

# Commissioning Specification

## Action Research – Volunteering in Oldham

### Introduction

The Community Engagement Commissioning Group, (CECG), was established by The Oldham Partnership to take responsibility for the approval and implementation of cohesion, engagement and cultural activity work commissioned under Oldham's Local Area Agreement, (LAA).

In pursuit of The Oldham Partnership's aim to develop the scope and amount of volunteering in the Borough, the Community Engagement Commissioning Group commissioned activity earlier in 2007-08. The programme of work was divided into three distinct parts and, at that point, only the first two parts of the work were commissioned. They were undertaken by Voluntary Action Oldham, the appointed Delivery Agent, and comprised the following:

1. *Reviews of:*
  - a. *volunteering activity in Oldham*
  - b. *the infrastructure in Oldham that supports volunteering and volunteers.*
  
2. *Identification of ways to increase volunteering across Oldham especially in identified areas and amongst groups, where the level of activity needs to be brought up to a level commensurate with the Borough's LAA baseline at least, (Safer Stronger Communities Block Outcome D), and formulation of practical proposals to implement these findings.*

Following the completion of Parts One and Two of the commission and the publication of the Final Report, (see Appendix A), by Voluntary Action Oldham, (VAO), the Community Engagement Commissioning Group has assessed VAO's findings and considered its recommendations.

The VAO Report identified low rates of volunteering amongst BME communities and young people between the ages of 15 and 25. Accordingly, the Community Engagement Commissioning Group is now seeking to commission activity under Part Three – LAA 10-07B Oldham Volunteering Development to address this issue.

Therefore, **Expressions of Interest** are now invited for delivery of the following:

## Action Research - Volunteering in Oldham

### **N.B.**

- **Up to £20,000** is available to cover the costs of undertaking this Commissioned Activity.
  
- The Commissioned Activity must be completed **by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008**
  
- The intellectual property rights of all material, associated information and reports arising from the undertaking of this commissioned activity will belong to the Oldham Partnership

## **Further Information**

From its inception, the Community Engagement Commissioning Group, (CECG), has been eager to secure an increase in volunteering, especially in areas, which demonstrate low current levels of activity. Similarly, the Group has sought to stimulate volunteering activity in a practical, measurable way, which is socially cohesive, inclusive and equitable. In overall terms, the primary aim of the Oldham Volunteering Development commissioned activity to date has been to increase the amount of volunteering in the Borough in all areas of activity and particularly:

- Within Oldham's communities of place and interest, where there is no precedence or little tradition of volunteering, compared to the most active communities
- Within demographically defined sections of Oldham's communities, where volunteering rates are low, or volunteering is absent, compared with the most active communities
- Volunteering activity that directly promotes or involves community cohesion, particularly where there may have been tensions between different communities or sections of the community

The VAO report, entitled 'Oldham Volunteering Development Parts 1 and 2', which was commissioned earlier this year by the CECG identified low uptake of volunteering opportunities by residents of BME communities and young people aged (15-25). Accordingly, the CECG is now seeking to commission:

### **Action Research - Volunteering in Oldham**

The Commissioned Activity will focus on the following target groups:

- **Residents of BME communities**
- **Young people aged 15 to 25**

It will:

- **Provide volunteering opportunities, as a means of securing actual data to research the two elements detailed below**
- **Investigate and identify why some members of the two target groups do take up volunteering opportunities**
- **Identify the barriers to volunteering for the two target groups and formulate strategies to overcome these barriers**

The individuals, (drawn from the two designated target groups), who will participate in the Action Research will be:

- **People taking up new volunteer opportunities arising from the delivery of this piece of work**
- **People currently participating in volunteering activity**
- **People not participating in volunteering activity**

It is envisaged that the work undertaken in the course of this Commissioned Activity will include the following elements:

1. **A brief, but rigorous, desk review of available research into volunteering activity within the two target groups**
2. **A brief, but rigorous, desk review of volunteering opportunities and volunteer projects in Oldham, which are aimed specifically at the two target groups**
3. **Making volunteering opportunities available to **one or both** of the target groups**

*Volunteering opportunities to be made available to the target groups may be:*

- *completely new*
- *existing opportunities offered by the Delivery Agent(s)*
- *opportunities offered by other organisations, (i.e. not the Delivery Agent(s))*

*N.B. If the volunteering opportunities are completely new, the Delivery Agent(s) will be expected to demonstrate how volunteers will be supported beyond the timescale of this piece of work.*

4. **The active involvement of members of the two target groups in the actual undertaking of the research, (i.e. as local researchers)**
5. **Identification of the reasons why volunteering activity is an attractive proposition for some members of the two target groups**
6. **Identification of the barriers, (cultural, organisational, individual etc), to participation in volunteering activity by members of the two target groups**
7. **Formulation of strategies to overcome the barriers, (identified in 6 above), and practical recommendations for volunteer providers to make use of these strategies**

**However**, the CECG has no desire to stipulate the methods and approaches to be adopted by potential Delivery Agents. Consequently, the Group will look favourably upon any proposals that offer the practical potential to deliver what is required:

The Commissioned Activity will contribute to the achievement of specific Indicators under Outcome D of the Safer and Stronger Communities Block and Outcome D of the Children and Young People Block:

**Outcome D (S & SC)**

- ***To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services.***

**Relevant LAA Indicator**

- ***Number of people engaging in (defined) volunteering activity***

**Outcome D (C & YP)**

- *Young People play a positive role in the community.*

**Relevant LAA Indicator**

- *The percentage of young people aged 13-19 from differing cultures participating in organised activities*

**2. Programme Specification**

<b>Elements of the Activity to be Commissioned</b>	<b>Oldham Volunteering Development Part Three LAA 10-07B Action Research – Volunteering Development</b>
<p><b>ACTION RESEARCH – VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p><i>Research to be focused on two target groups:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Residents of Oldham’s BME communities</i></li><li>• <i>Young people aged 15 to 25</i></li></ul> <p><b>Provide volunteering opportunities as a means of securing actual data to research the two elements detailed below</b></p> <p><b>Investigate and identify why some members of the two target groups <u>do</u> take up volunteering opportunities</b></p> <p><b>Identify the barriers to volunteering for the two target groups and formulate strategies to overcome these barriers</b></p>	<p>The Community Engagement Commissioning Group has no wish to be prescriptive about the approach to delivering this activity and its content and scope. However, it is envisaged that potential Delivery Agents will address the following issues as a matter of course in formulating their Expressions of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Innovative / practical approaches to the task of ensuring that individuals from the target groups are fully engaged in the action research programme</li><li>• Carefully considered plans to promote the action research programme effectively to the targeted groups</li><li>• Details of ‘concrete’ volunteering opportunities to be offered to the target groups in the course of the action research</li><li>• Ways in which good practice, (related to experience drawn from elsewhere), will be applied and implemented in work to be undertaken with the target groups</li><li>• Means of ensuring that evaluations of progress and achievements are inbuilt to the delivery of the commissioned activity</li><li>• Plans for linkages with organisations and agencies involved in the provision of volunteering opportunities in Oldham</li></ul>

Partnership Working	The successful Delivery Agent(s) will be expected to cooperate and collaborate, where appropriate, with other Delivery Agents undertaking activity commissioned on behalf of the Oldham Partnership.
Duration of programme	The Commissioned Activity must be completed by <b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.</b>
Deadline for receipt of Expressions of Interest	Potential Delivery Agents are invited to submit Expressions of Interest for undertaking the Commissioned Activity by <b>2.00 pm Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007</b>
Funding available	<b>A total of up to £20,000</b> is available to cover the costs of the activity to be commissioned.
Intellectual Property Rights	The intellectual property rights of material, associated information and all reports resulting from this Commissioned Activity will belong to the Oldham Partnership.

In formulating Expressions of Interest, potential Delivery Agents should bear in mind that the CECG Assessment Panel, which will consider their submissions, will expect to see the following detail:

- Measurable, quantifiable Outputs, which demonstrate the effectiveness, scope and scale of the work undertaken
- A fully costed Expenditure Profile, which demonstrates value for money and effective use of financial resources
- A work schedule, which shows clearly how the Commissioned Activity will be completed within the designated time scale
- Contingency plans / risk assessments to cover eventualities such as the departure or sickness of key staff during delivery of the Commissioned Activity
- Evidence that equality and diversity issues have been taken into account in planning the delivery of the Commissioned Activity

Expressions of Interest should be submitted on the template provided and addressed as below to arrive no later than: **2.00 p.m. on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

**It is the responsibility of the potential Delivery Agent to ensure that the signed, hard copy of their Expression of Interest has been received at one of the Civic Centre reception centres within the stated deadline.**

Private and Confidential  
(Ref: VolDev3)  
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