

Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum

LIFT OFF Student Volunteering Project – Final Report

The aims and objectives of the project were as follows:

1. Project aims

- 1) To have a fully trained, bank of Disclosure Scotland checked students to assist with work with young people, both within and outwith schools.
- 2) To develop a model of training for student volunteers that will bring together good practice from across the region and assist partners in developing institutional models of good practice.
- 3) To engage more fully with young people in schools and to enable more LIFT OFF activity across the board.
- 4) To increase aspiration to, and thereby participation in, higher education over time from young people attending target schools by the positive use of role models from their local area.

2. Objectives of project

- 1) To recruit a Student Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- 2) To develop a model for the recruitment and training of Student Volunteers to assist LIFT OFF with aspiration and awareness raising work in target schools.
- 3) To develop and distribute appropriate materials and resources
- 4) To work with partners to develop a training programme and ensure that where appropriate, such training is certificated.
- 5) To engage with all partners and target schools to ensure that the needs of all are addressed by the project.
- 6) To design and implement a robust system of evaluation for students, schools and partners

A Student Volunteer Co-ordinator, based within the Forum's LIFT OFF (working with schools) team was recruited to lead this project and his report on how the aims and objectives of the project have been met is below.

Volunteer Co-ordinator report

I have developed and implemented a model for the recruitment and training of student volunteers to support the activities of LIFT OFF and strengthen the programme. The project has successfully met its aims and LIFT OFF now has a strong group of trained and Disclosure Scotland checked student volunteers to support activities within and outwith schools.

When beginning the project, I liaised closely with Forum staff and partner institutions to assess the Forum needs regarding a strong student volunteering programme and to establish common goals. I also met with several organisations outside the Forum such as Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools (GOALS) and Lothians Equal Access Project for Schools (LEAPS). All these programmes use students, either in a voluntary or paid capacity, and an assessment of their models of training and recruitment identified good practice that could be incorporated into a model that would best suit the recruitment and training needs of LIFT OFF. Working relations with such organisations as Volunteer Development Scotland were also established. They were able to advise on good practice and provide guidance on the management of volunteers. The network of local Volunteer Centres assisted with recruitment of volunteers and helped contribute to the support package offered to trained LIFT OFF students, through the MV Awards scheme.

To support the recruitment of student volunteers, I engaged with all partner institutions on the advertising of our volunteering opportunities and the displaying of material. Posters and flyers, designed both to raise the profile of LIFT OFF and attract potential student volunteers, have been distributed to careers centres and students associations of all partner institutions. I have attended volunteering fairs and fresher's event that have allowed me to engage directly with students and this has raised considerable interest in our volunteering opportunities. A key aim of LIFT OFF is to encourage young people to aspire to university, whether straight from school or via a local college. LIFT OFF already supports this route through the production of Stepping Higher. It was therefore important to attract student volunteers who would be representative of different partner institutions and different routes into university education. I feel the project has been successful in this respect. The development of the LIFT OFF website, creating web links to partner websites and advertising through institutional e-bulletins have also contributed to the recruitment of students. The recruitment process is designed to be continuous – putting in place a framework for recruiting student volunteers has allowed LIFT OFF to build up a strong group of volunteers which will increase in the future.

The training of new student volunteers takes place on a regional basis due to the large geographical area of the Forum. The training package that has been developed is flexible, interactive and stimulating and can be delivered at short notice, in order for the students who show interest in working with us to be trained quickly and given the chance to begin their voluntary work as soon as possible. This has been further aided by the LIFT OFF Development Officer becoming a countersignature for Disclosure Scotland. A system for the monitoring and recording of student volunteers and the activities they participate in has also been developed. All this incorporates good communication practices and allows students to be processed quickly and efficiently once they apply to become volunteers. A system of evaluation has also been drawn up which will allow LIFT OFF to engage further with the student volunteers and provide scope for the future development and improvement of the volunteering programme.

Having a strong group of trained and Disclosure checked student volunteers has added great value to the work of LIFT OFF. It has enabled, and will continue to enable, LIFT OFF to expand activity across the board. All activities are designed with the participation of student volunteers in mind because they form an essential part of the LIFT OFF team. As well as supporting LIFT OFF activity within the target schools, student volunteers have also supported the regional pupil forums, the residential summer programme and other campus-based events. The addition of student volunteers allows young people to interact with positive role models on a regular basis, accessing information and advice from those who are currently going through the student experience. This is hugely worthwhile for the pupils and will contribute towards bridging the divide between their perceptions of college and university and the realities of post-school education and student life. Using student volunteers who attended one of the target schools is also being implemented where possible. All this highlights an overall strengthening of LIFT OFF activity and a significant contribution towards meeting the overall aim of raising awareness of and aspiration to college and university. Further evidence of the positive impact of the student volunteering project on LIFT OFF activity can be seen with several pupils stating a desire to become student volunteers themselves once they enter post-school education.

The student volunteering programme has also had a positive impact on other groups. Students who participate in the project are able to boost their personal development and make a valuable contribution to a local community, and have benefited through their training received. Adult learners have also been able to participate in the project as volunteers. Partners have benefited by having access to a trained and mobilised group of student volunteers, as well as being able to identify a framework of good practice for the recruitment and training of students when developing institutional models of volunteering. Also, the developing and implementing of the student volunteering model has raised awareness of the work of LIFT OFF and the Forum as a whole, due to the building of new links with partners and other organisations.

The successful development and implementation of a student volunteering model has resulted in many trained and Disclosure checked students from different Forum partner institutions working together to support LIFT OFF activity. It has been imbedded into LIFT OFF to strengthen the infrastructure of the programme as a whole and is facilitating a full engagement with young people to raise awareness of and increase aspiration to college and university. The student volunteering model is progressive in nature and will be able to expand alongside LIFT OFF to support its activities long after this one year development period.

Philip J. Clark
05/12/07

Development of student volunteering programme

Achievements in period

Recruitment and training

Number of information sessions attended – 6
Number of students expressing interest – 71
Number of students trained as volunteers – 27

Participation in LIFT OFF activities

5 students have supported school workshops across the region reaching 200 pupils
14 students participated in LIFT OFF 2 success in August 2007 reaching 55 pupils attending one week residential programme
29 students assisted at the Great Big LIFT OFF conference (this includes both trained volunteers and others who have expressed interest but not yet been trained) reaching approx 160 pupils over two days.
2 students support LIFT OFF Pupil Forums.

Information for volunteers is available at <http://www.lift-off.org.uk/students/>

Financial Statement - Additional work with schools

Period 1 - 1 May 2007 - 30 November 2007

INCOME

income from SFC	£	50,000.00
Total	£	50,000.00

EXPENDITURE

Salary	£	15,507.54
Travel	£	947.16
Salary costs committed	£	13,545.30
Programme development costs	£	20,000.00
Total	£	50,000.00

Wilma Clark
Forum Manager
10 December 2007