

Volunteering in Essex 2012-13

Volunteer Centre Activity

With regard to volunteer centre activity we have seen a small drop in the number of people coming forward to volunteer (registering), but an increase in those going on to engage in activity (i.e. placed or actually volunteering).

	2011-12	2012-13
Volunteers Registered	6,750	6,479
Volunteers Placed	1,885 (29%)	2,038 (31%)
Lost Resource Opportunity	4,685 (71%)	4,441 (69%)

The drop in numbers registering is offset by the increased percentage of those successfully placed.

This increase can be viewed as even more positive as 2011-12 year figures included the Olympic Games makers recruited in Essex. We know how many Games makers were placed (300) but we do not know how many registered specifically for that role but were unsuccessful, therefore it's likely the 2011-12 figures are not representative of a "normal year" and to have a 2012-13 registration of just 271 less is positive.

Traditionally the placement rate for Volunteer Centres in Essex has been greater than that for England and this has continued in 2011-12 (29%) where the national figure was 21% (national figures for 2012-13 have not been released yet).

The increase in numbers placed in Essex may in some part be attributed to the legacy of the Olympics publicity bringing good quality volunteers forward in 2012-13.

The Colchester Timebank scheme reports 62 new members last year with 4,474 transactions (an increase on the previous year), and to date for 2013-14 a figure of 31 new members (a pro rata indication of significant increase).

The Tendring Volunteer Centre also reports an increasing interest in Environmental volunteering and for the CAB service.

Whole Essex Community Budgets

Volunteering related work completed to-date is as follows:

- Consultation of VCS infrastructure and other key agencies from across Essex, inclusive of Thurrock and Southend;
- On-going engagement of VCS infrastructure agencies from across Essex, inclusive of Thurrock and Southend i.e. involvement in Strengthening Communities project group and agreement for Volunteer Centre (x1) and Community Volunteer Service (x1) representatives to be the project's conduits in terms of communication and consultation;
- Agreed capacity building funding for Volunteer Centres i.e. a fund that will enable the Volunteer Centres to engage in, assist in developing and helping to deliver aspects of the project plan;
- Agreed to roll out best practice, initially the Colchester Timebank, across North East and West Essex;
- Agreed on a volunteering campaign that will be informed by social marketing research, which itself will commence in June;
- Agreed a series of Community Builders and Asset Based Community Development trials across a number of Essex sites, building on the current Thurrock pilot.

Other Activity

Lent Invest

A joint venture between the local Diocese and ECC where people were asked to give up their time for a community initiative during Lent. As this was a light touch full data is not available; however we are aware of a number of local activities delivered under this approach:

Wickford and Runwell: Good Neighbour scheme and a food bank

Leigh On Sea: Communi-Tea drop in café
(the diocesan boundaries are not contiguous with ECC)

Southend On Sea: Two Housing Estate litter clear ups

Galleywood: Churchyard clearing and a handyman scheme

The concept was also instrumental in the Diocese deciding to introduce a web site for the faith community that whilst similar to Good for Essex also offers opportunities for Crowd Funding and for Companies to engage in pro bono work to support volunteer activity.

Community Computing Scheme

Providing used computers for free distribution to registered charities who will use them to work directly with people in Essex, offering opportunities which would not otherwise be available to them to improve computing skills or provide supported internet access.

CSV Healthy Ageing (operating in South Essex)

This is a three year joint funded project involving the DoH, ECC, CP&R and B&B CCG's. The project identifies and trains volunteers and supports them to deliver activity in their community. So far groups include:

Knitting/Craft
Walking
Tai Chi
OP Ward Meal Support (now taken over by the Hospital)
Volunteer Driver
Hospital/Shopping/Garden Centre

The report for 2012-13 shows

Older people benefiting from one to one engagement:	246
Older people benefiting from social/activity groups/health related activities	108
Support volunteers recruited and trained	40
Older peoples families/carers benefiting from service	17
Community members engaged	70
Individuals received social care advice/accessing events	532
TOTAL (these are in addition to the VC stats)	1013

Supported Volunteering

Supported Volunteering refers to schemes where volunteers receive additional support in order to carry out their volunteering roles. The following providers receive ECC funding:

CSV (Basildon, Brentwood, Rochford & Castle Point)

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) has carried out a 'Supported Volunteering' scheme for adults with learning disabilities in Essex for 14 years. This scheme is known as Essex Service Volunteers (ESV). It enables adults with additional support needs to integrate into and contribute to their own community through volunteering and mentoring. The scheme aims to support a minimum of 60 adults with additional support needs each year. The actual number achieved in 2012/13 was 87.

North London Homecare Support (Harlow)

Many vulnerable people within the local community require assistance with practical domestic tasks to enable them to remain living at home. 'Elbow Grease' is the name of a project in Harlow in which supported volunteers provide this type of assistance. Examples of domestic tasks carried out include gardening, cleaning etc. 'Elbow Grease' was recently runner-up in a national award scheme and winner of the regional prize. The actual number of supported volunteers in March 2012 was 20 and this has now risen to 29.

Voluntary Action Epping Forest

The 'Choices' project enable adults with learning disabilities to have an improved quality of life by volunteering and integrating into the local community. 'Choices' gives service users purpose and structure to their lives. They become active citizens within the community and choose the supported volunteering that suits them. By March 2013, the number of supported volunteers had risen from 40 to 48.