

STRICT EMBARGO: WEDS 23/04/08

Youth volunteering levels flat, 2006-7 and show “engagement watershed” around age 16

- 17-25 year olds seem *most* regularly engaged with charities, not least re volunteering
- 11-16 year olds seem *least* regularly engaged, possibly due to exam pressures
 - “Start where young people are at,” counsels Saxton

Youth volunteering levels fluctuated but remained broadly flat for the 18 month period Mar 2006 – Nov 2007, with 13%-19% 11-25 year olds claiming to have volunteered for a charity “in the last three months”, according to latest figures released today (*see attached summary slides*).

There also appears to be a seasonal nature to youth volunteering with significantly higher volunteering in the 3 months up to Autumn/November than the 3 months up to Spring/March/April. As of Nov 07, females, specifically 17-19 year olds and social classes AB and C1 are most likely to volunteer amongst young people. 11-13 year olds seem to be the only age group to see an uninterrupted hike in volunteering throughout Mar 2006 – Nov 2007.

Leading not for profit sector think tank and research consultancy nfpSynergy’s Youth Engagement Monitor tracks a representative sample of over 1000 11-25 year olds throughout mainland Britain twice-yearly, asking who volunteers, how and to what extent.

Figures over the same recent 18 month period were also fluctuating but broadly flat for more occasional young volunteers - ie those who have *not* volunteered “in the last three months”, 10%-14% of whom claim to have volunteered for a charity “in the last year”. The same flat trend – in fact with a *slight* downwards drift - was also bourn out over this period when young people were asked, more generally, how regularly they are “involved with charities in any way”: 11%-15% saying “regularly”, 65%-68% saying “occasionally” and 17%-29% saying “never”.

More specifically by age, there is a clear “engagement watershed” pre and post age 16:

- 17-25 year olds claim the most “regular” involvement with charities (14%-17% Nov 07; 15%-21% Mar 06), with 18%-22% (Nov 07; 13%-19% Mar 06) claiming specifically to have volunteered for a charity in the last 3 months.
- 11-16 year olds claim the least “regular” involvement with charities (6%-9% Nov 07; 10%-12% Mar 06), with correspondingly lower levels specifically for volunteering for a charity in the last 3 months (16%-18% Nov 07; 8%-13% Mar 06) – quite possibly due to exam pressures.

nfpSynergy’s Driver of Ideas, Joe Saxton, said:

“Our latest figures will make disappointing reading for both Government and the third sector. Whatever money, resources and efforts have been targeted at young people, to try to engage them more with charities and volunteering – and though still early days - there is as yet little clear sign of such strategies bearing fruit. Regular involvement is more likely amongst A-level and university age groups, possibly reflecting more personal freedom and reduced exam pressures. Volunteering schemes need to start where young people are at, with what they want to do - ensuring they can volunteer in the way that best meets their needs – not least by offering campaigning and fundraising, as well as community service, opportunities.”

- ends -

MEDIA INTERVIEWS: To interview nfpSynergy’s Joe Saxton about the significance of these latest findings into how much (or little) young British people are engaged with charities, please contact:

Adrian Gillan, T: 0207 6 22 99 11; M: 0774 086 7215; E: adrian@gillanmedia.com

Notes to editors:

- **nfpSynergy**

nfpSynergy (www.nfpsynergy.net) is the UK's *only* think-tank and research consultancy dedicated to the charity sector and not for profit issues. It provides ideas, insights and information to help voluntary and community organisations thrive in an ever-changing world. Regularly harvesting the social and charity-related views of public and parliament, media and business - not to mention not for profit organisations themselves - nfpSynergy has a vast and ever-growing knowledge pool from which to extract and deliver insights.

- **Joe Saxton, Driver of Ideas, nfpSynergy**

Joe Saxton co-founded *nfpSynergy* in 2002 after fifteen years experience in the voluntary sector, including as a director of the RNID (Britain's largest charity for deaf and hard of hearing people) and as a trustee of the RSPCA.

Joe is Chair of the Trustees of the Institute of Fundraising (www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk) - the professional body for fundraising and the largest individual representative body in the voluntary sector, with 4000 individual members and 200 organisational members. He was recently named one of the hundred most influential people in UK social policy by *The Guardian* and has been voted the most influential person in UK fundraising by *Professional Fundraising* for the last three years. Joe was named one of the *Ten People of Tomorrow* by public affairs agency, AS Biss, in 2006. He has recently (October 2007) been named by the *Evening Standard* as one of London's Top 50 Most Influential people in Social Affairs; and (March 2008) by *PR Week* as one of the most influential people within the UK communications industry.

A well-known and respected voice within the charity world and frequent face at sector conferences, Joe has contributed - via original research, opinion pieces and interviews - to a wide range of specialist and mainstream media, both print and broadcast, from *Third Sector* and *The Guardian* to *BBC Breakfast* and *BBC Radio 4*.