

Election manifestos: a summary

All parties recognise the importance and value of volunteering. Specific pledges are set out below.

Labour:

- The manifesto recognises the importance of the voluntary and community sector, in particular its independence and campaigning role.
- Would give greater support to third-sector organisations in competing for public-sector contracts
- National Youth Community Service, with the goal that all young people would contribute at least 50 hours to their communities by the age of 19.

Conservatives:

- 'Big Society' – social responsibility not state control
- 5,000 independent community organisers – training funded by Cabinet Office
- Every adult citizen to be a member of an active neighbourhood group, which would address local issues e.g. start new schools, take over parks and libraries that are under threat, look at planning, hold police to account
- National Citizen Service for 16 year olds. It would be voluntary and last for 2 months, and include outdoor activities and community work.
- A review of the criminal records and vetting and barring regime, scaling it back to "common sense levels".
- Transforming the civil service into a "civic service" by making sure that participation in social action is recognised in civil servants' appraisals.
- An annual Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action.

Liberal Democrats:

- Committed to handing power back to local communities
- Would reform the process of criminal record checking so that volunteers need only one record that is portable, rather than multiple checks for each activity

For more information please email rachel.castle@volunteeringengland.org