

# Full Time Social Action Review | Call For Evidence

## August 2017

The Government has established an independent review of full time social action in the UK. The Review is chaired by Steve Holliday who, with a panel of experts, will make recommendations to Government by the end of January 2018. This is following a request by the chair to extend the reporting deadline by one month.

### Background to the Review

The Government currently defines social action as practical action in the service of others to create positive change; this includes fundraising, supporting charities, tutoring and mentoring, supporting other people and campaigning. The Government further defines 'full time' as, on average, at least 16 hours a week of social action activities for 6 months or more.

Preliminary research suggests that there is no widely held definition of full-time volunteering. 'Full-time' has been used to describe low-hour, high-frequency incidences of volunteering: for instance, contributing one or two days a week for several months; as well as high-hour, low-frequency volunteering such as a one-week placement working 40 hours. In some cases, studies and surveys have left full-time undefined. This makes it difficult to compare full-time social action between different projects, countries or surveys, and limits the conclusions about the impact of full-time social action that may be drawn.

Preliminary research further found the following:

- An Ipsos MORI independent evaluation of perceptions of full-time volunteering in 2009 suggests that 3% of young people in England aged 16-25 were involved as full-time volunteers and 8% had done so in the past.<sup>1</sup>
- Evidence on impact is currently limited, and confined to project-specific evaluations. Project-based evidence can assess the impact of certain projects on their participants, but is limited in what it can say about young people's full-time social action in general. This is because impact based evidence cannot be generalised to other people, other projects or the volunteering sector as a whole.
- The main barriers for participating in full-time social action for young people are a lack of awareness of opportunities, lack of consideration, financial and time cost and a lack of opportunities overall.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pie, Julia, Lister, Claire, Latter, Jerry and Clements, Lucy, 2009, *Young people speak out: attitudes to, and perceptions of, full-time volunteering*, Ipsos Mori Publications, accessed 6 February 2017,

<sup>2</sup> Pie, Julia, Lister, Claire, Latter, Jerry and Clements, Lucy, 2009, *Young people speak out: attitudes to, and perceptions of, full-time volunteering*, Ipsos Mori Publications, accessed 21st August 2017.

- The main barriers for providers of full-time social action are navigating the complex legal and regulatory framework, reputational risk, providing adequate support for volunteers, funding and building relationships with partner organisations.<sup>3</sup>
- There are significant differences in the legal status of volunteers in other countries, such as the US, Germany and France. However, it is not clear whether change in legal status has led to an increase in volunteering overall, or how the *proportion* of young people involved in full-time volunteering compares to the UK.<sup>4</sup>

### Call for Evidence

The initial research identified a number of important knowledge gaps which the Review shall investigate by launching an open Call For Evidence, requesting responses to the following questions:

- What experience have you had of full time social action / volunteering, either as a young person or as a provider for young people?
- What impact does full time social action / volunteering have on young people and providers in comparison to part time social action / volunteering?
- What are the barriers to full time social action / volunteering and can you give examples of how these might be overcome?
- Should there be an expansion of full time social action / volunteering opportunities for young people, and do you have any evidence of unmet need or demand?
- If you were to propose up to three things to enable more full time social action / volunteering, what would they be?

If you have any further evidence or views, not covered by these questions, please don't hesitate to also include these.

### Submitting Evidence

Evidence can be submitted in writing to *Youth Policy Team, 4th Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road, Westminster, London, SW1A 2HQ* or via email to [socialactionreview@culture.gov.uk](mailto:socialactionreview@culture.gov.uk)

**The deadline for evidence to be submitted is Friday 13th October 2017.**  
**Please limit your evidence to 500 words per question. If any of your responses**

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<sup>3</sup> Jackson, Linda, 2013, *vInspired 24/24: Programme Evaluation 2013*, Office for Public Management, accessed 21st August 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Monitor Voluntary Activities, Volunteering in Germany 1999 - 2004 - 2009, Results of the Representative Survey on Volunteering and Civic Engagement, Accessed 21st August 2017. Study on Volunteering in the European Union, National Report: France, Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national\\_report\\_fr\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_fr_en.pdf) (accessed, 21st August 2017)

**exceed this word count, please get in touch**

**[socialactionreview@culture.gov.uk](mailto:socialactionreview@culture.gov.uk)**

**Anything received after this time may not be taken into consideration.**

The Review intends to be as open as possible. If you do not consent to your evidence being published please make sure that you clearly state this, and the reasons why, in your evidence. The Review will not be able to acknowledge every piece of evidence received but may contact you to discuss your evidence in more detail. If you do not wish to be contacted in this way, please say so in your evidence.

## **Annex A | Full Time Social Action Review - Terms of Reference**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Full-Time Social Action Review is to examine the purposes, benefits and challenges of full-time social action among young people. It will look at the legal, regulatory and other barriers that full-time volunteers face, and make recommendations for how full-time social action can be supported in the future.

### **Background**

The Government currently defines social action on a full-time basis as undertaking at least 16 hours a week of social action activities for 6 months or more. Full-time social action programmes provide individuals with the opportunity to carry out social action activities in the service of others. These programmes provide many benefits, not only to those whose lives are helped but also to those who take part in them. In undertaking full-time social action, full-time volunteers are able to take part in activities that provide them with meaning and purpose, and also allow them to acquire the skills and experiences they may need to transition into full-time employment or study. Social action activities might be based in charitable and voluntary organisations, schools, local communities, or health and social services departments.

Many young people move onto full-time social action programmes after completing activities such as National Citizen Service or as part of uniformed youth organisations. The Government provides a range of support for these kinds of opportunities through its commitment to the #iwill campaign, which promotes social action among 10-20 year-olds.

### **Objectives**

This review will look at the kinds of full-time volunteering and social action that young people take part in, and ask what needs to change to make it easier to take part in these valuable activities. The review will meet the following aims:

1. Gather evidence of full-time social action: what is the current status of full-time volunteers? What benefits does full-time volunteering bring? What are the limitations of current evidence?
2. Set out how this compares with international schemes: what are the global benchmarks for full-time social action?
3. Identify the key barriers and possible incentives to encourage full-time volunteering
4. Set out a vision: what is appropriate support to enable full-time volunteering, including advantages and drawbacks? What are the risks and challenges of promoting full-time social action?

5. Develop recommendations: What can the voluntary sector, industry, public sector and if necessary government do to better support this full-time volunteering? Any recommendations to government should be limited to issues that fall to the Westminster Parliament.

### **Format**

The study will be led by an independent expert advisory panel chaired by Steve Holliday, who will lead the panel and select other panelists to look at the support required to enable further participation. Members of the panel will act in a personal capacity rather than represent the views of their firm/organisation. The panel will provide impartial advice and make recommendations to government. The panel will orchestrate its own research and will also invite organisations from all relevant fields to submit evidence to the review. A series of expert roundtable events will be held with experts from the youth, voluntary, legal, finance, policy, business, education and public sectors. The secretariat for the review will be provided by the Office of Civil Society in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

### **Timeframe**

The review will make recommendations to the Minister for Sport and Civil Society by December 2017.