

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

A vision for Brighton & Hove



OUR VISION

Brighton & Hove, a city which champions volunteering: valuing the contribution that volunteers make; striving to ensure positive volunteering experiences; and recognising the impact of volunteering on the economic, social, cultural, leisure and environmental life of the city.



OUR COMMITMENTS

Raise awareness

Raise awareness of volunteering across Brighton & Hove

Increase numbers

Increase the number of people committing to volunteer from all communities

Enhance recognition

Enhance recognition of the value that volunteers bring to the city

Improve accessibility

Improve accessibility of volunteering opportunities

Promote good practice

Promote good practice in working with volunteers, including adequately resourcing volunteer management and support.

PARTNERSHIP PLEDGE

Brighton & Hove Connected brings together the business, public and voluntary & community sectors to work in partnership to address the key economic, social and environmental challenges facing the city. It is guided by two key principles of increasing equality and improving engagement.

Volunteers across the city make an invaluable contribution to the achievement of these principles across all partner organisations.

Their input cuts across many city-wide policies. Volunteers contribute to building stronger, more resilient communities through a vast range of activities. They bring added value to services through their skills and life experiences and they improve the environment of the city in which we live and work.

We understand the principle of volunteering as being freely undertaken and not for financial gain. Working together as partners we commit to:

- **Raise awareness of volunteering across Brighton & Hove – by regularly bringing volunteering to the attention of cross sector partners, the media and the public;**
- **Increase the number of people committing to volunteer from all communities – through attracting more volunteers from diverse communities across the city;**
- **Enhance recognition of the value that volunteers bring to the city – through regular promotion of the triple impact of volunteering for the city, business and organisations, and individuals;**
- **Improve accessibility of volunteering opportunities – by creating more high quality, well supported, accessible volunteering opportunities;**
- **Promote good practice in working with volunteers – through continuing support of the cross sector Volunteer Co-ordinators' Forum and endorsement of the need to adequately resource volunteer management and support.**

We endorse this document, which celebrates the contribution of volunteers and commitment to volunteering in Brighton & Hove. We hope that it will harness the potential of volunteering in our city and attract many more people to make a contribution as a volunteer, in whatever capacity.

Each partner is progressing plans to develop volunteering activity and we will work with the Volunteering Champions' Group to support the co-ordination and promotion of volunteering across the city.

We are committed to the ongoing development of good practice in volunteering, increasing the quality of volunteer placements and promoting the contribution that volunteers make to the life of the city.

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

The 'triple impact' of volunteering benefits the whole city; individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, public sector bodies and businesses, all benefit from volunteering. Volunteering also contributes to people's wellbeing, empowerment and inclusion, helping to build resilient communities and improving the quality of life for volunteers and those they support across the city.

For **individuals**, volunteering can be empowering, embedding an ethos of self-help and a sense of self-worth. Volunteers bring skills, knowledge and experience, as well as having an opportunity to develop new skills which can be a route to employment or a chance to try something new that improves life chances. Volunteering also has social benefits, as a way of socialising and meeting new people and an opportunity to get to know the local community.

Volunteers enable **organisations** to provide vital services across sectors, bringing a wealth of skills and knowledge to their roles and increasing capacity to allow organisations to deliver their services. The majority of voluntary & community sector organisations, where there is a 4:1 ratio of volunteers to paid staff, would be unable to provide their current level of service without volunteers. **Businesses** gain through their involvement in the community, achieving greater alignment, impact, value and visibility for their community activities. It also provides benefits to their employees in terms of job satisfaction, better morale and skill development.

The impact of volunteering on the **city** is economic, social and environmental. The added value of volunteer activity and the potential employment pathways contribute to the city's economy; delivery of services to people in need increases wellbeing; engagement in local communities helps improve people's lives and builds resilience; practical work improves the environment for all.

THE TRIPLE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING



For the city as volunteers improve the quality of life for many individuals and bring economic benefits



For business, organisations and community groups through increasing capacity and reaching out into communities



For individuals who experience an increase in wellbeing and a sense of social meaning

VOLUNTEERING IN CONTEXT

Volunteering involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that benefits the environment, groups or individuals in the community. It can be formal activity helping organisations, as well as informal community participation. Volunteering is a valuable resource in the city and contributes to helping those who are vulnerable and less engaged by providing accessible services, advice and support, and sharing skills. Volunteers support the development of resilient communities, both geographically and across communities of interest, and contribute to maintaining the environment. Volunteering also contributes to the economy and for some, can be a route to paid employment.

Understanding Volunteering

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship, founded on the giving of time to benefit society and the community, for mutual benefit. Everyone should have the opportunity to volunteer and be recognised for their efforts. Volunteers should not, however, be used to substitute for paid work, fill unpaid internships or be coerced into employment programmes. Volunteers bring something additional to a role; Volunteering England has a joint charter with

the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to strengthen relations between paid staff and volunteers, emphasising that the involvement of volunteers should complement and not supplement the work of paid staff.

How many volunteers are there in Brighton & Hove?

Estimates suggest that there are 50,000 volunteers in Brighton & Hove across the public, business and voluntary & community sectors. There is insufficient research to give exact numbers but it is known that many instances of volunteering go unrecorded.

What activities do volunteers engage in?

Volunteers are engaged across the city in a rich variety of roles, from supporting and befriending vulnerable people, in the governance of organisations, fundraising, to sports coaching and helping in community gardens.

What safeguards are in place to protect volunteers and the people they work with?

All volunteers working with vulnerable people have to be properly vetted and trained to ensure that proper safeguards are in place.

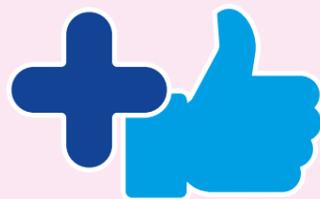
A snapshot of volunteering in Brighton & Hove

The following pages take you on a journey through the recent history and exciting future of volunteering in the city. It includes the development of 'Joining the Dots', our previous strategy which made significant progress in developing and understanding the impact of volunteering in Brighton & Hove. What follows is a rich assortment of volunteering activities that take place in our city; there are so many exciting volunteering opportunities in the city, it would be an impossible task to describe them all but here is a snapshot.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE PEOPLE THEY WORK WITH:



Report an increase in wellbeing



Feel empowered



Are representative of the whole community'

JOINING THE DOTS

Volunteering Strategy for Brighton & Hove, 2010-2015

Joining the Dots, the city's first volunteering strategy, put volunteering on the agenda by raising its profile and introducing the concept of impact. There have been a number of developments in the past five years as a result of the strategy, which champion and recognise the contribution of volunteers, across all sectors.

These developments include:

- developing high quality volunteering opportunities and experiences for volunteers, through encouraging organisations across sectors to invest in volunteering programmes;
- establishing the Volunteer Co-ordinators' Forum, which shares best practice in working with volunteers, and is developing accessible volunteering opportunities for those with additional support needs, working with both the Better Futures project, managed by Impetus, and The Fed Centre for Independent Living;
- raising the profile for business volunteering, whereby the Volunteer Centre brokers pro bono support between businesses and voluntary organisations;
- setting up the cross sector Volunteering Champions' Group (VCG), which enables shared learning amongst key volunteering stakeholders and offers a strong leadership voice on volunteering;
- the inclusion of volunteering as a valuable resource in a range of city-wide plans and strategies, thus supporting the city to work towards its objectives of better outcomes for people and communities;
- commissioning processes across the public sector now recognise volunteering as an important element of 'social value', which is a key assessment criteria for awarding funding and contracts;
- increasing and successful use of social media to recruit volunteers and broker volunteering opportunities.



The city now regularly celebrates the contribution made by volunteers during Volunteers' Week in June; Brighton & Hove City Council organises events for its volunteers and the Volunteer Centre, through Community Works, organises city-wide events.

Joining the Dots was a five year strategy. *The Power of Volunteering* is the next phase, offering a vision of volunteering for the city, restating a common understanding of volunteering across key cross sector partners and setting a course for volunteering development across the city.

For more information go to www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/volunteering

Jenna volunteers as the work experience co-ordinator for **Sussex Police**, dealing with enquiries from schools, parents and students and liaising with staff. She wants to start a career in the police and this experience gives her a better understanding of the force.



Over 45 Brighton & Hove based organisations have signed up to the **Disability Action Alliance Volunteer Charter**, led by The Fed Centre for Independent Living, pledging to provide accessible volunteering opportunities for disabled people to volunteer their time, skills and experience.'



In the academic year 2014/15 there were **2382 students** volunteering their time from the Universities of Brighton and Sussex



ENABLING & EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Enhance recognition
Improve accessibility

Volunteering enables and empowers volunteers and the people they work with. There is a long tradition of volunteering in health and social care, whether within the NHS, the local authority or through voluntary & community groups.

Practical support such as visiting and befriending, helping with activity groups, running tea bars and helping on the wards at hospitals, helping at day centres, providing transport, giving practical help such as gardening and re-ablement:

The **Brighton & Hove Befriending Coalition** estimates there are at least 600 volunteers visiting and supporting 800 older people, people with physical and learning disabilities, and those with cancer across the city.

Amy, 87 years old, is one of around 230 older and disabled people across the city who are visited by one of **200 volunteer befrienders from Neighbourhood Care Scheme.**

There are **54 Independent Visitors** who volunteer for Brighton & Hove City Council, visiting children and young people in care, spending quality time with and befriending a young person who is living in a children's home or foster placement.

Carla, a mother of two, was a volunteer on the **midwifery ward at the Royal Sussex County Hospital** where she gained skills and experience to work as a Maternity Care Assistant and is now planning to train to pursue her dream of becoming a midwife.



Providing information and advice, counselling, mentoring & coaching, mediation and advocacy:

There are at least 15 voluntary & community organisations offering a range of information & advice services across the city, **supported by an estimated 100 plus volunteers.**

There are **15 Community Navigator volunteers** working in 16 GP surgeries who facilitate referrals from patients to services, groups and activities that can help meet their needs and support their health and well-being.

Speak Out volunteer advocates, which is part of the City's Advocacy Partnership, support individuals with



learning disabilities to learn new skills and lead more fulfilling and independent lives. Volunteers need to have an open mind and be able to think of creative solutions to support people who may feel trapped'.

43 volunteers provided assessment, information and advice services to 7326 clients in Brighton & Hove for **Citizens' Advice** last year, both face-to-face and online.

Representing the public's views:

There are 175 volunteer users involved in **The Fed Centre for Independent Living's Getting Involved Group (GIG)**, which aims to ensure disabled peoples' voices are heard when services are planned or changed in Brighton and Hove.

"I am totally blind and Thomas, my guide dog, gets me safely around cluttered streets. As a member of **The Fed Centre for Independent Living 'Getting Involved Group'**, I have been involved in various consultations around street design especially the new redevelopment of the Brighton station and the Seven Dials redevelopment." Diane

An estimated 300 patient volunteers are involved with 30 **Patient Participation Groups**. Using a variety of means they give feedback and suggestions to their GP practices, ensuring that the patient voice is at the heart of decision making on health services in the city.



BUILDING RESILIENT & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Increase numbers

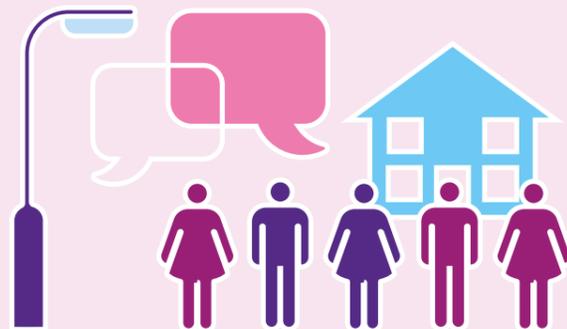
Enhance recognition

Volunteering is a key part of building resilience in local communities. People frequently become involved in community-based organisations through their friends or neighbours or because they want to meet new people. In areas with high levels of community involvement there are benefits to the wellbeing of both those involved and to other people living in the area. Communities of interest come together through their identity, whether it be race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief; people are able to support each other and share experiences, engage in activities and build their confidence.



Banyan Tree is a local all-female Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) theatre company bringing children's BAME stories and musical theatre to wider young audiences. Members needed access to affordable childcare, so they applied for and received funding to run a crèche, enabling them to rehearse and perform together. In addition this has allowed them to run community singing and craft workshops as well as attending meetings and consultations to represent community interests.

There are 19 active **community and residents associations** across the city with over 300 estimated volunteers and activists. They respond to local need by establishing foodbanks & drop-ins; accessible community gardens & allotments; activity clubs for local residents; and running neighbourhood events and festivals.



Queens Park LAT has worked with Brighton & Hove City Council to develop a Community Snow Plan, to ensure that vulnerable people in their community are not put at risk by severe cold weather. The plan includes rotas of volunteers clearing snow from priority areas such as GP surgeries, pharmacies, and bus stops, as well as their own streets.



There are 30 active **Local Action Teams (LATs)** across the city, supported by Brighton & Hove City Council, with an estimated 400 activists, who get engaged in local issues, such as tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, lobbying for facilities for young people, traffic problems, consulting residents on parking zones, and monitoring rubbish collection, to regular clear up events and flower planting in specific streets or areas.



PEER SUPPORT & MENTORING

Increase numbers

Enhance recognition

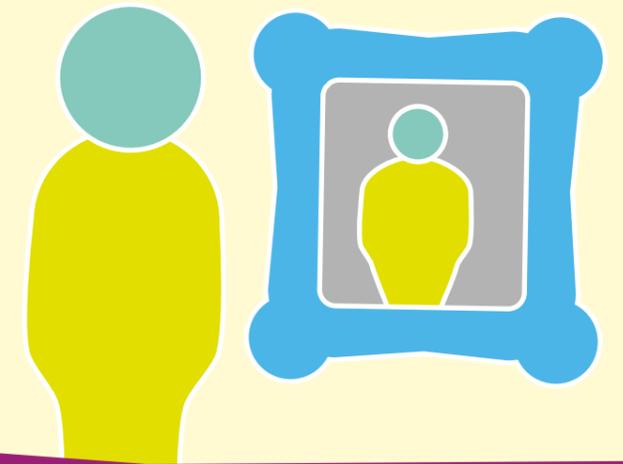
Improve accessibility

Volunteering helps keep people active, contributing to physical health and mental well-being. But it is not just about care recipients being provided with support; service users themselves volunteer to help maintain their independence and provide mutual support. This can be particularly the case in mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and homelessness.

Mothers Uncovered is a creative support network for new mothers who are struggling in their role. They offer arts workshops where they can share their feelings and experiences with existing mothers, so offering women control, self-esteem and enduring friendships.



Role Models is a University of Sussex Students' Union project whereby students are trained and supported to deliver peer-led workshops on food and body image, mental health and wellbeing, and personal relationships to school students at Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, inspiring and empowering young people in the local community.



Cascade Creative Recovery is a new, community centre and cafe in the city, run by and for people with experience of active recovery from drug & alcohol addiction, providing a supportive peer-led space, information, and a range of courses & social activities for people who want to recover.



EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

Raise awareness
Increase numbers
Promote good practice

Employer-supported volunteering is one element of a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) towards the community and environment in which it operates, and connects businesses with community needs to achieve financial, environmental and social solutions. As well as giving something back to the community, volunteering is a personal development opportunity for employees. Studies have identified a clear link between volunteering and learning and skills development: employees develop 'people skills', gain new ideas and understanding of how others live.

Employer-supported volunteering can take a number of forms; from the taking on of employee challenges, such as the Beach Clean Up, to the adoption of specific projects, such as decorating a youth centre, or the giving of professional advice to voluntary organisations on a pro-bono basis.



University of Brighton **Momentum and BME Education** mentoring programme matches students with volunteer mentors. The mentors come from local businesses and public sector organisations as well as university staff. The programme encourages students to continue studying and engage more fully with their course, as well as supporting personal development and career planning.



Over 150 volunteers from several local businesses including **American Express, Brighton & Hove Hoteliers' Association, Brighton & Hove Buses and Legal & General**, joined forces with Brighton & Hove City Council to clean up an estimated 25 tons of waste left on the city's beaches after the bank holiday.

200 volunteers from corporate sponsors have helped **The Martlets** with one-off sessions in their garden and warehouse.



Brokerage by Community Works enabled **Dabapps**, a local business, to help **Amaze** develop an app for their Compass Card, allowing parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to access offers and activities which are searchable while they are on the move.



7 staff from **Amex** trained as volunteer befrienders for **Neighbourhood Care Scheme (NCS)** and staff from **Bupa Global** also helped NCS with a leafleting campaign to recruit volunteers.



Community Works brokered 24 businesses to support 40 voluntary & community organisations with skills including web design, HR and legal advice.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Raise awareness
Enhance recognition
Improve accessibility

Voluntary activity contributes enormously to making our city a better place to live, from small groups looking after their local parks and community gardens, to campaigning groups, such as Friends of the Earth and Surfers Against Sewage; all residents benefit from these volunteers' efforts. Volunteers are also involved in sustainability issues – such as food growing and composting, food waste reduction and climate change.

There are more than 4,000 community garden volunteers across the city supported by **B&H Food Partnership 'Harvest' project.**



Preston Park Rock Garden is supported by volunteering activity: a core of 5 volunteers garden weekly; **Albion in the Community** organises team building sessions for volunteers from **American Express**; students from **Longhill School** come for work experience; and young adults with special needs undertake work placements.



"I've volunteered with the **Moulsecomb Forest Garden & Wildlife Project** for two years. It reaches some of the most vulnerable people in a deprived area, including those with physical and learning disabilities, refugees, children who are excluded from school, and older residents. On workdays there can be up to 30 people in the garden, cooking and eating together and building up valuable social skills that help support them in their lives." Susie Howells



Feeding the 5000 in October 2015 involved 250 volunteers serving 5,000 free curries made from over a tonne of surplus food donated by local businesses and farms. The volunteers came from across the city as well as The Food Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council, FareShare, Friends of the Earth, The Real Junk Food Project, The Food Waste Collective and university students. The event raised awareness and stimulated public action on food waste.



Brighton & Hove City Council estimates there are over 700 volunteers supporting their conservation work and helping with a range of tasks from organising events, overseeing allotments, site improvements and access work, to habitat management, including coppicing, and conservation grazing where lookers (volunteer shepherds) keep a check on grazing sheep.



Over 2,000 volunteers support nearly 70 **environmental organisations** across the city focussing on conserving wildlife, maintaining parks and allotments, as well as food waste, energy and transport issues.

SPORT, CULTURE & LEISURE

Improve accessibility

Promote good practice

Sports and culture impact on all our lives in different ways and volunteers are crucial in maintaining this aspect of life in the city – from organising local sports teams and sporting activities, to assisting at and putting on cultural activities, be it concerts, plays or stewarding. Artists' Open Houses, a key aspect of the Brighton Festival, started with artists voluntarily organising together to open their homes and show their work. Most activities for children and young people outside of school would not exist without the active engagement of dedicated volunteers. Not only do residents benefit but so do the volunteers, through enhanced health & wellbeing, social interaction and engagement.



Paul Gillett has a visual impairment and recently launched a **'sound tennis' club** at the King Alfred. "I was excited to find a sport that was accessible, giving a chance to learn a new skill, get some exercise, improve mobility and co-ordination... and share this with others. I know what it is like to face the challenges and frustrations of living with poor sight. I also hope that I can show that it is possible to live a full, positive and independent life. I recommend volunteering to anyone."

In the last ten years **B&H Healthwalks** has trained nearly 300 volunteers, who have given 30,000 hours of their time providing over 6,000 walks, in and around the city, for well over 1,000 people, who have walked 250,000 miles. That's around the equivalent of walking to the moon!

250,000 miles



103 volunteers support the **Royal Pavilion & Museums** helping with the collections, supporting the learning & engagement team, cleaning exhibits, and gardening.



"Being a volunteer for the library home delivery service has been a wonderful experience. I've met some truly inspiring people, and been impressed by the extensive amount of support available to the residents of Brighton & Hove. I know the clients find it invaluable. For a lot of housebound residents, it's an important connection not only to the outside world but also to their community." Amy



Jason is artistic and creative but has Autistic Spectrum disorder and finds meeting new people difficult. He has been supported by Warren at **Better Futures** to volunteer at **Fabrica art gallery**, showing people around and explaining the exhibits. Jason's confidence has grown rapidly and he is now independent in his role ... "as long as I know what my job is then I'm happy with whatever Fabrica throws at me. I really enjoy working there."



781 secondary school and college students, have helped organise and support interschool sports competitions through **Brighton & Hove City Council's School Games programme**. These volunteering hours then contribute to the Sports Leader's qualifications that some of them are taking.

GOVERNANCE

Raise awareness
Enhance recognition

Volunteers play a huge role in the governance and management of public bodies and voluntary & community organisations, through their roles as governors, user representatives, trustees and management committee members. Good governance is key in all sectors and is vital in ensuring that organisations are held to account. Volunteers may be active on public bodies as school governors, patient representatives, and experts in particular fields. All voluntary & community organisations are governed by trustee boards or management committees that are made up of volunteers; trustees have an important responsibility to demonstrate leadership and manage their organisations in a way that ensures public trust and support.



Brighton Unemployed Family Centre Project (BUCFP) users are supported to stand as management committee members once they feel confident enough. There are 6 user trustees; one of them, Kaz, says "I have volunteered at the BUCFP for a year now in Allganics which is a wholefood co-op within the Centre. Since May I have also been a trustee and am enjoying contributing to the Centre and community."



"I decided to join **Trust for Developing Communities** when I became aware of the range of good community projects they deliver across the city. It seemed a good way to contribute my skills around Equality & Diversity, whilst developing my knowledge of community work and governance."
Edith, Trustee

There are an estimated **13,800 trustee positions** in the voluntary & community sector in Brighton & Hove.



Community Works governance network offers trustees an opportunity for peer support through sharing skills and knowledge.



Healthwatch Brighton & Hove the 'consumer champion' for health and social care services across the city, recently recruited new Directors for their Board from groups whose voices tend not to be heard - Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer).

There are **853 volunteer school governors** in the city who ensure that schools are well managed and headteachers held to account.



RAISING FUNDS

Raise awareness
Promote good practice

Fundraising is a lifeline for so many organisations and community groups in the city and fundraising volunteers play a vital role, such as serving in charity shops, running stalls at events, selling raffle tickets and taking part in sponsored events. Brighton & Hove hosts a variety of innovative fundraising events.

Charity Chuckle at Komedia, Brighton's No.1 Comedy Fundraiser, has raised more than £17,500 for local charities with a monthly show.



The Martlets has 238 retail volunteers across 9 shops which raise nearly £2m per annum, plus another 91 fundraising volunteers.



Sara Snood raised funds and awareness for **Macmillan Cancer Support** after being diagnosed with triple Negative Breast Cancer. She shaved off her golden locks and embarked on a 365 Daily Different Headgear Challenge, posting photos on social media. She has raised over £16K for the new local Macmillan Horizon Centre which will offer information and advice to people affected by cancer.



Running for charity is one of the top 3 reasons runners take part in the **Brighton Marathon**. There were 9,300 runners in 2015.

Volunteers helped organise **Age UK Brighton & Hove's** '50th Anniversary' Swinging 60s Charity Dance and Raffle at the Emporium, with lots of dancing, magic and some amazing fancy dress outfits. Raffle prizes were generously donated by a variety of Brighton-based businesses.



REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- “Joining the Dots: a triple impact volunteering strategy for Brighton & Hove”, 2010-2015
- “Taking Account 3”, 2014, Brighton & Hove Community Works
- “Volunteering England Information Sheet”, 2009, Volunteering England

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The Volunteering Champions’ Group (VCG), which has wholeheartedly supported the concept of this publication and intends to develop and implement an action plan that will benefit the whole city.

All the individuals, organisations and businesses who have given us permission to use their stories and photographs as powerful examples of volunteering in our city.



These organisations have all committed to ensure that this volunteering vision becomes a reality.

ROUTES INTO VOLUNTEERING

Community Works provides a city-wide resource for the development and support of volunteering across all sectors through its volunteer centre services. It helps people looking to volunteer to find the right opportunity, promotes volunteering opportunities on behalf of other organisations, helps businesses wishing to volunteer their workforce skills to do so, and also provides information and advice to help organisations develop their volunteering programme.

Email. volunteercentre@bhcommunityworks.org.uk

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