





A response from v to the findings and recommendations of the summative evaluation of v's programmes between 2006 - 2008, undertaken by WM Enterprise



On behalf of the trustees, our v20 youth advisory board and our staff, I welcome the independent summative evaluation report of v's programmes between 2006 and 2008. As we approach our third birthday, this evaluation provides a valuable and timely opportunity to take stock of our achievements, and consider how we build on the learning and insights gained from our first two years of operation.

It is important to note that this report has evaluated the impact of investments made by v during its start-up phase, when v assumed responsibility for delivering a number of programmes, whilst also establishing and developing itself as a new national charity. It's clear from this evaluation that there is much to celebrate and be proud of. v has worked tirelessly to turn Ian Russell's vision for a new national framework for youth action and engagement into reality. We have harnessed the commitment of government, business, the third sector, and most importantly, young people themselves, helping to transform communities across England.

During the period covered by this evaluation, v commissioned over 148,000 new youth volunteering opportunities, and perhaps more significantly, our funded projects managed to engage 133,000 young people from a range of different backgrounds, many of whom had never considered volunteering before. Indeed, our performance on diversity is encouraging, and I have been struck by the commitment of so many of our funded projects to engage marginalised and hard-to-reach young people, broadening the appeal of volunteering, and helping more young people to experience the benefits of sharing their time and talents with their communities.



We were also committed to transforming the youth volunteering landscape, creating a fairer playing field, distributing resources more equitably and creating new and innovative projects and opportunities which will inspire a new generation of young volunteers. We invested a total of £23 million in the creation of new and innovative youth volunteering initiatives, funding a mix of third sector organisations. I am particularly proud of the fact that 85% of our investments have funded new activity – a key finding of this evaluation - demonstrating the vital strategic role that **v** has played in adding value through our investments, rather than duplicating existing activity.

Nowhere has this added-value been more apparent than in our private sector partnerships, where **v** used the match fund model to raise an initial £8.75million from business, cultivating cutting edge partnerships between companies and third sector organisations, with fantastic results. The Match Fund has also helped us to create the **vcashpoint** grants programme. **vcashpoint** puts money directly into young people's hands, enabling them to design, develop and deliver community projects which tackle the issues that matter to them. **vcashpoint**, perhaps more effectively than any other grants programme, demonstrates the ingenuity and resourcefulness of young people, and their commitment to transform their communities, sometimes with as little as £200.

I've considered carefully all of the recommendations outlined in this report, and we are committed to responding creatively to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. In particular, I recognise the call from the third sector for greater strategic leadership from **v**, and I intend to explore how best to achieve this in the months and years ahead.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the young people, our grant funded organisations, private sector investors and other valued stakeholders who participated in this evaluation, sharing their views about our performance to date, and providing important and timely insights to influence our future direction. We have much to celebrate, but there's also more work to do.

This document sets out our response to the findings and recommendations of the summative evaluation conducted by WM Enterprise. I hope that this evaluation can be the start of a discussion about our achievements to date, and **v**'s role in delivering a national youth volunteering service in the years to come. If you would like to comment on the results of this summative evaluation, or you have ideas and suggestions you would like to share, I'd like to hear from you. Please email me at rod.aldridge@vinspired.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Aldridge', with a horizontal line underneath.

Rod Aldridge
Chairman, **v**



v's response to the recommendations of the WM Enterprise summative evaluation report

Each of the responses set out below relate to the specific recommendations from WM Enterprise, detailed in the summative evaluation report pages 60 – 61. The summative evaluation covered v's active grant funding programmes that were commissioned between May 2006 and March 2008. During 2008, v produced and delivered further grant programmes and activities, many of which have addressed the findings of this evaluation report.

Targeted funding

R1: It would be useful to explore the possibility of establishing a dedicated fund, incorporating specialist support, to encourage small organisations to participate in v's grant programmes. This would build on the experiences of Grants Round 1.5.

- v is committed to ensuring that our funding is distributed to a range of large and small organisations across England. In particular, we recognise the importance of supporting smaller organisations to access funding, as many find it difficult to compete for funding on equal terms with larger, well-established organisations. To this end, our £75m flagship vinvolved programme, launched in April 2008, was deliberately designed to invite applications from large and small organisations, under separate strands of funding, based on turnover. This enabled v to create a level playing field, assessing smaller organisations on a like for like basis, and ensuring that a wide range of grassroots community organisations could benefit from our investments. Currently, 31 funded organisations operate on a turnover of under £150,000 per year, demonstrating our success in supporting smaller organisations to access v funding.
- In addition, v has also delivered specialist consultancy support to 49 organisations, running workshops and one-to-one coaching sessions to enable them to design and develop high quality, inspiring youth volunteering opportunities. v has provided advice on programme design, youth involvement and budget management as well as supporting projects to consider ways to improve creativity and innovation. Our team of Project Support Officers continues to provide bespoke training and support to our funded projects, and v is currently exploring new ways to deliver enhanced capacity-building and good practice support to funded and non-funded organisations.



R2: There is a case for establishing a ring-fenced programme to support innovative projects that are targeting specific groups, deprived areas, or testing new ways to engage young people. This could be associated with appropriate support, evaluation and learning activities.

- **v** is committed to promoting diversity through all our investments in youth volunteering. Our programme principles reflect the importance of diversity and inclusion, and we particularly welcome applications from organisations that proactively engage and work with a diverse cohort of young people. Our programme guidance gives priority to young people who are disabled, from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, care leavers, young offenders, refugees, lesbian, gay or transgender young people and lone parents.
- On geographical coverage, our flagship **v**involved programme has funded activity in every local authority area in England, ensuring that all young people have access to a consistent and equitable youth volunteering offer. **v** has also established a rolling programme of regional networking meetings, which provide a forum for projects to share learning and good practice.
- More recently, **v** has invested £19.5m in the creation of a full-time youth volunteering programme called **v** talent year. This is an ambitious pilot programme, which aims to test the effectiveness of full-time volunteering in supporting young people to gain valuable transferable skills, and make positive transitions to education, training or employment. Part of the **v** talent year programme will be delivered through the Further Education sector, in 31 colleges based around England. **v** targeted colleges to participate in this programme which were based in areas of multiple deprivation, in order to maximise the impact for communities and young people. To ensure young people's perspectives inform the future of full time volunteering we have commissioned research into the perceptions of and attitudes toward full time volunteering
- **v** actively supports projects to develop new and innovative approaches to the delivery of youth volunteering opportunities. In 2007, we commissioned a research project to highlight examples of innovation in international youth volunteering. This was closely followed in 2008 with a jointly commissioned research project with TimeBank to 're-imagine volunteering,' leading to the publication of an Innovation Toolkit for practitioners. We have also used the principles of this toolkit to deliver a series of induction days for newly funded organisations, alongside innovation workshops to support funded organisations and prospective applicants who are keen to apply for match funding. Furthermore, in 2009, **v** intends to explore the potential to engage young volunteers through new digital technologies, including mobile, social networks and other online communities.



Monitoring and reporting requirements

R3: A review of monitoring arrangements and reporting requirements should be undertaken, with a view to making them more straightforward. This may include increased support and discussion with VIOs in terms of the rationale for collecting such data.

- **v** takes its role as a responsible and accountable funder seriously, and our monitoring and reporting requirements are designed to demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative impact of our investments on young people, organisations and communities across England. The data we collect from funded organisations enables us to demonstrate to government, business sector investors, tax payers and young people themselves how the money entrusted to us is transforming the youth volunteering landscape in England. It is also essential in ensuring that our investments are reaching a diverse cohort of young people, and creating the mixed economy of volunteering opportunities recommended by the Russell Commission, thereby building an evidence base for sustained investment in youth volunteering.
- However, **v** has listened to the findings of this evaluation, and is keen to explore ways to simplify monitoring requirements where possible, in order to ease administrative burdens, whilst still ensuring that we collect high quality data about our investments. Specifically, **v** is currently considering the frequency of data collection, and also whether new methods can be applied to more easily and effectively collect data from funded organisations.
- Going forward, **v** has commissioned a formative evaluation, which will balance quantitative measures of success with rich qualitative examples of the difference that funded organisations are making in young people's lives and the contributions of youth volunteering to society. The findings of our ongoing formative evaluation will be published annually.



Long-term tracking of volunteers

R4: A sample of projects should be supported to track their volunteers post-involvement for evaluation and monitoring purposes. This would also assist measurement of long-term impact and quality.

- **v** is committed to evaluating the impact of our investments on young people, organisations and communities. In particular, **v** recognises the need to undertake longitudinal research as recommended in this evaluation, to demonstrate the vital role that volunteering plays in building self-esteem and confidence, enabling young people to develop vital transferable skills, as well as enhancing their capacity to effect positive change as active and responsible citizens.
- **v** is therefore committed to exploring and piloting methodologies that would enable longitudinal research to be undertaken to track the long term personal, social and economic impact of volunteering. **v** believes in the power and potential of volunteering to raise aspirations and transform lives. Tracking volunteers will enable us to provide compelling evidence of the ways in which volunteering supports positive transitions and enhances social mobility.

Improving quality

R4: A specific definition for quality in the context of **v**'s investments would be beneficial.

- **v** is keen to ensure that all funded activity is governed by a consistent set of quality measures, in order to ensure that young people have a safe and enjoyable volunteering experience. At application stage, all organisations are asked to commit to seven guiding principles in their work with young people as defined by **v**. One of these key principles is a commitment to the delivery of high quality volunteering opportunities:

Principle 2 – Deliver high quality volunteering experiences

***v** is keen to ensure that young people have a high quality volunteering experience, that is properly resourced and well-managed. Your proposal must demonstrate a commitment to quality volunteer management specifically in relation to recruitment, health & safety, induction, training and support, role definition, and the policies and procedures that facilitate the volunteering experience.*

- In order to support our funded organisations to improve the quality of their work, and ensure a consistently safe, accessible and well-managed volunteering experience for all young volunteers, **v** has also developed a partnership with Youth Action Network, to deliver the **Reach** self-assessment quality framework. This framework, which was introduced to our funded network in 2008, requires grant holders to reflect on and review their organisational practice in 12 key areas, including safety, accessibility, diversity, youth participation and recognition. All **v**involved teams and projects are required to complete the **Reach** Quality Standard, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring a consistent, high quality experience for young volunteers across England. **v** will review the impact of the **Reach** self-assessment toolkit, and consider ways to continue enhancing the quality of the volunteering experience for young people.



Measuring distance travelled

R5: There needs to be more explicit recognition of 'distance travelled' to recognise the potentially high impact of working with hard-to-reach groups, despite higher unit costs.

- **v** understands that engaging marginalised and hard to reach young people in volunteering activities requires additional resources - both financial and human - and we are proud of our record in delivering funding to organisations that specialise in this work. **v** has developed a funding formula which sets out the unit cost of short-term, part-time and full-time volunteering opportunities, including additional financial flexibility for those organisations that are committed to proactively engaging marginalised and disadvantaged young people, including young offenders, young people in or leaving care and young people with disabilities.
- **v** is keen to spotlight and share the growing expertise of our funded network in engaging hard-to-reach groups. To this end, **v** will be commissioning a multi-staged research project that will provide an in-depth understanding of the specific needs of disadvantaged groups. A series of activities will collate good practice and guidance from projects and practitioners around their experiences of engaging and supporting marginalised young people, leading to the publication and dissemination of practice guidance documents across the sector.
- **v** is also committed to supporting young people themselves to track their progress. In February 2009, **v** launched the **v**inspired awards to recognise the achievements of young volunteers. This innovative online scheme enables young people to log their volunteering hours, towards a **v**fifty award (for 50 hours service) and a **v**impact award (for 100 hours service). Perhaps more importantly, the **v**inspired awards enable young people to reflect on the skills and learning gained through their volunteering experience, enabling them to develop transferrable skills and identify distance travelled.

Promoting **v** regionally and locally

R6: It will be important to build on the under-exploited potential of the projects themselves as a means to market and promote what **v is doing through projects, perhaps enabling the creation of a network of '**v** advocates.'**

- To date, we have invested significant resources in a range of national campaigns targeting the 16-25 year old audience, in order to transform the image and perceptions of volunteering, and make it more appealing and accessible. In addition, our network of 107 **v**involved teams provides national coverage, operating in every local authority area in England, delivering an expert local presence.
- However, **v** recognises the significant untapped potential of our funded network to raise the profile of youth volunteering regionally and locally. In the months ahead, **v** is committed to investing further resources in innovative promotional activities, materials and merchandise to assist funded organisations in promoting youth volunteering within their communities.



R7: There is definite scope for such project activities to be promoted more effectively within local communities, not just for project recruitment purposes, but also to highlight the positive work undertaken by young people and enhance the image of volunteering.

- **v** recognises the important role that young people can play in promoting volunteering to their peers, and our network of 107 Youth Action Teams (YATs) - comprising over 1000 young volunteers - is a fantastic example of this work in action. Youth Action Teams (YATs) provide opportunities for young people in every local authority area to become a youth volunteering ambassador, using word of mouth to inspire their peers to volunteer.

In March 2009, the **v**20 Youth Advisory Board hosted a one day YAT Challenge conference, inviting over 300 YAT team representatives to attend an inspirational day of training, networking and idea generation, to support them in promoting volunteering in their local area and challenging them to create some 'Media Mayhem'. **v**20 are now planning further YAT challenges for 2009.

Improving communication and networking between projects

R8: Greater direct involvement with projects by **v grant officers and other staff would enable a greater understanding of project successes and create more opportunity for two-way feedback and learning.**

- It is important to recognise that this report has evaluated the impact of investments made by **v** during its start-up phase, when **v** assumed responsibility for delivering a number of programmes, whilst also establishing and developing itself as a new national charity. This necessarily limited **v**'s capacity to engage directly with funded organisations, and impacted on **v**'s ability to learn first-hand about the challenges and successes of the funded network.
- In the last two years, **v** has put in place a number of measures to improve two-way communication with funded organisations and to encourage open dialogue. Specifically, **v** has increased its Project Support Officer team, providing dedicated 'account managers' for all funded organisations. In addition, the Project Support Officer team has been able to increase the number and frequency of project visits, providing advice and support to organisations on a range of issues including diversity, monitoring, reporting and youth involvement. **v** is currently exploring new ways to deliver enhanced capacity-building and good practice support to funded and non-funded organisations, thereby increasing our contact with funded organisations and facilitating shared learning.



R9: There should be more opportunities for greater connection and networking between projects. It is recognised that a national conference is to occur, but regular regional events/showcasing activities would also be beneficial.

- In response to requests from our funded organisations to provide opportunities to share learning and good practice, **v** has initiated a programme of quarterly networking meetings. **v** has appointed a 'lead organisation' in each of the nine regions to take responsibility for planning and facilitating bi-annual meetings, bringing the funded network together to discuss topical issues and share good practice. **v** also takes responsibility to run one meetings per year, sharing information about national campaigns and activities and providing an overview of its future strategic direction.
- All funded organisations will be invited to join **v** for its inaugural National Conference, to be held at the ICC in Birmingham on 17 June 2009. This free one-day conference will include inspirational plenary sessions, and interactive workshops to share good practice and maximise learning and networking opportunities for all participants.
- **v** has also introduced a bi-monthly newsletter which features updates from **v**, success stories and good practice 'spotlights' from our funded projects, forthcoming events, as well as the voices and views of young volunteers. **v** is currently exploring demand for an interactive online forum for funded organisations, which could facilitate conversations and information exchange.

Improving relationships with key stakeholders

R10: There is scope to share achievements more readily with strategic stakeholders. In particular, there is a need to keep Match Funders informed of **v, its role and its successes.**

- **v** recognises the importance of developing effective stakeholder communications with a wide range of audiences, in order to celebrate our achievements and successes. Our newly appointed External Relations Manager will take responsibility to develop and deliver a detailed external relations strategy, identifying key audiences and establishing a regular programme of communications activities and events to keep stakeholders up to date and facilitate their active engagement in our work.
- In terms of our Match Funders, **v** has introduced a Stewardship Strategy to keep existing and potential funding partners informed of **v**'s work. Following a successful pilot in autumn 2008, all funders will now receive regular email communication detailing **v**'s new and ongoing initiatives. **v** will also invite funders to events (eg, breakfast briefings, launches, celebrations) on a more regular and co-ordinated basis – as well as arranging periodic update meetings with key supporters.



R11: There is a need to do more with regards to stakeholder engagement. The proposed appointment of a Stakeholder Engagement Manager which will be a positive step to increasing visibility with strategic stakeholders.

- With an External Relations Manager now in place, **v** will ensure its work is informed by the needs, concerns and interests of its wide range of key stakeholders across government, voluntary, private and public sectors. In turn, we will regularly communicate **v**'s role, achievements, and ambitions and upcoming work through our website, targeted communications and events.

Sustainability

R12: Additional provision of v-led or v-supported succession advice and guidance would enable projects to enhance their opportunities for continuing their activities.

- March 2011 marks the end of the current government Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period, and **v** recognises that there is some uncertainty about future funding arrangements for youth volunteering. As an independent charity, **v** shares the anxieties of our funded network about the long term sustainability of our investments, and **v** is committed to working with government, business, trusts and foundations and other national funders to advocate for continued commitment to the youth volunteering agenda, and ongoing financial support to sustain and develop a national youth volunteering service of which we can all be proud. **v** welcomes the active engagement of our funded network in this campaign for sustainability, which will enable young people to realise their potential and help communities across England to flourish.
- **v** believes that this summative evaluation is a positive step towards building a case for sustained investment in youth volunteering, demonstrating the positive impact of our investments on young people, organisations and communities across England. **v** is keen to work with our funded network and other strategic partners to consider ways to build commitment locally, regionally and nationally to youth volunteering, helping us to continue inspiring new generations of young people to share their time and talents with their communities.



Influencing other agencies

R13: There is scope to build on the success of individual projects in order to influence the policies and behaviour of key institutions such as local authorities, Connexions and Job Centre Plus.

- **v** is keen to build partnerships with a range of key agencies locally, in order to publicise the benefits of volunteering, encourage signposting and referrals and share good practice. Our network of 107 **v**involved teams which cover every local authority area in England, are responsible for developing strategic partnerships with a range of local agencies, including Children's Trusts, schools, colleges and universities, job centres and specialist services (e.g. youth offending teams, leaving care teams, disability agencies etc), in order to promote youth volunteering as a positive progression pathway for young people.
- **v** is also committed to supporting the expansion of youth volunteering opportunities in the public sector and has recently invested £10m in 32 local authorities based across England, to enable them to deliver part of the new **v** talent year full-time volunteering programme. **v** talent year aims to engage 1000 young volunteers in a 44 week volunteering placement, supporting the delivery of a range of children and young people's services in their local community. At least 400 of these volunteers will be NEET at the point of engagement with the programme, reflecting our commitment to work closely with local authorities, devising innovative volunteering opportunities that will encourage young people to enhance public services and gain valuable skills and experience along the way.
- In April 2009, **v**, in partnership with BTCV, CSV and Volunteering England, has agreed to deliver a pilot volunteering brokerage scheme for the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). Local Job Centres will make referrals to our network of delivery agencies, who will take responsibility to broker job seekers into a range of high quality volunteering placements. Job seekers will be encouraged to contribute their existing skills to a range of community projects, as well as developing new skills which link to their future career goals and aspirations. **v** believes that this exciting partnership will demonstrate the positive impact of volunteering in building confidence, self-esteem and valuable transferrable skills and will have a positive impact on partnership working between job centres and our funded network.

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