

Embargoed 12:00 (midday)
Monday 8th May 2006

New charity premières for 1 million youth volunteers

A new charity created to revolutionise youth volunteering launches today with a première-style film event in London's Leicester Square.

The charity, unveiled today as **v**, aims to inspire and engage 1 million new volunteers between the ages of 16 – 25 years.

The establishment of **v** was the major recommendation of the Russell Commission, set up in May 2004 by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown. The Russell Commission's aim was to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement, as part of the Government's commitment to increase youth volunteering and civic service.

Today marks the transition from Government to an independent charity.

The driving force behind **v** is an energetic group of 16-25 year olds – known as **v20** – who act as consultants and are involved in delivering the charity's messages and work. Young people form the largest constituency among the charity's Board of Trustees and they participate in all decisions. This reflects **v**'s commitment to put the views of young people at the heart of the charity's work.

The new charity has the task of identifying and securing private sector support, both financial and in-kind. The Government has made £50m available to match funding raised from the private sector.

New Chief Executive of **v**, Terry Ryall, said:

"**v** aims to set new standards in the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering for young people. We want to make volunteering a 'normal' part of young people's lives, providing them with tangible assets for their future as well as for society at large. **v** is the first independent charity to be established in this way being predominantly youth

led and born out of consultation with over 700 stakeholders and 6,000 young people from all over the country.”

v will work in partnership with the public and private sector and with voluntary and community sector organisations to develop and share best practice in youth volunteering and to increase youth volunteering opportunities overall.

The launch of the charity also sees the launch of the first round of grants for which v is inviting organisations to apply. There are two strands to the grants round. The first focuses on funding the development and delivery of new, creative, youth led, aspirational opportunities that engage young people in volunteering, either on a full time, part time or short term basis.

The second strand offers funding to successful organisations to host the first phase of Youth Volunteer Development Managers and Youth Volunteer Advisers. Organisations looking to host a team of workers will need to have the capacity and the networks to enthuse other organisations and young people to get involved with the vbest opportunities that will be created by the teams .

Visit www.wearev.com to find out more about v.

- Ends -

**To schedule an interview or for further information please contact
Emily Shelton or James Hollaway at Munro & Forster
on 0207 815 3900 or email James.Hollaway@munroforster.com**

Notes to Editors

- Following extensive research into the current volunteering landscape, both within the UK and abroad, the Russell Commission led by Ian Russell, launched a nationwide consultation in October 2004. The Russell Commission engaged a wide range of stakeholders including young people, the voluntary sector, business and the media, receiving over 700 responses from voluntary and community sector organisations, and a further 6,000 responses from young people.

The Commission reported in March 2005 with a headline recommendation to create a new charity, to 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.

- The Russell Commission was advised by an Independent Advisory Group with representatives from the voluntary sector, business and the media and a Youth Advisory Board made up of young volunteers and non-volunteers.
- The charity's Board of Trustees include: Rod Aldridge OBE (Chair) Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, Fiona Dawe OBE, Trevor Pears, Larissa Joy, Dr Justin Davis-Smith, Manny Amadi MVO, Sarah Ford, Sarah Reynolds, Philip Udeh, Jay Okwera and Oona King.
- The seven Founding Partners are - T-Mobile, ITV, KPMG, MTV, Tesco, Sky and The Hunter Foundation. The additional 19 who join them are GCap Media plc, Edge, The FA Premier League, BT, Emap plc, The Vodafone UK Foundation, HSBC Bank plc, BAA Communities Trust, Absolute Return for Kids (ARK), RWE npower, Channel 4, Diageo, HBOS Foundation, Sainsbury's, Barclays Bank, Flextech Television, JPMorgan, Jack Petchey Foundation, Norwich Union General Insurance.
- The Government has allocated £50 million over three years to support the implementation of the Russell Commission's recommendations. The new charity will also have a target of raising £50 million from the private sector. All funding raised from the private sector will be matched on a pound for pound basis by the Exchequer, unlocking potentially an additional £50 million.
- The launch also marks the new round of grant applications for 2006/07. In 2005 £600,000 was allocated under a small grants programme to develop volunteer involving strategies and best practice examples and another £300,000 was committed to capacity building programmes.

On Tuesday 9th May, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be publishing a new guide to volunteering on benefits. The guide will set out clear information on the existing rules that allow volunteering whilst on benefits.