

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND AND NAVCA (The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Volunteering England (VE) and NAVCA (The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) both engage with the network of local Volunteer Centres (VCs) to further our activities. Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) and VCs often operate as integrated agencies and are thus in membership of both national organisations.

NAVCA and VE are both strongly committed to partnership working in order to add value and strength to our core activities and, whenever possible, to be speaking with a united voice to our members and to Government on their behalf.

There is a history of VE and NAVCA working in partnership to deliver specific pieces of work in support of the strategic development of volunteering in England.

In 2005 NAVCA and VE published a joint statement asserting that there is no single best option in relation to the organisational structure supporting the delivery of local generic and volunteering infrastructure functions. In other words: whether through an independent or integrated agency, whatever works best, works best.

This means that neither VE nor NAVCA has a preference for independent LIOs/VCs. There is also no preference for mergers of VCs over mergers between VCs and LIOs. However, it is vital that the most efficient and effective use of local resources is encouraged. Therefore organisations should examine the business case for merger. What matters is effective support for volunteers and for organisations which involve volunteers rather than the maintenance of any particular organisational type.

NAVCA and VE wish to continue to develop a close and collaborative relationship between the two organisations and have drafted this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to describe it. Annexes describing particular pieces of collaborative work undertaken as a result of the MOU will be added, amended or removed from time to time.

2. **INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND**

VE is the national volunteering development agency for England. Its vision:

“Is of a society where the potential and passion of people to transform lives and communities through volunteering is fully realised”

and its mission is to:

“support an increase in the quality, quantity, impact and accessibility of volunteering throughout England.”

VE celebrates the contribution and value of volunteering in all its diversity values working in partnership with others; is a voice for volunteering; is independent and is seen to be independent; engages with others in open dialogue and debate; and is professional in all its dealings with paid staff, volunteers, members, stakeholders, partners and customers.

VE’s strategic objectives are:

- To demonstrate the value of volunteering and its contribution to society
- To strengthen leadership, management and diversity in volunteering
- To ensure a volunteering-friendly economic, political and social environment
- To secure and support an effective and sustainable volunteering infrastructure
- To develop Volunteering England as a sustainable, well governed and well managed organisation.

3. INFORMATION ABOUT NAVCA

NAVCA is the national voice of local third sector infrastructure in England. Its 360 members work with over 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations, helping them to provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, increase volunteering and tackle discrimination in partnership with local public bodies.

NAVCA supports local infrastructure organisations in developing high quality services to their communities and is their voice nationally.

NAVCA wishes to achieve the following strategic outcomes by 2011:

- government policies and practice at all levels will more accurately reflect the needs of local communities as a result of influence exerted through the voice of the local third sector
- local infrastructure organisations will have strong governance and management and will be providing inclusive services that enable local third sector organisations to meet the needs of the communities they represent.
- communities, supported by local infrastructure organisations, will be more active, engaged, strong and connected and more able to identify and address their own needs.

4. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Through agreeing this MOU NAVCA and VE aim to increase the impact and effectiveness of our members so that more people volunteer, local organisations manage volunteers more effectively and there is close collaboration between LIOs and VCs, regardless of local organisational structures.

We will also:

- build and maintain a mutual understanding of each other's work
- keep each other well informed
- define our working practices in the spirit of collaboration and partnership
- strengthen volunteering in England
- work collaboratively to support key aspects of the infrastructure for volunteering in England.

In order to achieve these aims VE and NAVCA will:

- hold an annual meeting of Chairs and Chief Executives to review:
 - the MOU and its impact
 - joint activity undertaken and described in annexes to this MOU
 - intelligence from members of both organisations about the way the relationship is perceived and experienced at local level
 - ways in which NAVCA and VE wish to develop the relationship in the coming year
 - potential for development of new joint activity.
- hold an annual meeting of appropriate Directors at a time when the organisations' work programmes are being prepared so that the scope for joint work and collaboration can be explored and agreed.
- ensure that all areas of joint work are negotiated; expectations made explicit; budgetary issues considered and agreed; working arrangements agreed; the work described and added as an annex to this MOU.
- work together to secure a sustainable infrastructure for volunteering at all levels.
- encourage key members of staff in both organisations to work consultatively on relevant policy developments, sharing intelligence and documents, and drawing up joint responses and submissions when appropriate.

This MOU was agreed between VE and NAVCA on
of2008.

Signed	Signed
Name	Name
For and on behalf of: VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND	For and on behalf of: NAVCA (The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)