



Living Well and Do-it.org Volunteer Recruitment

An Advisor Paper

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Introduction

A significant challenge to sustainability of Living Well is the recruitment of volunteers to the programme. Having sufficient volunteers and managing their turnover is important because of their central role in programme delivery. Enabled by an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Award (IAA) the Volunteers in Community (VIC) team, at the University of Exeter, have the opportunity to examine, review and update the current recruitment process for Living Well. This paper presents an overview to the current routes to becoming a volunteer, the recruitment processes and makes recommendations about how recruitment can be improved.

Becoming a Volunteer

Figure 1 shows how current volunteers heard about their volunteering opportunity.

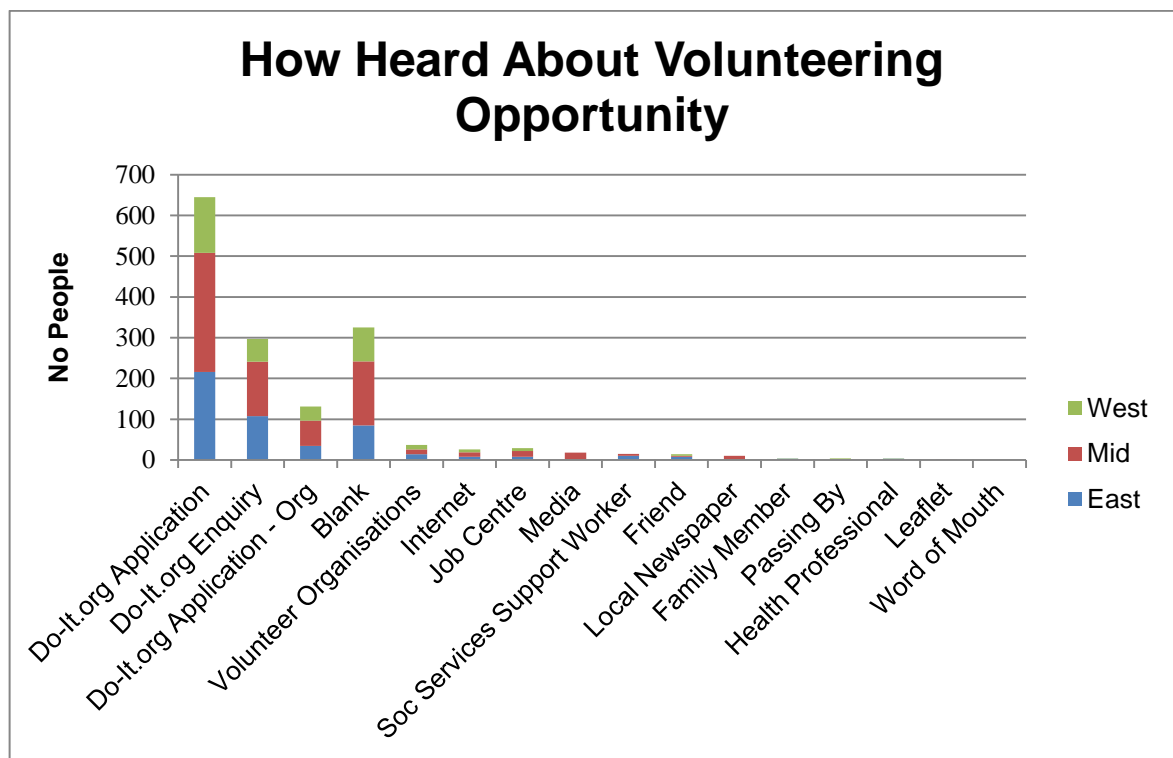


Figure 1: How Heard About Volunteering Opportunity

Figure 1 clearly shows how the primary route into volunteering is through Do-It.org. Volunteer Cornwall is well aware of this trend and this information partly informed the decision to redirect resources away from volunteer drop-in centres and towards the

management of online applications on Do-It.org. Figure 2 zooms in on the other routes, non Do-It.org, that people take into volunteering.

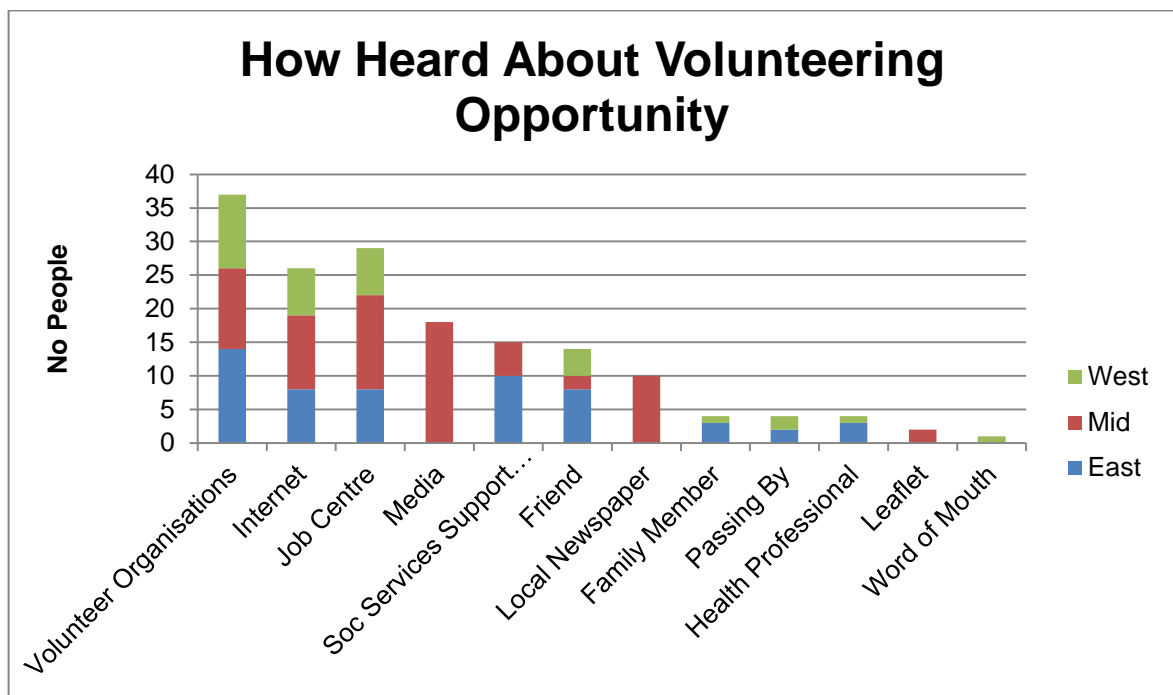


Figure 2: Lesser Routes into Volunteering

Considering the dominance of Do-It.org and the underutilisation of other routes the VIC team recommend that a campaign should be developed to broaden recruitment routes for Living Well. For example, one obvious shortfall is the lack of Living Well promotion by Health Professionals.

The Do-It.Org Recruitment Process

In the section above we have established that the primary route to volunteering is through Do-It.Org. The process of how this happens in practice in is broken down in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Do-It.Org Recruitment Process

Good Practice for Advert Management on Do-It.org

The Brokerage Team at Volunteer Cornwall provided a list of good practice for management of adverts on Do-It.org. Good management has become complex and messy process since Do-It.org 'updated' the way adverts are administrated. The Brokerage Team have learned how to 'play the system' and currently have the expertise to do so effectively. Evidence of their effectiveness is in their recent overhaul of Barnardo's adverts. Prior to the team's interventions the Barnardo opportunity adverts were receiving no applications. Post manipulation Barnardo are receiving two to eight applications a week. Good practice for management of volunteer opportunities includes:

Logo: Logos should need to present and formatted correctly (at ratio 4:2).

Expiry Date: Managing opportunity expiry date is a balancing act. If the date is too far in the future the opportunity will appear at the end of the list the prospective volunteer sees. Too close in the future and the Administrator will regularly have to update to prevent 'expiring'. Three months is the advised balancing date. Further, Do-It.org do not notify when adverts expire so it requires 'Admin' to check for 'live' status.

Opportunity Name: Should be clear and enticing, just 'Living Well' is not effective.

Opportunity Tag Line: To help guide prospective volunteer the opportunity tag line should reference the town closest to.

Opportunity Description: Should be informative, exciting and differentiate it from other opportunities.

Geo-Location: The Geo-location on Do-It.org is extremely dysfunctional. For example if the opportunity logged as county wide Do-It.org will place the opportunity in the middle of the county, i.e. Grampound. Good practice is to put opportunity on 16 times at all the major towns using the One Stop shop post codes (see Lorna at VC for list of postcodes used).

Postcode: Most people search by postcode so ensuring all adverts have a post code is critical.

Seasonal Adverts: If the advert is meant to be retired until the opportunity arises again then the team advise putting a ZZ in title so Volunteer Cornwall know so.

Review of Living Well Adverts on Do-It.org

In partnership with the Brokerage Team the Living Well adverts were reviewed. The conclusion was that the adverts fall short on many aspects of good advert management practice. Considering that Do-It.org is the primary route to volunteering this represents significant barrier to recruitment. The problems are as follows:

- 1. Only one Living Well advert is currently live – this is located in St Colum Major in mid Cornwall**
- 2. Expired adverts either have no logo or a logo which doesn't fit**

3. **Located under town not postcode and therefore not likely to come up in searches**
4. **Opportunity is described as 'Living Well' - not a clue about what it actually is**
5. **Living Well description could be better tailored and more enticing. Current adverts do not differentiate very well from other care opportunities**

Recommendations

1. **Management of Living Well adverts should be tasked to the Brokerage Team at Volunteer Cornwall. This would represent a step forward in partnership working a sensible use of existing expertise.**
2. **Volunteer Cornwall should conduct a Living Well recruitment campaign. This campaign should be developed in close partnership with Age UK and aim to enlist from places other than Do-It.org, for example through Health Professional networks.**

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