

31 May 2010

- **Volunteering opportunities fail to meet demand in Scotland**
- **Volunteer Development Scotland calls on the third sector to take urgent action this Volunteer's Week**

Volunteer Development Scotland has called on Scotland's third sector to take urgent action to plug the growing gap between supply and demand for volunteering opportunities and adopt a more modern approach to attract new, and retain existing, volunteers.

In a move coinciding with this year's Volunteer's Week (1-7 June), the nation's Centre for Excellence in volunteering is urging organisations to recognise, and take action, in response to the potentially bleak outlook where 41% of former volunteers have expressed no intention to ever volunteer again

Recent research by Volunteer Development Scotland into the leading volunteering resource, [www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk) – the largest opportunities database in Scotland which has exceeded 1.3m searches in the past year – has shown a clear disparity between what potential volunteers are seeking and what is actually available to them.

The findings support the urgent need to address the approach to not only finding volunteers, but also to keeping them interested in volunteering in the longer term. According to Volunteer Development Scotland, the key is identifying and implementing complementary approaches which attract new volunteers whilst also supporting committed, long standing volunteers.

Evidence demonstrates that in many cases today's volunteer seeks ways to share their own skills in return for new experiences. It is therefore vital for volunteer-involving organisations to acknowledge that people want to give of themselves and gain something personally, be that for employability, helping children or passion for Scotland's stunning landscape and heritage.

George Thomson, Chief Executive of Volunteer Development Scotland, said; "It is alarming that we are losing potential volunteers as they feel the opportunities do not meet their needs or expectations. We must

urgently address how we can fill the gap between supply of people and the right kind of demand in opportunities for voluntary activity. This is very much about listening to what people are telling us in terms of what works for them in giving their time voluntarily.

'We know that there has never been a greater willingness for people to give their time. In fact since we refreshed the Volunteer Scotland website in April, we have seen a quarter of a million searches by those seeking a volunteering opportunity and the figures continue to rise as more and more people are engaged in the idea of volunteering. However the demand side needs to ensure it doesn't lose these keen volunteers by considering their approach and being more responsive to our diverse population.'

The Volunteer Scotland website is the best place to look online for volunteering opportunities with over 10,000 opportunities seeking over 120,000 volunteers. The opportunities cover the length and breadth of Scotland and are supplied by Volunteer Centres from Stranraer and the Shetlands.

## **ENDS**

**Please contact Rebecca Charles or Susie Davidson at Smarts on 0131 561 0401 or email [rebecca.charles@smarts.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.charles@smarts.co.uk) / [susie.davidson@smarts.co.uk](mailto:susie.davidson@smarts.co.uk)**

For more information on Volunteer Development Scotland, visit [www.vds.org.uk](http://www.vds.org.uk)

### **Notes to editors**

- As Scotland's Centre for Excellence in volunteering, Volunteer Development Scotland leads the way in informing and modernising approaches to volunteering policy, enhancing practice and improving the quality of the volunteering experience for the people of Scotland.
- Volunteer Development Scotland actively seeks to unlock the full potential of volunteering to create a prosperous Scotland
- Its aim is to increase the numbers and diversity of volunteers by;
  - driving modernising approaches to volunteering
  - improving the access to volunteering opportunities,
  - enhancing the volunteering experience,
  - encouraging a balanced and proportionate response to legislation and
  - influencing policy and decision makers through a robust, evidence based approach
- Volunteer Development is based in Stirling with over 70 staff, of which half support the services provided through the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS), an integral service of the organisation.
- CRBS provides free Standard and Enhanced Disclosure Checks for volunteers and paid workers within the Voluntary Sector and also offers services which include training to all other organisations requiring an umbrella body to access disclosures.