

January 2008



Welcome to Volunteer News, our newsletter for and about all our volunteers.

Age Concern Kingston could not operate without its growing band of dedicated volunteers.

We want to know what do you think.

If you have any comments or feedback on this newsletter, or other issues about volunteering, please contact Femina Makkar:

Makkar:
femina@ageconcernkingston.org

A plea!

Please let us know if your contact details change or if you have stopped volunteering so that we can keep our records up to date and avoid wastage. Update forms are always available from the Admin Office at 14 Nelson Road, or just let us have a note or email:

jyoti@ageconcernkingston.org

020 8942 8256

Our full contact details are overleaf.

Volunteering must be a part of society's DNA

Baroness Julia Neuberger, Chair of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering, is demanding a fundamental shake-up to make volunteering part of the 'DNA of our society' and improve volunteering for millions of Britons over the next ten years. Red tape, unnecessary CRB checks and failure of the voluntary sector to genuinely respond to society's diverse needs are discouraging willing volunteers according to a new report, *Manifesto for Change*, published at the end of January. The Commission's report, which follows the most in-depth consultation ever conducted into volunteering in England, highlights the need to remove barriers and develop better opportunities to help develop the £48 billion volunteering sector.

Baroness Neuberger said: "Our vision is a society where volunteering is part of our DNA so that - by giving time - we enrich our own lives and those of others. But, at the moment too many people are being put off volunteering. Many people come forward to offer their time and skills, but red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy get in the way. For a start, it is time to rethink the obsession with any risks that might be involved and to remove financial obstacles which many people experience when they try to volunteer. We also need to avoid time-consuming criminal record checks, unless volunteers are working with children or



vulnerable adults."

The Commission criticises some parts of the voluntary sector for failing to address the needs of the UK's diverse population. Many groups encounter problems when enlisting for volunteer opportunities, including disabled people, people with mental health problems, as well as asylum seekers, refugees and homeless people. The Commission heard evidence from some witnesses that disabled volunteers were being turned away from training opportunities.

The Commission found that in many organisations existing volunteers are underutilised and not provided with opportunities which recognise or respond to their skills. It recommends that all volunteer-involving organisations need

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The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service 2007



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Our Mission

To be an effective organization that is recognized as a leader, committed to involving and empowering all older people in Kingston.

We're on the Web!

www.ageconcernkingston.org

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urgently to review their ways of working to ensure that new, creative and flexible opportunities are available to support all groups of society.

Baroness Neuberger concludes: "Government has significantly increased funding for volunteering and has developed a number of new initiatives. But now we must stop creating new initiatives. The government needs to support the voluntary sector in investing properly in providing volunteers with opportunities for progression and training. We recommend a basic level of training for volunteers - which should be recognised across all sectors and industries. This will not only improve the effectiveness of volunteers, but also offer them future opportunities."

In compiling its report, Manifesto for Change, the Commission heard evidence from 1,190 people and organisations, and examined the opportunities and challenges for volunteering over the next ten years.

Here at ACKuT we have recently reviewed our procedures for recruiting and managing volunteers, something we do regularly to ensure that we follow best practice and are meeting the needs of our volunteers, and that volunteers meet the organisation's needs in the current changing health and social care environment. We do not ask volunteers to undertake CRB disclosure unless they are working with vulnerable adults, or with children as part of our intergenerational programme. We aim to reflect the diversity in our community by providing a wide range of opportunities for volunteers, and by working with partner organisations such as Twining Enterprises (a charity that works with people with mental health problems) and the Kingston Volunteer Centre.

What do you think? Do you get enough training and support as a volunteer with ACKuT? Do you have unused skills which could benefit the organisation? Send your comments to Femina Makkar (contact details on front page).

Hello from Claire

I am a new volunteer for Age Concern and have taken over the responsibility of Volunteer News. As this publication is about volunteers and read by volunteers, it is only right that you the volunteers have more say on what goes in the issue. Therefore if you have any ideas for features - be it serious or light-hearted - please feel free to contact me on my email address:

claireageconcern@googlemail.com

I am keen to receive any feedback on past and future issues - do you read Volunteer News? Do you think it could be improved? How?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards, Claire Smyth
(volunteer)

Welcome to the following volunteers who have joined us since Christmas:

- Clara Touillon
- Rose Waddelow
- Claire Smyth
- Jeya Paramesan