



THE JEWISH VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE IN LONDON

A report for the Jewish Volunteering Network

Commissioned by Faith in Society Ltd.



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FOREWORD



Religious belief is a powerful motivator for volunteering. Volunteers who are inspired by their religious faith are making an immense – and, all too often, insufficiently appreciated – contribution to meeting social needs in modern Britain. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society exists to encourage and support faith-based organisations in their vital work in communities right across the country.

The Jewish Volunteering Network is justly well regarded as a hub of Jewish volunteering. It connects volunteers in London and elsewhere to charities and other organisations, and provides volunteers with training and advice. I applaud its initiative in commissioning this research, in order to understand the needs of its users better, and to make sure that the service it offers continues to be of the highest quality.

The volunteers deserve nothing better, and I warmly commend this report.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms

MP for East Ham
Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group
on Faith and Society



My passion and enthusiasm for volunteering and my personal experience of the benefits it offers to volunteers led me to become involved as a key supporter of JVN.

I commissioned this report to hear from volunteers across the community, with varied experiences of both volunteering and JVN, in order to establish three key findings: what it is that motivates people to give their time; how volunteering impacts on the life of the volunteer; and to what extent JVN is a useful tool for individuals when conducting their search for a suitable volunteering opportunity.

The input of Faith in Society Ltd. was crucial to maintaining the fairness and accuracy of the findings. It was important to conduct the research from a neutral, non-Jewish standpoint and their expertise in the faith-based voluntary sector is what makes this report so valuable. I am grateful to Warwick Hawkins and Jenny Kartupelis of FiS for the hard work and diligence and the JVN team for their continued support.

Daniel Levy

JVN Life Patron and Trustee

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on an investigation by survey and interviews of the support given to volunteers and charities by the Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN); the role of the charity and its web site; the experience of volunteers; and the motivations/deterrents to volunteering. It concludes with 32 recommendations for JVN in relation to the various areas of its work.

The key findings are:

- JVN and its web site have built a good reputation, are well received and used, and generally facilitate successful volunteering
- Word of mouth (primarily through informal contacts and friends, rather than through work and professional networks) plays a critical part in volunteers finding JVN, and finding the right role
- Many JVN volunteers take on multiple roles, both simultaneously and sequentially, with a variety of charities
- They tend to take on roles with Jewish charities, but not necessarily
- Volunteers have a high level of perceived reward, in terms of using their time and skills effectively; of benefitting others; and of meeting people
- There is a need for active volunteers to share this good news with friends and contacts to encourage more volunteering, and for JVN to actively assist them in doing this
- Most volunteers leave their roles due to changes in personal circumstances or because the job ends, rather than for negative reasons
- Nevertheless, there is a need for volunteers and charities to be clear in their expectations of one another, and there is a role for JVN in this respect

2. INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN) is a hub providing information to the Jewish community about volunteering opportunities, assistance to prospective volunteers in finding a role, and advice to individuals and charities on issues such as training and good practice. Volunteers are its life-blood, and it therefore needs to understand as much as possible about their needs, interests and motivations. It must also ensure that its communication with charities and volunteers is as clear, accessible and helpful as possible. For these reasons it commissioned an independent consultant, Faith in Society Ltd., to undertake a review of all these matters in the first half of 2017, and report on its findings and recommendations.

Faith in Society

Faith in Society is a social enterprise dedicated to helping faith and belief groups reach out to their neighbours and to build bridges with the public sector and civil society. Its vision is to promote improved community cohesion through better understanding and cooperation between people of different religions, those of no faith, and secular society. It provides tailored advisory services and logistical support to faith and belief groups ranging from national representative or umbrella bodies to individual places of worship, and also to secular bodies including public sector, voluntary sector and small to medium-sized businesses. Services provided include advocacy; strategy development, capacity building and fundraising; inter-faith activity and research.

The Directors of Faith in Society, Warwick Hawkins and Jenny Kartupelis, are highly experienced in the faith and social sector and have the experience, contacts and skills to provide this support. Their work has been officially recognised with MBEs for their contributions to inter faith understanding.

Warwick worked on faith engagement for 18 years as a senior civil servant, most recently as head of Faith Communities Engagement in the Department for Communities and Local Government. His roles included developing multi-faith events to mark the First World War centenary, the Millennium and the Golden Jubilee. He has continued to work on interfaith projects in private, consultancy and Trustee capacities. Jenny has a professional background in public relations. In 2002 she established the East of England Faiths Council, and remained its director for 11 years. She provides strategic planning advice and activity recommendations, undertakes survey and research projects – most recently, a faith audit commissioned by Peterborough City Council and a study of spiritual life in care homes – and is also the part-time Strategy and Development Officer for the World Congress of Faiths.

Between them they have some 40 years of experience in working with faith communities: designing and running interfaith dialogue and social action projects, communicating with and representing the 'faith voice', providing religious literacy training, facilitating contacts between faith groups and Government on public policy issues, undertaking surveys and research into faith-based activity and helping faith groups boost their organisational capacity.

3. THE CONTEXT: FAITH AND VOLUNTEERING

The concept of faith groups undertaking social action, and of ‘faithful volunteering’, has a long history. It is a history that is often seen in the UK as a primarily Christian story, associated with monastic almshouses and hospitals dating back to medieval days; church schools; and the great Quaker philanthropists of the Victorian era. However, this view inadvertently ignores a less public but equally rich history of Jewish philanthropy in the UK, with great figures from the 19th and 20th centuries such as Bernhard Baron, Anna Maria Goldsmid and Sir Basil Henriques giving major donations and endowments to health, education and alleviation of poverty.

Equally, there is an assumption in the public mind that Christian beliefs and practice are likely to support charitable ventures, but less thought about the similar motivation arising from other faith traditions. Consequently, many of the ‘faith audits’ of the early 21st century, surveying the presence and activity of faith groups, have focussed on the community activity of churches, although some have done more justice to the role of all faiths. A useful and concise exposition of the Jewish approach to community well-being is given by Sonia Douek in the recent publication *Faith with its Sleeves Rolled Up* (pp63-75, FaithAction, London, 2013).

At a time when religious motivations for social action can be viewed with suspicion by public service providers, or conversely as a panacea for all social ills, a number of surveys of faith-based philanthropy and voluntarism have been undertaken in order to provide social policy-makers with accurate information. These all reach the same overarching conclusions, that faith is a vital motivation for providing social benefits, and that the public sector should be more supportive and less wary of the opportunities this offers. Recent ONS figures (2017) indicate a fall in the total of volunteer hours of 7% from 2012 (2.1 billion hours) to 2015 (1.9 billion), so volunteering needs all the support it can get. The same report revealed that there is an increase in volunteering in the 16 to 24 age group, a resource that can be encouraged.

Other recent studies have focussed more on the benefits to the volunteers themselves; for example, in 2016 Ageing Better’s report found that the people aged 50 and over who would most benefit from volunteering were those who were more isolated, in poorer health, and on lower levels of income: the sector actually least likely to take the step of becoming a volunteer, and most in need of assistance to do so. This may be a demographic for JVN to consider.

This study for JVN does not attempt to reiterate the message of these studies – that faith-based community work is flourishing and commendable, that the benefits are wide ranging to all those involved – but concentrates on the experience of the volunteers undertaking such work, the environment in which they can develop, and the implications for JVN.

4. THE RESEARCH PROJECT: BACKGROUND AND METHOD

Purpose and objectives

The overall purposes of the research were to identify ways of:

- Motivating more people to volunteer
- Addressing constraints where this is possible
- Attracting more people to the JVN website
- Ensuring the website is fulfilling its function for volunteers
- Assisting charities posting jobs to make them attractive

and to assist JVN's development by:

- Ascertaining how best to promote JVN
- Gathering information for internal planning and external publicity

To fulfil these purposes, the objectives of the research were to gather information on:

- Respondent experience of the web site, and drivers to it
- Potential volunteers' experiences with JVN and the overall process of application
- The points at which people may withdraw from, or be deterred by the process
- Current volunteers' attitudes and feedback on the rewards, motivation for, and nature of volunteering
- Awareness levels of JVN among volunteers and non-volunteers
- Interest in volunteering within the Jewish community of Greater London

Other relevant studies

There have been many studies of volunteering, and while this one was specific to JVN, it also yields useful information to add the body of knowledge.

A survey by Volunteering England (*Volunteering and Faith Communities in England*, Boeck, Fleming, Smith and Thorp, 2009) reiterated the value of faith-based volunteering, and noted that many of its challenges were the same as those faced by all volunteering organisations: the need for strong working relationships in the sector, and for better support structures to provide training and development. However, they also identified some needs that are specific to the faith sector, including the necessity for dialogue to explore diversity and recognise difference (in terms of agenda, delivery and motivation). Most importantly, there were also recommendations for the non-faith VCS and the public sector to be better trained and equipped to work with and understand faith organisations.

There are also three short reports specific to Jewish volunteering in the UK, all undertaken by or for JVN: Door to Door Knock On (2013) investigated charities' attitudes to JVN; a 2015 survey undertaken by JVN volunteers for Limmud helped it refine recruitment and management; and the 2016 *Kitemark Survey* examined five charities endorsed by JVN for good practice. All these reports make observations and suggestions that are referred to in our findings at relevant points, and have informed some of our recommendations.

Timescale and methodology

Faith in Society was appointed at the end of December 2016, because of the Directors' familiarity with the work of the JVN, and experience in conducting scientific research. The company adopted recognised academic research approaches in taking this commission forward: desk research, an online survey, fieldwork interviews and a focus group. These were all undertaken in the period February to March 2017.

Respondents for the questionnaire were selected by sending an email to the full JVN database (c. 5,000 people), explaining about the survey and asking them to participate. At the same time, they were asked a few simple demographic questions. The intention was to select two respondent groups, each comprising 50 people of varied age and gender: one of current volunteers, and one comprising those who have registered on the website but not volunteered. In the event, there was not sufficient response to obtain the variety required from non-volunteers, and so we chose to use all the respondents offering to participate (86 individuals), of whom a substantial majority were currently volunteering and nearly all had had some experience of doing so. This group was comprised as follows:

Demographics of the on-line survey

<i>Gender</i>	
Female	62
Male	19
<hr/>	
<i>Age</i>	
21-48	19
49-58	26
Over 58	36
<hr/>	
<i>Volunteering status</i>	
Current volunteer	56
Registered but not volunteering	25
<hr/>	
<i>Employment status</i>	
Employed full-time	15
Employed part-time	16
Self-employed	12
<hr/>	
Student	1
Homemaker, carer or other unpaid employment	5
Retired	23
Unemployed	8

Responses to the questionnaire were analysed into categories of age, gender, employment status, and volunteering status. As the totals were very varied, all figures used are percentages of totals, to enable valid comparisons. Where the totals were too low for validity, this was noted; for all notes on analysis and calculations see Appendix A.

Using the findings drawn from the survey, we then defined questions to explore with a focus group held in March. The consultants also spent half a day in the JW3 premises, talking individually to randomly chosen visitors, and exploring the same questions with them. Finally, five selected respondents were telephoned to ask them more about their comments provided in the semi-structured part of the survey, where it was felt these could shed light on particular issues.

Questions asked in the focus group

- Are you currently volunteering?
- Have you ever volunteered?
- If so, did you volunteer through the Jewish Volunteering Network?
- If not, what is deterring you? (e.g. not enough time in the day? circumstances don't allow it? haven't found any attractive volunteering options?)
- Have you heard of the JVN?
- If not, would you like them to get in touch?
- Would you consider volunteering via the JVN?
- Should the JVN role be an active matchmaker, or just a clearing house?
- Do you use the JVN website?
- If so what do you think of it?
- When you read an ad. on the site, what makes it appealing or unappealing?
- Would you look for volunteering opportunities via your place of employment?

Demographics of the focus group

<i>Gender</i>	
Female	6
Male	3
<hr/>	
<i>Age</i>	
21-48	3
49-58	2
Over 58	4
<hr/>	
<i>Volunteering status</i>	
Current volunteer	6
Not volunteering	3
<hr/>	
<i>Employment status</i>	
Employed full-time	4
Self-employed	1
Student	1
Retired	3

Demographics of the individual interviews

<i>Gender</i>	
Female	5
Male	4
<hr/>	
<i>Age</i>	
21-48	1
49-58	3
Over 58	5
<hr/>	
<i>Volunteering status</i>	
Current volunteer	6
Not volunteering	3
<hr/>	
<i>Employment status</i>	
Employed full-time	3
Self-employed	1
Student	1
Retired	4

The JW3 interview pro forma is at Appendix C.

5. EXPERIENCES OF SEEKING VOLUNTARY WORK

Drawing on the survey and interviews, we initially explored how, after people had made a decision to volunteer, they then accessed the information they required to find a role. The focus group discussion also touched on the need for volunteers to form an idea of the role that might suit them - what experience do they want to use, and what benefits do they expect? - and be aware that it may take time to find something suitable.

The survey looked first at how people found and used the JVN web site, and then canvassed opinions on the site. (for the latter see Section 6 below).

Word of mouth (37%) and web search (27%) were the most common routes to finding the JVN web site, with the former being the most important for current volunteers, women and older people. It was the most important route across all employment groups, but especially unemployed. Volunteers suggested that it was sufficiently important to warrant an 'ambassador corps' willing to share personal experiences, including by social media e.g. WhatsApp. Given that the Limmud research indicated that a major benefit of volunteering is forming friendships and contacts, it is not surprising that this is also the way in which volunteering messages are spread.

Web search as an option did not vary much in popularity across age groups but was slightly more popular with employed and self-employed. Numbers of people to whom the JVN web site had been recommended by another organisation were consistent across all categories (10%). Hearing about the site at JVN events, or in any other way such as advertisements or publicity material were of limited relevance to all types of respondent, though some did suggest posters in synagogues. Some people commented that emails (viewed as 'junk mail' given the quality of what most people receive) were not paid any attention.

Having ascertained more information about routes to finding the site, the survey also addressed the question of routes to finding a volunteering role. The JVN web site was the most popular route, used by 52% of respondents on average, rising to 60% among those not currently volunteering, but who had done so previously.

The joint second most mentioned routes were 'friends' (11% across all categories and particularly popular with men of all ages at 22%) and 'another community group or organisation' (11% across all categories), and again popular with men at 25%. Interestingly, male answers were more evenly spread across route options, while women particularly favoured the JVN web site (60%). In the comments, only one person mentioned 'synagogue' as a route, but others may have included it in the 'other organisations' category.

Asking employers and professionals also scored low (5%). As seeking volunteering roles via the place of employment might have been expected to score more highly, this was investigated in interviews. The feedback was that employers might find it 'too expensive or time consuming' to set up any publicity and might be reluctant to display posters; but one person did say they had been encouraged to volunteer by their employer (though not in practical terms).

The answer 'other web sites' was cited by 10%, and the only significant variation across categories was that more than twice as many men (19%) as women (8%) used 'other web sites'. When invited to comment further, three people mentioned 'do-it.org' as the web site they used, and five mentioned local volunteer hubs.

Printed materials (5%) and publicity materials (4%) were very little used in finding a volunteering job. In discussion, some people thought they were totally ineffective, while others believed that print would still be used by older people. Older people themselves, however, said they did not want to receive a lot of literature.

Respondents were asked which route, if any, eventually led them to the job that they decided to take. The JVN web site was significantly the most successful (49% average) and this was remarkably consistent across all categories. However, it should be remembered these respondents were approached by JVN, so there would be a bias towards this answer. Those who sought work but did not like using web sites, nevertheless found JVN helpful; two respondents mentioned getting personal help from the JVN office, and an interviewee said, 'I don't do web sites, but it's very beneficial to have an umbrella organisation with all the contacts.'

'Other community groups' was the next most successful path to a job (14%), followed by 'asked friends' (11%) and 'other web site' (10%). These statistics reflect the most favoured routes to finding the web site. People may volunteer with an organisation that has previously helped them (such as a hospice or a school) or with which they feel empathy (such as refugee programmes), and have had these in mind as part of the 'Other community groups' category.

Interviews indicated that not only did prospective volunteers ask friends for volunteering suggestions, but also friends had proactively asked them to become involved in a charity. One interviewee said that she had found her role only because JVN had given a presentation at JW3, and she would not have used a web site or emails.

Word of mouth publicity is important not only in finding jobs, but also in being offered them, as became evident from the individual interviews: several volunteers had not sought this type of work, but had accepted it when directly asked by an organisation or personal contact within one. In one case, an interviewee said he would not volunteer unless specifically asked, in which case he would almost certainly accept. Proactivity on the part of the charity must be seen as part of the mix. However, charities making proactive approaches do need to tailor them; one focus group member remarked that when his retirement was announced, 'people kept asking me to do things, I was swamped with possibilities'. Organisations need to 'sell' themselves to potential volunteers, and there may be a role for JVN in this.

The survey also aimed to assess whether issues with using any particular route made it harder to find a job. This did not appear to be the case, and very few people had any problems with the JVN web site; reasons for not finding, or not taking up volunteer roles are examined in Section 8.

6. EXPERIENCES WITH JVN: WEB SITE AND OTHER SUPPORT

The JVN web site

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to choose as many as they wished from a range of options describing their experience of using the JVN site, and also to add any comments. As there was an average of three options chosen by each respondent, the percentages cited are given as a percentage of total options chosen in that respondent category. So for example, 40% finding the web site easy to use does not indicate that 60% found it difficult to use.

It was clear from the focus group that the JVN web site was likely to be an initial port of call for many seeking volunteer jobs: 'The obvious place for us', as one said, and another said that without it, the range of possibilities would be 'too vast'. In some cases, people were directed to it by other Jewish advisory services.

In the survey, out of a total of all the response options chosen, 87% were positive, while 13% were negative, and there was a consistent response across all categories in relation to 'easy to use' (40%) and 'clean and professional' (19%). There was some variation by gender, with men somewhat more focussed on the appearance of the site (negative and positive) and women on its usability.

The only option that indicated any marked variation was 'good volunteering opportunities', with older people, retired and unemployed choosing this option less than other categories; there was also a gender variation, with 31% of women, but only 15% of men choosing it. In the focus group, it was mentioned that a 'surprising' number of opportunities were not with Jewish charities; some liked the fact that there were non-Jewish advertisers, while others were rather negative about this. However, it is certainly the case that JVN's Jewish focus is seen by many participants as an advantage.

People also commented on the great range of jobs on the JVN site, with some finding this very positive, and 'liking to browse', while others found it daunting, and would have liked the site to offer better ways of filtering and defining the opportunities, or advice on how to handle so much information.

Turning to the negative response options chosen by survey respondents, responses were consistent across all categories. The negative options of 'too little information' and 'too much information' scored equally low, suggesting that the amount of information is about right; which reflects the comments cited above. There was very little variation between current and non-volunteers, implying that the JVN web site is not deterring applicants, nor is it responsible for any lack of success in finding the right job.

However, focus group participants were in broad agreement that JVN needs to limit, or at least

consider carefully, the emails it sends out once someone has registered. One person spoke of being 'bombarded'; as we understand that people are getting one JVN email a week, this may be an exaggeration, but there was a perception that emails were not targeted and too 'bland'. There were comparisons made with signing up to estate agents, and then getting notified of unsuitable properties.

The wording of advertisements played an important role in job-seeking, with some aspects such as offers of training, and clarity about how the work might meet volunteers' needs and use their particular skills being seen as encouraging, while other factors such as being too vague or too dictatorial were off-putting: 'if they aren't clear about the skills they want, they won't get the right people'. It was important to be exact about location and hours, to avoid wasting people's time. The part the advertiser plays in the process will influence the overall perception of the web site, and this is considered in making recommendations (Section 9). As it happened, one interviewee was an advertiser (having decided to form her own charity), and she said that the site was 'a good idea in theory', but had not provided her with the right people and skills.

As only 39% of survey respondents had used any other web sites, the total of options chosen across categories is quite low, and the following percentages should be treated with caution. In particular, breakdown across the employment categories gave individual numbers that were too low to be useful.

While a significant majority (61%) had used only the JVN web site, we cannot know if this was preference, or ignorance of others. One person said: 'I don't think there are any good volunteering web sites apart from JVN. I have recommended it to non-Jewish friends.' In interviews, some people said they would not use other web sites because they were more confident that those advertising on JVN were genuine, and in some cases were looking only for Jewish or Israeli charities.

However, it is encouraging to see that where respondents had used other web sites, they chose 89% of positive options when describing JVN in relation to others, and 11% of negative options. There was very little variation across categories in these responses except in one case: in relation to gender, women found the JVN web site had more suitable opportunities than others (25% as opposed to 0% for men actively choosing this option), but the male response figures were very low overall for this question, distorting the comparison.

Given previous answers, it is likely that the other web sites used, and therefore providing the basis of comparison, were either well-known hubs such as do-it.org, or were local community sites.

Other support from JVN

The interviews and focus group were used to discuss experiences of other JVN support that people had received or would like.

A number of people interviewed (and survey respondents' general comments) indicated the importance of JVN offering 'follow-on care' to those securing roles through its site. Suggestions included: 'JVN should keep in touch with volunteers, get feedback from them and reconnect with them... to offer new opportunities' and 'Send follow-up emails to volunteers – how are you getting on?'

They also suggested that current users could give feedback on the charities, who could then in turn be advised or assisted by JVN. Some went so far as to say that JVN could act in a 'TripAdvisor' capacity, providing a facility for volunteers to score their experience with a charity, and write public reviews.

The question of whether JVN should act as a 'clearing house' or also attempt to be a 'matchmaker' was explored with the focus group and interviewees. Some thought the latter would be difficult, entailing a large amount of work. Others said that the range of opportunities was so 'overwhelming' that JVN did need to do 'more matchmaking', or help people in other ways to discern the right thing for them; one added, 'especially older age groups.'

There was little agreement on this issue in the focus group: some people liked being able to look through a lot of opportunities at leisure and follow them up, while others wanted to be sent highly targeted information. A review of the filtering system might meet the needs of both categories.

However, the answer also depends on the scope of the 'matchmaking'. It could be more in the nature of briefing and preparing volunteers and charities to optimise the relationship, rather than actually matching them on a one-to-one basis; one person commented: 'Volunteers need to be made more aware of what they are signing up for'.

7. THE EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING

Range and nature of volunteering roles

Responses to the survey indicated that most people (66%) who volunteer at all, undertake more than one volunteering role over a period of two years (the maximum was nine). This could be sequentially or simultaneously, and we estimate that each respondent had undertaken 2.6 jobs over the last two years.

An analysis of the range and nature jobs undertaken by respondents, as extracted from their comments, appears in Appendix B.

About half the respondents answered a question about the travel distance to their current role: 44% lived 1 to 5 miles away, and 26% lived 5 to 10 miles away, suggesting a willingness to travel, but a limit on the distance. They were also asked about time commitment per role (not a total for the individual); 39% of roles took 1 to 5 hours per week, and 19% 5 to 10 hours per week. 25% were 'variable', suggesting there could be quite a lot of flexibility.

The question of flexibility is an interesting one, as for some people, ad hoc volunteering may be their best or only choice, and very useful to organisations for e.g. running a major event. As the NCVO says, people should be enabled to 'dip in and out' and it is an approach that enables more people to participate. However, some charities rely heavily on consistent commitment, especially if training or security checks are required. There is a need for clarity on both sides in terms of what is needed and expected.

Impressions of volunteering

Respondents were asked to share their impressions of their first volunteering post. Each respondent chose on average two options, with 112 responses from women and 28 responses from men.

Most responses were broadly positive (92%) as opposed to negative (8%) and very few people felt they were not wanted or needed. There was very little variation in responses between current volunteers and non-volunteers, suggesting that first impressions had not been critical to motivating or deterring subsequent volunteering.

Nor were there significant differences between age groups, but there was a tendency for the middle age group to be the most satisfied with their first experience. Some factors showed a difference between genders: women were more likely to feel they had been given 'something rewarding' to do (12% vs. 4%) and also more likely to have received training or instruction (22% vs. 11%), but men tended to be happier with the amount of work they had been given. These variations are noted for interest, but do not have any significant implications for JVN.

The 'other comments' (16) were largely positive, in line with the options chosen, although two people wrote at length about how unhappy they had been with their placement. Those who commented on experiences in more than one role that they had held, had had very different experiences with different charities, indicating a need to continue encouraging people to find the right thing for them.

Seeking new roles

Considering the range and multiplicity of roles undertaken, the survey also explored the willingness to seek new roles, and respondents were asked if they were currently looking for alternative or additional jobs. 47% of people who answered this question were currently looking, but this does not necessarily mean that they were planning to leave their present job. The figures suggest a fairly high level of 'churn', but given that 38% leave because their role has come to an end, this is not surprising. Nor is it necessarily a problem, as experience is being gained, and shared across the charities.

Whether or not people were currently volunteering, did not affect their intention to seek a new role. Older people (62%), self-employed (66%) and unemployed (71%) were the most likely to be looking for a new role, but it is not possible to know whether this would be an additional one. It may suggest they have more time, but there is no evidence for this.

Respondents were also asked about their reasons for moving on from a role, and these are discussed in the next Section.

The rewards of volunteering

Finally, we wanted to find out more about motivation, and people were asked to rank the importance of different ‘rewards’ that might be expected from volunteering.

Virtually everyone answering this set of questions said that ‘Using professional skills/experience’ was applicable to their situation, suggesting volunteers are bringing their professional knowledge to their roles. Of the total responding, 65% found this aspect ‘extremely rewarding’ and 24% ‘quite rewarding’. There was some variation according to age, with the youngest age group scoring most highly on ‘extremely rewarding’ (83%). Men were more adamant than women about this aspect, with 82% choosing ‘extremely rewarding’ as opposed to 58% of women.

‘Working with other people’ represented another important ‘reward’. Very few said this was not applicable, indicating that people were regularly interacting with others, and 89% found this aspect ‘extremely’ or ‘quite rewarding’, a finding that was consistent across all categories. In interviews, there were references to this aspect, such as ‘I like being with others’ and ‘I wanted to meet new people’. Without exception, all young people found this aspect extremely or quite rewarding. Only men and older people chose the ‘not rewarding’ option at all, and these were very low figures.

Similarly, a consistent and significant proportion of respondents chose ‘Seeing your impact on beneficiaries’ as important; 62% of the total found this aspect ‘extremely rewarding’ and 21% ‘quite rewarding’. There was just slightly less enthusiasm for this aspect among young people, but the baseline figure was low, so nothing can be read into this. There was also consensus across categories that volunteering is ‘A good way to fill my spare time’. Only 3% felt this option was not applicable to them, and one person added in comments, ‘volunteering is the best thing you can do in your spare time’. ‘Doing my share’ and ‘Giving back’ to society were mentioned by several people, and it seemed that for some this meant using their working-life skills, while for others it meant seeing people in need benefitting from the volunteer’s time (or of course, it could be both).

Bearing in mind the satisfaction of using professional skills, we also asked whether respondents enjoyed ‘Seeing change in policy or practice’. 57% did not consider this applicable to them, so it seems likely that this aspect is not part of many volunteering roles or that volunteers find it hard to observe the extent to which they have influenced change. When they did, 30% found it ‘extremely rewarding’ and 33% ‘quite rewarding’.

Through interviews and the focus group, we also explored volunteers’ experiences of being motivated directly by the charity with which they were working, and the type of rewards that were significant.

People felt that charities needed to be very (and possibly more) alert to this factor to secure continued involvement, and also that JVN should actively encourage recognition by the charities (rather than by JVN), reminding them of the need to express gratitude. One person said ‘We don’t necessarily want lots of conferences or rewards, though the JVN awards do remind everyone of the great range of volunteering roles’; another, ‘People need to feel appreciated and charities to remember that even a small amount of time is valuable.’

8. CHOOSING NOT TO VOLUNTEER

People may not consider volunteering, or consider it seriously and then decide against, or take up a role and then leave it. We wanted to gather some insights to what affects these decisions, in order for JVN to benefit from any learning points.

As survey respondents had all at least considered volunteering (or they would not have been on the database), the reasons why people may never have entertained the thought were discussed with interviewees and the focus group. The answers included 'health reasons', 'too busy at work', 'too tired' (2), and 'never been asked'. These reflect the recent ONS figures (Section 2), and the comment on them by the NCVO, that 'Lack of time is the biggest reason people cite for not volunteering.'

Interestingly one said 'No entry point', implying he was not aware of volunteering web sites.

The focus group discussed the issue of deferring the decision until retirement, and could not agree about the impact of retirement: some thought that was the point at which it would be easier to volunteer; some thought health and ability to travel may then become problems; and one said: 'Plenty of people in full time work volunteer, it's a myth you have to wait until you retire.'

The survey explored the factors that may influence someone who has considered volunteering (i.e. already used the web site) to decide against taking it further. The question was posed, 'If you used the JVN website, but did not take up a volunteering role, what prevented or deterred you?' Respondents were given a selection of options, and the facility to make additional comments.

Nearly half the respondents (49%) chose the 'not applicable' option, so it can be assumed that these people had found a role (though not necessarily through the JVN web site). Very few people noted any problems using the web site. The single largest reason (28%) for not taking a role was 'my circumstances changed'. Although there is quite a variation in this percentage across categories, it is not possible to read too much into this, given the low total numbers. It is in any case a factor outside JVN's control.

Remarks relating in some way to the lack of suitable job opportunities constituted 47% of all comments (e.g. nothing suited to experience, travelling difficult, did not match their interest/experience). Some respondents had gone quite a way down the path to taking a role, and then the charity had changed the job requirement or time, and they had been forced to drop out. They were clearly not pleased.

Respondents were also asked about reasons for ending a role: 48% had not recently given up a role, and 17% did not respond to this question, so may not have done so. The most common reason for leaving a role was 'change of personal circumstances' (52%), followed by the role they had held coming to an end (38%).

There was an insufficient number of 'other comments' to draw out any trends or conclusions, but amongst them were some reflecting distinct annoyance or disillusion, such as 'The organisation had not been clear with itself what it wanted'; 'It was rather cliquey, I didn't feel welcome'; 'It was unfulfilling' and 'They really didn't need me; they only used me for the most boring and menial tasks ... I stuck it out for nearly a year, but it was really a waste of my time and abilities'.

The annoyance at a 'bad' ending for a volunteer placement may be exacerbated by the feeling that time was given freely but not appreciated, and underlines the need for charities to be very proactive in their care for volunteers, and for them to be clear about what they are seeking, and what is on offer.

Some of the factors in non-volunteering are amenable to change, and some will always be the case. Among the latter are changes in personal circumstances such as deteriorating health or a different job. Others are to do with the experience of volunteering, or attempting to, such as indecisiveness or lack of support from the charity hosting the volunteer. These are factors that JVN may consider addressing.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Web site

The web site is generally viewed very positively, but there are improvements that can be made. The critical challenge is to provide a wide range of opportunities, but at the same time enable searchers to feel in control and not overwhelmed. There is a question relating to this challenge, as to whether JVN should be a 'matchmaker' or a 'clearing house'.

- It is not possible to go far with a search before needing to commit to registering; as there are concerns about receiving too many emails or other contact, JVN could be clear what registering commits someone to, with a 'What happens next?' message
- Aim to get as much variety as possible onto the site, and consider introducing mechanisms that may prompt people to look more widely amongst the opportunities; for example, could any search criteria be added or changed? Perhaps 'pop ups' could be used asking 'Have you considered...?'
- Making filtering simpler would give more sense of control. For example, the 'Location' box gives no indication as to whether a town, region or postcode is required. It could ask for a postcode and offer options for willingness to search within 2, 5, 10 or 20 miles. It is not necessary to ask for an exact age (is it necessary to ask at all at this stage?). Boxes could be unticked as default mode, and the user able to tick those of interest
- Ensure good cross-referencing and links with other web sites, especially do-it.org, local community sites, and those cited by respondents
- Put a message on the JVN web site asking users to call the office if they need help (if this is desirable)
- Several users suggested JVN provide reviews of charities, however this would need handling with care. Ratings and reviews would need to be moderated before posting, and this is time consuming. There would be difficult decisions around negative reviews e.g. would there be a right of response? Would charities be deterred from using the JVN web site?
- Exploring the question of being a 'matchmaker' results in the suggestion that JVN should not be attempting to match individual people and jobs, as this would involve it in substantial time in terms of assisting both sides, and in possible problems if matters went wrong, as it would have no control over outcomes
- However, it also results in the recommendation that JVN can do more to improve the expectations of both sides, such that the match starts with a good understanding and a favourable environment

Other publicity

Word of mouth is extremely important in promoting the web site, and as a route to finding a volunteer role. JVN has an enviable resource of volunteer experience, most of it very positive. It needs to enable volunteers to act as ambassadors for JVN and the 'cause'.

- Concentrate efforts on informal networks; help volunteers find ways of making sure friends know about the rewards of volunteering, and provide them with advice and tools to make presentations to groups they know such as hobby and sport clubs, PTAs, student unions, community groups
- Printed publicity and ads. should be reviewed, as people are not very influenced by them, and they have limited outlets. Perhaps just have one printed flyer that 'ambassadors' can use
- This survey, amongst others, will give JVN information that can be used on its web site, by its ambassadors and with the media, to encourage volunteering; for example, the great range of roles available, the clear enjoyment of volunteers in using their time and knowledge while meeting new people and building their skills
- JVN will need to decide whether to discount places of employment as a publicity medium, or make a major effort to use them better e.g. making contact with HR departments, arranging presentations. This is a resource intensive exercise, but may be worthwhile
- Similarly, JVN could target universities, for example through their multi-faith chaplaincies, but again this takes significant time and resource

Interaction with charities using the web site

- JVN can provide advice to advertisers on positive wording and factors that volunteers find attractive; also on what they need to know. The importance of clarity and good follow-through needs to be stressed
- Men and older people tend to find the available jobs less appealing and you could consider urging charities to bear these categories in mind when writing their text e.g. there may be certain words or phraseology that deter or attract men and older people
- Urge advertisers to test their own ad. when it appears on the site: make sure it looks as they wish, that the links are working, keep it up to date, remove it when the job is filled
- Enabling reviews to be posted on the web site would be difficult (see above). However, JVN does need to recognise volunteers' negative experiences, and assure people that their information is welcome and acknowledged. It should consider ways of sharing and helping charities learn from negative feedback, either through personal contact or by organising workshops
- JVN should suggest to the charities it serves, that they do an exit interview; JVN could offer a guidance leaflet or workshop on the value of this, as a way of sharing what it has learnt from volunteers
- Recommend that before advertising they consider the pros and cons of ad hoc and long-term volunteers, and decide which type they want
- Remind charities of the importance of word of mouth: if they want particular skills, encourage them to also target and ask people

Support for volunteers

It is critical that volunteers feel supported at each stage: the search, preparing to join a charity, during the volunteering period, and when it ends.

- On registration, explain what will happen next – what can be expected from JVN, and how the person can benefit from the JVN services
- When a volunteer finds a job, send them an email clarifying what to expect from the charity, what will be expected of them and how JVN will keep in touch (this will need to be a general email, rather than specific to the volunteer)
- The information from this survey on time input and travelling times could enable JVN to give new volunteers an idea of how variable commitment can be, depending on what time they have available
- Contact active volunteers regularly but not frequently (at three monthly intervals?), asking for their news, and particularly anything that can be used on the web site. Remind them of informal meetings and workshops
- Ask them to share their positive experiences, with suggestions how to spread the word when talking to others, going to community groups. Ask them to tell friends about the JVN web site
- Given that nearly 40% of volunteers leave only because their role is ending, JVN should try to 'catch' volunteers whose role is nearing its end, to help them find something else
- Encourage volunteers to try different types of placement, whether or not the first one has worked out
- The very positive experience of young people in respect of using their professional skills, and of finding it very rewarding to work with others can be used to 'sell' them the advantages of volunteering
- JVN can reassure volunteers that they will not be wasting their time: 'volunteering is the best thing you can do in your spare time'

CONCLUSION

Other publicity

This independent study indicates that JVN has achieved a significant level of awareness, has an enviable reputation, and is the favoured source of information and jobs for Jewish people seeking a volunteering role. Its achievement provides the foundation for further development, in terms of extending its reach and work, and of prioritising its most valued functions.

The 32 detailed recommendations provided in this report have been categorised according to the current organisational functions of JVN. We suggest that the next stage is for JVN to review change implementation in line with its objectives, strategy, resources, individual cost/resource estimates for introducing each recommendation, and any future plans already agreed. It will then be in a position to accept, reject and prioritise recommendations and incorporate them into a scheduled and costed plan.

It is suggested that this review could be undertaken by the Trustees (perhaps with one or two co-options to introduce additional experience); or by a 'task and finish' working party comprising some Trustees, volunteers and external advisers; or by an external consultancy.

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APPENDIX A:

NOTES ON ANALYSIS AND BASELINES OF ONLINE QUESTIONS

Question 1: How did you hear about JVN and its website?

Respondents could choose more than one option, so percentages are based on total of options chosen per category of respondent.

Question 2: When you were looking for volunteering opportunities, what route(s) did you use?

The answers reflect all routes, so percentages are based on route totals, not respondent totals. On average, each respondent used 1.6 routes. There was very little variation on this figure across categories, but men mentioned more routes (2 per person an average) than women (1.4)

Question 3: Which route (if any) eventually provided you with a suitable volunteering opportunity?

Some people mentioned more than one successful route, so percentages are based on route totals, not respondent totals.

Question 4: What was your impression of the JVN website?

There was an average of 3 response options per respondent, so all percentages are of total options chosen in that respondent category.

Question 5: If you used the JVN website, but did not take up a volunteering role, what prevented or deterred you?

There was an average of just over one option chosen per respondent. Nearly half the respondents (49%) chose the 'not applicable' option, so it can be assumed that these people had found a role (though not necessarily through the JVN web site). The percentages used are therefore percentages of the total options chosen by those respondents who appear not to have found a role. However, some of the category totals are very low, so the figures should be viewed with caution.

Question 6: If you used other websites, how did they compare?

As only 39% of respondents had used other web sites, and 6% did not respond, the total of options chosen across categories is quite low, and percentages should be treated with caution. The employment categories yielded numbers that were too low to be reliable as percentages.

Question 7: How many volunteering roles have you undertaken under the past few years?

The wording of this question was changed on SurveyMonkey from that on the original questionnaire. It had been intended to indicate the average number of jobs per respondent over the last two years, but this cannot be extracted from the numeric data. However, using the 'comments' it is possible to make a rough estimate of 2.6 jobs per respondent over the last two years.

Question 8: When you took up your first volunteering post, what impressions did you have?

There was an average of 2 options chosen per respondent. The baseline to calculate responses has 'additional comments' and 'no response' numbers removed. The wording of one of the options was changed from that on the original questionnaire, weighting it towards favourable answers. One respondent noted this as liable to create a bias. Substantially more women (112 responses) than men (28 responses) chose to answer this question.

Question 9: If you have recently given up a volunteering role, why?

48% of respondents had not recently given up a role, and 17% did not respond to this question. Therefore the baseline numbers are quite low, so comparison across categories would not be meaningful.

Question 10: Are you currently volunteering?

The purpose of this question was primarily to provide baseline figures for current and non-volunteers, to assist the category breakdowns. 39 people gave their job title or role description. These were enormously varied, and not always 'run of the mill' e.g. photographer, museum guide, IT manager.

Question 11: Are you looking for a new volunteering role?

No specific notes.

Question 12: Approximately how far from home do you work in your most recently started role?

52% of total respondents did not answer this question.

Question 13: How many hours per week do you volunteer in your most recently started role?

This question specifically applied to the most recently started role, rather than all roles, as we were aiming to assess the likely time input for a role, not for a volunteer.

Question 14: In your current volunteering role(s) please rank the following aspects in terms of how rewarding you find them

No specific notes

APPENDIX B:

RANGE OF VOLUNTEERING ROLES UNDERTAKEN BY RESPONDENTS IN LAST TWO YEARS

Charities by function/beneficiaries

Local community action (drop-ins, advice etc.)	26
Young people, families, education	20
Arts, museums, heritage	16
Learning disability	12
Synagogue	11
Israeli charities	10
Hospitals, hospices	9
Humanitarian, refugees, human rights	8
Homelessness, poverty	6
Charity shops (non specific)	3
Physical disability	3
Ad hoc/as needed	3
Older people	2
Sport	2
Environment	1
Other/not known/confidential	8
TOTAL	140

Charities by faith affiliation

Jewish	100
Not faith affiliated	37
Not known	3
TOTAL	140

APPENDIX C:

PRO FORMA FOR FIELDWORK INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AT JW3 ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH

Areas to cover

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Status: Employed/retired/homemaker or similar/student/jobseeker _____

1. Volunteering

Are you currently volunteering anywhere? _____

Have you ever volunteered? _____

If yes in either case:

Who with? _____

What do/did you do? _____

How did you find out about the opportunity? _____

What motivated you to volunteer (looking for friends, making a change, helping people, giving something back, etc)? _____

If you haven't, what is deterring you? (e.g. not enough time in the day? circumstances don't allow it? haven't found any attractive volunteering options?)

2. JVN

Have you heard of JVN? _____

If yes, what do you know about what they do? _____

From what you know do you think it makes more sense for JVN's role to be as an active match-maker or just a clearing house? _____

Have you seen their website and, if so, what do you think of it? _____

[If not, give them one brief sentence of explanation and say that this research is being done on their behalf] _____

Have any thoughts on how important having an organisation like that would be? _____

3. JW3

Are you aware that JW3 uses volunteers? _____

If yes, are you aware of what roles they have for volunteers and have you considered volunteering with them? _____

If no, introduce them to someone there to discuss it, or give them one brief sentence about what opportunities exist. _____

4. Future volunteering

Would you consider volunteering via either JW3 or JVN? _____

If yes, can we pass your details on to either or both (email or phone)? _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

If no, would you consider any other volunteering, including via your place of employment?

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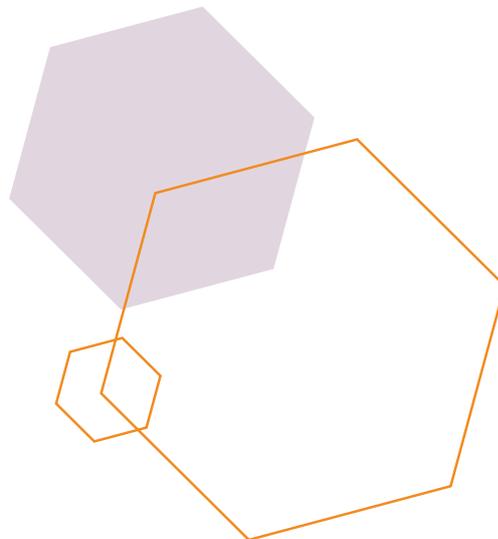
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