

An Overview of Wiltshire & Swindon Voluntary Sector

- Voluntary sector organisations provide a service or product not for financial profit. Also known as the “third sector” (commercial businesses being the “first” and the statutory or public sector the “second”) or the “not-for-profit” sector.
- Voluntary organisations range from large national registered charities (such as Oxfam, National Trust, NSPCC) to small groups of local people who come together to meet a local need (such as youth clubs, self-help groups for people with a medical need, carnival clubs, local environmental projects).
- Voluntary sector organisations with an annual income of £5000 or more need to register with the Charity Commission. Smaller, unregistered groups usually have a constitution or set of rules by which they are governed.
- Despite the sector’s name, many voluntary organisations employ paid staff, possibly assisted by volunteers. However, registered charities must be governed by a management committee or board of trustees who are unpaid.
- Voluntary groups derive their income from a number of sources: donations from individuals or businesses; fundraising events or activities; grants from national or local charitable trusts (including Lottery funds); grants from European, national or local government; and trading (which can only be limited and is regulated by charity law).
- A growing area is “social enterprise” – businesses set up for a social purpose (eg. to provide employment to people with disabilities; village shops). Some are registered charities.
- Many public sector organisations also involve volunteers in the delivery of their service. For example school governors are volunteers, as are some classroom helpers; the Youth Offending Team involves adult volunteers in its work.
- Sometimes similar services may be delivered either by voluntary or public sector organisations. For example some youth clubs are run by the local council and others are independent organisations run by the local community. Homes for the elderly are sometimes run by charities, sometimes by the local council, and sometimes are private businesses.

Examples of Voluntary and Community Groups and Statutory Sector Groups who involve Volunteers in their work within Swindon

Children

Koalas – playscheme for children with learning or physical disabilities
 Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project – group support for behavioural problems
 Rowdy Bunch – youth club for young people with disabilities

Disability

Tony Long House – care of young adults with disabilities
 Hard of Hearing Club
 Various groups supporting people who have had strokes

Disaster relief

There are no international aid agencies working within Swindon but there are Oxfam shops in Swindon and Wootton Bassett
 WRVS –local emergency service support

Drugs and addictions

Druglink – for people in various stages of rehabilitation
 Swindon & Wilts Alcohol & Drugs Advisory Service

Education and literacy

Primary schools – volunteers support reading, crafts or numeracy
 Youth Offending Literacy & Numeracy Mentoring Scheme
 Wiltshire & Swindon Mentoring Network
 Swindon College – volunteers give basic skills support
 School Governors

Elderly

Contact the Elderly – elderly taken once a month to a volunteer’s home for the afternoon to meet others

Environment

- BTCV –environmental projects
- Swindon Ranger Service –outdoor conservation
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – conservation & education projects

Families

- Home Start – volunteers befriend families with young children
- West Swindon Family Project –advice & support

Women's groups

- Well Woman Centre –support & counselling on health issues

Health/hospitals/hospice

- Prospect Hospice – volunteers involved in befriending, admin & fundraising
- Great Western Hospital – volunteers involved in befriending & providing information
- WRVS – volunteers work in shop at GW Hospital & provide patient escort service at hospital
- Terrence Higgins Trust – HIV & AIDS charity involves volunteers in buddying and drop-in centre

Heritage

- National Trust – volunteers involved in head office admin
- National Trust Ashdown House – volunteers act as guides
- British Red Cross – volunteers help with home-from-hospital & therapeutic care services

Homeless & housing

- Broadgreen Breakfast Club – breakfast for homeless people
- The Filling Station – provides soup & sandwiches one evening per week

Legal

- Wiltshire Law Centre – volunteers provide advice, admin & information
- Victim Support and Rape Support Helpline
- Witness Service – volunteers provide support for witnesses

Mental health

- Swindon Mind – runs activities for people with mental health problems
- TWIGS – offers therapeutic gardening & crafts

Prisoners/ex-offenders

- Youth Offending Team – volunteers act as appropriate adults”

Race, ethnicity, refugees

- Millen Advice Point – offer advice esp for Asian community
- Harbour Project for Asylum Seekers & Refugees – offers advice, befriending & support

Sport & outdoor activities

- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – run expeditions for young people
- Wiltshire Cricket Board

Youth

- Clivey Project – provides support, advice, & counselling
- SMASH – mentoring for young people
- Young Carers – support for young people who care for a relative

Infrastructure organisations providing support to the general voluntary sector

A number of voluntary organisations (infrastructure organisations) do not provide services directly to the public but support other voluntary organisations, and represent the voluntary sector.

- **Councils For Voluntary Service** – funded by the county council and district councils, there are 5 in Swindon and Wiltshire, each providing support services to voluntary groups in their area. In Swindon, **Voluntary Action Swindon** provides advice including on governance, training, and accounting. They provide printing and other resources, and publish a monthly newsletter for local voluntary groups. They often represent the voluntary sector on local forums with the statutory or private sectors.
- **Community First** is the rural community council for Wiltshire and Swindon and is funded primarily by the county council and other public agencies. It manages projects to improve the quality of life of people in Wiltshire and Swindon. Community First supports, for example, village halls and parish councils; helps to set up credit unions; and works with rural communities to provide transport schemes.
- **Charities Information Bureau** –provides advice on charity regulation and on funding sources to voluntary organisations (and individuals in need) across the county and Swindon. CIB's knowledge of local corporate community support led to their involvement in the setting up and running of InvolVe Swindon.
- **Volunteer Centre Swindon** - provides information to people interested in volunteering and advises organisations who involve volunteers in their work. The Centre markets volunteer opportunities on

- behalf of organisations; matches volunteers to organisations; helps organisations to develop new volunteering opportunities; and advises on good practice in involving volunteers. Volunteer Centre Swindon is the only volunteer development agency in Wiltshire and Swindon. Outside Swindon, the local CVS's offer some local brokerage and marketing of opportunities. Volunteer Centre Swindon, together with CIB, represents the voluntary sector on Swindon Employees in the Community Network.
- **Learning Curve** – set up by the CVS's and Community First, Learning Curve provides training and consultancy for voluntary organisations. Its courses and services include IT, basic skills, management, capacity building, and volunteering. Learning Curve now is substantially funded by the Learning and Skills Council and also provides community-based learning for adults, leading to NVQ or key skills qualifications.

Infrastructure organisations providing support to specific areas of the voluntary sector

The above infrastructure organisations support a wide range of local voluntary organisations. Other support organisations provide advice and guidance to organisations addressing specific needs. These include:

- **Race Equality Councils** – Wiltshire Race Equality Council and Swindon Race Equality Council – provide information and advice to individuals and voluntary sector organisations from minority ethnic communities, and to professionals working with individuals from minority ethnic communities. They support and represent individuals experiencing racial harassment; encourage other bodies to implement race equality policies and practices; and support the development of services to meet the needs of minority ethnic communities.
- **Swindon Coalition of Disabled People** - maintains a contact network of individual disabled people and organisations. The Coalition has a programme of consultation initiatives with statutory, voluntary and commercial organizations.
- **Youth Action Wiltshire** – provides information, advice and support to new and existing youth clubs (now part of Community First).
- **Age Concern Wiltshire** - works to promote the well-being of all older people both by providing services and products directly and by supporting other groups working with older people.
- **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust** - helps to set up and supports local wildlife conservation groups.
- **National Bodies** – some local organisations are affiliated to, or are branches of, national charities. For example, Scouts and Guides are affiliated to their national bodies; pre-schools are often members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance which supports them through regional branches; and the national charity MIND has local affiliated groups who raise funds and deliver services to people with mental health problems.