



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
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Your reference
Our reference

4 December 1981

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

The attached consultation paper "Opportunities for Volunteering" invites suggestions from selected voluntary organisations and other interested bodies on how best to expand the opportunities for unemployed people to undertake voluntary work in the health and personal social services. £3.3m is available in 1982/83, the English share of the £4m announced for this purpose for the country as a whole by the Prime Minister on 27 July (Hansard, Column 836).

The paper seeks suggestions for unemployed people to act as volunteers under the auspices of a voluntary or statutory agency; to contribute to neighbourhood care groups which reinforce the support given by families, friends and neighbours to the elderly, handicapped and other people in difficulty; and to take part in community and self-help groups. Priority will be given to schemes that will secure lasting benefits from increased volunteer involvement.

Volunteering cannot of course make up for the lack of a normal paid job, and that is why the Prime Minister's announcement of 27 July was chiefly concerned with a substantial package of measures to extend the Government's special employment and training programmes. However, many unemployed people derive satisfaction from helping others and we want to make sure that those who want to volunteer can do so.

Copies of this letter and the consultation paper are being sent to the organisations listed in the Annex to the paper. We should be grateful to receive comments, which should be sent to LASS Branch 2, Department of Health and Social Security, Room B1608, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1 (Tel 01-407 5522 ext 6003) by 8 January 1982; additional copies of the paper, if required, can be obtained from the same address.

Yours faithfully

D M Woolley

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

**A CONSULTATION PAPER BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

December 1981

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

CONSULTATION PAPER BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

A. INTRODUCTION

1. On 27 July 1981, in a speech to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister included the following announcement:-

"Finally, I believe that we should immediately develop further opportunities for voluntary service for unemployed people of all ages. Our seventh proposal, therefore, is that the Government will provide additional funds for this purpose. We will provide a further £4 million for the remainder of this year and £8 million in 1982-83 for voluntary work in connection with the Manpower Services Commission's community enterprise programme.

There are also opportunities in social service and health where community support for the handicapped and elderly depends on a wide range of voluntary services as well as statutory provision. An additional £4 million will accordingly be available in 1982-83 to expand these activities and the departments concerned will be considering how best to apply this money." (Hansard, col 836).

2. The second of the 2 sums of £4 million referred to is to be shared between the Department of Health and Social Security and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices, the DHSS share (for England) being £3.3 million. This consultation paper is concerned solely with the expenditure of the £3.3 million in England; separate arrangements are being made in respect of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

3. The £3.3 million is available for the scheme only in 1982/83. The question whether extra money could be made available in subsequent years will be decided in the light of other competing demands on the Department's budgets and on public expenditure generally.

4. This consultation paper has three purposes:

- (i) to describe and explain the objectives of the scheme;
- (ii) to canvass views on how these objectives might best be met (see paragraph 49); and
- (iii) to invite organisations interested in taking part in the scheme to consider and suggest in what ways they might do so (see paragraph 51).

B. OBJECTIVES

5. The scheme will have three main objectives:

- (i) to develop opportunities for unemployed people to undertake voluntary action including:
 - working as a volunteer under the auspices of a voluntary or statutory agency

- contributing to neighbourhood care groups, that is groups which reinforce the support of families, friends and neighbours given to the elderly, handicapped and other people in difficulty
- taking part in community groups
- taking part in self-help groups;

(ii) to expand voluntary action in the field of health and personal social services; and

(iii) to spend the money in such ways that benefits will continue to accrue in the longer term.

6. To be considered for funding under the scheme, a project will have to be designed to meet both objective (i) and objective (ii). Priority will be given to those which are also designed to meet objective (iii).

7. Paragraphs 8-16 elaborate on each of the three objectives in turn.

Opportunities for Unemployed People

8. Unemployed people span a wide range of skills, experience and interests, and many are already involved in voluntary action of one kind or another.

9. The development of opportunities for voluntary action by unemployed people should not take place in isolation from the development of voluntary action more generally, and may often be best achieved through projects which are not exclusive to unemployed people but which can be expected to attract substantial participation from among them, for example by concentrating on areas or neighbourhoods - in depressed inner cities, for instance - where the level of unemployment is particularly high.

10. The scheme will encompass the development of voluntary opportunities for people of working age who while desiring to work cannot secure full-time paid employment but who, for one reason or another, are not registered as unemployed. Such people include many who are disabled or prematurely retired, or who are on short-time working.

11. The Manpower Services Commission's Special Programmes will continue to provide valuable scope for temporary employment. The creation of employment - whether permanent or temporary - is not a primary purpose of the scheme discussed in this paper, although a significant proportion of the funds available may in the event be spent on wages or salaries. The Department will not support projects which would more suitably fall for consideration for funding by the MSC.

12. The scheme is not intended to develop opportunities for voluntary work as if such work were a substitute for paid employment. Nor will there be any question of compelling unemployed people to take part.

Opportunities in the Health and Personal Social Services Fields

13. All projects to be funded under the scheme will be expected to make a worthwhile contribution to meeting health needs, or personal social service needs, or both.

14. Some projects, whilst satisfying this criterion, may involve spillover into fields which are not strictly limited, in organisational terms, to the responsibilities of health and social services authorities. Such projects will still be eligible for consideration.

15. It will be important to ensure that the projects funded provide (whether from the scheme's funds or otherwise) for an adequate balance between good opportunities for voluntary action and the recruitment and deployment of those who are going to undertake that action. It would not make for productive use of the funds for the scheme to support only the "supply" of volunteers in circumstances in which no "demand" was established; and vice versa.

Lasting Benefits

16. The Department's intention is that priority under the scheme should be given to expenditure which can be expected to secure lasting benefits in terms of increasing the quantity or quality of volunteer involvement and self-help and neighbourhood groups, especially among unemployed people or in areas of particularly high unemployment.

C. TARGETS FOR EXPENDITURE

Voluntary Action at Local and Neighbourhood Levels

17. The bulk of the Department's expenditure under the scheme will need to go on projects at local and neighbourhood levels. (Possible administrative mechanisms for achieving this are outlined in section D). But whatever the position on the availability of funds for the scheme after 1982/83 (see paragraph 3), no local project will be supported indefinitely from Departmental funds.

18. To be considered for funding under the scheme, local voluntary sector projects should normally have been the subject of consultation with the relevant health authority or social services authority or both. This will be important generally, but especially so where longer-term funding may be needed from the statutory sector or where professional supervision or support is required.

19. Although expenditure under the scheme will be directed mainly towards local projects, voluntary organisations may in some instances need to incur administrative costs at national or regional levels in the course of, for example, developing and supporting such projects. It will be possible to consider using some part of the available funds to help meet such costs.

Possible Kinds of Expenditure

20. The Department is particularly interested to receive comments and suggestions, preferably including specific (even if hypothetical) examples, as to what kinds of expenditure, on what types of project, would best meet the objectives set out in section B.

21. The following are examples of the kinds of cost which might in principle be met, wholly or partly, under the scheme, always provided that the objectives of the scheme were met in each case (paragraphs 5-6):

(i) the costs of administrative, supervisory or developmental capacity, including salary and overhead costs. Such capacity might, for example, be used by:-

- a. service-providing voluntary organisations;
- b. organisations which recruit volunteers or seek to stimulate volunteering;
- c. neighbourhood care or community groups;
- d. self-help groups;
- e. resource centres, or other organisations offering relevant resources;
- f. other bodies, whether established or "ad hoc", which could perform a relevant intermediary function (eg by surveying local needs and the ways in which voluntary action by unemployed people might help to meet them).

(ii) capital payments, for which an upper limit might be prudent. Examples might include:-

- a. equipment;
- b. the building, restoration or maintenance costs of creating more space in, say, centres providing focal points for local community service or self help;
- c. vehicles.

(iii) training, for example:

- a. training for unemployed people who are contributing, or wish to contribute to relevant voluntary action but who do not feel that they have the necessary knowledge;
- b. further training for staff of voluntary or statutory organisations in connection with relevant project work.

22. The Department is not committed to helping with all these activities, and there may in addition be others relevant to the objectives of the scheme. Bearing in mind that a decision has yet to be taken on the availability of extra money after 1982/83 (paragraph 3), those responding to this paper are particularly invited to suggest activities which either are one-off in nature or are likely to be self-sustaining following the initial injection of cash under the scheme.

Expenses and "Pocket Money"

23. Volunteers need to have their expenses met, and volunteers' expenses could be a legitimate demand on the scheme's funds. There may also be scope for the payment of "pocket money"; for example, a properly evaluated project might provide a valuable opportunity to test the effectiveness of such payments in enabling unemployed people to undertake voluntary work. On the other hand, substantial expenditure on expenses or "pocket money" could absorb a large proportion of the funds available without necessarily securing lasting benefits along the lines envisaged by the scheme's third objective (paragraphs 5(iii) and 16), and the Department will need to keep this in mind.

24. Any projects which involved making "pocket money" or similar payments to volunteers would need to take account, as appropriate, of the relevant rules for entitlement to unemployment and supplementary benefit. The rules in this area are to be amended by new regulations which will reduce the difficulties volunteers might meet. The Department will be providing a short guide to the rules, for distribution once the changes have been made.

Statutory Services

25. The Department's intention is that most, if not all, of the money disbursed under the scheme will be spent on projects within the voluntary sector. But there is in principle scope for expenditure within the statutory sector too, for example, to strengthen the capacity to provide administrative, supervisory and developmental support for volunteer involvement in those services.

26. There would be advantages in having as an option the expenditure of some of the funds on volunteer using projects within the statutory sector. But the administrative mechanisms required would have disadvantages (see paragraph 44).

27. Comments are invited on whether or not some provision for expenditure within statutory services should be included within the scheme.

D. CHANNELS OF EXPENDITURE

28. The purpose of this section of the paper is to suggest various ways in one or more of which the funds disbursed under the scheme might be channelled to the local, voluntary sector projects which are likely to attract the bulk of the expenditure. Comments are invited on the relative merits and potential of each from the viewpoint of those who may wish to participate in the scheme. Suggestions as to other possibilities would also be welcome.

29. The options canvassed do not include that of the Department dealing directly and exclusively with the individual local projects themselves. The Department has neither the expertise nor the administrative capacity to mount the scheme on this basis, especially bearing in mind that the scheme may for the most part take the form of a large number of small payments.

Option 1: Payments to National Organisations with Local Branches

30. Where a national voluntary organisation has local branches for whose expenditure that organisation can accept accountability, it would in principle be possible for that organisation to receive a single grant towards the costs of a range of projects to be run by its branches.

31. This approach would have the advantage of being relatively straightforward to administer, and it would minimise the need to establish new channels of communication. But an approach of this kind could cover only a proportion of the kinds of projects which might benefit under the scheme.

Option 2: Payments to Local Projects Identified through National Intermediaries

32. This option would involve making use of national intermediary bodies, whether "specialist" or "generalist", which had local affiliates for whose expenditure they could not accept accountability. Each body would put together a "package" of local projects, but in this case the grant would be paid direct to those projects which were accepted for funding.

33. This approach could usefully supplement option 1 by opening up a wider range of projects which might benefit under the scheme. But, once the "package" had been put together, the Department would have to deal directly with the individual projects concerned.

Option 3: Payments to Local Projects Identified through Local Intermediaries

34. Option 3 would involve essentially the same approach as option 2 except that the intermediary bodies would be local rather than national.

35. Option 3 might be a useful supplement to options 1 and 2, although there would probably be a good deal of overlap. The main advantage would be that the intermediary bodies involved could be expected to have extensive local knowledge and contacts. The main disadvantage would be that the Department would be dealing with a large number of organisations with which it would usually have no established links; and there would still be a need to deal directly with individual projects, except in so far as these were mounted by the intermediary bodies themselves.

Option 4: A "Grant in Aid" to an Independent Fund

36. Under this option, a special fund would be established and independently administered on the basis of groundrules laid down by the Department. The trustees of the fund would be responsible, within the terms of the groundrules, for both the decisions on the projects to be funded and the administration of the payments. The Intermediate Treatment Fund is an example of this kind of approach.

37. There would be a number of advantages to this option. Once the groundrules were established, the Department's involvement would be minimised and there would be a potentially greater flexibility of operation. For example, the fund could if necessary carry some of the money over into the next financial year and it might be better placed to deal with the wide range of organisations and individuals who could be involved and to reach small self-help and neighbourhood groups. Option 4 could in principle subsume any or all of options 1-3, in that the payments under those options could be made by the fund rather than by the Department.

38. But there would also be a number of disadvantages. Option 4 would mean setting up a new body - albeit perhaps attached to an existing charitable trust. It might be difficult to attract the right administrative expertise to run the fund, especially if the scheme's life expectancy were to be relatively short. And it would be difficult to draw up satisfactory groundrules in advance without experience to build on.

Option 5: "Grants in Aid" to Existing National Intermediaries

39. This option would be a variant of options 2 and 4. As under option 2, each national intermediary body which participated would be responsible for putting together a "package" of local projects. As under option 4, that body would itself be responsible for taking funding decisions and administering the payments, within a specified budget and in accordance with groundrules.

40. This approach would have most of the advantages of options 2 and 4. But there would be considerable disadvantages. It could be difficult to achieve a balance which was seen to be fair as between different interests and different kinds of voluntary action, especially bearing in mind that budgets would have to be fixed (though not necessarily immutably) in advance. The greater the number of intermediary bodies participating the more sets of groundrules would have to be drawn up and the more problems of overlap there would be. Also, bearing in mind that a "grant in aid" involves some relinquishment of Departmental accountability, the greater the number of bodies participating the more diffused that accountability would become.

41. The Department's view at this stage is that option 5 could be considered in no more than two or three clearly delimited instances, and should be adopted, if at all, for only a relatively small proportion of the funds available.

Option 6: Payments via Statutory Channels

42. If it were thought desirable arrangements could be made for channelling some part of the available funds to health authorities. Means could doubtless be found whereby a proportion of such funds were in turn put at the disposal of social services authorities through Joint Consultative Committees. The health and local authorities concerned would then be able to make grants to suitable voluntary sector projects.

43. As under option 3, one advantage would be that payments would be made by people with local knowledge and contacts, a considerable advantage where there already existed a strong local partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors. Also - as against option 3 - the Department would not need to deal directly with the local projects themselves (although it would need to be satisfied that the funds were not being used to substitute for expenditure which would have occurred anyway).

44. But there would be a number of disadvantages. Arrangements would be untimely for many health authorities at a time of NHS restructuring, and this would affect the involvement of social services authorities too, given that money would have to be channelled to them through Joint Consultative Committees. The scheme could be thought too small to justify involving more than a few selected authorities. And the lines of accountability would be long.

45. The Department's view at this stage is that option 6 should not be thought of as a major component in the scheme, and that it should be considered at all only if it is thought desirable for some of the funds to be spent on statutory sector projects (see paragraphs 25-27) - the same funding channels from the Department could then be used for either statutory sector projects, or grants to voluntary sector projects, or both.

Statutory Powers

46. The Department needs no new statutory powers for any of the methods of payments canvassed in this paper. Some payments may be made under the Department's powers to give grants to voluntary bodies under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968; but expenditure on this special scheme will be kept separate from section 64 grant expenditure generally, and the groundrules for the scheme will not affect the Department's general policies on expenditure under section 64.

E. MONITORING

47. Whatever the arrangements for financial accountability under the scheme, the Department will need sufficient information about projects on which money is spent to be able to assess the benefits secured by the expenditure. It will also be desirable to obtain sufficient feedback to be able to identify useful lessons - whether for the Department or for other agencies. The costs of securing the necessary information and feedback will, as necessary, be allowed for in the payments made under the scheme.

48. The Department has no plans to make available any additional funds for the purpose of commissioning independent research to supplement this basic level of monitoring. But it may well be that the features of some of the projects to be funded under the scheme will be such that some independent research input would be worthwhile, for example where a project is designed to develop new approaches to the stimulation of voluntary action. In such cases there is no reason why the projects' sponsors should not seek to secure research funds from other sources.

F. CONCLUSION

49. The Department would welcome comments and suggestions on any aspects of the scheme and on any of the issues raised in this paper. In particular, comments and suggestions are invited on:-

- (i) what kinds of expenditure, on what types of project, would best meet the objectives of the scheme (paragraphs 20-22);
- (ii) whether there should be provision for including statutory sector projects within the scheme (paragraphs 25-27);
- (iii) the relative merits and potential of different channels of expenditure (paragraphs 28-45); and
- (iv) how to derive and share information and experience (whether by formal research or other means) for future application (paragraphs 47-48).

50. Following consideration of the comments received, the Department will announce as soon as possible the groundrules and administrative arrangements for the scheme. No bids for funds will be considered in advance of that announcement.

51. Where appropriate and if they so wish, organisations commenting on this paper are invited to indicate whether they would be able and willing to participate in the administration of the scheme. Those responding in this way should say under which of the various options for channelling expenditure (or under what alternative arrangements) they would be able to take part. They should also be as specific as is possible at this stage about the kinds of expenditure and types of project which would be involved, about the amount of money they could realistically be expected to spend within the terms of the scheme, and about the benefits which could be expected in relation to the scheme's objectives. Responses along these lines will be treated entirely without prejudice to any eventual bids for funds under the scheme.

52. Copies of this paper are being sent to the organisations listed in the appendix to this paper; comments from any other interested organisations or individuals would also be welcome, and additional copies of the paper can be obtained from LASS Branch 2, Department of Health and Social Security, Room B1608, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1. Comments should be sent to the same address, to reach the Department no later than 8 January 1982.

ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING COPIES OF THE PAPER

Advice Services Alliance
 Affor
 Age Concern (England)
 Al-Anon
 Al-Ateen
 Alcohol Education Centre
 Alcoholics Anonymous
 Alcoholism Community Centre for Education, Prevention and Treatment
 Apex Trust
 Association of Charity Officers
 Association to Combat Huntington's Chorea
 Association of County Councils
 Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes
 Association of Directors of Social Services
 Association of District Councils
 Association of Jamaicans UK
 Association of Metropolitan Authorities
 Association of Nurse Administrators
 Association for Researchers into Voluntary Action and Community
 Involvement
 Association of Residential Communities
 Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

Barrow and Geraldine S Cadbury Trust
 Board of Deputies of British Jews
 British Association for Counselling
 British Association of the Hard of Hearing
 British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres
 British Association of Social Workers
 British Council of Churches
 British Deaf Association
 British Epilepsy Association
 British Medical Association
 British Polio Fellowship
 British Red Cross Society

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
 Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless
 Campaign for Mentally Handicapped People
 Carnegie United Kingdom Trust
 Carr-Gomm Society Ltd
 Centre on Environment for the Handicapped
 Centre for Policy on Ageing
 Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
 Chinese Action Group
 Church Army
 Church of England Children's Society
 Churches' Council on Alcohol and Drugs
 City Parochial Foundation

Commission for Racial Equality
Community Projects Foundation
Community Service Volunteers
Confederation of British Industry
Confederation of Indian Organisations
Contact
COPE
Counsel and Care for the Elderly
CRUSE (National Organisation for the Widowed and their Children)

Deaf-Blind Helpers League
Disabled Living Foundation
Disablement Income Group
Dr Barnardo's

Employment Fellowship

Family Forum
Family Service Units
Family Welfare Association
Federation of Alcoholic Rehabilitation Establishments
Federation of Bangladeshi Associations
Federation of Community Work Training Groups

General Whitley Council Staff Side
Ghana Union
Gingerbread
Good Neighbour Information Exchange
Greater Manchester Youth Association
Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

Health Visitors' Association
Help the Aged
Hilden Charitable Trust
Holiday Care Service
Home Start
Home-Start Consultancy

Intermediate Treatment Fund
Invalid Children's Aid Association
Invalid at Home Trust

Jewish Blind Society
John Groom's Association for the Disabled
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust

London Boroughs Training Committee

Manpower Services Commission
Medical Council on Alcoholism Ltd
MENCAP - Royal National Society for Mentally Handicapped
Children and Adults
Mental After Care Association
Mental Health Foundation
MIND - National Association for Mental Health
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain

National Association for Asian Youth
National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux
National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
National Association of Community Relations Councils
National Association for Deaf/Blind and Rubella Handicapped
National Association of Health Authorities
National Association of Leagues of Hospital Friends
National Association of Victim Support Schemes
National Association of Voluntary Help Organisers
National Association of Voluntary Hostels
National Association of Women's Clubs
National Bureau for Handicapped Students
National Children's Home
National Council on Alcoholism
National Council of Bangladeshi Organisations
National Council for One Parent Families
National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents
National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Council for Voluntary Youth Service
National Council of YMCAs
National Cyrenians
National Deaf Children's Society
National Federation of the Blind
National Federation of Community Organisations
National Federation of Housing Associations
National Federation of Self Help Groups
National Federation of Women's Institutes
National Institute for Social Work
National League of the Blind and Disabled
National Play Bus Association
National Schizophrenia Fellowship
National Society for Autistic Children
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
National Union of Townswomen's Guilds
National Working Party of Young Volunteer Organisers
National Youth Bureau
Northern Regional Association for the Blind

Organisation for Parents under Stress
Oshwal Association of UK
OUTSET

Parkinson's Disease Society
Partially Sighted Society
PHAB (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied)
Pre-Retirement Association
Pre-School Playgroups Association
Project Fullemploy Trust
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for the Disabled

Rainer Foundation
Residential Care Association
Richmond Fellowship
Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for the Deaf

Sainsbury Family Trusts
Salvation Army
Samaritans
Save the Children Fund
Southern and Western Regional Association for the Blind
Spastics Society
Spinal Injuries Association
St John Ambulance
Standing Conference of Asian Organisations
Standing Conference of Councils for Voluntary Service
Standing Conference on Drug Abuse
Standing Conference of Pakistani Organisations
Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils
Student Community Action Development Unit

Toy Libraries Association
Trades Union Congress
Turning Point

UK Asian Womens Conference
Unemployment Alliance
Unemployment Unit
Union of Muslim Associations
Union of Pakistani Organisations

Volunteer Centre

West Indian Standing Conference
Winged Fellowship Trust
Women's Aid Federation (England)
Women's Royal Voluntary Service
Workers' Educational Association

