



Volunteering and the Workplace

Hands Up for New Skills

Introduction

Volunteering has long been acknowledged as a valuable activity – giving back to the community to dedicate time, share knowledge, or simply offer the hand of friendship to those who may be lonely.

It can boost self-confidence, re-connect an individual to the community and bring personal fulfilment.

2015 brought about a significant culture shift in the way that volunteering is viewed. No longer the preserve of students and retirees – volunteering has emerged from the shadows as a way to gain and develop skills that are relevant both in the search for employment and in the workplace. This was recognised earlier this year through the Government's pledge to allow three days of paid volunteering leave for employees in large organisations, designed to "unleash a

new wave of skills, capability and passion." Indeed, the leading job site worldwide, in close partnership with Team London, the Mayor of London's volunteering programme, has conducted brand new research amongst decision makers within 500 UK businesses and 500 UK adults to understand more about attitudes to volunteering. This study intends to discover whether there is a mismatch between consumer perception and employee expectation around the skills that can be gained through volunteering. The findings are supported with in-depth interviews with recruitment experts within four major UK businesses.

Foreword from Bill Richards, UK Managing Director at Indeed:

“As the job market evolves, so too do routes into employment. As competition for top talent grows at pace, we see more open and agile attitudes from talent acquisition heads around recruiting. Increasingly this means a move away from recruiting for specific ‘jobs’, but rather seeking individuals with relevant passion and enthusiasm that align with company culture. Once within the business, it’s crucial to set about developing this talent. Volunteering can play a big part in both feeding the talent pipeline and developing skills throughout an individual’s career.”

**Foreword from Veronica Wadley, Senior Advisor to the Mayor of London
(Team London, Volunteering, Charities and Sponsorship)**

“More than ever before, volunteering is helping young people develop the skills they need to secure paid employment. Employee volunteering is also transforming the way that organisations engage with their staff, their customers and the communities in which they operate. This volunteering revolution has been made possible by technological advancements in volunteer brokerage, such as Team London’s new volunteering mobile app and Speed Volunteering website.”

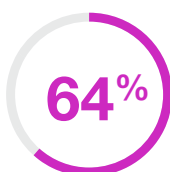
Perception Gap: The Value of Volunteering

54% of all consumers we spoke to said that they had undertaken some volunteering work, with London – named ‘European Volunteering Capital’ in 2016 – standing out, where the figure rises to 59%. Despite this, just under one third say they have never included this experience on their CV.

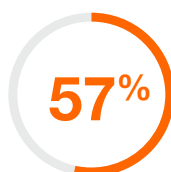
For those that have, the following reasons top the list of perceived benefits:



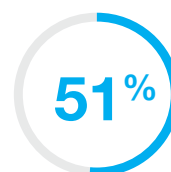
shows a willingness to work



translates into skills that can be used in the workplace

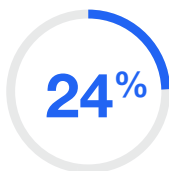


shows they like giving back to the community



it might make a person stand out compared to others who haven't done any volunteering

For those that said they didn't see the relevance of including volunteering experience on a CV, the following reasons were listed highest:



hadn't considered it as something that might help people in their job search



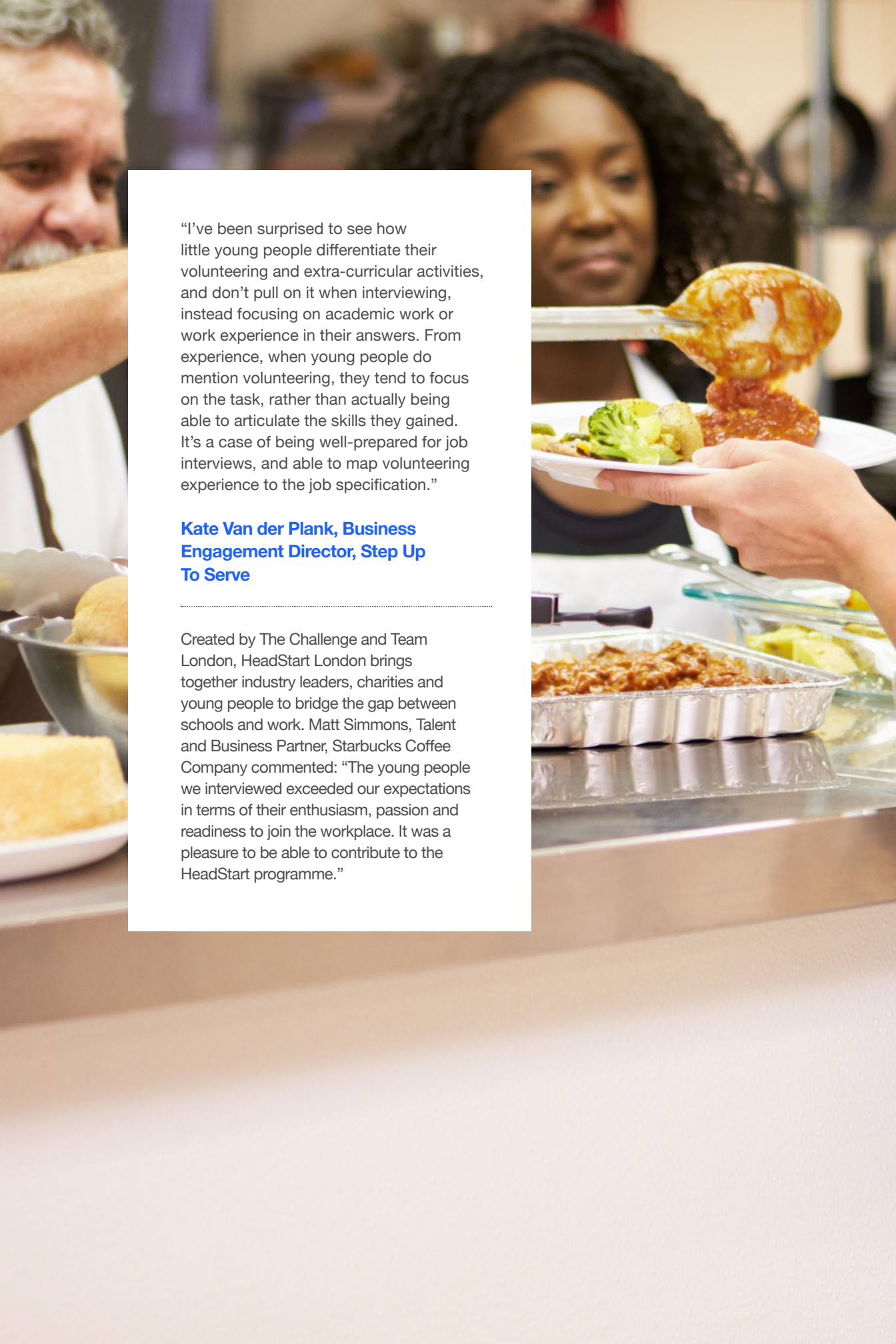
say they don't think the experience gained from volunteering is relevant for a CV/job applications



say they don't think it will set someone apart from other candidates



say they don't understand how volunteering experience can be relevant in the workplace



“I’ve been surprised to see how little young people differentiate their volunteering and extra-curricular activities, and don’t pull on it when interviewing, instead focusing on academic work or work experience in their answers. From experience, when young people do mention volunteering, they tend to focus on the task, rather than actually being able to articulate the skills they gained. It’s a case of being well-prepared for job interviews, and able to map volunteering experience to the job specification.”

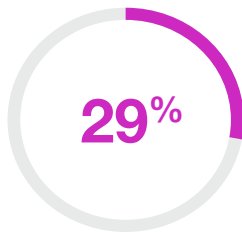
Kate Van der Plank, Business Engagement Director, Step Up To Serve

Created by The Challenge and Team London, HeadStart London brings together industry leaders, charities and young people to bridge the gap between schools and work. Matt Simmons, Talent and Business Partner, Starbucks Coffee Company commented: “The young people we interviewed exceeded our expectations in terms of their enthusiasm, passion and readiness to join the workplace. It was a pleasure to be able to contribute to the HeadStart programme.”

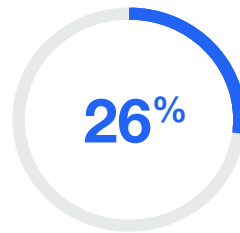
A Shout Out for Skills - Showcasing Voluntary Roles on CVs

Over three quarters (77%) believe that it is important to include volunteering experience on a CV or job application – this percentage is slightly higher amongst women (83%) than amongst men (70%). The age groups most likely to rate it as ‘very important’ are the 18-24 and 45-54 age groups.

This suggests that volunteering is still perceived as an activity for those looking to get onto the career ladder for the first time, and perhaps those returning to work or looking for a career change, rather than as a means to collect new skills and experience for current workers. This idea is corroborated when asking individuals who they believe volunteering is most suitable for:



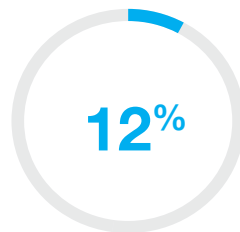
say ‘unemployed people’ – the likelihood of this perception increases with age of respondent (19% of 18-24 compared with 32% of 55+)




say ‘people looking for their first job’



say ‘retirees’



said ‘workers looking to expand skills/gain new experience’



“Volunteering helps young people to gain employability skills, such as communication and team working skills, and it also gives them insight into the world of work, which is why employers should recognise volunteering experience when they recruit young people. However, candidates often fail to highlight their volunteering experience, unless given the opportunity to do so, as many still regard traditional work experience as being more important to employers.

“With the difficulties that many young people also face in terms of securing good quality work experience, it is clear that volunteering has a huge role to play in terms of skills development. By failing to uncover this experience during the recruitment stage, employers could be missing out on enthusiastic individuals who have precisely the types of employability skills organisations tell us they need and struggle to find.”

Katerina Rudiger, Chief Community Officer, CIPD



64%

of decision makers agree that it is important to include volunteering experience, with 41% noting that they often ask specific questions about volunteering when recruiting. This agreement was highest in the education sector, followed by transportation/distribution and finance/accounting.

Industries that rate value of volunteering ranked by net importance

	Important	Fairly important	Net important
Manufacturing	29%	48%	77%
Construction	18%	59%	77%
Retail	26%	48%	74%
Finance and Accounting	14%	59%	73%
Hospitality and Leisure	19%	52%	71%
Legal	15%	54%	69%
IT and Telecoms	25%	44%	69%
Media/ marketing/ advertising/ PR & sales	24%	37%	61%
Medical & health services	27%	32%	59%
Education	16%	42%	58%
Transportation and distribution	21%	31%	52%
Real estate	15%	36%	51%

Uncovering the Value of Volunteering, to the Employer and Employee

Despite this positive response from decision-makers, the research reveals a disconnect between the theory and the practice. On average, just 45% business decision-makers report that their business recognises volunteering experience in recruitment practices, though this rises significantly to 60% amongst larger businesses (with over 250 employees), and within the medical and health services industry (65%).

“The Mayor’s Corporate Commitment sets a new standard for businesses that want to invest in social action. It has been signed by over 100 leading London organisations who recognise the importance of volunteering in staff development and the recruitment of young people. Working with the CIPD and Step Up To Serve we have provided a toolkit to support organisations to put this recognition into practice.” – **Veronica Wadley, Senior Advisor to the Mayor of London (Team London, Volunteering, Charities and Sponsorship)**

Communication skills (88%) and self-motivation (88%) are the skills that employers in this sector consider a benefit of volunteering experience, followed closely by confidence and interpersonal skills – both 82%. Given the predominance of care-giving roles in the healthcare sector, and the vocational nature of many roles, it is perhaps unsurprising to see the surge in importance that this industry places on voluntary experience.

The research suggests that volunteering experience comes into sharper focus after the initial application phase, once the candidate is selected for interview. Although only 15% businesses report that they actively search for volunteering experience on a CV, 41% say that they often ask a specific question about this when interviewing candidates. “In an interview, more often than not, a candidate will need to

proactively raise the subject of their voluntary experience. Employers are unlikely to probe into this, so candidates should be prepared to discuss it where relevant, without being prompted.” – **Leading Recruitment Agency**

Building on this, 51% would consider volunteering experience as a deciding factor when choosing between two very similar candidates. This percentage is highest amongst employers in Scotland (58%), and drops to its lowest in Wales at just 43%. 68% of these decision makers report that they have some volunteering experience themselves.

“Employers tell us time and time again, that when looking to recruit young people, skills such as resilience, perseverance, good communication skills and creativity are equally if not more important than academic qualifications. There is now hard evidence showing that young people who take part in social action develop these skills – enabling them to make a contribution to their communities whilst at the same time building the skills we need in the workplace – it really is a win-win. The #iwill campaign aims to make participation in social action the norm for 10-20 year olds across the UK. To date, over 400 organisations across all sectors, have pledged to support the campaign.” – **Kate Van der Plank, Business Engagement Director, Step Up To Serve**



Employers' Views of Skills Gained Through Volunteering

Which, if any, of the following do you believe are important skills that can be gained through volunteering? (Please select all that apply. If any of your answers don't show in the list below, please type them in the 'other' box)

Communication skills	71%
Self-motivation	68%
Team work	73%
Confidence	73%
Leadership skills	51%
Interpersonal skills	71%
Other (Please see tab Q5 other)	6%
Don't know	3%
Not applicable – I don't believe that important skills can be gained through volunteering	7%

Mariano Mamertino, economic analyst at Indeed, adds: "This mismatch between employer intent and reality extends beyond attitudes to volunteering. In mobile job search, we see an understanding amongst employers that jobseekers are 'convenience first' when considering application channels, yet just 5%

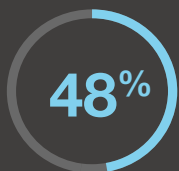
of Fortune 500 companies have a mobile-friendly application process. Employers would be wise to ensure that their application and interview process supports their wider strategy, reflecting the insights shared in this research."



of Londoners have done volunteering (compared to 54% average).



of London jobseekers believe it is 'very important' to include volunteering on a CV.



of employers often ask specific questions about volunteering experience when interviewing candidates.



of employers would use volunteering experience as a deciding factor when choosing between two candidates.

London

London was recently awarded the title of European Volunteering Capital 2016. The research also identifies London as the volunteering capital, with 59% people reporting that they have volunteer experience. This enthusiasm translates to employers, with 53% now stating that they would use volunteering experience as a deciding factor when choosing between two candidates.

However, it appears that there is further education required amongst jobseekers as to the value of volunteering experience in their job applications. Currently, just 32% of jobseekers say they have ever included this on their CV, with 33% reporting that they hadn't considered it as something that will help their job search.

"Whilst London candidates are more likely to have voluntary experience than any other group, there is a reluctance to showcase this when searching for a new role. The simple act of highlighting voluntary experience during the application process, can greatly increase a job seeker's chances of getting the role they want."

Bill Richards, UK Managing Director, Indeed

"London has been working hard to not only ensure employers recognise the value of volunteering but young people too see the importance of this when job seeking. Through initiatives like the HeadStart London and 2Work programmes, offering guaranteed interviews for young volunteers, we have started to shift that perception. Our most recent innovation of a speed volunteering platform and app supports young people to search by the skill they want to develop and log all their experience on a CV signed by the Mayor of London. I urge all schools and parents to encourage young people to be confident in firstly building their volunteering experience and then sharing it when trying to enter the labour market. It truly does demonstrate the transferable skills that employers are looking for."

Veronica Wadley, Senior Advisor to the Mayor of London (Team London, Volunteering, Charities and Sponsorship)

Workplace Volunteering: A Winning Strategy in the War for Talent

There is a familiar mismatch between employer intent and practice when it comes to offering existing staff volunteering opportunities. 48% agree that this is important – a percentage which is lowest in Scotland (44%) and highest in the East (50%). Just 11% of decision-makers rate this as “very important”.

However, just 21% businesses report that they use volunteering as a means for staff development. Just 14% use volunteering experience as part of their staff performance reviews. This increases amongst larger companies.

It is likely that these larger businesses have been able to incorporate volunteering as part of their wider staff engagement and retention policy. A separate piece of research from Indeed, which specifically explored talent attraction and retention, revealed that “feeling discouraged or insecure” ranked amongst the highest reasons for considering a job change.

Although salary remains the most obvious and primary consideration when considering a job role, the research reveals that employees are placing increasing importance on the offer of “meaningful work”, which was revealed as a key motivator for 33% of UK job seekers.

Indeed’s Bill Richard suggests that as the UK employment landscape continues to pick up, power is shifting away into the hands of the employee. “With this savvy workforce keeping a constant eye on new career opportunities, it is more important than ever that employers and recruiters are in-tune with the motivations, priorities and expectations of UK jobseekers. Being content in the workplace is not just a matter of having a good salary; staff want to feel appreciated and work within a supportive and motivating environment.” Needless to say, ensuring that employees are happy and fulfilled is key to

nurturing a productive workforce, as well as minimising the recruitment costs associated with employee churn.

“Through the Mayor’s Corporate Commitment, Team London is working with businesses to recognise the benefits of skills-based volunteering and support them to deliver their CSR ambitions to help thousands of small charities across London. We are delighted that Natixis are mobilising their staff and resources in innovative ways to support local charities Providence Row and Inspire! and that together these fantastic organisations are making a greater difference to young people and homeless people in the capital. By forming mutually beneficial partnerships like this, not only do small charities start to thrive but employees bring back valuable skills to the workplace enabling organisations to thrive as well. I would encourage more businesses to talk to Team London and get involved in this volunteering movement.” – **Natalie Cramp, Director, Team London**

“As we grow in the UK, we recognise the importance of investing in our local community, and in the innovative organisations that are fuelling social change and making London a better place to live and work. Our partnership with Team London has been invaluable in making that happen.” – **Chris Jackson, Executive Vice President and Head of International Product, Natixis Global Asset Management**



Addressing the Mismatch

Businesses are built on their people, and their ability to attract, engage and retain this talent. However, before businesses, communities and individuals can work together to reap the rewards of the volunteer workforce, it's clear there's work to be done to ensure expectations are aligned. While the voluntary sector must be ready to identify and articulate where it needs skilled support, businesses should be clear on how volunteering programmes can add value as part of a strategic approach to employee learning and development to support long term success and growth.

“The benefits of charity partnerships are clear to business; from reputational benefits to a deeper understanding of emerging social or environmental topics. At the same time, these partnerships can also enhance the personal and professional skills of your

people. Exposure to challenges and issues not found in normal day-to-day activity can develop the competences identified by ICRS as being essential for improving CR and sustainability performance.”

– **Claudine Blamey, ICRS Chair**

Staff from Lockton London volunteered to join the poppy planting at the Tower of London. Simon Coleman, Chief Operating Officer and Partner, Lockton London added: “I’m delighted that so many of our associates had the opportunity to take part in this unique and memorable experience. Lockton is committed to being recognised as a social asset in the communities in which it operates and this experience is one that will be referred to for many years to come.”

About

About Indeed

More people find jobs on Indeed than anywhere else. Indeed is the #1 job site in the world and allows job seekers to search millions of jobs on the web or mobile in over 60 countries and 29 languages. More than 180 million people each month search for jobs, post resumes, and research companies on Indeed, and Indeed is the #1 source of external hires for thousands of companies (sources: SilkRoad & iCIMS).

For more information, visit www.indeed.com

About Team London

The Mayor of London set up Team London to build upon the immense success of volunteering during the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. Team London encourages all Londoners to give their time to make their city a better place

By working closely with schools, charities and businesses across the capital, Team London is helping to build the next generation of volunteers, make the vital link between volunteering and paid work, and connecting our over 100,000 volunteers to over 1,700 charities. We offer a range of support to charities and businesses, ensuring that together we can have the greatest impact for the next generation, our communities and London as a whole.

European Volunteering Capital

London has been awarded the title of European Volunteering Capital 2016.

London secured this accolade because of its innovation, partnership working and the continuation of the volunteering legacy created from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As part of our activities during 2016, Team London will share best practice and showcase London's third sector, connect sectors to increase opportunities for Londoners and the organisations that support them, and empower Londoners to tackle pan-European challenges through volunteering with three themes: youth unemployment, the ageing population and the refugee crisis.

We will also share the concept of European Volunteering Capital with as many people as possible and create a blueprint by which future cities can deliver as volunteering capitals. As part of our role, we will convene the Mayor's Volunteering Conference in December 2016 involving the pan-European volunteering sector.

Visit <https://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk> to find out more