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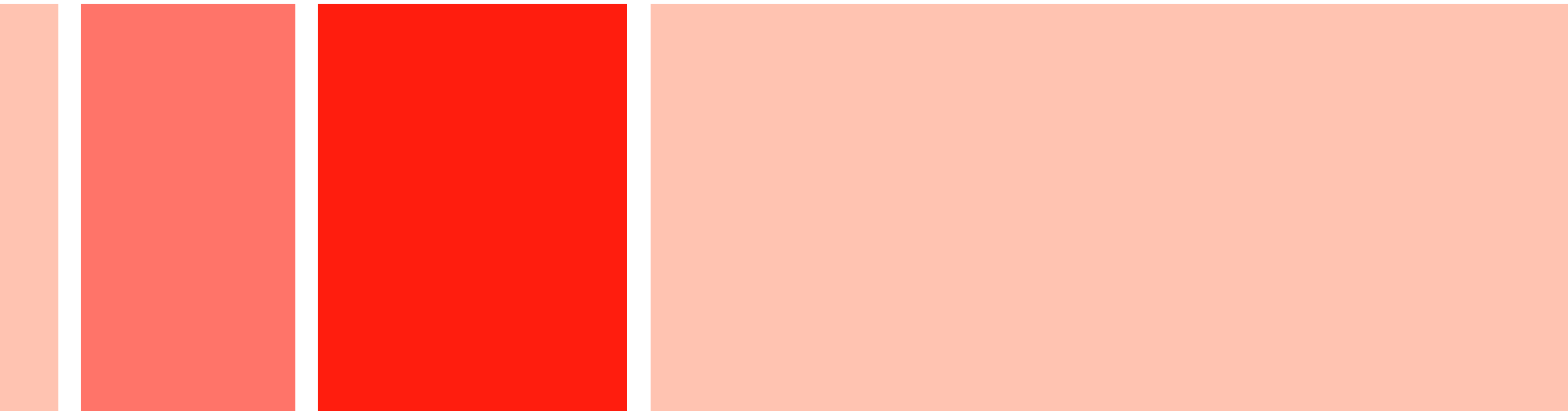
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Evaluation of the Welsh Government's GwirVol Programme



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Final Report

oldbell³

Research Policy Analysis
Ymchwil Polisi Dadansoddi

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

GwirVol was launched in April 2009 to take forward in Wales the recommendations of the Russell Commission's review into youth participation and volunteering.

GwirVol aims to put youth volunteering 'on the map', to make volunteering a natural activity for young people and help achieve the aims set out in the One Wales document and in the Third Sector Strategic Action Plan to increase volunteering in Wales.

GwirVol is led by the GwirVol Partnership comprised of representatives from the voluntary, community, public and private sectors in Wales. Administration of the programme is provided by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) on behalf of the Welsh Government.

For the period 2009-2012, the Welsh Government has provided approximately £1 million per annum for the GwirVol programme. Funding for GwirVol is due to end in March 2012.

Old Bell 3 Ltd. was commissioned in July 2011 to undertake a small scale evaluation of the Welsh Government's GwirVol scheme. The overall aim of the research was to:

'review the extent to which GwirVol has achieved its aims and objectives in supporting and increasing youth volunteering in Wales.'

1.2 Research Objectives

The evaluation had four specific objectives which were:

1. To review the initial and current rationale for GwirVol;
2. To assess the extent to which the scheme has contributed to increasing youth

volunteering in Wales and to taking forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission;

3. To estimate the cost effectiveness of the scheme;
4. To make recommendations on the need and most appropriate means to support volunteering amongst young people in Wales.

The researchers were also asked to consider and make recommendations on the future structure of funding for youth volunteering in Wales. In particular this was to centre on:

- a. 'A review of the outcomes achieved by the GwirVol scheme;
- b. A review of the suitability of the current structure and elements of the programme for achieving its intended objectives;
- c. Recommendations on the future of GwirVol or alternative means to increase volunteering amongst young people.'

1.3 Research Method

The work programme for this review has included the following stages:

- Review of available background administrative documentation including, application and guidance forms, monitoring data, performance reports, and the findings of internal evaluation and impact/feedback reviews;
- A telephone survey of key representatives within organisations that have received (national) grant funding from GwirVol;
- A focus group undertaken with a sample of seven youth volunteer advisors;
- A limited web based feedback questionnaire for young volunteers (16-25 years old) who have undertaken volunteering at least in part as a result of the GwirVol programme;
- Undertaking semi-structured face to face interviews with 11 key stakeholders, specifically:

- Representatives of the Welsh Government's Third Sector Unit;
- WCVA's GwirVol Manager as the operational lead officer for the programme;
- Representatives of GwirForce youth panel;
- Other members of the GwirVol Partnership Board including the Chair and vice-Chair.

The findings presented in this report will support decision makers in their deliberations on potential future funding arrangements. However, the findings are based upon a small scale review. The research scope did not provide for an extensive desk review of the policy context or approach elsewhere in the UK in response to the Russell Commission recommendations. Moreover, available resource allowed for only limited coverage of primary data collection from key programme stakeholders and in particular participants who have undertaken volunteering as a result of the GwirVol programme. With this in mind some use was made of secondary data in the form of feedback, evaluations and reviews undertaken by WCVA as the administrative body of the GwirVol programme.

1.4 Report Structure

In the remainder of this report, we provide background information on the GwirVol programme and associated delivery arrangements (**Section 2**). We then present the findings from the review of GwirVol monitoring data (**Section 3**). Next we present the findings from the fieldwork including telephone and web based survey and face to face interviews (**Section 4**). Finally, we present our conclusions and recommendations (**Section 5**).

2. GWIRVOL: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Background

Publicly funded support for youth volunteering has been a devolved issue in Wales since the Government of Wales Act 1998. However, much of what is seen as the current approach has developed in response to the wider UK policy context. In particular, the findings of the Russell Commission (2005) were seminal in not only establishing the importance of and opportunities within youth volunteering, but also in shaping strategic responses across the UK government bodies.

The Russell Commission was established in May 2004 by the then Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. In its final report¹, published in March 2005, the Commission set out 16 recommendations (presented in Annex 1) for delivering a 'step change' in the the levels of community participation by young people across the UK.

Implementation of the Russell Commission recommendations was a devolved matter.² In England, implementation took the form of 'V', a new charitable company launched in May 2006 and given the task of bringing together stakeholder groups via a shared purpose: 'to make volunteering opportunities so diverse, compelling and easy to get involved with that giving up your time to help others becomes a natural lifestyle choice for 16 to 25 year olds in England.'³

In Scotland, arrangements were already in place for 'Project Scotland', a charitable organisation set up in 2005 that helps young people access volunteering opportunities.⁴ In practice, there were (and are) many similarities between the Scottish and English approaches: both V and Project Scotland were new

¹ Report of the Russell Commission chaired by Ian M Russell (2005) *A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement*, Norwich: HMSO

² Though not for Northern Ireland

³ www.vinspired.com

⁴ <http://www.projectscotland.co.uk/aboutus/Pages/AboutProjectScotland.aspx>

organisations set up specifically to take forward youth volunteering and both have drawn upon approaches used for the 'US Americorps' scheme operational in the United States since 1993.⁵

In Wales, the 1998 Government of Wales Act, which established the National Assembly for Wales, had placed a statutory duty upon the Assembly (and later the Welsh Government) to promote the interests of voluntary organisations in the exercise of all its functions. The Voluntary Sector Scheme was the primary strategic mechanism through which the Welsh Government sought to support the sector, though operationally a number of key funding programmes were central.

Between 2006 and 2009 the Welsh Government made available Russell Commission funding to individual voluntary and community organisations in the form of youth focused grants totalling around £1 million per year. The use of grants seems to have been based firstly on the need to make use of the Russell funding made available by the UK government, and secondly to implement a form of specific youth volunteering support while allowing time for a more considered response to be developed.

That considered response was led by Judith Bevan, a secondee to the then Welsh Assembly Government's Voluntary Sector Unit, who was tasked by the Welsh Government to developing a distinctively Welsh response to the Russell Recommendations. Between 2006 and 2008 work was undertaken in developing underlying principles (i.e. what does 'youth focused' and 'youth led' mean in the Welsh context), consulting on potential approaches, understanding the risks, opportunities, constraining and enabling factors, and reviewing the workings and impacts of the existing volunteering schemes in Wales (including youth volunteering grants funded via Russell funding).⁶

⁵ Though the US Americorps scheme itself has roots in the Volunteers in Service to America program (amongst others) created by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. (<http://www.americorps.gov>)

⁶ Source: Fieldwork interviews for this study

2.2 GwirVol

As a result of this process in 2008 the Welsh Government set up a partnership between the third, public and private sectors, led by young people, to take forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission.⁷ Membership of the Partnership was (and is) on a voluntary basis.

Following a 'naming' competition held at the 2008 Eisteddfod⁸, the partnership was formally launched as 'GwirVol' on 6 April 2009 with the following strategic targets:

- 'To establish GwirVol as a genuinely led youth initiative and the lead body for youth volunteering in Wales;
- To take forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission by providing a framework to bring about a step change in the numbers and diversity of young volunteers;
- To ensure more and better volunteering opportunities through promotion, information, advice and grant funding;
- To reward and recognise the quality both of youth volunteering opportunities and young volunteers.'⁹

Noticeably, the approach in Wales was different in at least one important aspect to the approach taken in England and Scotland; rather than set-up a new young volunteer organisation, the decision was taken by the Welsh Government to procure administrative support for the GwirVol scheme from within the existing volunteer support infrastructure. In 2009 a contract was awarded in this respect to the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

⁷ <http://www.gwirvol.org/en/about-us/>

⁸ Young attendees at the Eisteddfod were invited to put forward proposals for a new name for the young people's volunteer support programme. GwirVol was chosen as the eventual winner.

⁹ In practice, the programme's online and paper based documentation presents the aims more simply as 'to put youth volunteering "on the map" ' and to 'make volunteering a natural activity for young people', by ensuring it is 'beneficial, rewarding and accessible'.

2.2.1 Administration Arrangements

The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) administers the GwirVol scheme (including the scheme's funding) on behalf of the Welsh Government. WCVA reports, and provides administrative support, to the GwirVol partnership board. WCVA also supports the (national) grants assessment panel and various working groups which have been set up to take forward the key strategic and operational issues (e.g. web master group, evaluation group, marketing and promotion group and so on). Both these groups and the grants assessment panel consist of Partnership Board members.

To meet the scheme's objectives, the Welsh Government has made available funding totalling £3,183,627 over the three years 2009/10 to 2011/12, inclusive of a 3% annual inflation, as follows:

Table 2.1: Welsh Government funding for GwirVol

| Year | Amount |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 2009/2010 | £1,030,000 |
| 2010/2011 | £1,060,900 |
| 2011/2012 | £1,092,727 |
| Total | £3,183,627 |

Source: WCVA

2.2.2 GwirVol Interventions

In practice 'GwirVol' comprises a number of interventions and actions at the national and local levels. These include the national and local grant programmes, the work of youth volunteer advisors (YVAs), the GwirForce youth panel, the GwirVol web site (and other information and promotional activity) and other activities.

National Grant Programmes

Around 50% of the GwirVol project funding goes to providing grants at the national and local levels.

The largest component of the grant funding goes towards the national grant programmes: grants to organisations in the public, private and third sectors to deliver projects or activities that encourage and support youth volunteering in Wales. There are five such grants, namely:

- **Creating Opportunities:** For organisations looking to create new youth volunteering projects, new youth volunteering roles or to recruit more young people into existing volunteering roles. Creating Opportunities grant applications can be for up to a maximum amount of £10,000. Initiated in April 2009¹⁰ there are two rounds of funding each year.
- **Promotions:** For organisations looking to promote the benefits or challenge the perceptions of volunteering to young people or about young people to their local communities. Promotions grant applications can be for up to a maximum amount of £3,000. Again, the programme began in April 2009 and two rounds of funding are available each year. The Promotions programme focuses on different targets compared to Creating opportunities.
- **StreetGames:** For organisations looking to develop volunteering opportunities in 'doorstep sports' within deprived areas. StreetGames grant applications can be for up to a maximum amount of £2,000.
- **International:** For organisations looking to develop overseas volunteering opportunities that benefit young people and their communities in Wales as well. International grant applications can be for up to a maximum amount of £30,000. Only one funding round is held each year (April to June).
- **Millennium Volunteers:** Has been delivered in Wales as a distinct programme since 1999. However the decision was taken by the Welsh Government to integrate Millennium Volunteers into GwirVol from April 2011. Within GwirVol the

¹⁰ The first round of Creating Opportunities and Promotions grants were launched in April 2009 and closed on 30th June 2009.

Millennium Volunteers programme remains a way in which organisations can recognise the commitment young people give to volunteering through offering the 50, 100 and 200 hours awards of excellence. In this respect the integration of Millennium Volunteers has provided GwirVol with an awards based programme.¹¹ However, against the (post-recession) backdrop of budgetary retraction in the third sector, and taking account of recommendations made in a previous independent evaluation,¹² no Welsh Government funding for Millennium Volunteers was made available from April 2011 onwards. Instead Millennium Volunteers grant awards – which can be made for up to a maximum amount of £10,000 – have been drawn from the existing GwirVol budget. In practice, some organisations have sought support from WCVA’s GwirVol team to help them implement Millennium Volunteer system and awards without applying for grant funding.

Potential applicants can learn of the national grant opportunities via the GwirVol website, County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) across Wales or other sources.

In its administrative role, WCVA disseminates application forms and guidance. Returned forms are initially assessed and scored by WCVA GwirVol staff. At this stage, the WCVA GwirVol team assesses the submission and may ask for more information where gaps are identified. The results of WCVA’s initial assessment are then forwarded to the national grants advisory panel (comprised of members of the partnership board) for review and final assessment. The national grants assessment panel reports to the GwirVol partnership board.

A recent development in the Millennium Volunteers Award programme has been the introduction of MV50 Sport initiative. The idea offered a way of recognising the volunteering people were already doing within the sporting environment e.g. team

¹¹ Noticeably, Recommendation 11 of the Russell Commission stated that it was important to ‘mark the contribution made by young volunteers.’

¹² Welsh Assembly Government (2009) ‘Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Volunteering Grants Programme’ prepared by Old Bell 3 Ltd.

coaching, administration or preparation. The approach recognises this time up to the 50 hours Millennium Volunteers award.

There are five other MV50 schemes either being introduced or currently being discussed:

- Overseas Volunteering (linked in with International, and addressing the fact that Millennium Volunteers does not recognise overseas volunteering in its awards);
- 14-16 year olds;
- Employee volunteering i.e. encouraging businesses and organisations to support their 16-25 year old employees to undertake volunteering (e.g. after-work);
- Accredited volunteering linked to OCN credits;
- Schools volunteering (an idea borrowed from Northern Ireland where volunteering by those 16-18 and in school is recognised).

Other MV50 programmes have also been mooted (e.g. uniform volunteering - for police, health, scouts/guides etc - and events volunteering).

GwirForce

Central to the Russell recommendations is that youth volunteering interventions should be 'youth led'. In response, GwirVol has ensured the involvement of young people through the implementation of 'GwirForce': a panel of young people that act as the hub or voice of youth volunteers across Wales.

GwirForce can trace its origins back to an event held in October 2007 which invited young people from across Wales to learn more about the development of young people's volunteering. From this event a series of residential meetings – funded through Russell Commission funding - were held to further develop ideas. These led to the formation of GwirForce in 2009.

A key objective of GwirForce is to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities amongst young people in Wales. Another key objective is to fulfill the role as the

'voice' for young volunteers. This includes gauging opinions of young people to help to shape GwirVol in such a way that the scheme remains relevant to needs and interests of those young people. As such members of GwirForce sit on the GwirVol partnership board.

It was also recognised that adherence to a 'youth led' approach would require GwirForce to have both an equal status on the wider GwirVol partnership and a level of independence that would remove the risk of any undue influence from that partnership.

To this latter end, independent contractors were sought to provide management and support to the GwirForce panel e.g. help them organise venues for meetings and events. Support for GwirForce was commissioned with the contract awarded to Rathbone Cymru from 1st July 2009 to March 2012. The contract is managed by WCVA and monthly meetings are held with representatives of Rathbone Cymru.

Youth Volunteer Advisors

GwirVol also funds 22 part-time YVA posts based in the volunteer centres in each county in Wales.¹³ Their aims are to:

- Increase the number and diversity of young people involved in volunteering;
- Increase the number and quality of volunteering opportunities for young people in Wales.¹⁴

Their role centres on:

- Promoting volunteering opportunities to young people and recruiting and placing young people into opportunities;
- Giving presentations (at schools and colleges), attending freshers' fairs at universities and other awareness raising e.g. establishing local social networking sites / producing publicity;

¹³ Specifically there are 21 Advisors covering the 22 counties in Wales (one Advisor works across the counties of Newport and Monmouthshire). GwirVol funding covers part-time posts vary between 15 hours and 18.5 hours. In many cases however matched or levered in funding allows the YVA role to be full-time (albeit not necessarily full-time to the GwirVol scheme).

¹⁴ <http://www.gwirvol.org/en/about-us/yvas/>

- Offering advice and information to organisations about how to develop youth friendly volunteering opportunities;
- Placing new opportunities on the Wales volunteering web site;
- Supporting local youth led grant giving panels including recruiting members, delivering training to new members, attending panel meetings and providing secretariat support to the panel, supporting applicants to submit applications for local youth funds, and on-going activity relating to successful applications;.
- Undertaking financial and monitoring arrangements of the local youth grants in most areas.

Local Youth Led Grants

A further element of the 'youth led' approach comes through the Local Youth Led Grant programme. The YVAs have supported the establishment of local youth led grant panels in each county in Wales.¹⁵ These are groups of young people from the local area who are allocated up to £5,000 per annum (via the relevant volunteer centres) to distribute through grants to local youth led volunteering activities. The panels decide on the criteria for the grants, the priority groups and the application process. The aim is to ensure that activity in every area is led by the ideas and needs of young people.

The WCVA Programme Manager oversees the local youth led grants. Around £110,000 has been made available each year across the 22 counties and applications can be submitted throughout the year in accordance with each scheme's stated deadlines. All projects are expected to be carried out and completed by the end of the year i.e. 31st March.

Web Site and Promotions

The GwirVol web site forms an important hub for the scheme – raising awareness, disseminating information about GwirVol and volunteering in Wales, providing a point

¹⁵ Four counties – Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire and Blaenau-Gwent - combined their funds together and had one grant panel (the 'Gwent' grant panel).

where grant information, guidance and application forms can be accessed and helping to build the GwirVol 'brand' recognition amongst stakeholders.¹⁶

In addition to online promotional work WCVA staff, GwirForce members and YVAs have also provided numerous presentations to other groups and interested stakeholders at various locations (e.g. Eisteddfod, Urdd, Royal Welsh and to local volunteer manager networks). Similarly WCVA has maintained a traditional media presence for the GwirVol scheme via: press releases, contributions to sector magazines/journals, distributed leaflets etc.

2.3 Policy Context

It should be noted that GwirVol was initially implemented against a backdrop of an overall strong performance in volunteering (all age groups) in Wales. By 2008 there were thought more than 1.5 million volunteers in Wales (all age groups) contributing as many hours as 90,000 full time workers annually. Similarly, a significant volunteering infrastructure was also in place: by 2008 there were at least 30,000 third sector organisations in operation in Wales of which almost 90% were thought to have a local scope and rely entirely on volunteers.¹⁷

Nevertheless, while much had clearly been achieved in Welsh volunteering, the Welsh Government recognised that more could be done. In January 2008 *The Third Dimension - A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme* set out the Welsh Government's 'vision, strategy and programme of action' for supporting the voluntary sector in Wales'.¹⁸ The Third Dimension identified the key issues facing the volunteering sector, including the need to increase the amount of volunteering hours (rather than just the number of volunteers) through 'better promotion and support'.

¹⁶ An initial web site was developed using (pre April 2009) Russell Commission funding. However the site was re-designed in 2010 due to concerns about the quality of the existing web site and cost of continuing to use that site. There is a separate contract for the on-going maintenance of the site including links to GwirVol's social media sites.

¹⁷ Welsh Assembly Government (January 2008) *The Third Dimension - A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme*

¹⁸ Page 9

These goals were broadly re-affirmed in the overarching policy framework One Wales (2008) which, for instance, committed the Welsh Government to ‘investigate ways in which volunteering by young people can be better recognised and rewarded’.¹⁹

In terms of the continuing policy context in Wales a cursory review of the Labour Manifesto²⁰ for 2011 and the subsequent Programme for Government (launched 27 September 2011) reveals that broadly the principles underpinning the Third Dimension (and support for volunteering specifically) are likely to be retained under the current administration, though with emerging opportunities in some sectors – for example in social care where there is commitment, for example, to ‘support and encourage the voluntary and not-for-profit sector to provide those [social care] services, currently operated for profit, through the promotion of social investment bonds, ‘time-banking’ and strengthened support for social enterprises.’²¹

Of course the UK-wide Russell Commission recommendations still remains a key policy foundation and the UK coalition government – through its Big Society agenda – has maintained a strong commitment to youth volunteering.²² Encouraging more young people to be ‘active citizens in their communities’ is, for example, a central element of their vision of a ‘positive for youth’ society.²³ In this respect the National Citizen Service - a voluntary eight week personal and social development programme for 16 year olds – is currently being piloted as a potential way of engaging greater numbers of young people.²⁴

¹⁹ One Wales A progressive agenda for the government of Wales: An agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly (27th June 2007), p24

²⁰ A Labour government was formed in Wales following the 2011 National Assembly for Wales.

²¹ Welsh Government (September 2011) Programme for Government Chapter 5 Annex Delivery Programme Manifesto Commitments, Commitment 5/004

²² Department for Education (2011b) Young people’s role in society: positive for youth discussion papers.

²³ Department for Education (2011a) A vision for society that is ‘Positive for Youth: positive for youth discussion papers.

²⁴ Department for Education (2011c) National Citizen Service [online] [last updated May 3rd 2011]. See:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/nationalcitizenservice/a0075357/national-citizen-service>

However, the 2008 credit crunch and subsequent recession has had (and will likely continue to have) a marked effect on funding within the UK third sector. While the will may exist, the means appears less certain, at least at current levels of support or using current approaches.

Against this backdrop we are aware that WCVA have been asked to prepare and submit a business plan to the Minister for the continued delivery of the GwirVol administrative role. We are also aware that a draft plan has been prepared encompassing the four year period 2012 to 2016. Within this plan, the proposed funding level for 2012/13 has been set at similar rate to the previous three years though subsequent years to 2016 show a marked reduction, reflecting the impacts of the wider economic and public spending climate.

3. REVIEW OF THE MONITORING DATA, REPORTS AND INTERNAL RESEARCH OUTPUT

3.1 Overview

A number of performance targets were set for the GwirVol programme for the period 2009-2012. Through its administrative role WCVA collects and analyses monitoring data in respect to these targets and other measures. The data is then presented to the GwirVol Partnership and Welsh Government in the form of half year and end of year reports.

In addition to the monitoring data and reports, in 2011 WCVA undertook an (internal) evaluation of the GwirVol scheme. The evaluation drew upon data from a number of sources including: performance monitoring data, monitoring reports and supplemental information together with surveys, focus groups and case studies of young people (including work undertaken by external consultants) with the purpose of learning more about the impact of the GwirVol scheme.²⁵ The findings of this initial review were presented in an evaluation report dated June 2011 and made available to the research team.

In this Section we use the monitoring data, reports and the internal evaluation to consider the progress made in respect of GwirVol's agreed performance targets and other measures. Each of the main elements of the GwirVol project are considered in turn. It should be noted that the monitoring data underpinning the results presented in this section is based on data provided by WCVA. It has not been subject to independent validation by the research team.

²⁵ The impact on young people was measured using case studies (the YVAs undertook 32 interviews and completed case studies up to June 2011), running surveys (e.g. young people attending the Urdd Eisteddfod) and commissioning Dynamix Ltd to undertake a series of focus groups (and surveys) with young volunteers in Wales, with particular focus on the 'priority groups' i.e. those from BME backgrounds, those not in education, employment or training, young people with physical or learning difficulties and - a priority group for 2009-2011 only – young people aged 16-18 years

3.2 National Grants Programme

Recipients of GwirVol national grants provide WCVA with information on the volunteering (and volunteers) supported by the funding. Data is presented to WCVA in the form of standardised reports at the half way and end of project stage.

It should be noted that grants awarded in one financial year are not reported until the end of the next financial year. That is, the projects awarded funding in first year (2009-2010) were required to provide reporting data in April 2011. The purpose is to allow projects adequate time (specifically between 12 and 18 months) to implement their funded activities before they are required to report on the agreed measures. However, this means that research data is only available in relation to 2009/10 grant recipients.²⁶

3.2.1 Funding

Funding for the national grant programmes accounts for around 40% of all GwirVol funding made available by the Welsh Government. Spend data was available for the period April 2009 to March 2011. Over this period the indicative budget for the national grant programmes was £815,450, though there was a slight underspend (see Table 3.1).²⁷ ²⁸ Feedback from WCVA suggests that by March 2012 they expect that spending on national grants will be in line with the indicative budget, in other words that the underspend from previous years will be absorbed in 2011/2012.

Table 3.1 also shows that around two-thirds of the national grant funding has been spent in the Creating Opportunities programme. One-fifth of the funding has gone to International projects. A little over one-tenth of the national grant funding has been used for Promotions grants.

²⁶ No data on progress against performance targets was available for StreetGames (which started in 2010/11) or Millennium Volunteers (which started in 2011/12).

²⁷ The spend data in Figure 3.1 is not the total funding used by the national grant programmes because GwirVol funding was used by grant recipient organisations (and WCVA in the case of StreetGames i.e. from the Co-operative) to generate match-funding.

²⁸ StreetGames funding began in 2010/11 and data on spend was available for that year. Similarly Millennium Volunteers became part of GwirVol on April 2011. No data is yet available on the budget and spend for Millennium Volunteers for 2011/12.

Table 3.1: National grant programmes funding (April 2009 to March 2011)

| Intervention | Spend (from GwirVol budget) |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Creating opportunities | £531,727 |
| Promotions | £86,709 |
| International | £163,064 |
| StreetGames | £10,844 |
| Millennium Volunteers | n/a |
| TOTAL | £792,344 |

Source: Data provided by WCVA

3.2.2 Applications and Awards

Data provided by WCVA suggests that 92 grants have been awarded across the five national grant programmes in the first two years of the current GwirVol programme. Table 3.2 provides a breakdown.

Of the 92 awards, 60 (65%) had received a Creating Opportunities grant, 20 (22%) a Promotions grant, six (6.5%) an International grant, and six (6.5%) a Street Games grant.²⁹

Of the 92 grants, eight organisations had received two grants (in four of these cases the same type of grant had been awarded but was made available twice in consecutive years) and one had received three grants via the GwirVol scheme (thus reducing the number of organisations supported to 82).

Table 3.2 reveals a healthy interest in the national grant programmes. To date around 346 applications have been received across the five programmes (around 80% for the Creating Opportunities and Promotions programmes): around two-thirds of these applications made in 2009/10 and 2010/11 were not successful (with International grant applications particularly likely to be unsuccessful).

²⁹ Note also that 2 projects returned their funding.

Table 3.2: Number of applications and awards by grant

| National Grant Programme | Number of Applications | | | Number of Awards | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| | 09 / 10 | 10 / 11 | 11 / 12 | 09 / 10 | 10 / 11 | 11 / 12 |
| Creating Opportunities | 89 | 82 | 39 | 24 | 36 | 23 pending |
| Promotions | 35 | 25 | 5 | 11 | 9 | 2 pending |
| International | 12 | 23 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 pending |
| StreetGames | n/a | 12 | 2 | n/a | 6 | 0 pending |
| Millennium Volunteers | n/a | n/a | 13 | n/a | n/a | 8 pending |
| Totals | 136 | 142 | 65 | 37 | 55 | 36 pending |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

Notably WCVA monitoring reports reveal that there was concern around the quality of applications in the first year of funding (2009/10). As a result, the role of providing support to national grant applicants was assigned primarily to the WCVA administrative team (prior to this decision the youth volunteer advisors had also provided support within their remit).³⁰ Review of GwirVol monitoring reports reveals a positive impact from this move; the reported quality of applications has improved over time.

Subsequent to each grant funding round WCVA has also undertaken a spatial review of the location of applicants and grant awards. The data reveals good overall coverage across Wales and a mix of pan-Wales, regional and more localised projects (e.g. about 10% of applications and awards were for pan-Wales projects). The reports also make clear that the spatial information has been used to inform promotional / awareness raising work for future funding rounds.

³⁰Indeed, as an additional measure, the YVAs also received additional training from the WCVA administrative team in relation to support grant applications.

3.2.3 Performance against Agreed Targets

At the project's inception stage a number of headline targets for the national grants programme were agreed between the Welsh Government, GwirVol partnership board and WCVA. Data on these targets and performance to date was made available to the research team and is presented in Table 3.3.

The data in Table 3.3 relates to the Creating Opportunities and International grant programmes only; different measures – based on achievement of activities and/or milestones - were considered for the Promotions programme.³¹

The findings reveal that overall the national grants programmes did not achieve their primary target for the first year of GwirVol (2009/10).

Table 3.3: Performance against targets for the national grants programme

| Target | Annual Target | 2009/10 | 20010/11 | Variance |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Number of young volunteers supported by national grants | 1,500 | 957 | n/a | 543 (-36%) |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

Grant recipients also provide statistical information which reveals the diversity of the volunteers. Of the 957 young volunteers supported 441 (46%) came from Communities First areas. 91 (10%) came from black or ethnic minority (BME) background and 85 (9%) had physical or learning difficulties. 47 (5%) of the young volunteers were aged between 16 and 18 years. Indicatively, these measures do point to good levels of GwirVol engagement with those from deprived areas, BME groups, and those with physical or learning difficulties.

Other secondary targets were also agreed for the national grant programmes. These are presented in Table 3.4. Again, performance for the 2009/10 funding year was below target.

³¹ No data was available for StreetGames (not operational) and Millennium Volunteers (not part of GwirVol at the time) for the first year (2009/10) of the scheme.

Table 3.4: Additional performance measures – national grant programmes

| Measure | Target 2009/10 | Achievement 2009/10 |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Total number of volunteering hours | 79,832 | 59,492 (-25%) |
| Total number of new opportunities created | 515 | 451 (-12%) |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

Overall, for the first year of GwirVol the national grant programmes failed to achieve their targets across a number of performance measures. WCVA’s evaluation report states that this was due to over ambitious target setting by applicant organisations and, as such, future additional guidance might need to be provided on setting realistic and achievable targets.³²

WCVA’s internal evaluation of GwirVol also included a web-based survey of national grant recipient organisations. 37 responses (from 68) were received. Key findings included:

- 80% of organisations reporting that GwirVol had helped them improve their structure for managing volunteers (in particular through the use of training);
- Respondents identified a range of positive impacts on communities (e.g. encouraging community engagement, raising the self-esteem and pride in the local community, positive outcomes in health and well-being, education and skills);
- Strongly positive views of WCVA’s administration of GwirVol.

3.3 Youth Volunteer Advisors (YVAs)

Budgetary and spend data reveals that around one-third of the annual GwirVol budget has been spent on the YVAs. Table 3.5 provides a summary.

³² Though this conclusion itself could be extended to include all Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART) factors.

Table 3.5: Annual budget/spend for youth volunteer advisors

| Intervention | Budget / Spend (£) |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 2009/10 | 350,000 |
| 2010/11 | 340,000 |
| 2011/12 | 340,000 |
| Total | 1, 030,000 |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

At the six and 12 month stage of the financial year, the YVAs provide statistical information to WCVA on their performance against relevant performance indicators. They also provide information on the youth led grants: the number of projects funded, opportunities created, volunteers recruited and the diversity of the volunteers and so on.

3.3.1 Performance against agreed targets

Table 3.6 presents the agreed measures, targets and performance for the work of the YVAs over the period April 2009 to March 2011. The table reveals strong performance on the number of volunteering opportunities identified and the number of young people advised, though the number of young people placed was somewhat below target.

Evidence from WCVA's internal evaluation also suggests that:

- About two-thirds of the young volunteers recruited by YVAs are female;
- The number of individuals recruited by YVAs tends to decrease with the age of the young person (i.e. YVAs recruit more 16-18 year olds than 22-24 year olds);
- Around half of young people recruited by YVAs are in school or college, more than a quarter are not in employment education or training and around one in ten are employed;
- Around 10% are disabled or with health problems, with a slightly higher representation from black or minority ethnic and Welsh Speaking volunteers.
- Most placements are made to volunteering opportunities in the youth work; children and families; community work; sports and recreation and environment sectors;

- Few placements are made to campaigning; driving; gender and sexuality; languages and trustees activities;
- 85% of volunteering opportunities are in the third/voluntary sector.

Table 3.6: *Performance against targets for volunteer youth advisors*

| Target | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | Achievement 2009 to 2011 | Target 2009 to 2011 | Variance |
|---|---------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Number of new volunteering opportunities identified by YVAs | 1,033 | 1,069 | 2,102 | 666 | 1,436 (+216%) |
| Number of young people advised by YVAs ³³ | 8,523 | 8,587 | 17,110 | 8,000 | 9,110 (+114%) |
| Number of young volunteers placed by YVAs | 1,985 | 1,970 | 3,955 | 4,400 | 445 (-10%) |

Source: *GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA*

Additional findings in the internal evaluation also suggest good levels of YVA activity: between 2009 and 2011 YVAs completed 1,035 presentations in schools, youth clubs etc. and had achieved good linkages with youth partnerships and networks around Wales, for example.

3.4 Local Youth Led Grants

£110,000 per annum has been made available for the Local Youth Led Grants. The monitoring data reveals an overall underspend on local youth led grants by March 2011 of £37,780. This was primarily due to a longer than expected development/set-up of the youth panels across Wales in 2009/10.³⁴

³³ This figure is the number of enquiries YVAs received from young people during the year.

³⁴ GwirVol End of Year Monitoring Report 2010/11

However, Table 3.7 shows strong performance against the agreed targets for the Local Youth Led Grants. The 'number of young volunteers supported' was almost four times the target figure for the period 2009 to 2011. The performance also seems appreciably greater than that achieved with the national grants even though national grant programme received approximately four times the budget of the local grant programme.

Table 3.7: Performance against targets for Local Youth Led Grants

| Target | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | Total to 2009 to 2011 | Target 2009 to 2011 | Variance |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Number of young volunteers supported by local youth led grants | 1,079 | 2,792 | 3,871 | 800 | 3,071 (+384%) |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

Analysis of 2010/11 data presented in the internal evaluation report reveals that a quarter of those supported were in Communities First areas; 10% had physical or learning difficulties and 3% of those supported were from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. These percentages are substantially lower than was found for the national grant programmes suggesting far greater targeting of 'disadvantaged' groups within national grant programmes, and thus perhaps accounting for the relatively higher costs of the latter.

Moreover, monitoring data suggests that in 2010/11 over 1,000 new volunteering opportunities were developed via the local grants.

Encouragingly, the WCVA team report that some recipients of Local Youth Led Grants have begun to look to the national grants as the next step to developing their projects.

In terms of the spatial breakdown, data provided by WCVA for the period April 2009 to March 2011 reveals significant variation across the Welsh counties in the number of funded projects (e.g. 66 projects were awarded local youth led funding in

Gwynedd compared with four awarded in Ceredigion). To some extent this reflects decisions at the local level to make smaller awards on average (thereby spreading the funding more widely), though some areas failed to spend their 2009/10 allocation (leading to an overall underspend in the first year).

3.5 Web site and Promotions

WCVA monitoring data shows that current spend for the web site is in line with budget (£65,000 for 2009 to 2012; £45,000 for 2009 to 2011).

3.5.1 Performance against targets

Performance against agreed web site related targets is presented in Table 3.8.

Overall the performance is mixed: GwirVol is overachieving on the 'number of portal hits' while underachieving on the 'number of portal unique users.'

However, the validity of the 'number of portal unique users' target has been questioned by the administrative and partnership board members since the recorded figures relate only to specific IP addresses. In practice, many people may access a web site from a single IP address – particularly in an organisational setting – and as such it would be prudent to presume that the recorded figures are understated, which would at least partly explain the significant negative variance from target.

It should also be noted however that fieldwork findings revealed concerns with the quality of the initial web site. This too may have had an impact on early performance. Indeed the figures – particularly the 'number of portal hits' in 2010/11 - does seem to support the decision to change the web site (via the engagement of a specialist web site consultancy). Overall, 'number of portal hits' was around 7% above target.

Table 3.8: Performance against targets for GwirVol web site and volunteering Opportunities

| Target | Annual Target | Total Achievement 2009 to 2011 | Total Target 2009 to 2011 | Variance |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Number of portal ³⁵ unique visitors | 60,000 | 16,312 | 70,000 | -53,688 |
| Number of Portal Hits ³⁶ | 650,000 | 809,166 | 758,333 | 50,833 |
| Total number of youth volunteering opportunities identified on www.volunteering-wales.net | 5,000 | 6,630 | 10,000 | -3,370 |

Source: GwirVol monitoring data, WCVA

The 'total number of youth volunteering opportunities identified on www.volunteering-wales.net' measure relates opportunities available on the site on the 31 March in each year. Again fieldwork interviews revealed some concern about the validity of this measure. Opportunities posted between subsequent (31 March) readings - especially short-term opportunities – would not show up in the figures if they were not advertised specifically on the 31 March and future monitoring arrangements may wish to set a target for the change or trend in volunteering opportunity numbers rather than the number of opportunities. Overall however, as the measures stands performance is below target.

Other achievements reported by WCVA within monitoring and evaluation reports include:

- An increase in the number of hits on the web site in recent times (particularly linked to the launch of You Give You Get³⁷);
- An increase in the time people stay on the GwirVol web site (from 2 minutes 20 seconds to 2 minutes 50 seconds).

³⁵ The web site was operational at the end of January 2010. The overall target and achievement to March 2011 relates to 14 months performance

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ GwirVol (2011) *You Give You Get: A guide to Recognition and Accreditation of Volunteering for Young People*

3.6 GwirForce

The monitoring reports also point to a number of positive contributions made by GwirForce, including:

- Creating a Young Volunteers' Charter for Wales to recognise the role and contributions of young volunteers in engaging in positive relationships, creating community cohesion and developing new skills that are recognised, valued and transferred into all areas of their lives. The Charter will be presented to the First Minister in September 2011;
- Showcasing GwirForce and youth volunteering more generally at WCVA conferences and other events in Wales and beyond;
- Developing promotional materials and progressing the GwirVol brand image including social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube);
- Helping to shape the GwirVol programme by contributing a 'youth voice' at GwirVol partnership meetings;
- Undertaking initial preparations for a conference to be held (probably in Cardiff) in March 2012.

3.7 Overall Impact

Findings from the WCVA led survey of young people reveal that 'helping others' was the strongest motivation for young people volunteering, followed by 'enhancing my CV/gaining experience/skills'.

However, less than half of those volunteers responding to the survey had heard of GwirVol.

Generally though young people also reported feeling well supported in their volunteering placements (e.g. in the survey almost all rated the support they received as 'good' or 'excellent')

87% of those surveyed indicated that they had gained skills through the volunteering.

'Lack of time' and 'not being paid' were the primary barriers to young people participating in volunteering

The data also shows that more attention could be paid to ensuring:

- young people integrate quickly into the volunteering environment (a relatively high percentage of young people said they felt awkward to begin with);
- volunteers are made to feel appreciated at all times;
- peer support by involving good numbers of young people in volunteering projects (i.e. not placing a young person in a wider group comprised of only older volunteers).

The focus group undertaken with young people revealed:³⁸

- Low levels of awareness of GwirVol and GwirForce;
- Volunteers seem to be motivated primarily by the opportunity to help others;
- A number of barriers to volunteering including alternative calls on young people's time (e.g. time with family, friends, studying), lack of information and a negative stigma/image associated with volunteering.

3.8 Spend and Value for Money

Data provided by WCVA suggests that overall spend for GwirVol is slightly under budget (by around 3%) for the period 2009-2011, though WCVA expect the spend to be on budget by March 2012.

In terms of value for money Table 3.9 compares the cost per volunteer recruited/placed for different grant programmes and YVA activity. The findings show relative high costs per volunteer associated with the International programmes and relative low costs associated with the Local Youth Led Grants. Similarly local interventions overall – the YVAs and Local Youth Led Grants - appear to attract lower costs per volunteer than the national grant programmes.

³⁸ Undertaken by Dynamix Ltd(2011)

We stress however that the findings are indicative only: the different interventions are not strictly comparable in that, for example, YVA's input also goes to generating volunteering opportunities and advising young people.³⁹ Similarly it is unclear to what extent one intervention's resources are used to support another, for example, how much time YVAs spend on supporting the local youth led grant programme or raising awareness of the national grant programmes or similarly to what extent should the cost of the WCVA management team be attributed to each of the programmes in Table 3.9. Furthermore, it should be stressed that while International projects are relatively more expensive per volunteer recruited, supporting international volunteering opportunities was a specific recommendation of the Russell Commission.

Table 3.9: Indicative Cost effectiveness Comparisons

| Programme | Spend 2009/10 (£) | Spend 2010/11 (£) | Total Spend (available data) (£) | Volunteers Recruited (associated period) | Cost per Volunteer recruited/placed (£) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| Creating Opportunities | 213,495 | n/a | 213,495 | 902 | 236 |
| International | 55,950 | n/a | 55,950 | 55 | 1,017 |
| National Grant Programmes ⁴⁰ | 269,445 | n/a | 269,445 | 957 | 282 |
| Youth Volunteer Advisors | 350,000 | 340,000 | 690,000 | 3,955 ⁴¹ | 174 |
| Local Youth Led Grants | 89,736 | 121,720 | 211,456 | 3,871 | 55 |
| All Local Activity ⁴² | 410,500 | 461,720 | 872,220 | 7,826 | 111 |

Source: based on data provided by the WCVA

Data supplied by WCVA suggests GwirVol has been successful in leveraging-in substantial other funds. GwirVol awards between April 2009 and March 2011 for the Local Youth Led, International, Opportunities and Promotions and StreetGames

³⁹ Like for like comparison between the interventions would require estimations of the resources consumed in relation to each measure e.g. estimate the typical time per week YVAs spend on placing young people.

⁴⁰ Creating Opportunities and International Programmes only

⁴¹ Number of volunteers placed

⁴² YVAs and Local Youth Led Grants combined

programmes amounted to around £1,060,093.⁴³ Additional match-funding from funded projects, statutory bodies etc. for this period was £681,834. That is, an additional £0.64 for every £1 invested in GwirVol.

Finally, comparing the data on the number of volunteering hours (Table 3.4) with spend on national grant programmes (Table 3.9) the spend per volunteer hour would be £4.53. This compares favourably with appropriate comparator figures for the opportunity cost of young volunteers like the minimum wage, which is currently £5.93 for those aged 21 and over, £4.92 for those aged between 18 and 20 (though less favourably for those aged 16 and 17 where the minimum wage is £3.64).

This finding hints at a good a return on the funds invested in GwirVol. However extreme care needs to be taken in deriving firm conclusions since for instance:

- The finding focuses on one element of the GwirVol programme. In particular it would be useful if monitoring data was able to capture – perhaps through case study sampling - estimates for the volunteer hours associated with other elements of the scheme, as appropriate;
- A full cost benefit model would wish to estimate life-time impacts from an intervention i.e. where GwirVol has played a major role in a young person being involved in volunteering over many future years (potentially a life-time) then the overall ‘benefit’ of GwirVol would increase;
- There are many wider benefits to the interventions including impacts on the recipient grant organisations and the communities in which the volunteering takes place (e.g. how many people feel less isolated because they have company/support from volunteers, how many people get released earlier from hospital and so on). This would include the impact on local public services i.e. cost-savings from volunteer service provision in health, social services and other sectors (now and in the future); GwirVol aims to impact on the attitudes of young people to volunteering in Wales and there may be a diffusion of benefits whereby

⁴³ Note match-funding is derived using amounts awarded (not amounts spent). The figure of £1,060,093 relates to GwirVol awards rather than spend. Spend was lower than award due to underspend in the various interventions.

young volunteers encourage their peers (and those from other age groups) to also take up volunteering;

- Other input factors need to be delineated e.g. the impact of whether the young person would have volunteered anyway (deadweight), whether there was 100% attribution i.e. whether the young person received support from other organisations/agencies (and in particular to what extent that support was publicly funded) and whether there was additional in-kind resources provided by these organisations;
- There are a number of more intricate issues including the fact that the financial return to the taxpayer is only a function of income earned (income tax for example represents a percentage of the earnings of people who pay it, though the taxpayer also sees a return through VAT and other tax sources);
- Over time decision-makers may be interested in changes in the 'map' of publicly funded youth volunteering support across Wales and in particular whether GwirVol had led to an overall cost-savings in publicly funded provision i.e. through economies of scale, reduction of duplication, synergies etc.;
- Cost benefit figures do not monetise the individual's progress in relation to softer outcomes for example: confidence, self-esteem; and self-efficacy, attitude, ambition and various generic skills like communication, reliability, punctuality and customer service. Similarly capturing data on the extent to which young people feel empowered, feel ownership and responsibility/control for their projects would be useful in determining longer term engagement, as would monitoring their general attitude to on-going volunteering;
- The scheme itself has added intangible value in the way it brings together organisations from the public private and third sectors, spreads good practice, and ensures volunteering standards and so on.

Finally, it is worth stating that the GwirVol programme already works to sound monitoring systems. Though there are obvious benefits to developing a more detailed and rigorous approach to monitoring – especially around impact and value for money - this would inevitably incur additional costs, and the value of such change would have to be balanced with the perceived benefits from other potential uses of that funding within GwirVol.

SECTION 4: FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK

4.1 Overview

In this section we present the findings from the research fieldwork, including:

- The telephone survey of national grant recipient organisations;
- A limited web-based survey of young volunteers who have had some involvement with GwirVol;
- A focus group held with seven YVAs; and
- Face-to-face semi-structured interviews with key GwirVol stakeholders.

Before analysing the findings from these different sources, we report briefly on the response rates and characteristics of respondents to the two surveys.

4.1.1 Profile of grant recipient organisations surveyed

A database of 92 grant recipients was made available to Old Bell 3 for the purpose of carrying out a telephone survey

Of these, 60 (65%) had received the Creating Opportunities grant, 20 (22%) the Promotions grant, six (6.5%) had received an International grant, and six (6.5%) a Street Games grant. None had received a Millennium Volunteers grant.

As noted in Section 3, a number of organisations had received multiple grants, reducing the number of organisations available to be interviewed to 82. Furthermore one organisation did not have any contact details.

45 interviews were completed with the grant recipient organisations – representing 56% of all organisations for which contact details were available.

Overall:

- The surveyed organisations covered a wide range of different thematic areas of interest. It was found that the most common sectors covered were volunteering and community - 13 (29%) of those surveyed were volunteering

based organisations and nine (20%) were community based organisations. Furthermore four (9%) were health and social care organisations, four (9%) were youth organisations, three (7%) were disability organisations and a further three (7%) were environmental organisations. Other organisations described themselves as operating across sectors such as ethnic minorities, community justice and the arts - but no more than one organisation noted each of these sectors.

- Nearly half of the surveyed organisations (22 organisations or 49%) described themselves as an independent organisation with a local area of interest. Six (13%) said they were an independent organisation with a regional area of interest, nine (20%) an independent organisation with an all-Wales interest and the remaining eight (18%) were a local or regional branch of a larger UK wide organisation.
- The majority of surveyed organisations were fairly well established (with 29 or 64%) having been established since 1995 or earlier and only 15 (33%) having been established since 2000⁴⁴. This finding raises some questions about the ability of GwirVol to market itself to newer organisations given the lack of newly established organisations within the surveyed sample.
- The turnover of the organisations surveyed was wide ranging – 13 (29%) had small turnovers of up to £50,000 (during the 2010/11 financial year), a further 17 (38%) had turnovers of between £50,000 and £250,000 whilst 11 (24%) had turnovers over £250,000⁴⁵.
- The majority of the surveyed organisations were small in terms of the number of employees in Wales as at the time of applying for GwirVol funding. Eight (18%) had no employees, over half (25 or 56%) employed between one and

⁴⁴ One surveyed organisation did not know when the organisation was established.

⁴⁵ Four surveyed organisations did not know their turnover.

ten employees, four (9%) employed between 11 and 50 employees and the remaining seven (16%) employed over 50 employees⁴⁶.

- The number of volunteers involved with the surveyed organisations tended to be wide ranging – only one organisation did not have any volunteers involved before accessing Gwirvol, seven (16%) had up to ten volunteers, 24 (53%) had between 11 and 50 volunteers and 12 (27%) had over 50 volunteers involved.

The grant recipient organisations interviewed had received the following GwirVol funds, largely in line with the overall database (albeit that a slight greater number of Creating Opportunities grant recipients and a slightly lower number of International grant recipients were interviewed)⁴⁷:

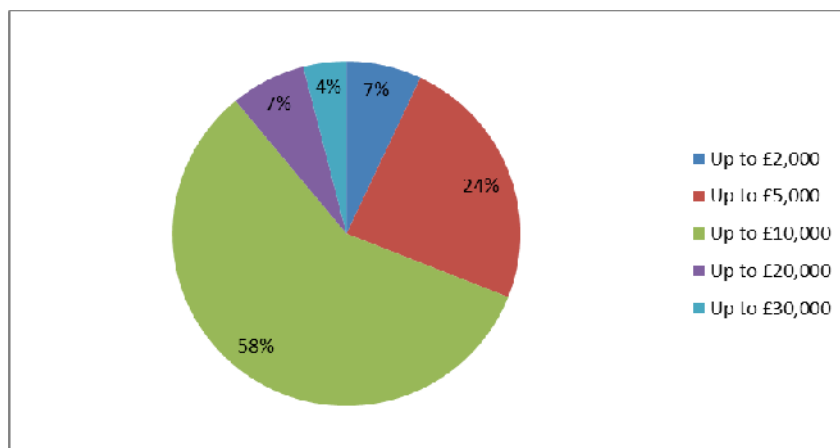
- 32 (71%) had received a Creating Opportunities grant;
- Eight (18%) had received a Promotions grant;
- Three (7%) had received a Street Games grant;
- Two (4%) had received an International grant.

Figure 4.1 presents the total value of the GwirVol grant(s) awarded to their organisation which shows that just over half (26 organisations or 58%) had received between £5,000 and £10,000. Only small numbers received over £10,000 (five organisations in all): though since only International grants can exceed £10,000 for any one grant, this reflects the impact of organisations holding multiple grants.

⁴⁶ Surveyed organisations were asked for the number of full time equivalent employees

⁴⁷ Whilst a very small number of these organisations would have received more than one grant telephone researchers were instructed to ask questions about one specific grant scheme. In most cases this meant that organisations who had received two consecutive grants were asked specifically about the 2010/11 grant received.

Figure 4.1: Total value of GwirVol grant(s) awarded to surveyed organisations



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

Two-thirds (30 organisations or 67%) had claimed all of the GwirVol national grant awarded to their organisation whilst a third (15 organisations or 33%) had not. Of these 15 organisations, three (20%) had yet to claim a small proportion of grant (up to 20%), nine (60%) had yet to claim between 21% and 50% whilst only two (13%) had yet to claim between 51% and 75%⁴⁸. The main reason given by surveyed organisations for not claiming all of the grant awarded was that the project was still underway (cited by 14 of the 15 organisations). Three organisations noted that they had faced delivery issues – of these one specifically noted that they had faced difficulties in obtaining project match funding and another noted that they had faced difficulties employing project staff to work with young people due to requirements such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

4.1.2 Profile of GwirVol beneficiaries surveyed

A short web based questionnaire was developed and distributed by email via the grant recipient organisations at the request of WCVA. 25 responses were received from young volunteers who had participated in a GwirVol funded placement. Extreme care must be taken when interpreting the findings of this survey as the researchers had no control over the distribution of the survey and the sample is not reflective of the overall volunteer population involved in the scheme. Instead the data provides a

⁴⁸ One respondent could not respond to this question.

quick snapshot of the volunteer experiences and should be considered in much the same way as case study data. However, in terms of the characteristics of those responding:

- Respondents volunteers generally had come to hear about the GwirVol scheme via their local CVC or organisation at which they volunteered;
- There was considerable variety in terms of current occupation – with some of those surveyed being at school, college/university, on a government training scheme, in work or looking for work;
- All respondents rated their volunteering experience via the GwirVol scheme as either excellent or good;
- Just under half of the young volunteers who responded to the survey suggested aspects of the GwirVol scheme needed to be improved in the future, which were:
 - Information about volunteering opportunities could be more readily available to young people;
 - The recognition given to volunteering work (e.g. celebratory events) could be improved;
 - The number of volunteering opportunities could be increased.

4.2 The initial and current rationale for GwirVol

Turning now to look at the findings from our fieldwork with key stakeholders, funded organisations, YVAs and young people responding to the web survey, we first consider views around the rationale for GwirVol and for individual projects funded by it, the ‘fit’ between GwirVol and broader policy and the continued relevance of GwirVol in the light of recent developments.

4.2.1 Initial Rationale

Key stakeholder interviewees commented that GwirVol was set up within a strongly supportive policy context in Wales. Prior to its inception the Welsh Government had already made clear its commitment to supporting the contribution of the voluntary sector in Wales and working with the sector to increase the scale of the contribution made by volunteers.

Indeed as one interviewee put it: ‘there was already a lot going on [in Wales] at the time of the Russell recommendations.’

All key stakeholders were aware of the Russell recommendations; though feedback from those able to comment suggests that there was never the feeling that GwirVol would satisfy all the Russell recommendations. What was clear was that ‘step change’ in youth volunteering, was viewed by the key stakeholders as a primary objective; though as most noted this was ‘not just about numbers of new volunteers’ but rather it also included altering young people’s attitudes towards volunteering.

Moreover, stakeholders were clear that with the Russell recommendations as a ‘starting point’ any interventions designed to support youth volunteering in Wales would require a uniquely Welsh ‘slant’ to them.⁴⁹

The decision to move to a specific young people volunteering programme (GwirVol) was also considered to fit well with the ring-fenced nature of the Russell Commission:

‘It [GwirVol] was never intended to “prop-up” existing schemes. It was a vehicle by which the Russell Commission recommendations could be implemented, but in a Welsh context.’

Similarly other interviewees mentioned that GwirVol was a way of ‘bringing together’ volunteering for those 16-25 years to form ‘a focal point’ and ‘leadership’.

⁴⁹ That is not to say that the developments towards GwirVol were completely independent of wider input. It should be remembered that Russell Commission funding was provided by the UK government to the devolved administrations. Key stakeholders noted that in the early years, there was always good links via a central steering group at the UK level which brought together those in England and across the devolved administrations who were tasked with progressing the Russell recommendations. Key stakeholders also noted that in recent years these linkages have declined markedly, though not with noticeable impact or even lost opportunity.

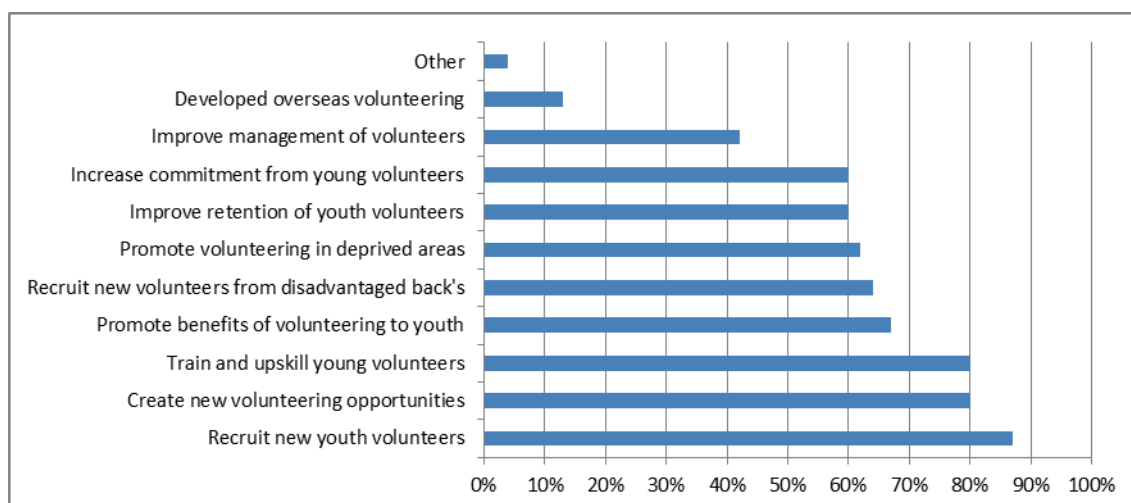
Stakeholders also commented on the way GwirVol – as a new scheme – could offer a fresh approach to promoting volunteering and in particular broaden the promotion and appeal of volunteering:

‘It meant changing attitudes towards volunteering. It meant broadening the young volunteer base beyond what might be seen as a very defined type of young person that you would typically find volunteering.’

The general consensus of the YVAs was that GwirVol was about encouraging and supporting young people into volunteering. Moreover, this required an element of proactive (identifying volunteering opportunities) and reactive (dealing with enquiries and referrals) support at the local level. Generally, the YVAs felt that the aims and objectives of the YVAs complimented the aims of GwirVol.

In terms of rationale at the project level, the survey of GwirVol national grant recipient organisations shows that funded projects had a wide range of objectives, as is shown in Figure 4.2. The most important objective however (cited by 39 organisations or 87%) was to recruit new volunteers, followed by the creation of new volunteering opportunities and training and up-skilling of young volunteers (each cited by 36 organisations or 80%). As would be expected given that only two organisations had received funding via the International volunteering grant smaller numbers stated that they were hoping to develop overseas volunteering opportunities.

Figure 4.2: Objectives of GwirVol funded projects



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

When asked for the specific aim of the project funded via GwirVol a range of responses was provided, very much in line with the objectives outlined above. Some interesting volunteering opportunities had been created for young people and these included:

- Media related opportunities such as production of short films and youth magazines;
- Arts based opportunities – particularly community art projects;
- IT based opportunities such as website creation and social media;
- Environmental, agricultural, fencing and forestry;
- Sport related opportunities such as training for lifeguarding work;
- Overseas volunteering such as in northern India and Belarus.

4.2.2 Fit with wider policy and intervention context

More generally, key stakeholders identified the importance of GwirVol achieving a continued fit with the wider policy context and direction. Not all interviewees felt well placed to comment on policy context and links. Those that did felt that GwirVol currently 'fitted' well with the Welsh (and UK) policy agendas and that GwirVol acted synergistically in supporting the wider third, public and (more indirectly) private sectors. For example, one interviewee mentioned that since the Beecham report the emphasis has been on a 'mixed economy of provision' – a multitude of agencies and

providers working together to provide services. Volunteering was seen as a component of that 'mix'.

Three interviewees mentioned that GwirVol has helped simplify the complexity of the volunteering landscape. One highlighted that prior to April 2009 youth volunteering support 'was not very co-ordinated'. In this respect, 'GwirVol provides a focus for this support activity.' Other key stakeholders pointed to the recent 'You Give You Get'⁵⁰ report as an example of how the GwirVol programme supports understanding of wider volunteering opportunities – and in this case accreditation opportunities - for young people in Wales.

It was generally argued by the YVA's that GwirVol complemented the activities of CVCs, particularly as the YVAs were employed by CVCs and in many areas undertook other roles at their employing organisation as well.

In terms of the potential for duplication between GwirVol and other interventions, while key stakeholders were aware that grants from, for example, Big Lottery, could be used to support young people's volunteering, they stressed that GwirVol was different in that it was a multifaceted scheme:

'GwirVol is about generic support for youth volunteering. Traditionally support for young volunteers would be within a specific genre like first aid volunteering or sport volunteering. But GwirVol as a scheme is much broader.'

None of the key stakeholders reported that duplication was a problem:

'It wasn't ever a threat to existing support work because it was intended to be inclusive, by making grants available, for instance. Actually organisations are using GwirVol funding as match-funding.'

⁵⁰ GwirVol (2011) You Give You Get

‘Duplication has certainly not been a problem since 2009 because we’ve seen grant funding opportunities severely cut since then and yet there is still the demand for support.’

‘YVAs play an important role in that respect; they can identify if there is duplication at the local level.’

‘The WCVA is the administrative body and has a great overview of the sector in Wales. I’d say they are in a good position to see if there was duplication.’

There was however clear recognition that while GwirVol is part of the youth volunteering landscape in Wales, it is not the whole landscape: ‘Things like Duke of Edinburgh Award would happen in any case. But what GwirVol does is it takes a lead for the sector. In doing so, I’d say it supports these other schemes.’

In terms of future developments, two respondents said that more focus could be made of supporting current policy priorities like the Child Poverty agenda in Wales and, in particular how young volunteers might be encouraged to volunteer in this area more specifically.

Similarly, three respondents mentioned that the Welsh Baccalaureate - which has a community service element – might also offer future opportunities:

‘It’s something that GwirVol might link to, not so much in the sense of how GwirVol supports the Welsh Bac - because community work is mandatory for the Welsh Bac - but whether GwirVol can provide a legacy or follow-on for those completing the Welsh Bac.’

In the same way one respondent also noted that the National Citizen Service agenda emanating from the UK coalition government could also present future opportunities.

By contrast, the YVAs identified a future threat in at the UK level the Youthbank had now ended: this meant in particular that finding match-funding for the local youth

grant scheme had become increasingly difficult. However, other opportunities could be pursued e.g. O2 Think Big Funding.

Two key stakeholders noted that despite recent developments (e.g. the volunteering opportunities.net web site) more could be done to map support for youth volunteering including the contribution of generic volunteering schemes to youth volunteering. This would help ensure, amongst other things, that the potential for duplication in support services for youth volunteering was minimised.

Other challenges to continued 'fit' were thought to include the wider economic context and specifically current funding cuts within the public sector, which risked volunteers being seen as a substitute for paid employees. As one interviewee put it:

'The third sector has always supported public sector but in the context of public funding squeeze and people worried about their jobs there is something of a tension there now. It's not a volunteering thing specifically but it does have implications.'

In this respect, 'clear definition of roles' was thought to be crucial in avoiding overlap and possible tensions.

A minority of respondents identified that the scope of GwirVol includes (primarily) the third sector (Communities and Social Justice) and Youth service (Education and Skills) divisions within the Welsh Government. However, as one respondent put it: 'These departments don't seem to always talk to each other'. In particular, respondents thought it important that GwirVol takes into consideration, and where possible aligns itself with, developments in the youth service strategy. Those commenting thought it would be 'comforting' to know that both 'education' youth work and 'third sector' youth volunteering were aware of each other's strategic direction and that there was 'something of a cross fertilisation' of ideas and good practices.

4.2.3 Continued rationale and fit

Finally in relation to the continued rationale and 'fit' of GwirVol with policy, key stakeholders argued that there was continued need and 'latent demand' for youth volunteering support, that could (and indeed should) be met by GwirVol.

Moreover, there was generally a consensus that while the Russell recommendations were still relevant, the 'context has moved on'. In particular, against the backdrop of growing youth unemployment ('Young people are bearing the brunt of much of the current economic problems') and what some interviewees described as 'continuing intergenerational issues' and 'an agenda for good citizenship' (particularly illustrated by the recent riots in England), the key stakeholders and YVAs were very strongly of the opinion that the rationale for having GwirVol remains; indeed, most argued that the rationale was stronger now than in 2009.

4.3 The Delivery of GwirVol

In this section we consider different aspects of the delivery of GwirVol and examine its effectiveness in supporting volunteering amongst young people in Wales. This in turn informs the question of whether it represents the most effective means of supporting youth volunteering. In turn we consider:

- Appropriateness of the design of GwirVol;
- Appropriateness of the Promotion of the Scheme;
- Effectiveness of the national grant programmes;
- Effectiveness of the youth volunteer advisors;
- Effectiveness of the local youth led grants;
- Effectiveness of GwirForce;
- Effectiveness of the management arrangements.

4.3.1 Appropriateness of the design of GwirVol

All respondents were positive about the design of the GwirVol scheme. Few recommendations were made for improvement. Where suggestions were made they were for evolutionary developments rather than major structural changes.

Fundamentally, key stakeholders recognised that the development of GwirVol had been a comprehensive process: 'The alternative models of structure were looked at pretty exhaustively.'

Clear too was that the design was shaped heavily by the desire to maximise the impact of the funding available. Key stakeholders reported that those tasked with developing ideas for the new scheme (subsequently called GwirVol) were acutely aware that £1 million funding per annum spread across 22 local authorities 'would not go far'. That suggested the need to target the funding efficiently and also use GwirVol funding to generate or draw in other funding.

It also points to the need to utilise wherever possible the existing volunteer support infrastructure. As one respondent noted:

'In England they could afford to set-up a new organisation called V. But they benefited there from much larger scale of funding and could use economies of scale.'

Moreover, key stakeholders reported that there was clear steer from Welsh Government at the time that as much funding as possible should be made available in the form of grants. In the end the Welsh Government stated that a minimum of 50% would have to be provided through grants. A majority of stakeholders confirmed that (in hindsight) the 50% figure was appropriate, though a minority suggested that future consideration should be given to the re-balancing of funding towards local grants, given firstly, the relatively strong performance (against targets) of the youth led local grant and secondly the impact of these grants as a means of ensuring a youth led approach. However, some key stakeholders stated that re-balancing the funding in this way risked 'losing potentially good projects from the national grants' programme'.

Notable too was the consistency in which respondents noted the synergistic way the different elements supported each other. For example, all respondents emphasised the importance of young people's input into GwirVol (via GwirForce, the web site and

indirectly through YVAs and so on). Fundamentally 'this has not been just a tick in the box for the Russell Recommendations' but rather, was seen as playing a crucial role in shaping the decisions GwirVol Partnership and WCVA and ensuring their work had continued relevance to the needs and interests of the target group. As one respondent put it:

'Having that link is absolutely crucial for us [the partnership board] and it's no exaggeration to say that it's impacted across all our decisions.'

Four respondents stated specifically that GwirVol was different (from other schemes, programmes and networks) in that it offered a broad base of participating organisations:

'It draws organisations together from all three sectors, which is different for a start. I suppose it takes us out of our comfort zone in a way. And because of that, and because you are bringing together diverse set of organisations, what you get are different perspectives on the same problem. You also generate lots of new ideas.'

Moreover, the funding of YVAs across the 22 counties of Wales was considered 'a smart move' because it not only ensured pan-Wales coverage but also ensured the 'buy-in' of the various CVCs across Wales

While almost all the key stakeholders emphasised that GwirVol was designed as a coherent scheme (e.g. with interventions at the national and local levels) many also pointed out the importance of the scheme evolving to take advantage of new opportunities:

'Evolution was always the key; to learn from our experiences. The web site is an example. We completely changed the web site because the first one we felt wasn't working. Now it's much better and it's receiving many more hits.'

Similarly:

'What's been crucial is the emerging experience. GwirVol has been good at that, at identifying new opportunities. The MV50 programme is a good example.'

There was also general agreement amongst key stakeholders that integrating MV into GwirVol was a positive move. In particular, it was thought that GwirVol was essential to securing the longer term future of MV after its funding was taken away, while MV had given GwirVol wider scope, in particular, in the offering an awards based programme. Beyond this, key stakeholders commented that the move had 'been a good one for the statutory sector' which previously could run MV but could not apply for funding but now, because MV is in GwirVol, can apply for funding to start up a youth volunteering project. Moreover, MV was still considered to be a popular programme ('organisations approach us for support with MV even without funding').

The one caveat here however, was that key stakeholders were acutely aware that the integration of MV within GwirVol had placed pressure on existing resources – indeed the integration of MV saw the loss of the part-time MV administrator role - and crucially, there was little or no spare capacity in the current GwirVol delivery operations. As such it has been essential that during busy periods the WCVA team have been able to draw in other support (including a temporary position financed via the Future Jobs Fund)

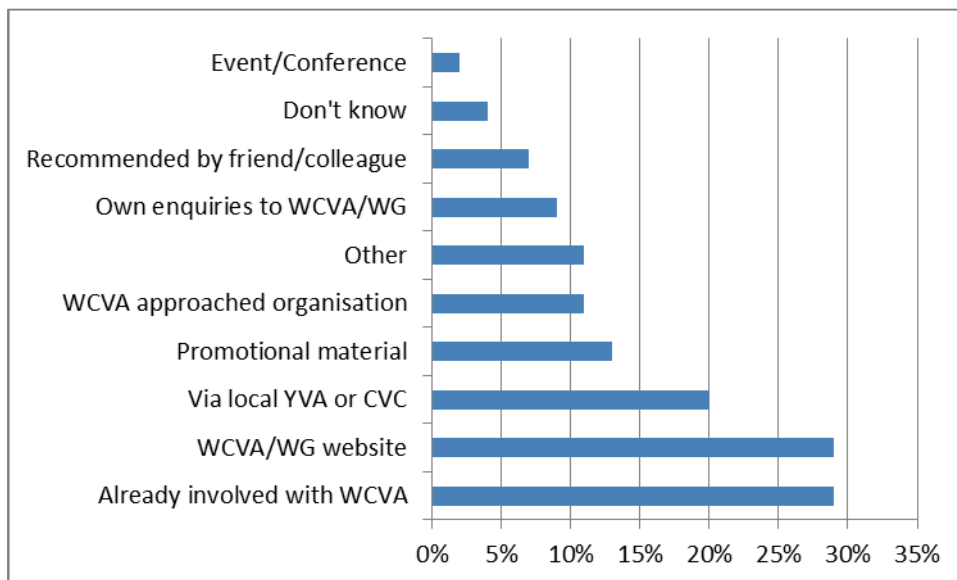
The YVAs were also positive about the overall design of the GwirVol scheme. In particular they thought it a broadly coherent package of support. For example, enquiries about the national grants are directed to WCVA, although YVAs were aware of what they offered and could inform organisations as appropriate. In one case a YVA noted that they had helped one organisation submit their funding application, had provided a letter of support for the project and had kept in touch over its delivery stage.

4.3.2. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the promotion of the scheme

Feedback from surveyed organisations suggest the current promotion of the scheme is broadly effective.

Surveyed organisations had come to hear of the GwirVol national grant programme in a variety of ways albeit that over a quarter of those surveyed (13 organisations or 29%) had previous involvement with the WVCA. The same proportion had also found out about GwirVol on the WCVA/Welsh Government's website and a somewhat smaller number (nine organisations or 20%) had heard of GwirVol via their CVC or local YVA.⁵¹ Other methods were less common, as shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Methods of hearing about GwirVol



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

All surveyed organisations thought that it was easy to obtain information about GwirVol: 28 organisations or 62% thought it was very easy and 15 organisations or 33% thought it was fairly easy⁵².

Only three surveyed organisations made some suggestions on how information about the GwirVol scheme could have been more readily available, which in itself

⁵¹ Surveyed respondents could select more than one response.

⁵² Two organisations did not respond to this question.

suggests that the methods currently adopted are largely appropriate. Two suggested that GwirVol should be better promoted through other organisations such as ‘community youth groups’ or the ‘volunteer bureau’ (albeit we understand that these methods are already adopted by WCVA). One commented that the information made available to them at the outset had not been detailed enough and suggested that ‘it would have been nice to talk to someone that knew more about the subject’.

The YVAs were also positive about GwirVol’s achievements in raising awareness of the scheme amongst stakeholder groups. They stated that partner organisations, who typically support young people into work or back into education, were by now highly aware of GwirVol and this was illustrated by the increasing number of referrals to GwirVol).⁵³

This view was re-affirmed by the key stakeholder interviewees who identified ‘a good mix of approaches’ including the web site, social media, event promotions, promotional materials (e.g. pens) and via word of mouth.

Of course, in addition to building ‘name awareness’ of the scheme, a central role for GwirVol was the promotion of youth volunteering in Wales generally. Indeed with GwirVol aiming to assume a central position of leadership for youth volunteering in Wales, the two concepts were viewed by key stakeholders as being (to a large extent) the same issue.

There was general agreement that much had been done in raising awareness of youth volunteering and GwirVol amongst stakeholder groups in Wales. In particular, the use of a Partnership approach, the position WCVA holds in Wales (e.g. at the hub of the CVC network) and having a specific Promotional grant programme were all thought to be key enabling factors. Three interviewees noted specifically that GwirVol had been important in engaging the public sector in young people’s

⁵³ As a side issue here, that partner agencies are engaging and referring ‘GwirVol volunteers’ does of course, re-enforce the issue that these young people are receiving support beyond the GwirVol scheme and as such any detailed analysis of impact would be complicated by the issue of attribution i.e. to what effect did non-GwirVol input have on the young person’s decision to volunteer and the subsequent benefits (or costs) of that volunteering experience.

volunteering and there was unanimous support too for the recently published You Give You Get campaign which, in addition to being informative, was seen as helpful in raising awareness of GwirVol and youth volunteering in Wales generally.

Key stakeholders also stated that the WCVA administrative team had 'punched above its weight' in relation to promotional work. However, there was widespread recognition that the size of the team and 'call on their time' from other elements of the scheme, meant that finding the time to do promotional work would always be difficult.

On a more negative note, a minority of key stakeholders argued that the name of the scheme was not easily understood (or easily remembered) by English-only speaking young people; though all stated that they would not recommend changing the name of the scheme.

That said most key stakeholders felt that promotion remained a key focus for GwirVol going forward. While there was general acceptance that 'time' was inevitably a factor (e.g 'more people know about Millennium Volunteers because it has been around for much longer') key stakeholders thought that greater promotion of the impacts of volunteering was one efficient option for raising awareness. GwirForce assuming a leading role in promoting both GwirVol and youth volunteering was deemed another.

4.3.3 Effectiveness of the national grant programmes

Programme scope and fit

Key stakeholders thought that the mix of national grant programmes was appropriate, with each programme being clearly distinct. They also stated that the 'fit' between the programmes was good with the five schemes overall offering an 'inclusive' package. Importantly, respondents also considered there to be no obvious gaps in existing grant provision/coverage.

A minority of respondents highlighted that International projects received substantially more per award than projects in the other national programmes.⁵⁴ However this was recognised as a reflection of the nature of international project and the overall view was that this grant programme should continue because firstly, feedback – especially from case studies - was overwhelmingly positive, secondly, because (as a minority of respondents noted) the International grant programme was unique in the UK and thirdly, because international volunteering experiences form one of the Russell recommendations. That said, a minority of key stakeholders said that future options might include, where possible, an element of ‘personal’ fundraising in support of the GwirVol funding for international opportunities.

The national grant programmes were also considered to be responsive and capable of adapting to the developing context. Within Millennium Volunteers, the MV50 programme for example has been developed to capture ‘what people do anyway’ in the way of volunteering in their spare time, thus raising awareness and the profile of volunteering:

‘It’s easy for people to not even recognise that they are in fact volunteering. MV-50 Sport is way of doing this. It is anticipated that in recognising and awarding existing volunteering, young people on the MV50 programmes will be encouraged to continue volunteering to the Millennium Volunteers 100hours and 200hours awards (and beyond)’.

Our survey of national grant funded organisations revealed good geographical coverage of the projects. 20% (nine) of the projects funded via GwirVol had an all-Wales remit whilst the remaining projects demonstrated a good geographical spread - for instance twelve projects (27%) were based in one of the six counties of north Wales⁵⁵. Our respondents reported at least one grant received in each of the Welsh counties (apart from Neath Port Talbot) albeit that some (in particular Flintshire, Carmarthenshire and Swansea) had received a larger number of GwirVol grants.

⁵⁴ It was noted that the International programme receives fewer applications than Promotions despite awarding almost twice the funding. Also the communities benefiting from the Volunteer’s time were outside of Wales.

⁵⁵ Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham or Flintshire

The low number of grant recipient organisations coming from Cardiff (two) and Newport (one) was perhaps surprising.

The survey respondents also suggested that projects targeted a variety of specific groups of potential young volunteers, including:

- Service men and ex-service men who were not in employment/ education and were finding it difficult to fit into the community;
- Young people who were not socially active;
- Young volunteer cadets aged 16-18.

Some specific promotional material had been produced as a result of some projects (primarily under the Promotions grant) and these had led to the production and distribution of youth video/DVDs to promote youth volunteering opportunities.

Application process

The large majority of surveyed organisations had found the GwirVol grant application process to be acceptable. For instance:

- 39 respondents (87%) thought that WCVA had dealt with their enquiries either well or very well;
- 39 respondents (87%) thought that the speed with which the application was approved was either good or very good;
- 37 respondents (82%) thought that the process of notification about the outcome of the grant application had been either good or very good – a small number of respondents (6 or 13%) thought that the notification process had either been poor or very poor however⁵⁶.

Furthermore just over two thirds of surveyed organisations (31 organisations or 69%) had found the grant application forms either very or fairly easy to complete. However almost one third had experienced difficulties – nine organisations or 20% noted that the application form was fairly difficult and a further four (9%) had found it very

⁵⁶ Two respondents did not respond to this question as they had not been involved in the application process.

difficult⁵⁷. Those from smaller organisations were more likely to state that they found the application form difficult to complete – with 12 of the 13 who thought the form to be difficult coming from organisations employing ten or less staff. Reasons given for these difficulties included the following – the first three were cited by most of those who faced difficulties:

- The application forms tended to ask for too much detail;
- The application form and guidance was too complex: ‘not straight forward’ and ‘questions not clear’;
- The application form tended to be repetitive ‘you repeat yourself many times’ and it was ‘very long winded’. One noted that it was ‘a lot of work for £2,000’;
- The application form was practically difficult to complete in that the different signatures required ‘proved extremely difficult’ for one organisation;
- Difficulties in sticking to the word limits (cited by one organisation);
- Difficulties in predicting costs – and the lack of flexibility that followed to vire budgets when things did not turn out as planned.

It followed that most of the suggestions made to improve the grant application form revolved around the need to address the level of detail, complexity and repetitive nature of the current form. Amongst the most commonly cited improvements were:

- Reduce the repetitive nature of the application form – making it shorter, less detailed and less time consuming to complete;
- Simplification of the form e.g. simplifying the language used and addressing specific aspects such as calculating the number of hours of volunteers and number of hours of benefit;
- Ensuring that the detail and amount of information required reflects the amount of funding being requested;
- Availability of a mock-up completed application form to potential applicants;
- Availability of a proof-reading service prior to submission of application;
- Introduction of a pre-qualifying questionnaire, thus reducing the amount of information re-submitted on an annual basis;

⁵⁷ One respondent did not respond to this question as they had not been involved in the application process.

- Making available an appendix of terminology used in application and guidance forms.

In addition to the suggestions made on ways of improving the application form itself, some 15 respondents also suggested ways of improving the application and approval process. The most commonly cited improvements were:

- Addressing errors and inaccuracies within completed application forms more quickly and more efficiently: in the case of one organisation ‘completing these forms incorrectly means that you are wasting time, it delays the process – it took three attempts for it to be approved’;
- Speed up the approval process and keep to deadlines set for making decisions and informing organisations. In this respect several respondents suggested that e-mail and phone communication should be adopted instead of postal communication: ‘the deadlines should be hit and would be better to find out over the phone if we’ve been successful as the post takes much longer’;
- Improving communication to successful organisations on funding aspects (e.g. ‘they should have emailed us to confirm that money had been transferred into our account’) and on match funding requirements: ‘we hadn’t received the money because we hadn’t told them about the match funding – we didn’t realise we needed to tell them’.

Whereas a minority of grant recipients clearly thought the application and assessment processes could be improved, overall, key stakeholders stated that the application process for the national grant programmes works well. Key stakeholders described the process as ‘thorough’ and that this gave the programmes ‘integrity’.

In particular key stakeholders said that the assessment training for the WCVA team and the way that the WCVA team supported grant applicants were two important elements. Though time-consuming to administer, key stakeholders said that that the investment in supporting organisations to submit quality applications reaped rewards in terms of less time being needed at the assessment stage and ultimately better

projects being delivered post award. It was also noted that the quality of applications had improved over time.

Key stakeholders also emphasised efforts that had been made to ensure the application process was inclusive, particularly for those organisations with relatively little experience (or skill) in writing bids:

‘there are organisations that have good project ideas but are not particularly good at writing bids. Now, we can’t write the bids for them, but you do want to allow the assessment panel to be able to evaluate the strength of the project idea, not the strength of their bid writing.’

As another described it: ‘it’s about getting to the root of the idea being presented’

The national grants assessment panel are also provided feedback by WCVA on the performance of the projects they awarded funding. Key stakeholders considered this an example of good practice: ‘Knowing how the applicants have performed – whether they have done what they said they would do, targeted who they said they would target etc - helps us in future assessments.’

In terms of potential improvements, two key stakeholders stated that the application forms could be ‘wordy in parts’. Notably two YVAs also thought that the national grant application forms were very complex and potentially disproportionate. Moreover, they argued that this favoured those organisations who had the capacity (and particularly paid capacity) to dedicate the time necessary to complete them. An extension of this idea was that smaller organisations without employees ‘fell’ between the national and local grant programmes.

A minority of key stakeholders also expressed unease at accepting repeat applications. They stated that organisations should not become reliant on GwirVol. Instead GwirVol should give emphasis to its support for new project ideas.

Elsewhere few potential improvements were identified. One interviewee said they would like to see more attention paid to ‘well costed’ applications: ‘I’m always a little

suspicious when applications come in at round numbers, especially when they are at the maximum.’ Another key stakeholder wondered whether a rolling deadline might be considered as a way of encouraging more bids – though with recognition of the increased burden this would have on the WCVA management team and assessment panel members.

Types of young people volunteering through national grant programme support

In terms of the types of young people volunteering, key stakeholders thought that a strength of GwirVol’s national grants programmes was that they supported a broad range of young people from all socio-economic groups. There was clear recognition that in many respects GwirVol was leading the way in engaging those from the most deprived communities and disadvantaged (and dis-engaged) backgrounds e.g. in awarding points in the application scoring for proposed work in engaging groups with traditional low representation in volunteering (e.g. black and ethnic minority and disabled groups)

That said key stakeholders were firmly of the view that GwirVol should be inclusive to all groups.

‘GwirVol should not exclude anyone who is interested or might be interested in volunteering.’

‘I’m not sure it should ever be a target [i.e. numbers from non-traditional groups], but it is something that should continue to be monitored.

4.3.4 Effectiveness of the Youth Volunteer Advisors

Feedback from the YVAs themselves suggested good levels of experience in volunteering support - most had been involved in volunteering support provision for a number of years. Communication between advisors was also thought to be good.

Feedback also revealed that although GwirVol funded part-time posts, in practice YVA posts were generally full-time⁵⁸ with the additional funding sourced at the local level (e.g. from the relevant CVC, 14-19 and Youth service funding).

There was a general preference on the part of YVAs for a 'hands on' role: for example, in one case the administration of the Youth Led Grant was undertaken separately by a Grants Administrator – but while this eased the burden on the YVA it was not necessarily the most effective model of delivery, as it reduced the awareness of what individual groups wanted to do.

The role of the YVAs was deemed to be critical, even in the absence of any local grant scheme; they emphasised that their work on the youth panels constituted only part of their remit which also included efforts to raise awareness, identify opportunities, support young people into volunteering etc.

Understandably, perhaps, YVAs argued that they had been very effective in encouraging young people to take up volunteering opportunities and this had largely been done by promoting volunteering at schools, colleges and universities as well as providing outreach drop in sessions at various locations across their authority. Likewise the work in identifying organisations that could potentially provide volunteering work had been equally as effective, although it was acknowledged that this work was also undertaken by other colleagues within the CVCs.

YVAs stated that engaging new young volunteers had been relatively easy – demand from potential young volunteers has been good and YVAs have experienced an increase in referrals from partner organisations. There has been an increase in youth volunteering due to the 'mandatory volunteering' requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate but, even when this is dis-regarded, YVAs were in agreement that generating interest has not posed a problem. Several cited external factors such as high youth unemployment and lack of employment opportunities as factors which had contributed towards this increase but some also noted that there is

⁵⁸ One of the seven respondents did work part-time

much more information available now on volunteering (particularly via GwirVol) which has increased awareness of it.

Sourcing suitable volunteering places for young people had been more of a challenge for the YVAs however, not least because of the pressure upon YVAs time to dedicate to the proactive nature of this work (i.e. finding new organisations and opportunities). Having said this however, some YVAs stressed that their CVC already had a very good database of volunteering opportunities – from which they were usually able to find something for the young person concerned – and if they could not, then that gave rise to consideration of whether a local youth grant could be considered to create a volunteering opportunity which was appropriate.

In terms of what proved more difficult within their role, YVAs unanimous view was that this was 'lack of time'. Working on the GwirVol scheme on a part time basis was considered to be highly frustrating given the potential to deliver even more outputs - one commented: 'I wish I could do the job on a full time basis'. Demand amongst young people for volunteering opportunities has increased dramatically as a result of the economic downturn and the rising rate of youth unemployment.

Some of the argument for increasing their working hours was put down to the fact that role of the YVA has expanded considerably over the last few years. In particular YVAs had experienced an increase in the number of referrals being made by partner organisations – often as a result of the lack of job opportunities available for those out of work.

Furthermore they argued that they were being approached directly by schools and colleges to talk to pupils about volunteering as a result of the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate volunteering curriculum. A discussion was had whereby YVAs acknowledged that the work with schools and colleges (which focused on the Welsh Baccalaureate) did not help them directly achieve their targets (these are not reported to WCVA as part of their contract) but was seen as building positive relationships with schools and colleges and also to support the wider objective of encouraging more young people into volunteering. One noted that schools had

started to approach her recently asking whether she could give a presentation to Year 9 pupils: whilst these pupils would not fit into the GwirVol age categories, she had felt that doing so would be in the interest of the project and volunteering in general. There is obviously a tension here between focusing upon the objectives of GwirVol and providing an extended service to partner organisations.

YVAs also noted that they often 'get dragged in to other stuff' by their CVC e.g. attending events that are targeted at the general public, not just young people, a result in part of the fact that CVCs were often providing part of the funding for the individual YVAs posts.

YVAs thought that the main factor that had helped them achieve their aims was the increase in referrals being received from partner organisations – in a sense an increase in the demand for volunteering as a route for clients to progress – including JobCentre Plus, Careers Wales, ESF funded projects etc who were increasingly seeing GwirVol as the main source of advice and support on youth volunteering. Moreover the increase in referrals seen in recent times was thought to reflect the increase in the number of partner organisations working with unemployed/inactive clients e.g. ESF funded projects

However, that there is co-operation does also suggest recognition that GwirVol does add to existing or other support infrastructure. As one YVA suggested, these other organisations have come to realise that they do not have expertise in volunteering advice and guidance.

YVAs said that enquiries were handled via drop in sessions (e.g. once per week) or via an appointments system.

When asked about the profile of volunteers, YVAs argued that young volunteers would initially have been the typical A-Level student but that in recent years they have seen a wider range of individuals being supported e.g. a greater number of NEETs and those from disadvantaged areas are now being referred by partner organisations.

Key stakeholders were generally very positive about the work of the YVAs. In particular their role was considered to strengthen local delivery and fit well with GwirVol's 'youth led' agenda.

Stakeholders did, however, echo YVAs own concerns as to whether they were appropriately resourced:

'their role is crucial but I sense that they are only just about managing the work that is coming in through the door. This means they are not spending as much time as perhaps we'd like trying to develop volunteering stakeholder base more widely... engaging the private sector or health sector at the local level.'

In this respect the key stakeholders recognised the benefits where YVAs are able to work full-time via match-funding obtained at the local level. However, stakeholders were mindful of the risk of creating a two-tier intervention where some areas received part-time YVA input while other areas enjoyed full-time input.

4.3.5 Effectiveness of the Local Youth led Grants

In addition to the direct provision of support and advice to young people and to organisations offering volunteering opportunities, YVAs have also been involved in managing the Local Youth Panels and managing (or part managing) the Local Youth Led Grants.

As already noted, GwirVol makes available £5,000 to each Panel on an annual basis. Match funding has been secured in some areas via the Youth Service, Youthbank etc raising the total funding available considerably in some areas (e.g. Swansea and Neath Port Talbot).

The YVA interviewees stated that the Local Youth Grant Programme has been over-subscribed in all of their areas and in some cases a decision had been taken to

reduce the upper level of grant awards to ensure that all good/worthy applications receive at least some funding.

The YVAs confirmed that over the previous financial year WCVA was able to provide some extra funding for the Local Youth Grant Programme, due to some project underspend.

A Youth Panel exists in each area, though branding varies: in some areas the Panel has come up with their own name (e.g. Dish Out Dosh in the Vale and the Vol Factor in Rhondda Cynon Taf) whereas in others it is referred to as the GwirVol Youth Panel (e.g. all areas covered by GAVO).

YVAs believed that the Panels have been working very effectively to date in terms of handling applications and making decisions on which projects to fund. One YVA commented that his Panel had shown particularly mature traits such as questioning the value for money from certain applications, querying the need for others and questioning the rationale of others. Each Panel is responsible for setting their own funding criteria and this was considered a strength in that they were responding to local circumstances and needs.

YVAs argued that a wide range of projects had been awarded funding – including social and environmentally based projects. It was generally felt that the projects which have received funding have provided good volunteering opportunities: one example was given of a local cricket club that had received a local youth grant to bring parents and players together to teach cricket to children.

The make-up of each Panel was deemed to be a crucial aspect of its success. New members are recruited on an annual basis and YVAs noted that in some years Panels had been weaker because of this and that YVAs have to take on greater duties and responsibilities to make up for any short-comings. YVAs find it difficult to recruit new Panel members but good practice in this respect does seem to include recruiting members from (successful) projects that have previously received local (youth led) grants.

In terms of development, while the remit of the youth panels focuses on the handling of applications for funding, future consideration might be given to how the role could be supported to include (more) local promotional and awareness raising work.

The key stakeholders unanimously thought that the Local Youth Led Grants were delivering strong results. This raised the question as to whether the intervention should receive a greater proportion of the funding: though as one key stakeholder stated this might jeopardise other GwirVol interventions which together contributed to an inclusive scheme. Moreover, it was argued the relative impact and value for money of the local (youth led) grants should also take into account the YVA time input to the process.

However, key stakeholders were clear that the focus should be on consistency of provision across the 22 areas, in particular, in sharing good practice and developing links with public and private organisations (particularly in respect to generating additional levered-in/matched funding).

One example of good practice in this respect occurred in Swansea where a service level agreement had been put in place between Swansea CVS and Swansea Youth Service in which the existing Youth Bank would act as the GwirVol young people's panel. This meant not only that the youth panel would be responsible for awarding the £5,000 of GwirVol local grant but also that through the agreement the youth panel would have access to additional funding from Youth Service Swansea (around £6,000-£7,000). So overall, in Swansea around £11,000-£12,000 (rather than £5,000) has been available for grants via the GwirVol local youth led panel.

Key stakeholders stated that while the roll out of this and other similar approaches might be desirable; the climate of uncertainty around public-funding - for example, the recent scrapping of the Youth Capital Grant by the Welsh Government - was a major constraint.

4.3.6 Effectiveness of GwirForce

All key stakeholders recognised the role of GwirForce in providing for a youth-led scheme. In particular, key stakeholders saw the role of GwirForce as being primarily about 'keeping the partnership and initiative in touch with young people' (e.g. by contributing to Partnership Board meeting) and 'supporting a change in the perception of volunteering amongst young people' (e.g. by developing merchandise and promotional materials, and holding events to raising awareness).

There was however a general consensus that GwirForce had got off to slow and somewhat difficult start. One key stakeholder explained that GwirForce 'had problems understanding their role, what we expected of them, and how they were to support GwirVol but be distinct from GwirVol'.

The introduction of support via the GwirForce administration and support contract (awarded to Rathbone) was thought to have made a difference:

'Support for GwirForce was important; resources were made available and since then GwirForce has had more impact.'

Moreover key stakeholders acknowledged the role Rathbone play in GwirForce operating independently from GwirVol and the benefits and experience that a specialist youth volunteering organisation brought to the scheme.

However, most key stakeholders considered that the support provided by Rathbone had itself been somewhat compromised by high levels of staff turnover.

Key stakeholders and the YVAs generally thought that GwirForce has shown signs of increasing confidence. In particular the Charter for Young Volunteers in Wales, - which is to be presented to the First Minister at the Senedd in September 2011 - was seen as a key output and milestone; in a sense the first time GwirForce has contributed in its own right. The conference being planned for March 2012 was seen in similar vein; with two key stakeholders (non-GwirForce members) stating that it was evidence of GwirForce slowly building 'an identity' that is not GwirVol.

Key stakeholders were also clear the any criticism of the limited impact made by GwirForce to date should be viewed within the context of the resources available: GwirForce is comprised of volunteers, and their activities and administrative support comprise relatively small percentages of the overall GwirVol budget. As such it was generally agreed that 'there's only so much they can do.' Moreover most key stakeholders stressed that GwirForce was a relatively new concept and that it would 'need time to develop.'

There was also some concern about the make-up of GwirForce; and in particular whether GwirForce was representative of young people in Wales:

'GwirForce seems to be a small group of very enthusiastic young people. But I suspect they are generally people who would be heavily involved anyway and at times it all feels a little insular in the way they operate.'

However, broad feedback on the backgrounds of GwirForce members revealed a good mix of backgrounds (e.g. volunteers included those currently in education or training, those currently in employment and others who were unemployed).

Better promotion and awareness raising was a central theme arising from the key stakeholder interviews. Though GwirForce had obtained GwirVol funding for promotional work, almost all respondents (including the GwirForce respondents) said that more work remained to be done. Resourcing such work was a concern in this respect; some respondents thought that a mix of 'more of what they currently do' (e.g. annual conferences and attendance at community level events) and 'innovative solutions' (e.g. building 'name recognition' by raising awareness within schools – including those aged below 16 – using posters and working with school councils) would be needed.

However, concern was raised that there was something of a contradiction between achieving good levels of representation and engaging those 'hardest to reach' since those currently not engaged may be less enthusiastic or confident about taking a

leadership role within GwirForce. Similarly the 'one big family' feel to GwirForce was described as being important in retaining membership.

Notably, in these respects the YVAs identified a lack of links between GwirForce and the Local Grants Panel members. In particular, it was noted that Local Grants Panel members are invited to join and meet with GwirForce, but that in practice it is difficult for Local Grants Panel members to attend meetings, and as such take up is low.

Other difficulties and future risks were identified in relation to:

- Developing a north Wales presence for GwirForce, in particular there was thought to be a shortage of funding needed to pay for travel costs and materials to attend awareness raising events in north Wales;
- Reliance on four or five key members of GwirForce to drive GwirForce forward and in particular the burden that falls on those individuals (e.g. researchers were told that the GwirForce Chair can receive up to 600 e-mails a week in relation to GwirForce);
- Ensuring that GwirForce views fully feed into the partnership board deliberations; though GwirForce input was reported to have improved recently, it was felt that the partnership board could be intimidating for GwirForce members. Ideas for circumventing this problem include the GwirForce Chair/representative holding brief discussions with the WCVA manager and Chair of the partnership board prior to the meeting to ensure that their main points were taken on board;⁵⁹
- Ensuring consistent attendance of volunteers at meetings and events. Currently there were 48 young people 'on the GwirForce books' though usually between 10 and 20 (and sometimes much fewer) attend meetings and events. Notably too, key stakeholders reported that the current target of raising membership to 75 by March 2012 was unlikely to be achieved.

In terms of the future, stakeholders thought it imperative that GwirForce is clear about its on-going remit; GwirForce volunteers must be clear about what GwirVol

⁵⁹ This approach would offer an enhancement to the current approach whereby the GwirForce representative tends to meet with the WCVA GwirVol Manager prior to meetings.

wants from it. In this respect it respondents generally thought that Rathbone had helped GwirForce clarify its identity.

Most stakeholders thought that GwirForce should aim to have a greater impact in future years. A minority of key stakeholders were frustrated by the pace of progress to date: 'I don't think they have inspired as many other young people as had been hoped.'

There was also clear disagreement between those that thought greater impact could be achieved and those who were far less confident.

Despite these differences, most key stakeholders viewed GwirForce as being fundamental to GwirVol being 'youth-led'. They tended to feel that GwirForce would become even more important over time and assume a leadership role with GwirVol. They also felt that the administrative support contract was also important in introducing an element of accountability to the work of GwirForce and that it was too soon to cut ties between GwirForce and an administrative support body.

Other stakeholders (though not a majority) thought that the concept of GwirForce itself should be examined and alternative approaches of building youth input considered (e.g. a young people's National Advisory Panel reporting to the Welsh Government): 'It may be that the idea [of GwirForce] was misplaced and we need to look at some alternative approach.'

Suggestions for strengthening GwirForce included:

- GwirVol Partnership Board members to consider ways in which they could provide greater support to GwirForce's website (e.g. there is discussion about developing a separate GwirForce website and were this to go-ahead then Partners might wish to ensure that their organisation's web sites provided a link to the new GwirForce site);
- More encouragement for representatives of Local Youth Led panels to work with/join GwirForce as a way of improving representation;

- Encouraging GwirForce to have greater input to the Partnership Board (e.g. there was some concern that GwirForce had not embedded itself within the partnership as much as it could have done – e.g. Rathbone had attended some Board meetings instead of GwirForce members - and as such that that the youth voice or viewpoint had not come out as fully as it might have);
- At an appropriate time, encouraging GwirForce to apply for a national grant themselves;
- Making additional resources available to GwirForce to cover travel costs and materials for additional promotional work (particularly in North Wales);
- Becoming more formalised through the development of a constitution. In particular it was suggested that eventually this might allow GwirForce to apply for grant funding outside of GwirVol, undertake fundraising and even potentially enterprise activities.

4.3.7 Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

WCVA

Contracting WCVA to manage the GwirVol scheme was seen by key stakeholders as a good decision. Expectations that the sector would respond positively to WCVA as a grant administrator and that significant use could be made of WCVA's sector expertise, knowledge and understanding had generally been met.

Key stakeholders saw strength in the fact that the GwirVol processes and systems (e.g. for the national grant programmes) draw heavily on 'tried and tested' approaches used by WCVA in previous programmes. In essence the feeling was that WCVA 'was a natural place' from which to administer GwirVol, given the existing infrastructure and in particular WCVA's links with CVCs across Wales.

Stakeholders were also extremely positive about WCVA's management of GwirVol: 'They've got a really good team', 'they're excellent at supporting the Partnership Board' and 'very proactive, very approachable' were some of the comments given at interview.

The YVAs thought that the management of GwirVol had been good. Links between the YVAs and WCVA were described as excellent. From their experience they had found WCVA to be very supportive of them as advisors and also of the project: 'GwirVol is well placed within the WCVA'.

Furthermore the YVAs reported that they had received good training from WCVA and that the WCVA team regularly attended the YVA meetings which was deemed to be very useful. Again, strengths of the WCVA team were that they were seen as enthusiastic and approachable.

In terms of the monitoring arrangements the YVAs reported broad overall satisfaction. The caveat here was that they were mindful that they had been asked very recently to produce monthly reports, and were unsure to what extent this would increase the workload on them.

Turning back to the experience of the organisations receiving national grants, (35 respondents or 78%) found the monitoring forms either fairly or very easy to complete whilst seven (15%) had experienced some difficulties with the monitoring forms⁶⁰.

Some eleven respondents suggested ways by which the monitoring forms could be improved and the most commonly cited suggestions related to:

- Simplifying the forms and in particular reducing what were seen to be repetitive questions thus making it less time consuming to complete;
- Making the forms available online and building in checking system to ensure that data being entered is accurate;
- Asking for data which is proportionate to the amount of grant received: some comments made in this respect included: 'it was a bit of an overkill considering the course was only two weeks long' and 'other grant providers give us larger sums of funding but have much simpler forms to complete'.

⁶⁰ Three could not respond to this question as they had no direct experience of completing the forms – in one case the respondent had yet to complete the monitoring forms.

It was surprising that only a quarter of the surveyed organisations (12 respondents or 27%) had received a monitoring visit from a WCVA grant assessor. All 12 respondents had been satisfied with the monitoring visit received and noted that the visit had involved some of the following elements:

- Meetings with project manager (or an appropriate senior manager within the organisation) and volunteers involved and if appropriate a site visit;
- Reviewing organisational processes relating to financial and monitoring arrangements;
- Reviewing project related documentation including spreadsheets and completed forms.

Three respondents suggested ways by which future monitoring visits could be improved. These were:

- Receiving a list beforehand of the information that the WCVA assessor would like to see so as to be better prepared;
- Undertaking monitoring visits at the outset when a grant is awarded to ensure processes being put in place are appropriate;
- Ensuring that all monitoring visits include an opportunity to meet volunteers and see the project in action.

The Partnership Board

Key stakeholders noted that good progress had been made in developing the size and representation of the Partnership. Currently there are around 20 Partner members – membership has consistently been at this level which, according to some respondents illustrates on-going enthusiasm for, and belief in, GwirVol.

Good linkages were also reported between the Partnership Board, WCVA and Welsh Government, though until recently there were no formal direct communications between the Partnership Board and the YVAs. This has now been resolved and two of the YVAs sit as members on the Board. It is thought that this move will improve further the links between local level interventions and GwirVol's national and strategic level work.

While key stakeholders deemed the Partnership Board to be working well there was almost unanimous agreement that the Board (and sub-groups) would benefit from greater private sector input. In particular it was thought that private sector input might give the discussions 'a harder edge', and provide a wider perspective around firstly the issues facing the private sector in offering and/or supporting volunteering, secondly how volunteering might best be used to support help young people find work and thirdly how GwirVol might engage more widely and build greater support for volunteering in the private sector. Encouragingly, key stakeholders reported that moves were already under way to encourage further private sector involvement.

The sub-groups themselves were seen as a significant strength:

'It's pretty lively at times! All opinions are welcome and the hard and difficult questions get asked.'

However, key stakeholders stated that reliance on volunteers meant that attendance at sub-group meetings was variable. For this reason, and to reduce the burden on specific individuals and ensure a broad mix of views and ideas, there was a general need to increase membership numbers.

4.4 The contribution of GwirVol to increasing youth volunteering in Wales

In this Section, we consider the impact of GwirVol in terms of increasing youth volunteering and taking forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission.

We consider in turn:

- Performance against agreed targets and impact on organisations being supported;
- The impact of GwirVol on young volunteers;
- Issues of additionality and deadweight;
- Cost effectiveness.

4.4.1 Performance against agreed targets

YVAs were broadly supportive of the GwirVol performance measures, though there was a strong sense that they failed to capture additional results of their work e.g. a school visit might result in contact with 100 or so young people, of which a percentage may engage in GwirVol volunteering, but all would have gained awareness of GwirVol and young people volunteering opportunities. Similarly the YVAs pointed out that their GwirVol work had wider benefits to others in the communities, and that this was not currently measured.

The YVAs did however consider that target numbers had been set appropriately, and that this was based upon realistic planning and basing targets on previous experience.⁶¹

Overall, YVA interviewees confirmed that, as shown in Table 3.6 above, they had generally achieved their own performance targets to date.

Some (albeit a minority of) YVAs suggested that the most effective aspect of their work was meeting young people on a one to one basis and getting them into volunteering opportunities. This is often a relatively straight-forward process (which takes about half an hour to an hour of their time) which involves talking about volunteering, finding out what interests the young person and giving them contact details about organisations and opportunities. In most cases young people are then able to follow this advice themselves.

YVAs also argued strongly that the Local Youth Grant programme has worked very well and provides small amounts of funding that can be easily accessed by groups of young people. They argued that more of GwirVol funds should be channelled via these panels.

In terms of factors constraining the achievement of targets the YVAs pointed to:

⁶¹ Individual targets have been set as a result of discussion between the WCVA, the YVA and their respective line manager at their CVC. These targets would then be included in the annual funding agreements put in place between the WCVA and each CVC. The national targets reflect the aggregate of the targets agreed with the individual YVA/CVC.

- Difficulties in prioritising workloads between activities that contribute directly to GwirVol outputs and activities that support youth volunteering in general. This has become more pressing with the introduction of the Welsh Bacculaureate in schools/colleges;
- Lack of resources per local authority to deal with the increase in demand from young people and referring organisations: in particular it was argued that this meant that 'reactive work' tended to take priority over the 'proactive work' of seeking out new volunteering opportunities (despite the fact that creating new volunteering opportunities was seen as more challenging);
- Difficulties in providing the time/resource necessary to support young people with additional requirements. YVAs stated that some 'clients' (e.g. disabled clients, those with mental health problems) need additional support in making contact with an organisation, taking them to meet them, offering assistance in making the transition into volunteering etc. One YVA also noted that partner organisations do sometimes refer clients who are not ready to take up volunteering opportunities because of their high level of requirements. Another noted that YVAs they have not received any training or have no experience of dealing with young people with such specific needs;
- Administration of the Youth Panel can be resource intensive: it was argued that the amount of work required maintaining these Panels is often underestimated.

In terms of the national grant recipients, three targets were set for three of the funding schemes under GwirVol (Creating Opportunities, Street Games and International Projects). These targets were:

- Number of new youth (16-25) volunteering opportunities to be created;
- Total number of new young (16-25) volunteers involved; and
- Total number of hours completed by all new volunteers.

It would appear that the targets set by surveyed organisations have been fairly modest. 32 organisations (or 86%) had set a target of creating up to 30 volunteering opportunities and 29 organisations (or 78%) had set a target of recruiting up to 30 new young volunteers. While grants are, of course, quite small, this average is below

that implied by the targets for the scheme: the overall target per funded project for 2009 to 2011 is for 3,000 new young volunteers across 72 organisations i.e. 42 new young volunteers per organisation on average.

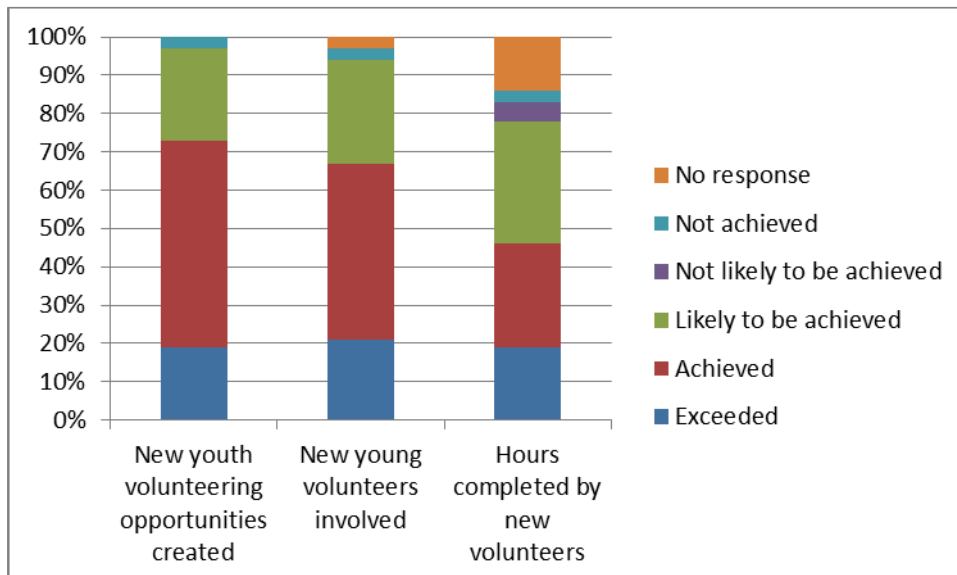
There was a greater diversity in terms of the total number of hours expected to be completed by all new volunteers although care must be taken in interpreting the findings as quite a number of surveyed respondents (10 respondents or 27%) could not recall the value of this target. Just under half (46% or 17 organisations) set a target of over 500 hours to be completed by all new volunteers, two (5%) did not have any such targets and eight organisations had very varied targets lower than 500 hours.

The survey of funded organisations suggests that organisations have been successful in achieving or exceeding their targets set for new volunteering opportunities and young volunteers involved (see Figure 4.4 below) whilst lower levels of success were reported against the total number of hours expected to be completed by new volunteers. For example 73% of those surveyed (27 of 37 respondents) had achieved or exceeded their target for creating volunteering opportunities with a further 24% (nine of 37 respondents) taking the view that the target would be achieved when the project would be complete. Indeed only one project had not achieved these two targets – this particular project had been funded via the Street Games strand and had managed to achieve half of its targets (i.e. nine opportunities and nine volunteers from a target of 18). In this instance the reason for not achieving the target had been put down to difficulties associated with public transport and the lack of funding for transport costs – thus not being able to get young people to the organisation.

Organisations have been slightly less successful in achieving their target of hours completed by all new volunteers, though still a large majority either had (46% or 17 of 37 respondents) or thought they were on track to (32% or 12 of 37 respondents) achieve or exceed this target. Three respondents (8%) stated that the target was

either not or not likely to be achieved⁶² - in one case the organisation had found that the volunteers recruited to the project had worked short hours than anticipated.

Figure 4.4: Targets Achieved by Surveyed Organisations



Source= Telephone survey of 37 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations who received funding via the Creating Opportunities, Street Games or International grant funds.

The targets set for the fourth strand of the GwirVol scheme (Promotions) could be defined during the application stage by the applicants themselves. Surveyed organisations who had received a Promotions grant (eight in total) noted that their targets were mostly unquantified or qualitative in nature e.g. increasing awareness and benefits of volunteering, preparation of resources such as CDs, giving presentations and attending various events which would ultimately lead to an increase in the number of young people getting involved in voluntary work. It therefore follows that all of the surveyed organisations in receipt of a Promotions grant thought that their targets had been achieved or exceeded (albeit two of the eight noted that the project was still underway but expected to achieve their targets).

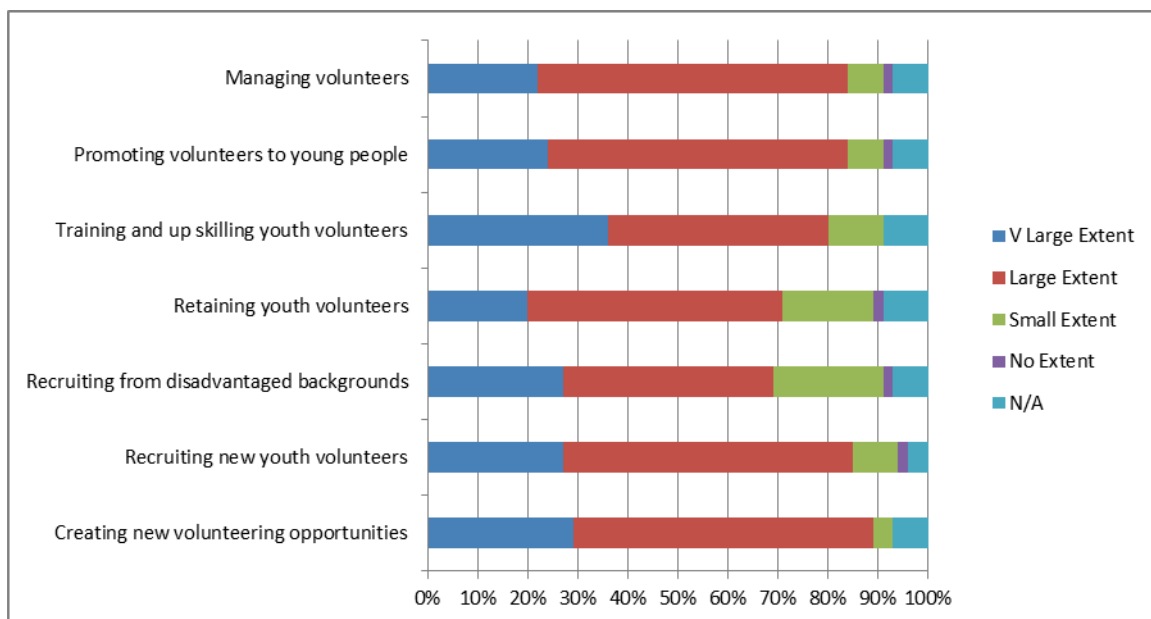
In terms of achievements, surveyed organisations were upbeat about the extent to which their funded project had been able to meet its original aims and objectives with

⁶² Five respondents did not respond to this question.

21 respondents (47%) claiming it had done so to a very large extent, 19 (or 42%) to a large extent and only two (4%) to a small extent⁶³.

It would appear that the GwirVol grant funding has been instrumental in helping funded organisations to deal with particular volunteering challenges; in particular in helping to overcome the difficulties of creating new volunteering opportunities and overcoming the challenges of recruiting new youth volunteers, as is shown in Figure 4.5. Whilst still important to many organisations it would appear that overall GwirVol funding has been less instrumental in helping organisations address the issues of retaining youth volunteers and recruiting young people from disadvantaged background with, for example, only around two-thirds of those surveyed (32 and 31 respondents respectively) claiming that the funding had helped to address these issues to a large or very large extent.

Figure 4.5: Extent to which GwirVol funding has helped organisations to overcome volunteering challenges



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

Surveyed organisations were asked to identify any other benefits as a result of delivering the project. The three most commonly cited benefits were:

⁶³ Three respondents declined to comment

- Positive outcomes for the volunteers involved including developing new skills including employability skills, and moving onto employment and further learning e.g. one respondent noted that some of the volunteers had proceeded to enrol at an university to study a degree which they had thought impossible for them at the outset;
- Positive publicity for the organisation delivering the project which often led to increased public awareness of their work and enhanced community reputation. It was also noted by one organisation that they had managed to enthuse interest in volunteering amongst people of all ages – not just young people;
- Developing relationships and partnerships with other organisations – often other charities and community groups.

In addition it is also worth highlighting the following benefits which were only mentioned by one organisation in each case:

- Securing an award for the work carried out by the project;
- Continuation of the project (and volunteers involved) to carry on with the work after funding had come to an end;
- A youth volunteer became a Board member of one organisation.

Only a very small number of surveyed organisations could identify any disadvantages of being involved with GwirVol funded projects. The main issue highlighted was around difficulties in managing volunteers recruited – this was a particular issue for two organisations who had a lack of staff resource capacity to manage volunteers. A third organisation had faced this issue because they had to deal with and manage volunteers who had been referred to the project by other organisations. These volunteers were termed ‘forced volunteers’ by the organisation concerned because they were reluctant to participate, lacked motivation and demonstrated challenging behaviour at times.

Key stakeholders were overall satisfied with the progress GwirVol had made against its agreed targets. Two respondents noted that GwirVol was implemented against a backdrop of already good performance in volunteering at all age groups in Wales.

As one respondent put it: 'This probably meant that numbers were never going to be startling in terms of take up.'

There was also general satisfaction from the key stakeholders that GwirVol has made good progress in relation to the Russell Recommendations, though again, a majority of respondents stressed that they tended to focus on a small number of the Recommendations (e.g. 'achieving a step change' and 'being youth led') as it was less clear how the project related to other Recommendations (e.g. 'a series of campaigns promoting awareness').

Key factors supporting the achievement of targets were identified as being:

- A sound scheme structure with GwirVol as the 'national umbrella' but with excellent linkages between national and local level interventions;
- Engagement with statutory services at the local level which had the effect of levering in additional funding (actual and in-kind time) in support of youth led grant etc;
- Growing awareness of GwirVol (and strong demand) as evidenced by a good overall levels of grant applications;
- The inclusiveness of multi-faceted scheme offering a mix of interventions at national and local levels;
- The flexibility in the scheme – that scope and method are not fixed - meaning that GwirVol can evolve to take advantage of opportunities or address problems arising. The work of the sub-groups was considered particularly important in this respect;
- Practical outputs: for example, the publication of the Young Volunteers Charter and the accreditation scoping report: You Give You Get.

Few concerns were raised about performance, though one respondent did identify inconsistent performance across Wales as being worth closer scrutiny. In particular it was thought that this was partly 'a reflection of history' (some areas have a longer background of supporting youth volunteering than other areas) and partly a reflection of the extent to which local CVCs were able to support GwirVol. Overall however key

stakeholders stated that most problems (e.g. initial web site) had been addressed quickly and had since improved.

More generally key stakeholders were acutely aware that GwirVol was a relatively new scheme and that achievement of some key goals (e.g. for it to 'be commonplace for young people to volunteer')⁶⁴ would take a period of time greater than one three year funding period.

However, against the backdrop of increased spending scrutiny key stakeholders were keen to explore what more could be done to enhance the evaluation of impact:

'People used to say that "volunteering is good because it is!" by that I mean it was just accepted. But now people are asking "this is an investment so "why is it good, in what ways?" '

All key stakeholders raised the caveat that that an enhanced performance measurement approach would require additional resourcing:

'I'm hesitant to say it [enhanced impact evaluation] should be done, because it would need additional resources. If the additional resources were not there then we must prioritise delivery....[However] 'It is something that could be proposed, that is, if we get X funding we can do Y impact/outcomes evaluation.'

Similarly, key stakeholders agreed that the approach to measuring impact needed to be robust:

'It has to be done in the right way, the findings need to stand up to scrutiny. So you would be wary of too much self-reporting etc.'

In this respect concern was raised as to how long term impacts on individuals and others could be measured.

⁶⁴ Recommendation 4: Russell Commission (2005)

Resource permitting, at the individual level it was thought that more emphasis could be given to qualitative side and in particular, random sampling to produce case study type findings. At the intervention level, surveying of participants could be built into the scheme from the outset (of a new funding round).

Moreover there was a clear steer from the key stakeholders that GwirVol monitoring and evaluation should be expanded to consider the impact on the wider community in which the volunteering is taking place.

Finally, stakeholders considered it important to publicise the impact findings to help build GwirVol:

‘You will need to resource this but overall it’s probably worth it.’

‘Better outcomes and impact measurement would lead to better showcasing of GwirVol and a stronger case for continued funding.’

4.4.2 Impact of GwirVol on Young Volunteers

Young volunteers were deemed to have benefitted in many ways from GwirVol. Key stakeholders stated that the quality of volunteering opportunities had been high⁶⁵ and the impacts – revealed by the collected case studies – impressive.

YVAs identified specific benefits to individuals including:

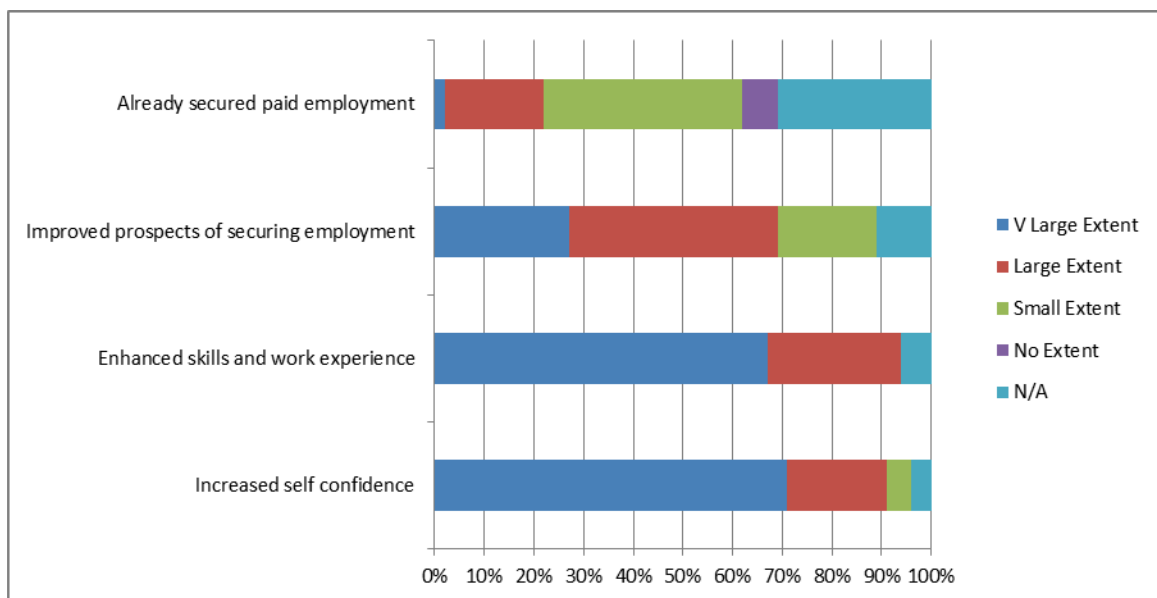
- Developing new and transferrable skills to employment;
- Developing a sense of pride e.g. gaining awards/achievements;
- Altruistic benefits – being able to contribute to community or work with specific groups and making a difference;
- Enhancing their CV – universities, colleges and prospective employers via volunteering experience in a positive light;

⁶⁵ For example, we are aware that early in the GwirVol scheme proposals were put to the SON (Service Operational Network) for Volunteer Centres regarding standards and policies when involving young people through projects like the youth led grants (see WCVA 6monthly report 2009-10)

- Personal benefits e.g. social interaction, confidence building etc

National grant recipients responding to the survey identified that the main benefit has been increased self-confidence: with 71% of those surveyed (32 respondents) noting that volunteers involved in the projects had been able to increase their confidence to a very large extent as a result of their participation. Whilst expected, the difference made to volunteers' prospects of securing employment or actually gaining employment as a result of their participation was much lower as shown in Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6: Extent of benefits to volunteers according to surveyed organisations



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

Feedback from young volunteers who responded to the web survey echoed the views of surveyed organisations as most of the young volunteers felt that their experience of GwirVol had led to an increase in their confidence but only a small number (around a third) thought that the experience had helped them to secure a training place and even less (around a fifth) thought that the experience had helped them find work.

4.4.3 Additionality and Deadweight

In terms of additionality, it was fairly encouraging to find that half of the surveyed national grant recipient organisations (51% or 23 organisations) thought that the project would not have been delivered at all, had it not been for the GwirVol grant funding, which suggests that the GwirVol scheme offers a reasonable level of additionality. The other half believed that the project would have been delivered in some way – two (4%) thought that the project would have gone ahead in the same way with funding from elsewhere, ten (22%) thought that the project would have been delivered on a smaller scale with funding from elsewhere, five (11%) thought that the project would have been delivered at a later date and the remaining five (11%) thought that another outcome would have been secured e.g. the project would have been delivered on a smaller scale but without any alternative source of funding.

Whilst additionality at the level of organisations offering volunteering opportunities appears relatively high, GwirVol does not appear to have offered the same level of added value in terms of attracting young people who did not have any previous experience of volunteering. A third of surveyed organisations (31% or 13 respondents) reported that all of the young volunteers recruited to the project had previous experience of volunteering; while, in addition, over half (53% or 24 organisations) noted that some of the volunteers had previous volunteering experience⁶⁶.

These views were echoed by those of the young volunteers who responded to the web survey - the majority of which had previous volunteering experience prior to getting involved with GwirVol. Indeed only a quarter claimed not to have any volunteering experience at all prior to GwirVol. These findings do suggest a strong element of deadweight is generated within the GwirVol scheme as far as the individual volunteers (as opposed to the volunteering opportunities) are concerned.

Finally, surveyed organisations were asked to comment on what they thought any new volunteers attracted through the project would have done had the project not existed. Of the 45 organisations surveyed:

⁶⁶ The remaining six respondents noted that they did not know.

- 19 respondents (42%) thought that new volunteers would have looked for work or other volunteering;
- One respondent (2%) thought that new volunteers would have looked for paid work;
- Two respondents (4%) thought that new volunteers would have volunteered elsewhere;
- 17 respondents (38%) thought that new volunteers would have done nothing (i.e. not volunteered elsewhere or looked for paid work).

Furthermore about two-thirds of the young volunteers who responded to the web survey stated that they would have got involved in volunteering anyway had it not been for GwirVol and only a third thought that they would not. Again the responses highlight the fact that there has been an element of displacement generated by the GwirVol scheme as a large proportion of volunteers would have volunteered elsewhere.

In contrast to this finding, the YVAs argued that the majority of individuals they supported were new to volunteering and that their main reason for contacting the YVA for advice was not knowing how to get involved in volunteering, how to find volunteering opportunities or what volunteering fundamentally means:

‘some young people come with mis-conceptions that they will be paid or will be guaranteed a job afterwards.’

YVAs were of the view that quite a large proportion would not have taken the idea further as a result of not knowing how to pursue with the concept.

YVAs also stated that more recent volunteers were also receiving support from partner organisations (given the higher referral rate in recent years). YVAs added that partner organisations viewed GwirVol as the best source of volunteering support and were more likely to consider volunteering as a progression route for their clients now.

4.4.4 Cost effectiveness

Key stakeholders were strongly of the opinion that GwirVol offers value for money. There was clear recognition of the different types of benefits:

‘There are immediate beneficiaries – the young people, the funded organisations - and then there are the communities in which these young people are volunteering’.

‘It is culture changing with impacts beyond those GwirVol volunteers’

‘It’s an investment in the future not just for the present.’

The YVAs also thought that GwirVol offers value for money, though they stated that some elements were more cost effective than others: the small local grants were highlighted as an example of an intervention offering relatively strong levels of value for money (though understandably YVAs felt less able to comment on the VFM of the national grant programme).

YVAs also argued that value for money had increased over time – which they saw as another argument for retention - since the YVAs were able to link with, and add value to, the work of partner organisations (e.g. Welsh Government, JobCentre Plus, Higher Education Institutions and providers of the New Work Programme) to help achieve their goals.

Levering funding / Matchfunding

There was also clear evidence of GwirVol interventions levering-in funding from other sources. Key stakeholders noted that many of the YVAs had been successful in drawing in funding such that their roles became full-time rather than part-time. Similarly, the Youth Led Grant had been increased in many areas through match-funding from local CVCs and statutory bodies. Moreover, key stakeholders were keenly aware that many national grant recipient organisations had used GwirVol funding to obtain further (match) funding.

However, some key stakeholders expressed disappointment in the failure to obtain European funding as match-funding for GwirVol, though it was stressed that this resulted from factors beyond the control of the WCVA team and GwirVol Partnership Board. Were GwirVol funding to continue post March 2012 then it was anticipated that the scheme would seek to apply for match-funding via European funds should they become available.

Some key stakeholders did also argue that there had been greater success elsewhere in generating match-funding:

‘In England they’re more successful overall at matchfunding – particularly with large private corporates who have a HQ there. But you wonder whether the economic downturn has affected that funding though, because it is the type of things that would be the first thing to go when financial pressures increase. But maybe more can be done to push for private sector financial match-funding support’.

In-kind funding

A further point in this respect is that GwirVol’s ‘input’ are greater than what GwirVol funds. The key stakeholders pointed out that many GwirVol interventions were based upon volunteer time: GwirForce, the local youth panels, the GwirVol Partnership Board being the most obvious examples.⁶⁷ Beyond these there was the feeling that grant funded organisations were also providing resource in addition to their GwirVol funding to ensure implementation of their GwirVol projects.

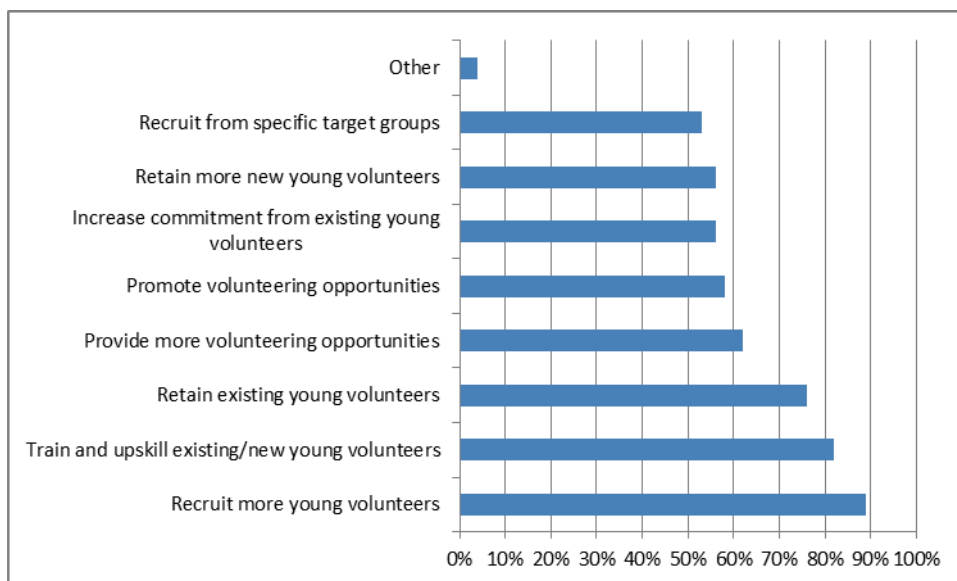
4.5 Future delivery

Finally, we consider evidence from our fieldwork on future delivery plans and aspirations.

⁶⁷ It was also highlighted in the Key stakeholder interviews that Partnership Board members tended to be very senior managers within their respective organisations, and hence their opportunity cost was significant.

Surveyed organisations were asked to identify their plans for the next few years (Figure 4.7). The most important objective, cited by 89% of those surveyed (40 respondents) was to recruit more new young volunteers, followed by training and upskilling of existing or new young volunteers (cited by 82% or 37 respondents). Other priorities, such as recruiting more new young volunteers from specific target groups were rated as a lower priority, albeit over half (53% or 24 respondents) stated that this would be an objective for them over the coming few years.

Figure 4.7: Future plans for surveyed organisations



Source= Telephone survey of 45 GwirVol national grant recipient organisations

Surveyed organisations noted that they intended to draw upon a variety of sources to fund these plans over the coming few years, including the following sources:

- 87% (39 organisations) intended to tap into WCVA volunteering grant scheme funding;
- 69% (31 organisations) intended to carry out fund raising activities;
- 64% (29 organisations) intended to use their own organisation's resources;
- 64% (29 organisations) intended to secure other grant schemes including Welsh Government, Local Authority, National Lottery, European Union and other community based funding streams;

- 7% (3 organisations) intended to fund these plans via other means – one of whom noted that they intended to establish the organisation as a social enterprise which would reduce their reliance on grant funding schemes.

Key stakeholders were unanimous in arguing that GwirVol should be retained. They described how this was a ‘very dangerous time to step away from youth volunteering’: GwirVol was not self-sustaining and was being implemented against a backdrop of rising youth unemployment and contracting third sector funding – both strong factors in providing a continued rationale. Moreover, almost all stakeholders considered major changes to GwirVol at this stage risked the progress that has been made.

Key stakeholders were unanimous however that the scheme must remain relevant in particular in identifying ‘what works’ with engaging young people. The role of GwirForce and the local level interventions was considered central: ‘We must understand the developments in young people’s thinking.’

Two respondents cautioned however that inclusiveness meant recognising that volunteers are a diverse set of individuals with a diverse set of backgrounds and motivations for volunteering. As such, flexibility must be retained in the ways young people might be engaged.

Moreover, GwirVol also includes organisations from the third, public and private sectors. Key stakeholders thought that more could be done to improve engagement across these sectors – and in particular, participation in the Partnership Board (and sub-groups). This would require achieving a broad appeal which, key stakeholders suggested, meant maintaining a diverse set of approaches and interventions.

Key stakeholders also thought that a stronger emphasis was needed on promoting GwirVol. Key stakeholders talked of improving name or ‘brand’ recognition across Wales and increasing understanding about what GwirVol is and what it does. Positive imagery through case studies and ‘news stories’ would be important; as

would be ensuring that youth volunteering remains on the political radar. GwirVol was thought to be a strong vehicle for both.

Effective and cost effective use of resources was seen as crucial. Stakeholders thought that continuing focus on innovative approaches (like the MV50 programme) would be needed. For example, to achieve further improvements in the quality of applications for national grants, GwirVol might consider signposting to other organisations who can support applicants.

In addition, partners thought there were future opportunities in leveraging-in funding (via match-funding) at the local and national level, including, crucially, funding support from the private sector. While some work has been undertaken in this area, key stakeholders were keen for greater emphasis over the next few years.

Against this, three key stakeholders thought there was a real risk in GwirVol resources being spread too thinly. In particular, future interventions had to attain 'depth as well as breadth' to ensure the impacts on young people and organisations are lasting. Key stakeholders were aware that some 'attractive opportunities' may need to be forsaken because of resource constraints though the interviews revealed a strong appetite for consideration of potential development (e.g. extending GwirVol to cover young people 14 to 25 years old).

Overall, there was thought to be significant unmet demand for young people volunteering opportunities in Wales.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, YVAs also argued that the GwirVol programme should continue. In particular they thought it a matter of priority that volunteers have some form of access to expenses funding (e.g. travel, equipment, child-care). Generally, YVAs were also happy with the existing GwirVol model; though with some suggested minor tweaking around:

- Simplification of the national grant programme application forms (e.g. 'the forms are too long for some to complete');
- YVAs being allocated additional resources to deal with the growth in demand;

- Determining how YVAs provide the additional support for young people with specific/special needs, which they cannot cater for at the moment;
- Expanding GwirVol to encompass the 14 and 15 year old age group.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, we outline our overall conclusions and a series of twelve recommendations, aimed principally at drawing out the key lessons that can help support decision makers in their deliberations on future funding arrangements.

Overall, the findings from this evaluation point to high levels of satisfaction with GwirVol, both by those directly involved and those benefiting from support from the grant programmes, albeit with some caveats around the application and monitoring processes.

GwirVol is a well-managed, inclusive scheme that encourages and supports young volunteers through a mix of interventions at the local and national levels.

GwirVol continues to be a uniquely Welsh approach to meeting the recommendations of the Russell Commission (2005). The scheme has been implemented against a backdrop of a supportive policy context in Wales and this is likely to continue under the 2011-2015 Programme for Government in Wales. Moreover, at the time GwirVol was set up, there were already good levels of volunteering across all age groups in Wales, which provided a solid platform for the initiative.

In light of the wider socio-economic context – characterised by high and increasing youth unemployment and concerns around intergenerational tensions - the rationale for GwirVol is probably stronger now than in April 2009. The evaluation has found strong support for the continuation of the scheme beyond March 2012.

GwirVol provides a broad based framework by which different routes into volunteering can be offered to young people. Importantly, this has allowed GwirVol to make progress (particularly through the national grant programmes) in engaging those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

While there has been progress in raising awareness of youth volunteering and GwirVol amongst stakeholder groups and organisations in Wales, and there is a general feeling that the scheme is 'punching above its weight' in respect to promotional work it seems essential that more work is done in this area.

In terms of design, GwirVol has operated in a flexible way to take advantage of new opportunities. In doing so much has been learnt about 'what works' in delivering volunteer support at the national and local level.

There must, however, be some concern about the progress made by the GwirForce intervention. GwirForce clearly has an important role in amongst other things providing a 'youth voice' that helps shape the wider GwirVol programme. There is nonetheless an urgent need to improve overall representation including increasing membership numbers, reducing reliance on certain individuals, and improving coverage across Wales (especially north Wales).

There is good evidence that the GwirVol scheme has contributed positively to youth volunteering in Wales. For instance WCVA's monitoring evidence suggests that – while not reaching their overall targets - the national grant programmes did recruit 957 volunteers in 2009/10 providing a total of 59,000 volunteer hours input in 2009/10, while our survey of grant recipient organisations suggests that almost all have met or will meet the targets set.

Similarly the YVA and Local Youth Led Grants programme showed strong levels of volunteer recruitment/engagement, and strong performance has also been recorded in the diversity of young people taking up volunteering opportunities.

However, less clear is GwirVol's effect on overall youth volunteering in Wales. Data on the aggregate amount of young volunteering hours (all Wales) is limited. The indirect/proxy measure based on number of volunteering opportunities (derived from www.volunteeringwales.net) revealed static volunteering opportunities between 2009/10 and 2010/11, though it must be stressed that the measure itself is at best indicative.

Moreover, the findings of this evaluation indicate relatively high levels of volunteer 'deadweight' suggesting that more needs to be done to engage new (rather than existing) volunteers.

At the scheme level, more needs to be done to improve the performance measures used for the scheme, particularly around the website based measures and setting SMART target figures for the grant programmes.

The findings do also however hint at appreciably positive impacts on young people (and indirectly others) though there is a clear need for a more detailed and robust capture of the scheme's impacts, particularly in presenting a more comprehensive picture of performance, and helping to better determine relative performance of the various interventions on a like for like basis.

Improved impact monitoring evaluation would also underpin more rigorous monitoring of value for money at the intervention and scheme levels. Within the scope of available resources this is likely to include both measures easily monetised e.g. hours of volunteering input and those less easily monetised (softer outcomes on volunteers - e.g. attitudinal change - and wider impacts on communities).

Crucially however, GwirVol must also retain the capacity to reallocate funding in light of future findings on relative value for money. For example, the findings for the Local Youth Led grants in particular do hint at relatively strong performance, which could potentially lead to a strong argument for these interventions receiving a greater proportion of the GwirVol funding in future years.

Recommendation 1: In light of the broadly positive findings of this evaluation, we recommend that the GwirVol programme is retained for at least another three years. While recognising the pressures to cut budgets for third sector support programmes, it seems important to stress that existing GwirVol funding is spread across a number of interventions and any significant reductions in overall funding for GwirVol would risk making individual interventions tokenistic, and render the scheme as whole,

ineffective. We recommend therefore that existing funding levels are retained as far as possible.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the current mix of interventions is retained, while also providing flexibility to ensure continued adaptation to changes in the wider policy context: in particular, GwirVol should aim to identify potential opportunities from current and emerging policy developments (e.g. providing follow-on volunteering opportunities for those studying the Welsh Baccalaureate, linking with the UK National Citizen Service agenda and opportunities around emerging policy developments like the Child Poverty agenda in Wales).

Recommendation 3: For the present we recommend retaining approximately the same balance between the different interventions as in the current scheme. However, given the strong performance of local grant schemes, and the small amount of funding currently available, we would argue that this element should be protected in absolute as well as relative terms. Where possible, local grant panels, YVAs and CVCs should seek to identify match funding for these 'pots', drawing on good practice examples such as that in Swansea.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that awareness raising and promotion remains an on-going focus of the GwirVol scheme and with increasing emphasis on: a) promotion in areas with relatively low take up (e.g. few volunteers from North Wales have so far engaged in GwirForce) and b) raising awareness of the overall impact and benefits of youth volunteering.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that GwirVol continues to target young volunteers from all backgrounds and does not become exclusively focused on engaging traditionally hard to reach groups, while retaining its record of success in this regard.

Recommendation 6: On balance, we recommend that GwirForce should be retained though there needs to be step change in the pace of delivering GwirForce activities and impacts. Promotion of GwirForce, particularly in north Wales needs

urgent attention, and GwirForce members must be given sufficient resources to cover promotional materials/costs and travel expenses to this end. Furthermore we think that cross-representation between the Local Youth Panels and GwirForce is highly desirable, while recognising the necessary limitations arising from the voluntary nature of participation in both. .

Recommendation 7: We recommend that the current management arrangements for GwirVol are retained, but with urgent attention given to increasing the membership numbers and scope of the partnership board (and sub-groups). In particular, though we recognise that this represents a generic challenge for many partnership based bodies, GwirVol should seek greater engagement from private sector organisations. There are significant advantages in WCVA, with its structural links to the CVCs and its high profile within the third sector, continuing to manage the scheme.

Recommendation 8: We recommend that while GwirVol should continue to operate inclusively, encouraging volunteering from all young volunteers in Wales, there should be a strong focus (particularly in the national grant programmes) on attracting individuals who are new to volunteering. Moreover, we think careful consideration should be given to the inclusion within GwirVol of the 14 and 15 year old age group.

Recommendation 9: Should the national grant programmes be retained, WCVA should review the grant application and monitoring forms in the light of the feedback from our questionnaire to ensure that they are as simple as possible, drawing on their broader experience, and discussing with the Welsh Government any obstacles which they perceive as arising from the latter's requirements. WCVA and the Welsh Government should also consider whether smaller locally based organisations could be signposted for assistance to the YVAs for support (and potentially for support from the local grants) in the first instance.

Recommendation 10: We recommend that GwirVol revisits (and where appropriate revises) the existing performance measures – particularly those associated with the web site / online data - to ensure robustness in the monitoring approach. Moreover,

GwirVol staff should work with applicants to create targets that are SMART – including for promotions grants.

Recommendation 11: We recommend that GwirVol Partnership Board gives careful consideration to how total youth volunteering hours in Wales can be derived and monitored (e.g. perhaps as part of the wider statistical information collated by WCVA in its third sector statistical resource). Moreover, we recommend that the Welsh Government and the GwirVol Partnership Board gives consideration to measuring young people’s attitudes to volunteering across Wales, perhaps via the National Survey for Wales.

Recommendation 12: We recommend that the GwirVol Partnership Board consider feasible ways of developing more detailed and robust impact monitoring and associated value for money data (e.g. what might be included within the standard returns from funded organisations, how surveys of young volunteers might be used and whether a case study template could be further developed to capture more detailed and indirect impacts e.g. to derive potential impacts on local public services).

Annex 1: Russell Commission (2005) Recommendations⁶⁸

1. A series of campaigns should promote awareness of volunteering;
2. A national volunteering portal to ensure that young people have ready access to information on volunteering opportunities;
3. To ensure that young people receive high quality advice and guidance on volunteering, the implementation body should contract to put in place 200 Youth Volunteer Advisers;
4. It should be commonplace for young people to volunteer whilst they are at school, college or in higher education;
5. To celebrate the achievements of young volunteers, the implementation body should facilitate an annual youth volunteering award ceremony, to recognise and reward young people for their contributions to UK society;
6. Young people should have access to a 'menu of opportunity', with details of the full range of volunteering activities;
7. There should be a step change in the number of young people volunteering and the diversity of young volunteers. This will require a significant expansion in the number of available opportunities – short-term, part-time and full-time – with effective targeting to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to volunteer;
8. A national framework should recognise the popularity and worth of international volunteering, by offering up to 1,000 overseas volunteering opportunities;
9. There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector, e.g. in hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres, to gain valuable experience and deliver tangible community benefit. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy;
10. The quality of volunteering opportunities would benefit from greater assurance on a set of clearly stated criteria. Volunteering organisations should be encouraged to meet minimum standards governing the access, involvement, development and reward of young volunteers;
11. The opportunity to improve skills and employability is a powerful incentive for young people to volunteer. It is important to mark the contribution made by young volunteers, and to recognize the skills they learn in the course of their activity;

⁶⁸ Report of the Russell Commission chaired by Ian M Russell (2005) *A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement*, Norwich: HMSO

12. Young people on benefits, and their families, should not suffer a financial barrier when they volunteer;
13. To build the capacity of organisations to engage groups which historically have found it difficult to access volunteering;
14. A dedicated implementation body should commission, through a series of contracts, the delivery of the framework;
15. Recommendation in relation to funding including that public funding for young people's volunteering should be ring-fenced;
16. The implementation body will need to measure the impact of the framework and ensure that there is constant learning and evaluation.

Annex 2: List of Interviewees

| Name | Organisation |
|-------------------|---|
| Nigel Cram | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Neath Port Talbot) |
| Thomas Crockett | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Rhondda Cynon Taf) |
| Tim Day | WCVA |
| Leah Doherty | WCVA |
| Paul Dunhill | Welsh Government |
| Paul Glaze | Council for Wales of Youth Voluntary Services |
| Geraint Hannaford | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Bridgend) |
| David Heald | WCVA |
| Clare Jones | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Newport and Monmouthshire) |
| Gareth Jones | Swansea Youth Service |
| Beverley Mallet | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Caerphilly) |
| Melanie Manca | GwirForce |
| Steve Sellars | GwirForce |
| Sheila Smith | UNA Exchange |
| Felicite Walls | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Swansea) |
| Amanda Williams | Welsh Government |
| Holly Williams | Youth Volunteer Advisor (Vale of Glamorgan) |
| Wendy Thomas | Welsh Government |