

POLICY BRIEFING: Volunteering and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**February 2010**

These brief notes are offered as background for volunteering organisations on the state-of-play in development of national-level strategies, programmes and activities for volunteering at and around the London 2012 Games, in the run-up and for the legacy. They draw on documentation and information from meetings, together with some informed speculation.

Corrections and updates would be welcome, as much of this information has not been fully placed in the public domain, and events are still unfolding. These notes are dated as at the start of February 2010. The coming year is expected to feature a number of significant strategic launches and announcements.

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1. Context

1.1 The various strands of volunteer involvement needed to support the London 2012 Games and secure its social legacy are getting closer to becoming concrete and public knowledge.

1.2 Although national policy can take a holistic view, what's going on has to be seen in terms of how different bodies with different legal status and financial foundations play their parts.

1.3 Government responsibility rests with the Cabinet Office Minister Tessa Jowell, supported by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) (in the Cabinet Office) and by the Government Olympic Executive (GOE) (in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport). The GOE is charged with the social legacy policy and the overall execution and coordination.

1.4 LOCOG (London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games) is accountable to the International Olympic Committee, and is a private sector body whose legal responsibilities are focussed on running the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It recognises its role in creating the social legacy, but in terms of legal scope and funding its volunteering programme is dedicated to delivering the Games. A broader and longer view is taken by its Nations and Regions Group, which now is working in tandem with the GOE on social legacy as well as with the government bodies of the home nations and the English regions. (Responsibility for building the site rests with another body, the Olympic Development Authority.)

1.5 Local government has responsibilities in the 'host cities' – the venues for football and sailing. In London, the government bodies – Mayor's Office and LDA – have taken major roles in developing volunteer programmes to support tourism and other activities in the city. We are currently exploring the state of play for the other host cities.

2. Games-delivery volunteers

2.1 LOCOG has formulated its programme strategy for Games-delivery volunteering, and, though the strategy document has - at this date - not been published, it has presented its plans to select volunteering sector meetings (for instance, Symposium organised by Volunteering England, 30 September 2009¹).

2.2 The projection for the numbers of volunteers still currently retains the original 70,000 overall, estimated as 54,000 for the Olympics and 16,000 for the Paralympics, with in each case 60 per cent as 'universal' and 40 per cent as 'specialists'. LOCOG is carrying out detailed calculations of the workforce requirements for volunteers in relation to functional areas of Games delivery; and the first cut of these projections may be public soon. The logistics will go on being refined through to early 2012 and will be fed into the selection processes (see below 2.7-.8) so volunteers will be matched to roles in functional teams.

2.3 Through the late summer, autumn and winter, LOCOG has been in negotiation with its sponsors to set up their partnerships for the volunteering programme, following international Olympic rules and its funding imperatives. One main partner we expect to be announced soon, contributing a planned £3m; the *London Evening Standard* has reported this would be McDonalds, but - at this date - there is no official confirmation or denial. Three other sponsors will be supporting partners, contributing £350K each.

2.4 LOCOG will manage the overall volunteering programme itself; previously, there had been speculation it might contract out the programme. We cannot yet see to what extent and in what ways some functions will be contracted out or may be gifted by partner sponsors. For instance, a partner might provide some training for volunteers as or as part of its contribution. The volunteer application form has been produced, based on previous Olympics formats, by global sponsor ATOS. Volunteer uniforms are reported to be provided by Adidas. A call centre function – to support the application procedure - is being contracted out, though not yet announced.

2.5 Applications to be a volunteer will be made through a fairly lengthy on-line application form, supported by FAQs on the website and by the call centre. The Museums and Libraries Association is making arrangements with LOCOG for local libraries to offer IT support to people in accessing this procedure and completing the form.

2.6 It is now clear that all volunteers will be recruited as individuals; this appears to be partly based on the stringency of security clearances. Nonetheless, the application form will have a facility for coding applicants from, say, sponsors or sports clubs etc.

2.7 Volunteers will need to commit to 10 days at Olympics or Paralympics (or 20 at both – as we read it) and also to three days of training. They will have to be over 18 by 1 January 2012, though some exceptions, such as ball-boys/girls for tennis will be made.

2.8 The marketing plan for volunteer recruitment is formulated, and we expect it to be reported to the volunteering sector early in 2010. This will launch the application and selection process in summer 2010, probably with a 'two years to go' theme. This 'attraction' process will be media and web-based; previously, there had been thinking about roadshows but we cannot see current planning for them.

2.9 LOCOG will plan then to monitor the flow of applications in terms of numbers and their broad match to functional requirements and to demographic and diversity promises, and adjustments to the marketing process will be made. Volunteers will be selected to attend selection events at a limited number of centres around the UK (to be decided). The intention is that the majority of those invited to the selection centres will be successful: it is assuming that 120,000 people invited to selection events can produce a 'talent pool' of 100,000 (thus, a 30 per cent contingency) providing for 70,000 recruited volunteers. The selection process will run through 2011 into 2012, with final offers for some roles not made until – as we read it - spring 2012.

2.10 A major issue is of how many applications are received in relation to the numbers of volunteers required, and hence the scale of disappointment that may have to be managed. LOCOG has indicated its thinking for handling between about 300,000 and 1 million applications. The communications strategy has to be developed with particular emphasis on managing expectations.

2.11 LOCOG maintains and updates its website on volunteering. It has communicated twice – and soon for a third time - to its data-base of 280,000 registrations of interest for Games-delivery volunteering to inform them broadly about the process of recruitment and to suggest that meanwhile they could volunteer through other organisations.

<http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php>

2.12 LOCOG is being helped – and gaining experience in managing volunteers – by its Trailblazers programme with a small number of volunteers working on developing strategies and programmes

3. Young Leaders

3.1 Announced January 2010, the Young Leaders Programme is to recruit a group of disadvantaged young people to develop volunteering opportunities leading to a high-profile role during the Games. The programme is delivered by v and the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust, and the young people will be mentored and supported by 100 BP employees.

3.2 The young leaders are to develop and deliver volunteering opportunities in their local community, recruiting and engaging other local young people to support community activities. They will also promote London 2012-related activity in their locality. An 18-month training programme is to improve their inter-personal, communication and leadership skills.

3.3 Young people will be selected in teams of five from local authorities near BP's hub locations in Hull, Aberdeen, Canary Wharf (London) and Sunbury-on-Thames. All young leaders have to be 16 years old by 1 January 2010.

4. Personal Best

4.1 Personal Best was initiated in London by the LDA, adopting a proposal from the volunteer strategy advisory group (see 8.1) and learning from the Manchester Commonwealth Games. It provides training and development to improve the social and personal skills of people marginalised from the labour market and from the volunteering movement, so as to pave the way into volunteering and paid employment and offer the incentive of a volunteering role in Games-delivery.

4.2 LOCOG has maintained the promise that 10 percent of the interviewees for volunteering opportunities in Games-delivery will be assigned to graduates of Personal Best.

4.3 The programme was to be rolled out to a selection of other areas in England, and has been launched in the North East, but it is not being taken up by other localities as much as intended.

5. Host City volunteers

5.1 The Mayor of London has announced the Host City Volunteer programme, based on planning by LDA and collaboration with GLV and the volunteering sector in London. These volunteers will welcome and support visitors to London for the period of the Games.

5.2 Current planning is for 6,500 volunteers, covering about 30 sites across London, transport links, public spaces, Live Sites etc. The commitments required of volunteers in terms of time will be set lower than for Games-delivery volunteering. It is not yet known whether there will be coordination with LOCOG's Games-delivery programme in terms of such issues as uniforms, badging and sponsorship, and training.

5.3 The other Olympic and Paralympic host cities are at earlier stages of developing congruent programmes, but the picture is not yet clear. There is support and coordination through the Government Olympic Executive.

6. 'Inspired by ...' volunteers

6.1 Many people and activities are being inspired by or associating with the London 2012 Games and generating large numbers of volunteering opportunities in numerous sporting, heritage, cultural, environmental and other community activities. At time of writing, the future activities of the Cultural Olympiad are unclear.

6.2 YouthNet and Volunteering England are in partnership, funded by OTS, to develop a 'digital channel' which will draw together data-bases on volunteering (other than Games-delivery) based around do-it.org and v-base. This will offer a readily accessible source of information about volunteering in all kinds of organisations and will encourage 'business to business' collaboration on developing opportunities. YouthNet is the lead agency and developing the digital channel and data-base. Volunteering England has a three-person volunteering development team working sectorally and regionally to advise and inform about volunteering activities inspired by 2012 and to encourage them onto the data-base. The project is due to be operational in public for autumn 2010.

6.3 The digital channel and development team will strengthen volunteering infrastructures and help build the legacy beyond 2012.

6.4 The development of this programme and other volunteering opportunities is encouraged by the establishment of more relaxed rules for the Inspired By branding, run by LOCOG.
<http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/inspire-programme/index.php>

7. Social legacy

7.1 The Government Olympic Executive has formulated its social legacy policy, following a sequence of consultations with volunteering organisations and with groups of young people in particular, as well as in collaboration with the Nations and Regions group of LOCOG. This carries forward its strategy paper *Before, during and after: making the most of the London 2012 Games* (June 2008). As the strategy has developed, an increase in volunteering is seen now as an identified component, rather than as just the means through which other policy goals of participation are achieved.

7.2 The social legacy programme is to feature a viral marketing campaign, focussed particularly but not exclusively on young people, to encourage all formal and informal kinds of volunteering. This has been talked of as the 'Big Idea'. A consultancy, Blue Rubicon, has been developing the plans for the programme, currently named the '25th Hour'. Depending on funding, we expect a high profile launch in March or April 2010. This would feature a major speech by Tessa Jowell, and an invitation to volunteering and infrastructure organisations to commit to a common endeavour. The public, operational launch of a data-base of people looking to volunteer, with social networking functionalities, is likely to be in October 2010.

7.3 The GOE is working out the architecture of institutions and systems to support the social legacy and overall volunteering provision associated with 2012. This seeks to connect existing

bodies, including the volunteering infrastructure bodies, so as to coordinate and assure quality in the overall volunteering programme and to do so without creating additional structures. The architecture features a Principles Group which will be a reference point on matters of quality and the volunteering experience.

8. Volunteering England's roles

8.1 Volunteering England staff have been involved in the planning of volunteering for London 2012 since a strategy advisory group was formed for the team bidding for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in December 2004. This group then reformed to advise LOCOG and formulate a detailed strategy, but its report in autumn 2006 was shelved.

8.2 We regard the volunteering associated with London 2012 as extraordinarily significant for the volunteering movement, especially the national and local infrastructure organisations. We look to help create a powerful legacy, partly through all the thousands of people who volunteer having a great experience and wanting to volunteer again in future, and partly through the systems and organisations of volunteering being strengthened by their involvement in and around London 2012.

8.3 We have maintained contact with LOCOG and Government officers since 2005, and, particularly during the past 18 months, have been engaged in frequent meetings with LOCOG and GOE colleagues, as they have developed and consulted on their strategies. VE's Chief Executive is a member of LOCOG's Advisory Group on volunteering. With YouthNet we are developing volunteering opportunities inspired by London 2012 (see 6.2 above).

8.3 In February and September 2009 we hosted symposiums to inform stakeholders about LOCOG and Government planning and to share knowledge among stakeholders. We took this initiative in response to hearing from a range of voluntary and public sector organisations about their need for updating on what was being planned and what opportunities there would be.

8.4 In early 2009, we commissioned consultancy from Perfect Moment to explore the role which Volunteering England and the Volunteer Centre network could play. The consultancy recommendations led us to invite other infrastructure organisations to form Life-Time UK Alliance to draw together knowledge from across the UK and to advise LOCOG and GOE. The members are: Volunteer Development Agency, Volunteer Development Scotland, Wales Council on Voluntary Action, Media Trust, YouthNet, Greater London Volunteering, v, TimeBank. Life-Time UK is currently putting proposals to LOCOG and GOE for the volunteering movement's involvement in policy and practice for volunteering in and around 2012ⁱⁱ.

ⁱⁱ The proposal put to LOCOG in early February 2010 is at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/whatwearesaying>