

## **Beyond the Trolley Service Case Study**

A coherent, strategic and sustainable action plan for volunteering and health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Background**

Beyond the Trolley Service originated from the work of Angus Community Health Partnership and Volunteer Centre Angus. Its intention was to undertake research leading to an evidence based set of recommendations to radically refocus the role of volunteering in Health.

### **Research Paradigm**

The research underpinning this report involved a diverse range of methodologies to elicit the views of :

- Volunteers involved in health
- Strategic partners
- Members of the public who use health facilities
- Young people

Semi structured interviews were conducted using questionnaires, focus group discussions involving strategic partners and volunteers, workshops with young people to ascertain their passion for volunteering in health and a large scale literature review on the subject matter.

This work was carried out by Volunteer Centre Angus who also undertook environmental analysis, mapping exercise and writing the final report. This work was carried out between September 2009 to December 2009.

### **Impact**

Beyond the Trolley Service report created a significant impact on planning for volunteering in health, not only in Angus but indeed throughout the UK. Although in Scotland there is a commitment to a refreshed strategy in volunteering, increasingly local community health partnerships are very interested in the analysis and recommendations contained within this report. Tayside Health Board are very excited by the contents and findings and have aligned the report to their Health Equities Strategy, Communities in Control. The principle alignment between both reports recognises a growing momentum towards coproduction as a means to achieve better equalities in volunteering and indeed health. Outwith Scotland Volunteering England have received Beyond the Trolley Service report and have fed back their admiration for the quality and content of the work and are keen to use it as a foundation for developing volunteering in health strategies for England and Wales.

### **Outcomes**

The main outcome from this work can be measured against very innovative partnership working which has made a real and meaningful difference to individuals facing serious social exclusion and disadvantage. There is also evidence of new working practices and projects unseen anywhere else in Scotland. One example is detailed below

#### **Volunteer Academy Life Skills Centre Community Project**

The above project is aimed at people facing various forms of disadvantage and works through the notion of peer learning, mentoring and skills development. This is based on the principles that everyone has something to offer another individual and where clients actually become contributors to their volunteering and essentially less dependent of

services. The new Life Skills Centre which is supported by Angus Community Health Partnership is led by a steering group of volunteers and supported by Volunteer Centre Angus staff along with healthcare and other practitioners. In the last year 97 people who have gone through the project have gained employment, continuing learning and sustainable volunteering. Through using qualitative measures such as Rickter scale it is clear that participants assert higher levels of confidence in accessing employment, further and higher education, better health, volunteering and community engagement.

The Volunteer Academy Life Skills Centre is the only one of its kind in the UK, it is fundamentally located on tackling inequalities in volunteering and health and building a positive volunteering experience where people become confident and build their latent talents.

### **Community Volunteering**

The notion of coproduction is explicit as a equal relationship between communities, agencies and services where they define community needs and act on delivering outcomes. There are many example of this here in Angus where there has been evidence of lower levels of demands on NHS services where community volunteering health projects exist. In Carnoustie the Community Health Cooperative support people who are elderly, potentially isolated or vulnerable by providing a befriender and care support ensuring their needs are attended to and where people become ill a local volunteer would undertaken tasks such as walking their dog or collecting prescriptions.

### **Friday Nite Project, Kirriemuir**

This project is based on coproduction where local volunteers run a youth drop in from an underused sports centre every Friday night. In Kirriemuir there are no such youth drop in facilities and young people themselves as volunteers came together with the Healthy Happy Communities project and Volunteer Centre Angus to get the project up and running. The project has made phenomenal success with up to 90 young people attending each night and its work was celebrated by Cabinet Secretary John Swinney as a modern way of working with young people in communities which builds on the capacity of existing facilities. Feedback from the young people suggests less likelihood to access alcohol and drugs and figures from Tayside Police suggest a significant reduction in the number of youth causing annoyance calls.

### **Summary**

It is clear that the different approach being taken in Angus based on strong partnership working across all sectors there has been a significant shift in the concepts of volunteering in health which move far beyond the trolley service and into building healthier community life whilst recognising volunteering as crucial to sustaining good mental and physical health of those who volunteer.