LEGAL RIGHTS OF VOLUNTEERS
Elizabeth Scholes examines what legal rights volunteers have in our organisations / 16

VOLUNTEERS TAKE CENTRE STAGE
BVSC puts Volunteers’ Week on the map in Birmingham with Volunteering Awards. See our 4 page centre pull-out feature.

PROJECT ASPIE LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVE
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ST JOHN AMBULANCE
Life saving first aid training for over 800,000 people each year / 8

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Versatile, central, excellent value.

BVSC Enterprises is a social enterprise that offers versatile and modern facilities right in the centre of Birmingham. Our conference centre is the ideal place to hold all types of meetings, events, training and seminars.

As a social enterprise we offer excellent value for money and all profits are re-invested into the facilities and into the work that BVSC does with the local community in Birmingham.

- Convenient city centre location, only minutes from New Street and Moor Street stations and public car parking adjacent
- Eight air conditioned rooms with capacities from 2-170 delegates
- All rooms fully accessible and disabled parking on-site
- Free WiFi, projection screen and white board in every room
- Variety of catering options including: working lunches; hot buffets; drinks and canapés receptions
- As a social enterprise – part of a leading Birmingham charity, BVSC – we re-invest all our profits to support the local community in Birmingham.
Rewarding the city’s volunteers

This special Update edition reflects on the achievements of our city’s amazing volunteers, with a special pull-out feature celebrating the winners and runners up at BVSC’s 2015 Volunteering Awards.

First aid charity, St John Ambulance, are striving to build a nation of first aiders in the workplace and at events and want to create the next generation of life savers by attracting more volunteers to join up (page 8).

Continuing the volunteering theme, Elizabeth Scholes examines the rights of volunteers in her regular ‘practice’ feature on page 16.

Turning to other news, read about Project Aspie’s new initiative for people with Asperger’s (page 4), the Parents Together Service for parents with learning difficulties (page 7), the new Women’s Enterprise Hub in Sparkbrook (page 13) and AVSC a network for supporting voluntary sector consultants (page 14).
Project Aspie launches new initiative

Alphabet 12 is a one year pilot advocacy and peer support group programme that will provide guidance and support to people with Asperger’s syndrome.

Project Aspie held a special event on 10 May at The Studio in Cannon Street, Birmingham to celebrate their first anniversary and to launch a new project, Alphabet 12, which has been funded by the Big Lottery.

Special guests included Dr Ellen McAdam from Birmingham Museums and Birmingham Poet Laureate, Adrian Blackledge.

Alphabet 12 is a one year pilot advocacy and peer support group programme that will provide guidance and support to people with Asperger’s syndrome with the aim of helping individuals to live healthy and independent lives in the community. It is free and is suitable for people who meet the following criteria:

- Aged between 18 and 25 years of age
- Have Asperger’s syndrome (Autism)
- Live in West Midlands region
- Want to meet other people with Asperger’s syndrome.

The programme will offer service users the chance to develop and improve confidence, independence and motivation. This will include various subjects and topics related to Asperger’s syndrome.

Service users will also develop and learn ways to improve self-esteem as well as working towards personal goals and learning coping strategies to live a healthy and independent life. There will be co-ordinators supervising each group session who have strong experience and background in autism.

Project Aspie: 07802 658150 / graeme@projectaspie.org.uk / www.projectaspie.org.uk

Birmingham’s educational inequality gap

It was an amazing experience ... I feel more confident in the subject due to the help I received.

Whilst Birmingham pupils are enjoying their well earned summer break, Action Tutoring, a national education charity, is gearing up to expand its work across the city.

Social background remains a strong predictor of academic attainment in the UK. Achieving five A*-C grades, including maths and English, is often a minimum requirement to access many opportunities in education, employment or training. In the UK 65.3% of pupils not eligible for free school meals achieve 5 A*-C grades. However, this falls as low as 37% in some schools in parts of Birmingham’s most deprived communities.

Having already run 11 tutoring programmes across five partner schools over the last year, Action Tutoring aims to help bridge this gap in educational inequality by extending its work across the city.

Set up in London in 2011, Action Tutoring has since expanded countrywide and, from September, will have its first full-time Regional Coordinator for Birmingham. Carefully selected volunteers are supported to tutor pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who ordinarily might not have access to private tuition. The charity aims to help pupils to achieve a meaningful level of attainment in GCSE maths or English, enabling them to access opportunities in education, employment or training.

Pupils gain subject knowledge, confidence and study skills whilst volunteer tutors gain valuable training, experience and the opportunity to contribute to their community. One Birmingham pupil said, “It was an amazing experience ... I feel more confident in the subject due to the help I received.”

Action Tutoring is always looking for enthusiastic volunteer tutors who can offer one hour a week over eight weeks. In return, we offer ongoing training, resources/support, travel expenses, a DBS check and a reference on completion of a programme.

If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch.

Action Tutoring: birmingham@actiontutoring.org.uk / 0207 803 4988 / www.actiontutoring.org.uk
Investing in social enterprise

Affordable housing contractor, Wates Living Space, has made a renewed call for businesses to increase investment in the social enterprise sector – as the number of registered SEs climbs to 500 across the city.

The call to action follows the Wates Group’s launch of a new social value toolkit that aims to equip housing professionals with a means to embed social value within their organisations and at the heart of their communities.

Communities count: A practical guide to unlocking social value promotes continued investment in social enterprises as an integral part of social and economic development, leading to cost savings, improved services, stronger partnerships, increased employment and clarity of purpose, across the housing sector and beyond.

Having pledged to trade £20m nationally with the social enterprise sector by 2020, the Wates Group’s continued drive to mobilise investment in this sector also recently saw the contractor host a Seeing is Believing tour of Birmingham’s Social Enterprise Quarter in Digbeth.

The event, jointly hosted with Birmingham-based social enterprise development organisation, iSE, gave attendees the opportunity to observe a variety of social enterprises in action.

Stewart Reid, business director, Wates Living Space, commented: “Birmingham has one of the highest concentrations of social enterprises in the UK, employing approximately 14,600 people across the city. More impressively, there are over 50 registered social enterprises in Digbeth alone, all working for the sole purpose of overcoming economic and social challenges.

“Wates is proud to have traded over £5m with social enterprises across the UK to date. Our most recent appointment was Birmingham-based Argonaut Community Enterprises, which employs deaf and disabled people – an appointment that I’m very proud to say is enabling Argonaut to increase sustainable employment opportunities for local people.”

“The Wates Group was recently highly commended in the Enterprise Growth category at Business in the Community’s (BITC) Annual Responsible Business Gala Dinner in recognition of the group’s investment in and mentoring for the social enterprise sector.”

Wates Group: www.wates.co.uk/sustainability/communities/social-enterprise | iSE: www.i-se.co.uk | Argonaut Community Enterprises: www.argonautenterprises.co.uk

Adoption Matters

Every year, there are vulnerable children needing a stable, caring home through adoption. Some wait longer than others. Adoption Matters wants to help change that.

Many children wait longer for a family if they are over four years old, in sibling groups, from a BME background or have complex needs. Adoption Matters has a successful track record in placing children from a range of backgrounds and the expert ongoing support and training they offer means they have one of the lowest disruption rates in the UK.

Adoption Matters is a Christian organisation with a long history of association with the Anglican Church. They know that faith communities are uniquely placed to offer help to children who need adoptive families, both in terms of finding families to adopt and providing the warm, loving community of support to wrap around those who do.

As an independent children’s charity Adoption Matters works with local authorities across the whole of the UK. That means a wider pool of children for potential adopters to consider.

Adoption Matters: www.adoptionmatters.org / 0300 123 1066

Considering Equality in Birmingham

Equality and human rights charity, brap, has recently published an interesting report reviewing equalities practice – and progress – in Birmingham over the past thirty years.

The culmination of a Barrow Cadbury Trust-funded project, From Benign Neglect to Citizen Khan will be required reading for anyone working in the field of equalities. It will also appeal to anyone with an interest in how we think about and ‘do’ equalities.

Using recent Fairness Commission reports from Birmingham and other UK cities as a starting point, the report considers the strategies and policy-making that have underpinned equalities practice in Birmingham over a generation and takes a critical view of what has been achieved.

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www.bssec.org.uk/considering-equality-in-birmingham

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www.bssec.org.uk/considering-equality-in-birmingham
Breathlessness programme shortlisted

A specialist breathing clinic which has helped more than 200 local people has been shortlisted for a top award.

The team behind John Taylor Hospice’s pioneering Fatigue, Anxiety and Breathlessness (FAB) programme are delighted to have been shortlisted for a Nursing Times award in the Respiratory Nursing category.

FAB was created by the Birmingham hospice’s physiotherapist Louise Tipson and occupational therapist Faye Collins in 2010, drawing from their experiences of working with patients with severe respiratory conditions.

Faye said: “It means a lot to us to have been shortlisted for this award and it’s great to think that others have been inspired by FAB. We know how much respiratory conditions can affect people’s lives both physically and psychologically. ‘FAB offers something different – a holistic and multi-professional programme that takes a patient-centred approach to managing symptoms. It’s all part of the ‘Taylor-made’ care we offer at John Taylor Hospice.”

Each FAB programme consists of nine two hour sessions aimed at developing knowledge and understanding of different respiratory problems. Up to 12 people are invited to start and finish the self-management programme as a group, which also promotes a relaxed and social atmosphere and peer support.

“Being able to restore a normal breathing pattern when you get into difficulties takes knowledge and skill,” added Louise. “Using cognitive behavioural and physical therapies, Tai Chi-based exercises and relaxation techniques, we help people to manage their symptoms and regain control.”

Chief executive, Kate Phipps, said: “It’s fantastic that the hospice has been recognised in this way. FAB has had a phenomenal impact on local communities – patient feedback tells us this. The team have been developing and building on this success so that we can do more to make sure every moment matters for the people in our care.”

The FAB team will present their entry to a judging panel in September in the next stage of the awards and the winners will be announced in November.

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Training for safeguarding children

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has developed a free two hour training course especially for the voluntary sector. The training, being delivered in partnership with BVSC, aims to achieve consistency in understanding and practice, when responding to children, young people and families who need extra support.

In March this year, BSCB published refreshed threshold guidance, Right Service, Right Time: Delivering effective support for children and families in Birmingham. The new guidance takes account of the recent changes in partnership working with the creation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the development of early help services including local family support and safeguarding hubs.

Participants will gain a detailed understanding of RSRT principles and how to apply them to their role. The session will include information about early help, children information and advice service and MASH. It will be a case study approach to enable staff to get hands on experience in determining levels of need and understanding how to access appropriate support based on the level of a child’s needs.

Asif Afridi, Third Sector Assembly representative BSCB, said: “This multi-agency training for staff groups working in the voluntary sector aims to enable the delivery of effective targeted support to children.” Jane Held, BSCB’s independent chair, added: “Children and families are supported most effectively and efficiently when services and information sharing are planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way.”

Training, which can be booked online, will take place at BVSC in Digbeth on 17 and 30 September, 15 October, 19 November and 10 December.

BSCB: www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk

Championing social enterprise

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP has announced the appointment of Melanie Mills, previously chief executive of Social Enterprise West Midlands, and currently director of social sector engagement at Big Society Capital, to the new post of social enterprise champion.

The social enterprise champion position was created by the LEP following recognition of the sector’s economic and social contribution in the LEP area and its potential to grow further. Melanie’s selection as the GBSLEP’s first ever social enterprise champion is a fitting way to mark this recognition of the sector’s importance.

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP: www.centreofenterprise.com

BSCB: www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk

FAB: www.johntaylorhospice.org.uk

BVECC: info@bvecc.org

FAB was created by the Birmingham hospice’s physiotherapist Louise Tipson and occupational therapist Faye Collins in 2010, drawing from their experiences of working with patients with severe respiratory conditions.

Faye said: “It means a lot to us to have been shortlisted for this award and it’s great to think that others have been inspired by FAB. We know how much respiratory conditions can affect people’s lives both physically and psychologically. “FAB offers something different – a holistic and multi-professional programme that takes a patient-centred approach to managing symptoms. It’s all part of the ‘Taylor-made’ care we offer at John Taylor Hospice.”
Official launch of complex needs programme

Over 120 guests attended the official launch of the Birmingham Changing Futures Together project at the Studio in Cannon Street on Friday 19 June, to find out about achievements so far, aspirations for the future and how to could get more involved.

Delegates were given the opportunity to share their views on how they think services, outcomes and systems (SOS) for people with multiple and complex needs can be improved across the city.

Councillor John Cotton, opening the event, expressed his delight at seeing partners from the public, voluntary and private sectors well represented and keen to look for ways to work together. He explained that he had first become involved with the project in his capacity as cabinet member for health and wellbeing, prior to taking on his current role as cabinet member for neighbourhood management and homes.

Brian Carr, chief executive of BVSC, explained how the project had come about, the facts and figures relating to the issues it is aiming to tackle and the various work strands included. He also thanked all those involved in designing and implementing the project so far and urged others interested in getting involved to come forward.

Julie Galano, head of funding (investment) for the Big Lottery Fund (BLF), outlined BLF’s approach to funding and set the wider context in which our project is being delivered. It is one of 12 different approaches being trialled across the UK, with a key emphasis on learning and sharing results in an effort to help those with multiple and complex needs break down barriers and improve their lives.

Key to the project is the involvement of service users, who have become ‘experts by experience’. Their value of the role was vividly brought to life by Will James from Shelter, speaking on behalf of the three partners – Shelter, Birmingham Mind and SIFA Fireside – who are recruiting and supporting them through the Every Step of the Way strand of the programme.

But, without doubt, the highlight of the morning was a film featuring some of the experts telling their stories. Made by production company Colonel Duck, the film moved some in the audience to tears and created a moment of silence before loud applause. "The film moved some in the audience to tears."

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The Parents Together project aims to ensure that parents with learning difficulties in South Birmingham have increased understanding and the ability to engage with statutory legal processes through provision of advice and support enabling them to make informed choices for them and their families.

The project will include independent advocacy support during statutory involvement or care proceedings, continued support after proceedings and weekly sessions offering training, visits to community and leisure resources and a drop-in service.

Hugh Tibbits, executive manager for CASBA, said he was delighted that Big Lottery had been able to fund the vital work of the charity, commenting: “The funding will allow us to support many of the most vulnerable parents in our community to improve family relationships, gain confidence and self-esteem and better understand and negotiate care and statutory proceedings.”

A parent who has accessed the project said, “My advocate has helped me to understand concerns and the things that I needed help with. I needed counselling and I have that now. I needed a support worker and I have one now. I needed a safe place to make friends and I have that now through the parents group. I have been on courses and training, worked with a dietician and I am much more confident.”

Although much of CASBAs work is carried out by paid professional staff, CASBA, like all charities, relies on the support of volunteers. Becky Jones, CASBAs development and volunteer co-ordinator, said she would love to hear from anyone interested in supporting the Parents Together project: “We need help in many different ways including mentoring, administration and fundraising support. Calling us could be the beginning of a rewarding and exciting opportunity.”

CASBA: 0121 475 0777 / casba@btconnect.com / www.advocacyatcasba.org

Advocacy charity, CASBA, secures funding

CASBA, a Birmingham Advocacy charity supporting people with learning disabilities since 1988, has been awarded Big Lottery funding, secured for FIVE years, to support parents with learning disabilities.

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St John Ambulance believes that no one should die because they needed first aid and didn’t get it. They’re striving to build a nation of first aiders in the workplace, keep people safe at events, and create the next generation of life savers. And they rely on their growing team of volunteers to help them achieve that.

About St John Ambulance
St John Ambulance is the nation’s leading first aid charity. They deliver life saving first aid training to more than 800,000 people each year, including hundreds of thousands of young people.

Their volunteers provide first aid in their communities and work alongside the NHS in response to 999 calls. They’re also always campaigning to raise awareness of first aid and directly educate the public – in fact, our recent campaign, The Chokeables, has helped to save 43 babies from choking this year.

St John Ambulance believes that everybody should learn first aid and help be the difference between a life lost and a life saved. Their volunteers are the face of our charitable work and play a vital part in helping them save lives in the region.

Finding the right role
Volunteers can get involved in anything from first aid to administrative support. No previous first aid training or knowledge is necessary – St John Ambulance provides volunteers with a progressive training route, enabling them to continually enhance and develop their skills. Volunteers can take on several different roles and duties.

Whatever your skills and whatever you want to learn, there is a role for you.

First aid roles
St John Ambulance first aiders and advanced first aiders are a familiar sight at events up and down the region. They provide first aid wherever and whenever it’s needed at events in the community, such as festivals or sports and community events.

Training
Their team of volunteer trainers deliver life saving skills to members of the public and volunteers across the region.

Youth
Each year, almost 700,000 young people learn life saving skills through St John Ambulance youth groups. Their youth leaders work with Badgers and Cadets, inspiring them to develop new skills and realise their full potential. They also support the delivery of a first aid for schools programme.

Administration and support
St John Ambulance volunteer support administrators play a huge role in ensuring the success of their first aid, training and youth programmes. These opportunities vary greatly, from diary management and administrative support to HR and fundraising.

Never looked back
Abigail Barhoumi, from Sandwell, joined St John Ambulance’s Sandwell Unit in 2013 – and two years on, she has never looked back. “The first few months were spent training and taking the modules I needed to become a first aider and then more intense modules to become an advanced first aider. I now provide support at sport events and festivals,” she explained.

“Since then, I have also qualified as a foundation driver, which means I can take vehicles to events.”

Abigail concluded: “It’s been an amazing two years and I would recommend joining St John Ambulance to anyone – it’s not only a great way to get involved in your local community but you are given so much development and opportunities to grow your skills and confidence. I’ve never looked back.”

Interested?
If you’re over 18, and want to help St John Ambulance save lives in your community, they’d love to hear from you. Get in touch or look on their website if you are interested in getting involved in any aspect of their work – no first aid knowledge is necessary, just enthusiasm!

St John Ambulance volunteering team: 0121 236 6660 / west-mids-volunteering@sja.org.uk / www.sja.org.uk
Volunteers take centre stage

BVSC puts Volunteers’ Week on the map in Birmingham with Volunteering Awards taking centre stage
Volunteers’ Week has become quite the landmark in the voluntary sector calendar as a national occasion to celebrate the work of volunteers and volunteering.

The event takes place during the first week of June each year. It plays a huge part in raising the profile of volunteering to encourage people to get involved. It also acts as a time to say ‘thank you’ to volunteers across the city and to recognise their efforts and contributions.

This year the staff team at BVSC pulled out all the stops to organise a special volunteering awards ceremony at stunning Aston Hall. The event is now in its second year with 2015 being the year which created the most interest and excitement so far. There were seven award categories, more than double that of last year, to acknowledge the diversity of our city’s volunteers and the breadth of volunteering roles they perform. They included, Young Volunteer, Community Volunteer, Volunteer Team, Fundraising Volunteer, ‘Beyond Volunteering’ Volunteer, Long-Term Achievement and Organisation of the Year.

We asked organisations to nominate their volunteers by completing an online form. More than 70 nominations were received, almost three times as many as 2014. And the quality of nominations left the judging panel with some difficult decisions. Julie Apps, volunteer co-ordinator of AGE UK and one of this year’s judges commented, “It was really hard to choose the winners and runners up, I just wanted to give everyone an award!” The judges drew up a shortlist of three from each category, and all those shortlisted were invited to attend the awards ceremony where winners were announced.

The sun was shining brightly on the day of the ceremony, which was testament to the positivity generated by the volunteers and nominators who attended the event. The event began with a welcome reception with guests enjoying afternoon tea and cakes on the terrace in the sunshine. From there, they were led to the Great Hall where the ceremony took place hosted by Nikki Tapper, BBC Radio WM presenter and outreach manager. There was not an empty seat in the house and the atmosphere in the room was full of excitement as the volunteers eagerly waited to hear if they had won in their category. The winners were awarded a glass trophy and everyone went home with a framed certificate. It was a very heart warming event with guests hearing about the wonderful work that volunteers do in their groups and communities.

Angela Lea, volunteering development co-ordinator with the Motor Neurone Disease Association said: “Volunteer awards are a wonderful way to thank volunteers and it is great to see the hard work of our volunteers acknowledged outside the organisation. [The awards] positively promote volunteering and help raise awareness of the Association and how people can get involved and support us”. Laura Rollason, community fundraiser at Edwards Trust nominated her volunteer who won Fundraising Volunteer of the Year commented, “I think it is lovely for the volunteers to be recognised, and hopefully it will inspire them and others to do more volunteering, knowing it is appreciated. It is always good to see good work being appreciated, and Birmingham being represented well.”

Brian Carr also commented, “We have been overwhelmed by the response to this year’s Awards. The volunteers’ stories demonstrate the passion and commitment shown by volunteers across Birmingham and we were honoured to showcase and celebrate their achievements at the special awards ceremony. It was great to see so many individuals and organisations being recognised for their contributions to volunteering in the city. I found it genuinely inspiring and moving event.”

It’s now time to get excited about 2016, and we’re already making plans. If you didn’t manage to nominate a volunteer for this year’s awards, we encourage you to do so next year, as we hope that the event will be bigger still. If you would like to sponsor, support, nominate or get involved in other ways, please don’t hesitate to get in touch and always keep an eye out on the BVSC website for more information.

Organisation of the Year: Gateway Family Services CIC

Gateway was nominated by one of their volunteer befrienders, Arlene Lawrence, who demonstrated how much she had been supported and enabled by Gateway in her volunteering role. Left to right are Sarah plus Arlene.

The runners up were Carrs Lane Counselling Service.
Volunteer Team of the Year: Fareshare
The Fareshare team fights hunger and tackles food waste by redistributing surplus food that they receive from supermarkets, manufacturers and growers. Left to right are Kevin O’Neill, Stephen May, William Stevenson, Declan McCallion.
The runners up were Birmingham and Solihull Group, MND Association and Beacon Lunch Club voluntary staff team, Beacon Evangelical Church.

BVSC ‘Beyond Volunteering’ Volunteer of the Year: Charles Kennedy
As a volunteer at Changes UK, Charlie is a peer mentor, inspiring others to maintain their recovery, improving the quality of life of people in mental and physical torment. With Charlie (centre) are Bryan Foster (left) and Steve Dixon (right) of Changes UK.
The runners up were Garry Murphy, Aquarius and Dennis Dixon, Hall Green and Smith’s Wood Child Contact Centres.

Aquarius Young Volunteer of the Year: Kirsty Kelly
Kirsty volunteers with ANAWIM women’s project, leading training sessions, working in prisons and doing outreach work with sex workers, reaching out to women with complex issues. Kirsty (right) is pictured with Novlette Balela of ANAWIM.
The runners up were Thomas Butcher, Resources for Autism and Haziq Ali, Birmingham Settlement.

Changes UK Long-Term Volunteer Achievement
Our winner has worked as a front of house assistant at a hospice for 19 years and never misses a shift. She meets and greets visitors and is the first point of contact. To her right is Steve Dixon, chief executive at Changes UK.
The runners up were Patrick O’Neill, Focus Birmingham and Gill Inish, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Fundraising Volunteer of the Year: Phil McKenzie
Phil began fundraising for Edward’s Trust after the loss of his son, Ben, who was stillborn, doing marathons and 500km on a static cycle. Picking up the award for Phil is Laura Rollason (centre) with award judges Janine Goodman (left) and Julie Apps (right).
The runners up were Jennie Burrows, Cruse Bereavement Care and Phil Mellanby, Birmingham Museums Trust.
Mohammed Zafran (known as Zaf and pictured here with BVSC’s Jessica Gray) won the CVCHA Community Volunteer of the Year Award at this year’s BVSC Volunteer Awards. Zaf won in his category because the judges were overwhelmed by his dedication and commitment to supporting young people in his community. His story starts when his brother-in-law was stabbed to death in a local, park five years ago. The previous year his sister died from cancer, aged 30. He started to walk in parks and alleys in the middle of the night, looking to engage with youths who were involved in crime and drugs. Zaf spoke to them, offered them his time, got to know them and engaged them in sporting and community projects which would keep them out of trouble. The thought of getting more youths off the streets on a daily basis spurs him on and gives him the motivation to continue. He has been fortunate to receive a lot of support from the South and City College principle, Mike Hopkins, who has allowed Zaf to use the college facilities. Zaf commented, “I feel blessed that I have got more than 300 volunteers in my company who always come to support my projects.”

Two years ago, Zaf received support from Enterprise Catalyst to set up his company called All 4 Youth & Community. To date, he has completed 100 projects with a total funding of £2,500 and over 13,500 youths have signed up to his academy. As a result, 2,000 youths are now back in education and more than 1,000 in employment. Zaf has also set up a women’s academy for young women who are not allowed to study because of family values. He feels really pleased and honoured to have won the trust of the youths, parents and the community.

It’s not only BVSC where Zaf’s efforts have been recognised. Over the past year, he has received a lot of local and national recognition for his outstanding contribution to the community. For example, he has been awarded the Pride of Birmingham Award, National Diversity Award, Pride of Sports Award, named JCI Top Ten Outstanding Young Person in the UK, appeared in the Independent Happy List of 100 people who have contributed to serve humanity world-wide, as well as winning the FA Respect Award Sir Bobby Moore Trophy and last month being told he had made it onto the Queen’s Honours List to receive a BEM, which he will pick up next month at Buckingham Palace.

Zaf was overjoyed to receive his award, “It is an absolute honour for me to win the Community Volunteer of the Year Award because so many people are doing great things for the community in their own capacity, so to have been recognised – especially in a category which appeals to me – is amazing and flattering. He continued, “Everyone needs a motive in life to do something and to reach their goals and my inspiration came in unfortunate circumstances after losing my sister and brother-in-law. I dedicate all my work to them.”

He added, “To win this volunteer award is just as important because it inspires other volunteers. Anyone who helps another human being is my role model and I always get excited reading about people who are doing amazing work in the community.”

Zaf started on this journey alone and without any direction at the time and to his disbelief he has in the last few months, received letters of praise from local MPs and the prime minister and that is something he never thought possible, nor was it his intention. He continues to inspire many people with his message that it is important not to gain revenge but kill hatred by offering love and smile to others.
3,260 sq ft of newly refurbished office space will be available exclusively for women when the Women’s Enterprise Hub Sparkbrook opens this Autumn.

Located in the Southside Business Centre in Ladypool Road, the self-contained Hub will provide not only space, but the opportunity for networking, peer support and access to business support. The aim is to give women the confidence, skills and tailored support they need to succeed in business to the same level as men.

Sarah Crawley, chief executive of iSE, the business support organisation that will be running the Hub, explained: “We still have a society in which women are disproportionately represented as business leaders and some who are not economically active at all, but have the potential to run their own businesses.

“If they can make money from doing something they enjoy and feel passionately about, it will boost their family income and standard of living as well that of the local economy. We believe the effect of the Hub will be the same as in all-girls schools – higher achievement. The clustering together of women who can share experiences, encourage and support each other will enable more of them to achieve their full potential.”

Business Support Available Now
Already up and running is a fully-funded programme of business support aimed at women at every stage of their journey – from thinking about starting a business to growing a business. Run by iSE, with partners and successful business women keen to share their expertise, the programme includes support surgeries, masterclasses, PeerShare networking sessions, a meet the entrepreneur club, business plan panels and spotlight sessions – all delivered in a friendly and informal environment.

For full details of the programme and to book a place on any of the sessions see the Women & Enterprise website.

Office Space from Autumn 2015
When the Hub opens it will offer women a secure, comfortable, space, which has been designed to a high, contemporary spec and is suitable for use by existing businesses as well as start ups.

The Women’s Enterprise Hub Sparkbrook offers:

- 12 small business units, ranging from 197 to 253 sq ft, which will accommodate two to five people; 3 of these are ‘showcase’ units, which have direct access from the street; 2 of them have ‘display’ windows overlooking the street
- Two ‘hot desk’ areas
- A large training room, which will hold 16 or more people depending on the configuration
- A meeting room, for around 16 people in board-room style.

Tenants are now being sought and interested women should contact Women & Enterprise now.

Creating the Hub
The Women’s Enterprise Hub Sparkbrook is being created with support from the European Regional Development Fund and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growing Places Fund. The refurbishment work has been carried out by Thomas Vale Construction and the landlord is Birmingham City Council.

Councillor Tahir Ali, Birmingham City Council cabinet member for development, transport and the economy, said: “The creation of a Women’s Enterprise Hub is an important piece of targeted support for aspiring business women in Birmingham. It will do much to improve business skills and confidence amongst women, whilst encouraging enterprise start-ups, particularly in this part of the city. It will also promote Birmingham’s ambition to be the enterprise capital of Britain.”

Inspiring Stories
Whether or not you are a woman running a business or thinking of setting one up, you may be interested to read the inspiring profiles included on the Women & Enterprise website. They are being added to all the time.

“...”

Women & Enterprise: 0121 663 1711 / hello@womenandenterprise.co.uk | Training: www.womenandenterprise/training | Inspiring stories: www.womenandenterprise/women-like-you
The Association of Voluntary Sector Consultants (AVSC CIC) was founded in response to social and economic changes which have impacted on both commissioning and delivery agencies. As a result, there are increasing numbers of independent consultants and sole traders who are entering the arena for the first time, and for some this is a new way of working.

AVSC provides a support structure for independent consultants working in, or for, the voluntary sector, linking people with complementary skills through the development of a virtual team.

AVSC’s core values – collaboration, integrity, and creativity – are focused on connecting people who share these values, want to make a real difference and gain a sense of belonging.

Judith Miller, founder and director of AVSC, is a passionate educator, trainer and executive coach with over thirty years of operational and strategic management experience. Judith and the team want to share their experiences, knowledge and skills by working with and learning from colleagues in similar situations, hence ‘the team in the cloud’.

The Consultants Café serves as a space for associates and guests to meet monthly at the Laurel Road Community and Sports Centre. Each Café provides a business development focus and participants say that they are informative, inspirational and educational.

The Café focuses on a particular topic and encompasses our Ideas Lab, which is unique to AVSC and provides opportunities to share ideas, ask for support and offer help to others in a safe and trusting environment. This has been particularly productive for participants and through this process many partnerships and collaborations have been formed.

Madge Milligan-Green, director, is an independent consultant and trainer, specialising in bid writing, community engagement and health and wellbeing.

A new reality

Gay Jones, director, wellness coach, NLP practitioner and educator. “Becoming an independent consultant was a real culture shock for me. I threw myself into my new life with a sense of purpose, determined to succeed, I was so busy I forgot to breathe!

“I had to learn to sell myself, see every meeting as an opportunity to market my services. As a one woman band all jobs relied on me. I was marketing, accounts, fundraiser, photocopier, sales manager, service deliverer and IT department in one.”

To find out more about AVSC contact Judith Miller:
judith.miller@avsccic.co.uk
www.avsccic.co.uk
www.linkedin.com/company/AVSC
@avsccic
“Gradually, I began to build a working life that better reflects my values and ethics and me as a person! I feel happier. I earn significantly less than I used to; I still work long hours, but usually because I’m excited by what I’m doing.

“My virtual team at AVSC gives me a forum to bounce ideas, connect with like-minded people and feel part of something whilst retaining the benefits of being independent.”

Personally Speaking…

Ellen Mukwewa
Director of Marell Consulting Limited, offering quality improvement, CPD training and Ofsted preparation services for independent learning providers and independent (alternative) schools.

“My name is Ellen and I enjoy being an associate at AVSC because of the support and advice we share as a team. I have been asked to take the two minutes Personally Speaking challenge, so here goes…

“What three words describe you?
Reliable, thorough, problem solver.

“Describe your best moment as a consultant.
The first time a potential client agreed to meet.

“Describe your worst moment as a consultant?
I don’t think I’ve had it yet!

“In hindsight, what advice would you give to yourself before starting on this journey?
Find a team to support you right from the beginning.

“What are you passionate about?
Learning and self-improvement.

“What legacy will you leave?
A successful consulting company with associates across the country offering valuable services to improve the quality of the education provision in the independent sector.

“Some words to describe me: creative, unassuming, optimistic, ambitious, determined, passionate, sensitive, courteous, reliable, sensitive.”

If you would you like to take the two minutes Personally Speaking Challenge, send us an email.
Volunteering is on the increase. In a 2013 survey, 44% of adults said they volunteered at least once a year and 29% said they volunteered at least once a month (UK Civil Society Almanac 2014). So what are volunteers’ legal rights?

Well, to start with let’s look at what rights volunteers don’t have. Volunteers are not employees and they don’t have employment rights. So they don’t have rights to:

- A fair dismissal
- Holidays
- Breaks
- Protection under the Equality Act.

This does depend though on your volunteers actually being volunteers. Some volunteers have successfully argued before a tribunal that in fact they are employees and therefore entitled to employment rights, for example not to be discriminated against. This is a complex area of law.

But briefly, if you do not give your employees any financial reward (itemised expenses and some limited catering is allowed but not subsistence or vouchers); you do not have too much control over your volunteers or fixed work requirements; and your documentation is not intended to be legally binding, then your volunteers should be genuine volunteers without employment rights. This difficult but important issue will be covered in more detail on BVSC’s course on volunteers, see below.

These are the rights volunteers do have:

**Health and safety**

Volunteers are entitled to be protected from health and safety risks. This means that organisations should carry out a risk assessment for volunteers and have a health and safety policy.

**Data protection legislation**

Volunteers are entitled to have their personal data processed in line with the Data Protection Act, in the same way as employees. Make sure you protect volunteers’ data in accordance with your data protection policy. So only obtain and keep ‘relevant information’ which is necessary for you to manage the volunteers, and look after this securely.

**State benefits and allowances**

Volunteers may continue to receive benefits and allowances while volunteering. There is no limit to the number of hours which people on benefits may volunteer, but Jobcentre Plus officials may decide that those volunteering full time do not have time to seek work actively and question their availability. It can therefore be helpful for organisations to provide a letter stating that volunteers:

- Are only receiving reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses
- Can easily be contacted if work becomes available
- Are free to attend interviews at 48 hours’ notice
- Are free to take up work at one week’s notice.

However, legal issues surrounding volunteers don’t end there. Organisations have a number of other legal duties, including the following:

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

It is a legal requirement for organisations to check that a volunteer engaged in a ‘regulated activity’ is registered with the DBS. However, it is against the law to try to obtain a disclosure of information on someone for whom a DBS check is not required. If in doubt, look at the DBS website or phone their helpline.

**Volunteer drivers**

Check that your volunteer drivers have informed their insurers that they will be using their vehicle for volunteering. This should be part of ‘social, domestic and pleasure’ use of the vehicle and should not increase the premium.

**Volunteers from overseas**

There are no restrictions on volunteering for people from EEA countries. Other nationals may require a work permit or a volunteer visa, depending on their nationality. People with refugee status or exceptional leave to remain and their family members may do any type of work including voluntary work. Asylum seekers may volunteer, but not enter paid employment. It is important that volunteering is genuine, and not employment substitution.

It is the responsibility of foreign volunteers to make sure they are legally entitled to volunteer and organisations are not required to check their documents. However, the Home Office suggest that it is safer for organisations to document check volunteers in case they are not volunteers but in fact unpaid employees (see above).

If you would like to find out more about the legal status and rights of volunteers, and also how best to recruit, motivate and manage volunteers, you may be interested in attending the following course at BVSC:


Elizabeth Scholes is an independent employment law and HR consultant, specialising in the third sector. A former employment solicitor, Elizabeth has worked extensively with charities and voluntary organisations, and has also been a Trustee of two large Birmingham charities. Elizabeth advises on a wide range of employment matters for the Third Sector, including contracts, dispute resolution, dismissals, redundancies, and charity restructuring. She also provides HR and employment law training.

- For further advice and details of Elizabeth’s competitive charity rates, contact Elizabeth: elizabeth@escholeshr.co.uk / 07941 457580 / www.escholeshr.co.uk
- Sign up for regular e-bulletins on employment law at www.escholeshr.co.uk

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**Independent employment adviser, ELIZABETH SCHOLES, examines what legal rights volunteers have.**

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**“Volunteers are entitled to be protected from health and safety risks. This means that organisations should carry out a risk assessment for volunteers and have a health and safety policy.”**
What are the legal rights of volunteers?
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<td>Wednesday 26 August</td>
<td><strong>Mental health awareness</strong> <em>Five Ways to Wellbeing</em> training</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 15 September</td>
<td><strong>Further coaching skills for leaders</strong> A highly intensive and practical</td>
<td>£125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 17 October</td>
<td><strong>Right Service, Right Time</strong> Specialist training for voluntary sector</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 29 September</td>
<td><strong>Volunteers: Managing, motivating and the law</strong></td>
<td>£95</td>
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<td>Wednesday 30 September</td>
<td><strong>Right Service, Right Time</strong> (see 17 September above for details and timings)</td>
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<td>Thursday 15 October</td>
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<td>Tuesday 3 November</td>
<td><strong>Sickness absence, poor performance, disciplinaries and grievances</strong></td>
<td>£95</td>
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<td>Thursday 19 November</td>
<td><strong>Data protection, the internet, email and social media</strong></td>
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*Early bird rates apply to courses booked on or before 31 August 2015

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