

# Creating High Quality Placements for Young Volunteers




A guide to providing opportunities in the community

**step**  
**into**  
**sport**



On-line document



“47% of young people’s  
volunteering takes place in sport”

### **Volunteers**

*“Sport plays a special part in young people’s volunteering. It is the most popular volunteering activity – 47% of young people’s volunteering takes place in sport. The sports sector accounts for 26% of all volunteering, and volunteers are vital to the success of our national sporting life – the London Marathon relies on 6,000 volunteers, the Wimbledon Tennis Championship on 5,000, Open Golf on 1,200. The Manchester Commonwealth Games involved 10,000 volunteers, and the role of volunteers will be integral to the 2012 Olympic... (and Paralympic Games).”*

**A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement: Report of The Russell Commission. Crown copyright 2005.**

*“Volunteers make a big contribution to life in the UK, 22 million adults are involved in formal volunteering each year, 90 million hours of formal voluntary work take place each week. This volunteering is estimated to be worth about £40 billion per year. Every pound an organisation spends supporting volunteers generates a notional payback of up to £14”*

**Figures gathered by the Institute of Volunteering Research**





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## 1. What is Step into Sport?

Step into Sport is part of the Government's National School Sport strategy. A consortium consisting of Sport England, Youth Sport Trust and Sports Leaders UK are managing the programme on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills.

Step into Sport (SIS) targets 14-19 year olds by providing a simple framework of coordinated opportunities at a local level, to enable young people to begin and sustain an involvement in leadership and volunteering in sport. Through the Step into Sport community volunteering aspect of the programme, young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities that sports clubs and other organisations deliver. The aim is to support young volunteers to develop key life skills, and gain new skills, knowledge, self-confidence and qualifications through the opportunities presented by the Step into Sport programme.

### 1.1 The Benefits of Being Involved

Young volunteers can bring a wide range of benefits to clubs. Through the delivery of a positive experience, Step into Sport can identify new young volunteers who will have the desire to continue volunteering through into later life.

#### What's in it for clubs?

There are a number of clubs already benefiting from the Step into Sport programme. Here are some quotes from **clubs** currently involved;

- "There are now more volunteers who are keen to learn and support the club"
- "SIS has allowed us to deliver parts of our action plan that we couldn't previously because of a lack of volunteers"
- "We have identified young role models for our new junior section"
- "Our existing coaches have picked up new ideas and some have become mentors"
- "Our Governing Body has given us official recognition for being involved."
- "It did not cost the Club to be part of the programme"
- "It's helped my club to develop best practice in volunteer management"

#### What's in it for a young volunteer?

Through Step into Sport young people are being given the opportunity to learn, acquire and develop a range of skills, which are transferable to many areas, such as higher education and future careers.

**Young volunteers** already involved have said that Step into Sport has helped them to achieve the following;

- “It helps me to develop and improve my ‘life skills’ (i.e. confidence, communication, self esteem), and ‘work skills’ (time management, organisation, leadership) in an environment that I enjoy”
- “ I have been given the opportunity to attend further training courses”
- “Being involved in SIS has allowed me to complete my Millennium Volunteers Award”
- “I have gained part-time work with the sports club and am able to use my experience and new skills to show future employers what I have learned”

### **What’s in it for the partners?**

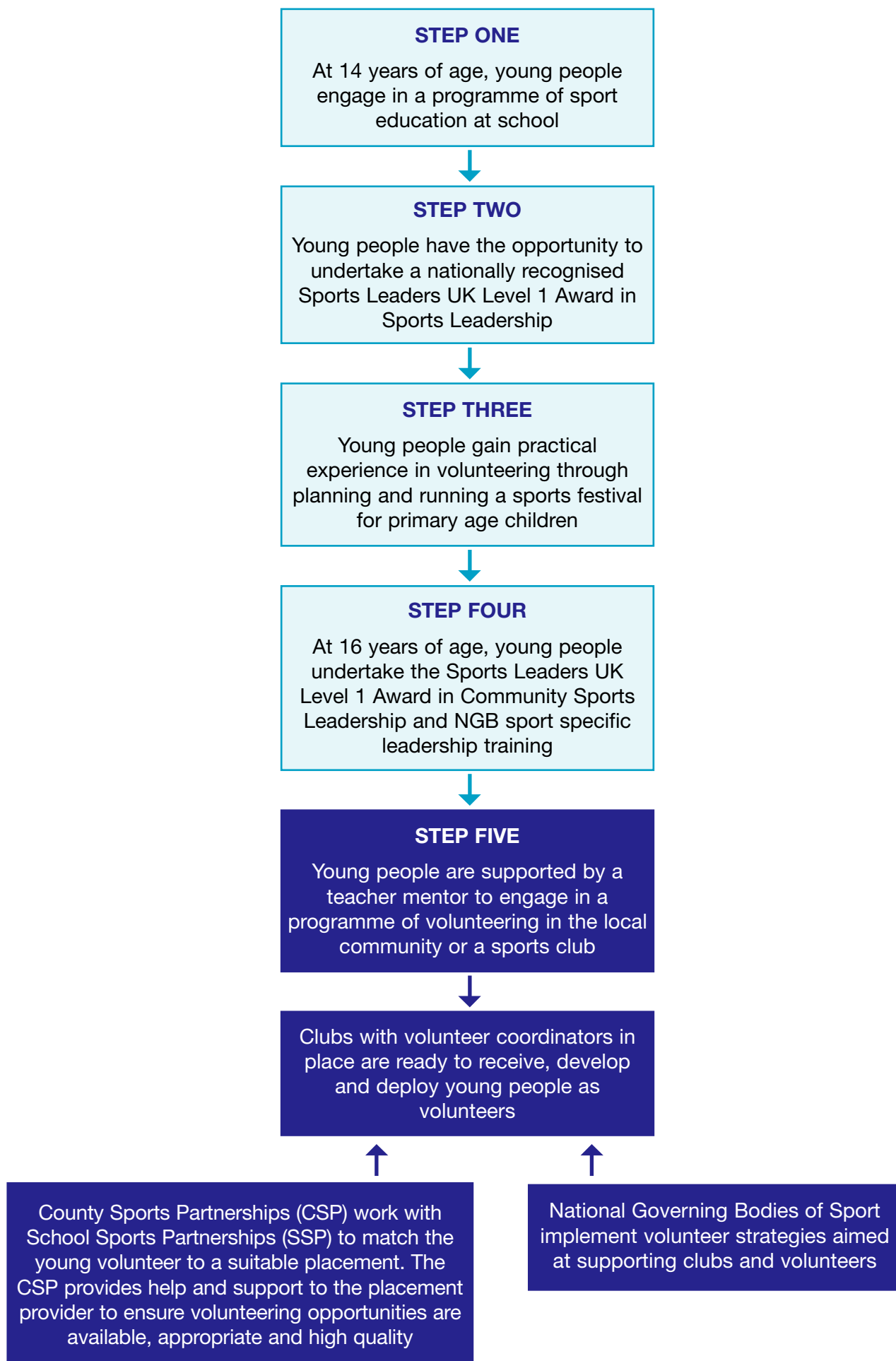
**National Governing Bodies, Schools and County Sports Partnerships**, whilst being responsible for delivering Step into Sport, have also seen a number of important benefits;

- More qualified coaches and officials in the local community
- Clubs being enthused as a result of the additional human resource
- More young volunteers also able to help with after school club and primary school activities
- Helps the school to deliver leadership and citizenship in a meaningful way
- Engaging young volunteers and preparing succession plans for the future is seen as an indicator of a healthy developing club and as such it can be a benefit to clubs who want to access small grants
- Development of additional school to club links
- Improvements in attainment, behaviour and performance of young people in schools

## **1.2 What Skills do the Young Volunteers Have?**

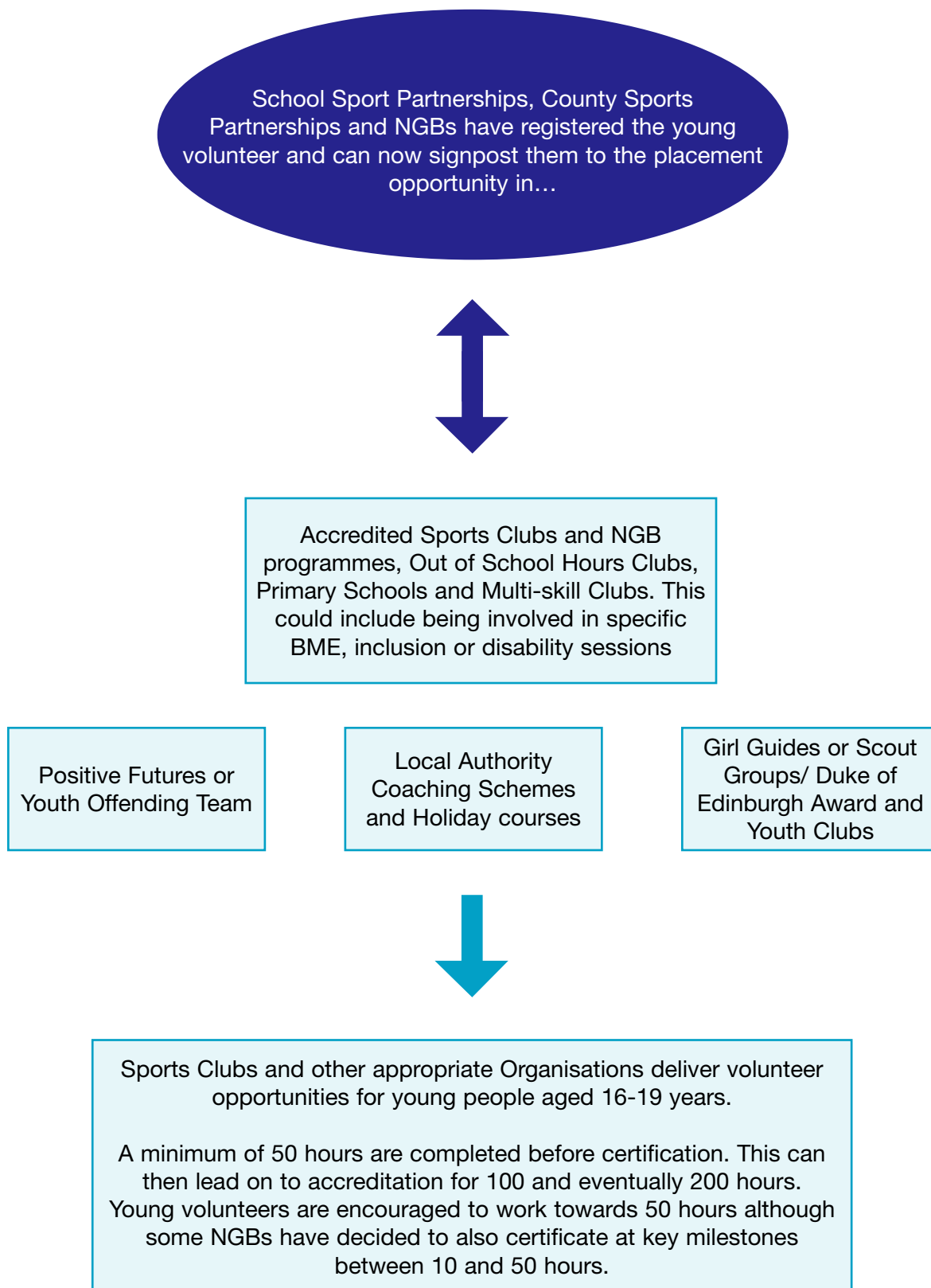
Each young volunteer has been identified by their school to take part in the Step into Sport programme. When they reach the club they will have already been trained. All of the volunteers will have undertaken and achieved their Sports Leaders UK Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership, and for those aged 16 and above, they may also have completed their Sports Leaders UK Level 1 Award in Community Sports Leadership and a specific National Governing Body (NGB) qualification. Many will also have received training around generic topics such as Child Protection, First Aid and Working with Children.

The following diagram illustrates the training that takes place at each step in the programme. Clubs and organisations will become involved at ‘Step 5,’ which is highlighted in dark blue whilst the light blue areas are led by the network of School Sport Partnerships.



## 2. Placement Opportunities

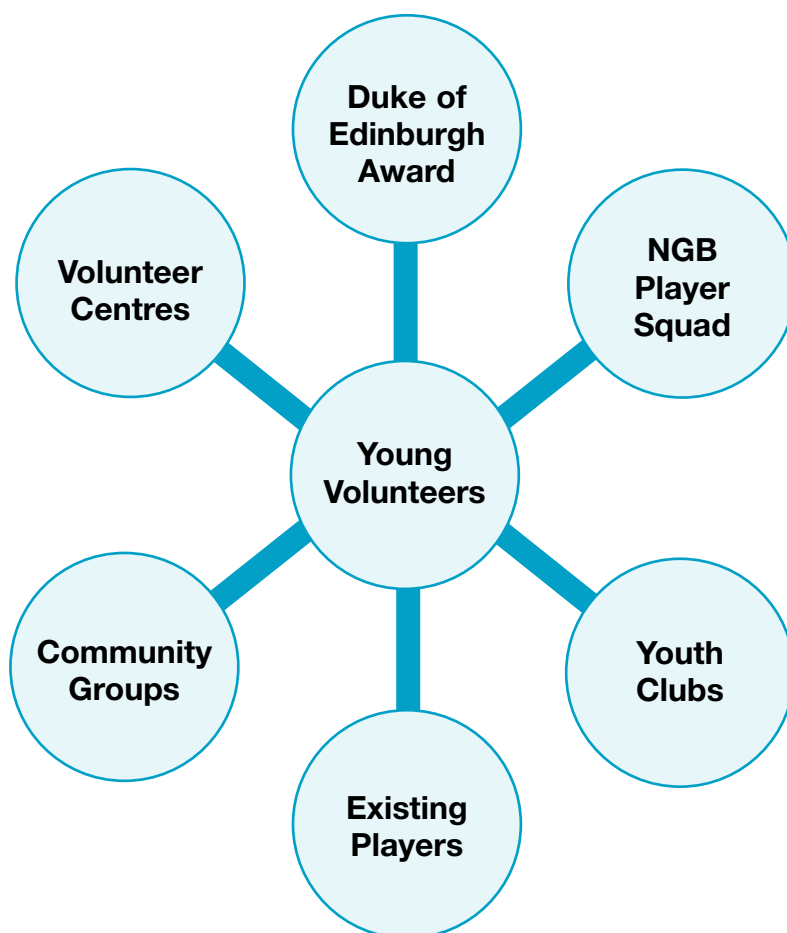
The diagram below illustrates where young people can be placed as part of the Step into Sport Programme, once at 'Step 5.'



## 2.1 Recruiting Volunteers From Outside the Step into Sport Programme

Step into Sport identifies young volunteers directly from an educational environment and places them into a sports club or other appropriate setting (as shown in the previous diagram). National Governing Bodies recognise however, that young volunteers can come from a variety of non-school environments as well. Your organisation may already have young people who are interested in developing their leadership skills in their own club. If that young volunteer is part of a school within a School Sport Partnership, then they could be put in touch with a teacher mentor from their school and register with the Step into Sport programme. Alternatively, you may be keen to receive young volunteers, but are not a traditional sports organisation. If this is the case you need to register with your County Sports Partnership as an organisation interested in providing placement opportunities.

If a young volunteer is not part of a school within a School Sports Partnership, you will not be able to register with the Step into Sport programme, but some National Governing Bodies are developing their own junior volunteering schemes, which link with the volunteering areas of Step into Sport. Each National Governing Body will have further information on this. The diagram below shows the types of organisations which could host placements or already have young volunteers that would be able to join their specific National Governing Body scheme, rather than the Step into Sport scheme.





### 3. Creating a High Quality Placement for Young Volunteers

A good experience as a sports volunteer can encourage young people towards a life-long involvement. A bad experience will definitely discourage them! Clubs must ensure that they can offer a safe and structured opportunity to take part in appropriate activities, which are both challenging and rewarding, in order that those young volunteers continue.

#### 3.1 Are you Ready?

The club that hosts the young volunteers will need to ensure that they are 'ready' to receive and have created a high quality environment for young volunteers to come into. The County Sports Partnership, supported by the National Governing Body, will arrange a briefing session to ensure that each club understands its role. This will include discussion on the ability of young volunteers, the activities that are appropriate for them to engage in, how these activities can be delivered and how clubs can create the right environment.

The following checklist identifies the main 'readiness factors' that need to be in place before a young volunteer can be placed within a club;

- Identify a Volunteer Coordinator who will oversee the programme and attend locally delivered training and briefing session which is delivered by the CSP.
- Identify the team of coaches, officials or existing volunteers who will support the young leader when on placement
- Ensure that your club or organisation has the appropriate accreditation, as determined by the County Sports Partnership, in partnership with each National Governing Body
- The Volunteer Coordinator must ensure that all club personnel who have direct responsibility for any young volunteer have been CRB checked, and that appropriate insurance is in place (the student will also have their own insurance if registered on Step into Sport)

#### 3.2 Role of the School and CSP/NGB

Following the briefing session, suitable students will be identified to participate in Step into Sport at each club. Contact details will be forwarded to the nominated Club or Organisation by the school mentor who will liaise with each other to monitor the progress of the young volunteer. The County Sports Partnership will ensure that the host club meets all of the relevant child protection and safety criteria so that the experience is a positive one for each young volunteer. The National Governing Body Volunteer Manager or local officer will support the club by offering ideas linked to the volunteering activities and by nominating best practice by clubs for national awards. National Governing Bodies have also established volunteer sections on their websites to offer further advice to clubs on delivering the volunteering activities. The Youth Sport Trust will issue certificates for completed hours.

### 3.3 Role of the Club or Other Organisation

Once the readiness factors have been achieved, the Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for identifying coaches and administrators who will support the volunteer, confirming start dates and location with the mentor, welcoming the volunteer and introducing them to the club and ensuring that all appropriate policies are in place to provide a safe and positive experience. To ensure the young volunteer is fully engaged in shaping their own opportunity, it is important to find out the skills and experiences that they bring and what their expectations of the volunteer placement are. A Community Volunteering Placement Checklist and sample Volunteer Agreement form can be found in the appendices and these form part of a support pack, which the Youth Sport Trust will provide to all Volunteer Coordinators in lieu of their support for the Step into Sport volunteers.

### 3.4 Getting Active

The young volunteers will be identified for you by the School Sport Partnership and/or County Sports Partnership, who will work with each National Governing Body. Remember, if your club or organisation does not have the relevant 'readiness factors' in place in order to offer young volunteer placements then please contact your CSP or NGB who will be able to assist you.

A number of pilot schemes have been delivered to identify the most appropriate areas for young volunteers to get active within clubs or organisations. The main six areas are listed below;

- **1 – Assisting in coaching activities**
- **2 – Behind the scenes, 'Running the Club or League'**
- **3 – Media**
- **4 – Understanding the Rules**
- **5 – Managing facilities**
- **6 – Organising a Competition, Event or Festival**

### 3.5 Different Ways of Volunteering

The following offer examples of the types of activities that young volunteers can complete within each area. Each NGB will also offer specific ideas on their website.

#### **1 – Assisting in Coaching activities**

- Introducing yourself to the group
- Observing best practice in organising safe activities
- Observing warm up, skills and cool down activities
- Preparing and delivering a warm-up session
- Preparing and delivering a skills session
- Leading a game
- Preparing and delivering a cool down activity
- Preparing and delivering a whole session (under the guidance of the coach)

## **2 – Behind the scenes, ‘Running the Club or League’**

- Act as School Liaison Officer
- Support club development activities
- General administration
- Facility co-ordination and maintenance
- Player registrations
- Undertake research of the skills of parents to see if anyone can support the club further
- Check the current qualifications of existing coaches and give them information on future courses
- Treasurer duties
- Club structures, committee meetings and minutes
- Officials appointments
- Basic First Aid
- Support Volunteer Coordinator
- Fundraising

## **3 – Media**

- Design and develop the club website OR
- Update the club website OR
- Design and develop a Step into Sport page on the existing club website
- Produce an article for the local newspaper promoting the club
- Produce a club programme
- Design a club poster which could be used to promote club coaching sessions
- Produce a marketing pack to present to potential sponsors
- Design a club logo
- Design club merchandise which could be sold to generate income

## **4 – Understanding the Rules**

- Understanding the rules
- Communicating as an official with players
- Practical match day control
- Using analysis to understand the practical implementation of rules
- Understanding safety and fair play
- Prepare a fitness programme for an official
- Personal performance evaluation

## **5 – Managing Facilities**

- Understanding how to manage a facility
- Time-tabling
- Maintenance of the facility
- Bookings and payments
- Budgets
- Devising staffing rotas
- Publicity
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments

## 6 – Organising a Competition, Event or Festival

- Publicity, marketing and media
- Inviting guests and VIPs
- Arranging event organiser meetings
- Ticketing
- Communicating with officials
- Venue preparation before the event
- Venue operation during and after the event
- Site security and safety matters
- Organise prizes and presentations
- Catering
- Developing the event format
- Design the event programme
- Develop a sponsorship package to seek extra funding
- Scoring and/or timing at the event

### 3.6 Case Studies

#### Rugby (quotes are taken from volunteers at a number of Rugby Football Union Clubs)

“I am 17 years old. I play rugby for my club and at higher levels making me a role model for other girls. I coach younger girls who have never played before. I am also able to help with after school coaching, building stronger links between my club and local schools. Seeing the team I’ve coached run out onto the pitch gives me a real buzz. It is really great to see them put into practice things I’ve taught them. Helping coach children with disabilities is my passion. I have helped organise festivals where several schools have taken part. Without my efforts these children would not have this opportunity to play. Seeing the players’ smiles and laughter makes my efforts worthwhile.”

“When I was 15, I began to referee rugby games as well as playing rugby. Completing a referee qualification improved my knowledge of the Laws of the game. Being the referee liaison officer at my club means that I telephone the referees who have been appointed to referee the matches to confirm the kick off times and make sure they have directions. If I didn’t do this, matches would be cancelled. Refereeing children and adults has given me a lot of confidence to deal with lots of different types of people. Helping my local Referee Society demonstrates to potential employers my ability to organise myself and others.”

“A group of players aged 17, including me, took part in a Community Leaders Award where we learned how to lead, coach and referee rugby. After completing my Level 1 qualification, I coached other young people during a two week summer camp. Teaching a group of young people who had never tackled before to be able to tackle safely really pleased me. We had a lot of fun during the camp. Being involved as a rugby volunteer has improved my social skills, enables me to meet people and it looks good on my UCAS form because it shows I’m not just academic.”



### **Tracksters Athletics Club, Merseyside**

Placements for 8 young Step into Sport volunteers have been provided by the Tracksters Athletics Club at Holly Lodge Primary School, through the Cardinal Heenan School Sport Partnership (SSP), over the past two years. The young volunteers, were recruited by the School Sport Coordinator (SSCO) from the SSP at the Merseyside Community Volunteering Conference. They worked alongside qualified Community Sports Coaches to help deliver multi-skills activities to primary school children, which was part of the Tracksters 'after-schools' programme. The volunteers were offered subsidised opportunities to undertake UK Athletics Level One and Two coaching qualifications and some of the young people did additional volunteering across a range of coaching and sports leadership activities. On average they volunteered between one and two hours per week during term time.

The young people's confidence increased and they demonstrated improved communications skills as result of volunteering on the Tracksters programme. These skills were perceived to be even more apparent in some of the volunteers who worked with young people with disabilities during the Merseyside Youth Games. The volunteers particularly benefited from the close supervision and mentoring from the Community Sports Coaches.

### **Tamar Valley Cannons Basketball Club, Ivybridge, Devon**

Over the past two years the Club had accommodated five Step into Sport volunteers, two of whom had been drawn from the Ivybridge SSP and three from an SSP in nearby Plymouth. In both cases, the SSCO at schools approached the club with potential volunteers with an interest in coaching in a basketball setting. The SIS volunteers tended to work alongside the club's qualified coaches to deliver coaching activities and to do some officiating with younger children between the ages of 5 years old and 14 years old involved in development squads at the Club.

The SIS volunteers had gone on to continue volunteering beyond their allotted Level 1 Award in Community Sports Leadership and/or community volunteering hours. The provision of opportunities for SIS volunteers to gain further accreditation in areas such as Child Protection Policy and Basketball coaching and officiating qualifications was key to the sustainability of youth-orientated volunteering at the club. SIS volunteers undertaking these additional sports-related qualifications were always accompanied by the Volunteer Coordinator or other 'workers' at the club and these activities were recorded as part of their Level 1 Award in Community Sports Leadership and/or community volunteering hours. This also acted as a stimulus for SIS volunteers to pursue further sports-related academic qualifications at University after their initial involvement with the Club.

### **Millmoor Juniors FC, Rotherham, South Yorkshire**

The Step into Sport FA pilot brought together key partners to support the development of young volunteers. This included The FA, Rawmarsh Sports College (Rotherham, S Yorks), The Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA, South Yorkshire Sport, Millmoor Juniors (Community Charter Standard Club) and sports coach UK (scUK).

The scheme brought education and sport closer together and identified learning outcomes that the young volunteers could identify within school and a sporting environment. The English and IT department within the school supported the project. This helped the students who chose areas including 'Running a Football Club' – Dealing with the club's administration and 'Marketing and Promotion' – updating the club's web site.

The most important benefit was the experience gained by the students from Rawmarsh Sports College. It gave them an insight to running a football club, an understanding of the responsibility that volunteers undertake to ensure a safe, quality environment to develop young football players. The opportunity to coach and support experienced coaches within the club was invaluable to developing confidence, communication and observation skills.

### **Leeds Hockey Club, West Yorkshire**

The Leeds Hockey Club had a relatively embryonic connection to Step into Sport and had recruited one female Step into Sport Volunteer in February 2006 from Priesthorpe Sports College. The Partnership Development Manager (PDM) at the college had contacted the Club directly to inform them of a student with an interest in coaching in a hockey setting. The Step into Sport Volunteer had assisted in the delivery of hockey development sessions with younger children at a local school-site.

It was felt that volunteers who had undertaken the Level 1 Award in Community Sports Leadership and Hockey-specific bolt-on award were most appropriately prepared for the real experience of volunteering within the Club. The Club was keen to offer SIS Volunteers opportunities to attain sports-specific coaching and umpiring accreditation, and to engender personal and professional benefits from the practical experience of sports-delivery in a club-based setting and around the provision of administrative and IT support.

### **Welwyn Lacrosse Club, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire**

When Welwyn Lacrosse Club formed as an U12 team in 1999, the website was very basic and set-up by a volunteer parent. That parent then left the club after a couple of years and the club was left without a very important resource. That was until a young player who had been a member since he was 11 had approached the club. The problem was that his friends were all very keen, but he wasn't so keen and only appeared to be there because his friends were.

One day, the boy approached the Club President and asked if he could launch a new website. He was 15 at the time and was really into computers. The club then provided a list of other lacrosse club websites for him to research, and now the club has one of the best websites of all English Lacrosse Clubs, as stated by the ELA's Publicity Officer. The boy now aged 18, actively manages and updates the website, and this has also given him the confidence to join his friends again on the playing field.

### **St. Mary's Table Tennis Club, Pontefract, West Yorkshire**

St. Mary's Table Tennis Club uses the English Table Tennis Association's Junior Umpire Award to encourage many of their junior players to become involved in umpiring, giving them the knowledge and basic skills to umpire in events such as the ETTA National Junior League and South Yorkshire Youth Games.

John Wilkinson, the club's Development Officer said, "The scheme has really helped increase the number of young umpires locally. We now have twelve young members who have the knowledge and confidence to umpire at local and county events. Two of our players Christopher (aged 14) and Stevie (aged 16) have recently taken the ETTA County Umpires paper and have umpired at the Halifax Vets tournament and division 2 of the British League at Dewsbury. Both are enthusiastic umpires who we have encouraged to umpire at high profile events, with great feedback from organisers and spectators alike."



### **North West Leicestershire Schools Sports Partnership, Leicestershire**

The North West Leicestershire Schools Sports Partnership ran its very first schools competition at Coalville Gymnastics Club in 2006. Planning and running the competition was new to everyone, but the one thing that we were confident about was the volunteers who would help. In particular, the number of young volunteers were outstanding with an enthusiasm that was a credit to them. Their ages ranged from 7 years to 18 years old.

The young volunteers began their day by helping to set up the gym, creating a friendly and safe environment. The first school to arrive was Forest Way School, a special school for young people with disabilities. The disabilities of the four gymnasts from this school ranged from Down's Syndrome through to behavioural difficulties. The young volunteers immediately began showing them the gym, talking to them and making them laugh. When the competition began two young volunteers took charge of the warm up for that group and stayed with them for the whole competition.

Meanwhile, the rest of the young volunteers helped by becoming runners for the judges, assisting the scorer, and helping to gather the school children for the next rounds. Throughout the event the young helpers demonstrated leadership skills, organisational and problem solving skills and behaved with a maturity that brought praise from teachers and parents attending the competition. At the end of the competition the young volunteers were awarded with a certificate of merit for their hard work; they all said they enjoyed the day and wanted to run more schools competitions.

## **4. Next Steps**

The case studies and quotes from clubs currently involved in the Step into Sport programme show that hosting young volunteers can be an exciting and rewarding opportunity. Delivering activities within a chosen area should bring significant benefits to both the club and volunteer, and it is hoped that this will develop into a longer term partnership, beyond the placement programme. Contacts for the main volunteer organisations can be found in the appendices.

If your club wants to register as a host to receive Step into Sport placements, then please contact your local CSP or NGB officer for details. Alternatively, if your club or organisation does not have the relevant 'readiness factors' in place in order to offer young volunteer placements then please contact your CSP or look at your NGB website for further information, and get involved!



## 1. Community Volunteering Placement Checklist

Key assessment criteria	Checked
Is the club/session accessible to the young volunteer?	
Does the session run at an appropriate time for the young volunteers?	
Can the work that the young volunteer wants to undertake be completed in a flexible way that allows them to balance their school/college work with their volunteering and lifestyle management?	
Has the club/organisation been made aware of the objectives of the Step into Sport Community Volunteering Programme?	
Is the club/session affiliated to an appropriate governing body?*	
Are sessions led by a qualified coach or appropriately trained person?	
Does the club/session have appropriate insurance, with minimum requirements of public liability cover?	
Does the young volunteer have insurance cover?	
Have the coaches/leaders/mentors undergone a CRB check?**	
Does the organisation comply with good practice guidelines when working with children?	
Is the club/session listed on a local authority database? ***	
Can the club/session identify a suitable person (volunteer coordinator) to support the young volunteer?	
Will the volunteer coordinator be available to support the young volunteer for the duration of the placement?	
Does the placement operate an equal access policy? ****	
If applicable has parental consent been gained?	
<b>Skills checklist for volunteer coordinator</b>	
Is the volunteer coordinator a good role model?	
If the volunteer coordinator is the coach/instructor are they appropriately qualified?	
Is the coordinator going to be available to support the young volunteer?	
Is the volunteer coordinator committed to the initiative and to providing the experience the young volunteer wants?	
Is the volunteer coordinator a good communicator, approachable and supportive?	
Is the volunteer coordinator prepared to help the young volunteer monitor and review their work?	

\* ie. NGB, Youth Association, school governing body etc.

\*\* If not, is it possible to organise through the LEA or local authority sports development unit

\*\*\* Many sports development units hold databases of clubs and coaches

\*\*\*\* Opportunities are available to all young people irrespective of their gender, ability, ethnicity etc.

## 2. Sample Volunteer Agreement Form

### Background

Step into Sport is a Government supported programme to develop leadership and volunteering amongst young people aged 14-19. The “Community Volunteering” aspect of the programme is specifically designed to encourage young people to undertake volunteering activity within their local sports community.

### Agreement

Each of the parties below need to agree the following:

#### Young volunteer

- Complete their volunteering hours against a defined plan agreed with the mentor and club volunteer coordinator
- Complete a Volunteer Log detailing their work in the community
- Review their progress with their mentor and club volunteer coordinator
- Be an ambassador for the initiative and their school/college

#### Mentor

- Promote their young volunteer’s involvement in the initiative
- Support the young volunteers to identify a placement, completing and reviewing their plan and logging their volunteer hours
- Provide in-school/college support and liaison with the young volunteer and club volunteer coordinator

#### Volunteer coordinator

- Promote the initiative in the community
- Provide placement based support for young volunteers in completing and reviewing their voluntary placement
- Commit to providing a safe, enjoyable volunteering experience, appropriate to the student’s skills and abilities

Signed (Mentor): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Volunteer coordinator): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Useful Contacts

To find out more information about agencies that support the development of volunteers, speak to your CSP, National Governing Body of Sport or Local Authority Sports Development Unit. Alternatively, use the links below.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
<http://www.culture.gov.uk/>  
0207 211 6200

Department for Education and Skills  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk>  
0870 000 2288

Sport England  
<http://www.sportengland.org>  
08458 508 508

Youth Sport Trust  
<http://www.youthsporttrust.org>  
01509 226600

Sports Leaders UK  
<http://www.bst.org.uk>  
01908 689180

runningsports  
<http://www.runningsports.org>  
0207 404 2224

Volunteering England  
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk>  
0845 305 6979

Russell Commission  
<http://www.russellcommission.org>  
0207 084 8131

V  
<http://www.wearev.com>  
020 7084 8001

Youth Active  
<http://www.youthactive.org>  
07738 986454

Volunteer Centres  
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk>  
0845 305 6979

Do it.org  
<http://www.do-it.org.uk>  
0207 925 2530

Timebank  
<http://www.timebank.org.uk>  
0845 456 1668

Duke of Edinburgh Award  
<http://www.theaward.org>  
01753 727400

Child Protection and Best Practice Guidance  
NSPCC  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk>  
0207 825 2500

#### **Acknowledgments**

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