

VDS, Learning & Practice Development

Volunteer Knowledge
Working with Volunteers
August 2007



Name of Organisation

Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland

Why did you decide to go for Investing in Volunteers?

We recognised this as **the** standard to begin working towards when the national occupational standards for the line management of volunteers and the volunteer impact assessments were first piloted in Scotland. It was also an opportunity for the organisation to further develop the work of the existing volunteer steering group to ensure that all volunteers within CHSS were volunteering in a safe environment – beginning this process from recruitment, support and development and recognition of their invaluable skills and time commitment.

To review all existing policies and procedures and implement those not in place as detail within the indicators to be met.

The standard would allow us to demonstrate to all our beneficiaries / stakeholders how much we value our volunteers – service users, funders, referrers, carers and the volunteer themselves.

The award was also a way to validate the skills and experiences within the organisation of those who line manage our volunteers.

What benefits have you found from working towards Investing in Volunteers?

Benefits identified included:

- Identifying what we do well and highlighting the areas of development.
- Undertaking an audit and evaluation of our line management of volunteers and the training needed to support this.
- Reminding ourselves of just how very committed our volunteers are to the organisation.
- Providing a structure through the development plan to reach targets for improvements in some areas of the line management of volunteers.

How did the assessment work in your organisation?

- The volunteer steering group was already in place prior to working towards the award, so the assessment process focussed the group on developments needed to be undertaken prior to applying.
- However a development plan (submitted to IIV) and policy and procedure checklist (internal use only) was put in place and all staff and volunteers were informed of the plan and updated when each benchmark was undertaken.
- Communication was vitally important for all.
- All staff who line manage volunteers were already trained in the line management of volunteers based on national occupational standards but the assessment provided us with the skills needed to be met to undertake an audit and evaluation of the key core competencies to support volunteers to identify further training and support for individuals.
- Once the key areas of development plan had been met – Anne delivered the presentation to the steering group and we undertook the assessment process with staff and volunteers.
- On reflection there was no point during the process that we felt that we were not coping. The staff and volunteers found it to be very beneficial – if anything the volunteers were scared that they would let us down!

5 Practical tips you would give another organisation working towards Investing in Volunteers

- Set realistic timescales for developments to be met
- Ensure volunteers know why you are undertaking the award
- Ensure any steering group representation reflects the whole organisation (from Executive Board to staff) and include volunteers directly on the group from the beginning.
- Keep staff and volunteers informed of each stage of the development
- Meet the assessors before they undertake assessments.