



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Education Volunteering at English Heritage

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English Heritage

Workshop agenda



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1. What would you like to get from today's session?
2. Education volunteering at English Heritage
3. Evaluation of the pilot programme
4. Questions and discussion
5. Breakout brainstorm groups (if time!)

Key aims of volunteering programme



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- Deliver new Learning Strategy introduced in 2005
- Increase our capacity to deliver site-based education activities (known as Discovery Visits – DVs)
- Engage with local communities
- Provide informal adult learning opportunities
- Bring new skills, knowledge and experiences to the education programme

Volunteers at selected properties



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In 2007 introduced at 7 pilot sites:

- Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire
- Brodsworth Hall and Gardens, Yorkshire
- Fort Brockhurst, Hampshire
- Goodrich Castle, Herefordshire
- Great Yarmouth Row Houses, Norfolk
- Kenwood House Estate, London
- Pendennis Castle, Cornwall

In 2008 rolled out to 9 sites in total:

- Audley End House, Essex
- Warkworth Castle, Northumberland



Johanna, education volunteer at Goodrich Castle

Getting started



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1. Paperwork – develop a plan and policy that everyone buys into
2. Consultation – work with staff to select sites
3. Roles – identify volunteer roles, be clear and realistic
4. Recruitment – understand your community, find a variety of ways to communicate and determine the most appropriate way to recruit volunteers

Managing volunteers



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What works well:

- Induction
- Training based on individual needs
- Regular informal progress meetings
- Layers of communication
- Making volunteers part of the decision-making process
- Never underestimate volunteers

Managing volunteers



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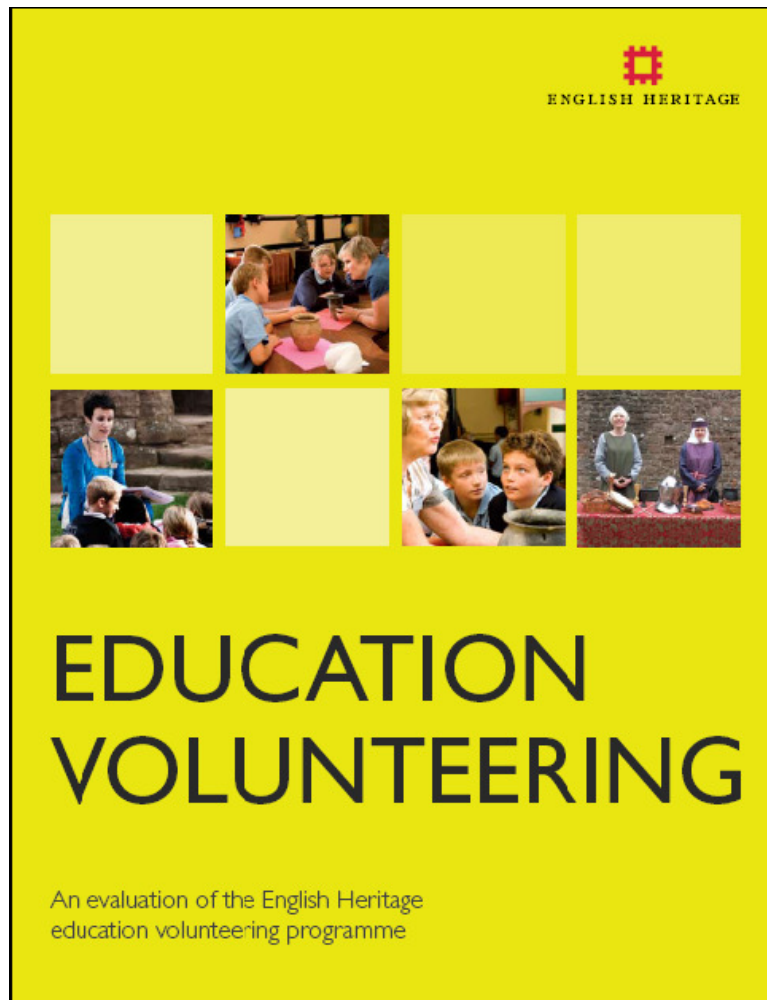
Challenges:

- Geographical spread of sites, volunteers and staff
- Complicated lines of communication
- Limited flexibility of volunteer roles
- Volunteering new to most sites
- Facilities at sites
- Matching volunteer skills to requirement of roles

Evaluating the pilot programme



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- Conducted by the Institute for Volunteering Research
- To evaluate the first year of education volunteering at English Heritage
- Published May 2007

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Findings from initial staff interviews



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- Idea of volunteers welcomed to expand services

BUT

- Need appropriate support and development for volunteers
- Realistic arrangements for managing and monitoring
- Well-defined roles to avoid encroachment on staff responsibilities

Volunteer motivations



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- Use existing skills and experience
- Develop new skills
- Take on a new challenge
- Work with children
- Meet new people



Victoria, education volunteer at Kenwood

The best bits



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“Privilege of access to house and records not available to public, meeting new people, developing new skills and using old ones, taking on new challenges, gaining new knowledge, sharing history with children.”

“Firstly being with the children, but also working with the other adults, feeling part of a team and developing my own knowledge.”

Volunteer feedback Summary



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Success

- Volunteers generally very satisfied with the programme and roles
- Most volunteers felt welcomed by site staff
- All volunteers happy to remain part of the volunteering programme

But

- Some volunteers did not feel as accepted and valued by site staff
- Some volunteers felt their skills and experience underused
- Some volunteers frustrated by long process to create new DVs

Finally

- At this early stage, most suggestions for improvements involve fine tuning not a fundamental reassessment of its structure or objectives

Conclusion – impact of volunteering



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- Volunteers supporting DVs relieved pressure, enabling leaders to focus on delivery, rather than on preparing and clearing away materials
- Volunteers have been able to engage with children, providing explanations and offering a supportive and sympathetic presence
- Volunteers developing and delivering DVs is a more challenging process but promises over the longer term to add greater value to EH's education provision, expanding the range of visits on offer and offering them to schools in a more flexible way

Recommendations



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- Consolidate
- Continue to consult with staff
- More support for volunteers
- Simplify communication
- More ethnic diversity
- Share what has been learned



Diane, education volunteer at Kenwood

Reflection and discussion



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Any questions?

Break out group questions



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Q1: How can a volunteer manager instil organisational values in volunteers?

Q2: What are the key ingredients when creating a meaningful volunteer experience?

Q3: How can a volunteer-involving organisation make volunteers feel special?

Q4: Identify the boundaries you might need to establish with volunteers and how you can impose them.

Q5: What are the challenges you face when recruiting volunteers and give 3 strategies to overcome them

Q6: Suggest ways to provide volunteers with feedback, recognition and appreciation (that you don't do already!)