



Changing lives, strengthening communities





37%

The number of Action Earth volunteers who were new to volunteering

## Improving our environment

CSV's Action Earth campaign enables people to become engaged in practical activities that improve and protect Scotland's outdoor spaces. We provide cash grants between £50 and £500 to volunteers to kick-start community projects that improve local environments in Scotland.

Whether organising a pond clearance, planting a wildflower meadow or creating a community garden, CSV Action Earth provides volunteers with the springboard they need to get active. It offers a starting point for local capacity building and conservation and not an end in itself. Many of our projects progress on to bigger things involving growing numbers of volunteers.

Volunteers come from all walks of life including community groups, tenants associations and youth clubs and their friends and colleagues. Environmental volunteering means you can see – often immediately – the impact your actions have in creating a better world. It is a way to get communities thinking about and taking action to improve biodiversity. It's the small changes that can make a real difference in creating stronger, cleaner and more inclusive communities.

Each year, around 5,000 volunteers take part in Action Earth Scotland which is supported by Scottish Natural Heritage. Events have ranged from creating wheelchair-accessible flowerbeds in Pilton to cleaning rivers in Clackmannanshire and expanding community growing areas. Volunteers have also taken part in beach clean-ups, woodland renovation, projects making-over derelict wasteland and creating new spaces to help reverse the decline of British bees and butterflies. We have improved an impressive 1,233,278 square metres of Scottish land.

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### From small beginnings

'Action Earth grants have been invaluable for some of the communities Urban Roots works with. A donation of £250 helped a group of adults with disabilities and their carers transform an outdoor space, building accessible raised beds and planting fruit trees. And a community centre in Castlemilk has planted bulbs, wildflowers and a small orchard – involving people from across the local community. Small grants like this can really help to kickstart a project and make a real difference to the environment.' *Abi Mordin, Urban Roots*

# Rising to the challenge – the next 50 years

## Message from Dr Alison Elliot OBE, Chair of the Scottish Advisory Board, and Lucy de Groot CBE, CSV Chief Executive

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Our recent celebrations to mark CSV's first 50 years have given us both the inspiration and confidence to tackle the fresh challenges that lie ahead in the future. We are delighted to be able to highlight CSV's strong track-record in Scotland in this review.

In 1962 CSV's first volunteer in our Full-time Away-from-Home Volunteering Programme was placed in Scotland at an 'approved school' in Glasgow, and we are still providing successful and fulfilling full-time placements in Scotland today.

We are very lucky within Scotland to have a dedicated Advisory Board drawn from all sectors, which supports our work in Scotland and helps enhance our profile.

During the last year alone, we successfully delivered 150,000 volunteering and 5,000 learning opportunities across the UK, adding to the amazing total of over three million volunteers who have been so central to CSV's efforts over the years.

There has been a groundswell of support and public interest in volunteering, boosted significantly in Scotland by the volunteering opportunities at Glasgow's Commonwealth Games and the London Olympics.

We are working with the volunteering sector to contribute to the development and policy work of the Volunteering Roundtable in Scotland and as partners with individual charities on joint programmes and projects. We continue to develop our many local community networks, and to strengthen and expand the impact of our relationships with our corporate partners involved in employee volunteering.

Our Action Earth campaign supports up to 5,000 volunteers who get involved in local groups and



organisations to deliver a range of outdoor projects including community growing initiatives and site reclamation.

Our work in mentoring and befriending young people and peer-led support activities for older people are particularly strong in Scotland. We are working hard to demonstrate the difference volunteers and volunteering make to society, especially when they focus on supporting the development of resilience and self-confidence both in individuals and communities.

We provide leadership to Volonteurope, a European network of organisations which involve volunteers and support trans-European programmes and projects.

We recognise that in these tough times CSV is needed now more than it ever has been. We will continue to support everyone to be active citizens, to get involved and make a difference in their communities. This is our mission.

# Who we are and what we do

## Sharing our vision

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) was set up with a vision of a society where everyone can participate and make their own individual contributions towards building strong and inclusive communities. That vision remains more relevant than ever in today's world.

## Overcoming barriers

By enabling people to take an active role in their communities, we help individuals to feel included, valued and to have the opportunity to develop their skills. Loneliness, social isolation and unemployment are major barriers to people leading fulfilled lives. CSV breaks through these barriers to enable people to gain confidence, skills and renewed self-respect; to become active citizens who contribute to a democratic and civil society.

Change takes time, patience and investment. Volunteering is at the heart of what we do and every year we inspire more people to volunteer and make a difference in their communities. We enable young people to change their lives, develop new skills and achieve their potential. We recognise their potential and help them find a better future.

The case studies here give just a taster of the many diverse and successful ways in which CSV changes people's lives for the better.

## Making an impact

We actively engage with people from all walks of life to volunteer and learn, and in doing so we provide invaluable support to families in need, children at risk, older and vulnerable people, people with disabilities, isolated people and unemployed young people. CSV shows every day that it can help people transform their lives.

## Our impact

Each year 150,000 people are inspired by CSV to make a difference in their communities.

277 Scottish employees dedicated 1,557 hours to benefit disabled children and older isolated people, as well as improving the environment.

8,000 volunteers gave their skills to help small community organisations improve their activities.

CSV engaged 6,200 volunteers in social action activities across the whole of Scotland, dedicating 85,639 hours to CSV projects.

17,000 older volunteers led more physically and socially active lives helping others in the UK.

76,000 volunteers tried out volunteering for Make a Difference Day in October in the UK.

CSV enabled 932 people in Scotland to live more independent lives with help from volunteers.

1,125 trained volunteers enabled over 30,000 children to improve their reading.

171 volunteers took part in 13 Heritage Camps to renovate historic buildings.

5,300 young people furthest away from the job market received training.

\*figures from 2012-13



# Befriending young people in need



## A little goes a long way

'Ordinary adults of all ages living in or around the local area, who have a genuine interest in helping young people, get involved in befriending by regularly giving a little free time, taking the trouble to listen or by sharing an interest or hobby – they provide important support. As little as an hour or two of their free time each week makes a major difference to a young person.' *Social Worker, Cumbernauld*

# 90%

of isolated and vulnerable young people felt more involved in making decisions about their own lives

**For 14 years CSV has been helping to improve the lives of children aged eight to 14 in North Lanarkshire by recruiting volunteer befrienders to forge supportive relationships with children at a time when they are facing particularly difficult circumstances.**

Ross, aged nine, and ten-year-old Callum (names changed) have had a difficult start in life. Both young people are accommodated in kinship care due to issues of substance abuse, neglect and violence within their family homes. CSV arranged for them to be supported by two part-time female volunteers who give them one-to-one support as well as taking them on outings.

Social workers for Ross and Callum agreed to joint outings as they considered this was a great idea to help them. At the project day out to a theme park last year, Ross and Callum met for the first time and enjoyed spending time together on the rides and exploring the park with their befrienders. For one of the young people, building positive relationships was a strong focus of his referral and for the other, who had cared for his siblings from a young age, respite was important for him. The friendship between the boys has allowed them to have fun and participate in age-appropriate activities in a safe and carefree environment.

Each year around 40 vulnerable, isolated or disabled children and young people are referred to CSV's befriending service in North Lanarkshire and we begin the journey of finding the right person to be their trusted and independent adult.

The role of the volunteers is to befriend the children and young people, acting as positive adult role models, and support the children and young people to engage in a variety of social, leisure and educational activities. They encourage the young people to make positive changes in their lives, and to become actively involved in their communities.



# Getting out and enjoying yourself

**Older people are a great asset to Scotland, but preparing for an increasingly ageing population is one of our biggest national challenges. Recent demographic projections suggest that if current trends continue we can expect that by 2033 the number of people who are over 60 will increase by 50%, reflecting our improved standards of living, public health activity and the success of health improvement initiatives.**

CSV harnesses the wealth of knowledge, skills and experience of our older people to offer powerful and creative ways of building local support networks and communities, dedicated to bringing about improvements in their own lives and in the lives of others.

CSV runs a range of guided walks in Stirling, with volunteers undertaking leader training before taking other older people out to enjoy the benefits of physical exercise and social interaction.

CSV has also set up a local Handy Person initiative which enables volunteers to help older and vulnerable people with small jobs and repairs around their houses that they can't manage by themselves.

## Keeping active

Volunteer Roger Bedwell (far right) is someone who gets back as much as he puts in. 'I retired when I was 63 due to problems with my legs,' says Roger. 'After an operation I was told that the momentum of walking and the muscle movements would help the blood flow.' So Roger started walking as part of CSV's guided walks.

After spending time as a regular walker Roger stepped up to become a volunteer leader and now leads two walks a week. As well as identifying the routes and leading the walkers he has an additional role, sparking conversations with people who have joined the group, a part of the job he really enjoys, and that has resulted in many friendships.

'Quite a few of the guys, like myself, live on their own, so the social aspect is quite important. There are quite a few of us now that will go for a coffee after a walk.'

Roger then joined the Handy Person service, bringing skills and experience from his working life. He now tries to make at least two visits a week, working around his other commitments.

'I'd had a guest house and my own hotel so was used to doing all my own repairs.' He told us, 'I had a reasonably comprehensive tool box and thought that the Handy Person service sounded quite good.'

Roger takes pride in his work but sees the role of Handy Person as more than just completing the odd job. He also goes there to spend some time with isolated elderly people, who live on their own. Most times he repairs something and afterwards sits down to have some tea and a nice talk.

"I sit down and chat with them after the job is done, as some of them may not have seen anyone for a day or two. It's good for them, but it's good for me too."

Roger also cares for his adult daughter, who suffers from epilepsy. Within his CSV peer-led group he says he can find social support and advice whenever he needs it. It's not just improved his health, but also stopped him feeling isolated and increased his confidence.



“The role of Handy Person is more than just completing the odd job. I often find time to sit down and have a nice talk.” Roger



# Helping people with disabilities to maintain their independence

**CSV recognises that people with learning and physical disabilities still face enormous barriers to participating fully in society. All too often they feel excluded and isolated. In addition, disabled people are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people not to hold any qualifications and to end up living in poverty. CSV enables people with disabilities to volunteer themselves and be active in their communities.**

From helping with basic needs to making it possible to study and find jobs, start social groups or get involved in community activities we help hundreds of people with disabilities every year find new purpose and fulfilment in their lives.

## Sharing the care

CSV volunteers have been providing invaluable support to Share Scotland for over 20 years. Volunteers carry out a variety of roles which empower disabled people to live life to the max, both in their own communities and beyond.

During a 12-month placement volunteers will supplement existing staff to provide activities such as sailing, skiing, hydrotherapy and rebound therapy. Due to the level of disability these activities are quite labour-intensive, so without the additional support of a volunteer each service user's opportunities may be limited. Volunteers will often provide support for people to allow them to enjoy a holiday, both at home and abroad.

Midlock Street in Glasgow is one of Share Scotland's small group homes, which was purpose built to accommodate residents with disabilities. From the outside, it looks like an ordinary house, but the service users all have complex disabilities, including physical disabilities, learning difficulties and communication difficulties. For some years now residents have been supported by CSV volunteers as part of a team, to support people to gain dignity, respect and be as independent as possible. CSV

volunteers join the residents in running the house, going out on social activities and managing their money.

Sarah McGhee of Share Scotland says: 'Volunteers bring their own skills and personality. We supplement their skills with relevant training. It is a two-way process. The service user gains and the individual volunteer's skills base is extended. Quite often the people who volunteer with our organisation are keen to work in this field long-term. Volunteering with us gives them a sound base on which to start their new career path.'

Relationships often continue beyond the placement. The service users enjoy keeping in contact with CSVs from all around the world. Many friendships have been made through this process and volunteers have used





their experience to go on to be employees of Share Scotland and to train as social workers and nurses.

### Part of the team

'Volunteering with Share was a great experience,' says Christina Bremer from Germany. 'I got the opportunity to support people with learning disabilities and enjoyed becoming a part of their lives. When being on shift, there was always a friendly face helping me if necessary and giving me the feeling to be a respected member of a well-trained team. I can definitely recommend other people to do the same as it broadened my horizon and let me acquire new skills.' *Christina, former volunteer*

# 79%

of vulnerable people helped by CSV said they were more engaged within their communities



# Getting companies involved in the local community

**CSV has long recognised the considerable volunteering resource sitting within most companies. Getting employees to volunteer is good for team building and also helps employees improve their skills and get connected with the community.**

CSV works closely with local communities and small organisations to find out what they need help with. We then place skilled volunteers from local companies within them to help them strengthen the work they do at a grassroots level.

Through employee volunteering we offer people the chance to try out volunteering, often for the first time, before making a commitment. This is vital if we are to recruit the volunteers of the future, the next generation of people who will make a real difference.

Getting your colleagues or company involved in volunteering is a great way to improve teamwork and hone your skills. CSV helps employers of all sizes find the right team task or mentoring programme for their staff which also benefits the local community. Working outdoors together is a great way to meet new friends and see the effect your group's volunteering effort has had on an unloved patch of ground. Within just a few hours CSV volunteers can spruce up a community centre or build wildlife-friendly gardens for a hospice. It's commitment-free and volunteers keep coming back to do more.



## Creating a sensory delight

One February afternoon a group of excited young people gathered to see what had been going on all day in their sensory garden at Achievement Bute's local centre. Achievement Bute is a Rothesay-based charity, which provides care and support for children with disabilities and their families, and organises a busy programme of popular clubs and events for the island's young people.

Donning all their cold and wet weather gear, volunteers from Webhelp UK had worked hard together to create a barefoot sensory path within the centre's Sensory Garden Project. Throughout the day the volunteers from Webhelp UK dug out a grassed area to turn into a barefoot path, dug ground over and added compost to create new flowerbeds, removed and resited rose bushes and a Christmas tree, helped build a fence, and cleared rubbish from the site! The children were thrilled to then work alongside Webhelp UK's volunteers to plant flowers.

Dorothy McDonald at Achievement Bute said, 'This is the children's garden, they do a lot of the work in it. The volunteers made a huge visual impact, having undertaken all the

heavy work that the children couldn't do themselves. They blitzed the work in one day and when the children arrived at the end of the day they could see the massive difference to their garden. This spurred the children on to make further changes. We couldn't have done the work without the help of the volunteers, and importantly, it showed the children that other people cared about their garden too.'



# Why your continued support is so vital

## Our priorities

CSV wants to help more disabled people lead as independent lives as possible. We will place 5,000 more volunteers with disabled people by 2017.

CSV wants to help more older people to make new friends and take part in their communities. We will recruit and support 8,000 more older volunteers by 2017.

CSV wants to set more young people on the road to employment and a better future. We will train and support 20,000 more young people by 2017.

CSV believes every child has the right to a safe and happy family life. We will support 2,500 more children and families by 2017.

CSV wants everyone to take part in volunteering and become active citizens. We will find opportunities for 150,000 more new volunteers by 2017.

**To make a donation to CSV, please visit  
[www.csv.org.uk/support-us](http://www.csv.org.uk/support-us)**

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**If you are keen to get involved in our work  
in Scotland, contact us on 0131 622 7766.**

