



Valuing and inspiring volunteering

Oxfordshire Partnership meeting 24 February 2010

Background briefing

- **How many people volunteer?** RAISE Hidden Asset 2009 (www.raise-networks.org.uk) estimates 657,780 volunteers across the south east (1 in 10 of the adult population).
- **How does Oxfordshire compare?** Place survey 2009 shows that 28.6% of those surveyed in Oxfordshire had given unpaid help at least once a month in the past year. This compares to 24.8% overall in the South East. Broken down by district this figure is made up as follows:

Oxford City - 26.6%	Cherwell - 26.6%
West Oxfordshire - 28.6%	South Oxfordshire - 31.4%
Vale - 30.5%	
- **How reliable is the data?** Research commissioned by OCVA in 2007 suggests that volunteer numbers are likely to be underestimated, in part because of the difficulty in identifying 'informal' volunteers (www.oxnet.org.uk/research)
- **Local Area Agreement:** Oxfordshire has adopted NI6 'Increase participation in regular volunteering by local people' as a target. We are aiming to increase levels to 30.4% in the next Place Survey 2011. OSCA is responsible for this target and its associated action plan.
- **Action plan targets:** April-December 2009 1,685 people contacted the volunteer centres about opportunities to volunteer (annual target 900); 1,252 opportunities to volunteer in Oxfordshire are advertised on www.do-it.org.uk (annual target 650). 79 people classified as 'vulnerable' have been assisted into volunteering by the OCVA Volunteer Centre over the past 18 months.
- **What is the value of volunteering?** If paid minimum wage they would be worth £2,397 million annually to the economy in the SE.

- ***Who benefits?*** Both statutory and voluntary sectors. For example, Oxfordshire has over 4,000 school governors and an estimated 25,000 charity trustees.
- ***What do volunteers do?*** They sit on management committees, provide transport to hospital, run activities for young people and older people, act as advocates for disabled people, preserve the environment, fundraise, provide administrative support, offer companionship.
- ***Why do people volunteer?*** A 2009 survey of users of the Volunteer Centre showed that top benefits were meeting new people, gaining a sense of achievement, and helping others or putting something back.
- ***Who volunteers?*** People of all ages, employed and unemployed people, students, people of all cultures and religions
- ***Impact of the recession on volunteering:*** There has been a 150% increase from 2007 to 2009 in enquiries to the OCVA volunteer centre.