

Action for Sustainable Living
(Manchester)

Final evaluation report to Defra by
Action for Sustainable Living

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Action for Sustainable Living depends for its success on the energies of our staff and volunteers and of the people they serve. Without you there would be nothing for us to evaluation! Thank you.

Alan Boyd
Director
Action for Sustainable Living

29th April 2008

Executive Summary

Project Aims

Action for Sustainable Living (AfSL) Manchester promoted action in 3 localities to improve sustainability across a wide range of areas including green energy and energy saving measures, green household products, recycling and waste management, organic and fairtrade food, green holidays, and reusable nappies.

The project aimed to help develop sustainable local communities, which were stronger socially and economically, promoting thriving community groups and “greener” local businesses that are sensitive to the needs of their community.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Build on AfSL's existing pilot scheme, serving one local community (Chorlton-cum-Hardy in Manchester), by extending the scheme and establishing services in a further two, quite different communities.
2. Develop a range of service models which will work successfully in a diverse range of localities.
3. Maximise the amount of income generated directly by our services (through affiliate deals with “green” service providers, payment by clients if appropriate, donations and sponsorship).
4. Maximise the contribution that volunteers and other local people make to all aspects of service operation and development in their locality.
5. “Hand over” each local service to local people when the time is right, with AfSL continuing to provide ongoing information and support as appropriate (including telephone and email support, occasional visits and events, and a peer support network).
6. Evaluate the services and demonstrate that they can provide a cost-effective means of improving sustainability in a wide variety of local communities, not only in terms of the environmental “footprint” of individual households, but also the social capital and economic well-being of the community.
7. Plan, and attract funding for, a national “roll out” of these services

Key Findings

The project did help towards developing sustainable local communities, but would need to be better resourced in order to have a significant effect across the whole of the population served. It fully achieved its objectives of extending the scheme to 3 localities, and of maximising the contribution of volunteers and other local people to service operation and development. It largely achieved its objectives of developing service models that will work in a diverse range of localities, and of “handing over” to local people. It partly achieved its objective of evaluating its services and demonstrating cost-effectiveness. The objectives that proved most difficult to achieve were those concerning income generation and funding for roll out of the services.

The main achievements were:

1. Over 2,400 people made pledges to reduce their environmental impact
2. 95% of those people went on to take action to reduce their environmental impact
3. 30% of those people are doing much more to reduce their environmental impact as a result of AfSL's support
4. AfSL initiated over 40 substantial projects on sustainable living
5. AfSL's support for action groups, as provided by both paid workers and volunteers, was valued and provided 3 key benefits:
 - Generating social capital, by connecting both individuals and groups
 - Enabling action to take place that would not have happened otherwise, by nurturing and sustaining groups
 - Enabling action to be more effective and efficient, by helping groups to organise their activities

6. AfSL developed hundreds of volunteering opportunities and supported hundreds of volunteers
7. Volunteers benefited from their time with AfSL:by:
 - Developing practical and technical skills
 - Increasing their confidence
 - Gaining valuable work experience
 - Engaging with other people, sharing ideas and being inspired
 - Doing something complementary to their paid work
8. AfSL volunteering produced wider benefits:
 - Civil renewal
 - Social inclusion
 - Breaking down barriers

It is feasible to support action on sustainability both through paid locality workers and through volunteer locality workers supported by a paid coordinator.

Both mini and in-depth consultations can help people to take action on sustainability, as can both in-home and at-event consultations. It would appear likely that at-event consultations offer better value for money.

Enabling people to meet others who are also trying to reduce their environmental impact may help them to make more substantial changes.

Some actions were harder to put into practice than others. It may be that this is related to the time, effort and money required for each action.

Women may have been more receptive to AfSL's approach than men.

Approaches need to be tailored to local communities, taking account of factors such as culture and levels of deprivation.

It is important to work with existing groups wherever possible, rather than cut across other work that is already happening.

Recommendations

1. Consider providing different levels of support and/or adopting different approaches, depending on the difficulty of the action that is being attempted. One option might be to focus only on relatively easy actions, with minimal support.
2. Consider conducting further evaluation on issues raised by this evaluation, and where insufficient data had been collected.
3. Evaluation should be given greater priority. This however requires engagement with staff and volunteers at an early stage in order to establish a culture of evaluation, access to expertise in data collection and analysis, and time and financial resources.
4. Information, policies and training for volunteers and staff might usefully be developed with regard to:
 - Project planning and management
 - Creating roles within a group to share workload and make the most of diverse talents
 - Engaging diverse communities
 - About AfSL's values and what the organisation can offer
 - Agreeing a clear 'contract' between AfSL, its volunteers, and the individuals and groups it supports
5. Consider providing information to help local groups decide on what mix of meeting venues and means of communication is best for them.
6. Provide enhanced induction, ongoing training, supervision and other support for volunteers.
7. Take steps to recruit a more diverse range of volunteers
8. Provide greater recognition for volunteers' achievements

1 Introduction

1.1 Project description

Action for Sustainable Living (AfSL) Manchester promoted action in 3 localities to improve sustainability across a wide range of areas including green energy and energy saving measures, green household products, recycling and waste management, organic and fairtrade food, green holidays, and reusable nappies.

The service AfSL provided was modelled partly on Independent Financial Advisors and the successful promotion of ethical investment by some such advisors. It had 2 main elements:

- Supporting individuals to change their lifestyles
- Developing action at a group/community level

Individuals were supported to change their lifestyles, focusing on areas for change relevant to them, by drawing on a simple menu of possible actions, aimed at producing changes that would have an immediate impact. Actions to be taken by the individual and by AfSL were agreed in pledge form.

Existing and new community groups were supported to take action on sustainability issues in their locality. AfSL helped with:

- Identifying relevant issues and interested individuals and stakeholders to participate in addressing them
- Facilitating initial project group meetings
- Doing necessary administration as needed (Eg room hire, meeting notes, publicity, funding bids, etc)
- Advising on how to organise key support processes such as project planning and evaluation.

Once a critical mass of active people had been achieved, AfSL aimed to gradually "hand over" more responsibilities to local volunteers. AfSL continued to provide some ongoing support, but at a substantially lower level.

Initially, AfSL employed a "Sustainability Consultant" in each locality to develop and deliver a local service, tailored to each community served. The Sustainability Consultant started by getting to know the locality, and the community groups, businesses and public sector organisations operating there. S/he then raised awareness of the AfSL service and provided most of the support directly.

- One worker supported action in the Chorlton/Whalley Range area from May 2004 to January 2007. She worked half time until April 2005, and full time thereafter.
- A second worker supported action in Old Trafford from July 2005 until March 2007. She worked $\frac{3}{4}$ time until September 2005, and full time thereafter.
- A third worker supported action in Hulme from July 2005 until March 2007. He worked $\frac{3}{4}$ time until September 2005, and full time thereafter.

As time progressed it became clear that the project was unlikely to be financially viable following the end of Defra funding, primarily because it was perceived to be expensive by potential funders. The means of delivering the project was therefore redesigned, making greater use of volunteers, who had been identified as being in plentiful supply.

In 2007, one of the Sustainability Consultants moved into a new coordinating role and recruited and supported a number of volunteer "Local Project Managers" (LPMs), covering the initial 3 localities and some additional localities. Individual LPMs committed to volunteering for at least 8 hours per week for at least 6 months, and during this time period followed a structured programme of support and activities. This broadly consisted of initial training, then working with individuals, then working with groups, providing much the same services as the

paid workers had done previously, but in smaller quantities and with less involvement in 'organisational' activities within AfSL. At the end of the six months, AfSL would assist the LPM to apply for funding to enable them to continue their work on a paid basis if they wished.

AfSL had in fact been contemplating a similar model for providing the reduced level of ongoing support to localities following the initial paid worker support. So what happened in the 3 project localities was actually similar to what had been planned in many ways, the main difference being that the "handover" from paid worker to volunteer was not a simple, succession type process, but followed a period of uncertainty and reduced support from AfSL while many of the organisation's resources were devoted to working up and implementing the new model. For new localities over and above the 3 project localities, then there was a marked difference, because these localities had no period of direct paid worker support.

1.2 Project aims

The project aimed to help develop sustainable local communities, which were stronger socially and economically, promoting thriving community groups and "greener" local businesses that are sensitive to the needs of their community.

The specific objectives were to:

8. Build on AfSL's existing pilot scheme, serving one local community (Chorlton-cum-Hardy in Manchester), by extending the scheme and establishing services in a further two, quite different communities.
9. Develop a range of service models which will work successfully in a diverse range of localities.
10. Maximise the amount of income generated directly by our services (through affiliate deals with "green" service providers, payment by clients if appropriate, donations and sponsorship).
11. Maximise the contribution that volunteers and other local people make to all aspects of service operation and development in their locality.
12. "Hand over" each local service to local people when the time is right, with AfSL continuing to provide ongoing information and support as appropriate (including telephone and email support, occasional visits and events, and a peer support network).
13. Evaluate the services and demonstrate that they can provide a cost-effective means of improving sustainability in a wide variety of local communities, not only in terms of the environmental "footprint" of individual households, but also the social capital and economic well-being of the community.
14. Plan, and attract funding for, a national "roll out" of these services

1.3 Project evaluation

The evaluation of the project had two major components:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which AfSL's support to individuals had enabled them to live more sustainably (ie primarily an outcome/impact evaluation of AfSL's support to individuals)
2. An evaluation comparing the support provided to local action groups and projects by AfSL's paid workers, with that provided by volunteer LPMs (ie primarily a process evaluation of AfSL's support to groups)

The methods and results of these evaluations are described in detail in the following sections of this report.

Our Volunteer Coordinator also conducted an evaluation of AfSL's support to volunteers, in order to develop an organisation-wide strategy for volunteering, including LPMs. The main body of this strategy document is enclosed as Appendix 5 of this report. The full strategy, including appendixes is available from AfSL.

2 Does AfSL's support for individuals enable them to live more sustainably?

Action for Sustainable Living operates a pledge system, whereby people promise to take various actions (Appendix 1). This is typically done as part of a one-to-one, face-to-face encounter either with an AfSL paid staff member or with an AfSL volunteer Local Project Manager (LPM). Some pledges are made as part of a group event, and a small number are made directly on our website without any direct input from AfSL staff or volunteers. AfSL retains a copy of the pledges and then they are then entered into a pledge database. If the person making the pledges has provided a valid email address then they are emailed a copy of their pledges shortly after the details have been entered in the database. This has generally been the practice throughout the project, although the format and time period have varied.

2.1 Evaluation Methods

The extent to which people are able to put their pledges into action was assessed through contacting them again at a later date, either by phone or email, and asking them to report their progress using a structured questionnaire (Appendix 1). The progress options were asked for every pledge that had been made. They were based on work done by WWF-UK and CAG consultants as part of developing a community engagement impact assessment tool, and have the generic form:

1. I have tried to do it, but have found it difficult to stick to
2. I usually do it
3. I am starting to do it
4. I frequently feel I should try to do it
5. I sometimes feel I should try to do it
6. I do not feel it is important to do it

Other questions in the questionnaire corresponded to the "preferred questions" suggested by Brook-Lyndhurst in the EAF evaluation handbook.

We aimed to contact the 515 people whose pledges had been entered onto our main pledge database¹ between 31st May 2007 and 11th February 2008. The cut off dates were chosen so that people would have had a reasonable period of time in which to put their pledges into action before we contacted them, and for reasons of administrative convenience.

1. 188 people were not contacted because either we had no contact details for them or they had specified at the time of making their pledges that they did not want AfSL to contact them again.
2. 153 people were sent an email questionnaire because we had no phone number for them. Of these, a proportion did not reach the person because the email address we had was either incorrect or no longer functioning.
3. 174 people were phoned. Of these, 88 provided answers to our questionnaire. The primary reason for not getting answers was because the person was not available when we phoned. In addition, a proportion of phone numbers were wrong, and a small number of people refused to complete the questionnaire.
4. Of the people who were not available when we phoned, 59 whose email addresses we had were then sent an email questionnaire.

In total 104 people completed our questionnaire – 88 by phone and 16 by email - just over 20% of the 515 people who made pledges during the period.

¹ We also maintained a second, much smaller pledge database during some of this period, corresponding to a slightly different set of pledges. The people on this database were excluded from being contacted for reasons of administrative convenience.

The phone interviews were conducted by 3 temporary staff, drawn from AfSL's volunteer-base, who received a two-hour training session and were given a handbook of instructions. One of these temporary staff is also a volunteer Local Project Manager (LPM) with AfSL, who had obtained some of the pledges in the first place, though only a relatively small proportion. As respondents were allocated to interviewers at random, only a very small number of people were contacted by the LPM who had taken their pledges in the first place. Any positive bias due to such people wanting to please, or not upset, this LPM is therefore likely to be small.

Phonecalls were all made in the evening, as previous experience had suggested that people were more likely to be contactable in the early evening, rather than during the day.

Respondents were only asked about the pledges they had made, rather than about all the pledges that AfSL can suggest to people. Occasionally people make other pledges that do not correspond to the standard AfSL pledges; for reasons of administrative convenience we did not ask people whether they had put such pledges into action.

2.2 Results

Most people made more than one pledge (table 1), with the median number of pledges made being 7. The median number of pledges that were actually put into action was 4. 12 people had not been able to implement any of their pledges. 92 people had put at least one pledge into action.

		Total pledges made	Total pledges put into action
Mean		9.6346	5.0865
Median		7.0000	4.0000
Mode		4.00	1.00(a)
Percentiles	25	4.0000	1.0000
	50	7.0000	4.0000
	75	13.0000	7.0000

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for total pledges made and put into action

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

95% of people who had made pledges said that as a result of their contact with AfSL they were now doing more than before to reduce their environmental impact (table 2). 30% were doing much more, and 65% a bit more.

Overall, as a result of your contact with AfSL, which one of the following statements most closely applies to you?	Frequency	Percent
A: Doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact	31	29.8
B: Doing a bit more than before to reduce my environmental impact	68	65.4
C: Not doing more yet but hope to do more in the future to reduce my environmental impact	3	2.9
D: Not doing more yet and don't think I can do much more to reduce my environmental impact	1	1.0
E: Still not really interested in taking action to reduce my environmental impact	1	1.0
Total	104	100.0

Table 2: Overall impact of contact with AfSL on the behaviour of people making pledge

53% of pledges were reported as usually being put into practice (table 3)². An optimistic interpretation would be that given more time the “Am starting to” responses will turn into “usually” responses in the same proportion as “usually” to “found it difficult to stick to” responses – giving an ultimate “usually” figure of (529+122=651, 65%). We obtained similar figures in quarters one and two of 2005 (see Appendix 3). Then, when people were asked by our staff to give a simple Yes or No answer to whether they had implemented each of their pledges, 61% of pledges were said to have been implemented (231 out of 381 pledges checked).

Extent of doing the pledge	Frequency	Percentage
Found it difficult to stick to	48	5%
Usually	529	53%
Am starting to	133	13%
Frequently feel I should	121	12%
Sometimes feel I should	78	8%
Not important	17	2%
Not recorded	76	8%
All pledges	1002	100%

Table 3: Extent of implementation of pledges

Assuming the sample is random, the 95% confidence limits for the percentage of pledges usually put into practice are from 50% to 56% (calculated using the web-based calculator at http://www.causascientia.org/math_stat/ProportionCI.html). The 99% confidence limits are 49% to 57%. For the optimistic interpretation, the 95% confidence limits are 62% to 68%, and 99% confidence limits 61% to 69%³.

This means we can be fairly confident that between 50% and 70% of pledges made to AfSL will be put into practice at least most of the time.

The data indicates that implementation rates vary between the different pledges that are made – i.e. people find some pledges harder to put into practice than others (table 4). This may be in part due to some pledges taking longer to put into practice (Eg solar power installation takes time to plan; renewal of car breakdown service may be annual).

Pledge	Achieved	Not done	Total	% achieved
10a a reuse plastic bags and think of other ways to reuse waste	30	4	34	88%
10d recycle waste where possible making full use of the councils doorstep recycling scheme	26	4	30	87%
2a a turn off lights when leaving the room and not leave appliances on standby	34	6	40	85%
2b switch to using low energy light bulbs	28	5	33	85%

2 According to the database, a total of 1002 pledges were made, but outcomes were only recorded for 936. We do not know the reason for this discrepancy – possibilities may include human error, or respondents not remembering making a pledge. In addition, there were outcomes recorded against 10 pledges that were not indicated as having been made in the database. This suggests that human error is unlikely to be the cause of most unrecorded outcomes, particularly where there are a substantial number of such outcomes for a single person, and that we should regard such pledges as not having been achieved. We have excluded the 10 outcomes with no corresponding pledge from our analyses.

3 For subsequent analyses we generally use the non-optimistic interpretation that equates “usually” with a pledge having been put into practice.

Pledge	Achieved	Not done	Total	% achieved
12b take all my unwanted clothes to charity shops	37	10	47	79%
6a a use green transport bus tram train bike or walk to travel to and from work	21	8	29	72%
4a a buy more products from shops situated in my local community	22	11	33	67%
8a a buy more fair trade products as part of my regular shopping	26	13	39	67%
9b reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet by using a watersave cistern filler	20	10	30	67%
10c not buy pre packed food or products with excessive packaging	17	9	26	65%
10b use rechargeable batteries	16	9	25	64%
12d buy my clothes from ethical trading companies or charity shops	19	12	31	61%
2c draught proof windows and doors	11	7	18	61%
12a a as my children grow out of clothes pass them on to younger children	21	14	35	60%
3c use real nappies or a combination of real nappies and disposables	3	2	5	60%
7b limit my impact on the environment by not flying when another form of transport is viable	15	10	25	60%
9c install a water meter	6	4	10	60%
4c buy local produce when it is available	20	15	35	57%
6b reduce my shopping associated car mileage	11	9	20	55%
2d insulate hot water pipes and tanks	7	6	13	54%
9a a use water from my bath/dishes or collect rainwater in a butt to water my plants or garden	15	14	29	52%
11a a compost my biodegradable waste	13	14	27	48%
4b buy more products from non-chain shops	13	14	27	48%
12c buy clothes made from natural materials	18	21	39	46%
6d use car sharing for some journeys	8	10	18	44%
11c use natural fertilizers and pest control	6	8	14	43%
1b switch to an electricity producer that supplies 100% green renewable electricity	7	12	19	37%
1a switch to a green tariff either with my current electricity supplier or with a new supplier	13	24	37	35%
8b eat in restaurants and cafes that use fair trade ingredients	8	15	23	35%
11b grow my own fruit and vegetables	6	13	19	32%
3a a buy eco friendly cleaning products	11	26	37	30%
3b make my own cleaning products from natural substances eg tea tree oil	4	13	17	24%
5b switch my credit card to one that donates to charity or donate any cashback to charity	3	11	14	21%

Pledge	Achieved	Not done	Total	% achieved
7a a lessen the environmental and social impact of my holidays by choosing an eco holiday	4	15	19	21%
7c offset the co2 emissions of my air travel	3	13	16	19%
4d join an organic box scheme	3	15	18	17%
5c switch my stock market investments to an ethical fund	1	6	7	14%
5a a join a credit union	1	7	8	13%
5d switch my bank account to a more ethically focused bank eg coop triodos mutual	2	21	23	9%
1c generate my own energy through installing solar panels a wind turbine etc	0	13	13	0%
6c arrange my car breakdown service through the environmental transport association	0	5	5	0%
8c join my local fair trade group	0	15	15	0%

Table 4: Percentage of pledges usually put into practice

The pledges where we can be fairly confident that implementation is easier (Chi square tests, $p < 0.001^4$) are:

1. 10a reuse plastic bags and think of other ways to reuse waste (88% implemented)
2. 10d recycle waste where possible making full use of the councils doorstep recycling scheme (87% implemented)
3. 2a a turn off lights when leaving the room and not leave appliances on standby (85% implemented)
4. 2b switch to using low energy light bulbs (85% implemented)
5. 12b take all my unwanted clothes to charity shops (79% implemented)

Those pledges where we can be fairly confident that implementation is harder are:

1. 1c generate my own energy through installing solar panels a wind turbine etc (0% implemented)
2. 8c join my local fair trade group (0% implemented)
3. 5d switch my bank account to a more ethically focused bank eg coop triodos mutual (9% implemented)

There appears to be a relationship between the frequency with which pledges are made and how easy they are to put into practice. The Pearson correlation between frequency and percentage implemented is 0.61, which is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed test)⁵. Pledges which are easier to implement are made more frequently, and pledges which are harder to implement are made less frequently. This makes intuitive sense – what people pledge to do is influenced by what they think they can achieve, which is in turn related to what people actually achieve.

For each of the factors we asked about a majority of people felt they were very or fairly important to helping them reduce their environmental impact, though some factors were felt to be more important than others. See appendix 2 for a table of all factors and their importance.

4 The p-value chosen is so small because of the use of 41 repeated Chi-square tests to test the 41 different pledges. Assuming independence between the tests, this p-value corresponds to an overall p-value of approx 0.05

5 We would expect that some pledges would also be made less often because they are irrelevant to some people (Eg nappies). It is beyond the scope of what we can do to try to correct for this. Nevertheless, we believe that this is strong evidence that actions that are harder to achieve are pledged less often.

Counting across all factors, the importance was as follows:

Importance of Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	329	27.6
Fairly important	531	44.5
Not very important	294	24.7
Not at all important	38	3.2
2.2.1 Total	1192	100.0

Table 5: How important the factors asked about are to AfSL helping people to reduce their environmental impact

The data indicate that two of the eleven factors had different distributions of importance to the others (CHI square tests, $p < 0.005^6$):

1. Showing me what government and business are doing on the environment. Opinions were more polarised than for other factors, with a greater proportion of people regarded this as not very or not at all important, although there were also a greater proportion of people regarding it as very important. One interpretation of this is that people are divided into two camps about the importance of this.
2. Helping me meet other people like me who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives. This was regarded as less important than other factors.

There are at least 2 ways of interpreting these data about lack of importance:

1. The factor may have been an element of AfSL's support for the person, but it wasn't important
2. The factor may be important, but AfSL did not provide the support corresponding to the factor.

Further research may be needed in order to disentangle these reasons from each other.

People who made pledges without receiving a consultation tended to be more likely to say that the factors were not very or not at all important. This suggests that responses about these factors relate more to whether AfSL provided this support than about whether it was important.

People who said they were now doing a lot more to reduce their environmental impact regarded all of the factors as being more important than people who were only doing a bit more. It may be that people are aware of many of these factors (through AfSL?), hence for the people who are only doing a bit more they can't be that important (because otherwise they would have done more)! If this is the case then perhaps in future we might instead ask such people about what factors would have helped them to reduce their environmental impact further.

Helping people making pledges to meet other people like them who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives was the only factor that was a statistically significant discriminator between people doing a lot more and a bit more to reduce their environmental impact (stepwise discriminant analysis) (table 6).

⁶ The p-value chosen is so small because of the use of 11 repeated Chi-square tests to test the 11 different pledges. Assuming independence between the tests, this p-value corresponds to an overall p-value of approx 0.05

Impact of AfSL on person making pledges	Importance of helping me meet other people like me who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives				Total
	Very important	Fairly Important	Not very important	Not at all important	
A: Doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact	12 (40%)	14 (47%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	30
B: Doing a bit more than before to reduce my environmental impact	8 (12%)	20 (30%)	34 (52%)	4 (6%)	66
Total	20 (21%)	34 (35%)	37 (39%)	5 (5%)	96

Table 6: Relationship between AfSL's impact and the importance of helping pledgers meet other people like them who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives

This may suggest that helping people to meet others like them may also help them to do more to reduce their environmental impact.

For each person we calculated the expected number of pledges they would have achieved by summing the pledges they made, weighted by the implementation rate for each type of pledge. E.g. Overall, 35% of pledges 1a that were made were implemented, so a person making pledge 1a would score 0.35 for that; 37% of pledges 1b that were made were implemented, so a person making pledge 1b would score an additional 0.37 for that. The residual difference between the actual number of pledges implemented and the expected number achieved was then calculated, and standardised by dividing by the expected number of pledges achieved. Correlations between this residual and other continuous variables were then calculated, and one way analysis of variance was conducted with categorical variables. Only one of these produced a statistically significant result – email respondents reported lower than expected implementation of pledges than phone respondents. This may be an example of phone respondents not wanting to 'hurt feelings' by admitting to low achievement of pledges, though more analysis is needed in order to check for other possible explanations. As the response rate to the email survey was quite low (in common with many email surveys), it may also be that the email respondents are more likely to hold stronger views (either positive or negative) than the population as a whole.

Response mode	N	Mean	Std. Error
Email	16	-.3794	.10000
Phone	87	.0587	.05818
Total	103	-.0094	.05372

(F=9.45, p=0.003)

Table 7: One way analysis of variance of standardized implementation residuals by mode of response

We also calculated a weighted number of pledges achieved for each person to reflect how hard each pledge was to achieve. The weight for each pledge was calculated as the reciprocal of the overall implementation rate for that pledge (Eg 1/0.35 for pledge 1a, etc.). This 'pledge achievement score' was strongly correlated with respondents' rating of the impact of AfSL on how much they are doing to reduce their environmental impact. Respondents who were doing much more than before to reduce their environmental impact had achieved a significantly higher weighted number of pledges (tables 8 and 9).

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
A: Doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact	31	13.6267	14.69490	2.63928	8.2365	19.0168	.00	64.57
B: Doing a bit more than before to reduce my environmental impact	67	7.5871	7.14551	.87296	5.8442	9.3300	.00	32.87
C: Not doing more yet but hope to do more in the future to reduce my environmental impact	5	7.2284	6.52201	2.91673	-.8697	15.3265	.00	16.11
Total	103	9.3874	10.29742	1.01463	7.3749	11.3999	.00	64.57

Table 8: Descriptive statistics - weighted number of pledges achieved

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	797.568	2	398.784	3.981	.022
Within Groups	10018.191	100	100.182		
Total	10815.759	102			

Table 9: Analysis of variance - weighted number of pledges achieved

This suggests that both can be useful outcome measures. More work is needed to investigate this relationship further, and whether there are any analytical benefits of using the score as a measure. If quick follow up is wanted in the future (Eg to save resources), or if there is a wish to focus on other aspects of follow up (Eg providing further assistance), then the AfSL impact question might be used as an alternative to asking about achievement on every pledge.

AfSL's impact rating had statistically significant correlations with a number of other variables – by inspection, gender and not wanting to be contacted seem to have independent effects; not wanting to be contacted and importance of helping meet similar people seem to have independent effects, gender and importance of helping meet similar people again seem to have independent effects.

Women reduced their environmental impact to a greater extent than men (tables 10 and 11). This echoes research by others which suggests that women are more interested in taking action on the environment than men.

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Overall, as a result of your contact with AfSL, which one of the following	A: Doing much more than before to reduce my	Count	9	1	10
		% within	39.1%	7.1%	27.0%
Total	B: Doing a bit more than before to reduce my	Count	14	13	27
		% within	60.9%	92.9%	73.0%
		Gender			
		Count	23	14	37
		% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Gender			

Table 10: Relationship between gender and the impact of AfSL on individuals reducing their environmental impact - crosstabulation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.515(b)	1	.034	.056	.036
Continuity Correction(a)	3.039	1	.081		
Likelihood Ratio	5.187	1	.023	.056	.036
Fisher's Exact Test				.056	.036
N of Valid Cases	37				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table

b 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.78.

Table 11: Relationship between gender and the impact of AfSL on individuals reducing their environmental impact – Chi-Square Tests

Gender was also correlated with feeling that meeting with similar people was important in helping them to reduce their environmental impact. We therefore need to investigate the relationship between these two variables in order to assess more fully the impact of each. Unfortunately the data on gender was incomplete, and this limits what further analysis can be done. It should be relatively easy however to obtain some of this missing data:

1. Gender can often be inferred from a person's name
2. AfSL staff/LPMs receiving pledges can be asked if they remember a person's gender
3. People doing the follow up can be asked if they remember a person's gender (although inferences may be less accurate here, as they will not have seen the person)

Underscoring the need to conduct a gender analysis is the fact that women received a lower level of input⁷ than men.

People who were happy to be contacted again in the future had reduced their environmental impact by more. This suggests a possibility that the data in this survey may be positively biased. For example, people who gave permission for us to follow them up in the first place may have felt more confident about achieving their pledges than people who did not, and this may have translated into greater actual achievement. It is not possible for us to check this directly, but we can make an estimate of the size of this effect by assuming it to be no greater (one might expect it to be less) than the effect of subsequent permission to follow up. This

⁷ The level of input variable is correlated with the duration of the interaction with the person making the pledge, but this latter variable is skewed by a few relatively long consultations, making it less useful for analysis without adjusting for this.

also suggests that if we follow up people a 2nd time in order to assess long-term sticking with pledges then this data may also be biased and we should attempt to apply a correction factor.

			i am happy for afsl to contact me in the future to		Total
			No	Yes	
Overall, as a result of your contact with AfSL, which one of the following statements most closely applies to you? (A-E)	A: Doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact	Count % within i am happy for afsl to contact me in the future to	0 .0%	27 35%	27 31%
	B: Doing a bit more than before to reduce my environmental impact	Count % within i am happy for afsl to contact me in the future to	11 100%	50 65%	61 69%
Total		Count % within i am happy for afsl to contact me in the future to find out how i am getting on with my pledges	11 100%	77 100%	88 100%

Table 12: Relationship between AfSL’s impact and whether respondents are happy for AfSL to contact them in the future - crosstabulation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	5.564	1	.018	.030	.013	
Continuity Correction	4.038	1	.044			
Likelihood Ratio	8.741	1	.003	.016	.013	
Fisher's Exact Test				.016	.013	
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.501	1	.019	.030	.013	.013
N of Valid Cases	88					

Table 13: Relationship between AfSL’s impact and whether respondents are happy for AfSL to contact them in the future – Chi-Square Tests

The period of time until being followed up was correlated with having more input, making fewer pledges and achieving fewer pledges, but was not correlated with weighted achievement of pledges. As this variable also corresponds to how long ago the pledges were made, the most obvious interpretation is that consultations have been getting longer over the time period. This is somewhat counter-intuitive, given the direction which AfSL has been taking, which has placed less emphasis on in depth home consultations. It may be that this is

to do with different approaches being taken by different individuals (E.g. new LPMs may be more enthusiastic and spend longer with clients, or less confident to give just brief support), and further analysis (and possibly further data collection) is required in order to investigate this.

The general absence of statistically significant correlations between level/duration of input and outcomes suggests either that:

- Consultations are being tailored appropriately to individuals and their needs, OR
- Longer consultations may be a waste of resources

Data on ethnicity, work status and birth year was not sufficiently complete to warrant conducting an analysis of these variables.

Costs

The whole exercise took up approximately 78 hours of AfSL staff and volunteer time, broken down as follows:

Time spent directly on collecting follow up information (phoning, asking questions, recording answers and other administration): 33 hours

Time spent on management, administration and induction: 25 hours

Analysis and write-up: 20 hours

Of this time, 41 hours was paid for, mostly at £8 per hour, and 37 hours was provided by volunteers

The actual cost of staff time was therefore approximately £328

Phone bills came to approximately £78

The total actual cost (excluding fixed overheads) was therefore approximately £406. If all of the work had been done by paid staff, then the total cost would have been about £702.

2.3 Suggestions for developing AfSL's support further

AfSL should consider the pledges where implementation is harder with a view to either:

1. Offering, either directly or indirectly, additional support that will facilitate implementation
2. Removing those pledges from its list

This may require further research to investigate the barriers to implementation. Many respondents to this survey indicated a willingness to be followed up further, and so could be a first port of call for further investigation.

AfSL should try to determine the gender of more of the people covered by this survey and analyse the relationship between gender and other data in this survey. It will be particularly important to consider the relationship between gender, the importance of helping people to meet others like them, and how much more than before people do to reduce their environmental impact. Subject to the results of this further analysis, AfSL should consider ways in which it can better help people making pledges to meet others like them, and ways in which AfSL can better support men to take action.

AfSL should consider investing in further follow up based on the model used for this exercise. The annual cost of this is estimated to be between £500 and £1000 depending on the amount of volunteer input. The actual questions asked might be varied from time to time in order to explore particular issues of importance. Consideration should also be given to whether the exercise should be conducted as a one-off once a year or every six months, or on a more ongoing basis, say once a month. This would have implications for the 'time to follow up' of the data. Consideration should also be given as to whether a second follow up phone call

should be made (Eg to check long-term achievement if calls are made monthly). This could be informed by a pilot exercise in 3-6 months time of 2nd follow up with the people questioned in this exercise, which would aim to look at both outcomes and at the impact of the initial follow-up phone-call, including the impact if any of the time to follow-up. Future phone follow-up should perhaps stress independence from AfSL as much as possible and might vary the content in order to investigate particular issues of interest.

Data on people's gender and age should be collected more systematically (this is already in the process of being implemented).

It did not prove possible to fully analyse the data in time for this report. Further analysis might be useful in helping to assess the validity of the above results, and in exploring additional issues. For example:

- Provide information about how respondents compared with non-respondents Eg gender etc, date of pledge, time since making pledge, mode of contact for follow-up, number of pledges made, mode of contact for pledge etc.
- Find out from telephone interviewers why outcomes were not obtained for all pledges from some individuals.
- Determine the extent to which some types of pledges not being implemented may be due to them taking longer to put into practice than other types of pledges
- Consider patterns of pledges – Eg are some pledges generally made together

3 Do AfSL's paid workers and volunteer Local Project Managers provide effective support to local action groups and projects wanting to take action on local sustainability issues?

Action for Sustainable Living has at various stages employed 3 full time paid workers ("Sustainability Consultants"), with one of their main tasks being to support groups of local people to take action on sustainability issues:

- Worker 1 supported action in the Chorlton/Whalley Range area from May 2004 to January 2007. She worked half time until April 2005, and full time thereafter.
- Worker 2 supported action in Old Trafford from July 2005 until March 2007. She worked $\frac{3}{4}$ time until September 2005, and full time thereafter.
- Worker 3 supported action in Hulme from July 2005 until March 2007. He worked $\frac{3}{4}$ time until September 2005, and full time thereafter.

Subsequently support for groups in these localities, and in some additional localities was provided by volunteer Local Project Managers (LPMs), each of whom volunteered for at least 8 hours per week. Support for the LPMs was provided by a full time paid worker, who had previously been one of the three Sustainability Consultants.

We attempted to evaluate both types of support, in order to assess both the actual and relative effectiveness of each.

3.1 Evaluation Methods – paid worker support

The usefulness of this support to action groups was assessed through 2 focus groups involving 12 people drawn from 9 groups, and 4 individual telephone interviews with people from a further 4 groups or organisations. The action groups and organisations represented included:

1. War on Waste Old Trafford (AfSL worker 2)
2. Fairtrade Old Trafford (AfSL worker 2)
3. Old Trafford Real Nappy Group (AfSL worker 2)
4. PLOT community allotment, Old Trafford (AfSL worker 2)
5. St John's allotment, Old Trafford (AfSL worker 2)
6. Woodburning stoves initiative, Old Trafford (AfSL worker 2)
7. Manchester Friends of the Earth (AfSL worker 1)
8. SUST swap shop, Manchester (AfSL worker 3)
9. Hulme Energy Action Team (AfSL worker 3)
10. Chorlton Action on Sustainable Transport (AfSL worker 1)
11. Green business project (AfSL worker 2)
12. Manchester Metropolitan University* (AfSL worker 3)
13. Loreto 6th Form College*, Hulme (AfSL worker 3)

Invitations to attend a focus group were sent out in late April 2007 to 158 email addresses corresponding to individuals known to have been involved in action groups or other projects that had received input from AfSL at some stage (see Appendix 4). For cost reasons, individuals not on email were not approached, and it may be that such individuals may have had different views to those of participants, particularly regarding the use of email and the web as communication and support mechanisms. Because participants were largely self-selected it may also be that individuals who feel less strongly about AfSL support or less positive about AfSL were not represented in the study.

* Students from the University and the College were involved in a number of different action groups over a period of time

It was originally intended to hold 3 focus groups, one for people from each of the 3 localities supported by AfSL workers, but despite phonecall follow-up and arranging a further date for a focus group, we were unable to secure the involvement of sufficient participants for the Hulme focus group to be viable, and the other 2 focus groups were predominantly made up of people from the Old Trafford area.. We therefore supplemented the focus groups with individual telephone interviews, starting with people who had expressed an interest in the focus groups but had been unable to attend and focusing on the Hulme and Chorlton/Whalley Range localities. These interviews took place in the Autumn of 2007.

A semi-structured guide for conducting the focus groups was prepared and amended slightly for the interviews (see Appendix 5). The focus groups lasted approximately 1½ hours and were facilitated by Alan Boyd, a director of AfSL, with notes being taken by volunteers Tim Hunt and Rosemary Armah. The phone interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes and were conducted by either Alan Boyd or Jess Buck, AfSL's volunteer manager. Most of the participants were not previously known to the facilitators, interviewers or note takers. The focus groups were taped and transcribed; the interviewers made notes of the key points arising in the interviews. The main themes were identified through discussion of the transcripts and notes by Alan Boyd and Jess Buck.

3.2 Results – paid worker support

AfSL's Sustainability Consultants did provide valued support to groups.

"AfSL have been a massive help. [name of worker] has been flexible, really good to work with. Brilliant, just brilliant!"

"[name of worker] is the woman isn't she?" (laughs all round) "She's just totally it"

"I think actually each of us in our different ways can testify to a, to a model [of providing support in a locality] that has worked in a way, that other models in my experience haven't"

There were three main benefits, with associated forms of support:

1. Generating social capital by connecting both individuals and groups.

AfSL Sustainability Consultants were seen as experts in knowing who to contact in order to answer queries and get things done.

"we're thinking 'where is there in the local community that we could get involved in something which was green space?'. And, mmm, met Claire, who introduced us to Janet, mmm, and the community allotment"

"[name of worker] is just a mine of information if we want something"

"[name of worker]'s been the hub around which we have all revolved, ... so it's relationships is the thing, and I think [name of worker] is really gifted in creating and enabling stable relationships to happen"

2. Enabling action to take place that would not have taken place otherwise, by nurturing and sustaining groups.

Groups need support, particularly in their early stages. It is important that groups find a focus for action (goals) and learn how to undertake the processes necessary to organise the group and its actions. Face-to-face meetings of group members and with AfSL contacts are important at the early stages, so that all can be included. Later, a mixture of face-to-face and email contact may be feasible, bearing in mind that some group members will not have easy internet access.

“Project has to be interesting and very focused. You need to be very clear of what the outcomes are going to be and what it entails.”

“I think that thing we did initially with [name of worker] is that she facilitated the group – because we have loads of ideas, and loads of things we wanted to do – and we have to sort of plan it in.”

“All the main organisers were volunteers. AfSL came to the first few planning meetings and then handed over to the coordinators. At the end lots of people wanted to move on and lost contact and AfSL bought the focus back and made it happen again. ... AfSL really oversaw the process and made sure it kept going.”

“I think it’s quite handy to have someone there who is clearly a leader of the group to start with, takes responsibility like [name of worker] or [name of worker], so people think they’re now gona do it, so we’ll just enjoy! But I think for a sustainable group you need to get people involved doing it especially if your seeding a group like Afsl do, its very important that you start sharing the responsibility out.”

“I don’t think you always need a connection with AfSL, but you do need to have someone available and contact details in case you come up against trouble.”

“I wouldn’t like to be completely autonomous from AfSl. I see it as an umbrella organisation and it gives credibility and people know that AfSL is a good thing. It would be a mistake to break free because if core people were to leave it will just die out, whereas AfSL can get new volunteers involved and fill the place”

“It’s always good to see the whites of people’s eyes and personality”

3. Enabling action to be more effective and efficient by helping groups to organise their activities.

AfSL guidance on project management was found useful by some action group members, particularly for organising large projects. Working within a project management framework may be alien to some people however.

“I can both prepare and chair meetings without it getting too hierarchical. However, it was good to have [name of worker] there for the first meeting to show how it was done.”

“That’s the main problem with our campaign work, we don’t know whose doing what”

These positive outcomes were facilitated by providing each group with easy access to a named contact (the Sustainability Coordinator) who people could get to know and trust.

“I tend to communicate through [name of worker]. I prefer having one point of contact otherwise it gets confusing”

Sustainability Coordinators were valued for their expertise on sustainability issues and their knowledge of who to contact locally in order to facilitate action, including individuals in other action groups, workers in other organisations supporting action on sustainability and in council departments, and funding sources.

“there’s somebody who we can ask for help, and advice and things.”

"It's good to know what works through [name of worker]. I can ask questions and be told 'oh we tried this and it worked or it didn't'. At the same time AfSL is very open to trying out new things and supports this."

"I said to [name of worker] 'Look. We've got this land [for a community allotment]. How do we do it?' And she immediately knew all the different people, in a way that I've not known any kind of city council officer know the people in a neighbourhood."

Being orientated towards action, ie focusing on doing practical things rather than just talking, was also important. This directly engages people whose natural inclination is to act rather than talk, and those people who want the encouragement of seeing fairly concretely that they are making a difference. Over time it has also enabled AfSL to build up a stock of examples that can be used to demonstrate what can be done, and to interest people in taking action.

Many participants valued the social aspects of being an action group member, and so it was important that AfSL workers valued people as people, rather than simply focusing on objectives for action. The cheerful enthusiasm of the workers was appreciated, enabling action group members to have fun and feeling able to take a break now and again.

"Certainly for me, and I'd say some of the others as well, you know I've got really good friends and helping each other, and er so it's been really positive in a community sort of way."

"and we've, I've made new friends, that I didn't have before I got involved with, and I've lived in the area for 14 years, so I've met new people through it."

"She, [name of worker], I mean to me she is amazing at getting you involved in stuff. She's so enthusiastic, I think that's what does it. She's connected isn't she to so many different people? And she always thinks well 'you could join in that'"

Having a flexible approach that could respond to the different styles and needs of action group members was helpful. Most groups had a small number of members (sometimes only 1 or 2) who were the driving force behind the group's activities, and appropriate support for these key members was felt to be particularly important.

"a lot of people, for various different reasons, either can't, or won't do that kind of thing. And our policy is 'if you're getting something out of coming, then that's fine'"

"I think it's drawing on people's strengths, because you get people coming to the group who can bring different skills. It wasn't just a case of getting everybody who was interested in organic gardening"

"with one Chinese volunteer whose English was not very good I felt that we pretended to listen to her views, but not sure if we really did. It was almost as if we didn't have time for her. If you don't communicate well it sometimes means people don't listen. If people don't listen people are more inclined to drop out."

"It depends on how people work. Some people like to get told, others like to get on with it."

"It's important to have several leaders and not all of them AfSL. It is good for everyone to know that there is someone else they can talk to. It feels less centralised and hierarchical."

3.3 Evaluation Methods – volunteer LPM support

The usefulness of this support to action groups was assessed through a focus group and individual interviews held in February and March 2008, involving a total of 5 people. Three action groups were represented:

- Fo Guang group (a green group in the buddhist temple, LPM for City Centre)
- Sustainable Chorlton (LPM for Chorlton)
- War on Waste Old Trafford (LPM for Old Trafford)

Our aim had been to involve action group members from the localities where LPMs had been in place for the longest: the 3 localities which had previously received support from a paid worker, plus Manchester city centre. LPMs focused on providing support to individuals initially, not being expected to support work with groups until after 3 months, so it was only in these 4 localities that there had been an opportunity for LPMs to do substantial work with action groups. Members of action groups in these localities were contacted (including those who had worked closely with LPMs and those who hadn't) and asked if they could spare some time at one of their already scheduled meetings to give us some feedback on LPMs, or else be interviewed by phone. This was felt to be the most feasible approach within the limited period of time that was available. Although we managed to get feedback relating to 3 of the LPMs, unfortunately the number of participants was small, and so the results must be regarded as indicative rather than conclusive.

The guide for conducting the focus groups and interviews was an amended version of that used previously for assessing paid worker support. Where relevant, participants were asked to compare support from an LPM with support from a paid worker. All data collection and analysis was conducted by Jess Buck, AfSL's volunteer manager, who took notes of the feedback that was given.

3.4 Results – volunteer LPM support

All of the participants regarded the work they had done with LPMs to have been successful. LPMs had been the catalyst for projects that would not otherwise have happened, and had assisted the groups with information, enthusiasm and project management skills – positive outcomes similar to the 3 themes identified for the paid workers (see above):

“She's provided information and links us to bigger themes. We wanted to do something and she has helped. [name of LPM] has provided activities, ideas, discussions and information”

“The plastic bag campaign was [name of LPM]'s idea. Having someone who is keen to launch and achieve something really works”

“[name of LPM] is a skilled action planner”

“[name of LPM] joined us as AfSL volunteer and said lets do a project to draw in more people and we changed the name of Fair Trade Chorlton to Sustainable Chorlton to create a catch all group”

In addition to providing expertise, the LPM/AfSL was also seen as doing things that group members simply did not have time for, such as obtaining and managing funds and recruiting additional volunteers to help with group activities

“Somebody's time is the most valuable thing you can offer and administration”

“AfSL holds and manages funds for WOWOT. It offers a fantastic way for a group to engage in their own issues in their own time without the headache of managing money or getting into constitutions”

“Finding and supporting volunteers is worth millions”

In providing such additional time, care needed to be taken that project/group objectives were served rather than AfSL's objectives taking precedence. This was not always the case:

"We had a ban plastic bag stall .. and all of AfSL's materials were there. I thought it would be more of an independent plastic bag stall. There was a feeling of AfSL being over present"

"At one meeting there were too many AfSL related people turning up who didn't live in Chorlton. It felt a bit like an AfSL training ground. It prevented the gelling of the rest of the group"

All groups were positive about their LPMs, but the group which had not previously had paid worker support appeared to be more positive than the other 2 groups. The fact that LPMs were available for fewer hours each week than the paid workers was a limitation. While this was the main issue, and all groups would like ongoing support from an LPM/AfSL, there was also a suggestion that LPMs were less experienced and less reliable than the paid workers. Some groups had expected more from their LPM, and had given them more to do than the LPM had been able to deliver.

"[name of worker] was full time. When she left support declined considerably. [name of LPM] offered to type minutes, but then disappeared for a while"

"[name of worker] was more experienced and did loads more work"

While valuing their current members, groups wanted to broaden their membership to better reflect society.

"We have a really good mix I think. There are more men than I was expecting"

"It doesn't engage people who are not already engaged"

"[We're] 99% white women We need to work out how the Asian community works. It's a nut that needs to be cracked"

Communication methods and meeting venues varied between groups depending on facilities available locally, personal preferences and group values. Groups were concerned however that they might be excluding others by using a particular method or venue. Email was the main communication method for 2 of the groups, but they also had members without access to email or who did not like to use email. There was also some discussion about the pro's and con's of different meeting venues (Eg at a community centre; or in people's homes)

3.5 Suggestions for developing AfSL's support further

In order to ensure that action is open to all and that the skills and expertise of all action group members are fully used, it may be helpful for AfSL to develop relevant policies and training for key volunteers (action group members, LPMs etc.) and staff with regard to:

1. Project planning and management
2. Creating roles within a group to share workload and make the most of diverse talents
3. Engaging diverse communities

In order to help people make the most of what AfSL can offer, it may be helpful for AfSL to produce and distribute a leaflet or DVD for action groups and volunteers, explaining AfSL's background, values and desired relationship with groups and individuals (Eg AfSL as the umbrella or support hub for activities). There needs to be a clear agreement at the outset about what support AfSL and LPMs will provide to action groups, and monitoring/management by AfSL to ensure that this is provided. The agreement should also make clear the roles and responsibilities of action group members. Again relevant policies and training may be useful.

So that groups do not exclude members through their use of communication methods and meeting venues, it may be helpful for AfSL to draw up a list of different types, how to access them, and the pro's and con's of each, and encourage groups to consider these issues. While AfSL might consider offering groups direct/easy access to some types of communication methods (Eg online forums, webpages, email boxes), such offers should only be seen as part of a wider array which groups may wish to choose from.

4 Outputs

4.1 Pledges

A breakdown of all the pledges people made during the project is given in table 14 - over 11,500 pledges in total. Our data on the number of people making those pledges is less robust owing to some missing data, but we estimate that these pledges were made by approximately 2400 people – an average of about 5 pledges per person.

Pledge	Number
1. a switch to a green tariff either with my current electricity supplier or with a new supplier	261
b switch to an electricity producer that supplies 100 green renewable electricity	175
c generate my own energy through installing solar panels a wind turbine etc	93
1d other green electricity	14
2. a turn off lights when leaving the room and 0t leave appliances on standby	803
b switch to using low energy light bulbs	1251
c draught proof windows and doors	441
d insulate hot water pipes and tanks	191
2d other energy	96
3. a buy eco friendly cleaning products	322
b make my own cleaning products from natural substances eg tea tree oil	127
c use real nappies or a combination of real nappies and disposables	81
3d other household	9
4. a buy more products from shops situated in my local community	430
b buy more products from 0nchain shops	340
c buy local produce when it is available	401
d join an organic box scheme	157
4e other local/organic food	37
5. a join a credit union	71
b switch my credit card to one that donates to charity or donate any cashback to charity	106

c switch my stock market investments to an ethical fund	57
d switch my bank account to a more ethically focused bank eg coop triodos mutual	170
5e other ethical finance	6
6. a use green transport bus tram train bike or walk to travel to and from work	242
b reduce my shopping associated car mileage	159
c arrange my car breakdown service through the environmental transport association	81
d use car sharing for some journeys	117
6e other green transport	15
7. a lessen the environmental and social impact of my holidays by choosing an eco holiday	146
b limit my impact on the environment by not flying when another form of transport is viable	189
c offset the co2 emissions of my air travel	108
7d other green holidays	5
8. a buy more fair trade products as part of my regular shopping	395
b eat in restaurants and cafes that use fair trade ingredients	209
c join my local fair trade group	105
8d other fair trade	15
9. a use water from my bathdishes or collect rainwater in a butt to water my plants or garden	205
b reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet by using a watersave cistern filler	735
c install a water meter	94
9d other water saving	53
10. a reuse plastic bags and think of other ways to reuse waste	544
b use rechargeable batteries	312
c Not buy pre packed food or products with excessive packaging	346
d recycle waste where possible making full use of the councils doorstep recycling scheme	494
10e other waste and recycling	64
11. a compost my biodegradable waste	261

b grow my own fruit and vegetables	178
c use natural fertilizers and pest control	151
11d other gardening	15
12. a as my children grow out of clothes pass them on to younger children	151
b take all my unwanted clothes to charity shops	305
c buy clothes made from natural materials	177
d buy my clothes from ethical trading companies or charity shops	203
12e other clothing	5
Other	54
All pledges	11772

Table 14: Total pledges made in each sustainability category

4.2 Projects

AfSL has initiated a wide range of projects, ranging from one-off events to ongoing action groups. Some of the ongoing groups went on to initiate a variety of projects themselves, with and without direct support from AfSL; a small number met and planned, but did not take action in the end. This variety makes quantification and comparison difficult, but AfSL initiated approximately 44 of what we would regard as substantial projects during the 3 years, the vast majority of which delivered action on sustainability:

1. Fair Trade with a primary school
2. Litter and recycling with a secondary school
3. Waste and recycling action groups x 3.
4. Working with a local grocery to discourage customers from using their car when they shop there
5. Energy Action Teams x 3
6. Drop-in Energy Saving Advice Sessions at a local Library every week for a month
7. Food Action Groups x 3
8. Energy and Waste Awareness initiative in student halls of residence
9. Local food supply project.
10. Sustainable Urban Styles Today (SUST) fashion shows x 2
11. SUST clothes 'swap shop'
12. Community Health Centre campaign to make the building more energy efficient and its users more energy aware.
13. Community Allotment Projects x 3
14. "Keep it Real" real nappy group
15. Renewable energy trial
16. Fair Trade groups x 2
17. "A FEW small steps" schools project (working with 5+ schools)
18. Bus Poster Project (Hulme)
19. Permaculture Summer Programme
20. Green transport action group
21. Urban Gardens Society
22. Eco-clubnight
23. Timber Recycling group

24. Geodesic dome gardening project in a primary school
25. Sustainable Living Calendar for students x 2
26. Transition Town project
27. University People & Planet group
28. Plastic Bag Free projects x 2
29. Workshops for businesses wanting to become more sustainable
30. Bike Project
31. Churches Against Climate Change project
32. Sustainable Students project

Further details about some of these projects are available at www.afsl.org.uk, together with information about a number of one-off events.

4.3 Partnerships

AfSL is pleased to have worked in partnership with many other organisations. There is insufficient space in this report to give details about all of these relationships. The following list is not exhaustive, and we apologise to the groups we have missed out!

1. Bloom Healthy Living Network
2. Chorlton local co-op members group
3. Chorlton park primary school
4. Chorlton police
5. Co-op
6. Creative Concern
7. Eighth Day Café
8. EMERGE Recycling
9. Fairfield Waste Management
10. Friends of Birley Fields
11. Gold Green Biodiesel
12. Greater Manchester Public Transport Executive
13. Groundwork
14. HARP Café
15. Hornchurch Tenants and Residents Association
16. Hulme Alliance
17. Japan Centre
18. Limited Resources Organics
19. Loreto Friends of the Earth
20. MANCAT (Manchester College of Arts and Technology)
21. Manchester and District Housing Trust
22. Manchester City Council
23. Manchester Climate Forum
24. Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN)
25. Development Education Project (DEP)
26. Global Dimensions forum
27. Manchester Friends of the Earth
28. Manchester Knowledge Capital
29. Manchester Methodist group
30. Manchester Metropolitan University
31. Manchester Refugee Support Network
32. Manchester University
33. NEA
34. North West Regional Assembly
35. People & Planet Society
36. Permaculture North West
37. South Manchester Energy Advice Centre
38. Spearfish
39. The dukeries residents group
40. The Soil association
41. South Central Community Network

42. Trafford Council
43. TrainingWise
44. Trim
45. Unicorn grocery
46. Voluntary and Community Action Trafford.
47. Whalley Range Forum
48. Whitworth Art Gallery
49. Zion Community Health Centre

5 Conclusions

The project did help towards developing sustainable local communities, but would need to be better resourced in order to have a significant effect across the whole of the population served. It fully achieved its objectives of extending the scheme to 3 localities, and of maximising the contribution of volunteers and other local people to service operation and development. It largely achieved its objectives of developing service models that will work in a diverse range of localities, and of “handing over” to local people. It partly achieved its objective of evaluating its services and demonstrating cost-effectiveness. The objectives that proved most difficult to achieve were those concerning income generation and funding for roll out of the services.

5.1 Main Achievements

9. Over 2,400 people made pledges to reduce their environmental impact
10. 95% of those people went on to take action to reduce their environmental impact
11. 30% of those people are doing much more to reduce their environmental impact as a result of AfSL’s support
12. AfSL initiated over 40 substantial projects on sustainable living
13. AfSL’s support for action groups, as provided by both paid workers and volunteers, was valued and provided 3 key benefits:
 - Generating social capital, by connecting both individuals and groups
 - Enabling action to take place that would not have happened otherwise, by nurturing and sustaining groups
 - Enabling action to be more effective and efficient, by helping groups to organise their activities
14. AfSL developed hundreds of volunteering opportunities and supported hundreds of volunteers
15. Volunteers benefited from their time with AfSL:by:
 - Developing practical and technical skills
 - Increasing their confidence
 - Gaining valuable work experience
 - Engaging with other people, sharing ideas and being inspired
 - Doing something complementary to their paid work
16. AfSL volunteering produced wider benefits:
 - Civil renewal
 - Social inclusion
 - Breaking down barriers

5.2 Successes and Areas for Improvement

Approaches

It is feasible to support action on sustainability both through paid locality workers and through volunteer locality workers supported by a paid coordinator. The volunteer approach is less costly, and may potentially provide better value for money, but further evaluation would be required in order to provide a definitive answer.

Both mini and in-depth consultations can help people to take action on sustainability. One possible explanation of our data is that both are equally effective, and therefore mini-consultations provide better value for money. Another possible explanation is that the amount of input required depends on the individual and the nature of the changes they want to make. If this is the case, then mini-consultations focused on changes that are relatively easy to make and on population groups that better able to make those changes, should be effective

and relatively inexpensive. But more extensive changes and population groups less able to make changes would require a greater input. Further evaluation would be required in order to provide a definitive answer.

Similarly both in-home and at-event consultations can help people to take action on sustainability. In-home consultations are substantially more costly than at-event consultations, and this difference is so great, that it would appear likely that at-event consultations also offer better value for money.

While not conclusive, our data suggests that enabling people to meet others who are also trying to reduce their environmental impact may help them to make more substantial changes, but further analysis would be required in order to provide a definitive answer.

We were able to reduce the support provided to localities, switching from full time paid workers to part-time volunteers. This was not a straight forward process however, and would have benefited from us providing clearer information at an earlier stage and managing the change more actively. Our experience suggests that keeping a lower, but uniform level of support, may be preferable to having a higher level of support reduced to that level.

We were not able to generate significant amounts of income through affiliate deals or donations. Affiliate deals proved time consuming to set up and difficult to monitor, while also potentially compromising our independence. Our experience would suggest they are likely to be useful only to much larger projects, particularly those that are national in scale, where the set up overheads might be worth paying.

Sustainable Consumption and Production Areas

Some actions were harder to put into practice than others. We did not have time to conduct a specific statistical analysis to look at whether some sustainability areas were less amenable to change than others. Our analyses would appear to support the “common sense” conclusion that actions which take more time, effort or money are less likely to be put into practice. Perceptions of difficulty would appear to be related to actual difficulty of implementation, although further analysis would be required in order to assess the extent to which perceptions of difficulty predict outcomes.

The pledges where we can be fairly confident that implementation is easier are:

1. Reuse plastic bags and think of other ways to reuse waste (88% implemented)
2. Recycle waste where possible making full use of the council's doorstep recycling scheme (87% implemented)
3. Turn off lights when leaving the room and not leave appliances on standby (85% implemented)
4. Switch to using low energy light bulbs (85% implemented)
5. Take all my unwanted clothes to charity shops (79% implemented)

Those pledges where we can be fairly confident that implementation is harder are:

1. Generate my own energy through installing solar panels a wind turbine etc (0% implemented)
2. Join my local fair trade group (0% implemented)
3. Switch my bank account to a more ethically focused bank eg coop triodos mutual (9% implemented)

Project participants/audiences

We lacked data to make a full assessment of which types of people were most and least receptive to our project. Our statistical analysis suggests that women may have been more receptive than men, but more analysis would be required in order to draw a definitive conclusion.

Replication

Our experience is that approaches need to be tailored to local communities, taking account of factors such as culture and levels of deprivation. While our principles and our basic approach can provide a good foundation for work in other localities, we cannot provide a 'cookbook' recipe for success, it is crucial to tailor the approach based on engagement and dialogue with local communities.

We also believe it is important to work with existing groups wherever possible, rather than cut across other work that is already happening. Competition between voluntary organisations for scarce funding resources can be a barrier to this. More fundamentally, it is difficult for a holistic approach to sustainable living to obtain funding, when most funders are focusing on only a subset of issues Eg insulation, or recycling, or CO2 reduction etc. Different objectives and styles of working can also present barriers to working with large public sector organisations, which in our experience (with honourable exceptions) could be bureaucratic, uncoordinated and self-important.

We also need to bear in mind that our project was situated in an urban area, and may not be applicable in rural areas. We also had access to a large student population which provided a significant number of volunteers (this had both pro's and con's).

5.3 Recommendations

We have made a variety of suggestions and recommendations in sections 2.3 and 3.5 and in Appendix 5 regarding how AfSL could improve what it does. These could also be taken as indicative of areas that other organisations in a similar role or situation should give consideration to. In summary, the recommendations are:

1. Consider providing different levels of support and/or adopting different approaches, depending on the difficulty of the action that is being attempted. One option might be to focus only on relatively easy actions, with minimal support.
2. Consider conducting further evaluation on issues raised by this evaluation, and where insufficient data had been collected.
3. Evaluation should be given greater priority. This however requires engagement with staff and volunteers at an early stage in order to establish a culture of evaluation, access to expertise in data collection and analysis, and time and financial resources.
4. Information, policies and training for volunteers and staff might usefully be developed with regard to:
 - Project planning and management
 - Creating roles within a group to share workload and make the most of diverse talents
 - Engaging diverse communities
 - About AfSL's values and what the organisation can offer
 - Agreeing a clear 'contract' between AfSL, its volunteers, and the individuals and groups it supports
5. Consider providing information to help local groups decide on what mix of meeting venues and means of communication is best for them.
6. Provide enhanced induction, ongoing training, supervision and other support for volunteers.
7. Take steps to recruit a more diverse range of volunteers
8. Provide greater recognition for volunteers' achievements

Appendix 1: Instructions to Interviewers

When phoning people, have a printed copy of this document to refer to. Then open your spreadsheet list and use this to record the information that people give you – each row contains the contact details of a person, spaces to record the number of phonecalls you have made, the eventual outcome (Eg Information obtained, refused, gave up, etc.), the date, what pledges they have made, and spaces to record answers to all of the follow up questions. Please do not email anyone at this stage. Remember to save the spreadsheet after each phonecall, and to back it up after each session (you can do this by emailing it to us if you wish).

Work your way along the row until you come to a “Yes” - look at the column heading to see what the person has pledged to do, and overwrite the “Yes” with a category number from 1-6, depending on what the person says they have actually done. The exact meaning of each number varies slightly from question to question, and is printed out below, but generally the categories are as follows:

1. I did it, but am not doing it any more
2. I have done it and am continuing to do it
3. I'm just starting to do it
4. I haven't done it yet, but frequently feel that I should
5. I haven't done it yet, but sometimes feel that I should
6. I don't think it's important any more

Rather than read out every category for every question (this could take forever!), just ask if the pledge has been put into action, choose the category that seems closest to their answer, and say it back to them Eg “So would I be right to say you frequently feel you should switch to a green tariff?” etc. If people are struggling to answer, then it may help to read out some of the categories.

When you have gone through all of the relevant pledges (1a – 12d and other pledges), ask the questions in the column headings immediately to the right (column BG onwards). The possible responses to question BG are:

I'm now doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact

I'm now doing a bit more than before to reduce to my environmental impact

I haven't managed to do more yet but hope to do more in the future to reduce my environmental impact

I haven't managed to do more yet and don't think I can do much more to reduce my environmental impact

I'm still not really interested in taking action to reduce my environmental impact

Depending on the answer to this question you choose the relevant question in column BH and record the answers to the related questions in columns BI to BT (these questions differ only in their tense, depending on which question BH was relevant). Code the answer to each question 1-4 as follows:

1. Very important
2. Fairly important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important

Finally record whether it would be OK for AfSL to contact them again in the future.

Pledges and the questions to ask for each one

1. Green electricity

1a Switch to a "green" tariff, either with my current electricity supplier or with a new supplier

1. I switched to a green tariff, but have reverted to an ordinary tariff
2. I am now on a green tariff
3. I am in the process of switching to a green tariff
4. I frequently feel I should switch to a green tariff
5. I sometimes feel I should switch to a green tariff
6. I do not feel it is important to switch to a green tariff

1b Switch to an electricity producer that supplies 100% green renewable electricity

supplier

1. I switched to a 100% green electricity supplier, but have reverted to an ordinary supplier
2. I am now with a 100% green electricity supplier
3. I am in the process of switching to a 100% green electricity supplier
4. I frequently feel I should switch to a 100% green electricity supplier
5. I sometimes feel I should switch to a 100% green electricity supplier
6. I do not feel it is important to switch to a 100% green electricity supplier

1c Generate my own energy through installing solar panels, a wind turbine etc

1. I have generated my own energy, but no longer do so
2. I now generate my own energy
3. I am in the process of setting up my own energy generation
4. I frequently feel I should generate my own energy
5. I sometimes feel I should generate my own energy
6. I do not feel it is important to generate my own energy

2. Energy saving

2a Turn off lights when leaving the room and not leave appliances on standby

1. I have tried to turn off lights etc., but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually turn off lights etc.
3. I am starting to turn off lights etc.
4. I frequently feel I should try to turn off lights etc.
5. I sometimes feel I should try to turn off lights etc.
6. I do not feel that it is important to turn off lights etc.

2b Switch to using low energy light bulbs

1. I have tried low energy light bulbs, but have reverted to ordinary light bulbs
2. I have switched most or all of my light bulbs to low energy ones
3. I am starting to switch to low energy light bulbs
4. I frequently feel I should try to switch to using low energy light bulbs
5. I sometimes feel I should try to switch to using low energy light bulbs
6. I do not feel that it is important to switch to using low energy light bulbs

2c Draught proof windows and doors

1. I have draught proofed windows and doors, but they're no longer draught proofed
2. I have draught proofed most or all of my windows and doors
3. I am starting to draught proof windows and doors
4. I frequently feel I should try to draught proof windows and doors
5. I sometimes feel I should try to draught proof windows and doors
6. I do not feel that it is important to draught proof windows and doors

2d Insulate hot water pipes and tanks

1. I have insulated hot water pipes and tanks, but they're no long insulated
2. I have insulated most or all of my hot water pipes and tanks
3. I am starting to insulate my hot water pipes and tanks
4. I frequently feel I should try to insulate my hot water pipes and tanks
5. I sometimes feel I should try to insulate my hot water pipes and tanks
6. I do not feel that it is important to insulate hot water pipes and tanks

3. Household products

3a Buy eco friendly cleaning products

1. I have tried to buy eco friendly cleaning products, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually buy eco friendly cleaning products
3. I am starting to buy eco friendly cleaning products
4. I frequently feel I should try to buy eco friendly cleaning products
5. I sometimes feel I should try to buy eco friendly cleaning products
6. I do not feel that it is important to buy eco friendly cleaning products

3b Make my own cleaning products from natural substances (e.g. Tea tree oil)

1. I have tried to make my own cleaning products, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually make my own cleaning products
3. I am starting to make my own cleaning products
4. I frequently feel I should try to make my own cleaning products
5. I sometimes feel I should try to make my own cleaning products
6. I do not feel that it is important to make my own cleaning products

3c Use real nappies or a combination of real nappies and disposables

1. I have tried to use real nappies, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually use real nappies
3. I am starting to use real nappies
4. I frequently feel I should try to use real nappies
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use real nappies
6. I do not feel that it is important to use real nappies

4. Local and organic food

4a Buy more products from shops situated in my local community

1. I have tried to shop in local shops, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually shop in local shops
3. I am starting to shop in local shops
4. I frequently feel I should try to shop in local shops
5. I sometimes feel I should try to shop in local shops
6. I do not feel that it is important to shop in local shops

4b Buy more products from non-chain shops

1. I have tried to shop in non-chain shops, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually shop in non-chain shops
3. I am starting to shop in non-chain shops
4. I frequently feel I should try to shop in non-chain shops
5. I sometimes feel I should try to shop in non-chain shops
6. I do not feel that it is important to shop in non-chain shops

4c Buy local produce when it is available

1. I have tried to buy local produce, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually buy local produce
3. I am starting to buy local produce
4. I frequently feel I should try to buy local produce
5. I sometimes feel I should try to buy local produce
6. I do not feel that it is important to buy local produce

4d Join an organic box scheme

1. I joined an organic box scheme, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I have joined an organic box scheme
3. I am starting to join an organic box scheme
4. I frequently feel I should try to join an organic box scheme
5. I sometimes feel I should try to join an organic box scheme
6. I do not feel that it is important to join an organic box scheme

5. Ethical finance

5a Join a credit union

1. I have joined a credit union, but have found it hard to make use of it
2. I often make use of a credit union
3. I am starting to join a credit union
4. I frequently feel I should try to join a credit union
5. I sometimes feel I should try to join a credit union
6. I do not feel that it is important to join a credit union

5b Switch my credit card to one that donates to charity, or donate any cashback to charity

1. I did switch to a charity credit card, but no longer use that card
2. I usually use a charity credit card rather than an ordinary one
3. I am starting to switch to a charity credit card
4. I frequently feel I should try to switch to a charity credit card
5. I sometimes feel I should try to switch to a charity credit card
6. I do not feel that it is important to switch to a charity credit card

5c Switch my stock market investments to an "Ethical Fund"

1. I have tried to switch to ethical investments, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually invest ethically
3. I am starting to invest ethically
4. I frequently feel I should try to invest ethically
5. I sometimes feel I should try to invest ethically
6. I do not feel that it is important to invest ethically

5d Switch my bank account to a more "ethically focused" bank

1. I have tried to make use of ethical bank accounts, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually use an ethical bank account
3. I am starting to use an ethical bank account
4. I frequently feel I should try to use an ethical bank account
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use an ethical bank account
6. I do not feel that it is important to use an ethical bank account

6. Green transport

6a Use green transport (Bus, Tram, Train, Bike or Walk) to travel to and from work

1. I have tried to use green transport, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually use green transport
3. I am starting to use green transport
4. I frequently feel I should try to use green transport
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use green transport
6. I do not feel that it is important to use green transport

6b Reduce my shopping-associated car mileage

1. I have tried to reduce my shopping car mileage, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I have reduced my shopping car mileage
3. I am starting to reduce my shopping car mileage
4. I frequently feel I should try to reduce my shopping car mileage
5. I sometimes feel I should try to reduce my shopping car mileage
6. I do not feel that it is important to reduce my shopping car mileage

6c Arrange my car breakdown service through the Environmental Transport Association

1. I did arrange my car breakdown service through ETA, but no longer do so

2. My car breakdown service is arranged through ETA
3. I am starting to arrange my car breakdown service through ETA
4. I frequently feel I should try to arrange my car breakdown service through ETA
5. I sometimes feel I should try to arrange my car breakdown service through ETA
6. I do not feel that it is important to arrange my car breakdown service through ETA

6d Use car sharing for some journeys

1. I have tried to use car sharing for some journeys, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I use car sharing for some journeys
3. I am starting to use car sharing for some journeys
4. I frequently feel I should try to use car sharing for some journeys
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use car sharing for some journeys
6. I do not feel that it is important to use car sharing for some journeys

7. Green holidays

7a Lessen the environmental and social impact of my holidays by choosing an 'Eco holiday'

1. I have tried to choose Eco holidays, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually choose an Eco holiday
3. I am starting to choose Eco holidays
4. I frequently feel I should try to choose Eco holidays
5. I sometimes feel I should try to choose Eco holidays
6. I do not feel that it is important to choose Eco holidays

7b Limit my impact on the environment by not flying when another form of transport is viable

1. I have tried to fly less, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually don't fly when there is a viable alternative
3. I am starting to fly less
4. I frequently feel I should try to fly less
5. I sometimes feel I should try to fly less
6. I do not feel that it is important to fly less

7c Offset the CO2 emissions of my air travel

1. I have tried to offset my CO2 emissions, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually offset my CO2 emissions
3. I am starting to offset my CO2 emissions
4. I frequently feel I should try to offset my CO2 emissions
5. I sometimes feel I should try to offset my CO2 emissions
6. I do not feel that it is important to offset my CO2 emissions

8. Fair trade

8a Buy more Fair Trade products as part of my regular shopping

1. I have tried to buy more fair trade products, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I buy more fair trade products
3. I am starting to buy more fair trade products
4. I frequently feel I should try to buy more fair trade products
5. I sometimes feel I should try to buy more fair trade products
6. I do not feel that it is important to buy more fair trade products

8b Eat in restaurants and cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients

1. I have tried to eat in cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually eat in cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients
3. I am starting to eat in cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients
4. I frequently feel I should try to eat in cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients
5. I sometimes feel I should try to eat in cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients
6. I do not feel that it is important to eat in restaurants and cafes that use Fair Trade ingredients

8c Join my local Fair Trade group

1. I did join my local Fair Trade group, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I am a member of my local Fair Trade group
3. I am starting to join my local Fair Trade group
4. I frequently feel I should try to join my local Fair Trade group
5. I sometimes feel I should try to join my local Fair Trade group
6. I do not feel that it is important to join my local Fair Trade group

9. Save water

9a Use water from my bath/dishes, or collect rainwater in a “butt”, to water my plants or garden

1. I have tried to use rain or bath water to water my plants, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually use rain or bath water to water my plants
3. I am starting to use rain or bath water to water my plants
4. I frequently feel I should try to use rain or bath water to water my plants
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use rain or bath water to water my plants
6. I do not feel that it is important to use rain or bath water to water my plants

9b Reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet by using a “water-save cistern filler”

1. I have tried to reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I have reduced the amount of water used to flush the toilet
3. I am starting to reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet
4. I frequently feel I should try to reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet
5. I sometimes feel I should try to reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet
6. I do not feel that it is important to reduce the amount of water used to flush the toilet

9c Install a water meter

1. I have tried to install a water meter, but do not have one now
2. I have installed a water meter
3. I am starting to install a water meter
4. I frequently feel I should try to install a water meter
5. I sometimes feel I should try to install a water meter
6. I do not feel that it is important to install a water meter

10. Recycling

10a Reuse plastic bags and think of other ways to reuse waste

1. I have tried to reuse plastic bags, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually reuse plastic bags
3. I am starting to reuse plastic bags
4. I frequently feel I should try to reuse plastic bags
5. I sometimes feel I should try to reuse plastic bags
6. I do not feel that it is important to reuse plastic bags

10b Use rechargeable batteries

1. I have tried to use rechargeable batteries, but have found it hard to stick to
2. I usually use rechargeable batteries
3. I am starting to use rechargeable batteries
4. I frequently feel I should try to use rechargeable batteries
5. I sometimes feel I should try to use rechargeable batteries
6. I do not feel that it is important to use rechargeable batteries

10c Not buy pre packed food or products with excessive packaging

1. I have tried not to buy products with excessive packaging, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I don't usually buy products with excessive packaging

3. I am starting not to buy products with excessive packaging

4. I frequently feel I should try not to buy products with excessive packaging

5. I sometimes feel I should try not to buy products with excessive packaging

6. I do not feel that it is important not to buy products with excessive packaging

10d Recycle waste where possible, making full use of the council's doorstep recycling scheme

1. I have tried to recycle waste, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually recycle waste

3. I am starting to recycle waste

4. I frequently feel I should try to recycle waste

5. I sometimes feel I should try to recycle waste

6. I do not feel that it is important to recycle waste

11. Organic gardening and composting

11a Compost my biodegradable waste

1. I have tried to compost biodegradable waste, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually compost biodegradable waste

3. I am starting to compost biodegradable waste

4. I frequently feel I should try to compost biodegradable waste

5. I sometimes feel I should try to compost biodegradable waste

6. I do not feel that it is important to compost biodegradable waste

11b Grow my own fruit and vegetables

1. I have tried to grow my own fruit and vegetables, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually grow my own fruit and vegetables

3. I am starting to grow my own fruit and vegetables

4. I frequently feel I should try to grow my own fruit and vegetables

5. I sometimes feel I should try to grow my own fruit and vegetables

6. I do not feel that it is important to grow my own fruit and vegetables

11c Use natural fertilizers and pest control

1. I have tried to use natural fertilizers and pest control, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually use natural fertilizers and pest control

3. I am starting to use natural fertilizers and pest control

4. I frequently feel I should try to use natural fertilizers and pest control

5. I sometimes feel I should try to use natural fertilizers and pest control

6. I do not feel that it is important to use natural fertilizers and pest control

12. Ethical clothing

12a As my children grow out of clothes, pass them on to younger children

1. I have tried to pass clothes on to younger children, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually pass clothes on to younger children

3. I am starting to pass clothes on to younger children

4. I frequently feel I should try to pass clothes on to younger children

5. I sometimes feel I should try to pass clothes on to younger children

6. I do not feel that it is important to pass clothes on to younger children

12b Take all my unwanted clothes to charity shops

1. I have tried to take my unwanted clothes to charity shops, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually take my unwanted clothes to charity shops
3. I am starting to take my unwanted clothes to charity shops
4. I frequently feel I should try to take my unwanted clothes to charity shops
5. I sometimes feel I should try to take my unwanted clothes to charity shops
6. I do not feel that it is important to take my unwanted clothes to charity shops

12c Buy clothes made from natural materials

1. I have tried to buy clothes made from natural ingredients, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually buy clothes made from natural ingredients
3. I am starting to buy clothes made from natural ingredients
4. I frequently feel I should try to buy clothes made from natural ingredients
5. I sometimes feel I should try to buy clothes made from natural ingredients
6. I do not feel that it is important to buy clothes made from natural ingredients

12d Buy my clothes from ethical trading companies or charity shops

1. I have tried to buy clothes from ethical or charity shops, but have found it hard to stick to

2. I usually buy clothes from ethical or charity shops
3. I am starting to buy clothes from ethical or charity shops
4. I frequently feel I should try to buy clothes from ethical or charity shops
5. I sometimes feel I should try to buy clothes from ethical or charity shops
6. I do not feel that it is important to buy clothes from ethical or charity shops

Other pledges: Please record notes from any other action taken:

Questions about AFSL's impact

	<i>Overall, as a result of your contact with AfSL, which one of the following statements most closely applies to you?</i>
A	I'm now doing much more than before to reduce my environmental impact
B	I'm now doing a bit more than before to reduce my environmental impact
C	I haven't managed to do more yet but hope to do more in the future to reduce my environmental impact
D	I haven't managed to do more yet and don't think I can do much more to reduce my environmental impact
E	I'm still not really interested in taking action to reduce my environmental impact

If answer is A or B ask:

Thinking about why AfSL has helped you to reduce your environmental impact, how important have the following factors been? (for each factor record 1=very important, 2=fairly important, 3=not very important, 4=not at all important)

- Given me facts on how my everyday life impacts on the environment
- Made me feel more strongly that environmental action is my personal responsibility, not someone else's
- Made me believe that what I do actually makes a difference to the environment
- Made me more confident I can actually do the things that are needed to reduce my impact
- Given me practical advice on what I can do to reduce my impact
- Given me new products or services so I can take action to reduce my environmental impact
- Given me information on where to go for advice/to get environmentally friendly products
- Persuaded me that being 'green' is normal
- Helped me meet other people like me who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives
- Shown me what personal benefits I can get from reducing my environmental impact

- Shown me examples of what other people are doing to reduce environmental impacts in their own lives
- Shown me what government and business are doing on the environment

If answer is C, D or E ask:

Thinking about what might help you to reduce your environmental impact, how important might the following factors be?

- Giving me facts on how my everyday life impacts on the environment
- Making me feel more strongly that environmental action is my personal responsibility, not someone else's
- Making me believe that what I do actually makes a difference to the environment
- Making me more confident I can actually do the things that are needed to reduce my impact
- Giving me practical advice on what I can do to reduce my impact
- Giving me new products or services so I can take action to reduce my environmental impact
- Giving me information on where to go for advice/to get environmentally friendly products
- Persuading me that being 'green' is normal
- Helping me meet other people like me who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives
- Showing me what personal benefits I can get from reducing my environmental impact
- Showing me examples of what other people are doing to reduce environmental impacts in their own lives
- Showing me what government and business are doing on the environment

Would it be OK for AfSL to contact you in the future to find out how you are getting on with your pledges?

Follow Up People Skills

Make sure you introduce yourself and say that you are from Action for Sustainable Living very clearly at the beginning of the conversation.

Go on to tell the person that they pledged with us in (say when) and that they wanted to have someone call them to see how they were doing.

Ask if it would be ok to quickly take them though their pledges.

If they say no or they are busy try and pinpoint when might be best to call them back.

Don't push people but at the same time, if someone just sounds a bit unsure try to reassure them that we want to help people to take small steps to change the world and make living sustainably as easy as possible!

AfSL gets in touch with people after a few weeks to find out how they are getting on with their pledges.	
Why do we do this?	
1	AfSL understands it's difficult to make changes to live more sustainably without support....
2	We offer you the support you may need to make small changes to change the world!
3	We do this by getting in touch with you a few weeks down the line by e-mail or phone.

If people request more resources or advice you can email emma.sheppard@afsl.org.uk to get extra information sent out.

Don't feel you have to explain any topics to them unless you are totally confident you know about the topic.

If you'd like to find out more about the different topics then please have a look at our website topic sections and get in touch with Jess or Emma if you have specific queries.

Be encouraging, sometimes people often sound like they haven't fulfilled their pledges, but say they have, because they feel bad. Offer further help, and ask why they haven't managed to do something if they say they would, and see how we can help them.

Above all enjoy talking to people!

It can be really rewarding talking to people about their pledges, and if you are enjoying it this is reflected in the way you sound. If you start to resent having to phone people up this can also be reflected in the way you sound. Please talk to Jess if you are unhappy with your role and wish to stop or need some advice. jess.buck@afsl.org.uk

Thank you!

From everyone at AfSL

Appendix 2: Importance of various factors in helping people making pledges to reduce their environmental impact

Factor	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
Giving me facts on how my everyday life impacts on the environment	41	42	16	1	100
Making me feel more strongly that environmental action is my personal responsibility, not someone else's	35	50	14	1	100
Making me believe that what I do actually makes a difference to the environment	37	40	19	1	97
Making me more confident I can actually do the things that are needed to reduce my impact	25	53	19	2	99
Giving me practical advice on what I can do to reduce my impact	32	44	22	1	99
Giving me new products or services so I can take action to reduce my environmental impact	23	57	17	2	99
Giving me information on where to go for advice/to get environmentally friendly products	25	43	26	5	99
Persuading me that being 'green' is normal	23	47	23	8	101
Helping me meet other people like me who are trying to reduce environmental impact in their everyday lives	21	34	38	6	99
Showing me what personal benefits I can get from reducing my environmental impact	15	47	33	4	99
Showing me examples of what other people are doing to reduce environmental impacts in their own lives	19	51	27	2	99
Showing me what government and business are doing on the environment	33	23	40	5	101
Total	329	531	294	38	1192
Percentage	27.6%	44.5%	24.7%	3.2%	100.0%

Appendix 3: Previous data on fulfillment of pledges

Chorlton-cum-Hardy locality: fulfillment of pledges made during quarter 1, 2005

Outcome	Number of Pledges Made Q1	Pledges Fulfilled	Pledges Not Fulfilled	Not Known
1	15	6	8	1
2	18	10	6	2
3	10	3	6	1
4	21	9	6	6
5	1	1	0	0
6	0	0	0	0
7	12	5	7	0
8	1	1	0	0
9	2	1	0	1
10	0	0	0	0
11	1	0	0	1
12	246	30	11	205
13	1	1	0	0
14	2	1	1	0
15	1	0	0	1
16	12	5	3	4
17	3	1	2	0
18	1	0	0	1
19	5	0	1	4
20	26	7	11	8
21	31	9	9	13
22	10	3	6	1
23	29	7	0	22
24	13	6	4	3
25	5	5	0	0
All Outcomes	466	111	81	274

Chorlton-cum-Hardy locality: fulfillment of pledges made during quarter 2, 2005

Outcome	Number of Pledges Made	Pledges Fulfilled	Pledges Not Fulfilled	Not Known
1	22	5	4	13
2	33	0	6	27
3	13	6	1	6
4	32	1	3	28
5	37	5	4	28
6	18	4	1	13
7	24	0	7	17
8	9	0	2	7
9	4	0	1	3
10	12	2	0	10
11	7	1	0	6
12	26	1	5	20
13	21	2	1	18
14	12	0	1	11
15	24	3	4	17
16	44	2	2	40
17	19	4	0	15
18	30	2	2	26
19	9	1	1	7
20	33	0	2	31
21	20	2	4	14
22	18	4	1	13
23	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0
26	27	15	3	9
All Outcomes	494	60	55	379

Hulme locality: fulfillment of pledges during Q2, 2005

Outcome	Number of Pledges Made	Pledges Fulfilled	Pledges Not Fulfilled	Not Known
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1	12	2	2	8
2	135	0	0	135
3	10	3	0	7
4	76	10	3	63
5	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0
8	6	2	0	4
9	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
12	11	2	2	7
13	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0
15	16	5	1	10
16	11	5	1	5
17	0	0	0	0
18	10	3	0	7
19	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0
21	0	0	0	0
22	13	13	0	0
23	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0
All Outcomes	300	45	9	246

Old Trafford locality: fulfillment of pledges during Q2, 2005

Outcome	Number of Pledges Made	Pledges Fulfilled	Pledges Not Fulfilled	Not Known
1	4	1	1	2
2	25	2	0	23
3	9	2	0	7
4	24	2	0	22
5	3	1	0	2
6	5	0	0	5
7	1	1	0	0
8	3	1	0	2
9	2	0	0	2
10	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
12	1	1	0	0
13	1	0	1	0
14	1	1	0	0
15	1	0	1	0
16	2	1	1	0
17	0	0	0	0
18	1	1	0	0
19	1	0	1	0
20	3	1	0	2
21	1	0	0	1
22	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0
All Outcomes	88	15	5	68

Appendix 4: Invitation email to participate in “You talk, we listen” events

Dear <name here>/friend

Action for Sustainable Living (AfSL) would like to invite you to give us feedback on the action and project groups (<names here>) you have been involved in, and the level of support you feel has been offered by AfSL. This will help us both to better support new groups in the future, and to obtain further funding for action group work in the future.

We will be holding 3 focus group events. Each will be an opportunity for you to spend an hour and a half talking with people from a variety of AfSL action groups, and enjoying some organic and fairtrade refreshments. We will give everyone who attends a fairtrade chocolate bar as a token of our thanks, and we will also pay your travel expenses (just bring your receipts). A facilitator and a note-taker will give you some questions to discuss, and will listen carefully to what you have to say. After the events they will produce a report and recommendations, which you will also have an opportunity to comment on if you wish.

Come to whichever one of the following events is most convenient for you:

- 2 Tuesday, 22nd May, 7pm-8.30pm, Old Trafford Community Centre, Shrewsbury Street, Old Trafford
- 3 Wednesday, 23rd May, 7pm-8.30pm, Unit 7, St Wilfrid's Enterprise Centre, Royce Road, Hulme
- 4 Thursday, 24th May, 7pm-8.30pm, Chorlton Co-op Society meeting room, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton (opposite Chorlton Park Primary School)

Please let us know by 4th May if you wish to attend, as places are limited and we need to know numbers for catering. Just reply to this email, filling in the details below.

We're also looking for facilitators and note-takers - if you know of anyone who might be interested in doing this please ask them to get in touch with me.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Alan Boyd
Director
Action for Sustainable Living

Name:

Email:

Tel:

I would like to come to the event on (state date):

I am/have been a member of the following AfSL action/project groups:

Special dietary requirements (all food will be vegetarian):

Appendix 5: Schedule for telephone interview

Pre-amble

Introductions

Thanks for participating.

The purpose is to find out more about AfSL-related action groups or projects you have been involved in, and how AfSL can better support them in the future.

We will treat what you say in confidence – if reported anywhere this will be done anonymously, or we will ask you for specific permission.

Relevant group(s)

How would you describe your relationship with AfSL?

What action or project groups have you been involved in that have had some sort of relationship with AfSL?

When did these begin and end (if not still going)?

What is/was the nature of the relationship between them and AfSL?

What was your role?

Make-up of the group(s)

How diverse is the membership - age, gender etc

What type of person attends the group - already active in the community? Etc

Recruitment and retention

What attracted you to the group, and why are you still a member/why did you leave?

Group Dynamics/Communication between members

How do members communicate?

Are different views respected/listened to?

How should members of groups communicate with each other (meetings/email/yahoo groups etc)

Are meetings useful?

Data protection issues (sharing contact details with others/potential group members)

Resources/support – what support have you had (Eg from AFSL)?

What support have you had?

How has AfSL helped you?

What did your AfSL contact(s) (check which - Anna/Claire/Josh) bring to the group? (Check importance of accessibility of contact and their expertise level – on sustainability issues, on local knowledge and bringing in wider networks)

What resources do you need (inside and outside of meetings)?

What are the barriers to you achieving more?

What method of chairing works (Eg AfSL chairing then taking a step back)?

How long does an action group need a member of AFSL to be with them until self sufficient?

How do you feel about autonomy from AfSL/links with AfSL?

Impact of the group (wrt variety of stakeholders)

What have you achieved/ Key achievements

Difference group made to community

How do you think you could have more impact?

How does the group evaluate itself/its' activities?

What advice would you give to a new group that is just starting out?

Close

Appendix 6: AfSL Volunteering Strategy

AfSL Volunteering Strategy November 2007

Jess Buck

Volunteer Coordinator

'Green Pampering Day' for volunteers, Nov 07 SUST Swap shop volunteers, Oct 07

Summary

This piece of work has been written after consultation with AfSL volunteers and staff with the aim of developing a strategy that reflects volunteers needs and expectations. A questionnaire was emailed to all volunteers and the Volunteer Coordinator interviewed 22 people individually.

It highlights key themes and recommendations for improvement, which will not only realise the potential of current volunteers, but also provide a framework for expanding our activities to other local areas.

This strategy documents the current volunteering picture and recognises 6 main types of volunteers, all of whom are considered in this strategy.

- Local Volunteers
- Key Project Volunteers
- Local Project Managers
- Office Volunteers
- Strategy/Support Volunteers
- One-off and Work Placement volunteers

Volunteers are involved in AfSL for a number of reasons which include:

- Skills development
- Developing soft skills
- Work experience
- To meet like minded people
- To do something different

In terms of volunteer provision, there are a number of recommendations included in the strategy, which would ensure AfSL involves a diverse spectrum of society and retains its volunteers whilst maximising their energy and dynamism. Recommendations are made under recruitment, induction, ongoing support and supervision, recognition, training, networking and partnership working.

It specifically mentions linking into national accreditation schemes, such as Millenium Volunteers for 16-25 year olds and evaluating and improving on current practice, by taking part in a volunteer management programme (SAM Volunteer Management) delivered by the Volunteer Centre Trafford. Recommendations are also made for the development of an in-house accreditation scheme.

When rolling out to new Local Authorities, this strategy recommends the implementation of a model that engages 'local volunteer mentors'. These volunteer mentors would work in different communities to recruit, support and supervise local people to become involved with action groups and key projects. They would work alongside Local Project Managers with the aim of offering them some added support, enhance the capacity of local action groups and potentially involve more 'hard to reach people'.

1. Introduction

As part of its commitment to supporting and promoting sustainable living, AfSL recognises the important role played by volunteers in its core activities and the valuable contribution made by volunteers to the local community.

AfSL relies on volunteers to function; they play an essential role in our projects and core work. They offer a huge diversity of skills and experience that all extend AfSL's capacity to support local people to live more sustainable lives.

2. Aims

The aim of this strategy is to:

- maximize the energy and dynamism of potential and current volunteers to advance AfSL's capacity.
- develop a framework that is transferable to local areas outside Manchester.
- ensure people are inspired to volunteer and have a rewarding experience whilst doing so.

Ultimately to give volunteers an opportunity to fulfill their potential and develop their skills.

3. 'Volunteer' Definition

Different definitions of volunteering underline the important role volunteering plays in today's society.

"Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary." (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>)

Throughout this strategy, the term volunteer refers to **anyone who chooses to give up their time to offer unpaid support to AfSL and its associated activities.**

4. National Volunteering Picture

4.1 Growth of Volunteering

In the last decade there has been a considerable growth in the popularity and incidence of people volunteering in Great Britain. For example, in 2007 68% of people aged sixteen and over (28.1 million) reported that they had volunteered formally at least once in the last five years; and 45% (18.6 million), at least once a month in the last five years.

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/News/latestnews>

4.2 Government support

The government is increasingly recognising the importance of volunteering within society. The topic has been put high on the policy agenda as a key to increasing community engagement.

In 1998 the government's Compact Agreement between Government, Voluntary and Community Sectors was implemented to improve the relationship between these bodies and to accompany it produced the Code of Good Practice for Volunteering, which described volunteering as an 'important expression of citizenship and fundamental to democracy'.

([http://www.ncvo.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What we do/Compact Advocacy/Volunteering%20code.pdf](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What_we_do/Compact_Advocacy/Volunteering%20code.pdf))

The fact that 2005 was named the Year of the Volunteer is another example of the importance attached to volunteering in the current political environment. The current Prime minister, then chancellor, Gordon Brown dedicated £50 million to volunteering and described the year of the volunteer as:

'an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of not just those volunteers here today but all those across the country; a chance to tell everyone about the volunteering opportunities available and encourage more people, more employers, more organisations to get involved as we strive in 2005 to engage a new generation in serving their communities' (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/newsroom_and_speeches/press/2005/press)

This increased interest from individuals and government bodies has led to a professionalisation of volunteering, with more formal procedures being put in place to support volunteers. It is within this context that AfSL has developed this volunteering strategy.

5. AfSL and Volunteers

AfSL has a successful history of volunteer involvement. Currently there are 185 people on the AfSL volunteering email list. These people are involved in many different capacities-some volunteer regularly and others on a more ad-hoc basis. For example some volunteer remotely with website development, whilst others volunteer in the community on a more regular basis.

6. Who Are They?

Generally AfSL volunteers fall into 6 main categories.

6.1 Local Volunteers

These are members of the community who are involved with local action groups, such as Sustainability Chorlton, Hulme in Transition (HIT) or War on Waste Old Trafford (WOWOT)

These people don't always consider themselves volunteers for AfSL, but more volunteers for their local community. This is especially the case with action groups that have been running for some time. For example in Chorlton, Manchester, an AfSL Sustainability Consultant closely supported local residents to set up Fair Trade Chorlton in 2004. This action group successfully campaigned to make Chorlton a fair trade area and is now independently taking more steps to improve sustainability in the area.

'I identify more with Chorlton Food Group than with AfSL. When we were Fair Trade Chorlton at the beginning I felt very connected to AfSL, but the focus has changed now' (Local Volunteer, Chorlton)

The development of this group and its relative independence from AfSL illustrates a strength to a certain extent because it fits our bottom up approach. Local volunteers often have a sense of ownership for their groups, which gives them added resilience.

Other Local Volunteers appreciate the support, networks and resources AfSL can bring to a local group.

'We see ourselves as closely linked to AfSL. We get help from AfSL'(Local Volunteer, Old Trafford)

Therefore, with local volunteers it is important to establish a balance between autonomy and ongoing support.

6.2 Core Project Volunteers

At present there are 2 core projects that volunteers are actively involved with. The FEW Small Steps schools project currently has 2 central and 7 support volunteers, all of who volunteer between 2 and 6 hours per week. This project runs from the AfSL office in Hulme under the supervision of a member of staff, but the central volunteers serve as excellent mentors for the other volunteers and there is potential for the delivery of this project to become entirely volunteer led.

7 central and 8 support volunteers run the monthly SUST Swap shop. The central volunteers do all of the planning, promotion and publicity and the support volunteers are on hand to help out at the events. This project is entirely volunteer led.

6.3 Local Project Managers

There are currently 10 Volunteer Local Project Managers working in 9 different areas of Manchester. These areas are;

- Castlefield
- Chorlton
- City Centre
- Didsbury
- Hulme
- Longsight
- Old Trafford
- Whalley Range
- Withington

Being a LPM involves meeting with the local community, supporting local people and their community to take simple steps towards more sustainable living.

The Local Project Manager is a point of contact for their local community. LPMs attend events, give talks, set up action groups or projects (for example, a local action group to tackle waste and recycling or a local allotment project), and recruit and support their own team of volunteers. An LPM is asked to volunteer a minimum of 8 hours per week for 6 months after which AfSL actively helps them to look for funds to cover their post. LPMs are supported by a paid Coordinator who is also available to assist with project development and other major initiatives.

Many of these volunteers are inspired by the career potential and focused work experience a volunteer position such as this can offer.

'I always wanted to work in the field of sustainability. The charity fitted my principles and everyone was very friendly and approachable' (LPM, City Centre)

These are relatively new volunteering positions (the first LPM was appointed in June 2007) and evaluation has suggested that time can become an issue for these volunteers as there is a significant amount of work within these posts.

'I work full time so I am struggling to do both LPM work and my job at the same time' (LPM, Chorlton)

6.4 Office Volunteers

There are currently 3 office volunteers who volunteer on a regular basis in the main AfSL office in Hulme. Jobs are varied depending on the volunteer, but can include filing, research, press releases, creating promotional material, pledge inputting and web page development.

Similar to LPMs, office volunteers value the experience working in the AfSL office can offer. Currently 1 volunteer is wishing to gain more experience and confidence after being out of work for an extended period, another is a recent graduate who wants to gain work experience and the last is a student on a work placement from Manchester University's Japan Centre.

Whilst working in the office is a very popular volunteer role, there is the potential for people to lose sight of AfSL's core aims.

'It is frustrating doing basic things all of the time. I would like to know more about what Josh and Claire actually do. I would like to be in the loop more. I feel I have lacked in connectedness with what has been going on' (Office Volunteer)

6.5 Strategy/Support Unit Volunteers

These are the volunteers who help with the strategic development of AfSL. These people often work remotely to support AfSL and there are currently a variety of support related jobs being carried out by volunteers, ranging from graphics work, proof reading, web input, DVD production, fundraising etc.

For many this is an opportunity to gain work experience and network with potential employers/clients.

'Volunteering has offered exposure for myself. AfSL has a lot of connections in Manchester. Josh also spoke with such passion. The image was very modern and contemporary- the re-branding and the things that went along with it' (AfSL Volunteer)

The remote nature of much of this work means that the volunteer can feel quite isolated at times.

'The work I have done has been solitary and it would have been nicer to be in touch with a broader group of people' (AfSL Volunteer)

6.6 One-off and Work Placements

These are volunteers who get involved with AfSL through finite projects or offer specific amounts of time. For example students from Manchester Metropolitan University helped AfSL carry out a Waste Watch Survey in partnership with Emerge. The Manchester Leadership

Programme and the Combined Studies course at Manchester University both provide student volunteers for a fixed time period.

The volunteer categories above are not absolute and many of these roles overlap. For example many of the local volunteers are also involved with AfSL in other capacities, such as supporting the Strategy/Support Unit.

6.7 Demographics

It is difficult to report the demographic make-up of AfSL volunteers because information such as gender, age, socio-economic and ethnic status has not been recorded. However, based on consultation and observation there does appear to be an equal gender balance and AfSL's work with university groups has led to a reasonable age spread of volunteers.

Volunteer feedback does suggest that AfSL could do more to engage with the full spectrum of society. For example, the unemployed, non white and those with added support needs.

'I would like to be involved in reaching people that aren't already converted' (AfSL Volunteer)

7. What Motivates AfSL Volunteers?

7.1 Skills development

The diversity of volunteering roles that AfSL offers means that people can build up tangible skills, such as workshop facilitation, event organising and promoting, IT etc.

'I am learning more and I have more skills I can offer' (AfSL Volunteer)

I've learnt quite a bit from writing stuff for the newsletter and completing funding bids.

It feeds into and complements my professional work anyway'(AfSL Volunteer)

7.2 Develop soft skills

Volunteering also offers a chance for people to build up their confidence in a supported and relaxed environment. This can be particularly valuable for those who are looking to enter the employment market for the first time or after a break.

'Through volunteering I have gained in confidence to an extent. I have had quite slow personal development, so it's been great having emotional and practical support from the staff. They have been like mentors to me' (AfSL Volunteer)

7.3 Gain valuable work experience

As a respected and successful voluntary organisation, AfSL provides great experience for the work place. We also offer references on request to all volunteers.

'(Volunteering) will look good on my CV- I'm already using it on application forms and used it recently in an application' (AfSL Volunteer)

7.4 Meet like minded people and get involved with the community

People value the opportunity AfSI offers to engage with other people, share ideas and gain inspiration.

'I felt more engaged with Old Trafford immediately and didn't realise there were like-minded people on my doorstep' (AfSI Volunteer)

7.5 To do something different

Volunteering offers a great opportunity to do something different and a complement to work life.

'I like to do practical and outside work that is not based at a desk' (AfSL Volunteer)

8. How Does the Community Benefit?

8.1 Civil renewal

People are inspired to influence decisions about their communities and take responsibility for local problems.

'Through WOWOT (War on Waste Old Trafford) there were real practical things we have been able to do and achieve. There was a missing service identified and we were able to improve upon' (AfSL Volunteer)

8.2 Social inclusion

Through involvement with AfSL and its focus on community people feel less isolated, which is what can happen when communities suffer from a number of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor skills, poor housing etc. Volunteering encourages a sense of belonging and people feel like they have a stake in society.

'Outside my church it's the only chance I have had to working the community.'

'I meet new people and laughter is involved. It's about happiness joy and laughter' (AfSL Volunteer)

8.2 Breaks down barriers

AfSL offers people the chance to work together irrespective of age, gender, religion, socio-economic status or capabilities.

'I was very prejudice and thought that because I wasn't Asian I wouldn't have anything in common with people in my community. It's been great to engage with the community for a common cause. It's been nice to dig and do organic gardening with people we are supposed to be fighting with! We are united in a common, simple thing' (AfSL Volunteer)

9. Current Volunteer Provision

Since the appointment of a Volunteer Coordinator in August work has started towards increasing the provision for volunteers.

9.1 Consultations

Prompt response is made to volunteering enquiries. This is done by phone or email and if necessary a meeting is scheduled to provide an induction.

9.2 Inductions

Potential volunteers are met in person (where possible) to provide a more thorough understanding of AfSI and its activities and current volunteering opportunities. They are then signposted on to relevant project supervisors.

Having someone to meet a potential volunteer face to face has helped improve communication and give people an understanding and appreciation of everything AfSL is involved with, which in turn provides a context for volunteers.

This was identified from consultation with volunteers as a need.

'Nothing-maybe communication. Josh and Claire are so busy so they can't keep me informed as much as I would like.' (AfSL Volunteer)

9.3 Induction pack

A coherent induction pack is now available to give to volunteers at the initial consultation. It contains the following;

- Volunteer Policy,
- Volunteer Contact Form
- Volunteer Agreement
- AfSL Background Information
- Energy saving light bulbs
- Pledges to inspire people to make changes and to capture their enthusiasm immediately

9.4 Monthly update

'I would do more if it was easier to know what was on and when. I would like a list of events to see whats on and when' (AfSL Volunteer)

A monthly update now goes out to all volunteers, which details AfSL news and current volunteering opportunities.

9.5 LPM training

As part of their development and training we now offer training to LPMs on involving volunteers. The first training was attended by 6 LPMs and feedback positive. There is now a How2 Guide on volunteers for LPMs.

10.Challenges

In producing this strategy there are a number of key challenges that need considering.

10.1 Volunteer led

We do not own the volunteers and it's the volunteers that drive AfSL and it's activities.

10.2 Flexibility

We must be careful not to create rigid volunteering roles and must allow for a degree of flexibility and individuality. We do not want to isolate or discourage those who prefer a less formal approach to volunteering, such as the local volunteers. We do not want to stifle spontaneity either. Research on volunteering cites lack of time as the biggest barrier to participation (Volunteering England, 2005) We need to offer flexibility and a diversity of volunteering opportunities that allows people to offer varying levels of time and commitment.

10.3 Partnership

We must avoid creating friction with other organisations or seem to be in competition for volunteers from other sources, such as MMU's People and Planet Group. Instead we need to maintain the strong partnerships we presently have.

10.4 Diversity

The makeup of AfSL volunteers should reflect more closely the diversity of the communities we work in.

10.5 Transferable model

Any volunteer provision needs to be replicable and transferable to other Local Authorities.

10.6 Resources

Whilst we need to ensure our volunteers have a positive experience we have limited and indefinite resources.

11. Action Plan for Manchester and General Recommendations

For the purpose of this action plan **'key volunteers'** refer to people who do more than join and attend action groups. These are our office volunteers, strategy/support unit volunteers and core project volunteers who offer more specific and regular volunteering.

11.1 Recruitment

- Widen and expand networks for this to make the recruitment process as accessible as possible. For example recruit from local job centres, Mencap, BME organisations, inter faith groups, refugee networks.
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring with all potential volunteers at the initial induction. Encourage LPMs to monitor the demographic make up of action groups.
- Conduct an attitudinal survey in the areas we are currently active to find out key barriers to volunteer involvement. This is a project to be carried out by students from Manchester University's Combined Studies programme in February 08

11.2 Induction

- Group inductions for core projects to increase team building and a sense of collective identity. A group induction has already taken place with 6 FEW Small Steps schools volunteers, which went well.
- Modify the volunteer induction for key volunteers so that in addition to a comprehensive induction pack, they also get an opportunity to engage with the website and fill out a pledge to start becoming active immediately. Guidance notes on volunteer induction can accompany this. This is for key volunteers who join through AfSL and offer more regular and specific volunteering support to the support unit.
- Each key volunteer will be encouraged to fill out a Volunteer Agreement with project supervisor to agree on roles, expectations and commitment. This agreement can underline the important role volunteers have in spreading the word and becoming active in their community.
- Develop and maintain a volunteer database that details contact data, current level of activity, key skills and statistics for monitoring and effective communication.

11.3 Ongoing Support and Supervision

- Continuing communication through monthly updates detailing latest volunteering news and opportunities
- Encourage volunteers to register and engage with the website.
- Create a forum on the website
- Provide 6 monthly socials for informal networking. This is a suggestion that continues coming through from volunteer feedback and would re-engage those volunteers whose work can be solitary.
- Offer 3 monthly supervision sessions with a mentor for key volunteers and those requesting it. This will be recorded and used for evaluation.

'Linking up with volunteers a bit more would be good, especially for people who are working on their own. I worked at home for a while and part of my motivation for getting involved in AfSL was to meet like-minded people' (AfSL Volunteer)

'AfSL could give feedback that you are being useful. To positively re-inforce can never be a bad thing' (AfSL Volunteer)

11.4 Recognition

- In-house accreditation-This would be through the eco-angel award scheme. Depending on various levels of volunteering, volunteers would be given a badge to recognise their commitment. Their status could also be documented on the website through a designated page
- External accreditation- For young people AfSL can link into the Millenium Volunteer (MV) Awards scheme (to be replaced by a new and similar scheme in March) We can continue to explore and remain open to other forms of external accreditation.
- References -We can continue to remind volunteers that references are available on request
- Website links- Provide links to the website of key volunteers in recognition of their contribution. e.g artists, graphic designers

11.5 Training

It is essential that AfSL builds on the skills and experiences of volunteers to both develop their capacity and retain them. To ensure this we will consult volunteers through support and supervision sessions about training needs. Training can take the form of:

- Single issue presentation/workshops for LPM s and other volunteers. This can be delivered both in house and externally. A training programme can be developed between the Volunteer Coordinator and LPM Coordinator.
- Invite key note speakers from the sustainability arena to both inspire and inform volunteers.
- Link in to external agencies and their training oportunities.

We can aim to provide a training/discussion event every 3 months.

11.6 Evaluation

'I would have liked to have been delegated more responsibility- responsibility as far a as consultation goes' (AfSL Volunteer)

It is essential that we create and maintain strong evaluation techniques to measure the outcome of our work. In order to evaluate both the impact of any changes we make to our volunteer provision and volunteer satisfaction we need to develop a model of evaluation. All evaluation should also aim to assess and illustrate the positive difference AfSL makes to volunteers lives. Evaluation should include a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data through:

- One off event questionnaires
- Yearly volunteer feedback questionnaires
- Support and Supervision sessions and feedback

Throughout the evaluation it is important we also measure the impact volunteers have on AfSL's overall aims.

11.7 Clear Volunteer Briefs

In order to activate motivated and informed volunteers AfSL must be clear in communicating what each volunteering role involves. This can be achieved through:

- Creating clear and concise volunteer briefs that detail the background to an individual project and how it fits into AfSL's vision, what AfSL are looking for from a volunteer and what volunteers can expect from AfSL. These briefs can also be published under volunteering opportunities on the website.
- Each core project can have a suggested model, that details key volunteering roles, eg publicity, chair, secretary, communications, treasurer
- These key volunteer roles can be written in to the 'How 2' Guide to setting up an action group.

11.8 Networking/Partnership Working

It is essential that we continue to build on and maintain strong relationships with volunteer involving organisations, local authorities, voluntary organisations and student bodies. This is something AfSL already does, but needs to continue doing. This is the key to ensuring that we all work together and share ideas, without creating any conflict.

- Working with the Volunteer Centre, Trafford we could complete the **SAM Volunteer Management** manual, a self-assessment manual for organisations in the North West that involve volunteers in their work. This would ensure AfSL remained up to date on best practice regarding volunteer management.
- Enhance links with national volunteering bodies, such as Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and Volunteering England and get involved in activities such as CSV's Make A Difference Day to raise AfSL's profile
- Offer any youth volunteers the opportunity to get involved with the national 'Millennium Volunteering' scheme, which recognises the hours 16-25 year olds dedicate to volunteering. Although this programme is due to change in March, it will be replaced by a similar scheme, which we can continue engaging with.
- Establish a partnership policy to ensure productive partnerships.

11.9 Volunteer Mentors

AfSL could enhance its capacity to engage volunteers through the creation of a new 'Volunteer Mentor' role. These volunteers would work alongside LPMs for 4-6 hours per week in the community. Their specific role would be to recruit, induct, support and mentor local volunteers. With the growth of 'volunteer manager' paid positions, this is likely to be a popular role. It will also reduce the work load of LPMs as some of the work will invariably be shared and these new volunteers will also increase the capacity to involve more volunteers in local action groups.

There is also the potential to create volunteer mentors for the core projects, who could serve as a contact person to recruit, mobilise and communicate with project volunteers.

'It would be good to have someone who you can touch base with, who has an overview and you can go to when you have any confusion. Good to have a third party to talk to'(AfSL volunteer)

12. Moving to other Local Authorities/networks

Afsl would engage with volunteers as detailed above, but the person/s responsible for volunteer coordination would depend on funding. 2 possible models for volunteer coordination are detailed below.

12.1 Model 1

Ideally, AfSL would be able to employ a part-time Volunteer Coordinator (20 hours) to work alongside the Project Coordinator in each Local Authority they work in.

Potential Strengths

- More streamlined for both supervision and networking as it offers a more coherent and centralised structure.
- More flexible in its ability to respond to the different demands of each LA.
- A paid volunteer coordinator working 20 hours per week is more reliable and likely to offer longer term support to local volunteers.
- Provides support to the Network Coordinator in each LA

Potential Weaknesses

- Less cost-efficient
- More hierarchical
- Relies on volunteer coordinator knowing the activities of each locality intimately.

12.2 Model 2

Alternatively, volunteer mentors would work alongside and support LPMs (4-6 hours per week) to recruit, induct, action and support volunteers. Their targets would be less demanding than LPMs and as a consequence require less supervision.

Identifiable Need

Consultation with staff, LPMs and volunteers has identified a need for volunteer mentors. These roles will enable AfSL to;

- Expand it's capacity to support local communities with as few resources as possible (cost)

- Offer LPMs a chance to work in more of a 'team' with someone to support them, share their workload and inspire. The LPM Coordinator describes how the 2 LPMs currently working together are 'heads and shoulders' above the other LPMs in terms of achieving their targets. There is also the benefit of increased accountability through pair work.
- Engage with more disadvantaged people who might require more support to volunteer/attend action groups.

'It would be useful, because there are people in the community you would like to follow up, but don't have the time' (LPM, Chorlton)

'It sounds good-it would offer moral support for the LPMs and for instance, my next door neighbour wanted to get involved with HIT, but didn't feel like she was welcome, or had her voice listened to. She would have benefitted from a mentor' (LPM, Hulme)

'Having a Volunteer mentor in each LPM area I suspect would greatly increase the efficiency of the work LPMs do it would also mean that far more local people are directly involved with an LPMs work in their area' (LPM Project Coordinator)

Strengths

This model is;

- Low cost and relatively self-sufficient
- Easy to replicate and take to other LAs
- A scaled down variation of the already tried and tested LPM model
- Able to provide support to LPMs
- About the positive engagement of more volunteers
- An inspiring way for potential volunteers to meet other volunteers
- Delivered by volunteers
- Supportive to the LPM model and provides an opportunity for Local Volunteer Mentors to move into LPM positions as and when the LPM moves on
- Able to engage with 'harder to reach' members of the community

Potential Weaknesses:

- Supervision- this would be done mostly by the Project Coordinator in LAs, but the Regional Volunteer Coordinator would need to be available to troubleshoot and advise.
- There is the potential for confusion regarding the lines of supervision for Local Volunteer Mentors
- Volunteers have a transient profile. As documented earlier lots of people consider volunteering as a 'stop gap' to more long-term employment. This might cause difficulties with retaining local volunteer mentors.

Local Volunteer Mentors would need clear role descriptions, support and training from AfSL to effectively carry out their roles. The application, induction and support processes could be developed based on the recent evaluation of the LPM model (November 2007)

13. Budget/Resources per LA-Year 1

13.1 Model 2

This is based on having 10 Local Volunteer Mentors per LA. It has assumed an average lifespan of 6 months per volunteer mentor, thus involving a total of 20 Local Volunteer Mentors (LVM)

10 hours per week of the regional Volunteer Coordinator's time has been added to account for the initial visit to the area and networking, along with providing support to the Network Coordinator in their supervision of volunteers.

Local Volunteer Mentor Expenses Per annum

Travel (£3.00 per week=£140 per year per LVM) £1440

Subsistence (£3.00 per week=£140 per year per LVM) £1440

Communication (£1.50 per week=£72 per year per LVM) £720

Socials (2 socials @ £150) £300

Training (£20 per LVM x 20) £400

Regional Volunteer Coordinator £5,760

(10 hours per week @ £12 per hour-£25,000 pro-rata)

On Costs @10% £576

Total per annum £10,636

13.2 Model 1

This model is based on having a paid part-time Volunteer Coordinator working in each local authority.

General Volunteering Expenses-travel, subsistence, (£60 per month) £720

Socials (2 socials @£150) £300

Training (4 trainings @ £25) £200

LA Volunteer Coordinator £11520

(20 hours per week @£12 per hour- £25,000 pro rata)

On Costs @10% £1152

Total per annum £13,892

14. Next Phase

The Board of Directors need to consider and decide;

- the appropriate model to adopt
- if they are in agreement with the proposed internal accreditation systems
- which recommendations to action

The lines of communication/supervision for Local Volunteer Mentors needs to be explored in more detail and finalised.

A separate piece of work needs to be completed to identify the potential sources of funding for the volunteer coordinator and volunteer mentor posts.

The approved recommendations need to be actioned.