

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT POT ON GLASGOW 2014 COMMONWEALTH GAMES VOLUNTEERS



A report for



This report was commissioned by Volunteer Scotland in August 2014. It has been conducted by a team of researchers at the University of Strathclyde led by Dr Robert Rogerson, the legacy research coordinator for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Research Partnership. The research analysis was conducted by Robert Rogerson and Sue Sadler, and the interviews conducted by Andrea Pavoni, Tom Duncan and Richard Withington.

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All contributions to the online survey and the telephone interviews were on the basis of anonymity. We have therefore ensured that details which might identify any recipient or contributor are not included. However, we have used direct quotations where appropriate, providing attribution only to the form of volunteer involved – as a Clyde-sider or Ceremonies volunteer – and where relevant to the level of support provided.

The views expressed in the remainder of the report are those of the researcher team.

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Executive Summary

The Volunteer Support Pot (VSP) was created by the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland in 2013 to support volunteers so that they could complete their roles as Clyde-siders or Ceremonies volunteers at the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in July and August 2014. More than 18,000 volunteers, including 12,467 Clyde-siders, helped to contribute to the success of the 'best Games ever'.

However, for some who were selected from the more than 53,000 applicants, their ability to take part and experience the Games as a volunteer was challenged as they faced hardship or exceptional costs associated with rurality, low income, caring responsibilities or disabilities. The VSP was created to allow them access to a contribution of the costs involved. A simple application process, with support and help available, was provided by Volunteer Scotland (VS) and delivered by the VSP team who assessed 2,632 applications and allocated £554,760 providing support for 2,177 individuals.

The Evaluation

In August 2014, VS commissioned the University of Strathclyde to conduct a review of the support provided under the VSP, with three main objectives:

- to review the efficacy of the funding mechanism and the process of distribution of the funds;
- to determine the impact of the VSP; and
- to give guidance and recommendations on the VSP model, including its suitability for future use and how the funding mechanism and impact could be improved.

As well as secondary data and information gathered by the VSP team, the evaluation contacted more than 2,000 beneficiaries receiving 936 responses (44% response rate) through an online survey which asked about their experiences of the support process, the impact of the support provided, and the experience of volunteering roles completed. In addition, 19 recipients who were unable to fulfil their roles were surveyed and across both groups 27 individuals were interviewed by telephone to provide specific insights and experiences.

Applying for support

In total 3,589 payments were made from the VSP, with only 285 (10.8%) applicants being deemed ineligible and a further 240 (14.7%) who cancelled or withdrew mainly before any funding was provided.

This achievement was managed through an application and support process which 90% of survey respondents found convenient. 87% found the application form easy to complete and 85% found communication with the VSP team effective. Indeed, 86% would recommend the use of the VSP in future events in Scotland. Together this was testimony to the robust VSP team and the approach developed by VS with the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland.

"I was surprised at how quickly I did it....I think I managed to do it in under 5 minutes!.. in fact once I had done it myself I evangelised about it and told other people and how simple it had been and advised them to do the same!"

Helping volunteers to deliver

Volunteering at a major event such as the Commonwealth Games is exceptional. The volunteer makes a substantial commitment of time, delivered mostly during the relatively short and intense period of the Games. In addition, volunteers commit time and other resources to travel, preparation, training and accreditation. Some volunteers also face exceptional costs that the VSP was able to help with.

“The funding allowed me to pay for my disabled son’s care. I would not have been able to volunteer without the funding “ (Ceremonies volunteer)

Unlike most volunteering opportunities, the volunteer does not have the option to vary their commitment. A failure to attend on designated dates, for training, to pick up a uniform or to attend a shift generally results in the withdrawal of volunteer status. When applying to volunteer, many of the costs are unknown.

“So originally I planned to put the money by, so that it was in the bank ready and waiting. But then I lost my job ...”

For some individuals, a lot could change during the 18 month period from when applications opened, to delivery of the Games and some volunteers would inevitably experience problems relating to employment, health and relationships.

Individual experience of VSP funding was diverse, ranging from some individuals who gave VSP sole credit for enabling them to volunteer and others insisting that they would have successfully delivered on their volunteering commitment without any VSP funding.

“I would have volunteered regardless and taken the hit on the cost”

Overall, VSP had a positive role in giving volunteers confidence that they could complete their role for the Games. While, only 1 in 8 (12%) of those supported suggested that they would have withdrawn without support from the VSP, a further 51% reported that they would have been confident in fulfilling only part of their roles – which was not an option open to volunteers.

Helping to generate a volunteer legacy

Being a volunteer at the Games was for many a special opportunity, both as an event volunteer and to be part of the Games themselves. Many of those supported talked about the people they met, the skills and experience gained, the opportunities provided, and the confidence gained by the experience.

“It was one of the most awe inspiring experiences I’ve ever done. It was just out of this world. The people I’d met, the different walks of life all coming together for one final big impact at Hampden, it was really out of this world! Such a good exercise for having to deal with different people, different walks of life, people with disabilities, people needing help to continue, it was just like pulling together as one big family.” (Ceremonies volunteer)

And the telling evidence was that 58% of respondents thought their experience would be likely to increase their commitment to volunteering and 38% continuing to be committed at the same level. This was true even from those who were already involved in volunteering before taking part in the Games – and was even more evident amongst the ‘novice’ volunteers.

Amongst the committed volunteers, 52%

indicated that they were likely to do more, with the most common aspects being applying to be part of another major event (21%), getting involved in a local sport or sport club (18%) or involvement in a local event (18%).

For the novice volunteers, the Games experience without exception left them re-defining their relationship with volunteering. This group did not see their general volunteering as supporting local sports clubs, being more inspired by volunteering at another major event (20%) or volunteering in their local community (10%).

Efficacy and impact

Key factors influencing the impact of the VSP on volunteers included the individual circumstances of the applicant highlighted above, the funding structure of VSP (comprising three separate funds), and the principles applied to allocating funding.

Although presented as a single fund, VSP was in reality made up of three separate funds supporting different groups of Games volunteers. The initial fund (VSP1) providing £425,000 from Big Lottery Scotland was directed to supporting Clyde-siders from Scotland. This was later supplemented with £100,000 to support Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK (VSP2, also from Big Lottery Fund) and by a fund to support Ceremonies volunteers (VSP3) from the Spirit of 2012 Trust. Each sought to help address hardship on the basis of need, using largely the same criteria.

The impact of the funds varied. Most volunteers supported under VSP1 (77%) and VSP3 (89%), reported that the VSP support had a major or significant impact on their ability to volunteer. All of these beneficiaries received at least 50% of the amount they requested, and many – especially at Games time – received all the support requested.

The impact of VSP2 was different. With less funding available in relation to demand, support was allocated on a discretionary basis in terms of a contribution rather than proportional amount. This meant that 54% of beneficiaries received less than £50 (although some also got accommodation provided) and few received more than £250. For this group, the impact was less, with only 26% indicating that the VSP support had a significant or major impact, and with 58% suggesting they were confident they could have fulfilled their roles without the funding.

Three factors have been identified contributing to this variation:

- there was insufficient funding available to meet the overall demand for target groups outside of Scotland, especially as these Clyde-siders were likely to have higher travel and accommodation costs;
- the allocation mechanism used to support Clyde-siders in the rest of the UK was different to that already in use in Scotland as part of the earlier funding stream; and
- whereas the allocations made to Clyde-siders from Scotland were proportional to the amount requested, the allocations to the rest of the UK was unrelated to the costs likely to be incurred, but fixed by the type of need (e.g. low income, caring).

Where volunteers were offered small amounts of money in comparison to the total cost of Games volunteering, this had limited impact. For most Clyde-siders based outside Scotland

a contribution of £30, based on an assessment of need relating to distance from the Games, was too small to have much impact.

The presentation of the VSP as a single fund raised expectations and meant that during the Games, volunteers were unable to understand the different levels of support provided, which exacerbated a sense of low impact.

What worked well?

One of the key strengths of the VSP process was the straightforward and simple process of application. The online application process was convenient and the application form was easy to complete. The support provided by the VSP team and their effectiveness in communicating with applicants and recipients was highly commended. Overall, the application process and the associated support mechanisms were very efficiently delivered by a small team of only 3 (full time equivalent) staff within VS for a low management fee to a much larger than expected number of applicants.

“[I received] a very small proportion [of my overall costs]. I’m very very grateful, but there were several people I spoke to during the Games who received considerably more than me, and I don’t understand why they got it and I didn’t.... but I didn’t query it either, I was just grateful that I got it”
(Clyde-sider)

Could it have worked better?

Key decisions were made in the operation of the VSP which reduced both its impact and its effectiveness as a fair and transparent process. Recognising that providing only a very small sum was likely to have negligible impact, the retention of the principle to support all eligible applicants (as applied to VSP2), significantly reduced the impact overall. A more targeted approach based on meeting a proportion of costs – used in VSP1 and VSP3 – would have greatly increased the overall impact for those supported.

Such an approach would also have had the additional benefit of enabling more transparent and consistent communication to all beneficiaries of the basis on which they received support and how the funding was allocated.

Conclusions on the VSP Model.....

Five principles were important in developing the VSP approach and the way in which it supported volunteers:

1. applicants had already been selected for a volunteering role at the Games;
2. financial support was targeted to specific areas of need to tackle barriers which might prevent individuals completing their role;
3. individual applicants made the case for support;
4. funding was provided on a discretionary basis, being assessed in terms of four areas of need; and
5. funding was provided on the basis of ‘trust’ that it would be used to help the volunteer to be involved without auditing or accountability of expenditure.

The evaluation of the evidence gathered about the VSP model as a process of providing support and the impact of this support on volunteering at the Glasgow 2014 Games suggests that:

- the creation of a novel way to provide support, based on trust and a discretionary fund has considerable merit, with the approach devised and administered by the VSP team being strongly endorsed by the recipients;
- VSP achieved its primary objective of helping those volunteers with specific needs to continue to fulfil their roles and to gain from the experience of being part of this major event;
- the approach taken to support Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK was not very effective, with too little targeting of support to those where funding would have greatest impact, and
- improvements could be made around transparency – at the application stage in terms of assessment criteria, in relation to the allocation mechanism used, and in the differences which were required within the VSP.

The experience of the VSP in 2014 suggests that with adjustments and an appreciation of the specific contexts of each event, the model has the potential for use at future events – and this is likely to be welcomed by volunteers. It is also possible to envisage this approach being adapted to help support volunteering at small events, including extending the approach to help recruit volunteers as well as retain them.

In contrast, however, given the specific nature of event volunteering it will be more challenging to find the appropriate conditions which would allow the VSP approach to have wider applicability to other areas of volunteering.

Section 1

Background to the Volunteer Support Pot

Key points:

- VSP was created in recognition of the significant contribution to the Games to be made by volunteers
- More than 50,000 people applied for an estimated 15,000 volunteer positions before the fund was launched
- The fund was created initially for the purpose of supporting Clyde-siders¹ from Scotland to mitigate hardship and enable volunteers to fulfil their roles
- The process was later extended to include Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK and Ceremonies volunteers
- The process of application, allocation and distribution was administered by Volunteer Scotland (VS) under contract to the Big Lottery Fund and Spirit of London 2012
- This evaluation has reviewed the VSP as a mechanism to support volunteers at the Commonwealth Games in 2014 and to determine the impact on those who were supported
- Data collated by the VS team, online surveys of 954 beneficiaries, and telephone interviews with 27 people have informed this research

1.1 The rationale for a Volunteer Support Pot

The Volunteer Support Pot (VSP) was created and funded by Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, with support from the Organising Committee, Glasgow 2014 Ltd², and the Scottish Government. It was designed to help volunteers whose individual circumstances meant that they needed assistance towards the cost of participating as a volunteer at the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014³.

The creation of this fund reflected learning from the experience of volunteer recruitment and retention at previous major multi-sport events held in the UK in the last two decades. The XVII Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002 saw the then largest peace-time 'army' of 12,000 volunteers being created, whilst the more recent experience of 2012 Olympics in London highlighted the important role of the more than 70,000 Games Makers and London Ambassadors to the success of the event.

There was an awareness of some of the challenges faced by event organisers in recruiting and retaining volunteers and the time and cost which the volunteers needed to invest. Although the timing of VSP meant that it was unable to influence volunteer recruitment, the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland wanted to "provide a volunteer support programme which will enable eligible volunteers who have been selected through the Glasgow 2014 Organising

¹ Clyde-siders were volunteers recruited and organised by Glasgow 2014 Ltd to assist in the delivery of the Games. They were recruited from an open application process and resided in Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally.

² This is referred to as the Organising Committee (OC) thereafter

³ The XX Commonwealth Games are referred to thereafter as 'the Games'

Committee process and are resident in Scotland to overcome practical and financial barriers they face in volunteering at the Glasgow 2014 (sic). This will achieve a diverse and inclusive pool of volunteers” (Schedule A, contract with VS).

The VSP set up under this contract sought to ensure that people facing barriers can successfully participate in a volunteer opportunity at the Games, and help support a diverse and inclusive pool of volunteers as beneficiaries. Under the contract, the beneficiary groups outlined by the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland were:

- people who are in a low income household (a generic term to cover socially and economically deprived, especially lone parents and young people)
- people with a disability
- people who are rurally isolated
- people who care, especially young carers
- people from minority ethnic groups⁴.

The VSP was later extended by including funding to support Clyde-siders from outside of Scotland and by the inclusion of funding from the Spirit of 2012 Trust support volunteers selected to be involved in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

1.2 Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games volunteers

Volunteers played an important part of the Games held in Glasgow during July and August 2014. They were involved in supporting the OC workforce, in contributing to the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games, and in supporting spectators to navigate their way across the city. Many of these were known as ‘Clyde-siders’, recruited, trained and organised by the OC to help out with Games activities in and around venues and other Games locations including Glasgow Airport. Others were part of the ‘cast’ who performed at the ceremonies⁵, and yet other volunteers contributed on behalf of the host city, Glasgow, in specific roles within the other cultural and festival sites.

Recruiting, training and retaining the services of volunteers was thus a key aspect of the organisation of the Games. This role was part of the Organising Committee’s area of responsibility, and a team of staff and other volunteers (the Front-runners) contributed to these aspects of the Games preparation.

Opportunities for people to apply to be considered as a Games volunteer –later called Clyde-siders – opened in January 2013. Hundreds of people had already expressed an interest in advance of this date, and by the closing date at the end of February 2013, more than 50,800 people had applied to be volunteers using the online application forms. The process of selecting the approximately 15,000 people needed included interviews in Glasgow from April 2013 and by October 2013, the first successful volunteers were being told of their roles at the Games. This process of selection continued through to June 2014 with most Clyde-siders knowing by March 2014 of their roles and their expected commitments.

⁴ The beneficiary minority ethnic group was not used for allocation within the VSP

⁵ Although known also as the ‘cast’, the term Ceremonies volunteer is used here

The recruitment of volunteers for the Ceremonies opened on 23 January 2014 and closed on 14 February 2014, with successful applicants being informed in May 2014, ahead of the first rehearsals in June.

1.3 Event volunteering and the volunteer contribution

Volunteering at a major event such as the Commonwealth Games is exceptional. Unlike most other forms of volunteering, it is 'bounded' in time and roles, and is appealing to people for reasons beyond that usually associated with volunteering.

It is a time limited commitment, focussed on specific roles which in advance are unknown but are focussed on delivering the event, and where the predominant motivation is usually to experience and be part of the event itself. It does however invariably include more than just 'Games time' involvement with the need for time allocated to training, accreditation and other preparatory tasks.

"I think being away volunteering for a period of time was quite nice, to be actually away from home, where your whole focus is on the volunteering and not trying to add it to your busy days at home and have fit it onto the end of the day or at weekends."

Major sport event volunteering attracts those with little or no previous experience of volunteering as well as those who are committed volunteers. It attracts those whose interests are focussed on sport and those who wish to experience the 'festival' effect of the event.

Consequently, applicants' ability to visualise their contribution to and gain from a role as an event volunteer varies greatly. Not all are able to gauge in advance the time, effort and cost associated with the volunteering experience, and not all have past experiences to draw upon as they progress through the volunteering experience of the Games.

As the nature of the volunteer commitment and roles become clearer, and expectations are translated into experiences, volunteers face challenges. In addition, personal circumstances can change from the initial application stage to the time of the Games themselves. People move homes, change jobs, personal and family commitments alter, and personal health and wellbeing can change.

"When I was applying for it originally I was working, and at my work place they said they would give me the four weeks off in order to do it. So originally I planned to put the money by, so that it was in the bank ready and waiting. But then I lost my job ..." and thus the savings in the bank had to be used otherwise.!

As a result, a characteristic of event volunteering is the risk of attrition amongst those who apply and start to volunteer.

The VSP was designed to help mitigate this risk, by providing some financial contribution to the cost incurred by volunteers at the Commonwealth Games. However, it only addressed the financial dimension of what is a significant commitment in time and effort as well as cost.

For example, the 12,467 Clyde-siders involved in the Games committed in total more than 893,000 hours as part of their shifts. In addition, many stayed beyond these times either to fulfil roles or to gain more of the experience of

being part of the event. And in addition, each Clyde-sider had to commit further time to attending training days, the uniform pick-up and accreditation.

For those involved in the cast, hours of rehearsal time had to be given in advance of the time at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies as well as the time and input to the ceremonies themselves.

The application process to be involved in the roles as Clyde-siders or Ceremonies volunteers outlined the time commitment expected in terms of days and activities. It had also underlined that no payment was being provided for this involvement or money to reimburse expenses. However, for many who applied to be considered as Games volunteers, estimating or identifying the actual costs (and time commitment) at application time was difficult. The specific times of shifts, the nature of the roles to be fulfilled by volunteers and the dates of interviews, training events and roles in the Games were all still to be organised.

For many volunteers the cost of being involved was considerable, and for many not really known at the time of application. Travelling to venues for training, for sessions in Glasgow, and to the Games, accommodation for those visiting the city, subsistence to augment that provided by the OC all had to be met by the volunteer. And for some there were additional costs associated with the responsibilities in daily life. Many arranged to get paid or unpaid leave or were able to negotiate with employers for time off to be a volunteer. Others had to make specific arrangements to provide caring for those to whom they were responsible, either child care or family care. And for others, including those with disabilities, special arrangements had to be organised to assist them to volunteer.

"I was hoping to have some paid leave from my employer, which I didn't [get...and] that the cost would have been more contained. But in the end I realised that costs were skyrocketing"

In short, applicants to become volunteers at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow were being asked to make a significant and relatively unknown commitment well in advance of the event itself, with limited knowledge of many of the parameters that might shape their availability.

As the process of recruitment of Clyde-siders and Ceremonies volunteers unfolded, the cost and time implications became clearer to applicants – and in turn for some there was a realisation that they might find it difficult to complete their volunteering commitments. The funding under VSP was designed to help support those volunteers who might struggle to fulfil the opportunities presented because of exceptional circumstances, thus retaining them as volunteers and reducing the risk of attrition of volunteers for the event organisers.

1.4 The Volunteer Scotland role

After the Big Lottery Fund announced in January 2013 the intention to set aside £500,000 towards helping Clyde-siders in Scotland to be part of the experience of the Commonwealth Games, it invited tenders from organisations able to implement and administer a distribution system for this fund. Volunteer Scotland (VS) won the tender.

In responding to the tender details, and drawing on their own experience of supporting volunteers, VS proposed a system which would meet the principles of the VSP (see 2.1) and

provide a fair, transparent and timeous means of distributing the funds. Their experience of providing Disclosure Services advice and support for the voluntary sector was particularly important, as there was existing expertise in assisting people to work through difficult forms and processes as well as meeting compliance requirements. Four members of the Disclosure Services team (3 FTEs) were selected to provide the main administrative, support and helpline services required to deliver the VSP.

VS took the lead in developing a process of application and allocation which was fair, transparent and would be accepted by the large majority of volunteers. Recognising that the number of volunteers likely to apply or be eligible was unknown in advance, the VS team created a management system to record and manage applications, and to assess applications. This initially assessed the eligibility of applications (against the agreed priorities of the VSP – rurality, low income, caring and disability) and then ensured that there was sufficient and accurate information to enable an assessment of the case for support. The management system used recorded each application, decisions made in terms of eligibility, and then the outcome of assessment. It also recorded the allocation of payments made thereafter.

The team provided help online and by telephone, both to assist in the completion of the application forms and in proactively gathering necessary information missing from the forms to enable decisions to be made on the nature of support being requested.

This support not only covered the funds available to be allocated directly to individuals and groups, but also accommodation in lieu of costs. Accommodation in and around Glasgow had been secured by the VS team, and later supplemented by accommodation in Edinburgh, to enable this form of support to be available to help Clyde-siders to eliminate their accommodation costs and reduce their travelling costs. Funds used to pay for accommodation came from the overall VSP fund.

1.5 Evaluation approach

This evaluation has three main objectives:

- to review the efficacy of the funding mechanism and the process of distribution of the funds as shown above;
- to determine the impact of the VSP; and
- to give guidance and recommendations on the VSP model, including its suitability for future use and how the funding mechanism and impact could be improved.

It has been commissioned by VS and has been guided by the VSP team and the funding bodies, Big Lottery Fund in Scotland and the Spirit of 2012 Trust.

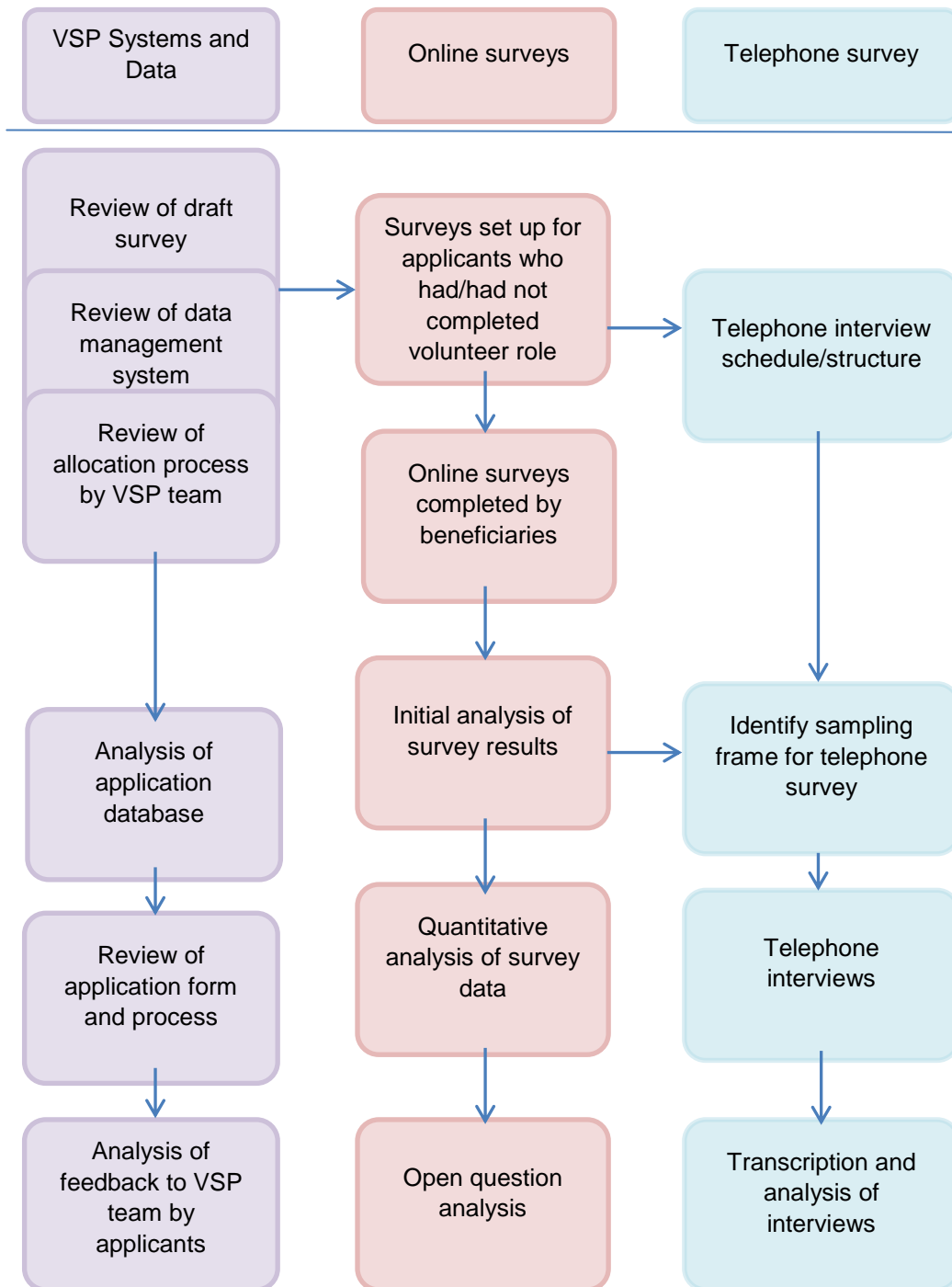
To enable the review to meet these objectives, the approach adopted in this study has involved a mix of desk-based research and primary data gathering (Figure 1.1)⁶.

Information already gathered by VS was provided, including that relating to applications, allocation decision making and the distribution database. Management reports provided monthly by VS to the funders and the database constructed to record awards made provide

⁶ Fuller details of the approach can be found in Appendix 1.

an overview of the allocation of the funds and the process involved. In addition, qualitative information provided by applicants to the VS team beyond that in the form, usually by email, have also been used to supplement the primary research. The anonymity of individuals on the database and in correspondence has been maintained.

Figure 1.1 : The evaluation approach adopted for this research⁷



⁷ The colour coding for each strand of data is continued throughout this report, with comments and quotes colour coded to reflect the source of the material

Adding to this information, the evaluation team has conducted **online surveys** of beneficiaries who fully completed their roles and those who did not completely fulfil their roles. A pilot survey had been drafted and tested by VS and this was adapted by the research team. Invitations were sent by VS to all individual applicants to the VSP asking them to complete an online survey. These anonymous surveys elicited over 1,000 responses. Completed surveys, representing the views of 936 volunteers who had successfully completed their volunteer roles, and a further 19 volunteers who had not completed their roles as volunteers have contributed to this evaluation.

These surveys focussed on the respondent's experience of gaining funding from the VSP, of the impact on their participation as a volunteer and their possible future commitment to volunteering, and for the non-participants their reasons for not completing their roles. A mixture of closed, often scaled questions, and open questions were used to elicit responses⁸.

To complete this overview, a sample of 27 volunteers was contacted by **telephone**, having received their consent as part of the online survey to be involved in follow-on research. This sample of respondents was drawn on the basis of their survey responses, and divided between those who received small sums of money (less than £100), those with more medial sums (£250-499) and those with larger awards and cross-referenced to the degree of impact the respondent indicated the award had had to them on their ability to volunteer at the Games⁹.

Each telephone interview was conducted in private by one of the research team and explored in more detail the experience of gaining funding and its impact on the individual. Lasting on average 10-15 minutes each survey was transcribed and used to elaborate key conclusions reached from the analysis of the management data and the online survey. In addition, the telephone interviews provide a set of case studies which illustrate some of the different experiences of gaining funding and its impact.

Using the evidence gathered from these three main strands, this report addresses the three main objectives in the following sections. Section 3 assesses the efficacy of the mechanisms and processes used to distribute the funding and the experience of the recipients in accessing the funding. Section 4 considers the reach and impact of the funding, exploring not only the impact on the primary objective of volunteers being able to complete their Games roles, but also what impact the volunteering experience at the Games has had on them.

In Section 5 we provide an evaluation of the VSP model, considering its effectiveness in meeting the objectives set for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and draw out recommendations arising from this analysis. Recognising the uniqueness of the Commonwealth Games and supportive of ensuring that the experiences of using the VSP approach have wider relevance, we conclude in Section 6 by considering the value of the approach as a model for supporting event volunteering in future, and its utility as an approach to support other forms of volunteering.

However, to undertake this assessment it is necessary to provide more clarity about what is the 'VSP model', the approach adopted by VS to distribute the funding and some of the key

⁸ More details of the online survey and respondents can be found in Appendix 2

⁹ Details of the telephone survey structure and sampling can be found in Appendix 3

factors which influenced the delivery of its objective, that of providing support for volunteers. We turn therefore in the next section to outline these aspects.

Section 2

The Volunteer Support Pot approach

Key points

- The VSP as a 'model' or approach to allocate funding to support event volunteering is novel
- VSP demonstrated five key principles; pre-selected target group, addressing specific areas of need, identified by the individual, allocated on a discretionary basis and on the basis of trust
- VSP comprised three funds administered through a single process
- VSP was designed to allocate funding to one group of Commonwealth Games volunteers, Clyde-siders from Scotland
- The addition of later funding streams required the VSP approach to be adapted

2.1 The 'VSP approach'

Five principles were important in developing the VSP approach:

1. applicants had already been selected for a volunteering role at the Games;
2. financial support was targeted to specific areas of need to tackle barriers which might prevent individuals completing their role;
3. individual applicants made the case for support;
4. funding was provided on a discretionary basis, being assessed in terms of four areas of need; and
5. funding was provided on the basis of 'trust' that it would be used to help the volunteer to be involved without auditing or accountability of expenditure.

The VSP model did not set out to cover all expenditure associated with Games volunteering (and applicants were made aware of this in the application information) or to provide support to all volunteers. However, there was a desire by VS to contribute towards meeting need for all eligible applicants, and if required to assist volunteers to complete their application.

By the time VSP was launched, more than 50,000 people had applied online to the OC for an estimated 15,000 volunteer positions. A single, online application form was devised for VSP which allowed each applicant to make their case for support, once they had confirmation that they were selected for a role at the Games. As this process was on-going from the launch of the fund through to Games time, applications for support were being made continuously. The level of need and demand for support was thus unknown at the start and the allocation process had to include a means to balance support with demand.

Using the information provided, the VSP team in VS assessed the eligibility of the application, the nature of the need and made an allocation of funding to support the volunteer (see Section 3 for more detailed analysis of the process). Payments were made in stages, based on information provided by applicants. While some volunteers received Games time support only, others applied for and received additional contributions to the pre-

Games training of Clyde-siders in Glasgow. Applicants were informed shortly after applying whether they would receive support, and funds were transferred directly into their bank accounts by the VSP team.

Based on the above principles, the VSP has been a novel ‘model’ of funding allocation and support from that used normally by the Big Lottery Fund and other grant makers, especially in terms of trust and the large number of small amounts being provided. It also represents a unique form of support for event volunteering, with no precedence upon which to draw.

2.2 Overview of funds and fund management

The initial allocation of funding and design of the VSP was later augmented by additional funding. In total, using the VSP approach, funding worth £625,000 was available to support Games volunteers. This was composed of three elements, made available at different times, and with the intention of supporting different groups of volunteers. For simplicity, in this report we designate these funds as VSP1, VSP2 and VSP3. The first VSP fund (VSP1) from the Big Lottery Fund provided £425,000 to be allocated to support Clyde-siders from Scotland, whilst the second fund (VSP2) of £100,000 also from the Big Lottery supported Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK. The third fund (VSP3) of £100,000 was provided by the Spirit of 2012 Trust to assist Ceremonies volunteers from across the country.

Table 2.1 : Allocation of funds from Big Lottery Fund Scotland and Spirit of 2012 Trust

	Funding for allocation	Management fees	Total Funding
VSP1 – Clyde-siders in Scotland	£425,000	£75,000	£500,000
VSP2 – Clyde-siders rest of UK	£100,000	£15,000	£115,000
VSP3 – Ceremonies volunteers	£100,000	£22,000	£122,000

As indicated above, the VSP approach was designed to meet the objectives of VSP1 with the other two funding streams subsequently being allocated through the same approach.

2.2.1 Supporting Clyde-siders from Scotland (VSP1)

The initial fund was launched in October 2013, accompanying the announcement of the name of the Glasgow 2014 Games volunteers as ‘Clyde-siders’ and the start of the allocation of roles. The fund eventually closed on 1 June 2014.

Some six months before the VSP launch, expectations informing the VS tender for the number of applicants were modest – less than 300 – with a likelihood that many would thus receive funding of £1000. It was recognised by VS that this was unknown and difficult to

predict given the unique circumstances and thus the approach to assessment and allocation had to provide a degree of flexibility to manage demand.

A small team of staff were seconded from other parts of VS to support the allocation and management of funds. Assessment of need was based on the following criteria: distance from Glasgow as a barrier (termed rurality), low household incomes, need because of a disability, or additional costs associated with caring responsibilities. These assessment criteria had been selected to reflect the anticipated hardship barriers in Scotland. Checks were made to ensure eligibility under these criteria.

2.2.2 Supporting Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK (VSP 2)

In early March 2014, a second fund was made available by the Big Lottery Fund to offer similar support to those Clyde-siders resident in the remainder of the UK. This support was provided by the Big Lottery Fund because of the unexpected high numbers of applications to VSP1 from outside of the Scotland and because of complaints of inequity in supporting only Scottish Clyde-siders.

A sum of £100,000 was allocated and VS was asked to manage the distribution of this support through the same VSP approach currently being used for VSP1. A comparable application process was launched and announced through the OC communications in March 2014, with a closing date of 17 April 2014. The same criteria for assessment were used..

To manage the distribution of this fund, the VSP team overlaid it on their existing system developed for VSP1. The same data management systems and support systems were used for this additional fund.

2.2.3 Supporting Ceremonies volunteers (VSP3)

A third fund was provided by the Spirit of 2012 Trust. Set up following the London 2012 Olympics, the Spirit of 2012 Trust has been helping to tackle isolation and disadvantage by supporting those providing opportunities in sports, the arts and volunteering. The Trust provided £100,000 to support those who might struggle financially to complete their roles associated with the Opening and Closing Ceremonies (Ceremonies volunteers) at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. The VSP team were asked to manage the allocation of this funding from April 2014. The funding could be sought by individuals or by groups with different application forms for each.

As with VSP2, the existing VSP approach was used to manage demand, assess need and allocate funding, with similar assessment criteria being used.

2.3 Timing of availability of fund and demand management

Applicants could seek support from the relevant VSP fund once they had confirmation from the OC that they had a role as a volunteer. In the case of VSP1 and VSP2, demand for roles as Clyde-siders greatly exceeded need and thus a selection process had been implemented by the OC. Interviewing had been completed in advance of the availability of the VSP support, but decisions on whether applicants had Games roles were being made throughout

the period from October 2013. As a result, Clyde-siders became eligible for VSP support at different times, and the VSP approach had therefore to manage demand throughout this period with little insight to future demand. Applications to VSP1 in the first few months were therefore lower than expected, and only peaked in the weeks in February and March when many Clyde-siders knew of their training dates and roles and when an associated social media campaign was launched by the OC.

In addition, although the OC informed Clyde-siders that they had a role and were expected to attend training in March and April 2014, the specifics in terms of timing and shift patterns were not known to most applicants when they initially applied to the VSP fund which made it more challenging for applicants to estimate their costs. This was particularly acute for early applicants to VSP1.

With the VSP1 fund remaining open until 1 June 2014, some applicants had already completed their training before applying and thus sought support only for Games time roles.

For VSP2, the application process started after many had learnt of their selection as volunteers at the Games and the shorter time period for application meant that all applicants had to seek funding in advance of training.

For the Ceremonies volunteers, there was much greater certainty about the roles and timing of their roles, both for rehearsals and the Games ceremonies. It was thus easier from them to provide estimates in their application about actual costs.

The implications of this different timing were evident in two respects. First, it meant that applicants to the VSP had different levels of key information required to indicate both their likely requirements and support needs, and the basis on which to estimate costs. For those in VSP2 and 3, their knowledge of roles and commitments was more specific than those who applied early to the VSP1 fund.

Second, for VSP team at VS the ability to manage demand was different. Allocations under VSP2 for example were able to be made once all the applications had been received, and thus the total demand was known. For VSP1 and BSP3 a rolling programme of allocation was necessary with total demand being unknown. These implications are considered further in Section 3.5.

2.4 The distribution of funds

Under VSP, a total of £554,760 was distributed to individual volunteers¹⁰ to help support them to fulfil their roles at the Games. The VSP team management database recorded the distribution of these funds shown below (Table 2.2).

A total of £444,830 has been distributed to recipients on an individual basis, along with £103,419 to provide accommodation – in total to 2147 people – and £11,963 from VSP3 was provided to groups to support them as Ceremonies volunteers.

¹⁰ In addition 11 groups of Ceremonies volunteers were supported from the VSP. A review of these groups is being conducted by the Spirit of 2012 Trust. The groups are excluded from this evaluation.

Table 2.2 : The distribution of VSP funds

Role	Number of recipients	Individual funding	Accommodation costs	Other charges	Total distribution
VSP1 Clyde-sider					
Scotland	1163	£282,715	£70,499	£2,938	£355,152
VSP2 Clyde-sider					
Rest of UK	777	£63,097	£33,120	£663	£96,880
VSP3 Cast					
Scotland	177	£58,309	-	-	
Rest UK	30	£29,745	-	-	
Groups		£11,963	-	-	£100,017
Incomplete	30	£2,710	-	-	£2,710
Total	2177	£447,540	£103,419	£3,601	£554,760

Source: VSP management database

A further £2,710 was also distributed to 30 volunteers who took part in some of their roles (shown as incomplete in Table 2.2) but were unable to complete all their Games time commitments; one payment of £214 being made to a member of the cast from Scotland and £2,497 to 29 Clyde-siders (23 from Scotland under VSP1).

In the analysis here the main focus is on the recipients who completed their roles and were funded. The subsequent figures refer to this group. We consider the other 30 recipients along with evidence on those not funded in Section 4 under impact.

For many of these recipients the level of funding was relatively small – both in terms of the amount of money offered under VSP, and especially in comparison with the overall expenditure they incurred being a volunteer. Indeed more than a quarter of recipients (28%) received less than £50 and 40 (less than 2%) got more than £1000 (Table 2.3).

Most beneficiaries from VSP received between £100 and £500, with the average amount being £202. These figures exclude accommodation provided to Clyde-siders from Scotland and the rest of the UK. A total of 207 rooms were purchased to support volunteers and used on a total of 96 dates around the Games and with pre-Games activity.

In addition to financial support, the VSP team secured 99 rooms in Glasgow, 69 rooms in Edinburgh and 39 rooms in Greenock for use by applicants during the Games, plus 40 rooms, some of which offered disabled access, in Glasgow hotels for training dates in February. The team also promoted awareness of Camping Ninja and the Volunteer

Table 2.3 : The allocation of funds to recipients

Role	Location	Number of recipients					
		< £50	£50-99	£100-249	£250-499	£500-999	£1000+
Clyde-sider	Scotland	156	171	434	274	105	23
Clyde-sider	Rest of UK	419	23	330	5		
Cast	UK	26	15	60	57	32	17
Total		601	209	824	336	137	40

Source: VSP management database, n=2147

Homestay (More than Gold) programme. Some beneficiaries were offered accommodation in lieu of financial assistance. Few comments were made about this form of support in the surveys and indeed it received much less visibility than the monetary support under the VSP even though this represented in value about 20% of the support. Supporting applicants with accommodation may have been a more cost-effective way of enabling those with the most exceptional travel requirements to participate, but there is insufficient evidence in the surveys to support or negate that conclusion.

2.5 Making the VSP approach work

For the VSP team and the VSP approach therefore the experience associated with these three funds has been one of development and adaptation. With the approach designed to meet the needs of VSP1, the decision to use the same system to manage the allocation process for VSP2 and VSP3 has required minor adaptation to meet the different needs of each fund. The next section of the report focusses on these process issues, whilst the consequences on impact are considered in Section 5.

Section 3

The process of delivering support to volunteers

Key points

- The online application process was convenient
- The application form was straightforward and easy to complete
- The process was very efficiently delivered by a small team for a low management fee to a much larger than expected number of applicants
- The process was sufficiently flexible to adapt to inclusion of additional funding streams beyond its initial purpose
- The delivery of three funding streams through a single VSP adversely affected transparency
- The trust based process worked well
- The process was useful to volunteers in encouraging them to think through the cost of volunteering at the games

3.1 Setting up the VSP

The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland allocation of funding to support volunteers to the Commonwealth Games announced in January 2013 was geared to making funding available to volunteers at the time Glasgow 2014 started to notify applicants of their roles (anticipated to be September 2013). This allowed nine months for tendering and setting up a process for distributing the funds.

The implications of this timetable were first, that ‘front runners’ (volunteers appointed to assist with recruitment) would have no access to the support fund and second, that no details would be available during the period that might have influenced decisions to apply to be a volunteer. Although on their application forms almost 13% of applicants suggested that the VSP had influenced their decision to become a Clyde-sider, in reality the timing of the availability of the VSP fund makes this unlikely and the survey for this evaluation found that less than 1% of respondents learned about the support prior to their application to be a volunteer.

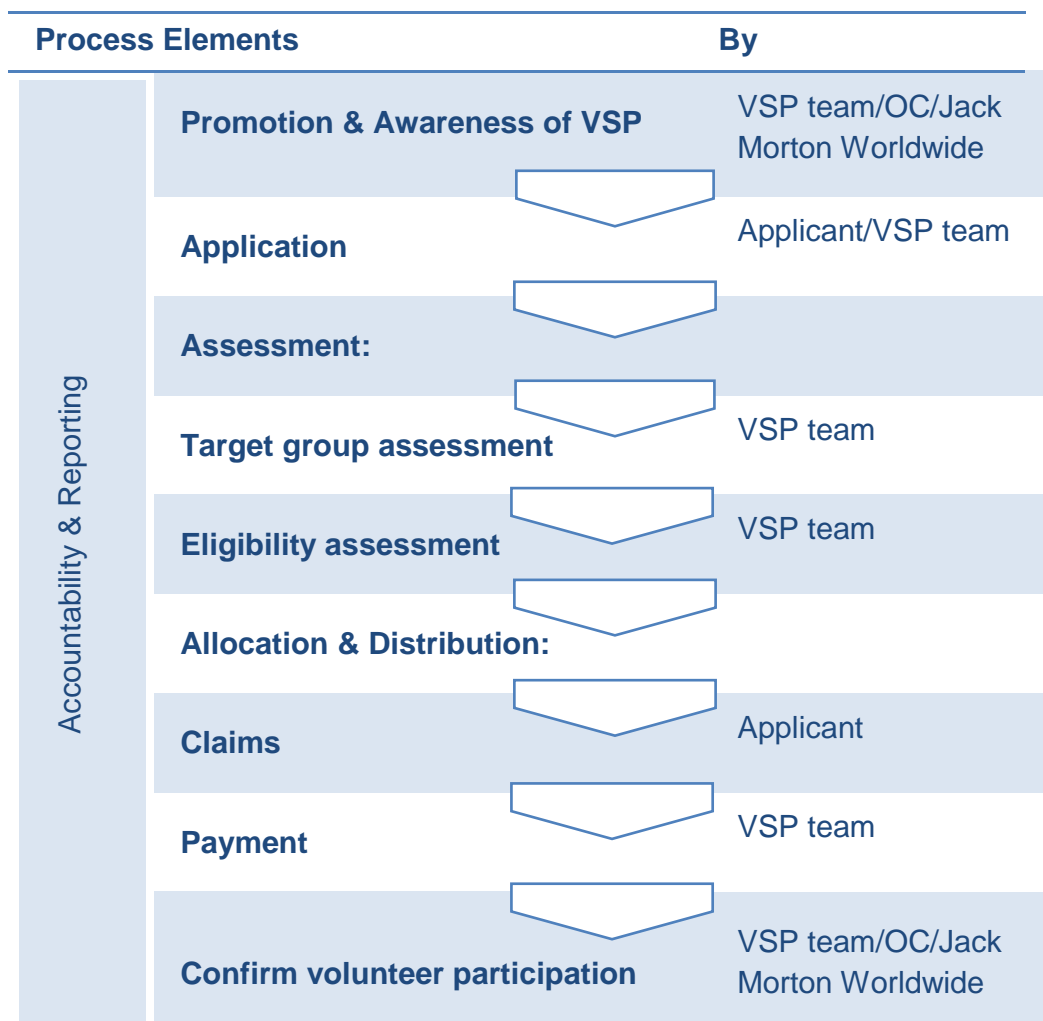
Management of the fund allocation was by VS through their VSP team, but the process of communicating with volunteers was conducted in partnership with the OC and other stakeholders (Figure 3.1).

3.2 Promoting the VSP and raising awareness

While funding to support volunteers at the Games had been announced by the Big Lottery in January 2013, no further information was available to applicants until the launch of VSP in October, when the Organising Committee began to make appointments to volunteer roles. Whilst there was press coverage at this time, limited publicity was given to the additional

funding streams (VSP2 and VSP3) as they became available. Given the targeted nature of the funding linked to those already offered roles as Games volunteers, the most important communication channels were through the OC's fora – including emails to all volunteers and through social media – as well as by word of mouth and social media communication between volunteers and their friends.

Figure 3.1: The VSP Process



From the data provided at the time of application, for the Clyde-siders the main sources of information about the VSP were through communication from the OC (76%), from Volunteer Scotland (8%) and other sources (14%) which included friends and family and through social media. For the ceremonies volunteer, the vast majority (88%) found out about VSP through communication by the ceremonies team, based within the OC and /or Jack Morton Worldwide, the ceremony organisers.

Of note, however, was in the survey for this evaluation, only 2 respondents found out from the Big Lottery Fund and 1 from the Spirit of 2012 Trust. In the follow up telephone surveys, it was evident that most recipients were unaware of the original source of funding – only five rightly noting that the funds came from the Big Lottery as Clyde-siders and one member of

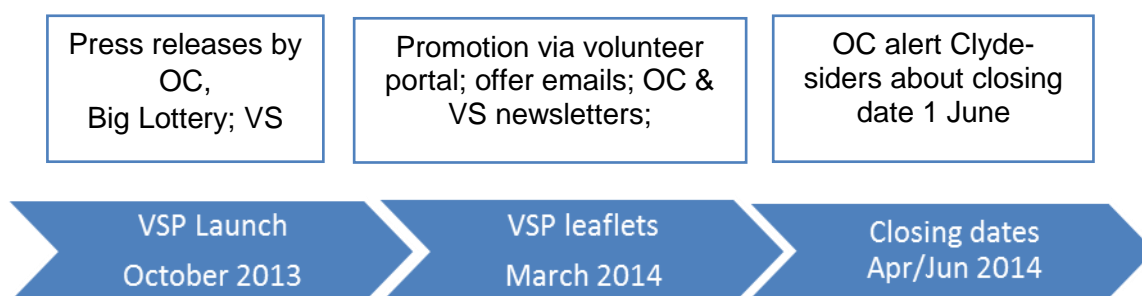
the cast knowing the VSP was funded by “something from legacy from the Olympics and also Lottery funding”.

The role of the VSP in supporting volunteers necessitated a close relationship with the OC and Jack Morton Worldwide, who were the official conduit of information on VSP to volunteers. In particular, the OC had responsibility for determining the timetable for volunteer recruitment, training, accreditation and the allocation of shift patterns for volunteers, as well as providing feedback to the VSP team on continued participation by volunteers.

Communication with volunteers was thus primarily through the channels set up by the OC for other purposes – regular emails to applicants and volunteers about the process, information at training, and through the newsletters being sent to Clyde-siders.

A timeline and principal features of each funding stream are highlighted below:

Figure 3.2 : VSP Communications



As the first appointments were made to volunteer positions on 7th October 2013, the creation of the VSP1 was announced by Glasgow 2014. Shona Robison (Sports Minister in the Scottish Government) set out the size and purpose of the VSP fund:

'For those Clyde-siders who may need extra support, like those with a disability or care responsibilities, the £500,000 Legacy 2014 Volunteer Support Pot is now open. It will help Scottish volunteers to overcome practical and financial barriers to help make their volunteering dreams a reality and provide valuable new skills and experiences.' (Press statement, Glasgow 2014, 7/10/13).

Interested parties were directed to the Volunteer Scotland VSP website or telephone support.

Information about the VSP was included by the OC with all Clyde-sider volunteer role offers from 7th October onward and in subsequent correspondence with volunteers. In addition to references to the VSP in communications from the OC, 18,000 VSP leaflets were distributed to Clyde-siders on 7/8 March 2014 during the training sessions. The closing date for applicants resident in Scotland was 1 June 2014, providing 9 months during which volunteers were able to seek support.

In contrast to this diversity of communication, information about VSP2 and VSP3 was more limited. The VSP2 fund opened without fanfare in early March and closed on 17th April with information provided only through the OC. The Spirit of 2012 Trust support for Ceremonies volunteers went live on 14th April 2014 as auditions were underway. Jack Morton Worldwide

and the OC – operating together as the Ceremonies Team - included information about the VSP in communications regarding role offers and in all subsequent correspondence.

This close collaboration appears to have generally worked well in terms of ensuring that applicants were familiar with online communications and in informing volunteers about the application process for VSP1 – none of the volunteers contacted for the online or telephone surveys reported any difficulty in identifying Volunteer Scotland website/helpline. Over 60% of online survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the VSP before they started their training.

“For myself, it wasn’t a problem. What I found from the emails was that there was a lot of information contained in them. I suppose it was about where the subject was within that email, People asked me about accessing it and I told them it was in the email, turns out they’d only read the first bit.”

However it was evident that the distinction between VSP1 and the later funds was not fully understood by other stakeholders, and especially the OC. They, for example, sent reminders to Clyde-siders that the VSP would close to new applications on 1 June, prompting a significant influx of enquiries and at least 250 applications from residents in other parts of the UK (ineligible under VSP1) even though applications for VSP2 (which could have offered support) had already closed.

3.3 The application stage

Once volunteers had been offered and accepted a volunteering role, they were able to apply for support through VSP. Application forms were made available online via the Volunteer Scotland website, or on paper, or could be completed over the phone.

Three application forms were constructed, the first associated with VSP1, which was then used for VSP2 and two relating to VSP3; one for individual Ceremonies volunteers and one for groups. The forms comprised 25-29 questions and followed the same broad format of collecting background details on the applicant and open questions on the nature of the applicant’s disability (where relevant), the sort of assistance and costs sought, together with a statement on how the support would help the applicant participate as a Clyde-sider/Ceremonies volunteer.

Participant survey respondents overwhelmingly reported that they found the online process convenient (90%) and the application form easy to use (87%). While the ease of application supported the principles behind the scheme, making it more likely that applicants who needed support would complete the form, it may also have encouraged more applicants with lower levels of need to apply.

“I was surprised at how quickly I did it...I think I managed to do it in under 5 minutes!.. in fact once I had done it myself I evangelised about it and told other people how simple it had been and advised them to do the

Responses suggest that any difficulties experienced with the process were specific to individual parts of the process (online process; application form or communications) rather than across the whole process. Only one respondent of the 938 indicated that they found the online application process inconvenient AND the

application form difficult as well as experiencing ineffective communication from the VSP team.

Of the 15 respondents who reported that they found the online application process 'inconvenient' or 'very inconvenient', 9 found the application form 'easy' or 'very easy' to complete and 11 found communications from the VSP team to be 'effective' or 'very effective', indicating that there may have been very specific issues for individuals and/or parts of the process, rather than issues deeply embedded in the process.

Comments from the surveys from those who found the online application process inconvenient were as often positive as they were negative, suggesting that the VSP team did extremely well in creating a simple, easy to use online application form and in terms of enabling applicants to use the process most appropriate to them. In fact, only 14 applicants chose to complete a paper-based application.

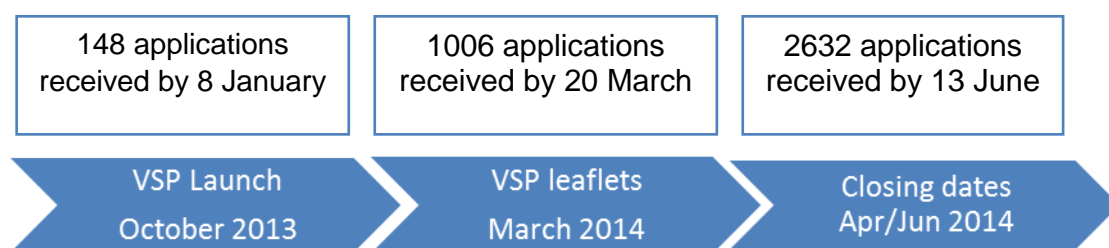
CASE STUDY 1

The participant in this case study volunteered as a Clyde-sider with a generalised role in communications at the Athlete's village. As she is based in England, she received funding from VSP2 to the sum of £30. Like many volunteers from outside Scotland, the participant only found out that the VSP had been extended to the rest of the UK at a relatively late stage, after she had previously discounted the option when it was only open to Scotland. She was notified about this change through chatting with fellow volunteers on social media, rather than through any official correspondence. The participant found the application process relatively easy, although she complained that the application form could've been more specific about which costs were eligible for support. She did not call up the VSP team for assistance but in hindsight she wished she had as she presumed that over the phone they would have tempered her expectations about the amount she would receive.

In terms of the amount received, the participant was initially very disappointed to only receive £30, an "insignificant" proportion of her overall personal cost of £2000. This personal cost was a combination of transport from the south of England and accommodation, and understandably, the funding had "no impact whatsoever" on the participant's ability to volunteer. In this particular case, the participant was left feeling rather confused at the lack of explanation for why she had received this amount, and conversing with fellow volunteers during the games who had received more, only served to strengthen this feeling of injustice. Like certain other volunteers interviewed, this initial disappointment has however been replaced with a certain degree of acceptance over time: "I was grateful that I got it... I had set some money aside... It [funding] would be incredibly helpful, but I think you have to be pragmatic about it. If you want to do something like Rio, you have to set aside the funds to do it yourself".

In setting up this application process, VS had an expectation that demand for funding would occur steadily as volunteers were informed of their roles. However, due in part to the massive number of volunteer applicants and the size and complexity of interviewing and allocating volunteers to roles throughout the Games, decisions to appoint volunteers continued from October 2013 through to July 2014. A slow start to both Clyde-sider and Ceremonies VSP applications (Figure 3.3) necessitated a more flexible approach by the VSP team than at first anticipated and also prompted regular reviews and actions to improve communications through the organising bodies.

Figure 3.3: VSP Application Rate



Applicants were supported to complete their application, through the design of the form, supporting documentation and by VSP team members by phone and email.

In support of the process, applicants could access a Checklist (covering the information required to complete the application form), Guidance Notes, FAQs and Case study examples. The online application form had to be completed in a single session (if the session was interrupted, applicants had to start again).

VSP was promoted as a ‘discretionary fund’ aimed at helping volunteers to complete their role if faced with ‘hardship or exceptional costs’ (VSP web page). The application form emphasised that the VSP team would ‘make an assessment based on the information’ given in the form.

The application form presented questions relating to household income, whether individuals had a disability, were carers, employment status and ethnicity in a section entitled ‘information in support of your application’. Applicants were next presented with a section on ‘how the volunteer support pot works’ and guided by the phrase, ‘To help Volunteer Development Scotland decide what support we can provide you with...’ were directed to answer questions 21-23. These questions sought to identify the ‘sort of assistance that would help’ to remove barriers to volunteering; ‘how much financial assistance’ would be required and ‘how the support will help’.

“There was a lot more information needed than I thought it would require. So I ended up having to sit down and going through all my bills and things to find out how much I would need to apply for; how much my accommodation and travel would cost so I could put them down in the break-down..... it was just a bit longer winded than I had assumed.” (Clyde-sider)

The examples identified on the form/guidance included childcare, travel or accommodation costs and the guidance note raised the possibility that applicants 'MAY only be allocated a proportion' [their emphasis] of the requested amount.

In applying to the VSP, then, applicants began to understand the size of the financial commitment they were making, which had both a positive effect, ensuring that volunteers understood the level of financial commitment they were making, but was also potentially irksome and may have raised expectations regarding the amounts likely to be received.

"It was aimed mainly for Scottish residents yeah, so not to get sobbing but, it could build your hopes that maybe I was going to get a little help but in the end didn't happen you know, it's all part of life innit?" [Clyde-sider]

The VSP team communications with volunteers was informed by the knowledge that the OC had already established communications electronically with volunteers. This enabled it to be a workable method of communication for the majority of applicants. Indeed, most applicants engaged with the VSP team by email, and almost all (85%) rated VSP communications as 'effective' or 'very effective'.

Throughout the process, the VSP team received numerous appreciative messages from applicants, particularly Scottish Clydesiders, and these were reinforced by the survey evidence in this research. The professionalism and efficiency of the VSP team was particularly noted.

"Thank you for your e-mail. I am delighted with your award, and would thank you and your colleagues for your support to both me and the many other Clydesiders. Your contribution will help immensely with my travel costs."

However, a small proportion of applicants experienced problems. Some issues raised by respondents to the online and telephone surveys suggest that not all applicants fully understood the application process and that in several cases applicants understood the communication indicating that they were eligible for funding to infer that they were successful in gaining funding that matched their request. This may well have been compounded by the decision to pay 100% of funding requested by the first tranche of Clydesiders to attend training (see 3.4).

However, such difficulties have been reported by a very small number of the thousands who applied to the VSP, and generally applicant experience of the VSP team has been positive. The support offered by the VSP team also allowed them to assist some applicants to identify and claim for exceptional costs, emphasising the discretionary element of the scheme. It should be noted that the team received no applications from ceremonies volunteers relating to disability and the number of applications to support disability related costs was surprisingly low, a reflection probably of the availability of VSP only after applications had been made to volunteer as part of the Games (see Section 6 for consideration of this timing).

Figure 3.4 : VSP Success Rates

	Received support	Ineligible	Cancelled	% success within category
Clyde-siders	1940	197	218	82%
Ceremonies volunteers	207	48	22	75%
Total	2147	245	240	

Source: VSP monthly management reports, Aug 2014

3.4 Assessing the applications

Assessment of applications had two phases; an initial assessment to ascertain whether the applicant was eligible as a member of one of the target groups - Rural; Low Income; Disabled; Carer - and second, to determine for those with disabilities or caring responsibilities, whether exceptional costs were associated to meeting these criteria. If the costs were not associated with these needs, then applicants were deemed ineligible.

Applicants were asked on the application form if they considered themselves to be disabled or a carer, and to declare their household income and number of residents in the household (over and under 16). The VSP team compared applicants' declared income against a benchmark minimum income chart from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The VSP team documented a 'primary assessment group' against each applicant who passed the initial assessment. Income was assessed comparing applicants' declared household income against a benchmark minimum income chart from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Rurality was assessed in terms of distance from Glasgow, while disability and caring responsibilities were determined on the grounds of additional costs directly incurred.

The 'rural' classification proved most problematic, as travel would no doubt be a significant cost for all but the most local volunteers. There is some rationale for attributing support on the basis of distance from Glasgow, given that free transport available for volunteers within the local area around the Games, was restricted to within close proximity of Glasgow and was unknown at the time of assessment in VSP. However, 'rurality' in Scotland (and elsewhere) might also imply difficulties in accessing public transport and exceptional travel times. The extension of VSP beyond Scotland also meant there would be significant demand on VSP from this category.

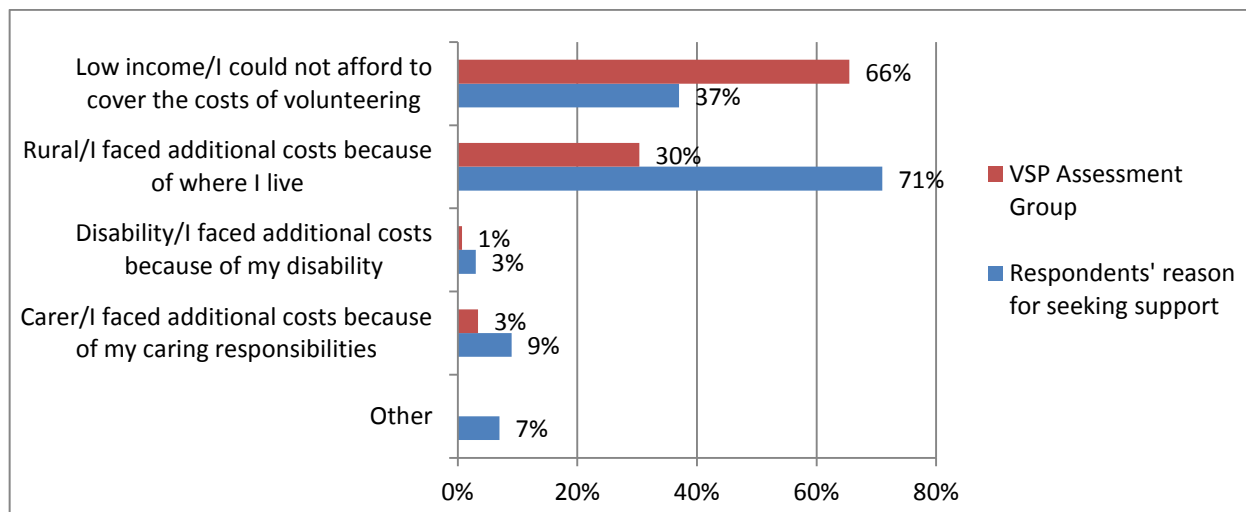
This target group around 'rural' clearly became difficult to assess, in part because there was no question on the application form to indicate rural (unlike the other criteria) and judgements had to be made by the VSP team. Comments from VSP staff suggest that where low income also applied alongside 'rural', over time low income became the recorded assessment criteria.

It is important to note that this allocation to a target group was made by the VSP team rather than the applicant which led to a clear difference between what applicants thought the core

elements of their case for support was and the criterion allocated by the VSP team (Figure 3.5).

The second stage of the assessment process involved consideration of the exceptional costs or low income assessment.

Figure 3.5 Understanding the rationale for support – VSP assessment compared with respondents' answers to the question 'Why did you seek funding'



Source: online survey (n=936), management database (n=2147)
 (NB: Respondents were able to identify more than one answer – hence % >100).

The online survey evidence pointed to most recipients applying for help with additional costs because of where they lived. The allocation to assessment group by the VSP team rather than the applicant had two effects. First there was a mismatch between the recipients understanding of why their participation had been supported, and second it failed to make the most of the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of their own situation (see also below).

The absence of clear advice on the qualifying criteria in the application form or guidance notes provided the VSP team with flexibility in responding to uncertain levels of demand and to apply a consistent benchmark to the assessment of low income. However a more straightforward focus on local income and exceptional costs would have been more transparent and made use of applicants’ knowledge and understanding of their own situation. This is considered further in Sections 5 and 6.

3.5 Allocation and distribution of funds

In total the small VSP team assessed 2,632 applications and made 3,589 payments to 2,147 successful applicants over a period of 10 months (from October 2013 to mid-August 2014).

Most of this effort was concentrated in the last 3 months from May to July and was significantly influenced by the addition of the funding streams under VSP2 and VSP3.

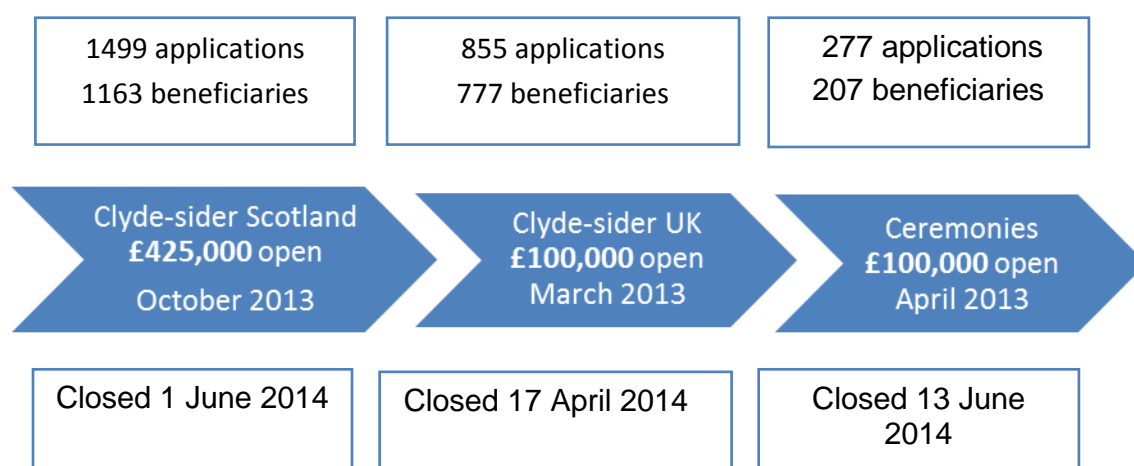
Overall, the VSP process proved adaptable and was largely successful at incorporating these additional funding streams.

Three major challenges were faced by the VSP team:

- much higher than anticipated level of demand;
- the slow build-up of applications to the Clyde-sider Scotland funding stream due to the later than anticipated allocation of volunteer roles; and
- the decision to add additional funding streams to the process.

In particular the decision to add these additional funding streams meant that the process had to cope with three different deadlines, different levels of demand on each funding stream and two different processes of allocation (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 : Summary Distribution of Funds by VSP Funding Streams



With no previous experience to draw upon to assess the likely total demand for funding from Clyde-siders in Scotland and the slower than anticipated rate of applications in the early months of the scheme, the VSP team made regular judgements over the level of support they thought they could offer applicants. In particular they used the flexibility provided by the VSP approach to provide differential support at different stages.

Once deemed eligible, all applicants to **VSP1** were provided with a communication indicating that they would receive support from VSP1. This was to be made in two stages – one related to costs associated with training and second in relation to their role during the Games. For those who applied to VSP1 and submitted travel costs before May 2014, they were allocated 100% of their requested costs towards attendance at training. For those who submitted claims for travel costs between May and July 2014, they were offered 50% of their requested costs towards attendance at training. This enabled the VSP team to make allocations to all eligible VSP1 applicants of 100% towards their Games costs, either in terms of the money requested or support through funding accommodation in and around Glasgow. With sufficient funds to cover this demand, no differentiated allocation was required to be made between the 4 assessment criteria; low household income, rurality, caring needs and disability.

With some experience of applications received from Clyde-siders outside of Scotland to VSP1 (they were ineligible under this stream) the VSP team knew they had to take a different approach to allocation for **VSP2**. With a budget of only £100,000, it was evident that demand was going to exceed the funds available. With most Clyde-siders having higher costs than those in Scotland – mainly for travel and accommodation – each applicant was likely to be seeking greater funding than under VSP1. However, the timing of the fund – open only for 6 weeks – meant that allocations could be made once all applications had been received and the total demand known.

In making allocations under VSP2, a more differentiated approach using the assessment criteria was made. Eligible applicants who were assessed by the VSP team to be seeking support under the ‘rurality’ primary criterion were broadly allocated £30. Those who were allocated to ‘low income’ were offered £125, those with caring responsibilities £225 and those with disability £300 with some variation made to reflect individual circumstances.

With most recipients receiving a financial sum based on their primary assessment criteria rather than in relation to requested ‘need’ (see comments in 3.4 above), this generated very mixed reactions among recipients. For some this was identified as such a small contribution to significant costs that some felt insulted, while others took the view that ‘something’s better than nothing’, and others commented that it made them feel appreciated (see Section 4).

To support Ceremonies volunteers under **VSP3**, it had been agreed with the Spirit of 2012 Trust that financial need was the key driver for allocating support. For individuals applying to VSP3, proportional allocations were also made based on the basis of the VSP team’s allocations to primary assessment criteria. For those deemed to be on low income, 50%, 75% or 100% funding was offered, whilst for those with care needs and disability were offered 100%. Having received all the applications, a further ‘top up’ of funding was offered to recipients who received less than 100% from the unallocated funds.

Applicants to the VSP funds received different amounts and proportions under each of the VSP funding streams (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 : Allocation basis for each VSP funding stream

	<i>Training/Rehearsal costs</i>	<i>Games time costs</i>			
		<i>Rurality</i>	<i>Low income</i>	<i>Caring needs</i>	<i>Disability</i>
VSP1	50% or 100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
VSP2	n/a	c£30	c£125	c£225	c£300
VSP3	50%, 75% or 100%	n/a	50%, 75% or 100%	100%	100%

Source: VSP management database, n=2147

This highlights two key elements of the VSP approach. First the approach enabled flexibility to respond to different levels of demand and to manage that demand for funding within the

finances available. Second, it provided the level of discretion required to have some targeting of funding towards different levels of need based on the assessment criteria.

However, Table 3.7 also underlines the very different outcomes for applicants from what to many was perceived as a single support fund. In this context, explanations of these variations was potentially important, enabling beneficiaries to appreciate both the rationale for the allocation of funding and how the funding offered was aligned with the case for support made in their application.

In summary, demand management of the funds strongly influenced allocation and hindsight, particularly in view of the additions of VSP2 and 3 to the initial Pot, suggests that more might have been done to manage expectations, and hence demand. The demand for support on the basis of rurality, that might have been understandable in the Scottish context, given highly dispersed and island populations, became insupportable for the wider UK population and was largely subsumed by the over-riding consideration of low income.

3.6 Communicating decisions to applicants

As indicated above, the VSP team responded to each to application with an initial statement of whether the application was deemed eligible and thus being supported. For VSP1 and VSP3, applicants were subsequently provided with an indication of the level of support being provided for training or rehearsals and for Games time expenditure, represented as a percentage of the funding sought. In both cases, the primary assessment criteria used by the VSP team to make allocations was not communicated. The communication from the VSP team enabled each applicant to:

- understand the basis of the allocation in terms of proportion
- make a clear assessment of what this meant to them in financial terms
- evaluate how this related to the case for support made in their application.

The survey results suggest that more than 85% of beneficiaries found this satisfactory and clear, with nearly half being very satisfied with communications from the VSP team.

Thank you for contacting the Volunteer Support Pot Team – you’re going to make a huge contribution to the Games and we’re delighted to be able to help you play your part in the action!

We’ll be making a payment of £[adjusted for each recipient] to the bank account details you provided us on [date].

We hope this small contribution to your Games Time costs will help you make the most of your Glasgow 2014 experience as a Clyde-sider.

The Volunteer Support Pot is provided by Big Lottery Scotland and together we’re helping 2,500 of your fellow Clyde-siders to participate in the Games.

In relation to VSP2, a similar approach to communication was made by the VSP team. As the email sent to most of the successful applicants indicated (above), there was recognition that due to high demand a small contribution was being offered:

Whilst this message did make clear what this meant to volunteers in financial terms, it did not enable each applicant to understand the basis of the allocation in terms of proportion (which was important in determining the level of funding) or allow them to relate this to the case for support made in their application. As a consequence, only 25% were very satisfied with the communication from the VSP team, and 18% less than satisfied. Whilst this may be impacted by the small amount of support available, it also reflects the lack of transparency in the communication about the allocation process.

“As far as I can remember it was an easy process. I was asked to list my expenses, perhaps It would’ve been a bit more focused if it was listed: “how much are you going to be spending on this” Because I actually didn’t know what areas would qualify and what didn’t, so I had to put down the whole thing. Perhaps if it had been split up into transport costs, accommodation costs, extra costs etc. that would’ve been useful. And also a limit, because I know some people spent an awful lot of money on this, if it had said ‘if your expenses are this much then we would consider giving a certain amount etc.’ that would’ve been useful, precisely.”

Applicants were not informed of the decision-making or allocation criteria, which allowed the VSP team to be flexible and responsive to demand. However, this approach failed to *manage* demand. Allocation decisions were made on the basis of the total amount of eligible applications received under VSP2, and applicants receiving only a small proportion of the funding requested, were often confused about what the funding was for – most assumed it was a contribution to travel expenses.

The allocation of very small awards unconnected to amounts requested under VSP2 generated mixed feedback to the VSP team, confirmed in the participant survey. While generally glad of any support, some of those receiving £30 were disbelieving and upset (see also Case Study 1).

“it probably cost me about £1500 to be a volunteer and the pot gave me £30 which I thought was an insult.” (Clyde-sider)

3.7 Operating on the basis of trust

A defining principle of the Volunteer Support Pot model is that it has been based on trust. Applicants were trusted to provide accurate or appropriate estimates of the costs they were seeking from the VSP, and in turn they were trusted to use the funding allocated to help towards fulfilling their roles as volunteers.

Risk was minimised by the requirement that applicants had to have a volunteer role before applying to VSP. The agreement between the OC and volunteer ensured that the applicant

had already demonstrated sufficient commitment to attend an interview and that ongoing commitment to the role could be monitored.

It was thus up to the individual recipient to use the funds allocated as appropriate (see for example case study 2). This may not have been related to the original request, which were in reality only estimates for most applicants as they did not have sufficient information (on their commitment in time) and their specific roles to work out precise costs. As many respondents to the surveys indicated, in their application they often under-estimated the total costs that were incurred to fulfil their roles

CASE STUDY 2

The participant was a Clyde-sider who had a specialist role as a qualified nurse and first aider during the Games. She received funding from VSP1. Initially, like many others she found out about the VSP through email correspondence and found the application form easily, yet commented that they were 'bombarded' with emails and that many people would've simply ignored it.

The application process itself she found very straightforward, and did not require any in-depth contact with the VSP team to deal with issues. The participant's criteria for support could be described as a combination of a number of factors: extreme rurality, low income (recent unemployment) and disability (long-term illness). These combining factors created an exceptional circumstance for the participant adding up to a substantial cost, and therefore she was not in the position to support these costs herself.

The participant was provided with around £1800; an amount which covered the majority of costs, with some additional outgoings (deemed 'not significant' by the participant). The money was spent primarily on travel expenses from the isles, as well as accommodation costs. The participant was overly modest in her application, commenting that she "felt cheeky applying" and the amount was "over and above what she thought she would receive", yet exceptional circumstances meant she was incredibly grateful for what she received. In terms of impact, the participant states that they "would not have been able to afford it", and would not have even been able to pay for travel down for initial training. The Games time experience was a positive one, described as "an amazing time", with the main benefits being the realisation of skills and abilities and a sense of being valued.

Looking ahead to the future, the participant is keen to continue volunteering, although already an established volunteer in her local community. She made the point that her needs during Glasgow 2014 were due to exceptional circumstances at a bad financial period in her life, and that in future, although it would not be easy, but she would be 'more able to manage costs'.

However, the approach used to distribute funds meant that some auditing was part of the VSP approach and was used in some cases to provide staged payment. In particular,

payment during the Games was dependent on the VSP team checking with the OC on the volunteer continuing to fulfil their roles. In the absence of them completing roles either in the Ceremonies or as Clyde-siders, the VSP team withheld payment.

To achieve this, regular checking by the OC volunteer team was required as it had not been possible to put data sharing arrangements in place to enable the VS team to do this remotely.

“I was not informed of the amount or timing of the payment. I only found out by accident when looking through my bank statements.” (Clyde-sider)

“I believe that the Pot should have explained to me how the amount I received was calculated.” (Clyde-sider)

“It was very efficient, they knew the exact amount I would need and we got the money in advance which was a huge help because I would not have had the funds to be claiming money back with receipts “ (Clyde-sider)

The accompanying process of staged payments – with up to seven different stages of payment – meant that although recipients were informed of their successful application for funding and support, the exact amounts and the timing were not always known. However whilst a few comments were made concerning this, most recipients felt the system was efficient and effective.

Had the VSP team been more confident of the levels of demand and able to provide more information about eligibility and assessment, they might also have trusted applicants to determine the basis of their application – that is, to apply on the basis of a particular assessment group. This could have reduced the amount of information applicants had to provide as well as the assessment work undertaken by VSP staff. However, this would have been a risky strategy for this one-off funding stream as it would have limited the team’s discretion in allocation.

3.8 Overview of process

The VSP process was an evolutionary one, having to be applied to the three emerging funding streams supporting the different volunteer groups. Having been set up and promoted to assist Clyde-siders from Scotland (VSP1), the process of application, assessment and allocation had to be adjusted to fit the subsequent streams.

Overall, its strengths lay in its flexibility, ease of application and the competence of its staff and management, both in making decisions and in supporting applicants. It met the needs of the Big Lottery Fund and Spirit of 2012 Trust by efficiently managing demand and the distribution of support.

But it was not without some internal challenges, most of which were revealed by the overlaying of distribution of support to Clyde-siders in the rest of the UK under VSP2. Issues about how to categorise need – mainly in relation to rural need – and the differences in assessment of that need between applicants and the VSP team in part reflected the ways in

which assessment criteria were poorly communicated to applicants through the form and in subsequent communications. The need for different approaches to the allocation between the three VSP streams, arising both from different levels of demand and funding available, were not clearly communicated to beneficiaries. And the decision to use eligibility criteria as a means of differentiating between those getting some support under VSP rather than a more targeted approach had impacts which might have been avoided or managed more effectively. These are considered in Section 5 with recommendations for improvement in the process in 5.3

Section 4

The impact of the Volunteer Support Pot

Key points

- VSP supported 2147 volunteers in fulfilling their roles for the Games
- 90% of these volunteers fulfilled their roles for the Games
- For 57% of recipients, VSP support had a major or significant impact on their ability to volunteer at the Games,
- Support from the VSP to Clyde-siders from Scotland and to Ceremonies volunteers was effective in boosting confidence among volunteers that they could fulfil their volunteer roles
- However 37% felt confident that they would have been able to complete their roles as volunteers without VSP support and 26% indicated it had little or no impact
- Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK receiving small levels of support reported limited impact on their ability to complete their roles
- Funding to help those with caring needs and with disabilities had a significant impact, across all three volunteer groups
- Most reasons for withdrawing were not related to issues able to be addressed by the VSP

4.1 Reasons for non-participation at the Games

Although 90% of those who applied and were eligible under VSP completed their roles as volunteers, 240 volunteers did not (Figure 4.1). This group was made up primarily of those who voluntarily withdrew their application before gaining funding and those who received some initial funding but then withdrew before or during the Games. From the information available, it is not possible to identify the exact number whose application was cancelled for each reason.

Figure 4.1 : VSP Success Rates

	Received support	Ineligible	Cancelled	% success within category
Clyde-siders	1940	197	218	82%
Ceremonies volunteers	207	48	22	75%
Total	2147	245	240	

Source: VSP monthly management reports, Aug 2014

However, there were some who applied, were assessed under the VSP approach, were offered an allocation of funds and then having started the process with support from the VSP withdrew. 30 applicants were in this position, having received in total £2,710. Of these, most (59%) withdrew after receiving only one payment but of the remainder 4 received three payments before being unable to complete their roles.

Although it is possible to suggest that for these volunteers the VSP failed to ensure their continued role in the Games, there are many reasons beyond financial hardship which can account for their withdrawal. To assist in this respect, the online survey of those who had been assessed as eligible and offered an allocation but were unable to complete their roles elicited 19 responses and three of these were followed up with a telephone interview. All but 3 were Clyde-siders, split between from Scotland (9) and from the rest of the UK (7).

Each of these respondents provided an indication of the reasons why they were unable to fulfil their roles. Table 4.2 summarises the responses. Amongst the three 'other' answers, one respondent indicated that they withdrew because they had been offered another role in the Games as an official, one had split from their partner and the third suggested that they had in fact completed their role at the Games.

Table 4.2: Reasons for not completing roles as Games volunteers

	Before training/ rehearsal	During training/ rehearsal	After training/ before Games	During the Games	Total
Cost of volunteering	1	3	2	3	9
Time commitment		1			1
Volunteer Process	1				1
Quality of support		1	1	2	4
Ill-health		1	1	2	4
Disability				2	2
Work pressures		4	1	2	7
Caring commitments		2	3		5
Bereavement				1	1
Changed mind				1	1
Other	1		1	1	4
Totals	3	12	9	14	38

Source: online survey; note multiple responses were possible (n=19)

In addition, each person was asked if there were specific interventions or actions which could have helped them to continue as a volunteer and if they had comments on the VSP. Nine comments were helpfully provided about actions and these fell into two groups.

The first related to the process of allocation of roles at the Games and in particular the lack of notice about what training was required, insufficient notice to arrange transport and to apply to VSP. One withdrew because their shift pattern was unsuitable.

The second set of explanations related to the level of support needed, with two mentioning the lack of affordable accommodation and one the late decision by the VSP team to offer support (after they had had to cancel volunteering).

In relation to the VSP, the 11 comments were also split between those who found the approach and staff helpful and were disappointed not to complete their roles (6) and those whose actions reflected lack of knowledge about what support was available (2) or poor communication from VSP (2). Only two people mentioned that they had withdrawn because they had insufficient funding.

“Did not realise individual claims had to be made for each trip until I had already done one trip, thus meaning I got no money for first trip.”

“I was made aware of this quite late in the training process and, from the information provided, was led to believe that there would be reasonable support for volunteers... I received £30 which was disappointing... as I am self employed”.

“I was led to believe that I would be getting all of my accommodation and travel costs ... I was paid expenses two months after the date when I was told I'd be paid originally.”

Together this evidence offers some, if limited, insight to the pressures on event volunteers and the multiple reasons which result in withdrawals. Importantly it suggests that for most people the reasons for withdrawal are not related to aspects which the VSP could have addressed financially. However for some the level of funding provided relative to expectations and/or what was requested did have an impact. In several cases this resulted in them not completing their roles.

4.2 Helping them to complete their role as volunteer

With the VSP designed to help mitigate the impact of some of the hardship factors that might prevent volunteers from being able to complete their roles, the online survey asked all respondents to consider how confident they were that they would have completed their roles as volunteers without support from the VSP. Three options were provided: confident all commitments would have been completed; some commitments only; or would have withdrawn.

In reality either the volunteer completed their role or did not; there was not an option of undertaking only some elements. Consequently, whilst nearly 51% suggested that they

would only have partially completed roles, this analysis has taken together the 'some commitments' and 'withdrawn' answers as each of these represent a similar outcome from the OC and Ceremonies Teams' perspective, the need to replace the volunteer.

Of the 936 survey respondents overall – covering Clyde-siders and Ceremonies volunteers - 37% indicated that they would have been confident in completing all their volunteering commitments without the support from the VSP (Figure 4.3) .

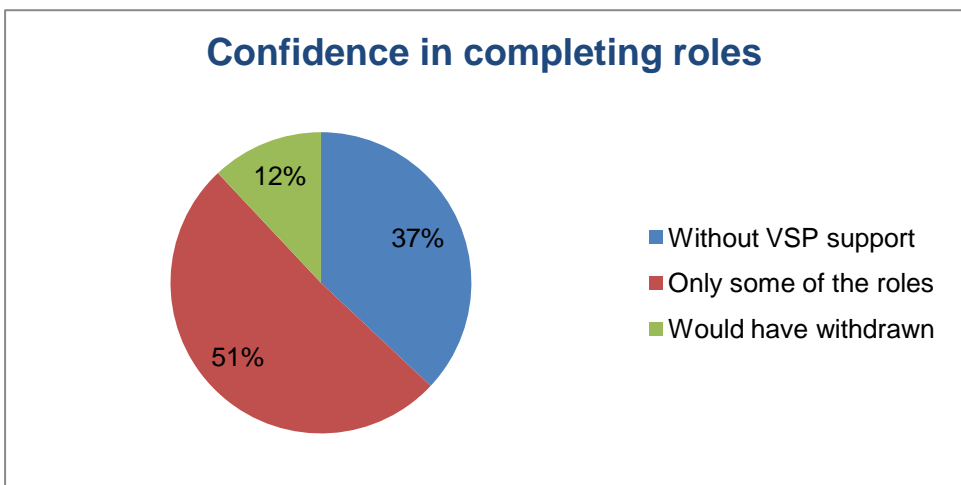
There was a correlation between the amount of money received under the VSP and their ability to complete roles. Of those who received less than £50 – 237 respondents – 65% of them indicated this did not impact on their completion of roles. Only 12% of those who would

“The efficiency, friendliness and support of the staff was second to none. I really appreciated their help when I was planning to stay down to volunteer.”

“I believe the process was effective”.

have completed their volunteering role without VSP received more than £250, including three who had more than £1000 support.

Figure 4.3: Impact of VSP funding on ability to complete roles



Source: online survey, n=936

“I was able to participate only because of the funding! Couldn't have done it without the support! “ (Clyde-sider receiving £50-99)

“It allowed me to take part in the Games, without it, I would have had to withdraw “(Clyde-sider £250-499)

“The funding allowed me to pay for my disabled son's care. I would not have been able to volunteer without the funding “(Ceremonies volunteer, >£1000)

On the other hand, 12% indicated that without the support from the VSP, they would have had to withdraw their application and not been part of the experience either as a Clyde-sider or as a Ceremonies volunteer. Very few of this group received small sums of money – 14% got less than £100 – and just under half (45%) got more than £250. For the remainder who felt that the VSP had avoided them completing only some of their commitments, the majority received between £100 and £500, with 25% getting less and 9% more than these sums.

Using these proportions and an average sum within each of the funding categories in the survey, it is possible to estimate what proportion of the total funding was spent towards each of these impact outcomes. Across all the survey respondents, 22% of the total funds were allocated to those who said they would have completed without the VSP support and a similar proportion was used to support those who would have withdrawn (Table 4.4).

These patterns overall however mask some important variations across the three component elements of the VSP.

Table 4.4: Impact of VSP support on completing roles: funding

	% respondents in survey	% of funding allocated
Completed role without VSP support	37	22
Would have completed part of roles	51	56
Would have withdrawn without VSP support	12	22

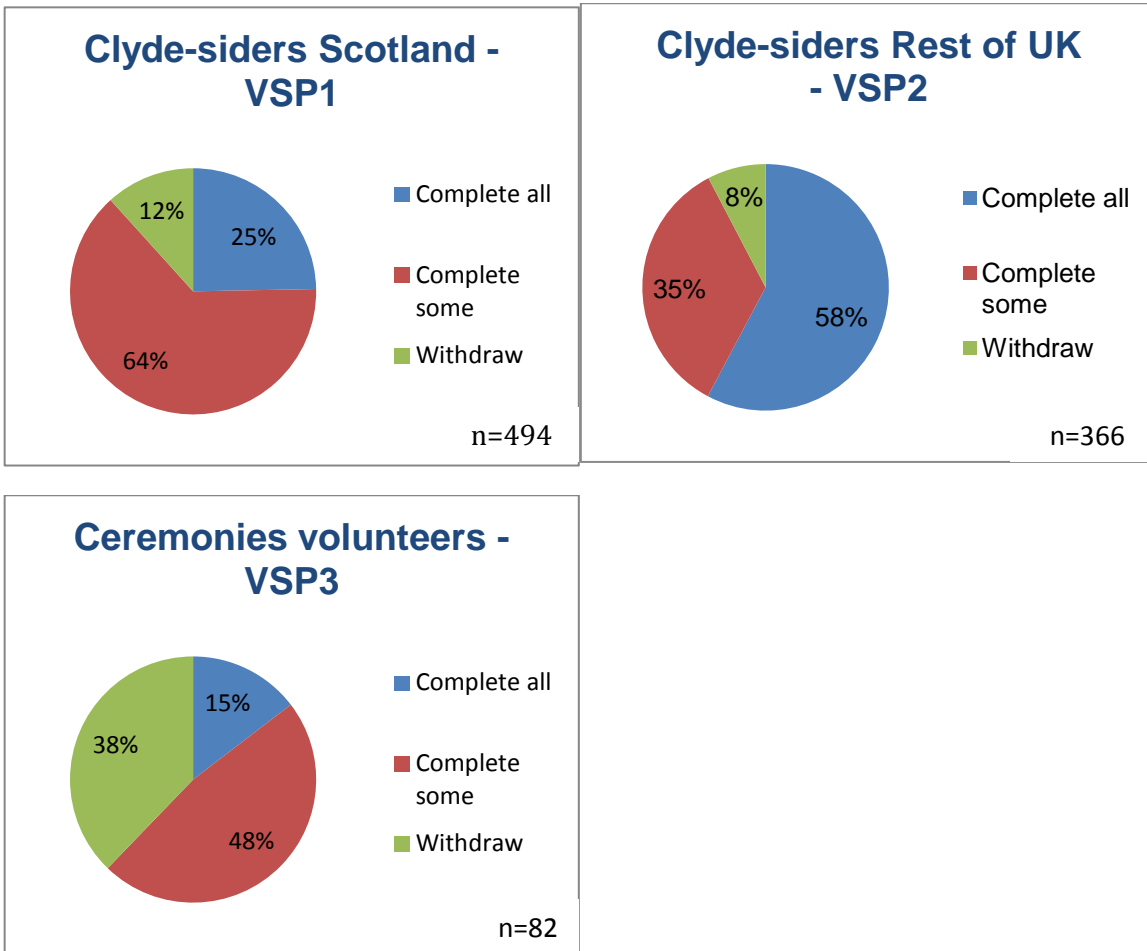
Source: online survey, n=936

There was least impact on **Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK (VSP2)**. Across the group as a whole there was greater certainty about completing their Games roles, with 58% able to do so without VSP. Only 8% would have withdrawn their application. And for this cohort, the provision of small amounts of money made little difference to their confidence to complete. With allocations under this funding stream for the majority being £30, £150, £225 or £300, there was a noticeable difference in impact. Only 1 in 4 (51 people) of those supported with less than £50 were unlikely to complete the roles, with more than 72% suggesting they would have been able to manage without the support from the VSP. However, for those Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK who received larger sums (greater than £100) this funding did make a difference - 59% would not have completed their roles without support.

As this level of funding was associated with discretionary funding being provided for those assessed to be on low income (usually allocated £150), having carer needs (allocated £225) or with disability (£250), the VSP support was important. In contrast where the assessment was on the basis of rurality (and £30 allocations provided towards travel) the impact was much less.

For the other two groups – Clyde-siders from Scotland and Ceremonies volunteers – there was much less confidence that they would have been able to complete their roles without support from VSP.

Figure 4.5: Confidence in completing volunteer roles without support: VSP1, VSP2, VSP3



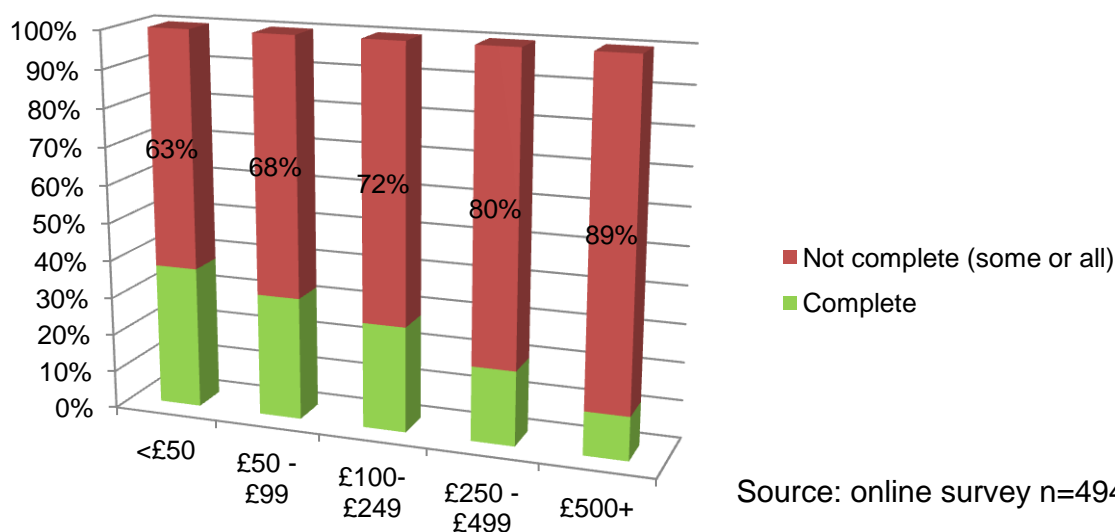
Source: online survey

Amongst the **Clyde-siders from Scotland**, supported by VSP1, a high proportion felt they would have failed to complete some (64%) or none (12%) of their roles as Clyde-siders. Even among those receiving relatively low levels of funding, there was an acknowledgement that the VSP had helped them to be involved – 63% and 68% of those who received less than £50 or between £50 and £100 respectively would have not been confident about completing their roles without VSP.

As Figure 4.6 illustrates, there was a declining degree of confidence amongst respondents across the different levels of support provided by the VSP1 and that those who needed greatest support had least confidence in completing roles and were in turn those most likely to have withdrawn or failed to complete all their roles.

This represents a very positive outcome and one that suggests that VSP1 met its objective. The allocation criteria and their application and the level of support sought and offered had the desired impact in retaining volunteers – and in particular those who were most likely to have struggled in meeting their commitments.

Figure 4.6 : Impact of funding on ability to complete roles: Clyde-siders from Scotland



The pattern for VSP support to **Ceremonies volunteers** is similarly positive, although the number of respondents (82) in this category means that the correlations are less clear. Overall for this group there was a higher degree of uncertainty. Only 12 respondents (15%) were confident that they would have completed the roles and 38% indicated that they would have withdrawn their application (Figure 4.3 above). This lack of confidence was evident whether the level of support was less than £50 or greater than £500.

Overall in terms of the main objective to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles at the Games and experience the event, the survey results suggest that funding to both Clyde-siders from Scotland (VSP1) and the Ceremonies volunteers (VSP3) was effective in this respect.

In contrast, the provision of small sums of money to Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK under VSP2 was not nearly as effective, with more than twice the proportion of beneficiaries indicating that they would have completed their roles without support under VSP2 and less than 8% likely to have withdrawn.

4.3 Unravelling the impact of the VSP

Whilst the above analysis provides one approach to analysing the impact of the VSP – matching its primary objective of enabling volunteers to remain involved with the Games – impact can also be assessed in other ways. This reflects the intertwining of fulfilling a role and the experiences of being in a role.

In an attempt to unravel this relationship, the online surveys asked each respondent a set of questions on **their** notion of impact; overall in terms of their ability to volunteer at the Games, to offer an explanation of why this impact was assessed as significant or otherwise; and the impact on them as volunteers. These issues were followed up in the telephone survey, with the interviewees selected on the basis of what they had said was the impact of the VSP funding.

In the analysis below we consider three dimensions of this relationship between roles and experiences, considering the level of impact on ability to volunteer and the explanations for this impact, before turning to consider the experience(s) gained.

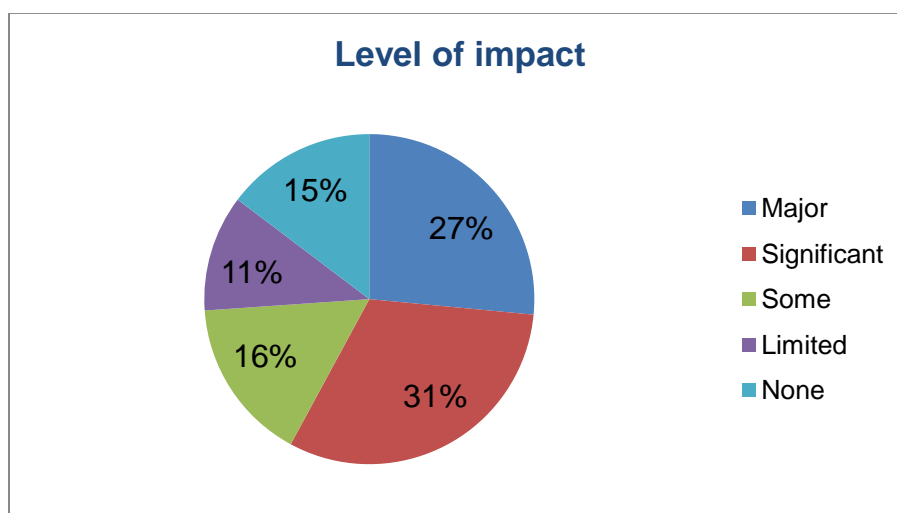
The evaluation of impact concludes with a note on the impact of the VSP on their motivation to be a Games volunteer, and an assessment of the potential impact on each volunteer to engaging with volunteering in future.

4.3.1 Level of impact on ability to volunteer

For those receiving funding from the VSP and taking part in the Games as volunteers, more than half (58%) felt that the VSP had a significant or major impact.

For this group, 83% indicated they were not confident they would have completed their roles as volunteers without the support provided by the VSP. In contrast, for those who suggested that VSP support had 'no' impact (138 respondents) all but 29 had expressed themselves confident that they would have been able to complete their roles without support.

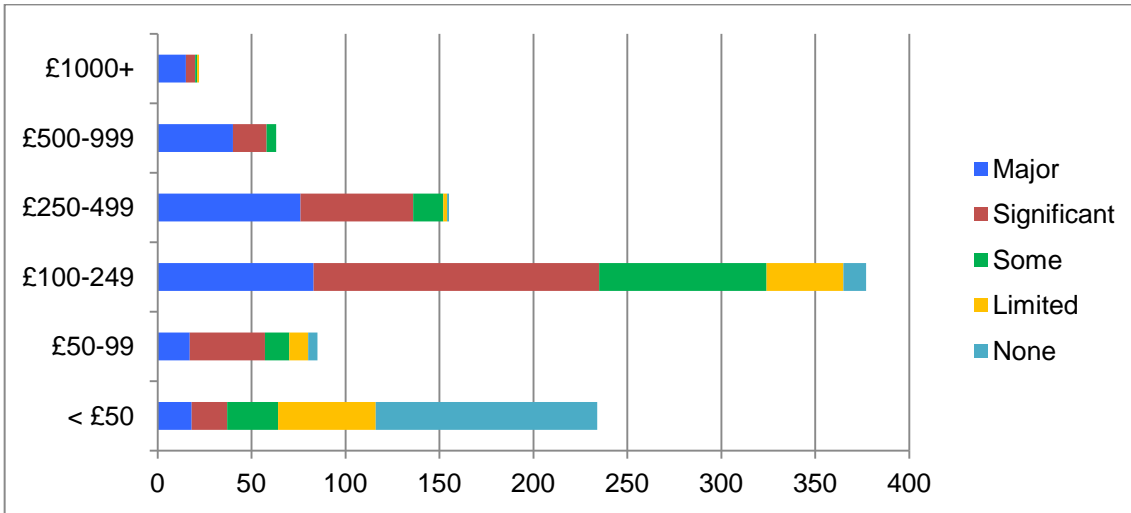
Figure 4.7: Level of impact on volunteering at Games



Source: online survey n=936

Intriguingly there is no clear correlation between these respondents assessment of impact and the level of funding they received. As Figure 4.8 shows those who rated impact as significant or major are distributed across all the funding levels, with rising proportions in the large funding groups. As would be anticipated, for most people who received less than £50, the impact was limited or none (73%) although for 16% there was at least significant or major impact and for 11% some impact.

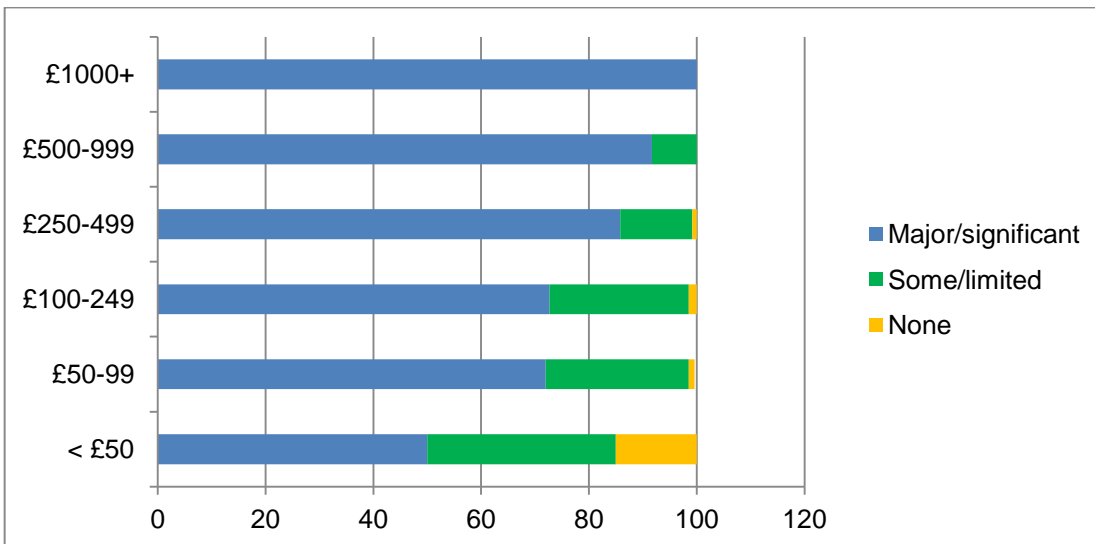
Figure 4.8: Assessment of impact by level of funding support



Source: online survey, n=936

Again when this aggregate pattern is divided into the three supported groups, there are differences (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Level of impact by funding: Clyde-siders from Scotland (VSP1)

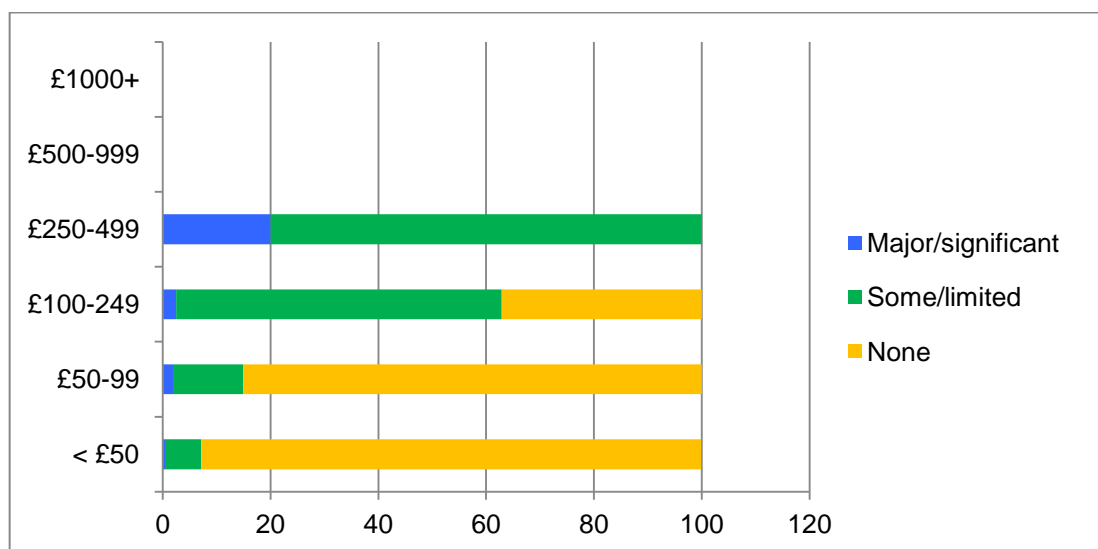


Source: online survey, n=494

For the Clyde-siders from Scotland, 77% felt that the VSP had a significant or major impact; the proportion growing with the amount of funding provided. In contrast, only 26% of those

Clyde-siders supported from the rest of the UK under VSP2 felt that the fund was of significant impact, although here there was a rise in the level of impact by funding levels (Figure 4.9). Amongst the Ceremonies volunteers supported under VSP3, none felt that the funding had no impact and only 1 respondent felt it had limited impact. With fewer respondents in each funding category there is a less obvious relationship with impact, and in each funding group more than two thirds felt the support had a significant impact.

Figure 4.10: Level of impact by funding: Clyde-siders from rest of the UK (VSP2)



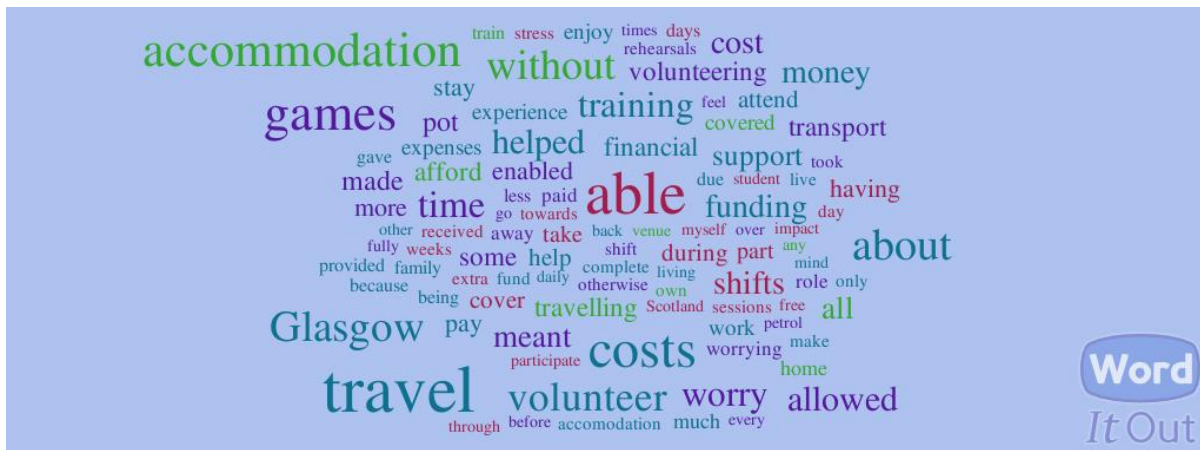
Source: online survey, n=366

4.3.2 Explanations of this impact

74% (698 respondents in the online survey) indicated that VSP had had some or greater impact on their ability to be a Games time volunteer – 58% of whom said this impact was significant or major. Each was invited to add some explanation as to how the VSP had contributed to the positive impact. A similar opportunity was given to each of the respondents who have suggested that VSP had limited or no impact.

Together the two groups raised similar issues – with most focussing on the funding provided to meet costs (the positive element) or the amount of costs being incurred relative to the funding provided (the negative element). More than 59% of the comments referred to costs or finance, with nearly 90% of the low impact comments focussing on costs. When reference to accommodation and travel are added, there were few other key words present (see word cloud below).

The primary difference between the two sets of comments lay with how the funding versus costs was perceived.



For those who viewed the VSP support as offering a positive impact, it was generally the case that the actual value was less significant than the effect this had on individuals. The comments focussed on the enabling impact of the money and support offered:

“It enabled me to take public transport every day “ (Clyde-sider)

“I received transport costs which helped me to attend all rehearsals. It was really helpful not to have to worry about covering transport costs” (Ceremonies volunteer)

And for others, the impact was about reducing the overall worry around money issues:

“It took some of the financial worry away from me and I was able to enjoy the games more” (Clyde-sider)

“I didn’t need to stress over paying for travel when I was made redundant the week before it started and I wanted to enjoy the commonwealth experience in my local town”.(Ceremonies volunteer)

On the other hand, for some who received comparable amounts of funding from the VSP, the explanation of the low impact from the fund lay generally in two areas:

- the volunteer would have paid the costs anyway as they were committed to be Clydesiders and had made that choice before being given the money, and
- the funding was only a small proportion of the costs incurred.

The following typified the comments made by most of the 245 respondents:

“I would have volunteered regardless and taken the hit on the cost”

“I would have fulfilled my voluntary duties without help from the Pot”

“Only a little amount £22.00 so it didn’t really make any difference to my involvement”

Overall, those who felt that the impact of the VSP was low could be summarised in two quotes from two Clyde-siders supported under VSP2.

My total cost of attending the Commonwealth Games as a volunteer exceeded £1,000. A grant of £30, of which I am grateful, had little impact on my commitment to fund this venture.

"I applied for 1000 pounds ... they offered £150 and I was a bit put off with that cause it would make no different whatsoever, I was still greatly in debt It would have made more sense to put funding in England first because of higher expenses" it "was just a drop in the ocean, really"

{[The funding had] no impact at all, as I'd made a commitment, I'd put some money aside so it made no impact whatsoever. I was hopeful [of receiving more], It would've been nice to have just received something more than I did to help me on my way."

4.4 Gaining from the Games experience

As the above analysis has shown, nearly 90% of those who applied and were eligible to the VSP fulfilled their roles and gained experience from the Games. At least 37% of these would have done this without support from the VSP, but for others the VSP enabled to gain volunteering experience in Glasgow from which they would otherwise not have benefitted. Recognising the value of being 'part of the Games' as a volunteer, and the potential benefits to volunteering beyond the Games themselves, the VSP support helped volunteers to gain from the experience as part of the 'best Games ever'.

Research on those who sought to be Clyde-siders at the Commonwealth Games conducted by Glasgow Centre for Population Health¹¹ indicates that for many the opportunity to experience the event was a key motivating factor. Alongside offering something back to the community, having a chance to be part of a unique event was the most important factor in their decision to apply.

So what did those supported by the VSP gain from the experience? Was it more than just being part of the event? What did they take away from this that might have some more tangible and long lasting benefit beyond the 'festival effect'?

Two elements of this evaluation help to reveal the impact and benefits from being a games volunteer. The first considers what were the key dimensions of the 'experience' for each recipient and second what impact that experience is likely to have on them as future volunteers.

¹¹ This research has been commissioned by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council and will be published later in 2014.

In the research survey, each respondent was asked to identify what experiences from their contribution as a Games' volunteer was likely to have most impact on their future. To encourage a range of responses, example areas of new skills, opportunities to be involved in new activities or improved health were given to clarify the questions. All the respondents offered some insight as to what they had taken from their experience as a volunteer. Many chose to express this in terms of what they had contributed as well as what they had gained. As the word cloud illustrates, there were a number of common threads throughout the comments.



4.4.1 Meeting people, making friends

More than 300 respondents (34%) indicated that for them the experience of the Games was about meeting people and making friends - including those they met as fellow volunteers, the public with whom they interacted as part of their roles (and in a few cases the athletes they were assisting), and the wider Glasgow and Scottish population whom they met beyond their roles. For everyone who mentioned people, the experience was positive and for many inspirational.

“It was one of the most awe inspiring experiences I’ve ever done. It was just out of this world. The people I’d met, the different walks of life all coming together for one final big impact at Hampden, it was really out of this world! Such a good exercise for having to deal with different people, different walks of life, people with disabilities, people needing help to continue, it was just like pulling together as one big family.” (Ceremonies volunteer)

“it was quite exciting meeting different people and seeing different stuff in different light than you normally would. So it was a bit of an experience yes ...It has helped me to deal with people with different mentalities and different ideas, also it helps a lot to see how you can gain by just talking to one another and you learn a lot.” (Clyde-sider)

“By being able to volunteer at the games, I have met a whole range of people of all ages who I would never have encountered in my day to day work normally. I feel more confident in dealing with difficult situations involving people outside my age group and empowered to do more work with my community to understand the issues it faces and try and promote working together.” (Clyde-sider)

This respondent went on to describe how this positive aspect of the role had an impact on their weight directly:

“I have also carried on the additional exercise I did during my role which has made me feel a lot better about myself and more confident as I lost around a stone in weight.”

For those who lived outside of Glasgow, the opportunity of the interactions during their roles has had a lasting impact. As one Clyde-sider respondent from outside of Scotland commented:

The experience was very positive. I had never before visited Scotland and spending two weeks "living" in Scotland gave me a real insight into the City and the people. I made new friends who were Scottish residents and will certainly be keeping in touch with them and visiting Scotland again in the future.

4.4.2 Skills

Research suggests that for most event volunteering, the acquisition of new skills is a relatively low priority and seldom a major motivator for taking part, but that using their existing skills as part of the event is important. Across the respondents in the survey 200 (21%) commented on the use of their skills and how they had acquired skills. The telephone surveys explored this further, with many indicating that they already had the skills they felt were needed and the experience was not focussed on adding much in this respect.

“Not really no, I’m semi-retired now, so it’s just sort of a way for me to keep busy.” (Clyde-sider)

“I wouldn’t say I needed the skills or confidence, as I’m retired now. I would say though that it was a great life experience, it was an opportunity to give something back.” (Clyde-sider)

“... No cause I’m part of a theatre company anyway” (Ceremonies volunteer)

“No I think, because I work with the public a lot anyway so it was more about using the skills I already have, you know, to make a more enjoyable Game for the people visiting Glasgow ” (Clyde-sider)

For others, mainly amongst the Clyde-siders there was a chance to develop new skills as they were involved with less familiar roles and functional areas. For some this experience will be used in their work places, for some in their volunteering roles and for others in a variety of roles in their lives. In particular, for those who had team leader roles, there was an appreciation of the skills they learnt in managing groups.

I am looking for a position in event management so the experience I gained will be invaluable in finding employment. (Ceremonies volunteer)

Better understanding of how to organise a major event which I will take back to my local triathlon club.(Clyde-sider)

Helped me add to my experience of different computer systems that I can use, gave me up to date experience in supporting a major event(Clyde-sider)

Although mentioned specifically only by a few respondents in the online and telephone surveys, the Commonwealth Games volunteering offered a range of experiences and opportunities. Whilst many were only involved at one point – as a Clyde-sider or as part of the cast – a few had experienced more of the planning stages of the Games. The story of one Clyde-sider illustrates how in totality, the Games volunteer experience can offer different benefits at different stages. In their own words:

“Well, I’m quite far on in my career so I’ve tackled quite a lot of things. If you take the experience of being a Clyde-sider on its own, I didn’t have to do anything that I wouldn’t have been able to cope with anyway.

For my overall experience of volunteering with Glasgow 2014, my ‘front runner’ experience is much more significant, I did that for a much longer period, I acquired skills doing that. Because I was involved with the interviewing and training at Hampden... I had done some interviewing before, but doing it there gave me a lot of skills about conducting interviews, keeping timetables, interacting with different people. That was a very positive experience. My job role now is not anything like any of these things that I’ve done there, but I guess you can take these skills into any jobs.

The [Games time] team leader experience placed responsibilities on me, it was slightly different to responsibilities I’ve had before, having to deal with challenging people... It sharpens your skills at being able to deal with it.”

I think I’m possibly too long in the tooth for that [laughs] I think it increases my skills of sort of managing people, having a team of people of different backgrounds, skills, abilities, personalities, trying to merge them into a team for a day, was challenging, so I learned a bit from that”

4.4.3 Personal confidence and learning

157 respondents (17%) mentioned that they experienced benefits in their confidence – in general or in specific areas. For most this was expressed in terms of an overall feeling of being more confident in themselves, assisting them to feel more engaged and involved. Examples include:

Made me become more self-confident

It has improved my confidence and I feel like I could do anything now and makes me want to try new things

It has given me more confidence to mix with people of different backgrounds and ages and with people who were all strangers to me before the Games.

However, even when the Games time role was less public-facing – and for many of the volunteers their roles were away from those areas where the public were allowed – the experience provided other forms of confidence. One Clyde-sider interviewed illustrated how their role as a driver gave them confidence:

“I would say confidence wise, yes, because in the beginning I thought I couldn’t really drive 10 hours a day and using the radio chatting away with your guests I thought ‘ooh I won’t be doing that’.

But again I like the challenges, I tried it and I thought this is fine and ‘oh I am doing it!’ because I know Glasgow quite well. I had no problems to drive but I was thinking about the hours, 10 hours was too much, and I was thinking using the radio at the same time would be hard, but at the end I said ‘oh I can do it!’ and I felt really very good after that yes.”
(Clyde-sider)

For other volunteers, the benefits in terms of confidence gain was even more dramatic and life-changing, enabling them to reflect afresh on their own situations and feel more confident about overcoming disabilities and personal challenges. Two comments illustrate this:

“Definitely improved my hearing ability (I am a recent cochlear implant recipient) and helped build me confidence again after being very withdrawn. Made me much more aware of my capabilities for the future & have since applied to volunteer elsewhere” (Clyde-sider)

“Absolutely, the Commonwealth Games pretty much gave me my life back, as I suffered from depression for a long [time], especially as I lost my job as I said in February and we had a death in the family three weeks later, so I was really struggling with my own self-confidence, I was struggling to get a job ... I got the feeling that nobody wanted to employ me, and that maybe I wasn’t as good as what I originally thought.

And then I came into the Commonwealth Games and I was given a massive opportunity, great responsibility and it completely changed the way I see things in my life now, it really did give me my confidence back. I met a lot of new people that didn’t know me before, and on the first impression and then all the way through appreciated me for what I am.

It’s completely given me a new perspective on the way that I see things now, and I’m applying for jobs now where I would have thought previously ‘oh I can’t go for that ‘cause there’s no way they’ll hire me’, now I’m aiming higher because I’ve got my confidence back. It’s just given me that little boost I needed, it really has made such a difference to myself, my life and my family life as well” (Clyde-sider)

4.5 Volunteer development and legacy

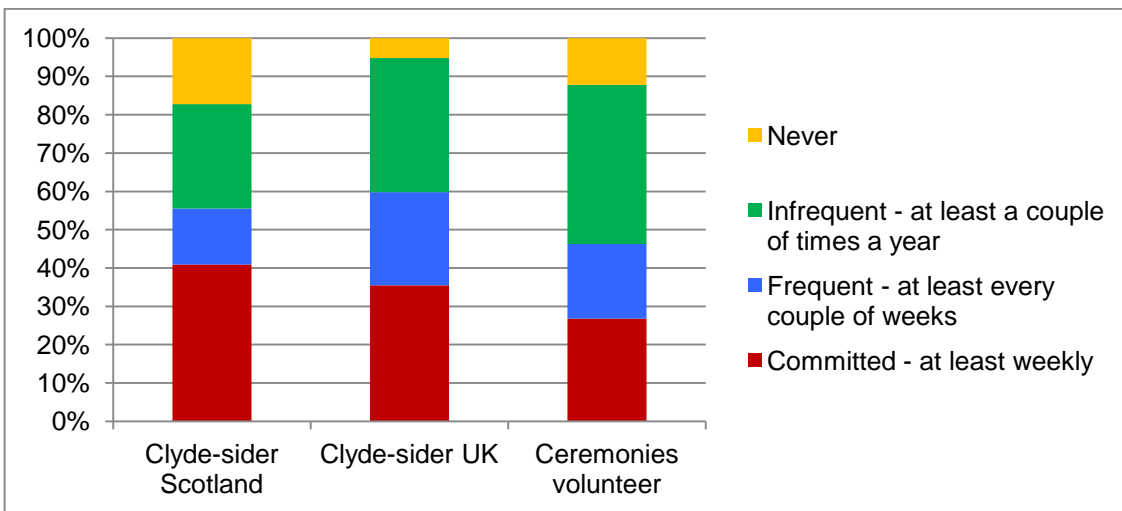
Whilst the primary purpose of the VSP was to encourage volunteers to fulfil their roles during the Games, for the Games partners – the OC, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Scottish Government, and Glasgow City Council – the act of volunteering was also to help develop a legacy; one where the experience of being part of the Games would encourage further volunteering in future¹².

Amongst the respondents to the survey, there was already a majority of volunteers who were engaged regularly in volunteering (i.e. at least 5 or 6 times a year) including 38% who were involved with volunteering at least once a week; classified as ‘committed volunteers’ here. These volunteers were more likely to be under 24 years of age or between 45-59 years of age, but were well represented across all age groups. They were more likely to be involved as Clyde-siders (Figure 4.11). Only 12% indicated that they never volunteered: respondents in this group were more likely to be located in Scotland – either taking on Clyde-sider or Ceremonies roles at the Games.

To examine the impact of the VSP enabling volunteers to be part the Games and the impact of this experience on them as volunteers, we explore two perspectives. The first looks at what the committed volunteer gained over and above their existing engagement in volunteering. The second in contrast considers the gains for those who say they are in effect ‘novice volunteers’, finding out about volunteering through their roles at the Games.

¹² See “A Games Legacy for Scotland” (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/282449/0085405.pdf>) and “Glasgow 2014: legacy framework” (<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7770>)

Figure 4.11 : Pre-Games volunteering experience



Source: online survey, n=936

4.5.1 The perspective of the committed volunteer

For the 494 respondents (52%) who were already frequent volunteers the experience of being a volunteer at the Glasgow Games was positive. Only 10 respondents – representing 3% - suggested that they were now likely to be less involved in volunteering, with 52% indicating that they were likely to do more.

For those inspired to increase their volunteering further, 182 respondents gave some indication of the form this was likely to take and their motivations. Amongst the main ways in which this group would increase their volunteering were four main approaches:

- Applying to be part of another major event (21%)
- Volunteer (more) in local community (15%)
- Involvement in a local event (18%)
- Involvement in a local sport or sport club (18%)

As one respondent expressed it, “Once you get the bug for volunteering it’s hard to ignore”.

“I loved being a volunteer in both London & Glasgow. It was an amazing privilege to be part of something so special & if I ever have the chance to take part in other events like those I would jump at it.” (Clyde-sider)

“It has allowed me to take part in such a fantastic experience which would have been almost impossible previously. It has also opened up new opportunities to volunteer for more sports competitions”.(Clyde-sider)

Indeed for many people in this group the experience of being a Clyde-sider or in the cast, the benefits were less about future activity and more about their own position as a volunteer.

CASE STUDY 3

This participant was a cast member at the Closing Ceremony of the games, who received a reasonably large amount of funding from VSP3. He initially found out about the opportunity for support through email correspondence after having already been successful at audition and attended an initial rehearsal. Although the participant found the marketing accessible, he remarked that he would've liked to have found out about it sooner as his wife would've been eager to also get involved also. Although he remarked that for some people it may have been off-putting to put down details of their financial situation, the participant himself found the application process simple and straightforward. In terms of contact with the VSP team, he mentioned that "he picked up the phone on several occasions" for support, and found this helpful in the majority of cases. On one occasion however he did run into issues when allocated funding did not appear in his account when stated. After contacting the team he was told that his records were not on the system, which caused considerable inconvenience at the time but eventually was resolved.

The participant expressed his particular needs as a combination of travel expenses and childcare expenses for his 3 children, one of which is severely disabled. After negative financial repercussions as a result of his volunteering (in similar capacity) during London 2012, he was made aware that his wife would need considerable help in caring for the children, and expressed how a VSP-type funding model would've been extremely helpful. In total he received £1565; which covered a significant amount of his costs but left him approximately £400 out of pocket for additional costs. The participant puts this discrepancy down to an overly modest application (he received exactly what he applied for) rather than blaming the VSP. Like other VSP3 recipients interviewed, the participant reported a huge impact of the funding on his ability to volunteer, stating that after the negative experiences in London, he would've probably dropped out due to lack of childcare provision.

The participant is distinctly aware of the knock on effects of the VSP funding upon his ability to volunteer and therefore upon the benefits to his life in general. His volunteer experience was incredibly positive in terms of the 'feel-good factor' of involvement with the event and forming new friendships, as well as the whole experience "getting his life back on track" in many different respects (weight loss, relationships, work stresses.)

- "...the impact it has had, I'm trying to describe it to you. Genuinely everything has come from this, I need to keep on saying again and again how grateful I am." –

In terms of a future volunteering legacy, he articulates that he is eager to get more involved in his local community, with a preference for '5 minutes here or there' as opposed to event volunteering.

"I loved the feeling of being part of something great, and feel I have learnt a lot about myself, knowing that I can help others achieve."
(Clyde-sider)

14 respondents indicated that they had gained more confidence, 7 skills and 24 excitement and inspiration – each likely to make them more likely to add further volunteering roles in their lives.

Amongst the small number who were likely to volunteer less, there were some negative experiences at the Games. For a few the lack of money or the cost was off-putting - "I will never volunteer at an international event again unless accommodation and transport are provided". For others the issues were organisational. In one case this was about the late accommodation arrangements made by VS but three others focussed on their training and roles. The sentiment of all 10 respondents was captured in one quote:

"The attitudes towards volunteers from CG senior management [sic] was dismissive and patronising. They completely forgot that the volunteers were also sponsors and funders of the event through the provision of their free labour and associated costs. The Support Pot should not have been an afterthought and an add-on. The organisers should have taken on board our logistical needs as well as those who were paid to deliver the games. For example ALL the student accommodation was booked up by them long before we knew what our shifts were going to be, leaving us with very little to choose from. If they had considered us as part of the games instead of a charity case these issues would not have arisen."
(Clyde-sider)

4.5.2 The perspective of the novice volunteer

114 respondents indicated that they had never volunteered before. For them, the experience was both novel and positive and, without exception, left them re-defining their relationship with volunteering. Even though some (23 respondents) indicated that they may not volunteer again, all of them indicated that the experience they had in their roles at the Games were positive, underlining new skills (9 of the 23), confidence (2), friends and meeting people (5), be part of the experience (4) and health benefits (2). None mentioned a negative experience.

For the 80% of this group who were inspired to consider more volunteering, there was enthusiasm targeted towards specific activity and those whose comments reflected more personal benefits. Overall, the following two comments summed up the sentiment of this group:

"I have never volunteered before but now I am actively looking to do it again."
(Clyde-sider)

"I find it easier to now volunteer, I have realised what fun you can achieve with the people you meet at these kind of events."(Clyde-sider)

For many the next step is to apply for opportunities associated with major events, with local events or with opportunities in local communities. Although the major events are focussed on sport, this group did not see their general volunteering as supporting local sports clubs or events, being more inspired by general volunteering opportunities.

- Applying to be part of another major event (20%)
- Involvement in a local event (7%)
- Involvement in a local sport or sport club (5%)
- Volunteer (more) in local community (10%)

This group came away from the Games with a greater sense of awareness of what volunteering had to offer (10 comments), confidence to volunteer (7) and a general keenness to get involved (10), with most pointing towards elements expressed by one person:

"I would have the confidence to apply for different types of volunteering now as being chosen for Glasgow 2014 I feel that I could do most things put in front of me. What an experience - it was so amazing that I want to do it again!"
(Clyde-sider)

For this group in particular, the opportunity to participate in the Commonwealth Games has permitted many of them to enter the 'radar' of the volunteering world. Rubbing against committed volunteers, getting a feel of the rewards that can be gained from volunteering, and learning about some of the volunteering opportunities available has changed their mind sets:

"If something came up that was quite close, I might apply for it, before now I wouldn't have thought about it" (Clyde-sider)

"before the Games I didn't give a thought to volunteering but now I am looking for further opportunities" (Clyde-sider)

"Yes it definitely has [encouraged me to volunteer more]. The camaraderie and the friends you make are all on the same page giving up our time that would really make me think now about applying for a volunteer position." (Ceremonies volunteer)

Section 5

Critical evaluation of the VSP model

Key points

- The VSP process was streamlined and effective at distributing financial support to applicants within the principles of the scheme
- Improvements to VSP require balanced judgements between improving outcomes and increasing management costs
- Learning from delivery of VSP should enable improved demand management and greater transparency for applicants
- Random auditing would provide evidence to counter any challenges of unfairness or inappropriate support and maintain the overall principle of 'trust'

In light of the experiences of delivery and the impact VSP has made on volunteers at the Games, this section provides an evaluation of the VSP model. Despite this overall success as with any newly developed approach, there is scope for improvement. In this section, we draw upon the evidence presented above to discuss some of the issues which have impacted on the approach's effectiveness, less in terms of its overall objective of offering support and more in the process of development, implementation and delivery.

The issues here are divided into two groups; the first addressing a set of questions which are related to the overall objectives and outcomes. The second set relates to issues which arose during the implementation of the VSP model. The section concludes with recommendations for improvement of the VSP model in the context of the 2014 Commonwealth Games volunteering.

5.1 Objectives and outcomes

5.1.1 Could impact have been increased with the same level of funding?

This question has two aspects, could VSP have delivered at least as much impact for more people, or could it have generated more impact for those it did help.

Some target groups, notably people with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities remain under-represented among VSP applicants. However, without stepping outside the principle of working with those already granted a role in volunteering, it is difficult to see how the VSP team might have extended its reach into these target areas without considerable additional spending.

A more accessible group were the 10% of VSP funded volunteers who failed to complete their volunteering commitment. Although many other factors influenced their decisions, the cost of volunteering remains one area, where more pro-active intervention by the VSP team may have had an influence, but this would have increased costs.

Another key target group might be the 15% of the survey respondents for whom VSP support had no impact on their roles as volunteers, and the 37% who reported that they would have been confident that they would have completed their roles without support from

VSP. Comparison across the three funds (Section 4), by allocation approach (fixed or proportional sums) and by the amount awarded, suggest that making fewer, larger and proportional awards creates greater impact for volunteers, suggesting that this might be a mechanism for increasing impact with the same level of funding.

5.1.2 Could less funding have been allocated to achieve the same impact?

In addition to the point above, this question is perhaps most relevant to those who received larger (but not very large) sums of money. For some covering all the cost was necessary as they had no other funding in place, but for others there was a willingness to resort to borrowing and loans to offset the cost, with the experience as a volunteer making such sacrifices worthwhile. For those receiving the largest sum, the overall assessment is clearer. There was both a more substantial need (in financial terms) and without support it would have been challenging for these volunteers to have fulfilled their roles. Not only were they more likely to have withdrawn but they were amongst the groups that gained much from being part of the experience.

In many respects this question is more about creating and managing expectations, rather than simply providing money. People who had limited expectation about receiving funding from their application to the VSP were happy with £30. But others who asked for more than £1000 and got the same contribution were highly disappointed, initially in terms of the impact on their total outlay, and then later when they found other volunteers had received significantly more – albeit from VSP1.

The management therefore of expectations is important to maximise the effective impact of funding (being valued, recognised, 'pleasant surprise') whilst creating (more) realistic expectations of possible funding.

In the experience of the VSP approach, the issue arose primarily in relation to VSP2. Using the same application process and assessment criteria as for the earlier funding stream did not manage expectations. With a different allocation mechanism being used, it failed to meet individual expectations and generated differences between levels of support between (apparently) similar circumstances.

If expectations of support had been lowered therefore and managed differently – and consistently – between the funding streams, it is possible that less money could have achieved the same outcome. However in doing this, a greater degree of intervention and assessment would have had to be implemented by VS to ensure a differentiation between those where the need for more exceptional funding (other than for care and disability) existed.

5.1.3 Was the VSP approach and allocation fair?

VS set out with the objective of ensuring that the VSP approach was fair, transparent and accepted by most beneficiaries as supporting them to be Games volunteers. Assessing 'fairness' is challenging, and is in part a comparative term; and this was not able to be judged by beneficiaries. In the context of the VSP approach and allocations made under it, it is appropriate to ask whether it was fair that some people got (relatively) large sums of

funding - 40 received more than £1000 (Table 2.3) – whilst many others received less than £50? Or that some received everything they requested and others only a small proportion?

With an acceptance that the VSP was discretionary (see below), was designed to make a contribution towards rather than cover full costs, and was based on eligibility, the focus on ‘fairness’ was largely one for the VSP team and the funders. Debates over whether any recipient should receive as much as £5,000 occurred, with discussion on whether an upper limit should be in place. However, such costs reflected the reality for many Games volunteers, who had to find thousands of pounds to be a Clyde-sider and for whom the opportunity was much more likely to be ‘once in a life-time’.

It is not possible from the evidence in this review to conclude whether an upper limit would have reduced impact. The telephone surveys of those who received some of the largest levels of financial support underlined the value to them (see case study 2 on page 37 and case study 3 on page 58 for example), but others acknowledged that making a contribution to being part of the Games was to be expected (see case study 1, page 28).

5.1.4 Was the approach transparent to all parties?

It was clear from the feedback from recipients and applicants that the process lacked transparency in a number of aspects.

First, the application form did not clearly indicate the criteria which were being used for assessment. They were mentioned but within the text indicating the case for support to be made or as part of the supporting information. It was thus unclear to anyone completing the form for example whether there was any distinction between ethnicity or disability information in terms of how this was being used to support or assess their application.

As a result, recipients were not always clear which aspects of the case for support they made were being supported through the VSP or on what basis they got funding. They knew that the money was for a purpose – travel, accommodation, care need etc. – but not that this was being assessed in terms of rurality, low income or exceptional costs.

Second in the assessment process it was unclear to the research team on what basis the VSP assessors decided what was the primary assessment criterion in all cases. This was evident in the discrepancy between the applicant’s assessment of the main need and that used for allocation (Figure 3.6). This lack of agreement was of greatest significance in relation to the support for Clyde-siders in the rest of the UK (VSP2) where allocations were based on the primary criterion and less on projected costs.

Third, and compounding these factors, the lack of transparency about the tension between managing the process as a single VSP and the internal differences arising from the allocation process reinforced frustration amongst some recipients.

“There appeared to be no consistency on how much money folks were given. I knew someone from Scotland ... lived fairly close (within an hour of Glasgow) and given £500. I had a five hour journey, accommodation costs, attended 3 training events and was given £30 - very unfair. I had other friends living further north in England than me, again attending less training and given £150.” (Clyde-sider)

“It became apparent that the goal posts with regards to eligibility for support and application deadlines were shifting almost continuously ... I would perhaps suggest that if such Pots are made available in future perhaps greater transparency and consistency might be advised.” (Clyde-sider)

When volunteers compared their level of support with the funding provided to others – and this was inevitably going to occur given the nature of group dynamics around event volunteering - there was no appreciation of the different basis of allocation, and thus an understanding of why such outcomes existed.

This risked undermining the core principle of ‘trust’ as some volunteers felt others were ‘exploiting’ the system and others felt poorly supported.

5.1.5 Was the discretionary nature of the fund understood?

Throughout the dissemination of information relating to the VSP, there was a consistent and clear indication that this was a discretionary fund. This seemed to be understood by applicants. In reality the discretionary nature of the allocation process was, however, primarily about the level of funding rather than accessing funding. All applicants who met the eligibility criteria were offered some funding, but the proportion of that requested varied.

Associated with the discretionary nature of the funding is a responsibility to communicate the rationale for allocation. The telephone interviews in particular indicate that to most recipients who received less than requested, the reason for the amount provided remained unclear. They did not understand the basis of allocation. This applied not only for those who got a small amount of support.

5.1.6 Was the basis of trust appropriate?

The allocation of funding based on trust was a positive element, and one that elicited few comments from recipients.

Auditing to ensure that the primary objective of completing their roles was undertaken and was an area where partnership working between the OC and VS worked effectively. However, this could have been conducted in a less resource intensive way if protocols had been agreed in advance with the OC on data sharing to enable checking to be undertaken by VDS. The late development of the VSP in the process of data management by the OC, the centralised system of data management and limited levels of permission sought meant that data could not be shared directly and OC staff resources had to be deployed to conduct checking for the VSP team.

Associated with the allocation process based on trust is the accompanying inability to conduct auditing and accountability analysis, either in terms of the original claims made for financial assistance or in the commitment of funding on such items. As the majority of recipients received only a small proportion of the assistance requested, and thus formed only a proportion of the total costs likely to be incurred as a volunteer, the issue of accountability is less significant. Whether the recipient spent the money on exactly what was

claimed or another element of the costs to be a volunteer still meant that the funding achieved its objective of helping them to fulfil their roles.

However, in a small percentage of cases where either a 100% funding was provided or where relatively large sums of funding were allocated (187 people were allocated more than £500) then some auditing would normally be anticipated.

5.1.7 Was the VSP approach accessible?

The overall process of application and communication of the VSP fund proved to be both effective in providing the necessary information for allocating funds, and simple and direct to enable applicants to provide such information. The convenience and ease of completion was clearly evident in the survey results. This was augmented by positive communication and support provided by VS and the VSP team, and the available guidance notes online. However, it is not possible to assess whether everyone who might have benefited from support was reached through the communication channels used.

5.2 Implementation

5.2.1 Did it matter that some funding was not allocated?

Although most of the £625,000 available to support volunteers was distributed to beneficiaries, a residual sum of approximately £71,000 existed after the end of the Games from the funds provided by the Big Lottery Fund. The full allocation under VSP3 was distributed to support Ceremonies volunteers.

A number of factors exist which made it difficult to ensure that all the money was allocated, including:

- the VSP relied on applications so could only meet demand generated; this was particularly the case with support for Ceremonies volunteers where all eligible requests were met in full;
- It was difficult to model and thus manage demand when the overall need was not known during the process of allocation; especially for the Clyde-sider in Scotland fund;
- decisions about allocations had to be made on a rolling basis to ensure volunteers heard quickly about whether they were being supported or not. This meant providing 100% funding to everyone was not possible at all stages; and
- demand for support from Clyde-siders in the rest of the UK greatly exceeded available funds, and the implementation of a consistent system of notional contributions meant a small underspend.

But the question remains as to whether more demand could have been generated? Were there others who could have been supported and who did not fulfil their roles as volunteers? It has not been possible to address this from the current research; such research would need to explore those Clyde-siders and Ceremonies volunteers who did not fulfil their roles to assess what reasons and need was involved. This is considered further in Section 6.

5.2.2 Did the VSP approach offer the flexibility to meet unknown demand?

Identifying the demand for support was a challenge for VSP1 and was influenced by circumstances beyond the control of the VSP team. The changing timetable for Clyde-siders to learn of their selection after October 2013 and the resulting spike in demand in early 2014 as communications from the OC reminded Clyde-siders of support alongside communication on dates for training, meant that initial demand patterns were not appropriate for predicting the total demand.

The VSP1 approach however was sufficiently flexible to allow the assessment team to make adjustments to the allocations being offered. This enabled a move from providing 100% of costs for training to 50% to manage demand and to enable 100% of costs to be met when it was likely to have most impact, during the Games. In contrast managing demand under VSP2 and VSP3 should have been easier.

With lower numbers of potential applicants, with relatively large sum of money available (£100,000) and with a shorter period (than VSP1) to apply, mapping out patterns of demand under VSP3 was easier. It was handled effectively, delivering high levels of impact, allocating all the funds and targeting support to those most in need

With the allocation decision not requiring to be made until the demand was known, for VSP2 the challenge was less about predicting demand as responding to high demand in relation to a (relatively) small sum of funding (£100,000). There was flexibility in the approach to manage this – but as evident above the decisions made did not result in maximising impact or targeting support to those most in need to fulfil their roles.

Together these three strands provided a difficult and challenging environment in which to implement the VSP allocation but showed the ability of the approach to cope with different patterns of demand, and continue to offer an efficient and effective service for recipients. It is testament to the VS team that despite the variable workloads associated with the demand; they provided for applicants and especially recipients a consistent level of service and support.

5.2.3 Was the communication and support provided by the VSP team useful?

The VSP model relied on an efficient system of data management and decision-making, and this in turn required accurate information from applicants and thus clear communications.

Communications by the VSP team in VS were rated very effective by recipients, with some specifically positively commenting on the proactive role taken by the VSP team to contact them when gaps in information existed. Issues which arose were generally minor and individual. The overall support provided by the VSP team was highly effective in resolving queries and managing information requirements.

Communication about the fund was at times less perfect. The decision by the funders and VS to include later funds – VSP2 and VSP3 – under the same heading of VSP created some confusion and was in part a reason for ineligible applications being received.

The decision that all general communications connected with the VSP would be direct through the OC meant that there was a need for greater appreciation on the part of the OC of the evolving nature of the VSP. Mis-information on closing dates from the OC created unnecessary applications for a funding stream already closed seemed to occur because

there was not an understanding of the different components within the OC communication functional area. It also meant that communications more targeted towards key groups were not possible, with messages tending to be lost amongst the wider array of information being sent by the OC to Clyde-siders and ceremonies volunteers.

5.2.4 Was the allocation process managed efficiently and effectively by the VSP team?

Creating and delivering a process which allocated funding where the nature of the need, the level of demand, and the impact of funding was largely unknown was likely to create challenges. Many of these had been considered and mitigated in the design of each stage of the process, and it was clear that for the original fund – VSP1 – support was allocated very efficiently and effectively.

The VSP model provided sufficient flexibility to respond to demand, and the allocation approach created the desired impact, both for VSP1 and for VSP3. For this element of the process, the issue of lack of transparency over allocation criteria (see above) was not significant.

The least effective element in the allocation management process by the VSP team arose in the decisions made about the allocation of VSP2. The choice to continue with one of the underlying desires of VSP1 – that it would provide support all eligible applicants – was clearly unsustainable for VSP2. High demand, limited funding and inadequate information on need mean that the incorrect decision was made to allocate everyone some funding. As the analysis in Section 4 shows, low levels of impact were achieved and many beneficiaries would have managed without any support from VSP2.

A more effective targeting of support on those with most need and likely to have greatest impact was required.

However, to achieve this more effective outcome the VSP team would have required a different assessment and allocation mechanism. The assessment criteria on rurality and low income were insufficiently refined to enable differentiation of need for most of the applicants to VSP2, and the simple allocation was also inadequate, primarily as it took no account of total costs for each applicant. Whilst the allocation of £30 may have a ‘recognition value’ it had very limited impact on the primary objectives of the VSP.

5.2.5 Did the VSP approach provide the robustness required to support the additional funding streams?

The different outcomes from the three VSP funding streams raise the above question. The VS process of deciding on eligibility and need was robust and well designed to meet its original objectives and to provide support for the original funding stream (VSP1). It was also sufficiently robust to enable new funding streams to be added where the main characteristics were similar (VSP3) and where there was not a high demand for support. Learning and adjustment which had taken place within the VSP team during the early stages of implementation and which had been envisaged as demand and needs became evident, enabled the team to adopt and adapt the approach for the support for the Ceremonies

volunteers under VSP3. This was reinforced by strong support from the Spirit of 2012 Trust board.

However the scheme proved less robust in relation to that required for the allocation of funds to the Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK (VSP2) as operated. The experience of VSP2 suggests that the need or desire to use the same application process, to use the same assessment process and to keep a single identity to the VSP created consequences which reduced some of the impact of the fund – certainly in relation to the experience of the volunteers at the Games. This greatly reduced the effectiveness and impact of VSP2 – to a point when more than half of those funded probably should not have been supported to maximise impact. It also however reduced the overall impact of VSP (as a whole).

On the other hand, the experience of VSP2 tested the VSP approach and has enabled this evaluation to make some recommendations, initially below in relation to the use of the VSP approach again in a context similar to the Commonwealth Games and in Section 6 in other contexts.

5.3 Recommendations for improving performance of VSP

The following recommendations are made to improve the delivery of the key objectives of the VSP as it was adopted for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow:

- The identification of assessment criteria on application forms and sufficient direct questions to enable key assessment criteria information to be provided by the applicant. This would enable greater transparency to everyone as the basis for decision making, would assist applicants to provide clear and relevant information, and would reduce further the need for follow-up calls by VSP team
- Transparency in communications to recipients of the basis of decision making, against the assessment criteria, highlighting the specific need the support is helping to meet OR a general contribution towards the overall costs of volunteering
- For those receiving larger funds, a random sample should be asked to provide evidence of expenditure. This is good practice in terms of auditing, but would also reinforce the overall principle of 'trust', enabling evidence to exist to counter any challenges of unfairness or inappropriate support
- As part of demand management, consideration needs to be given to targeting support to those likely to have greatest need and gain most impact, and where required offer no support to those who are likely to manage without support for VSP. This may require additional information either during application or at assessment stage.

Section 6

Conclusions and future use

6.1 The effectiveness of VSP for Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

The VSP was designed to help support Games volunteers to fulfil their roles and to help overcome some of the barriers of financial hardship associated with low household income, rurality, caring responsibility or disability. As a discretionary fund offering support on the basis of trust, it also sought to be fair and transparent helping all those who applied and were eligible.

The three VSP funds, totalling £625,000 enabled 2147 Clyde-siders from across the UK and individual Ceremonies volunteers to be supported to fulfil their roles during the Games. All of those who applied and met the eligibility criteria of need received support from the VSP funds, and only 240 (10% of eligible applicants) were unable to complete their roles.

However, the evidence gathered for this evaluation from nearly half of those who were beneficiaries suggested that whilst 1 in 8 (12%) of those who were supported would have withdrawn without funding assistance, 37% would have fulfilled all their roles without the intervention of the VSP fund. This was most acute in relation to the Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK where more than half (54%) indicated that VSP funding did not have an impact on their ability to volunteer.

This evaluation has examined the efficiency and effectiveness of the process of application, assessment and allocation made under this fund – the VSP approach – as well as the impact the funding had on beneficiaries. In doing this it has underlined that:

- The VSP process was designed and implemented for an initial fund of £425,000 from the Big Lottery Scotland to support Clyde-siders from Scotland (VSP1)
- The process had to be adapted to provide subsequent funding for Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK (VSP2) and for Ceremonies volunteers (VSP2)
- The fund was made available after the volunteers had been allocated a Games role and thus was not a motivator to apply to be a volunteer; and
- The VSP funds provided a novel way to help support Games volunteers in their roles with no precedence to draw upon.

In developing the VSP approach, five principles were important which had consequences for its delivery and impact:

1. a financial contribution was offered to support those already selected for a volunteering role at the Games;
2. support was targeted to specific areas of need which could be financial barriers to prevent individuals completing their volunteer role;
3. need was identified by the individual applicant, and a case made by them for support;
4. funding was provided on a discretionary basis, being assessed in terms of four areas of need; and
5. funding was provided on the basis of 'trust' that it would be used to help the volunteer to be involved without auditing or accountability of expenditure.

6.1.1 The VSP approach

One of the key strengths of the VSP process was the straightforward and simple process of application. The online application process was convenient and the application form was straightforward and easy to complete (Section 3.3), completion of the application form was 'easy' or 'very easy'. The support provided by the VSP team in VS and their effectiveness in communicating with applicants and recipients was highly commended. 85% of respondents rated communications from VSP as 'effective' or 'very effective'. Overall, the application process and the associated support mechanisms were very efficiently delivered by a small team within VS for a low management fee to a much larger than expected number of applicants.

The VSP approach did not envisage providing support to cover all expenditure associated with Games volunteering (and applicants were made aware of this in the application information) and was focussed on meeting those within the four categories of need. The VSP team therefore had to use the information on the application form to make assessments of eligibility and to decide on allocation of support. The basis of trust meant that distribution of support to applicants was straightforward and no auditing of expenditure was required.

From the perspective of the VSP team, the application process provided most of the necessary information for them to make decisions, and they were able to follow up by email or telephone those who had not provided sufficient information.

Beyond this the VSP application and allocation process was also designed to provide flexibility that it could manage demand. With slow initial rate of application and a late spike in demand, the process worked effectively for VSP1 and VSP3. Adjustments could be made by the VSP team in consultation with funding stakeholders to manage allocations and continue to have sufficient funds to support later applicants. This was particularly effective for VSP3 where all the funds were used to meet demand, and to offer all applicants at least 50% of their requests. In both these funding streams, the overall funding available was sufficient to enable all applicants to receive a meaningful contribution to their costs – and thus to have a relatively high impact on retention.

The much more limited funding available under VSP2 provided greater challenges for the VSP team in allocating support and revealed significant problems with the approach adopted. On the one hand, £100,000 was – in comparison with the support provided under VSP1 – very limited and was not going to be sufficient to meet demand. With potentially higher travel and accommodation costs for Clyde-siders from the rest of the UK, each applicant was likely to be seeking more support. And there was already known to be a significant number of Clyde-sider applicants from the rest of the UK. Consequently, under VSP2, decisions on how to allocate support against need had to be made by the VSP team. On the other hand, with the shorter period for application to VSP2, the allocation process was able to be undertaken when all applications had been received and overall demand known.

What VSP2 revealed was that:

1. The information provided by applicants in their case for support meant that the VSP team had to make judgements about what was the primary assessment criterion, the

outcome of which was often as odds with the primary reason perceived by the applicant.

2. Priorities had to be made to support some areas of need over others; thus elevating the need for accurate information on reasons for support
3. The VSP team decided to continue to support all eligible applicants rather than target support to only some applicants
4. Priority was thus given to making a small contribution rather than proportional to individuals' overall costs.

Each of these had consequences which reduced the impact of VSP2. Small contributions (relative to their overall costs) to many people resulted in most viewing the VSP support as marginal – both financially and in impact. 54% of those supported under VSP2 received £50 or less. For this group, funding had little impact on them fulfilling their roles or overall impact on their contribution as volunteers. This was reinforced by the lack of clarity about why individuals received this level of support and beneficiaries not being able to appreciate why others (for other reasons) received more support.

Greater differentiation in funding under VSP2 towards fewer individuals would have increased impact and enabled targeted use of the funds to support those with greatest need. This would also have allowed funding to be more proportional to the overall costs borne by each applicant. The evidence from the surveys (Figure 4.6) suggests that those who received the largest sums felt that this had greatest impact on their contribution to their volunteering roles.

6.1.2 Meeting its objectives?

Together the evidence from the more positive impacts under VSP1 and VSP3 and the low impact of VSP2 suggests that in meeting its objectives, the VSP approach offered a generally effective and efficient approach to supporting volunteers at the Games with recognised needs that might have prevented them from completing roles and it had sufficient discretion available to manage demand and allocate against different needs.

However, key decisions were made in its operation which reduced both its impact and its effectiveness as a fair and transparent process. The retention of the principle to support all eligible applicants significantly reduced the impact overall. A more targeted approach based on meeting a proportion of costs – used in VSP1 and VSP3 – and a recognition that providing only a small percentage was likely to have negligible impact (in effect used in VSP2) would have greatly increased the overall impact for those supported. This would have meant that some eligible recipients would have received no support. In making that decision, it would therefore have been possible for the VSP team to have acknowledged that the provision of a small contribution relative to the overall financial cost outlined in each application was likely to have a low impact. And in turn therefore, far fewer awards of less than £50 would have been made, and more funding could have been allocated on a proportional basis to those with needs associated with low income, caring responsibilities or disability. This would have helped to make the allocation basis similar to that of VSP1 and VSP3.

Such an approach would also have had the additional benefit of enabling a clearer and consistent communication to all beneficiaries of the basis on which they received support and how the funding was allocated.

6.1.3 Additional benefits

In addition to its main objective,

- the application process to the VSP had the merit of encouraging volunteers to think through the cost of volunteering at the Games. It was evident, mainly amongst the Clyde-siders, that many had not considered this carefully when applying to be considered for this role and it was only when having to pay to attend the interviews or when offered a defined role that the overall costs were revealed;
- the allocation of funding to support volunteers in itself was viewed as providing recognition as a volunteer with the value being more symbolic than financial.

6.1.4 Adding further benefit

First, although this research has examined the impact on those who were beneficiaries and applicants to the VSP funds, the question remains as to whether more demand could have been generated? Were there others who could have been supported and who did not fulfil their roles as volunteers?

With other Clyde-siders beyond those supported by the VSP, being unable to fulfil their roles at the Commonwealth Games, there remains questions over if and how VSP might have supported them. Undoubtedly there were other Clyde-siders and Ceremonies volunteers who could potentially have benefitted from the VSP funds. More effective communication might have widened the reach but there is no evidence to suggest that the publicity and communication associated with VSP was inadequate. To appreciate the scale of this would require further research with those Clyde-siders and Ceremonies volunteers who did not fulfil their roles to assess what reasons and need was involved.

Second, the VSP approach has developed to provide support only to those who have already applied and been allocated a Games role. It is very unlikely that the presence of the VSP had a major impact on encouraging volunteers and especially any specific group of volunteers to consider applying for a role at the Games. For this benefit to be achieved, the VSP approach would have to be available in advance of Games volunteers applying to the OC. Although the principle of VSP support was announced at that time, the process was not sufficiently developed to be effective in helping those groups likely to experience financial hardship to apply. If it had been, the VSP would have had the potential to increase the number of those still under-represented groups – such as those with disabilities or caring responsibilities – who were put off from applying because of the high costs.

However, this would require significant modifications to VSP. In the absence of applicants' prior commitment to being a volunteer, risk management would be more significant and the trust principle would require further scrutiny. Consideration would have to be given to greater targeting on specific needs (i.e. enhancing the discretionary element), enhanced key information from applicants to assist assessment (e.g. key reasons for applying) and clearer

communication on allocation outcomes to explain support/non-support so that successful and unsuccessful applicants remain motivated to fulfil roles. Such a greater degree of intervention and assessment is also likely to require greater management costs and a larger VSP support team.

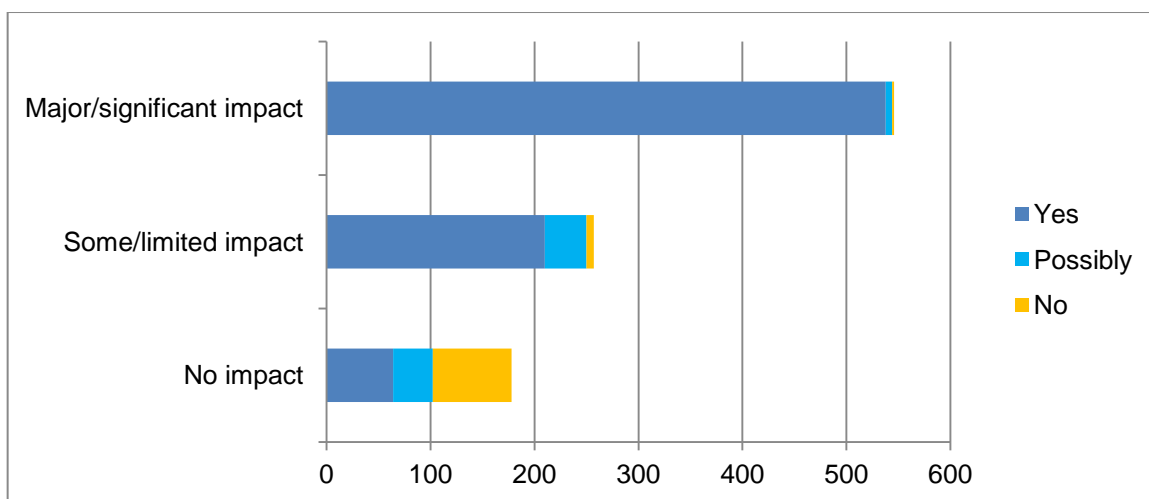
6.2 Future use of VSP ‘model’ to support event volunteering

This research has focussed on the experience of the VSP developed to meet specific needs at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014. To conclude this report, we explore whether there are lessons that can be learnt that suggest whether (i) the approach has utility in other event volunteering contexts and (ii) in other areas of volunteering beyond that of events.

As this report has highlighted while the development and implementation of the VSP has not been without some issues there was strong support for the VSP approach overall from beneficiaries. 86% of respondents in the survey recommended the VSP and a further 9% gave qualified support for its use at future events. Only 45 respondents felt that they could not recommend the VSP if this was available at future events in Scotland.

Most of those with reservations or not recommending future use of VSP were those who found that the fund had little impact on their volunteering at the Games (Figure 6.1) and were those who received less than £50. Of those who did not recommend future use, 93% received this level of funding. But even amongst those receiving a small level of funding under VSP, the majority (58.2%) were supportive of future use of the VSP.

Figure 6.1: Relationship between impact and recommendation of use of VSP



Source: online survey, n=936

However, the transfer of this approach to other smaller events may not be appropriate. In particular, there are 4 aspects which might be considered different to most events:

- there was a pool of already motivated volunteers who had signalled their desire to be involved in the event and for whom costs was not a major consideration in applying to have a volunteer role;
- the nature of demand for support was largely unknown given the uniqueness of the event in Glasgow;
- there was a significant number of volunteers who had limited or no previous experience of volunteering and thus were likely to be at risk of not completing their roles as they realised the level of commitment required and the associated costs; and
- the nature of the commitment required from the volunteers, especially the Clydesiders, was over a more extended period than is normal for events and was not well known at the time of application.

Whilst recognising these differences, as a model to provide funding and targeted for a key purpose and to key groups, it has the potential to offer a model to support volunteering at other events. In particular it has the attraction and advantage of being:

- a light touch approach, based on the principle of trust, which is consistent with the notion of volunteering at events;
- a focus on specific groups that are likely to struggle to be volunteers, thus helping them to 'become' event volunteers and gain from the experience; and
- an effective way to offer discretionary funds in a flexible way – shaped by emerging demand and need.

It offers the advantages of making event volunteering more accessible, especially if targeted towards supporting key groups – either in terms of their needs and exceptional costs, or in terms of their involvement with volunteering, for example novice event volunteers. The VSP approach also provides a means of recognising both the importance of event volunteers and of the input (cost, time, effort, skills) provided by them as volunteers.

However if the aim of the VSP fund is to assist in removing barriers to target groups – such as those with disabilities or caring responsibilities – the support needs to be available prior to event volunteering application to have greatest impacts. The low level of application from these groups overall suggest that they had already viewed hardship as a barrier to applying to be a Clyde-sider or Ceremonies volunteer.

Recommendations:

To achieve this in the context of other events, however, it is recommended that:

- greater emphasis is placed on developing a demand management model so that the VSP can be planned around better information on the nature and timing of demand;
- provision of support and application process in advance of decision making by volunteers to apply to have a role at events thus making funding available to attract as well as retain volunteers;
- use of the demand model to inform a set of allocation criteria;

- a clearer application form where the allocation criteria are communicated and used to direct applicants in the case for support;
- VSP is focussed on delivering a single set of funding, on a single allocation basis, to a single population.

6.3 Using the VSP approach in supporting volunteering beyond events

Event volunteering is, as noted in Section 1.3, a different form of volunteering from most other areas. It attracts interest and involvement from volunteers who often differ from those involved in other volunteering activity. Indeed, it is just this difference which has meant that Games volunteering provides a potential platform for generating a volunteering legacy. In the context of the VSP approach, therefore, the uniqueness of the event volunteering experience means that the rationale for the support is less likely to be easily transferable to other volunteering contexts.

As indicated in Section 3, the key strengths of the VSP approach lay in its relative simplicity – in application, assessment and allocation – and the consequent relatively ‘light touch’ required to manage the process of support allocation. Retaining this is vital for the VSP approach to be applicable elsewhere. In addition, as indicated the assessment of the different VSP funding streams (Sections 3 and 4), there needs to be greater clarity about the assessment criteria at all stages to reinforce the simplicity and trust base of the process, and there needs to be a stronger targeting of support through demand management to some and not necessary all eligible applicants.

Reflecting this, there is some potentially wider application of the VSP model, based around adaptations of the key principles outlined at the start of Section 2. This would mean that a VSP approach to be applied in non-event contexts would be based on:

- targeting support to specific areas of need which could be barriers to prevent individuals completing their role as a volunteer, drawing on evidence that a financial contribution is able to overcome such barriers;
- the individual applicant identifying their need, and a case being made by them for support in a way that can be easily assessed by the funding body;
- support being provided on a discretionary basis, and being assessed in terms of specific areas of need, with the approach being used to manage demand and using the discretionary aspects to focus support on some eligible individuals; and
- funding being provided on the basis of ‘trust’ that it would be used to help the volunteer to be involved with only a light touch auditing of expenditure of those who received highest funding.

In proposing these, however, there are some significant challenges which are likely to restrict the VSP application.

The advantage of the VSP in its use for the Commonwealth Games volunteers was that the nature of need and what factors were likely to impact on volunteering were known in advance. These could be used to design the application form, used to help shape the assessment process, and against which a simple allocation could be made. And for the

principle of trust work, the support could be then managed by the individual volunteer to achieve impact.

To apply these principles - and thus the VSP model - to other volunteering circumstances therefore means that the need which is to be supported has to be identified and measured in financial terms in advance by those who are committed and selected to become volunteers. Without this the effectiveness of the VSP process – a simple application and allocation system – becomes problematic, requiring a more continuous process of application and allocation.

In addition, for the volunteer and more important for the organisation or context in which the volunteer is engaging there clarity is needed about the barriers (and thus support need) are likely to impact on the volunteer fulfilling their roles. This further needs to be translated into assessment criteria which can be communicated to the funder and those making the assessment.

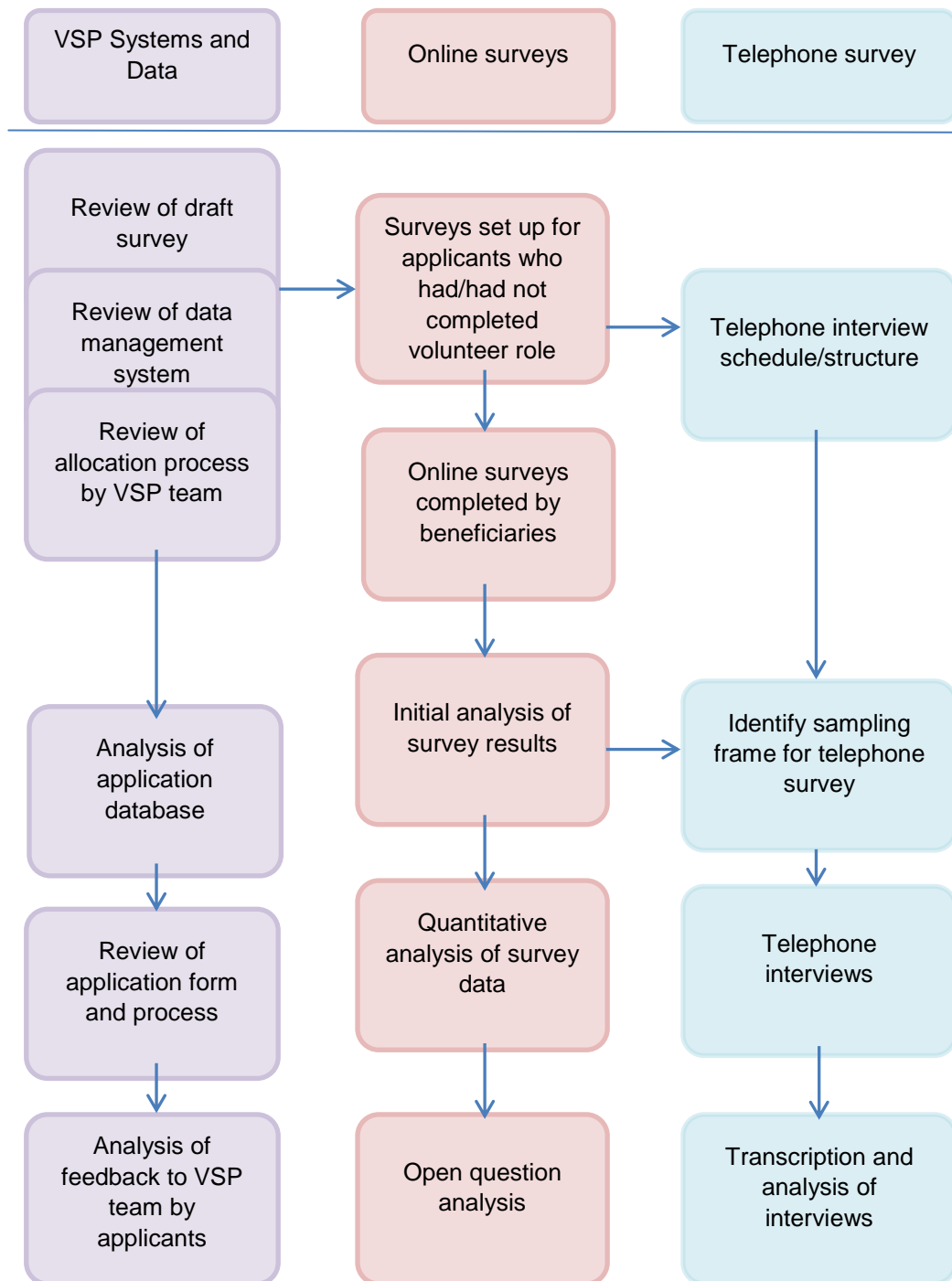
Recommendation

The specific nature of event volunteering and the desire to provide a simple, single application process based around the principles of the VSP make it difficult to envisage circumstances where it could easily and effectively be used to support wider volunteering.

Appendix 1

Evaluation approach

In conducting the research for this evaluation, three main sources of information have been used.



The first, secondary information was provided by the VSP team at VDS. This included:

- A partial copy of the VDS tender to Big Lottery Fund to manage the distribution of VSP
- Copies of the application forms for individual Clyde-siders, individual Ceremonies volunteers and for groups of Ceremonies volunteers
- The assessment process flow chart used the VSP team in making decisions
- Monthly Performance reports for Clyde-sider applications from Aug/Sep 2013 to Aug 2014 used by the VSP team to report to Big Lottery Fund
- Monthly Performance reports for Ceremonies volunteer applications from April – Jun 2014 used to report to Spirit of 2012 Trust
- Email feedback from applicants/recipients to VSP.

In addition, the VSP team provided a copy of their database of applicants – both those who were recipients of support and those who were unsuccessful. This had been anonymised and only data relevant to the analysis was made available to the researchers.

As the chart below indicates, this information was used to inform the content of the online survey, with an initial analysis of the database and feedback comments in particular raising issues about impact might be assessed.

The remaining two sources of information were primary data generated for this evaluation.

A draft online survey had been prepared and piloted in advance of the evaluation by the VSP team. This formed the basis of the online surveys devised by researchers. Details of this are provided in Appendix 2.

The telephone survey schedule was designed alongside the online survey to ensure that comparable areas were being explored in more depth in the interviews. The sampling frame for these interviews was constructed from the responses to the online survey, enabling the interviews to be cross referenced to the results from that survey. Details of the telephone survey are provided in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2

Survey of recipients and successful applicants

An online survey was conducted between 12 August and 26 August 2014. An invitation was sent by VDS to all recipients of funding from VSP and to those who had not been able to participate fully. Two different surveys were conducted although they shared some questions on the application process and support provided by VDS. For those who received funding, the survey focussed on:

- The funding they received
- Their Games time roles
- The impact of VSP on their roles as volunteers
- The impact on their future roles as volunteers

For those who were unsuccessful in participating through VSP – because they were unable to complete their Games volunteering roles – the survey asked about why they had sought funding from VSP and to explore when and why they had been unable to continue volunteering. Copies of the surveys are provided below.

The recipient survey elicited 942 fully completed responses, representing a response rate of 43.8%. Although the profile of these respondents were not exactly aligned with that of all those supported by VSP, there are few significant differences and provide a high degree of confidence that the online survey can be taken as representative of all those supported by VSP (table below).

	All recipients	Online survey respondents
Number	2148	942
Gender		
Male	34.50%	35.50%
Female	65.50%	64.50%
Age		
16-24	30.90%	18.60%
25-34	18.20%	14.50%
35-44	14.10%	16.00%
45-59	23.60%	31.00%
60-74	12.80%	19.50%
75+	0.20%	0.20%
Funding		
< £50	28.40%	25.20%
£50-99	10.80%	9.00%
£100-249	38.60%	40.40%
£250-499	14.90%	16.50%
£500-999	5.80%	6.70%
£1000+	1.70%	2.30%

Volunteer Support Pot Recipients Survey

Your Awareness of the Volunteer Support Pot

How did you find out about the Volunteer Support Pot? Please give one answer only.

- From the Organising Committee for the Glasgow 2014 Games
- From the Spirit of 2012 Trust
- From the Big Lottery Fund
- From Volunteer Scotland
- From Jack Morton Worldwide
- From friends/other volunteers
- Social media (eg Facebook)
- Other

When did you learn about the Volunteer Support Pot? Please give one answer only

- Before you applied to be a volunteer
- Before you had confirmation as a volunteer
- After you had confirmation as a volunteer
- After attending training as a volunteer

Your Experience of the Volunteer Support Pot Application Process

How convenient was the online application process? >Please give one answer only

- Very convenient
- Convenient
- Some issues
- Inconvenient
- Very inconvenient

How would you rate the 'ease of completion' of the online application form? Please give one answer only

- Very easy
- Easy
- Some issues
- Difficult
- Very

Your Experience of the Volunteer Support Pot Team

What method of communication did you use most frequently? Please give one answer only

- Mainly telephone
- Mainly e-mail
- Both telephone and e-mail

How would you rate communication from the Volunteer Support Pot team? Please give one answer only

- Very effective
- Effective
- Some issues
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

What volunteer category did you belong to at the Games?

- Clyde-sider (from Scotland)
- Clyde-sider (from outside of Scotland)
- Ceremonies (from Scotland)
- Ceremonies (from outside of Scotland)

Before the Games, how frequently did you volunteer?

- Several times a week
- About once a week
- At least once a month
- At least five or six times a year
- A few times a year
- Less often
- Never

Funding from Volunteer Support Pot

Why did you seek funding from the Volunteer Support Pot? Please indicate as many answers as apply

- I could not afford to cover the costs of volunteering
- I faced additional costs because of my caring responsibilities
- I faced additional costs because of my disability
- I faced additional costs because of where I live
- Other

Have you received funding for training or rehearsals in addition to your Games time volunteering?

- Yes
- No

What was the total amount of funding you received from the Volunteer Support Pot (including training & Games time; or rehearsal and ceremonies time? Please give one answer only

- Less than £50
- £50 - £99
- £100 - £249
- £250 - £499
- £500 - £999
- £1000+

Volunteer Support Pot Impact

In the absence of the Volunteer Support Pot would you have been confident of completing all of your volunteering commitments at the Commonwealth Games ?

- Yes, all of my commitments
- Some of my commitments only
- No - I would have withdrawn my application

What impact did this level of funding have on your ability to volunteer at the Games?

- Major impact
- Significant impact
- Some impact
- Limited impact
- No impact

In what ways did the funding have a positive impact on your ability to volunteer at the Games?

OR

Please explain why the funding had a limited, or no, impact on your ability to volunteer at the Games?

What experiences from your contribution as a volunteer are likely to have most impact on your future? Tell us, for example, about new skills; opportunities for getting involved in new work or community activities; or improved health.

Would you recommend the Volunteer Support Pot if this was available at future events in Scotland?

- Yes
- Possibly
- No

Is your volunteering experience at the Commonwealth Games likely to have any impact on your future commitment to volunteering?

- Increase in volunteering
- About the same
- Reduction in volunteering

In what ways do you think that your volunteering commitment will increase?

OR

If you think that your volunteering commitment will decrease, please describe the nature of this change

Do you have any additional comments relating to the Volunteer Support Pot which you would like to make?

Please fill in the next few questions about you as this information will enable us to analyse the responses for trends by gender, age, etc. Again, this information is anonymous and is 100% confidential, with only aggregated responses reported. Are you

- Male
- Female

How old are you?

- 16 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 59
- 60 - 74
- 75+

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No

Do you have carer responsibilities?

- Yes
- No

We are interested in talking to a small number of people in more detail about their experience of the Volunteer Support Pot and the impact that it may have had on volunteering. Please indicate if you are willing to participate in a follow up telephone interview that will help us to understand more about the impact of the Volunteer Support Pot for Games volunteers.

- I am happy to be contacted for a telephone interview
- Do not contact me regarding a telephone interview

Volunteer Support Pot Non Participants Survey

This survey had the same questions in relation to the application and support experience and funding as the above survey and the same profile information. The following questions replaced the section on impact.

At what point did you decide not to continue in your volunteering role?

- Before training/rehearsal
- During training/rehearsal
- At the end of training/rehearsal - but before the Games started
- During the Games

What was the reason(s) for not participating as a volunteer in the Games? >Indicate as many answers as apply

- Cost of volunteering
- Time commitment to volunteer
- Volunteer process: eg training/rehearsal
- Quality of volunteer management & support
- Ill-health
- Disability
- Competing work pressures
- Other commitments (e.g. carer)
- Bereavement
- Changed my mind
- Other

Please list any other reasons for not participating as a volunteer

Are there any measures which could have been taken which would have enabled you to volunteer?

- Yes
- No

Please tell us what measures, and by whom, would have enabled you to volunteer

Do you have any comments relating to the Volunteer Support Pot which you would like to make?

Appendix 3

Telephone survey and interviews

A telephone interview was arranged with 27 recipients and applicants to explore further the issues raised in the online surveys and which had been agreed in advance with the VDS team. The interviewees were identified randomly from the survey respondents who had indicated their willingness to participate on the basis of two criteria:

- the level of funding they received
- the impact which the VSP funding had on their volunteering role according to their own assessment in the online survey

Using these criteria a sample of 24 interviewees were identified – 4 from each of those who received less than £50 and had major impact, those with similar funding but limited or no impact, those who received between £100 and £249 with major impact and those with no or limited impact, and from those who received more than £1000 with major impact and those with limited or no impact (see table below).

Online survey distribution

	Impact				
	Major	Significant	Some	Limited	None
Less than £50	18	19	27	53	120
£50 - £99	17	40	13	10	5
£100 - £249	84	154	89	41	12
£250 - £499	76	60	16	2	1
£500 - £999	10	18	5	0	0
£1000+	15	5	1	1	0
Total	250	296	151	107	138

Telephone survey sample

	Impact		
	Major	Significant	Limited/None
Less than £50	4		4
£50 - £99			
£100 - £249	4		4
£250 - £499			
£500 - £999			4
£1000+	4		
Total	12		12

In addition, 3 applicants from the sample of 17 respondents who had received the offer of support but had been unable to complete their roles were also interviewed.

For each category a research list of the same size was selected, providing a direct replacement when contact with the original interviewee was not possible.

Each telephone interview followed a similar schedule (see below). However it was considered important that the interviewee was able to express their own views and shape the conversation as appropriate, and the schedule was thus used as a guide to ensure all topics were covered. For most interviews, the conversation lasted between 10 and 15 minutes and each finished with the interviewee having the opportunity to add any further comments they felt relevant.

In all but two cases the telephone conversation was recorded, with permission, and then analysed. In the two cases notes were taken during the call by the researchers.

In all cases the researcher involved knew only that the interviewee had agreed to participate but did not know their location in the sampling frame above. This enabled the conversation to be led by the interviewee who was asked to reveal as much as information as relevant. This proved an important stage as it allowed an exploration of what they thought was impact and what they had received in terms of support – including beyond the monetary sum.

Although in all cases the identity of the interviewee was known to the researchers, the comments and points raised have been used unattributed and any element what might enable their identity to be traced has been excluded from the report.

Discussion topic guide

Check identity of caller.

I am phoning from the University of Strathclyde on behalf of Volunteer Scotland about the VSP. You kindly completed an online survey in the last fortnight and indicated that you would be willing to be contacted by telephone.

I am Tom/Andrea/Sue and I am following up the survey and would like to have a few minutes (about 10) to discuss some of your experiences of getting support from the VSP.

Are you able to talk now and are willing to take part in the interview?

[if not, arrange a time to call back]

Is it okay if we record our conversation? We will not pass on the recording to anyone and you will not be identified at any stage. It is entirely anonymous. However we may use quotations in a report but these will be unattributed.

Thank you.

I want to ask some questions on the process of application before considering the support you got and how this impacted on your role in the Commonwealth Games.

Topic 1: Feedback on marketing and management of VSP [this information is aligned with survey]

First I would like ask about the process by which you applied for funding.

Q1: *How did you find out about the VSP (Glasgow 2014, Big Lottery Fund etc)*

When you accessed this marketing information, did it give you all the information you needed?

How could they improve the marketing?

Q2: *Did you find it easy to apply for support? If not, why not?*

Did you get assistance from the VSP team to help you in applying? If so, how did they help?

How could this be improved (if at all)

How could the overall application process (marketing, access and support) be made easier for you?

Q3: *Do you know who was responsible for funding the VSP?*

Topic 2: funding support (note this is potentially sensitive and it is important to strike the right tone of getting information without judgement; especially it is okay for them to have used money differently, we just want to know how. If the respondent is very defensive, do not persist with questions)

If I may, I would now like to ask about the funding support you received.

Q4: *What funding did you receive and how did you use it (connect with Q4 + Q5)?*

What contribution did this make to your overall cost ?

Did your use of the funding match that the same categories in the application?

If not, what additional/ substitutional elements did you use the money for?

Did you in the end spend all the money you received on supporting your volunteering at the Games?

Were there any categories of non-eligible expenditure which would have assisted you? (Probe: the only categories which were eligible were travel, accommodation and costs related to disability and carer responsibilities)

Q5: *Explore impact on ability to participate in roles (connect with Q6)*

How would describe the impact of this funding on your ability to volunteer?

What difference did it make to you?

If positive impact, can you tell me more about how it assisted?

If it had no or little impact, why was this?

Topic 2: Roles in the Games (either as Clyde-sider or member of the cast)

Can you tell me more about what role(s) you had in the Games?

Did you find these rewarding? If so, in what ways?

Topic 3:

Has your volunteering experience at the Games helped you in any way? (if necessary prompt to ensure that they cover areas of):

- a) Gain Confidence*
- b) Learn new Skills*
- c) Create friendships*
- d) Feel more able to face up to other challenges*

Topic 4

Volunteering in the future

I would like finally to ask about your plans in relation to volunteering in the future

Has the experience as Clyde-sider/ceremonies volunteer encouraged you to consider more/different volunteering? If so, what would you like to do?

Are you likely to volunteer for a future event if asked? Would you need support like the VSP to do this or could you manage on your own?

If not encouraged more volunteering, will it reduce your involvement? If so, in what areas and in what ways?

Thank you for answering my questions. Is there anything else you would like me to record about the VSP and its contribution to the Commonwealth Games?

Once again, many thanks for setting aside this time. Your comments will be very helpful to Volunteer Scotland in taking forward lessons from the VSP and in shaping their future ways of supporting volunteering in Scotland.

Appendix 4

Overview of online survey results

2. How did you find out about the Volunteer Support Pot?				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	From the Organising Committee for the Glasgow 2014 Games		610	65%
2	From the Big Lottery Fund		2	0%
3	From Volunteer Scotland		71	8%
4	From friends/other volunteers		89	10%
5	Social media (eg Facebook)		82	9%
6	Other		44	5%
8	From the Spirit of 2012 Trust		1	0%
9	From Jack Morton Worldwide		37	4%
	Total		936	100%

3. When did you learn about the Volunteer Support Pot

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Before you applied to be a volunteer	14	1%
2	Before you had confirmation as a volunteer	71	8%
3	After you had confirmation as a volunteer	555	59%
4	After attending training as a volunteer	296	32%
	Total	936	100%

4. How convenient was the online application process? Please give one answer only

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Very convenient	463	49%
2	Convenient	380	41%
3	Some issues	78	8%
4	Inconvenient	4	0%
5	Very inconvenient	11	1%
	Total	936	100%

5. How would you rate completion of the application form?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Very easy	390	42%
2	Easy	427	46%
3	Some issues	112	12%
4	Difficult	7	1%
5	Very difficult	0	0%
	Total	936	100%

6. How would you rate the support from the VSP Team?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Mainly telephone	29	3%
2	Mainly e-mail	684	73%
3	Both telephone and e-mail	223	24%
	Total	936	100%

7. How would you rate communication from VSP?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Very effective	363	39%
2	Effective	429	46%
3	Some issues	124	13%
4	Ineffective	14	1%
5	Very ineffective	6	1%
	Total	936	100%

8. Volunteer category

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Clyde-sider (from Scotland)	492	53%
2	Ceremonies (from Scotland)	67	7%
3	Clyde-sider (from outside of Scotland)	363	39%
4	Ceremonies (from outside of Scotland)	14	1%
	Total	936	100%

9. Frequency of Volunteering

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Several times a week	162	17%
2	About once a week	190	20%
3	At least once a month	89	10%
4	At least five or six times a year	86	9%
5	A few times a year	154	16%
6	Less often	141	15%
7	Never	114	12%
	Total	936	100%

10. Why did you seek funding?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	I could not afford to cover the costs of volunteering	350	37%
2	I faced additional costs because of my caring responsibilities	80	9%
3	I faced additional costs because of my disability	31	3%
4	I faced additional costs because of where I live	669	71%
5	Other	68	7%

11. Funding for training and rehearsals?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		295	32%
2	No		641	68%
	Total		936	100%






12. What level of assistance did you receive?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than £50		236	25%
2	£50 - £99		85	9%
3	£100 - £249		377	40%
4	£250 - £499		153	16%
5	£500 - £999		63	7%
6	£1000+		22	2%
	Total		936	100%

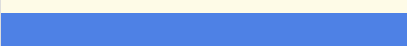


13. Confidence of completion In the absence of the Volunteer Support Pot

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes, all of my commitments		343	37%
2	Some of my commitments only		476	51%
3	No - I would have withdrawn my application		117	13%
	Total		936	100%




14. What impact did this level of funding have on your ability to volunteer?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Major impact		250	27%
2	Significant impact		292	31%
3	Some impact		151	16%
4	Limited impact		105	11%
5	No impact		138	15%
	Total		936	100%

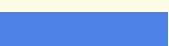

18. Would you recommend VSP?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		808	86%
2	Possibly		83	9%
3	No		45	5%
	Total		936	100%

19. Any impact on your future commitment to volunteering?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Increase in volunteering		545	58%
2	About the same		359	38%
3	Reduction in volunteering		32	3%
	Total		936	100%

23. Gender

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		330	35%
2	Female		606	65%
	Total		936	100%

24. Age

#	Answer		Response	%
1	16 - 24		173	18%
2	25 - 34		137	15%
3	35 - 44		149	16%
4	45 - 59		292	31%
5	60 - 74		183	20%
6	75+		2	0%
	Total		936	100%

25. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		90	10%
2	No		846	90%
	Total		936	100%

26. Do you have carer responsibilities?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		178	19%
2	No		758	81%
	Total		936	100%

27. Case Study Consent

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I am happy to be contacted for a telephone interview		429	46%
2	Do not contact me regarding a telephone interview		507	54%
	Total		936	100%