

Sporting equals

Promoting ethnic diversity
across sport & physical activity

Black and Minority Ethnic “Volunteering for Communities” in Sport Report



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Glossary of Terms

Brokerage

Actively placing a young volunteer into an opportunity within another organisation.

Black and Ethnic Minority (BME)

Black and Ethnic Minorities – for monitoring purposes this definition also includes white others or communities from other countries e.g Poles.

Delivery through partners

Any volunteering activity for young people which is directly delivered by another organisation which is managed by the volunteer centres.

Direct delivery

Any volunteering activity for young people that is delivered directly by your organisation.

Full Time Opportunity

Activities where a young person makes a structured commitment to volunteer for approximately 30 hours a week over a period of not less than 13 weeks.

New Opportunity

A volunteering opportunity for young people that would not have existed before. New volunteering opportunities for young people can be created by the expansion of existing activities.

Part Time Opportunity

Volunteering activity which is usually a few hours per month – but also including young people who make a structured commitment to volunteer for up to two or three days per week.

Partner work

Any volunteering opportunity created through working in partnership with another organisation.

Short Term Opportunity

Opportunities for young people to take part in a one-off volunteering opportunity that enables them to get a flavour of volunteering and a sense of its potential value both to themselves and their local community.



1 - Introduction

- 1.1 Sporting Equals is an independent body which aims to help people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities to get involved in all aspects of sport and physical activity. Sporting Equals work with a range of organisations to support policy and strategy development in relation to promoting racial inclusion and equality in sport.
- 1.2 In recognition of the low levels of sport volunteering identified as being undertaken by BME communities in comparison with the general populationⁱ, Sporting Equals established the Volunteering for Communities project. The Volunteering for Communities project aimed to increase the diversity of sport volunteers by building the links between BME individuals and communities, Volunteer Centres and sports organisations.
- 1.3 The Volunteering for Communities project was initiated as a pilot project in June 2007. The project operated for 12 months within four regions Yorkshire, West Midlands, London and the North West. In total seven interested Volunteer Centres within the regions took part in the project. Each of the Volunteer Centres worked to provide both part-time and full-time volunteering opportunities for young people aged 16-25 from local BME communities.
- 1.4 As a pilot study the Volunteering for Communities project was established to identify and test approaches to engaging BME communities in sports volunteering opportunities.
- 1.5 Sport Structures in partnership with Sporting Equals undertook the evaluation of the Volunteering for Communities Project in October 2008. The evaluation comprised of a detailed review of monitoring data collected through the duration of the project and a series of semi-structured interviews with staff based within the Volunteer Centres and sports organisations.
- 1.6 This document concludes the evaluation of the Volunteering for Communities pilot aiming to draw together evidence from the pilot study to inform future projects that address sports volunteering within BME communities. In addition this evaluation will act as a reference point for the development of a resource for Sporting Equals which will be made available to organisations from the sport and voluntary sectors.



ⁱ Sport England 2007 Active People data 05/06. KPI 2 Percentage of adults 16+ volunteering in sport or active recreation for at least one hour per week.

2 - Background

- 2.1 Volunteering as a concept has a multitude of meanings, dependant on who is asked and within what contextⁱⁱ. Volunteering tends to be identified as those activities that take place within formal organisations. Although broader interpretations include informal activity as volunteering such as people helping relatives and individuals within their local community. The scale of sports volunteering in the UK is extensive and is seen to engage with both formal and informal concepts of volunteering. Volunteers contribute to sport at every level, from club, county, regional and national, to European and World levels. Sports clubs and major events are seen to be the most common formal volunteering opportunities, with volunteering roles being identified as a significant part of the preparation and delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Gamesⁱⁱⁱ.
- 2.2 The number of people actively volunteering in sport has been estimated through various studies with figures for the total number of sports volunteers ranging from in the region of three million^{iv} people to as much as six million^v people. Volunteers are seen to undertake a wide range of crucial roles in the management, administration and delivery of sport, with many undertaking a number of different roles within one organisation^v.
- 2.3 The profile of volunteers is found to be often thought of as a white middle class, middle aged and a mainly female activityⁱⁱ. This profile differs to some extent within sport compared to other areas of volunteering due to the significant number of male volunteers and its ability to attract volunteers from all age ranges. Nearly twice as many men take part in sports volunteering than women and although over two thirds of volunteers are those aged 35-44 and 45-55 years, there are more than a quarter that are aged 16-24 years. Similarly to other volunteering areas sports volunteers tend to have higher levels of education and employment^v.
- 2.4 The profile of ethnic diversity sports volunteers tends to be predominantly white. With individuals from a BME community less than half as likely than the white population to volunteer in sportⁱⁱⁱ. However, this tends to be measured in terms of formal volunteering activity within organisations which overlooks the informal, non organisational sports volunteering that takes place in BME communitiesⁱⁱ.
- 2.5 Volunteers from BME communities tend to engage in volunteering at a practical level rather than within the management of sports clubs and organisations which can be seen as being too formal and bureaucratic^v.
- 2.6 Informal volunteering is seen as an integral part of some BME communities as a form of mutual support within a community rather than a formal mainstream volunteering opportunity. With some positive sports volunteering activity taking place within specific communities. This preference towards informal volunteering in a cultural or community environment is seen to further exclude BME communities from broader volunteering. It is suggested that there is a lack of understanding within mainstream volunteering of the value placed on volunteering within BME communities and the differences of formal and informal volunteering activitiesⁱⁱ.
- 2.7 Volunteering is acknowledged nationally as essential to sport and features within Sport England's Strategy 2008 – 2011 which recognises the strength of the volunteer workforce in community sport and the way in which volunteers support the work of National Governing Bodies^{vi}.

- 2.8** Sport's links with volunteering support organisations such as Volunteer Centres has been developed through the work of Volunteering England through their sport post, funded by Sport England since 2005. Although positive work has been undertaken within this area there appears to be a number of steps still to be overcome to bridge the gap between the sport and the volunteering infrastructure.
- 2.9** The Volunteering for Communities project was developed as a pilot scheme to investigate the best approaches to addressing the low levels of volunteering in sport by BME communities. The desired outcomes of the project were:
- An increase in the number of BME communities volunteering in the sports sector.
 - An increase in the physical activity levels of young BME communities leading to an increase in well being in their physical, emotional and mental health.
 - A wider and more diverse pool of potential employees for employers in the sports sector.
 - The development of a more informed sports and volunteering sectors in relation to engaging with BME communities.
 - The development of a more informed BME minority community sector leading to a continue increase in opportunities for BME communities in volunteering.
- 2.10** The pilot project operated within four regions due to the interest exhibited by the Volunteer Centres and due to there being a higher proportion of the population from BME communities. The four regions were London, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West. Each of the seven Volunteer Centres engaged in the project received a funding grant provided through Sporting Equals in partnership with V. Each Volunteer Centre received a grant of between £8,000 and £23,000 for the Volunteering for Communities project.
- 2.11** The project aimed to support 168 young people (aged 16-25 years) from BME communities to volunteer within the sports sector. By working closely with target communities to provide essential learning as to how to effectively engage a more diverse range of volunteers. The project looked to engage 154 volunteers in part-time volunteer opportunities and encourage 14 volunteers to undertake full-time volunteering opportunities in the role of Volunteer Champions. The Volunteer Champions role was developed so that volunteers could support the project by helping plan, deliver and assist in the recruitment and support of volunteers in the project.
- 2.12** The delivery of the Volunteering for Communities project was undertaken through varied approaches dependent on the capacity and commitment of the Volunteer Centres. The Volunteer Centres developed a variety of volunteering and training opportunities providing support to volunteers in the form of advice, guidance and expenses. The project was monitored through a process based on the requirements of grant funding provided by V and adapted forms from the Institute of Voluntary Research Impact Assessment Toolkit. The monitoring aimed to measure both the number of volunteers gaining new skills and qualifications and the impact of the project in terms of the attitude of BME communities to sports volunteering.

ⁱⁱ Lukka & Paine (2001) *An exclusive construct? Exploring different cultural concepts of volunteering*. In: J Smith & M Locke (eds.), *Volunteering and the test of time - Essays for policy, organisation and research*. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sport England. *The Active People Survey 2005-2006*.

^{iv} Sport England. (2002). *Sports Volunteering in England in 2002*. London: Sport England.

^v Gaskin (2008). *A winning Team? The impacts of volunteers in sport*. Institute for Volunteering Research.

^{vi} Sport England (2008) *Sport England Strategy 2008-2011*. London: Sport England.



3 - Key Findings

- 3.1** This section seeks to outline the key findings from the project through discussing five areas; Volunteer Centres Sporting experience, Experiences of ethnic minorities and emerging communities, Volunteer Profile, Volunteer Opportunities and Potential Continuation. This section also provides an insight into the project through two case studies.

Volunteer Centres Sporting experience

- 3.2** The project received a good level of interest from Volunteer Centres and sports organisations through a programme of promotion which included direct mail and regional events. The Volunteer Centres recognised the benefits of their involvement in the project as it would allow them to explore or extend their current work with sports organisations specifically in relation to volunteers aged between 16-25 years and those from BME communities.
- 3.3** The Volunteer Centres involved in the project identified having little or no experience of working with sports volunteering, although had identified sport as an 'untapped' area for volunteering opportunities. Some connections with the wider sporting infrastructure had been established prior to the project with Project Officers and/or Chief Officers attending Local Authority Sport Development Networks and County Sports Partnership meetings.
- 3.4** Although the Volunteer Centres had some awareness of sport through network meetings with sports organisations there had been limited formal engagement with sports volunteering or creating opportunities. The main reasons for Volunteer Centres not having previously worked with sport volunteering were seen to be:
- A lack of understanding of the needs of sports organisations and how this differed to other volunteering areas.
 - Little awareness of the organisational structure of sport and ways in which to engage with sports organisations.
 - Limited resources of the Volunteer Centre to establish relationships with sports organisations and source opportunities.
 - Capacity of the Volunteer Centre staff in relation to other projects being delivered.
 - Timing of sports volunteering opportunities outside of the Volunteer Centre operating hours mainly on evenings and weekends.
- 3.5** Involvement in the Volunteering for Communities project provided an opportunity for Volunteer Centres to explore sport, an area of volunteering with which several of the Volunteer Centres had limited experience. The project provided small grants which enabled each Volunteer Centres to enhance their current capacity by employing or extending the contracts of a project worker to coordinate and manage the Volunteering for Communities' project on a part-time basis.
- 3.6** The Volunteer Centres all undertook initial groundwork with sports organisations in order to understand the volunteering needs of sport and prepare partnerships for accessing sport volunteering opportunities in sports organisations and community groups. The groundwork period was seen as an essential aspect of the project which aimed to map the regional structure of sports organisations. This initial period included seeking access to sports organisations through national and regional contacts provided by Sporting Equals and through contact with sport development workers.



- 3.7** Accessing relevant contact information for sports organisations proved to be difficult, due to concerns from sports organisation regarding data protection and the fact that contact information often required updating. Therefore some Volunteer Centres initiated the development of their own sports databases to inform the targeting of their project. Volunteer Centres approached sports organisations initially through email contact. However, these initial emails received limited responses due to an apparent lack of awareness from the sports organisations of the Volunteering for Communities project or the role that a Volunteer Centre could take in assisting sports volunteering.
- 3.8** Due in part to the lack of awareness of sports organisations of the project and concept of Volunteer Centres as a useful resource the most widely used approach was a grassroots outreach approach. This involved the project worker visiting local sports clubs and organisations to directly communicate the objectives of the project. Project workers encountered a number of issues in their discussions with sports organisations:
- Many sports organisations had no policies for volunteers which made it difficult for volunteers to engage in opportunities until a policy had been put in place.
 - Sports organisations were sometimes put off involvement with the project due to the process used by some Volunteer Centres to 'sign off' a club as suitable for placing volunteers.
 - There tended to be a lack of understanding from sports organisations about how a Volunteer Centre operates and the benefits a relationship could bring.
 - Many Leisure Centres/Sports Centres are run through private companies which do not often offer volunteer opportunities.
 - Sports organisations tended to see volunteering as a narrow focus identifying a demand for volunteers that were qualified as coaches or officials rather than looking outside of these limited roles.
 - Volunteer Coordinators appeared positive regarding the intentions of the project but identified having a busy work schedule and the ideal of wanting a long term relationship rather than involvement in a short term project.
 - There was some resistance to the term 'volunteer' expressed by some sports organisations as a term that did not apply to their organisation as individuals did not perceive themselves as volunteers.
- 3.9** As well as identifying a number of issues the outreach work with sports organisations highlighted a need within sport for support in recruiting volunteers to a range of positions. Sports clubs were seen to be reliant on volunteers associated with the sport or club either as a participant or through participants being family members. This reliance for some clubs was seen as difficult to sustain and they expressed a desire to have volunteers from outside of the traditional channels.
- 3.10** The initial ground work period led to a reduction in the scale of the project. The project was initially conceived as a regional project coordinated through the identified Volunteer Centres, however the project became more localised. Although some wider activity did take place through regional and sub regional Volunteer Centre networks this tended to be focused around bordering districts, boroughs and neighbourhoods. The reduction in scale of the project was in part due to the capacity of the project workers to extend their local community networks to a regional level, to travel within the region and to engage with sports organisations at a regional level.



Lessons learnt

- Volunteer Centres recognise the importance of volunteering in sport and its potential to be attractive to all age groups but specifically those aged 16-25 years.
- Volunteer Centres would welcome training on sports volunteering and are actively seeking ways in which to engage with sports organisations.
- Sports organisations are in need of support to recruit volunteers for a range of positions.
- Sports organisations often require volunteers for evening and weekend opportunities with very few offering weekday opportunities.
- Sports organisations can be put off offering volunteering opportunities due to the demands on proving themselves as suitable to receive volunteers.
- Sports organisations are often reliant on volunteers that are associated with the organisation such as participants or those with family connections to participants.
- It takes time to develop a relationship between Volunteer Centres and sports organisations which this project underestimated.
- The coordination of the project through part-time project workers within Volunteer Centres was most suited to a local scale working with community groups and sports organisations within the catchment of the Volunteer Centre.

Experiences of BME and emerging communities

- 3.11** Most of the Volunteer Centres identified working regularly with BME communities through the general work of the Volunteer Centre. Several centres were heavily involved with local community networks that were well established within their area for example; Newham Volunteer Centre, whilst other centres such as St Helens Volunteer Centre had unrelated community groups operating outside of a network. Those centres such as St Helens without established networks found that they had to work hard to build relationships with community groups to be able to work effectively within the context of the project.
- 3.12** Although the Volunteer Centres involved in the Volunteering for Communities project appreciated the targeted approach of the task in working with BME communities. Some concerns were expressed as to the conflicts this raised with the values of the Volunteer Centres in providing opportunities for all.
- 3.13** The main reasons that Volunteer Centres having not worked specifically with BME communities were seen to be:
- Limited resources of the volunteer centre to establish relationships with BME, emerging community and faith based groups
 - No visibly active BME, emerging community and faith based networks within the local area
 - A perception that a targeted project with BME communities conflicts with the Volunteer Centre values of equality of access
- 3.14** A variety of approaches were used to engage BME communities with the project. These approaches tended to be similar to those used by the centre to attract general volunteers and included:
- Visits to present the project to community groups, associations, leisure centres, facilities, schools, colleges and universities.
 - Local newspaper adverts and articles.



- Website articles, e-bulletins and features.
- Adverts through organisations such as Newstart, Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) and Connexions.
- Promotional flyers in sports facilities, faith centres and specialist shops.
- Promotion to volunteers within existing V and projects for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Volunteer Centre Stall at relevant community events such as university 'freshers' weeks.
- Promotional material produced in a variety of languages.

3.15 Several Volunteer Centres worked to produce a variety of promotional material including developing the material in a variety of languages for those with English as a second language. Producing material in differing languages to promote volunteering opportunities highlighted its own issues in using volunteering as a term. As it was acknowledged that the word 'volunteering' does not exist in Asian languages and is uncommon in African-Caribbean communities^{vii}. This required Volunteer Centres to reconsider the terminology used within their promotional material.

3.16 Project worker discussions with community organisations and volunteers interested in the project highlighted that formal volunteering or involvement in sport was not always an important aspect of the culture of some BME communities^{vii}. This was in part due to differing work-life balances, with other life areas such as work, education and family commitments being prioritised over volunteering or participating in sport. This seemed to be more evident in European based communities such as Polish groups who proved difficult to engage in the project due to the prioritisation of their work commitments.

3.17 Although a number of BME, emerging community and faith based groups were engaged with the project others struggled to be fully involved in the project due to their own capacity and less formalised structures. Some organisations and individuals initially keen to be involved withdrew from the process due to the requirements to complete further paperwork. This specifically affected new arrivals into the UK that were required to complete other more pressing applications concerning their asylum and refugee status.

Lessons learnt

- Several Volunteer Centres were not engaged with an active network of faith/BME community groups and required additional support in developing productive relationships.
- Several Volunteer Centres indicated a reluctance to establish projects which are specific to sections of the population such as targeted work with BME communities as this was felt to conflict with the Volunteer Centres principle of offering support equally to all potential volunteers.
- The promotional material engaging with BME communities needs to suit that audience in terms of content, imagery, terminology and language.
- The concept of volunteering and/or involvement in sport may have a different level of priority within certain communities.
- The process of engaging or being inducted into the project needed to be simplified to ensure that targeted communities didn't see volunteering as a burden.

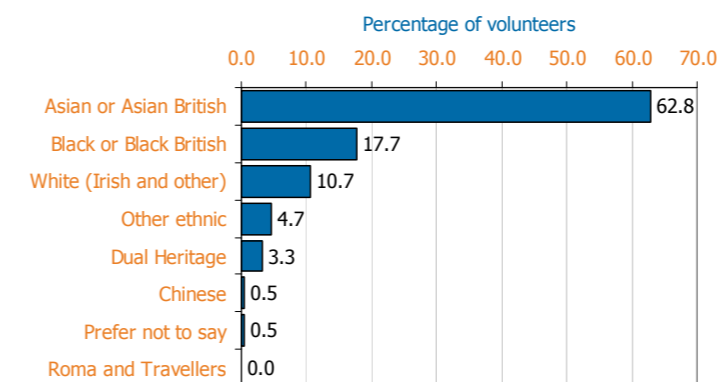


Volunteer Profile

3.18 The Volunteering for Communities project successfully engaged with seven Volunteer Centres within four regions working with a total of 215 volunteers which surpassed the projected target for the project (168) by a total of 47 volunteers.

3.19 The profile of the volunteers involved in the project illustrates the effectiveness of the focused approach as all volunteers involved in the project were from BME communities. With a total of 12.1% of the volunteers identifying themselves as refugees. Due to difficulties in collecting data on the migrant status of volunteers there are no figures available in relation to the migrant status of the volunteers involved with the project. The breakdown of the ethnicity grouping of the volunteers provides an indication of the communities involved.

Figure 1 Breakdown of volunteers by Ethnicity Grouping (Target group all BME communities)



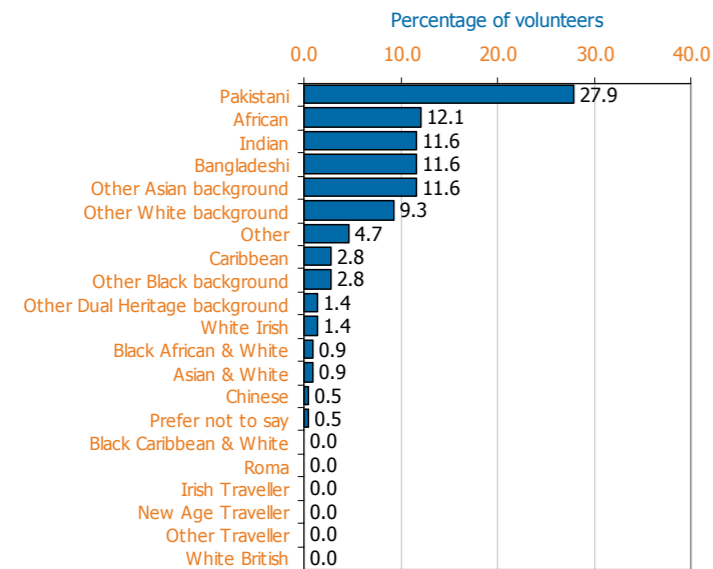
Based on a total of 215 volunteers

3.20 A significant proportion of the volunteers (62.8%) were from Asian or Asian British communities specifically the Pakistani community which made up over a quarter of the volunteers. The higher proportion of volunteers from the Pakistani community may be in part due to the higher proportion of the population surrounding the Volunteer Centres that were coordinating the projects. Further research within this community may highlight other reasons for being actively engaged in the project in relation to volunteering and/or sports participation.

3.21 The projects focus on engaging with BME communities provided a clear direction for the Volunteer Centres as well as meeting the intended focus for some partner organisations. However the emphasis of working with BME communities also created its own issues in relation to the perception of the project encouraging segregation and discrimination towards White British volunteers. This negativity towards the aims of the project was outweighed by the number of organisations that recognised the benefits of the projects approach and its attempt to address inequalities in volunteering.



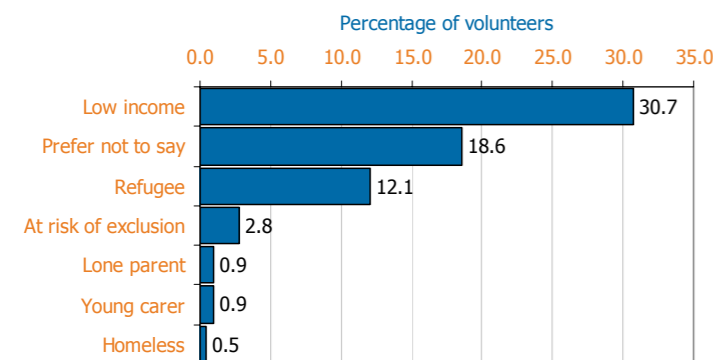
Figure 2 Breakdown of volunteers by Ethnicity (Target group all BME communities)



Based on a total of 215 volunteers

3.22 Just under half of volunteers within the project (n=103) identified aspects of their personal circumstances that impacted on their ability to engage with volunteering. However assistance provided by the Volunteer Centres enabled these volunteers to engage successfully with the project. Those issues facing volunteers included being on a low income, being a refugee, homeless, at risk of exclusion, being a lone parent or young carer. The most significant issue facing volunteers involved in the project appeared to be being on a low income with 30.7% identifying this area. This was reflected in comments made by volunteers in the project that identified cost as one of their main concerns regarding volunteering in sport.

Figure 3 Issues facing the volunteers



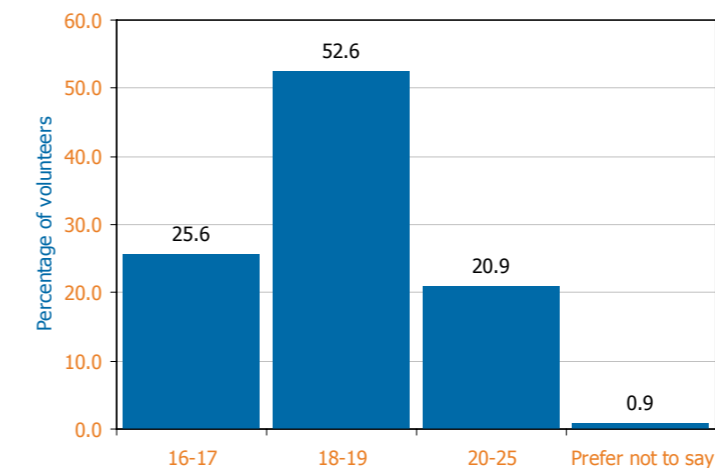
Based on a total of 215 volunteers

3.23 The payment of volunteer expenses was a positive feature of the project which enabled those on a low income to benefit from a volunteer experience at little to no cost. The payment of expenses was seen as a good selling point for engaging with young people although it did create some issues for sports organisations. Some sports organisations traditionally did not offer any expenses payment for volunteers so were therefore unwilling for volunteers from the project to take up opportunities. As it was thought that to retain the volunteers from the project the organisation would be expected to maintain the payment of expenses which would conflict with the way in which other established volunteers were supported.



3.24 The profile of the volunteers indicates that the project was effective in targeting young people aged 16-25 years old. Over 50% of those young people active within the project were aged 18-19 years. The higher proportion of volunteers within this age group could relate to suggestions from volunteers concerning those under 18 having difficulty with transport, demands of education and those aged 20-25 having additional time commitments in other areas such as full time work and family responsibilities.

Figure 4 Breakdown of volunteers by Age (Target group 16-25 years)



Based on a total of 215 volunteers

3.25 The project attracted a significantly higher proportion of male volunteers than female volunteers, as only 14.9% of the volunteers were female. The low level of female engagement with the project reflects national research regarding sports volunteering which highlights a deficit in female volunteers^{viii}. It was suggested by volunteers that the low take up of sports volunteering opportunities by young women was felt to be in part due to cultural priorities other than sport or volunteering relating to the importance of family commitments, education and work.

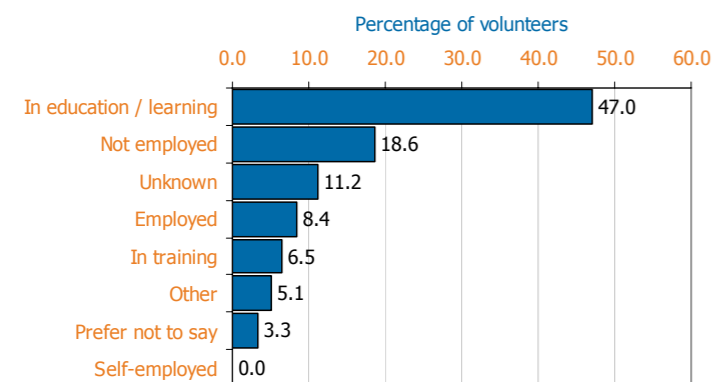
3.26 There were eight volunteers involved with the project that identified themselves as having a disability. Of those volunteers with a disability the most common disabilities were learning difficulties, mental health issues and learning disabilities. These volunteers were offered additional support by the Volunteer Centres to ensure that they encountered a positive volunteering experience.

3.27 Almost half of the volunteers (n=101) involved in the project were in education/ learning, which is commonly associated with the target age group of 16-25 years. The ability of Volunteer Centres to attract those young people in full time education related to the capacity of the young volunteers to balance their educational commitments with volunteering. Although, the opportunity to engage with volunteering was seen by volunteers as something that could complement education and learning.

3.28 There were a significant number of volunteers (n=40) that were not in education/learning or in employment, therefore the project offered a positive activity that could assist in developing employment skills and support volunteers into employment.



Figure 5 Breakdown of volunteers by Employment Status (No target group identified)



Based on a total of 15 volunteers

3.29 Where possible, the Volunteer Centres offered free training in sports related qualifications mainly relating to the demand for coaches and officials. The free courses were not directly supported through the project as no funding was specifically provided for training volunteers. However, several Volunteer Centres supported training opportunities through their existing relationships with training providers. Several volunteers attended training courses including County FA Referring courses, National governing Body Level 1 Coaching courses, Youth Work courses, Institute of Leadership and Management courses and, Sport Leaders UK Community Sports Leadership Awards.

3.30 The standard cost of a number of sports courses and qualifications were seen to be too expensive for volunteers who were often unable or unwilling to pay. The time frame of the project led to some difficulties in recognising the need for training, locating a suitable course, applying for the course, attending the course, and completing the qualification prior to being placed in an opportunity.

Case Study - Khurram aged 19 - Newham

Khurram worked as a Volunteer Champion to motivate young people to engage with and promote sports volunteering within his local community through producing leaflets, by talking with groups of young people and engaging in volunteer management processes at the Volunteer Centre.

'Khurram has raised the awareness of the importance of sports activities and exercise to the community.'
- A local community member

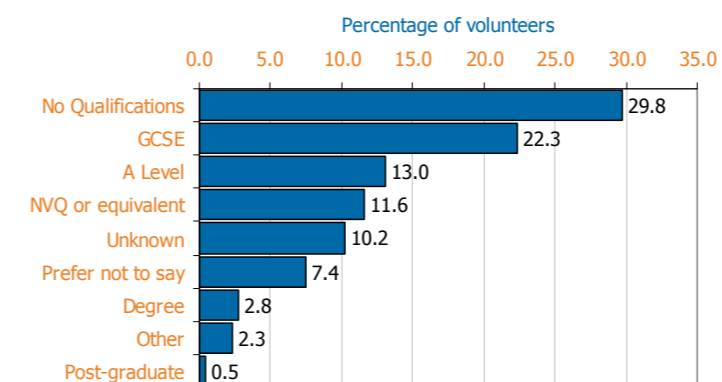
Khurram's enthusiasm for volunteering developed through the project leading to him attending three courses to help develop his skills including Employment Skills, Project Management Course and Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Volunteering Management. The ILM Volunteering Management course is a year long and consists of modules dealing with the needs of volunteers, interviewing volunteers and finding appropriate volunteer opportunities to meet their needs.

Involvement in the project has seen Khurram gain in confidence to work with a range of people from the Newham community in a friendly but professional manner. The project gave Khurram his first experience of work and enabled him to learn new skills from the courses that he could put directly into practice. This helped him to think about himself and consider the routes he wants to take in terms of volunteering and a career.



3.31 The volunteers involved in the project had varied educational attainment. With the majority of volunteers 29.8% having attained no qualifications. Many of those volunteers at the lower age band of the project aged 16, so were still in education and were yet to undertake their first formal qualifications. The duration of the project during the academic year did impact on the capacity for some young volunteers to engage with sports volunteering opportunities as their academic work and exams took priority.

Figure 6 Breakdown of volunteers by Education (No target group identified)



Based on a total of 215 volunteers

Lessons learnt

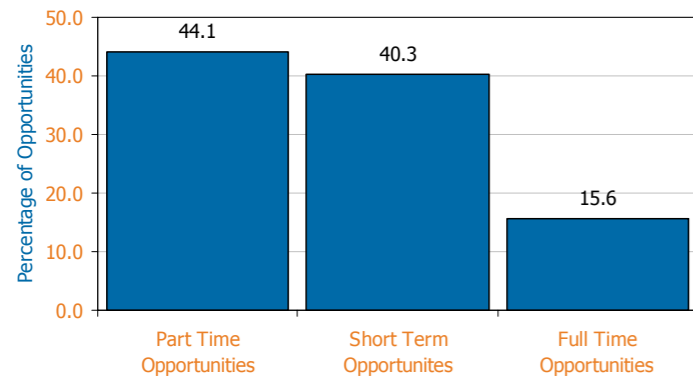
- The project attracted a significant number of volunteers from Pakistani communities which suggests that other BME communities may require additional targeting or support to become sports volunteers.
- Some negativity was experienced from sports organisations in relation to the targeted approach of the project in working with BME communities and supporting BME volunteers with expense payments.
- Volunteers involved in the project tended to be on a low income which relates to findings that suggest that BME communities are more likely to live in areas affected by income deprivation^{ix}.
- Young female potential volunteers require specific promotion and support to become involved in sports volunteering.
- Many volunteers were engaged in education/ learning so looked to fit volunteering around these commitments if the project ran through the academic holidays more potential volunteers could have perhaps been reached.

Volunteer Opportunities

3.32 The sports volunteering opportunities within the project differed in both the level of volunteering commitment and the way in which the opportunities were delivered. In terms of the volunteering commitment the opportunities were identified as short term, part time, or full time. The Volunteer Centres had the greatest success with finding and placing volunteers into part time and short term opportunities, 44.1% and 40.3% respectively. It appeared more difficult to find and place volunteers in full time opportunities due to the level of commitment required by the volunteers.



Figure 7 Breakdown of volunteer commitment for opportunities



Based on a total of 315 opportunities

3.33 The approach taken by the Volunteer Centres to promoting the role of Volunteer Champions and full-time volunteering required significant effort as these roles demanded a young person to commit to volunteering for approximately 30 hours per week for a period of 13 weeks. The project managed to engage 6 volunteers within the role of Volunteer Champions which was less than the intended target of 14. The Volunteer Champions' and full-time volunteering role were specifically promoted to young people not engaged in full-time education or employment through organisations such as Newstart, Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) and Connexions. The process of encouraging a young person to commit to becoming a Volunteer Champion or being involved in full-time volunteering proved to be a difficult task for a number of reasons:

- The project ran during a period when young people were involved in full-time education and were studying and preparing for exams.
- Young people were not prepared to commit to 30 hours due to the perceived impact it would have on other aspects of their life.
- Volunteering within sport tends to be focused on shorter volunteering time within weekday evenings and on weekends.
- The time taken to develop the volunteer champion role was under estimated within the project.
- The volunteer champions experience of working with the issues facing the Volunteer Centre in engaging with sports organisations had a negative impact on the motivations of the volunteer champions.

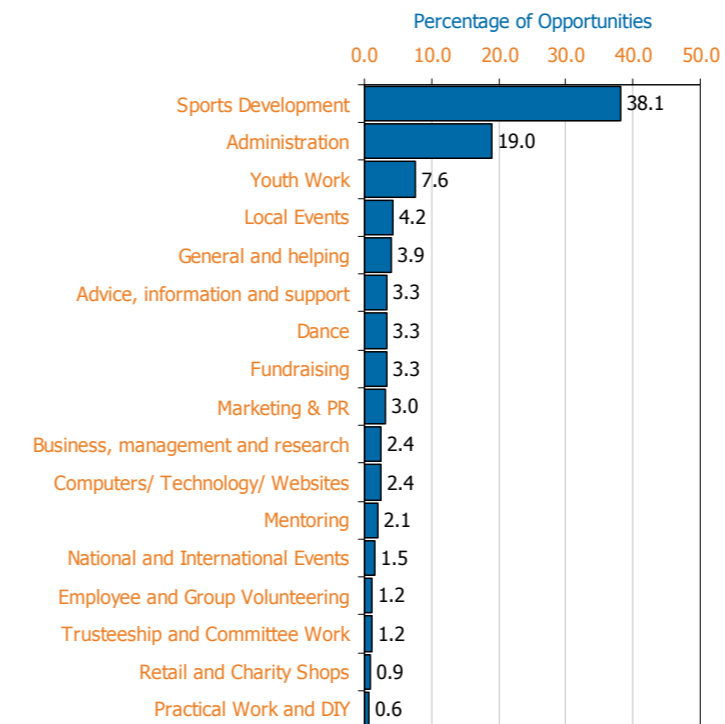
3.34 The project involved a range of partners in working towards the desired outcomes, many of which had common aspirations to further engage BME communities in sports volunteering including local sports, volunteering and community networks, youth organisations, county sports partnerships and, regional and national sports organisations.

3.35 The relationships that have been developed with partner organisations enabled opportunities to be delivered directly through the Volunteer Centre, directly through partners and by working with partners. Delivery through partners appeared to be the most successful in regards to the number of opportunities available (41.3%). The ability to deliver through partners supported the capacity of the project workers as it enabled the Volunteer Centres to delegate part of the administration of the project to partner organisations such as other Volunteer Centres and youth organisations within their local networks.



3.36 The types of organisations that were involved in offering sports volunteer opportunities were varied however there were two types of organisations that offered a greater number of opportunities, Local Authority Youth Services (33.3%) and Local Sports Clubs (32.9%). Other opportunities were made available within organisations such as local charities, community and faith groups. The specific sports that young people from BME communities engaged with as volunteers included sports such as Basketball, Cricket, Football, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Cricket, Judo, Greco-roman wrestling and Marathon Running.

Figure 8 Nature of opportunities offered



Based on a total of 315 opportunities

3.37 The project aimed to engage volunteers within all aspects of sports volunteering therefore the type of volunteering opportunities offered through the project was diverse, ranging from sports development to practical work and DIY. The greatest number of opportunities was within sports development these opportunities tended to involve coaching, officiating and the development of leagues and tournaments.



Lessons learnt

- Volunteer Centres and sports organisations seem to prefer to develop opportunities for long term volunteering although this does not always match the needs of the volunteer.
- A range of attractive sports volunteering opportunities offering different level of commitment and with different types of organisation are required.
- Volunteer Champions can support the work of Volunteer Centre staff but consideration should be given to the level of commitment and promotion of such a role.
- The requirement of 30 hours volunteering over a 13 week period for full-time volunteering is unrealistic for most volunteers.
- There tends to be a common understanding between organisations that there is a need for a targeted approach to engage young BME communities in sports volunteering.

Case Study - Anaz aged 24 - Halifax

Anaz was an unemployed asylum seeker that became involved as a volunteer in the project from a local Himmat community group. Anaz decided to get people involved in sport and to bring communities together through organising a five-a-side tournament. Anaz worked to develop the whole event he networked with local community groups, promoted volunteering, identified training courses and liaised with Calderdale College and Leisure Centre. He also encouraged some volunteers to attend a referee course provided by West Ridings County FA, so they could referee the tournament.

Azan and the other volunteers involved in organising and taking part in the event gained in confidence and realised the value of putting something back into their community. The tournament was a great success, involving over 50 people including players and volunteers. An award ceremony was held which was attended by the Mayor which gave recognition to the event and the volunteers. Funding is currently being looked for to run a similar event next year.

'It was a really good event that got a lot of different communities together. Sometimes the BME community lacks confidence in taking part in tournaments but because this was organised by them and for them it was easier.'

It's important to make sure the BME community develop an awareness of the opportunities in sport, not just around playing.' - European 11 Team Manager.

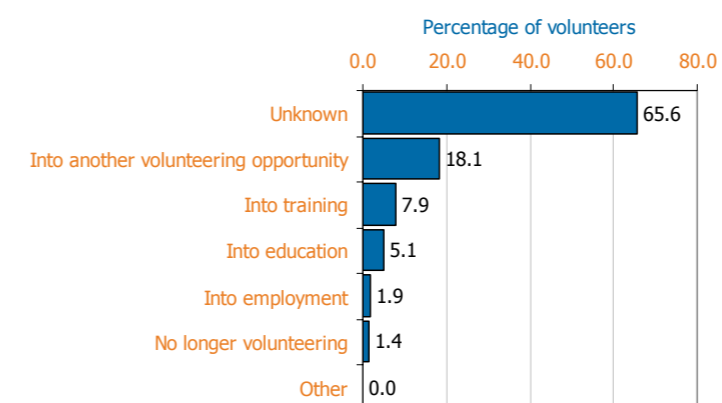
Continuation

- 3.38 All of the Volunteer Centres involved in the project were confident about continuing the work started through the project in working with volunteering in sport with an emphasis on assisting BME communities. The continuation of the Volunteering for Communities work was identified as being on a smaller scale due to the limited capacity of the Volunteer Centre, as several of the project workers could not be further funded after the project was completed.



- 3.39 The project workers were able to engage in starting to build relationships with sports organisations and community groups which have been maintained and extended beyond completion of the project. Although positive relationships were established these were within a very local context. It is apparent that the ongoing relationship between the Volunteer Centres involved in the project and sports organisations will require further development work at a local and regional level.
- 3.40 Several Volunteer Centres had links at both a delivery and strategic level with sports organisations, BME Community groups and/or sports networks prior to the project. These relationships were further developed through the project with clear indication that these would continue and that they would share their experience of working with sports volunteering and the good practice gained through the project.
- 3.41 The project was initially perceived by the Volunteer Centres as a long term project that would enable relationships to be built between themselves, sports organisations and community groups. However, the limited duration of the project, some running for less than a year, led to some Volunteer Centres not having the time to undertake sufficient ground work to build relationships with potential partners and develop sustainable sports volunteering opportunities.
- 3.42 The progression of the volunteers at the end of the project highlighted a number of exit routes. This data was difficult to collect as it required follow up work with the volunteers after the project was completed. However, positive outcomes were achieved with 18.1% involved in further volunteering opportunities, 7.9% moving into training, 5.1% into education and 1.9% into employment.

Figure 9 Progression of volunteers at the end of the project (No target group identified)



Based on a total of 215 volunteers

- 3.43 With a limited amount of funding provided to each Volunteer Centre the project enabled Volunteer Centres to appreciate the differing needs of sports organisations and enabled sports organisations to understand how a relationship with a Volunteer Centre could be mutually beneficial. Sports organisations were initially sceptical of how Volunteer Centres could assist with their demand for sports volunteers. However, the outreach work with sports organisations ensured that there was an appreciation of the range of roles that the Volunteer Centres could provide assistance with. Outside of the traditional coach and official roles sports organisations engaged volunteers from the project in their needs for committees, administrative, events, media and website roles.
- 3.44 The monitoring of the project was undertaken through the submission of the Volunteer Centre of quarterly reporting on volunteering opportunities and volunteer profile. As well as adapted Volunteering Impact Assessment forms^x administered to the volunteers, volunteer opportunities



and people working with the volunteers. The Impact Assessment forms although adapted to the project were seen to be difficult to complete due to the terms and language used being inappropriate for the 16-25 age group. Many BME community volunteers felt that the questions within the forms were both complicated and intrusive. The length of forms was also seen to be of putting to a number of volunteers.

Lessons learnt

- Volunteer Centres are prepared to continue to work with developing sports volunteering in relation to BME communities but will require additional funding and capacity support.
- The project worked best where there was established relationships with sports organisations at a strategic and delivery level although it was the project that generated action in regards to progressing that relationship.
- The project was suited to operating at a local level although work was initially widespread it reduced to localised activity around the Volunteer Centres.
- The short duration of the project impinged on the quality of experience gained by the volunteers, Volunteer Centres and sports organisations.

4 - Conclusions

- 4.1 The term volunteering is interpreted in different ways dependant on an individual's social and cultural identity, although within the UK there is a dominant concept of what volunteering constitutes. This concept may not suitably reflect the values held by BME communities which could create difficulties in individuals identifying with volunteering[i].
- 4.2 Challenging the conventionally narrow image of sports volunteering as an activity for white middle class, middle aged individuals is a difficult task that is being addressed by the volunteering and sporting infrastructure. This attempt to change the perception of volunteering to be recognised as an inclusive activity should be seen as a long term change process that hopes to attract young BME communities into sports volunteering.
- 4.3 The Volunteering for Communities pilot project has looked to initiate change and has identified a number of lessons that have been learnt from the process, highlighting the need for further work and research in to ways in which to engage young BME communities in sports volunteering. The following section looks to draw together those lessons learnt and provide concise recommendations to progress the work undertaken to date through the Volunteering for Communities pilot project.
- 4.4 Although positive action has been taken to change the traditional image of volunteering it needs to be recognised that developing volunteers in sport from BME communities will require consistent effort from sports organisations and the volunteering infrastructure. The Volunteering for Communities pilot project has identified a number of lessons that have been learnt from the process and has highlighted the need for further work and research in to ways in which to engage young BME communities in sports volunteering.
- 4.5 The following section looks to draw together those lessons learnt and provide concise recommendations to progress the work undertaken to date through the Volunteering for Communities pilot project.

^{vii} Lukka & Paine (2001) An exclusive construct? Exploring different cultural concepts of volunteering. In: J Smith & M Locke (eds.), Volunteering and the test of time - Essays for policy, organisation and research. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

^{viii} Sport England (2007). Active People data 05/06. KPI 2 Percentage of adults 16+ volunteering in sport or active recreation for at least one hour per week.

^{ix} Walby, S. Armstrong, J and Humphreys, L (2008). Review of Equality Statistics. London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

^x Volunteer Development Scotland. (2007). Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.



5 - Recommendations

Further Volunteering for Communities projects

- 5.1 This pilot project has highlighted a number of positive outcomes and areas for improvement for projects looking to engage BME communities with sports volunteering. There is potential for the development of a wider initiative to support Volunteer Centres and sports organisations in engaging BME communities with sports volunteering.

Sporting Equals could assist in developing similar projects with Volunteer Centres. Additional resources are however required to support targeted projects such as developing women and girls from BME communities in to sports volunteering.

Reduction in the scope of the project

- 5.2 The scope of the Volunteering for Communities pilot project was too broad for Volunteer Centres. Any ongoing project from the pilot delivered through Volunteer Centres should be limited to the catchment area of the Volunteer Centre which would allow more effective use of funding and a greater impact. It takes time to build relationships between Volunteer Centres and sports organisations. Therefore Volunteering England recommends a minimum of three years funding to initiate the cultural change needed between Volunteer Centres and sports organisations. The timing of the project outside of the academic year could also increase the take up of volunteers aged 16-25 years.

Wider understanding of the role of Volunteer Centres

- 5.3 Volunteer Centres may not have the capacity for undertaking outreach work with sports organisations. It is recommended that sports development officers such as those within Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies work to endorse Volunteer Centres as consultants in volunteer management and recruitment. It is hoped that this would encourage sports organisations to approach Volunteer Centres rather than needing to be approached.

Sharing the benefits of a relationship between Volunteering and Sport

- 5.4 There is a need for sports organisations at a strategic and delivery level to link with the Volunteering infrastructure building on the work already undertaken by Volunteering England and Sport England. The development of these links is a joint responsibility and will require work nationally, regionally and locally to ensure that a consistent message of mutual benefits are shared. Existing sports and volunteering networks should be used to promote any further Volunteering for Communities based projects.

Approving sport organisations as suitable to host volunteers

- 5.5 There is a need for sports organisations to have approval as suitable for volunteer opportunities. This would reduce the demand placed on sports organisations to provide evidence to Volunteer Centres that they are suitable for volunteer opportunities and would also alleviate capacity issues in relation to volunteer centres having to make checks with sports organisations. The approval of sports clubs and organisations would be most successful if it could be incorporated within a quality standard such as Clubmark. Although at present volunteer management is not an integral part of Clubmark.

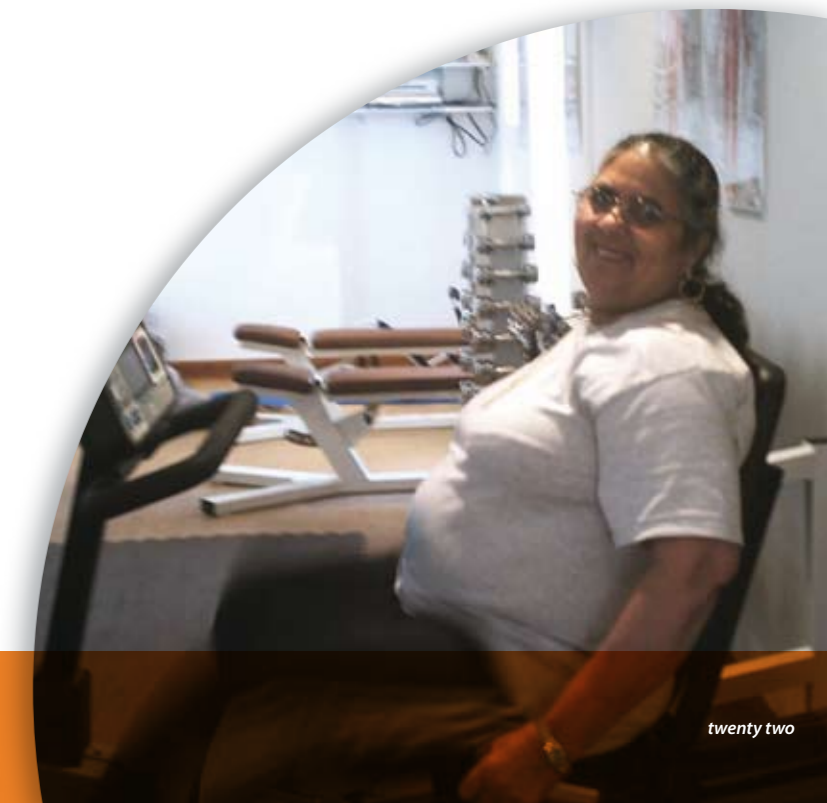


Approaches to engaging BME communities

- 5.6 The approach to working with BME communities needs to be through community and faith based groups offering opportunities that are both formal and informal. Contact should be where possible through suitable promotional material and outreach work to develop positive working relationships. Sporting Equals could assist in developing a database of sports based community and faith based groups to support ongoing work.

Clarity around monitoring and evaluation

- 5.7 The process of monitoring the project requires a simple monitoring form to record progress against targets such as the number of volunteers, demographic profile, details of volunteering opportunities and the progression of volunteers. This should be complemented with an evaluation process initiated at the outset of the project to gather a range of material from young BME volunteers. The evaluation material could include material such as web based blogs, written messages, images, video and photographs to provide an overview of the volunteer experience.



Sporting Equals

Promoting ethnic diversity
across sport & physical activity

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