

Learning by Volunteering

Final Impact Evaluation Report

September 2011

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1 INTRODUCTION

Learning by Volunteering (LbyV) is a Scottish Funding Council commissioned project which aims to drive forward volunteering to enhance learning. College project partners are Adam Smith College (ASC), Angus College (AC) and Langside College (LC). Scotland's Colleges is also a partner, ensuring the project has a national impact. Key project outputs taken from the project bid document are:

- A toolkit to help learners record, reflect on, and evidence their learning from volunteering
- A college Volunteering Policy Template
- The development of appropriate formal and informal recognition for volunteering
- The development of learner records to include recording of engagement in volunteering
- The development of the option of volunteering through college as one of the alternative pathways of the 16+ Learner Choices Consultation
- The development of collaborative working arrangements with the local Volunteer Centre and College Student Associations

(p5)

Although the project aims to drive forward a culture of volunteering across the college sector, this evaluation assesses the impact within the three partner colleges only. To date, this is where all the project activity has been concentrated and the effect on the wider college sector will be minimal until post-dissemination. Also, in terms of resources, a wider and/or longitudinal evaluation is outwith the scope of the project. The following research questions present the basis for the evaluation:

1. What are the staff perceptions of the impact of the LbyV project in terms of developing a culture of volunteering within their college?
2. What are student perceptions of the impact of the LbyV project in terms of developing a culture of volunteering within their college?
3. What were the barriers?
4. What were the facilitators?
5. What lessons have been learned? What could have been done differently/better?
6. How can the project be sustained?

1.1 Definition of terms

The concepts of 'volunteering' and 'culture' are discussed throughout this report. What is meant by these terms is clarified below.

Volunteering

There are many definitions of volunteering. One such definition of volunteering adapted from a description of volunteering characteristics produced by the Institute for Volunteering Research (2006) is:

Volunteering is for the benefit of people (or the environment) other than (or in addition to) the volunteer's own family and friends. Volunteering is an activity people choose to do of their own free will and there is no financial payment to the volunteer (other than out of pocket expenses).

(p3)

However, this definition does not capture the benefit that volunteering can bring to the volunteer, a key aspect of this project and how volunteering should be defined within the context of this evaluation. Also, within the context of this evaluation, it should be noted that mandatory work placements associated with some college courses are not considered as being volunteering. This is because students must participate in these placements and therefore it is regarded to be training and not volunteering.

Culture

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1991) defines culture as:

"The customs, civilisation, and achievements of a particular time or people"

(p282)

In terms of the LbyV project, a 'culture of volunteering' refers to a situation where it is customary, that is normal and expected, for students to engage in volunteering and for staff to promote and support volunteering in Scotland's colleges.

2 METHODOLOGY

Section 2 sets out the methodology for the evaluation. Section 2.1 presents the various methods and data sources employed to collect the data. Section 2.2 provides the justification for the methods and data sources used, and Section 2.3 presents the associated research limitations. Section 2.4 sets out the ethical considerations.

2.1 Methods and data sources

The evaluation was conducted through the collection of primary data only. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Each method and its associated data source is presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Evaluation methods and data sources

Method	Data source
Staff baseline questionnaire	All staff within AC and LC; academic staff only within ASC
Staff final questionnaire	All staff within the three colleges
Student baseline questionnaire	All students within the three colleges
Student final questionnaire	All students within the three colleges
Staff interviews	Selected staff within the three colleges
Student case studies	Selected students within the three colleges

Staff baseline and final questionnaires

Two questionnaires were administered to staff: a baseline questionnaire and a final questionnaire (see Appendix A for both questionnaires). The final questionnaire was a repeat of the baseline questionnaire with some additional questions. The baseline questionnaire was administered via college email systems to all staff in AC and LC, and all teaching staff in ASC around the start of the project in March 2010. The final questionnaire was administered via email to all staff in all three colleges towards the end of the project in June 2011. Table 2.2 presents the number of respondents from each college for the baseline and final questionnaires.

Table 2.2: Response rates for staff questionnaires by college

College	Staff baseline questionnaire	Staff final questionnaire
Adam Smith College	32	34
Angus College	28	18
Langside College	26	27

Student baseline and final questionnaire

Baseline and final questionnaires were administered with students in the three colleges. The final questionnaire was an exact repeat of the baseline questionnaire. The questionnaire administered with ASC students differed to the questionnaire carried out in AC and LC. The AC and LC questionnaire is presented in Appendix B and the ASC questionnaire is presented in Appendix C. The response rates for the baseline and final questionnaires are presented in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Response rates for student baseline and repeat questionnaires by college

College	No. respondents student baseline questionnaire	No. respondents student final questionnaire
Adam Smith College	144	112 (30 email + 81 telephone)
Angus College	73	80
Langside College	100	100

The baseline questionnaires were administered in their respective colleges via email to all students at ASC, and face-to-face with randomly selected students in public areas at AC and LC around the start of the project in March 2010.

The final questionnaires were administered in their respective colleges towards the end of the project in June/July 2011. The ASC questionnaire was administered via a combination of email sent to all students and telephone interviews with a random selection of students. The sampling method for the telephone interviews was a stratified systematic probability sample. Students were stratified by learning cluster and then by randomly selected course within these learning clusters. As each course is listed by learning cluster in the college 2010/11 prospectus, the researcher was able to randomly select every *n*th course from the list. Within each randomly selected course a list of students was obtained from the college systems. The researcher was then able to select every

nth student from the list making up the sample. Within LC and AC, the final questionnaire was administered with randomly selected students in public areas in LC, and via telephone interviews with a sample of students who had attended a college volunteering award ceremony at AC.

Staff interviews

Staff interviews were conducted with a total of 11 support and lecturing staff from the partner colleges who had had some kind of contact with the project. See Appendix D for interview schedule. The sample was non-random and names were put forward by the respective college Project Coordinators (PCs). In ASC and LC staff interviews were carried out face-to-face and in AC they were conducted via telephone. The number of staff respondents per college is presented in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Staff interview respondents per college

College	No. of respondents
Adam Smith College	2
Angus College	4
Langside College	5

Student case studies

Students were asked to tell the ‘story’ of their college volunteering experience. A total of nine students across the three colleges participated in the research. The sample was non-random and students with positive experiences of college volunteering were selected specifically by the PCs in each college. The number of student respondents per college is presented in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Student interview respondents per college

College	No. of respondents
Adam Smith College	3
Angus College	3
Langside College	4

2.2 Method and data source justification

A major strength of the research is that both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The quantitative data provides a comprehensive picture of how widespread volunteering has become. The qualitative data gets behind the

numbers and illuminates the issues and benefits that volunteering can make to individuals. Each method is discussed in turn below.

Staff questionnaire

A questionnaire method enables the attainment of 'hard' evidence that is quantifiable and generalisable to a population. In terms of employing an electronic questionnaire method it was thought that this method would be optimal, as it allows data collection from the highest number of respondents and is quick and cheap to administer. The method also lends itself to repetition making it possible to draw comparisons between staff position around the outset of project implementation and their position towards the end of the project. A repeat of the sampling method used for the baseline and final questionnaires was implemented. By repeating the sampling method it allowed comparison between the datasets to be more reliable.

It was decided at ASC that only teaching staff would be included in the sampling frame for the baseline questionnaire. This decision was made to minimise staff disruption, as many support staff do not have contact with students. However, the final questionnaire went out initially to all staff via a link in the staff weekly newsletter, meaning support staff had an opportunity to participate in the final questionnaire.

Student questionnaire

As with the staff questionnaires, this method enables the attainment of 'hard' evidence that is quantifiable and generalisable to a population. Also, as with the staff questionnaire, the method lends itself to repetition making it possible to draw comparisons between student position around the outset of project implementation and their position towards the end of the project.

In terms of administering the baseline questionnaire, it was decided that face-to-face would work best with students as many students do not access their college email account and would also provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the project with students in person. An electronic questionnaire was administered with ASC students because this particular college is spread over a large geographical area and, given project time constraints, it was not practical to conduct the questionnaire face-to-face over the separate campuses. Also, ASC designed a different student questionnaire from AC and LC as each partner college was given autonomy to develop a questionnaire instrument which best suited their individual information needs.

The face-to-face convenience sampling method used for the baseline questionnaire was repeated in LC, allowing for reliability in comparison-making. However, the sampling method used the first time round was not repeated in AC and ASC. In ASC the electronic survey was delayed and went out late in term. This limited the number of students who received the questionnaire and therefore the number of respondents. To make up a more meaningful sample, additional students were contacted by telephone. In AC the administration of the face-to-face questionnaire was delayed until late in the term at a time when most students had left. Therefore, it was decided that telephone interview would be optimal. The sample was taken from a list of students who had attended a volunteering ceremony as their contact details were readily available.

Staff interviews

Staff interviews provide a qualitative account of project impact that is not attainable through the questionnaire method alone. The sample was non-random and staff with positive experiences of college volunteering were selected specifically by PCs. Because the respondents were selected, it guaranteed that good work of the project, which may not have been captured in the questionnaires, appears in the evaluation.

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with staff in ASC and LC. It was thought that face-to-face interviews would work best because they allow the researcher better opportunity to build rapport and get into depth with respondents. In AC staff interviews were conducted over the telephone. This was because it proved challenging to organise a day when all staff were available to take part in the research. Given the distance, it was not feasible for the researcher to travel to AC on multiple occasions when staff would be available.

Student case studies

As with the staff interviews, student case studies provide a detailed, qualitative account of project impact that is not attainable through the questionnaire method alone. The sample was non-random and students with positive experiences of college volunteering were selected specifically by PCs. Again, because the respondents were selected, it guaranteed that good work of the project, which may not have been captured in the questionnaires, features in the evaluation.

Face-to-face case studies were carried out with students in ASC and LC. As with the staff interviews, it was thought that face-to-face case studies would work best because they allow the researcher better opportunity to build rapport and get into more depth with respondents. In AC case studies were conducted over the telephone. Again, this was because it proved challenging to organise a day when all students were available to take part in the research. Given the distance, it was not feasible for the researcher to travel to AC on multiple occasions.

2.3 Research limitations

A major limitation of this evaluation was time constraints. It was important to administer the baseline questionnaires before project awareness raising activities were carried out so as not to skew the baseline qualities of the data. This meant a short questionnaire response deadline for the staff and student baseline questionnaires. Despite this, data from staff at two of the three colleges indicated that some respondents were already aware of the project.

There are also some issues around generalisability. The response rates for both the staff baseline questionnaire and final questionnaire were fairly low and may not have captured a true picture of the situation. Also, the staff baseline questionnaire in ASC did not target support staff, and therefore any volunteering activity for this staff grouping is not captured in the baseline data. Also, as with all questionnaires, there may be a difference between those who choose to respond and those who choose not to.

In terms of the student questionnaire data, many students do not use their college email account and this may affect how representative the student baseline findings from ASC are. A representative sample was taken for the repeat questionnaire in ASC; however, not repeating the sampling method had implications for comparison-making. The randomly selected students for the baseline questionnaire in AC and LC and the final questionnaire in LC may not be representative of all learners in these colleges as students with certain characteristics may have been more likely to have been around when the data was being collected. There are also implications for comparison-making for AC as the students selected for the repeat questionnaire had attended a volunteering award ceremony and were therefore more likely to be positive regarding volunteering than the baseline students who were selected from the entire population. Also, because the ASC student questionnaire differed to the AC and LC student questionnaire, it was challenging to compare and contrast the findings between ASC and the other two colleges. Finally, as with all questionnaires, there may be a difference between those who choose to respond and those who choose not to.

At AC, staff and student interviews were carried out over the telephone, rather than face-to-face. Face-to-face interviews would have been optimal as this method is likely to provide the richest data.

Finally, the original research design for the evaluation included student interviews with randomly selected students who had been involved in the project. This would have meant that an element of the qualitative data would have been selected from a representative sample. However, because of resource restraints, this element was taken out of the evaluation.

2.4 Ethical considerations

For the staff and student questionnaires informed consent was secured. This was obtained by providing respondents with information regarding the aims of the project, the project sponsor, what the research was about, and by giving them the opportunity to withdraw participation at any time. They were also assured that any information they provided would be confidential with any identifying features removed. All the data has been stored securely on the researcher's PC and will be destroyed upon completion of this evaluation.

For the staff and student interviews informed consent was also secured. As with the questionnaires, this was obtained by providing respondents with information regarding the aims of the project, the project sponsor, what the research was about, and by giving them the opportunity to withdraw participation at any time. In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, the respondents' real names were not used. However, some staff and students are likely to be identifiable from their job title, course of study or circumstances. This information was thought to be important in terms of context and has not been changed. To ensure consent was given for the inclusion of such identifiable features, respondents were sent a copy of their interview transcript for approval and given the opportunity to make any changes. As with the questionnaires, all the data has been stored securely on the researcher's PC and will be destroyed upon completion of this evaluation.

3 FINDINGS

Section 3 describes the evaluation findings. Staff findings are presented in Section 3.1 and student findings are presented in Section 3.2. All the statistics portrayed within Sections 3.1 and 3.2 are calculated by taking the proportion for each individual college and then averaging these figures across the three colleges. Finally, key findings relating to both staff and students are presented in Section 3.3.

3.1 Staff findings

The findings from the data collected from staff have been divided into five sub-sections: findings relating to activities, findings relating to changes in attitudes, findings relating to changes in behaviours, findings relating to barriers to staff in supporting volunteering and findings relating to enablers to staff in supporting volunteering.

3.1.1 Activities

Final questionnaire respondents were asked if they were aware of volunteering being promoted in their respective colleges. Across the three colleges, almost three quarters of staff stated that they were aware of volunteering being promoted in their college. The findings are presented in Chart 3.1 below.

Chart 3.1: Proportion of respondents aware of volunteering being promoted in college, across the three colleges

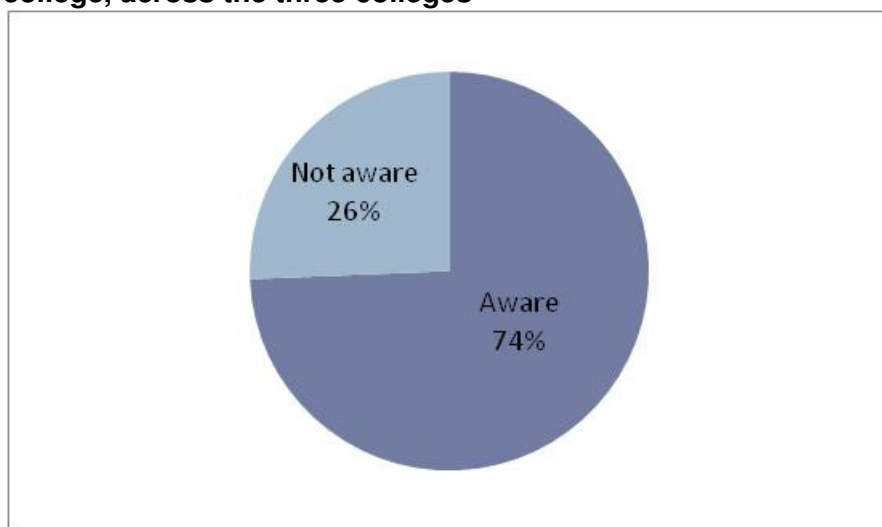


Table 3.1 below provides details of the volunteering related activities that staff were aware of within each of the three colleges. The findings are taken from a combination of the data collected through the final questionnaire and the staff interviews.

Table 3.1: Volunteering activity that staff are aware of by college

Adam Smith College	Angus College	Langside College
<p><i>Internal volunteering:</i> Student Union; Sports Union; Gym; Fundraising events; Fresher's week; Healthfest event; Classroom volunteer mentors; Student Mentoring programme*</p> <p><i>LbyV project specific:</i> Funding of Managing Volunteering SQA qualification for staff; Better attitudes among students and staff towards volunteering</p> <p><i>Encouragement:</i> Volunteer of the Year Award; Tutors promoting at start of courses; Tutors promoting throughout courses; Volunteer Centre representative talks; Tutors passing opportunities onto students (Hospitality, Tourism and Events Dept); Tutors assisting students to look for opportunities; Leaflets and fliers to students; Posters around college</p> <p><i>Curriculum related:</i> Youth Achievement Award (Sport and Fitness Unit); Citizenship Through Sport and Fitness Volunteering (Sport and Fitness Unit); Incorporated into STEP IN programme*</p>	<p><i>Internal volunteering:</i> Fundraising events; Increase in students asking for help with marketing for volunteer and charity work; Increase in SkillZone* students volunteering</p> <p><i>LbyV project specific:</i> Awareness of PC/project; PC talks to student groups; PC support to students and assistance with enquiries; Project promotional events; Promotion/advertising of volunteering opportunities; Volunteer recruitment fair; Students being encouraged to enter Student Volunteer Awards; Development of the Toolkit; Incorporation into Operational Plan; Administration of Volunteer Record*; Email messages; Intranet updates</p> <p><i>Encouragement:</i> Student Volunteer Awards; Promotion by Student Association; Promotion by tutors; VC* stalls in college; National Volunteer Week advertised</p> <p><i>Curriculum related:</i> Creation of SCQF Level 4 Learning by Volunteering Unit; Creation of SQA Level 3,4 & 5 Volunteering Skills Units; PDP* sessions including volunteer job searching</p>	<p><i>Internal volunteering:</i> Student Association; Fundraising events; Awareness among staff of an increase in students volunteering generally (beauty and horticultural students mentioned specifically); SCIL scheme*; Peer Mentoring Scheme*</p> <p><i>LbyV project specific:</i> Awareness of PC/project; Staff development event; Advertising of volunteering opportunities; PC talks to staff; PC support to students accessing volunteering; Regular information and encouragement emails; Information stand in foyer; PC appeal to beauty students to volunteer; PC involved in induction sessions; Administration of Volunteer Record*; PC appeal to SCIL staff to take on volunteers; Identifying potential recruits for SCIL scheme</p> <p><i>Encouragement:</i> Volunteering in college literature and website; Gold Awards; Posters and various information throughout college; SCIL Volunteering information pack; Student Services availability for support</p> <p><i>Curriculum related:</i> Beauty Department self-evaluation volunteering diary</p>

*Terms explained below

Explanation of Table 3.1 terms

Peer mentoring: Programmes where established students ‘mentor’ new students to help them settle into college life

STEP IN: Community learning programme

SkillZone: Employability programme

SCIL scheme: A system ran by the Section of Inclusive and Continuing Learning where volunteers support lecturing staff with delivering programmes to SCIL students with additional support needs

PDP: Personal Development Planning

Volunteer Record: Register of number of hours engaged in volunteering. Upon completion of a certain number of hours volunteer is eligible for a MV national volunteering award.

VC: Volunteer Centre

Interviews with staff reflect some of the activities presented in Table 3.1 above. Instances in each of the three colleges where LbyV has had a significant impact are presented below as case studies. Case study 3.1 provides an account from ASC where STEP IN staff have incorporated volunteering into the course curriculum and have encouraged students to volunteer internally by becoming mentors in classes where tutors benefit from having additional help. This has had a positive impact on both students and tutors.

Case study 3.1: Community Learning and Development Worker, Adam Smith College

I am part of the team that delivers the STEP IN community learning programme. I'm a huge believer in volunteering and I'm currently on the board of the Volunteer Centre Fife. I have volunteered with a number of organisations over the years. The volunteering experiences I've had have enabled me to gain experience and make decisions about my career. I wouldn't be in the job I am today if I hadn't started in community volunteering.

When I heard about the Learning by Volunteering project I was really up for it! STEP IN staff strive to encourage the students to take up volunteering. The programme covers Health and Wellbeing and within this topic we have encompassed volunteering. We invite a representative from the Volunteer Centre to speak to students about the opportunities available locally. As well as incorporating volunteering into the course, we look out for potential volunteering opportunities within the college; for example, classes where a volunteer mentor may be useful.

I really think Learning by Volunteering has changed attitudes. It is helping staff and students realise that volunteering is an opportunity for all. For students it's an opportunity to see what they like by giving it a try, while at the same time giving something back to the community. It is helping staff realise that we all owe it to students to help them access opportunities on their journey of learning, and that volunteering enhances and assists the work we do.

An account from AC presented in Case study 3.2 below reflects how awareness-raising activities have led to an increase in volunteering among SkillZone students. The account also demonstrates awareness among staff of volunteering being incorporated into the college's Operational Plan document, the development of volunteering related qualifications and the development of the project toolkit.

Case study 3.2: SkillsZone Course Leader, Angus College

I've been fairly involved in the Learning by Volunteering project and am part of the local steering group. I'm aware that volunteering is now much more prominent, recognised by and promoted with students. As part of the SkillsZone programme students are encouraged to participate in a community project involving volunteering. For the last couple of years students have been helping out at an IT class aimed at people aged 50+, supporting them with learning basic computer skills. This year the volunteering undertaken by my students has increased. As well as volunteering for longer, students are much more interested in taking part and recognise the validity of the activity in developing their confidence and self-esteem. One young man helped out every week and continued to go in and support the group even after he'd received his certificate.

Volunteering is now in the College's Operational Plan. Volunteering is also part of the curriculum for students through the development of a volunteering related SQA unit. Having a volunteering certificate will take volunteering into the future and cascade it around the college. Knowing that their volunteering will be accredited will make it much more attractive to students. I'm going to use the unit with my 15 year old school link students next year – I've seen the material and it looks great. Also, the toolkit looks really good and is kept up to date; this is a resource that will continue to be used.

Finally, in LC an account of the impact of the project on the SCIL is presented in Case study 3.3 below. Staff in the SCIL have developed a timetable of volunteering opportunities for both students and members of the local community. This has benefited both SCIL staff and students.

Case study 3.3: SCIL Lecturer, Langside College

The SCIL has embraced the world of volunteering. This has involved creating opportunities for volunteers from the wider college and the local community to come and volunteer within our section. We now have a full timetable of volunteers helping out each day of the week. The types of voluntary work they do ranges from simply sitting in on a class and being an extra pair of hands to having volunteer HND beauty students coming in and demonstrating treatments like facials, massage and nail care.

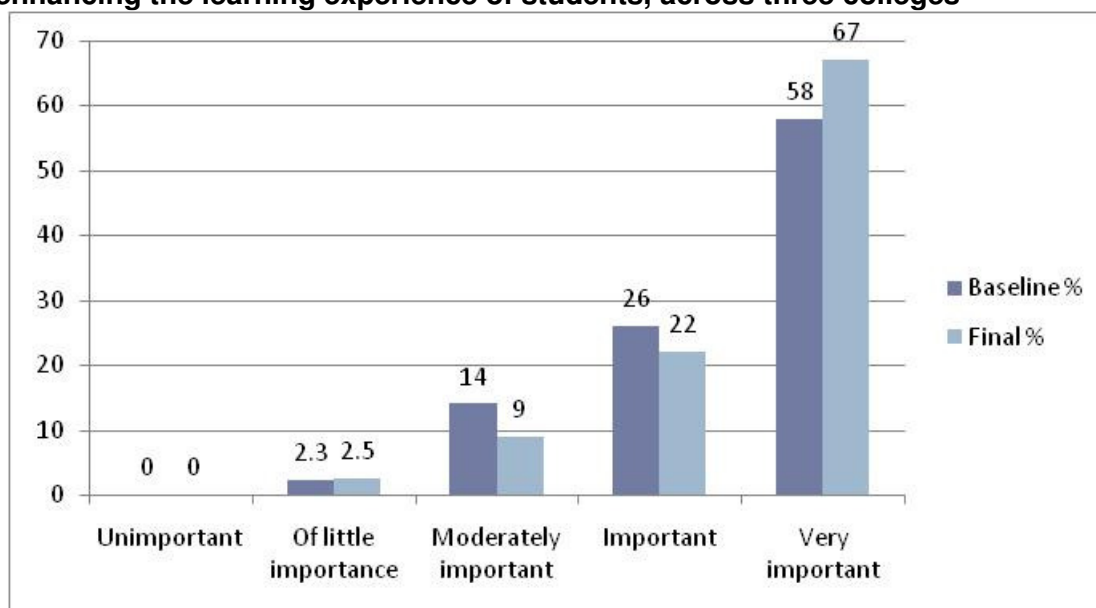
We've developed a Volunteering Information Pack containing all the information that volunteers need to know, such as various college and SCIL specific policies and procedures. The pack also contains an agreement for volunteers to sign and log files for recording and reflecting on activity. Many of the volunteers are only in for a couple of hours a week so we created a contact list with photos of staff in the department so they know who's who.

Having volunteers in the department has been really helpful. Because we work with students with additional support needs it is great just to have another person in the room to help support students' learning. Also, beauty demonstrations from our beauty students have proved a great success. Both the beauty students and our own SCIL students gained a lot from this volunteering opportunity as well as gaining valuable skills.

3.1.2 Changes in attitudes

Questionnaire respondents were asked around the start of the project and again towards the end of the project to what extent they felt that volunteering is important for enhancing the learning experience of their students. Across the three colleges, the majority of staff at the outset and towards end of the project felt that volunteering was 'very important'. This baseline position was built upon and by around the end of the project this majority had increased. The findings are presented in Graph 3.1 below.

Graph 3.1: The extent to which staff felt that volunteering is important for enhancing the learning experience of students, across three colleges



These findings were reflected in the interviews with staff. Many respondents across the three colleges commented that staff were attaching more value to volunteering and that it was increasingly being embedded into the curriculum. Many respondents commented on the skills and benefits of volunteering and were able to provide examples of students who had profited from it. Example comments were:

“The Learning by Volunteering project has been great in that it is raising the profile of volunteering which is benefiting many students. For example, we had a student who had attained all his fitness qualifications but couldn’t get work because he didn’t have any work experience. We arranged for him to volunteer in the college gym and he is now working as a fitness trainer out in Japan!”

(Mentoring Coordinator, Adam Smith College)

“I’m a strong believer in volunteering and think through volunteering students gain confidence and become more organised. It’s in with the citizenship thing – when students volunteer in something it enables them to take ownership of it and believe in it more. Also, it looks good on UCAS forms and CVs.”

(Student Support Coordinator (Development), Langside College)

"I'm the key worker for the Sports, Construction and Art, Craft & Design Teams and the Project Coordinator came and spoke to our students about the volunteering awards and encouraged them to enter. One of the sports students, who has been involved in coaching teenage rugby and swimming teams, won an award – it was a huge achievement and gave him a real boost! A lot of students have got involved in volunteering and it's increased their confidence, social skills and given them additional 'CV' skills. Many of the students I work with have disabilities and volunteering gives them a different outlook on life which is really good for them."

(Student Development Team Leader, Angus College)

"I think the project has achieved a lot of good work. Lecturers from many courses are showing more interest in encouraging their students to volunteer. For example, they'll do 'personal development' time with their students where they look at job searching and mention volunteering then. A number of students have benefited from getting involved in volunteering this year. For example, a student gave up her time to help out at Home Start. She is looking for a career in the care industry, so it has benefited her job prospects - and she won a college volunteering award!"

(Student Support Worker, Angus College)

Case study 3.4 below provides an account of how LbyV has changed attitudes among staff and students and enhanced student learning within the Beauty Department at LC.

Case study 3.4: Beauty Lecturer, Langside College

Our department is often approached by organisations asking us to provide student beauticians to volunteer at various charity and community events. For example, we'll take students to the Ideal Home Show and support them with face painting, nail art and so forth. Although supporting students into volunteering is great for our CPD and we are aware that it's an opportunity for students to practise their skills, we'd almost come to see it as a chore. Most years we are overwhelmed with requests and usually by October we start refusing altogether. The majority of students weren't interested in volunteering and it was difficult to persuade them to get involved. We often found ourselves 'picking' on the few students that did show some interest - which wasn't fair on those students either.

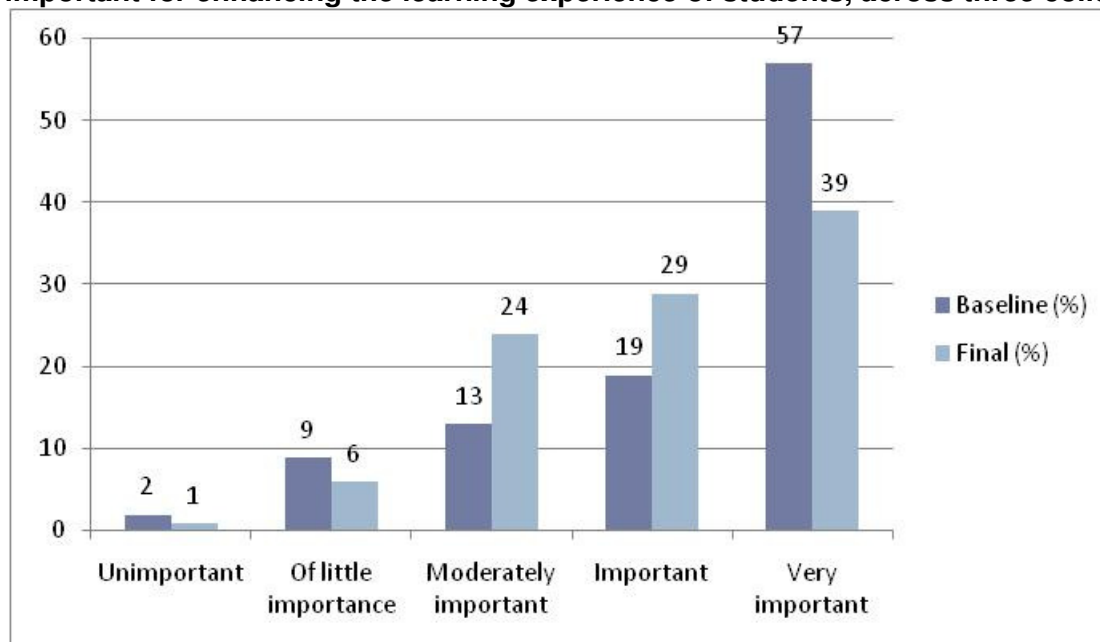
The Learning by Volunteering project has had a positive impact on volunteering within the department. The Project Coordinator took on the role of promoting volunteering to staff and students and coordinating the volunteering requests that were coming through. The Coordinator spoke to the students and explained how volunteering could enhance their learning and their CVs. He also introduced students to keeping a Volunteering Record through which they could get their volunteering formally recognised.

Students have become more responsive to volunteering requests and are much keener to get involved. Because students can have their volunteering formally recognised they attach more importance to it and take ownership of it. They have even started coming up with volunteering ideas of their own; they are motivated and actually want to volunteer! Volunteering takes students out of college and their comfort zone and this has given them more confidence. They enjoy being ambassadors for the College and like to show off their skills! It's had a positive effect

on staff too. Students are easier to manage when we know they are willing to volunteer.

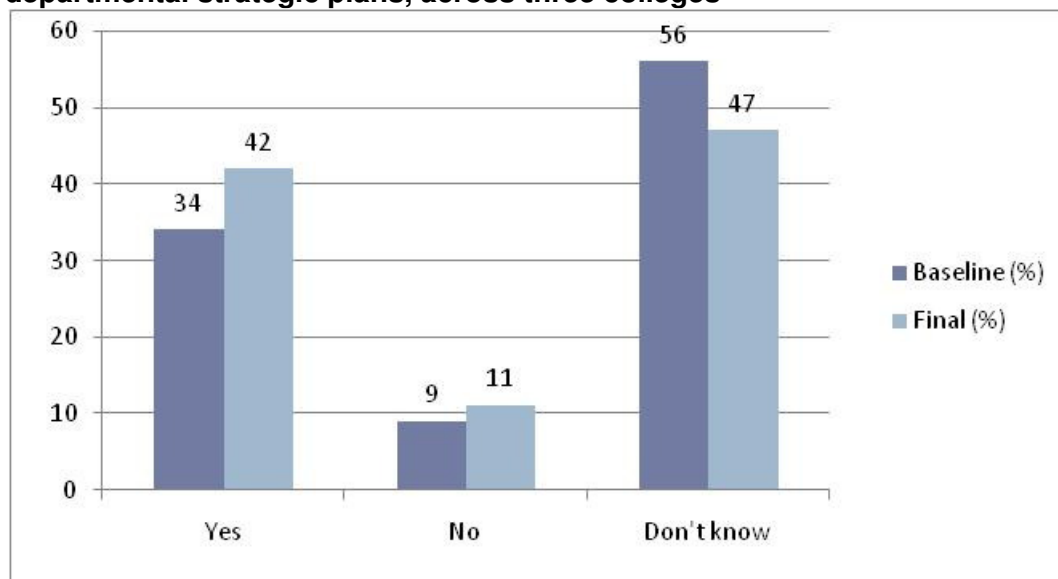
Questionnaire respondents were also asked around the start and towards the end of the project to what extent they felt that their *college* viewed volunteering as important for enhancing the learning experience of students. Across the three colleges, both around the outset and towards the end the majority of staff believed that their college viewed volunteering as 'very important'. However, this majority reduced over the lifespan of the project. Despite this, across the three colleges, a larger proportion of respondents believed that their college viewed volunteering as 'important' and a smaller proportion believed their college viewed volunteering as 'of little importance' by around the end of the project. The findings are presented in Graph 3.2 below.

Graph 3.2: The extent to which staff felt that their *college* viewed volunteering as important for enhancing the learning experience of students, across three colleges



Questionnaire respondents were asked around the start of the project and towards the end of the project if the promotion of volunteering was included in their department's strategic plan. Across the three colleges, by the end of the project a higher proportion of respondents stated that it was. The findings are presented in Graph 3.3 below.

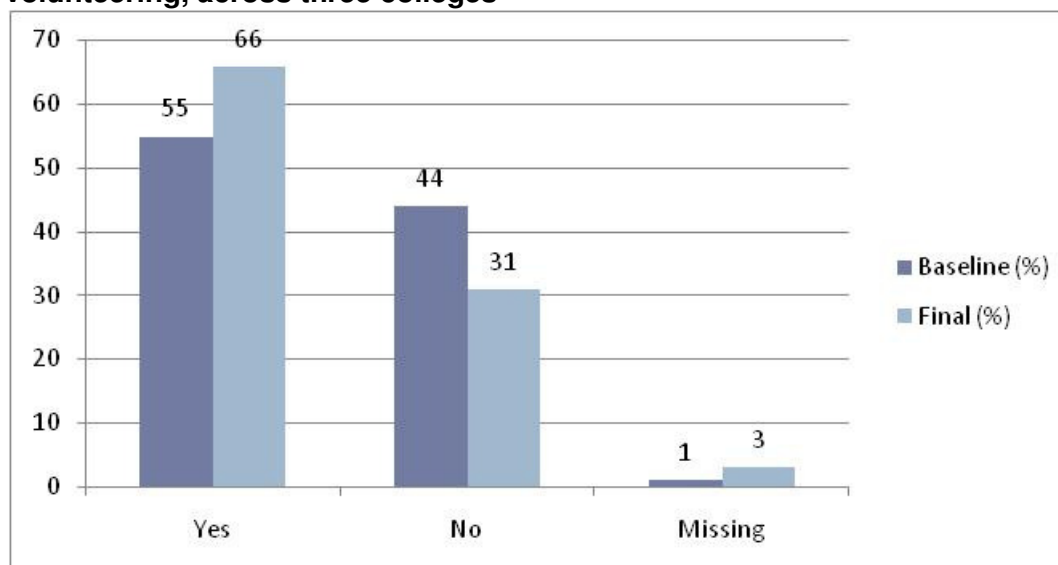
Graph 3.3: The extent to which the promotion of volunteering is included in departmental strategic plans, across three colleges



3.1.3 Changes in behaviours

In terms of behaviours, respondents were asked around the outset of the project and towards the end of the project if students were supported into volunteering through their department. Across the three colleges, by the end of the project a higher proportion of respondents stated that their department did. The findings are presented in Graph 3.4 below.

Graph 3.4: The extent to which college departments support their students into volunteering, across three colleges



Questionnaire respondents were also asked around the start of the project and then again towards the end of the project what, if any, mechanisms their department had in place to support students into volunteering. Many mechanisms were described by respondents. The findings from across the three colleges are presented in Table 3.2 below. The mechanisms have been divided into six categories: workshops, written information, encouragement and support

from staff, embedding in the curriculum, practical help, and schemes and initiatives. New mechanisms reported in the baseline questionnaire only are in *italics*.

Table 3.2: Mechanisms for promoting volunteering, across the three college

<p>Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College support staff • Local Volunteer Centres • Other external agencies 	<p>Written information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature • Websites • Departmental guidebook • <i>Posters</i> • <i>Emailing of opportunities</i>
<p>Encouragement/support from staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement during Interview • Encouragement throughout course • <i>Staff referrals to Student Services and Volunteer Centers</i> • <i>Staff mentoring/coaching student volunteers in spare time</i> • <i>Support staff helping students volunteer/ find opportunities</i> • <i>PC support, encouragement and information on opportunities</i> • <i>Staff providing references</i> • <i>Staff developing contacts with external agencies</i> • <i>Staff working in partnership with other departments across college</i> • <i>Staff providing information</i> • <i>Marketing department promoting opportunities</i> 	<p>Embedding in curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated into community learning/employability programmes • Requirement for some course units: Youth Achievement Award Unit <i>Citizenship Unit</i> <i>Employability Unit</i> <i>Enterprise Activity Unit</i> <i>Citizenship Through Sport and Fitness Volunteering Unit</i> • <i>PDP sessions</i> • <i>Worked into timetable if relevant opportunities come up</i>
<p>Practical help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release from class • Use of college transport, equipment and resources • Disclosure Scotland checks/costs • <i>Payment of expenses</i> 	<p>Schemes and initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Volunteer Awards • Peer support mentoring schemes • Angus Gold project • Class rep system • <i>Volunteer Record</i> • <i>SCIL scheme</i> • <i>Adam Smith Business Club*</i> <i>Internships</i>

New (final questionnaire only) mechanisms are in italics

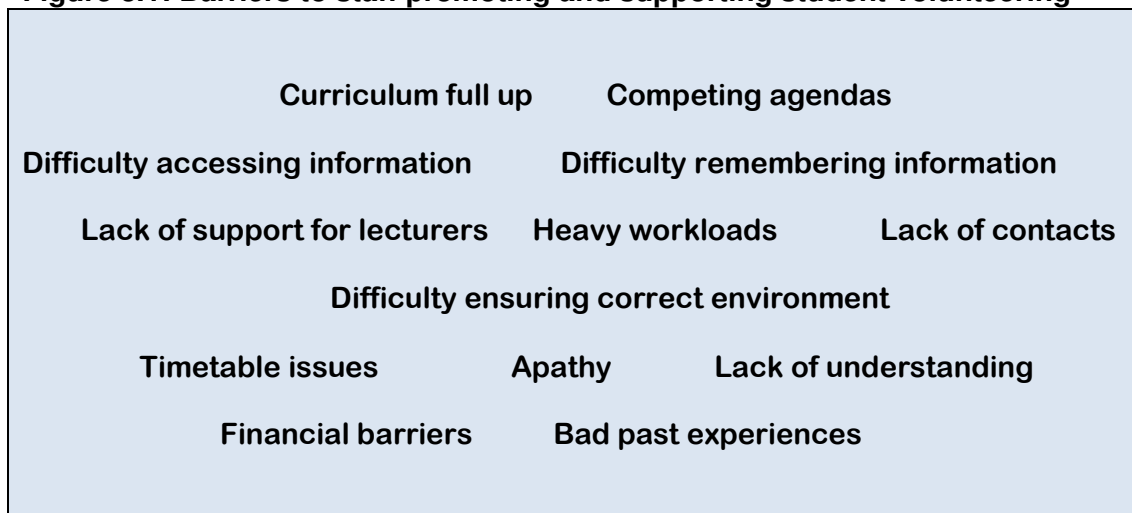
**Forum where business students and business people meet and network*

3.1.4 Staff barriers to volunteering

Both questionnaire respondents and interview respondents were asked about barriers to them getting involved in promoting and supporting student volunteering. The barriers that were raised by respondents across the three colleges are depicted in Figure 3.1 below. These barriers have been categorised

into three groupings: time related, knowledge related and practical constraints, and are explored in more detail below.

Figure 3.1: Barriers to staff promoting and supporting student volunteering



Time related

Respondents commented on a number of barriers relating to time constraints. Many lecturers stated that there is little time available to promote volunteering to students and support them with, say, researching volunteering posts, procuring resources and providing the personal contact that many students require to enable them to volunteer. Some staff commented that within existing curriculum frameworks there is little room to incorporate volunteering. Also, heavy workloads mean that it is difficult to find time outside of the classroom to promote and support volunteering. Staff made a number of comments relating to ‘competing agendas’. Work pressures mean that lecturers must prioritise coursework. Staff are also subject to other agendas over and above core course subject which squeeze the potential for them to promote the volunteering agenda.

Work pressures and the impact of these came across in staff interviews with lecturers. There was a sentiment shared by many staff that because of these pressures it would be hard for them to continue the work of the project when it comes to an end. An example comment was:

“It’ll be difficult for me to find the time to sustain the work of the Learning by Volunteering project with my students. There are only so many hours allocated to teaching and my focus is to get students through the course and prepare them for assessment - time is a major barrier. We’ll always help students with UCAS forms and point them towards the Volunteer Centre; however, volunteering is an add-on and with nobody here to encourage it, or for tutors to handover enquiries to, it will suffer. It’s a difficult situation, the door gets opened and you can see the benefit to something and then because it’s funded by a project it gets stopped.”

(History Lecturer, Angus College)

Similarly, the lecturer from Case study 3.3 comments that the SCIL scheme will likely suffer when the project comes to an end. She stated:

“Our section hopes to keep up the work of volunteering after the project comes to an end. This won’t be easy as our time is tight with teaching. Having a Project Coordinator who is able to identify potential recruits saves a lot of time. Also, the Coordinator brings potential recruits to us straightaway, which means that we can interview volunteers there and then and there is no waiting time. Volunteers like the fact that we respond quickly – so not doing this would have an impact.”

(SCIL Lecturer, Langside College)

Knowledge related

Some staff commented that they found it difficult to access and remember information on volunteering and this was a barrier to them promoting it with students. Some respondents commented that they lacked knowledge of opportunities available and/or did not have contacts in the local area that would enable them to find opportunities. In relation to this, some respondents commented that they did not know where to refer students who are interested in volunteering, either within college or externally. Another barrier related to finding suitable volunteering opportunities and there was concern regarding the vetting of opportunities. Ignorance and apathy towards volunteering was found to persist with some staff. These respondents stated that they were not sure of the benefits of volunteering, what it involved or how they could go about incorporating it into their courses. Some respondents had no interest in volunteering or even had a negative perception of it. For example, one questionnaire respondent had encouraged her class to volunteer, but then found the conditions students were given to volunteer in poor and the recipient organisation unappreciative; this experience made her reluctant to engage in the volunteering agenda.

Practical constraints

Respondents mentioned some practical obstacles which they perceived and experienced as barriers to them supporting student volunteering. Some respondents mentioned costs such as transport costs, travel expenses and the cost of Disclosure Scotland checks. Some respondents stated that lack of funding had prevented prearranged volunteering going ahead. Another practical barrier mentioned by respondents was difficulties with timetabling; for example, problems with scheduling information workshops that all students across college courses were able to attend or finding volunteering opportunities that do not coincide with class time.

One of the staff interview respondents commented on some of the practical constraints associated with volunteering, including ensuring that health and safety standards are met and that funding is available. The respondent also mentioned lack in supply of accessible opportunities, a practical constraint for rural colleges in particular. She stated:

“At the moment, for my course, we only do volunteering internally and don’t have connections outside the college in terms of volunteering in the community. Cost is a big barrier. My students suggest doing projects such as tidying gardens or clearing out ponds, but you need appropriate clothing and safety measures and this has associated costs, for which there is no funding

available. Opportunities are also limited. The Volunteer Centre is inundated with potential volunteers and can't always place them; there is progress to be made by me in terms of working better with the opportunities they can make available. Finally, there are geographical barriers. Angus College is in a rural area and we have many small to medium size enterprises which do not provide the scope for voluntary opportunities. We've tried in the past with vocational qualification courses to place students for work experience and it's proved challenging. This is now even more difficult in the current economic climate when firms are reducing staff numbers and so cannot offer places for our students, even in a voluntary capacity."

(SkillsZone Course Leader, Angus College)

3.1.5 Staff enablers to volunteering

Staff were asked what enables or would enable them to promote and support students with volunteering. Facilitators across the three colleges are depicted in Figure 3.2 below. Each enabler has been categorised into four groupings: partnership working, curriculum incorporation, college support systems and information, and are examined in more detail below.

Figure 3.2: Enablers to staff promoting and supporting students into volunteering

Having good contacts	Better internal communication
Structured progression routes	Emphasis within course programmes
Flexible working practices	Project Coordinator
Involving support staff/Student Association	
Remission for staff	College policies/ethos
	Broker system
Information on benefits	Information on opportunities
Information workshops	Volunteering framework

Partnership working

Many respondents commented that partnership working, both internally and externally, facilitates student volunteering. In terms of external partnership, having good links with the local VC and having a dedicated contact person for the college at the VC was endorsed. Other useful external links raised by respondents were to local agencies and employers, which enable the direct creation of volunteering opportunities. One example of where good links to employers have been made is through The Adam Smith Business Club (see Table 3.2). It was suggested that colleges should work with employers to create structured pathways for volunteers with clear progression opportunities that are signposted either onto further training or into employment.

Respondents from the staff interviews commented on connections with external agencies and the importance of establishing good links for facilitating student

volunteering. For example, a member of support staff comments on how having good links enables her to facilitate volunteering:

“I seek out, recruit and place students and external volunteers into volunteering opportunities both within the college and partnership agencies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. In order to do this I’ve established good links with the Volunteer Centre and the not-for-profit organisations renting space in our campus that have the potential to take on volunteers.”

(Mentoring Coordinator, Adam Smith College)

Equally, another member of staff comments on what happens when there is a lack of partnership working:

“Although the Volunteer Centre is very accessible, they do not always get back to students who have expressed interest, which is very frustrating. I think there need to be better links with the Volunteer Centre to enable more student volunteering.”

(Student Development Team Leader, Angus College)

In terms of internal partnership working, many respondents suggested college departments working together to create internal opportunities for student volunteers. For this to be successful it was stated that it requires good communication between departments, team work and a shared sense of purpose. Case study 3.2, where tutors from the IT department work with SkillsZone students, is a good example of internal partnership working.

Curriculum incorporation

Another enabler commented on by respondents is building volunteering into learning through its incorporation into the curriculum, either as a core subject or as ‘added value’. It was suggested that this could be done through having greater emphasis on citizenship and employability skills within course programmes or running volunteering related units, such as the Learning by Volunteering Unit and the Volunteering Skills Unit developed through the project. Alternatively, it was suggested that volunteering could be incorporated into PDP time and guidance slots. It was commented that having flexible course descriptions and assessment criteria allows greater scope for lecturers to embed volunteering. Some staff interviews revealed how volunteering was being incorporated into the curriculum. For example:

“Volunteering embraces the Curriculum for Excellence and the citizenship ‘capacity’ in particular. We have incorporated volunteering into the curriculum by asking students to keep a diary where they self-evaluate the volunteering activity they’ve done.”

(Beauty Lecturer, Langside College)

College support systems

As mentioned in the previous section, staff face a number of barriers to supporting their students into volunteering. It was commented by many respondents that having good support systems in place helps to overcome several of these barriers. In particular, a number of lecturer respondents stated that it is helpful to have a contact within the support staff who is responsible for all aspects of volunteering. In relation to this, many of the respondents mentioned the work of the PCs in particular and how this support mechanism was vital for enabling staff to support volunteering. This sentiment came across in several of the staff interviews. Example comments were:

“The Learning by Volunteering project has been great in terms of raising awareness of volunteering among our students. The Project Coordinator came to my classes and talked to the students. He reinforced the importance of volunteering and told students about how they can put the voluntary work they do towards a qualification. He has also provided support and my students have been able to go to him with enquiries and help with linking up to volunteering opportunities. For example, this year I had a very capable mature student on my HNC course. She wanted to ‘make a difference’ and was looking to get into social work with vulnerable adults. She is now helping out on evenings and at weekends working for a mental health telephone counselling service. Maybe she would have got there herself, but the Project Coordinator encouraged her and made the link to the counselling service.”

(History Lecturer, Angus College)

“I think that without having someone like the Project Coordinator pushing volunteering in the college I would forget about it to some extent. We get bombarded all the time with information that we need to keep up to date with and without someone keeping volunteering in the forefront of my mind I’d not think about it so much.”

(Business Administration Lecturer, Langside College)

Other suggestions were for existing support workers, such as Student Services staff and careers advisors, to take on this role. Many support staff interviewees stated that they would try to sustain the work of the project. However, similar to lecturing staff, they stated that it would be challenging to take on volunteering related work because their responsibilities are already extensive. Example comments were:

“I deal with all non-academic issues regarding students. My remit’s wide and includes counselling services, student funding, induction and freshers’ events and student accommodation. I also deal with student volunteering related matters including supporting the Student Association. When the project finishes I will take on the role of promoting and supporting volunteering with the students. This will be difficult as there is so much to my job already. Also, I don’t have the same level of knowledge as the Project Coordinator.”

(Student Support Coordinator (Development), Langside College)

“I support students with social, emotional and behavioural issues, either on a one-to-one basis or in class groups. Before the Learning by Volunteering project I was also in charge of supporting student volunteering in the college. Despite this, it will be difficult for me to continue the work of the project. I have a wide remit and work part-time, so therefore am not as able as the Project Coordinator.”

(Student Support Worker, Angus College)

Another suggested enabler relating to college support systems is remission type schemes where lecturers are granted a reduction in hours in order to administer or manage a volunteering project. Also, an interview respondent suggested the development of a broker type system where students are matched to appropriate opportunities, therefore making them more likely to stay in and succeed in these posts. It was thought that this would make college departments and external agencies more predisposed towards volunteering. She stated:

“I think there are still sometimes negative attitudes towards volunteers from staff and external organisations - that it's too much work or time to train volunteers up and that they are worried they will leave. It can be time consuming to train volunteers and make them feel part of the team, so matching roles can reduce this.”

(Mentoring Coordinator, Adam Smith College)

In relation to college support systems, it was also suggested that having an ethos within a college and its departments of continuous review and improvement is essential to the promotion of volunteering or any other agenda. A college culture where senior management prioritises volunteering and has college policies in place to back this sentiment up was also thought to be necessary.

Information

Many respondents commented that having good information enables them to promote and support student volunteering. In terms of promoting volunteering, staff need knowledge and understanding of what volunteering is and its benefits. Staff also need belief that volunteering can enhance skills and CVs, and providing staff with information reinforces this belief. In terms of support, staff need to be informed of the opportunities available and understand what is expected of the students before they can support them into volunteering effectively.

Suggested mechanisms for putting across information to staff include the creation of a simple, well-publicised framework that staff can access and having college volunteering policies and procedures in place. Other suggestions are providing information for staff on volunteering and opportunities through college websites, staff newsletters, guest speakers, information workshops and literature on volunteering. One interview respondent stated that she is hopeful that the project toolkit will provide staff with the information they need. She commented:

“Although it has improved, there are still barriers to getting staff and students motivated to find out information on volunteering for themselves. Some courses, such as construction and engineering, lack interest so there is still work to be done there. However, I'm hoping the toolkit will facilitate staff

knowledge and understanding of the importance of volunteering and that staff will take the toolkit on board next year.”

(Student Support Worker, Angus College)

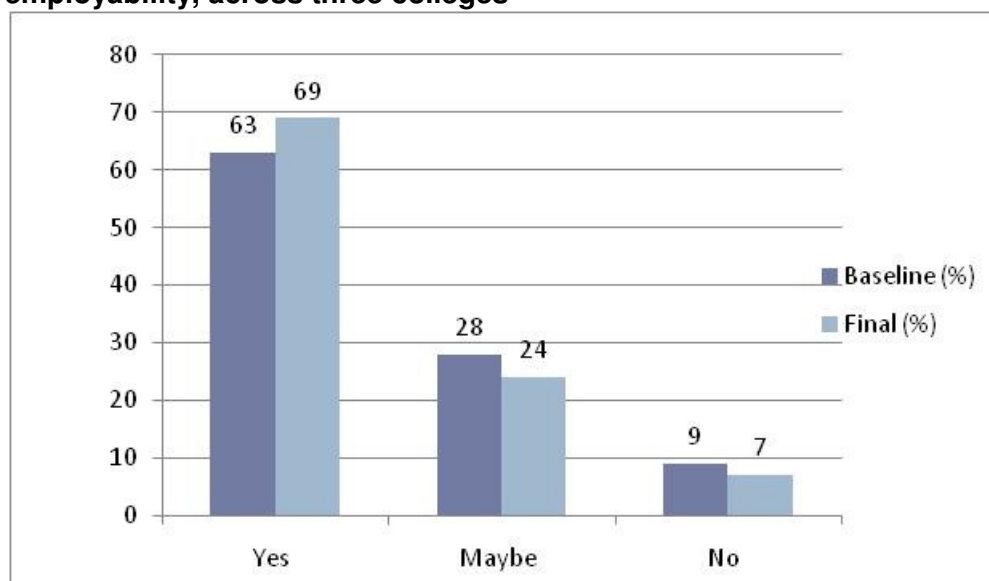
3.2 Student findings

Student findings have been divided into two sub-sections. Section 3.2.1 relates to student attitudes towards volunteering and changes over the duration of the LbyV project. Section 3.2.2 relates to student experiences of volunteering since the implementation of the project.

3.2.1 Student attitudes

Respondents were asked if they believe that volunteering can enhance future career prospects. Across the three colleges, a majority of 63% of respondents around the start of the project agreed. This majority increased by a further 6% over the course of the project. The findings are presented in Graph 3.5 below.

Graph 3.5: Extent to which students believe that volunteering can enhance their employability, across three colleges



In relation to this, many of the case study interviews revealed students who found that volunteering was helping them with choosing career paths. For example, Case study 3.5 below provides an example of a student who overcame a career setback to discover a new and rewarding vocation through having volunteered.

Case study 3.5: Simon, HNC Working with Communities, Adam Smith College

I worked as a supervisor in a factory for six years before crashing my motorbike. Following the accident I was severely injured and left on crutches for 16 months and eventually paid off at my work. It was a terrible time - I felt vexed about losing my job and frustrated about not being able to do anything for myself. At first I couldn't even climb down the stairs in my house, let alone play football three times a week like I'd done before the crash. I knew I had to find a new career and thought that maybe computers was something I could do, so decided to come to the college.

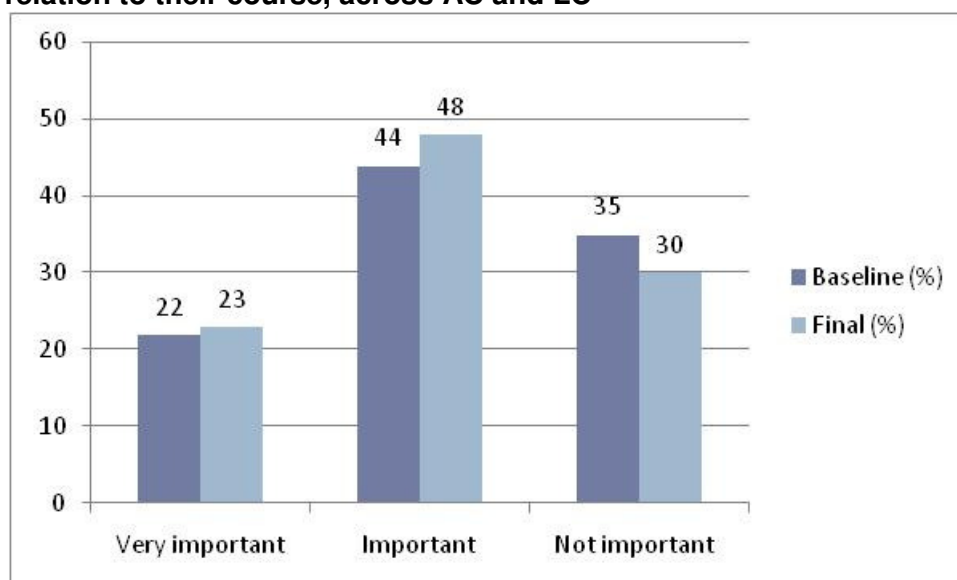
During my time on the computer course I got involved in volunteering with the Princes Trust group in the classroom upstairs. Not long after that I was introduced to a lady from Fife Young Carers (FYC) and got involved in volunteering with them too. I then soon realised that computer studies were not for me. This year I am doing HNC Working with Communities and am hoping to get into uni next year to do a degree in Community Learning and Development.

The college has been brilliant in supporting me into volunteering. It was my lecturer who introduced me to the Princes Trust group and college links to the Volunteer Centre meant I found out about FYC. The Mentoring Co-ordinator at the college is helping me keep a volunteering diary where I reflect on my learning through volunteering. She has also given me lots of practical help with Disclosure Scotland checks for the Princes Trust work and helping me claim dinner money for the voluntary work that I do.

Being introduced to volunteering has turned my life around. I find it really rewarding to work with young people and get involved in the community – it gives me a buzz. Volunteering has set me on a new path and new career. It has helped me decide that I would like a career in community work specialising in youth work. Through volunteering I am gaining valuable experience in the field and it has also led to me getting part-time paid work as a Sessional Worker for FYC.

Students at AC and LC were asked how important they felt volunteering was in relation to their course of study. Across the two colleges, around the start of the project the majority of respondents agreed that volunteering was either ‘important’ or ‘very important’. Over the duration of the project this majority had increased slightly in both categories. The findings are presented in Graph 3.6 below.

Graph 3.6: Extent to which respondents believe that volunteering is important in relation to their course, across AC and LC



Many case study respondents described how volunteering had benefited them with their course work. One example of this is presented in Case study 3.6 below where an ESOL student describes how volunteering has assisted her with improving her English.

Case study 3.6: Tanya, ESOL student, Angus College

I've been doing volunteer work for Angus Council and Angus College. I work as an interpreter at the Council for customers who do not speak English. I've been able to help people with big problems. For example, there was a woman who could not understand why her neighbours were complaining about her. I explained that it was because her kids were noisy; she was then able to address the problem. Within the college I help out on the ESOL programmes. I assist students with writing letters to the Council, housing applications, job applications and so forth. I'm working on a welcome pack at the moment that will be translated into ten different languages. It will contain basic information including stuff on bursary funding and the teaching team and where to find them.

The College has been supportive of my volunteer work. For example, my tutor has allowed our class 1.5 hours of course time per week to carry out volunteering as part of the communications element of the programme. Getting that 1.5 hours is great - most of the class would not have time to volunteer if it were not incorporated into the programme this way, as many of us have children and paid work commitments. Also, Student Services have been great with letting me use their computer and printer for stuff.

Where I'm from in Russia people would say I was stupid to work for free. But I'm really glad volunteering is being promoted in Scotland's colleges as I've got loads out of it. At home my husband and I only speak Russian, so volunteering has helped me to meet lots of people with different accents and understand them better. I've met loads of interesting people and improved my people skills. Also, it has given me the opportunity to trial being an interpreter. Although I now realise it is not for me, I got to test it out before entering the profession and got lots of positive feedback for references from the experience.

Many of the case study student respondents mentioned benefits they had experienced through volunteering. Some examples are provided below.

A student describes how voluntary beauty therapy work had increased her confidence as a practitioner and the satisfaction she felt from helping others, promoting the beauty industry and raising the profile of her college in the community.

"It makes me feel good to do something for others and not to expect anything in return. I think with beauty it's a nice thing to do as people enjoy it. Taking part in volunteering has increased my confidence with clients, as you have to get used to working for people you don't know. Volunteering also promotes beauty and gets people interested in treatments who maybe wouldn't have had, let's say, a facial before. It also gets the name of college about too which is great for Langside."

(Sylvia, HND Beauty Therapy student, Langside College)

Another respondent describes how getting involved in college committee type work had helped him become a more responsible young adult, given him a sense of achievement and triggered him to become actively involved in his local community.

"This year I've been involved in a lot of volunteering, including sitting on the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the Community Life Long Learning

Committee. I've done voluntary work for the Learning by Volunteering project and helped set up and run a Volunteer Centre stall for getting students to sign up to volunteering. I've also volunteered helping older people with IT as part of my Skillzone course. Volunteering has helped me grow up. When I came out of school I only had a few Standard Grades and was a bit of a brat; smoking, drinking and being cheeky! Now I'm much different. I've realised that it's okay to be mature and want to make a change and still have a laugh with my old mates. This year we won a national volunteering group award for our SRC work. I also won a class rep award and an award for the volunteer work I did through Skillzone! I've become aware that I can make a change and now have the wherewithal to do this. This has led to me becoming the Community Council Youth Representative for my town. I contacted the Community Council myself and pitched the role to them and they accepted."

(Jon, Skillzone student, Angus College)

One respondent talked about how volunteering had provided her with a challenge, helped her overcome her nerves and made her feel more engaged with her college.

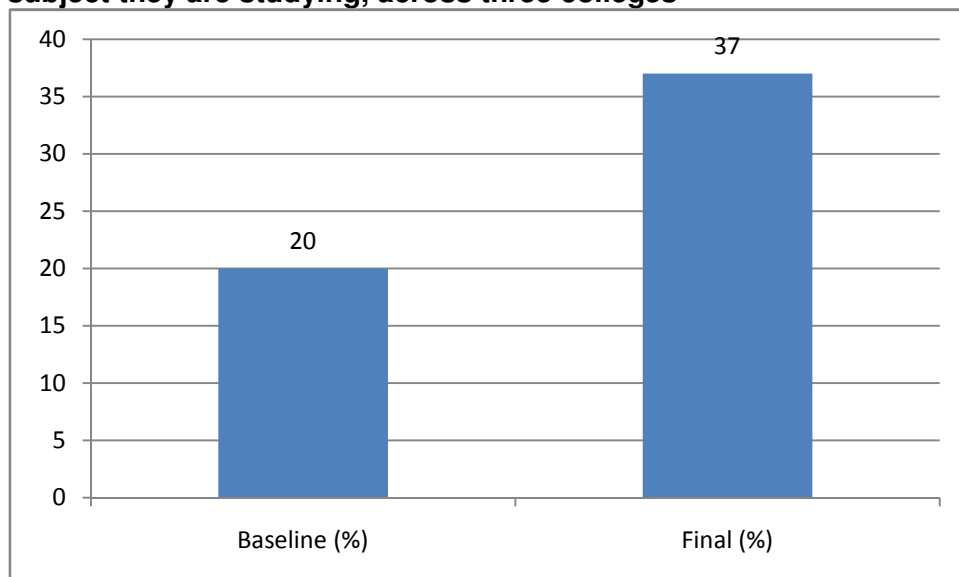
"At the moment I am involved in mentoring a group of young mums on the STEP IN programme. We do all sorts of things with them like cookery and managing bills. I also encourage them to get out into the world and maybe go to college; I've been where they are so feel that I can talk to them. Before I did the voluntary work I was really shy – not the type of person to speak and would always wait for someone to approach me first. I'd heard that the mums were a bit of a rowdy bunch but I got on fine. It has made me more confident, got me out the house and helps keep me connected with the college."

(Cathy, Flexible Learning student, Adam Smith College)

3.2.2 Student experiences

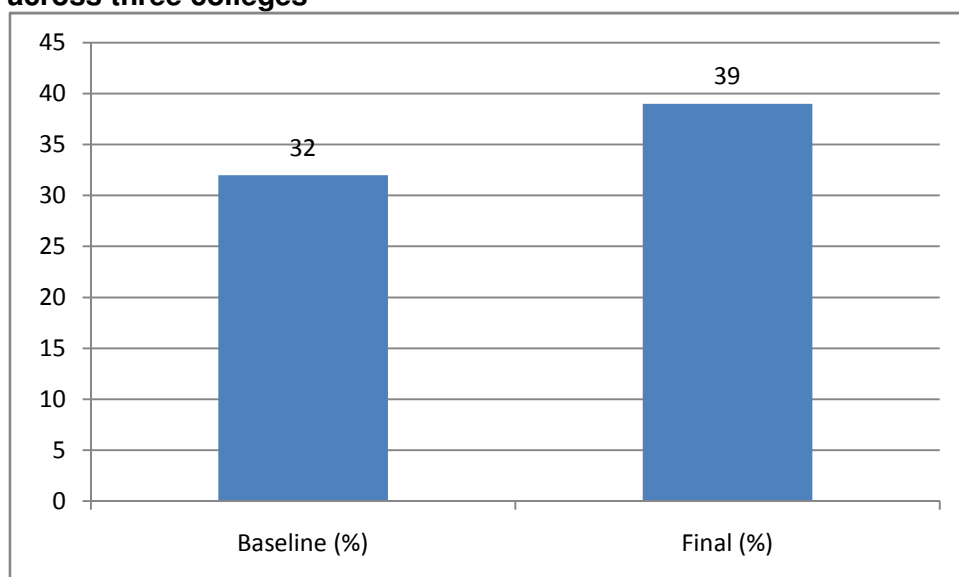
Respondents were asked if they were currently taking part in any volunteering that linked to their course of study. Across the three colleges, this proportion increased from 20% to 37% over the lifespan of the project. The findings are presented in Graph 3.7 below.

Graph 3.7: Proportion of students taking part in volunteering that links to the subject they are studying, across three colleges



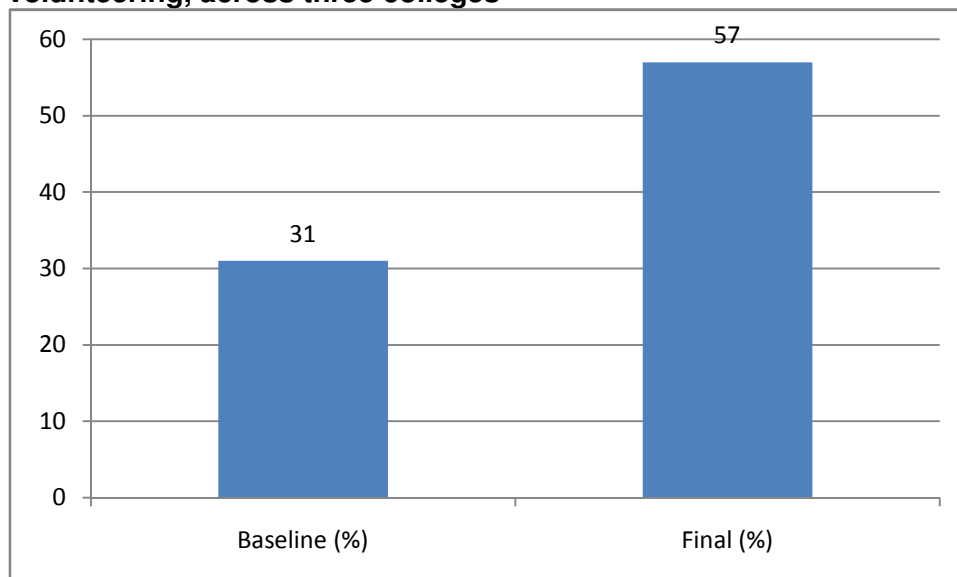
Respondents were asked if they were currently taking part in volunteering outwith college that was not directly linked to their college course. Across the three colleges, the proportion increased from 32% to 39% over the duration of the project. Findings are presented in Graph 3.8 below.

Graph 3.8: Proportion of students taking part in volunteering outwith college, across three colleges



Respondents were asked if staff had actively encouraged or facilitated volunteering. Across the three colleges, around the start of the project 31% of respondents stated that staff had. By the end of the project this average had risen to 57%, an increase of 26%. The findings are presented in Graph 3.9 below.

Graph 3.9: Proportion of students who have been encouraged to take part in volunteering, across three colleges



Many of the student case study respondents told of how they had been encouraged by staff to take up volunteering. An example of this is presented in Case study 3.7 below. The respondent describes how lecturing and support staff in her college had promoted volunteering to her and her class.

Case study 3.7 Kirsten, HND Beauty Therapy student, Langside College

I've been involved in volunteering work here in the college. I help out as a teacher two afternoons a week in a class with young students with learning and behavioural difficulties. I do things like nail art, facials and massage demonstrations.

Volunteering is great for my CV as I'd quite like to get into lecturing. It's been good for my own personal development too. I was quite nervous about going into a classroom and taking the class and it boosted my confidence when I did it. It's also taken me into a new environment. As a manager of a coffee shop for 8 years I'd always done training, but I'd never worked with adolescents before and never really been a child-friendly person, so it's taken me out of my comfort zone.

The college is really promoting volunteering and our lecturers have encouraged us to go for it. The Project Coordinator talked to our class and explained the benefits and add-on skills you can get from volunteering and how good it is to give something back to the community. In class our lecturers have incorporated volunteering into our learning plans. Lecturers also have us record our volunteering in a diary as part of the Curriculum for Excellence, which is all about expanding your skills. I've had loads of practical help as well, such as help with filling in the Disclosure Scotland form. The staff here are really approachable and you can always go into their offices and ask them about anything.

Many of the student case study respondents commented that they had received help and support with their volunteering. Some example comments are provided below.

One respondent describes how staff helped with volunteering relating to his course. Also, as with many of the respondents, he commented on support he had received with maintaining his volunteering record. He stated:

"I'm a Business student and for part of my course I've to raise money or set up some kind of event. I'm concerned about the earthquake in Japan and wanted to do something to help, so we decided to set up a charity 'fun run'. This involved staff running an assault course while having water balloons, water pistols and silly string sprayed at them! Lecturers and staff in the college have been very supportive. They helped get the fun run advertised on the projector in the foyer. The Student Association sent out emails asking staff to take part and handed out leaflets advertising the event. Also, the Project Coordinator has helped me to record the volunteering work that I do so that I qualify for the MV awards."

(Daniel, NC Business, Langside College)

Another respondent commented on support he received with volunteering relating to the Student Association. He also commented on how he was aware of volunteering being promoted in the college. He stated:

"I'm the Fair Trade and Sustainability Officer for the Student Association. It's a voluntary role and is about raising awareness of ethical and green issues in the college. I've organised events for the college Fair Trade fortnight; for example, I bought in fair trade products and gave them out as freebies to students. Also, I'm in the process of designing a questionnaire for students about sustainability. The college has been really supportive of volunteering. Student Services came around all the classes at the beginning of the year promoting it. There are posters up in the foyer telling us about volunteering and who to speak to in the college about getting involved. The people in Student Services are always more than happy to sit down and go through stuff with you, like help with writing the sustainability questionnaire."

(Allan, SQA Highers programme, Langside College)

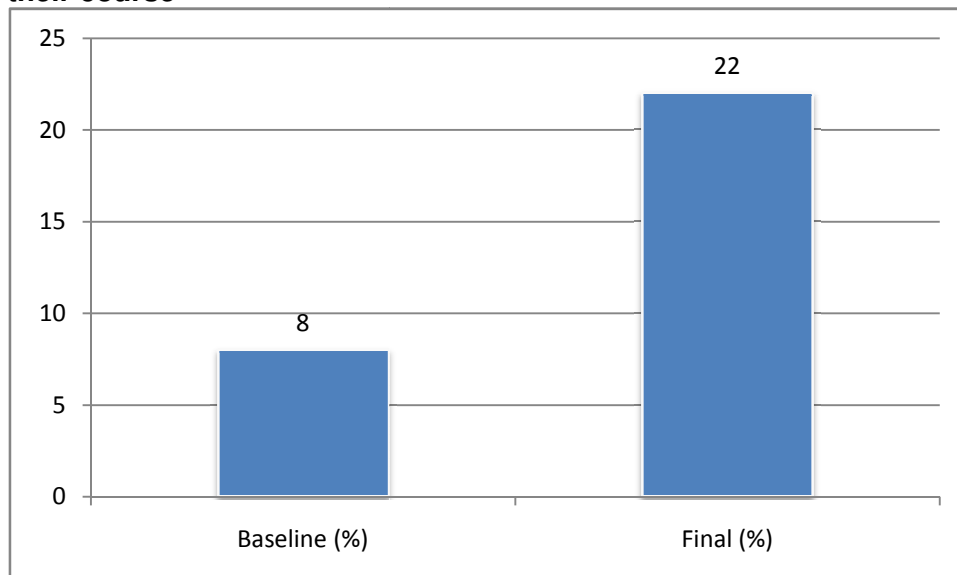
Another respondent describes help he received with organising an event and the support he was given when problems arose. He stated:

"I volunteer as the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans) Officer for Angus College. My role involves making sure the LGBT community's voice is heard and also organising campaigns to promote equality within the college. For example, in February we celebrated LGBT history week. We put a presentation together of LGBT celebrities and had the presentation put up on the plasmas around the college. Staff at the college have been great with supporting me. I've had help with setting up the presentation and with getting permission to put it up on the plasmas. The presentation did not go down well with some sectors of the college but staff were supportive of me and dealt with the situation when these people wanted to take the presentation down."

(Mike, HNC Healthcare, Angus College)

Finally, ASC respondents were also asked if volunteering featured in any aspect of their course curriculum, discounting any mandatory work placements. Over the duration of the project the proportion of students stating that it had increased from 8% to 22%. The findings are presented in Graph 3.8 below.

Graph 3.8: Proportion of ASC students who stated that volunteering featured in their course



3.3 Key findings

Section 3.3 summarises the key findings from the staff and student data across the three colleges.

- There appears to be an awareness of the volunteering agenda among staff.
- There has been much volunteering related activity; many activities are linked directly to the Learning by Volunteering project.
- Positive attitudes towards volunteering among staff and students have increased significantly over the lifespan of the project.
- Student belief that volunteering can enhance employability and that it is important in relation to course of study (Angus College and Langside College only) increased slightly over the duration of the project.
- Students reported benefits such as increased confidence, feelings of accomplishment, greater maturity, and being galvanised into further action through volunteering.
- Many students responded well to having their volunteering recognised either through award schemes or formal accreditation.
- Staff perception of support for volunteering at senior management level has decreased over the course of the project.

- There appears to be an increase in departments incorporating volunteering within departmental strategic plans.
- In terms of behaviours, there appears to be an increase in departments supporting students into volunteering.
- Key barriers to staff supporting volunteering are time constraints, lack of knowledge and practical barriers, such as funding.
- Key enablers to staff supporting volunteering are good partnership working, college support systems, incorporation into the curriculum and accessible information.
- Over the duration of the project there appears to be an increase in the number of students taking part both in volunteering that links directly to their course and external volunteering outwith college.
- There appears to be a significant increase in students being encouraged by college staff to get involved in volunteering.

4 DISCUSSION

Many staff and students had not heard of the Learning by Volunteering project by name. This was to be expected given the nature of the project, which aims to steer staff and students towards volunteering rather than setting targets for doing so. It was therefore considered likely that some staff and most students may be aware that something was 'going on' but not necessarily know that it was linked to a project. This meant that the project was not mentioned by name in the questionnaires and in some of the interviews, apart from obtaining informed consent, so as not to confuse respondents.

This presented a problem with evaluating the impact of the project in that it was sometimes difficult to strip out work directly attributable to the project from activity that would have happened anyway. For example, Table 3.2 highlights 'new' mechanisms for supporting students into volunteering, these being mechanisms that were reported in the final questionnaire only. These may not have been picked up in the original baseline questionnaire and therefore not necessarily related to LbyV.

Staff and student interviews and case studies were overwhelmingly positive towards volunteering. There was concern that these respondents may have been unrepresentative as they had been selected to take part in the research by the PCs who had an interest in the evaluation being successful. However, these findings were borne out in the questionnaire findings to an extent, which were likely to be generalisable to the total population.

It was interesting that the proportion of staff with very positive attitudes towards volunteering appeared to increase over the lifespan of the project, while the proportion of staff who perceived senior management to have positive attitudes towards volunteering appeared to decrease. This could either be related to awareness among staff that the LbyV project is coming to an end or the impact of budget cuts within the sector and awareness of the affect these are likely to have on any non-core activities. Despite this, a very large majority of respondents still perceived their college as valuing volunteering by project conclusion. Therefore, although this finding was disappointing, its significance should be taken in context.

Staff facilitators and barriers to volunteering are reported on at length in this evaluation. It was thought that staff barriers and facilitators would provide information relating to sustainability and recommendations for moving forward upon completion of the project. Students were not asked about barriers to engagement as these are already well documented (see project baseline report). It was encouraging that staff were able to identify more enablers than barriers to engagement. It should also be noted that some barriers are likely to affect colleges disproportionately; for example, rural colleges may face greater barriers in that there is less scope for opportunities in these areas.

LbV aims to create a volunteering ethos; however, it is difficult to measure culture change in the short-term. Much of the work of the project has been to establish infrastructure for enabling volunteering in colleges, such as the development of the toolkit and accreditation. This work is likely to impact on culture in the medium to long-term, and the full impact of this may not be felt now. Also,

assessing the impact of LbV on staff and students now may not reflect true culture change, but the short-term impact of a major and recent project.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be inferred that the Learning by Volunteering project has had a substantial and positive impact. This evaluation suggests that over the lifetime of the project attitudes towards volunteering have improved among staff and students, and more staff are supporting students into volunteering. Also, many students have been supported into and benefited from volunteering through the project. However, there are a number of staff and students who have not embraced the volunteering agenda and there is still some progress to be made in terms of instilling a volunteering culture.

In terms of sustainability, this evaluation highlights a number of mechanisms that it is believed will continue the work of the project once it comes to an end. It is important that volunteering is embedded within the curriculum and the volunteering related qualifications developed through the project will support this. It is also important that staff have information on volunteering and the toolkit will continue to provide staff with the necessary knowledge. However, it appears that the greatest impact has been made through the PCs and the promotion and support they have provided to both staff and students. Once this support comes to an end it will likely have a negative impact on the ability of colleges to continue and build on the work achieved thus far. Some lecturing and support staff will endeavour to continue the work but given the prevalence of heavy workloads this will be challenging.

In terms of moving forward, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Colleges should provide a member of support staff who is responsible for promoting the volunteering agenda within colleges. This could either be a dedicated staff member or an existing member of staff whose remit is expanded to include volunteering.
- Alternatively, lecturing staff could be given a remission in hours to free up time to support students into volunteering.
- Colleges should explore ways to fund expenses incurred by volunteers, such as travel and subsistence. Investment of relatively small sums can remove what can be major barriers to supporting student into volunteering.
- The newly developed volunteering related qualifications should be heavily promoted within colleges and supported through allowing flexible course descriptions.
- The newly developed project toolkit should be heavily promoted within colleges and kept up to date.
- Colleges should improve links with Volunteer Centres, other external organisations and across departments with a view to creating more volunteering opportunities for students. This work should be done by both lecturing and relevant support staff.
- Colleges should work with employers to create structured pathways for volunteers with progression opportunities into employment.

- Volunteering should be incorporated into operational and strategic planning and thus demonstrate senior management support.
- Broker type systems that match appropriate volunteers with relevant and feasible volunteering opportunities should be developed. This would limit the number of volunteers leaving posts early and diminishing the perception of volunteering among agencies taking on volunteers.
- In relation to this, there may be potential to develop a system where providers of volunteering opportunities are quality 'accredited'.

6 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: Staff Questionnaire

About you

1. Name
2. Department/team

Section A: Perceptions (*Please note that this section was in the final questionnaire only*)

3. Are you aware of student volunteering being promoted in the college?

(Tick box)

Yes

No

If so, please provide details

4. What barriers do staff face when promoting and supporting students into volunteering?

(Open question)

5. What enables staff to promote and support students into volunteering?

(Open question)

Section B: Behaviours

6. Are students supported in volunteering through your department?

If so, please provide details

7. Please describe the mechanisms that are in place to support volunteering in your department.

8. Please describe the type of volunteering opportunities that students are involved in through your department.

Section C: Attitudes

9. To what extent do you feel volunteering is important for enhancing the learning experience of your students?

- Very important*
- Important*
- Moderately important*
- Of little importance*
- Unimportant*

10. To what extent do you feel the college views volunteering as important for enhancing the learning experience of students in our college?

- Very important*
- Important*
- Moderately important*
- Of little importance*
- Unimportant*

11. Is the promotion of volunteering included in your department's strategic plan?

- Yes*
- No*
- Don't know*

APPENDIX B: Student questionnaire AC and LC

1. During your time in college have you been encouraged to take part in volunteering?
2. Are you taking part in any type of volunteering that links to the subject you are studying?
3. Are you taking part in any type of volunteering outside of college?
4. In your view - how important is volunteering as part of your college course?

Very important

Important

Not very important

5. Do you think that volunteering has the potential to improve your employability and life skills?

Definitely

Maybe

No

APPENDIX C: Student questionnaire ASC

1. Name
2. Teaching Institute
3. Do you participate in any of the following types of voluntary work?
 - Charity related (e.g. fundraising, event organising, charity shop etc)
 - Voluntary organisations (e.g. Guides/Scouts, youth groups, committee work etc)
 - College internal (e.g. fundraising, fire warden, first aid etc)
 - Quasi professional (e.g. Ambulance Corps, Children's Panel, Special Constabulary etc)
 - Faith related (e.g. church elder, Sunday school teacher, committee work etc)
 - Informal (babysitting, helping an elderly neighbour etc)
 - Other

If so, please give details (e.g. name of organisation, what you do)

4. Have staff actively encouraged/facilitated volunteering through any of the following mechanisms?

- Workshops – internal
- Workshops external (e.g. Volunteer Centre, other organisations)
- General encouragement during course
- Recruiting students for volunteering related schemes/initiatives
- Release from class to volunteer
- Given use of college transport/equipment/resources for voluntary work
- Help with Disclosure Scotland checks/costs
- Being given volunteering related literature
- Being directed towards volunteering related website
- Information within departmental student guidebook
- Other

If so, please describe what they did.

5. Does volunteering feature in any aspect of your curriculum? Please give details.

6. Do you believe that volunteering helps your future career prospects?

APPENDIX D: Staff interview schedule

1. What is your job title and job description?
2. How did you get involved in the LbyV project?
3. What have you done to facilitate students into volunteering?
4. What barriers have you come across?
5. Has the project had a positive affect on your students? Any good examples of students that have benefited from the project?
6. How sustainable do you think the project is?
7. Is there anything that could have been done differently/better?

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