



**Improving Interaction between NGOs,  
Universities, and Science Shops:  
Experiences and Expectations**

# **UK CASE STUDIES REPORT**

**Compiled and edited by**

**David Hall & Irene Hall**

**January 2003**



A project funded by the European  
Commission/DG 12 under the Fifth  
RTD Framework Programme

Contract No. HPV1-CT-2001-60039

*Title:* UK Case Studies Report  
*Authors:* David Hall and Irene Hall  
*Series:* INTERACTS Report No. 2f  
*Pages:* 100  
*Date:* January 2003  
*ISBN:* 87-90855-49-3

*Publisher:*

The Science Shop c/o Department of Manufacturing, Engineering and Management at  
Technical University of Denmark, Building 303 East, Matematiktorvet, DK-2800 Lyngby,  
Denmark  
E-mail: [msj@ipl.dtu.dk](mailto:msj@ipl.dtu.dk)  
Tel: ++45 45 25 60 24  
Fax: ++45 45 93 66 20

*Cover Design:* Michael Strähle

*Logo:* Michael Strähle

*Lay out:* Michael Strähle

Use and single copy/print of this report is free. The use of parts of the text, tables, figures etc. of the report is allowed free of charge when full reference is made to the report.

Copyright on the report remains with the authors.

When referring to this report please state the authors + title+ publisher + date  
(European Commission financed project INTERACTS HPV1-CT-2001-60039)

The INTERACTS consortium appreciates any notification of the public use of this publication through an e-mail to the INTERACTS mail address [msj@ipl.dtu.dk](mailto:msj@ipl.dtu.dk) or a copy of the publication to the Science Shop at the Technical University of Denmark.

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction to INTERACTS Case Studies and Methods</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1 Introduction to the Cases</b>	<b>19</b>
1.1 Description of Science Shops	19
1.2 Choice of Case Studies	22
1.3 Link to national issues in WP3: The State of the Art Report on Science and Society in the UK	23
1.4 Methodology	24
1.5 Selection of Interviewees	24
1.6 Reflective Report	25
1.7 Documentary Evidence Available (see References for each case study)	26
<b>2 Case Study 1: Benington Hospital</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 Fact Summary	28
2.2 Brief Description of NGO	30
2.3 Process of Project Origination	30
2.4 Process of Project Negotiation	31
2.5 Aims and Objectives	32
2.6 Data Collection and Analysis	33
2.7 Channels of On-Going Communication	33
2.8 Project 1	34
2.9 Project 2	35
2.10 Project 3	37
2.11 Project 4	38
2.12 Students' Evaluation	39
2.13 References	40
<b>3 Case Study 2: Lakeview Day Centre</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1 Fact Summary:	42
3.2 Brief Description of NGO	43
3.3 Process of Project Origination	44
3.4 Process of Project Negotiation	45
3.5 Data Collection and Analysis	47
3.6 Channels of On-Going Communication	50
3.7 Outcomes	51

3.8	Students' Evaluation	54
3.9	References:	55
4	Case Study 3: Midlands Befriending Service	56
4.1	Fact Summary	56
4.2	Brief Description of NGO	57
4.3	Process of Project Origination	58
4.4	Process of Project Negotiation	59
4.5	Aims and Objectives	60
4.6	Channels of On-Going Communication	61
4.7	Outcomes	62
4.8	References	66
5	Policy Evaluation – the Cases Compared	67
5.1	NGO Perspectives	67
5.2	University Perspectives	70
5.3	Response to and Support for an Intermediary Organisation or Science Shop	77
5.4	Development of Relationship between the Community, NGOs and Academic Institutions	80
5.5	Relationship with National Policy on Science and Society Research.	84
5.6	Conclusions about the Effect of Science Shop Research	88
5.7	References	92
6	Appendix	94
6.1	INTERACTS – Questions for Case Studies / FINAL VERSION March 2002	94

## Acknowledgements

We wish to record our appreciation and thanks to all the people who have willingly agreed to participate in this study, as students, NGO managers, researchers, senior university managers and staff members from Interchange and Student Link.

Particular thanks are due to our colleagues at Wolverhampton, and to Peter Watson for assisting so ably with the interviews. We should also mention Aine Wolstenholme for her transcription of the interviews, and Sharon Lockley for contributing to the interviews as former Interchange Co-ordinator and organising the final presentation of the case studies.

Also thanks to the other members of the INTERACTS consortium, who have contributed to the research design, the interview schedules and the discussions on analysis of the research.

Irene Hall and David Hall

Liverpool, January 2003

## Preface

Michael Strähle and Sosser Rasmussen

The objective of the INTERACTS project is: to draw out policy implications for future co-operation in Science, Technology and Innovation, in particular the co-operation of small and medium NGOs with universities through intermediaries such as Science Shops.

INTERACTS is a pioneer cross-national study by organisations and institutions from seven different countries – Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom - collaborating across disciplines to identify necessary changes in structures and routines in the RTD system for improving future interaction between NGOs, researchers, and intermediaries like Science Shops. By bringing together the results from different countries, a broader picture emerges concerning past experience of the impact of Science Shops, future expectations and policy relevance. In this way, INTERACTS contributes to strengthening the interaction between research institutions and society, and gives more in-depth understanding of the processes and effects of knowledge production.

INTERACTS is an Accompanying Measure to ISSNET (Improving Science Shop Networking), and financed by the European Commission, DG 12.

INTERACTS comprises five activities, which are interlinked. These National Case Studies Reports constitute the second activity in the INTERACTS project:

1. The State-of-the-Art Report provides an overview of the political and institutional conditions for co-operation between small to medium non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Science Shops, and universities in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom.
2. The **National Case Studies Reports** examine the practical experience and impact of interaction between NGOs, scientists, and Science Shops.
3. Participatory workshops in each of the partner countries form the next step, allowing discussion of future expectations and perspectives for co-operation with NGO representatives, researchers and policy makers. By giving voice to a broader range of stakeholders, INTERACTS contributes to the democratisation of science and technology policy.

4. The final report will identify potentials and barriers within the research and development system for improving conditions for future co-operation.
5. In a final step, the INTERACTS findings will be disseminated through national and international workshops and conferences.

Further information: <http://members.chello.at/wilawien/interacts/main.html>

## **Executive Summary**

### **Science Shop Funding**

Both science shops (Wolverhampton Student Link and Liverpool Interchange) received initial funding from the Enterprise in Higher Education programme in the early 1990s. Interchange was able to fund a co-ordinator post from a mix of charitable trust and higher education resources, but is currently run on a volunteer basis. Funding is a critical issue.

Student Link has recently been able to access the Higher Education Active Community Fund (for student volunteers) to develop innovative activities.

### **Science Shop Development**

Both Interchange and Student Link are now diversifying their activities to include support for curriculum-based volunteering as well as applied research.

Staff from both science shops are increasingly collaborating on research publications and conference papers and networking with colleagues in other universities conducting similar activities.

### **Applied Research Placements**

There was diversity in the cases, with one case covering volunteering within a large public service organisation (hospital), another a local charity (older people's drop in centre) and a third a branch of a large nationally federated charity – reflecting the varied nature of the UK voluntary sector.

All projects shared the aim of providing research to benefit the NGO they were working with and all were felt by the NGO managers to have been of value in helping improve service provision.

All student researchers valued the experience and felt that their work had been intrinsically worthwhile, as well as providing them with valuable academic, personal and work-related skills.

All supervisors were supportive of the activity and felt it represented relevant learning for students in the community. They were aware, however, that colleagues were

concerned about the labour-intensive nature of supervision, and the impact on workload.

All participants found the intermediary role of the science shop to be of value in preparing the placement, negotiating the research problem and methodology and in easing access for the researchers.

## Policy Evaluation Findings

Senior NGO directors want science shop research which is:

- based on simple methods, with clear results, and transferable findings provided by independent researcher(s)
- delivered via an intermediary organisation which supports participants related to quality assurance
- applicable to evidence-based practice
- useful for development of training and roles
- sensitive to the circumstances of their (vulnerable) clients
- able to track emergent needs
- related to providing creative solutions which the state sector can implement
- relevant as evidence for funding applications for service development
- able to develop public understanding of science through raising awareness of scientific application and professionalism in NGOs

Senior university managers see science shops as:

- providing evidence of “third arm” activity with the community
- relating to the universities’ role in local and regional regeneration
- delivering citizenship and employable skills to students through the curriculum
- providing job satisfaction for academic staff
- promoting curriculum development
- being part of similar (less specified) activity in the university (which needs to be mapped)
- producing knowledge transfer to the community
- having barriers to development through lack of awareness and resources, time pressures on staff

Science shops are seen by their staff as:

- repositories of knowledge for the community
- part of social inclusion policy
- based on collaboration which requires specific skills and time to develop
- able to encourage smaller community groups to participate in research

providing research which is quality controlled through the assessment process  
emphasising ethical and democratic applied research practice  
improving the status and record of applied research in academia and the community  
having barriers to development through academic emphasis on “pure research”  
(Research Assessment Exercise)

## **Recommendations arising from the findings**

Funding science shops in the UK is the crucial issue and it is recommended that core funding (for staff) be supplied by universities, either directly or through available external government funds (such as the Active Community Fund). This will enable universities to demonstrate their commitment to “Third Mission” activity.

Long term partnerships between NGOs and science shops should also be developed to help raise funding for science shop activity and to provide longer term commitment to NGO research needs.

Networking between science shops/ those developing similar activity should be encouraged and supported in the UK.

Publication of science shop research reports needs to be developed to enable it to reach the public domain. However, it is recognised that much social science research is evaluatory, and the consent of the NGO is essential.

Science shops are not well known in the UK, even within the university sector. Marketing and publicity is needed at local, regional and national levels for this mediation to be recognised and accepted as an instrument of science policy.

## Section 1: Introduction to INTERACTS Case Studies and Methods

### Experiences and Expectations of NGO / Science Shop Interaction

The European Commission has shown itself keen to build up the scientific work of research and technology development, but concerned that many studies of public attitudes show there is little interest in science, but a considerable amount of public distrust in science.

One of the functions envisaged by Europe in promoting a dialogue between science and society is to address this distrust through an 'early warning' system to alert the scientific community to citizens' concerns that are not being met by science as currently practised; the converse of this is to improve the public image of science, damaged by concerns over BSE, GM food etc., by greater communication to and respect for the public. As in the United States, there is also a concern in some circles, to democratise science by not leaving all the policy decisions to 'experts' but also to involve citizens and civil society (European Commission, 2002).

Regarding this dialogue, it has been argued that

*“the relationship between science and society must become more two-way, involving scientific institutions listening to and learning to understand public concerns and values, and not merely educating them ... there needs to be a long-term process of mutual learning between the public and science, which will necessarily involve new institutional relationships and forms.”* (Fischer, Wallentin et al, 2002: 85)

The development of “new institutional relationships and forms” implies a new form of scientific governance. In Europe this development has included the emergence of intermediary organisations to link local groups with the sources of knowledge production (usually universities). It has been argued that these science shops have a vital role to play in the interface between science and civil society, because they can mediate between the concerns of citizens regarding their local conditions and environments and scientists who have access to the scientific and technical knowledge to meet those concerns (Irwin, 1995: 156).

Science shops consciously seek to “create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organisations”, where they make their services available on “an affordable basis, free of financial barriers.” As the research support is provided in response to community concerns, it differs from “the traditional hegemony of science.” (Mulder et al, 2001)

In the European ‘Science and Society Action Plan’ (European Commission, 2002) this role of the science shop is recognised. In relation to engaging in a dialogue between science and the citizen, science shops are mentioned as an example of actions where

*“science is placed at the service of local communities and non-profit making associations. Hosted by universities or independent, their common feature is that they answer questions from the public, citizens’ associations or NGOs on a wide variety of scientific issues.”* (European Commission, 2002: 15)

A sub-project of SCIPAS<sup>1</sup> considered the other side of the equation – the impact of science shop activity not just on the community but on university teaching, learning and research. The report argued that

*“besides assisting citizen groups, science shops can also contribute to the development of university curricula and research.”* (Hende and Joergensen, 2001: 5)

All these developments illustrate that access to knowledge has to be spread more evenly through society, and that within the universities, curriculum change is also required to produce scientists who are aware of their social responsibility. Science shops have a key role to play in mediating the relationship between the public and science and in forwarding new awareness. As science shops now have considerable experience in this activity, and have become diverse in response to local and national conditions, it is timely to review whether they have been able to deliver these ideals, and whether their further development should be promoted through the support of European policy. The INTERACTS research is designed to address these issues, by tracing and comparing the experiences of science shops and asking whether these experiences have brought about benefit to community groups through improved scientific knowledge and whether they have helped develop university teaching and learning strategies as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> The SCIPAS network attempted to catalogue the variety of science shop activity and to investigate their different methods of operation. Important outcomes were a conference in Leuven, Belgium in January 2001, proposals for establishing a network of science shops with a newsletter and the Living Knowledge website ([www.bio.uu.nl/living-knowledge](http://www.bio.uu.nl/living-knowledge)).

## Case Study Approach

The method of research chosen for this project is case study research, as this approach will provide detailed data on the varied experiences of the very different science shops in the member countries. Case studies are not merely descriptive, they are based on analytic categorisation and are designed to inform policy. According to key writers in this field:

*“The research goal in a case history is to get the fullest possible story for its own sake. In contrast, the case study is based on analytic abstractions and constructions for purposes of description, or verification and/ or generation of theory. There is no attempt at obtaining the fullest possible story for its own sake.”*

*(Strauss and Glaser, 1977: 183)*

Criticisms of case study research usually relate to the idiosyncratic nature of a case, with the argument that case studies cannot deliver the kind of generalisable data that more positivistic, quantitative approaches can produce. Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer to replace the concept generalisability with “transferability” as the latter term more accurately expresses how cases can be transferred from specific contexts to illustrate particular differences and similarities between cases. With INTERACTS, data is also being transferred to a wider policy context, through a method which involves comparison of cases.

For social policy researchers the case study has distinct advantages.

*“All who wish to understand voluntary action will need to balance the parochialism of the case study approach against its attention to process and dynamics. Dense, located detail, critically analysed, is as important as thinner, if numerically significant outputs. This is a message for all who study voluntary organisations, whether as policy makers, practitioners, researchers or students”.*

*(Scott et al: 2000)*

The work of INTERACTS is intended to generate policy implications and recommendations by showing the empirical reality of science shop work “on the ground”. If current policy does not connect with empirical experience then policy needs to be reviewed in the light of the evidence we produce.

As researchers we have collected information with a structured outcome as an objective, through gathering data via semi-structured interviewing using a standardised interview schedule, and using a common framework for analysis. The research has

been designed to make the information accessible and coherent, so that both common and unique features can emerge, along with explanatory discussion on the wider issues of impact and implication for policy (Hall & Hall: 2002).

Donmoyer (in Gomm et al, 2000: 61) notes a key advantage of the case study method when he states that “case studies can take us to places where most of us would not have an opportunity to go”. Similarly, Stake (1986) believes the role of the evaluator is to provide narrative accounts that provide vicarious experience. This report can therefore be considered as providing access to a variety of community experiences, a “window on the localities” of science shops in action. The account of unique situations and individuals provides models for action, while the “rich data” collected adds nuance and subtlety to overarching theoretical perspectives.

## **Interview Questionnaire**

The case study is the means by which grounded experience can be developed into policy discussion. Each case is a study which has been conducted by a science shop, and is based on interviews with all the key participants on two levels – those who have been directly involved (Level 1) and those who have a view on the policy implications of the activity, such as university deans or organisational managers (Level 2). In this way it is hoped to represent the overlapping spheres of university, science shop and NGO activity, similar to the model of the Triple Helix of university-industry-government relations. (Leydesdorff, 2001)

A common methodology has been devised, with interview schedules (see Appendix) derived from the issues that partners have decided are central to the understanding of science shop work. Initial suggestions from partners of suitable questions were formulated into a pilot questionnaire, and feedback from the pilots was used to develop the final questionnaires to participants at level 1 and level 2.

So, for instance, the NGO respondent, researcher(s), supervisor and science shop were asked about the main research questions and methods, findings and recommendations and about the organisation of the project – how it was initiated, channels of communication, budget and timescales. The outcomes of the research were also investigated, in terms of usage and publication, long term benefit to the organisation, and relation to the wider objectives of the organisation.

These policy issues were also explored with level 2 respondents, although with the diversity of roles involved, it was more difficult to find questions which could be asked

across all 6 countries, and some of the questions asked about science and society questions rather than about the specifics of the cases.

A major purpose of the study is not just to show whether negotiated applied community research can be effective – but to examine the case for the intermediary organisation in facilitating such research. So direct questions have been asked about the role of the science shop and about the advantages and disadvantages of the three way relationship between science shop, community group and researcher.

Open ended questions have been used to enable both the development of relevance to the particular case being studied and flexibility between cases (as national contexts are so different). The interviews had to be conducted according to ethical procedures and the following instruction was given by the designers of the methodology:

*“Before any interview take place, it is important to gain the **consent** of the participants for this research to be used by INTERACTS and for possible future publication. Please enquire whether they wish themselves and/or their organisation to be anonymous – and a pseudonym to be used.”*

## Sample

It was agreed that partners would study cases of NGO-Science Shop interaction that were:

- ❖ Complete (so that activity was finished and impact could be assessed)
- ❖ Recent (so that those interviewed could recall fairly accurately what happened)
- ❖ With Impact (so that cases contributed to knowledge or to usage)

It was also agreed that case studies would focus on the three main actors:

- ❖ NGOs (with activities regarding the environment or social welfare and health)
- ❖ Researchers (students and/or supervisors)
- ❖ Science Shops

It was suggested that a minimum of 6 interviews per case would be required:

- ❖ 3 with those directly involved in the research, one each from NGO, Researcher, Science Shop (level 1)
- ❖ 3 with those involved in the research at a policy level, one each from NGO, Researcher, Science Shop. These might include NGO manager or regional network coordinator, University Dean with responsibility for curriculum and/or research profile, Science Shop manager (level 2)

In the event, it was difficult to interview three level 2 participants for each case, because the science shops were all at different stages of development – with the level

1 science shop co-ordinator often being the only science shop worker. Further, not all the science shops were university based, and policy makers in academia, who would be willing to participate, were not easy to locate.

Finally, each partner agreed to complete three case studies, one of which would be from a science shop in their country, which was different from their own. It was felt that this would supply further comparative perspective to the study and increase the validity of the research – so that the findings would be less heavily biased to personal experience and justification of action. It is recognised that this will not provide “objective” or “value-neutral” research, as all researchers are, after all, committed to the ideals of science shop activity. Researcher involvement requires awareness of ‘positionality’ – of the positioning of the researcher within a wider structure which relates to how they have come to understand knowledge as well as how they have come to produce it (Rhoads, 1997: 17).

But the extension of the sample to other science shops would enable the inclusion of questions and issues which the INTERACTS members might not have encountered in their own science shops and might provide further insights into negative or difficult problems which can arise.

### **Link to Science and Society Policy, WP3 (State of the Art Report), WP5 (Scenario Workshops) and WP6 (the Final Report)**

A first task for the INTERACTS research project has been for each national partner to contribute to a ‘State of the Art’ report, to set out the baseline with regard to science shops and science policy (Fischer, Wallentin et al, 2002). The case studies provide an opportunity to relate practice on the ground to the wider issues of policy at the national level of each partner through the conjunction of level 1 and level 2 interviews. The state of the art exercise sensitised the researchers to the policy environment of the cases and raised issues for questioning and analysis.

It is expected, in turn, the cases will provide the agenda for the scenario workshops which will further refine the issues introduced in the state of the art report, and worked through in the cases. Finally, WP6 will bring together the national findings into a comparative analysis for dissemination to NGOs, researchers, science shops and policy makers at national and European level.

## Reflection and the Research

All partners were required to complete a pilot case, which became the basis of reflection on and development of the study through email and workshops. All partners were advised to keep a research diary to record their experiences of the pilot. “Reflection in action” is the process of thinking about what you are doing, as the work progresses and is distinct from “reflection on action” which is a *post hoc* activity – “stop and think” when the action is no longer current (Schön, 1983). Such reflection in action, Schön argues, provides a way of opening thought up to possibilities which might otherwise be blocked off. It helps produce flexibility in finding solutions when objectives are unclear or problematic and so produces improvisation which is thoughtful rather than reactive.

For the INTERACTS partners representing different cultures and experiences, reflection in action is crucial, if not always comfortable, to finding solutions which are creative and scientifically sound, and which represent the commonality and the diversity of the cases. The interview schedule, for instance, was modified after extensive consultation and reflection by partners, and the analytic framework was similarly revised. The case study research has thus been improved on the basis of both substantive and methodological considerations.

## References for Section 1

- Gomm, R; Hammersley, M; Foster, P (eds) (2000) *Case Study Method* (Thousand Oaks: Sage)
- Christensen, T & Joergensen, M (2002) *Country Report: Denmark* in Fischer C, Wallentin A et al (2002) *State of the Art Report, Interacts Project*
- European Commission (2002) *Science and Society Action Plan*, Brussels: European Commission
- Fischer C, Wallentin A et al, (2002) *State of the Art Report, Interacts Project*
- Gomm, R; Hammersley, M; Foster, P (eds) (2000) *Case Study Method* (Thousand Oaks: Sage)
- Hall I & Hall, D (2002) *Community based research and science shops: an update on the INTERACTS project*, Discussion paper: Voluntary Sector Studies Network, University of Manchester, 4 November
- Hende, M and Joergensen, M (2001) *The Impact of Science Shops on University Curricula and Research, SCIPAS report 6*, (Utrecht: Utrecht University, Science Shop for Biology)
- Irwin, A (1995) *Citizen Science*, (London: Routledge)
- Leydesdorff, L (2001) *A Sociological Theory of Communication: The Self-organization of the Knowledge-Based Society* (Universal Publishers/ Upublish.com/2001)
- Lincoln Y & Guba E (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage)
- Mulder, H, auf der Heyde, T, Goffer, R and Teodosiu, C (2001) *Success and Failure in Starting Science Shops, SCIPAS Report 2*, (Utrecht: Utrecht University, Science Shop for Biology)
- Rhoads, R. A. (1997) *Community Service and Higher Learning: Explorations of the Caring Self* (New York: State University of New York Press)
- Schön, D (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*, (Basic Books: New York)
- Sclove, D (1995) *Democracy and Technology* (New York: The Guilford Press)
- Scott, D, Alcock, P, Russell L, and Macmillan R (2000) *Moving pictures: Realities of voluntary action* (Bristol: The Policy Press and Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- Stake, R (1986) *Quieting Reform* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press)
- Strauss, A and Glaser, B. (1977) *Anguish: a case history of a dying trajectory* (Oxford: Martin Robertson)

## Section 2: The UK Science Shops

### 1 Introduction to the Cases

#### 1.1 Description of Science Shops

##### 1.1.1 *Interchange: Liverpool and Merseyside*

Interchange was established as a registered charity in 1994, the result of a merger between two organisations, Merseyside Community Research Exchange (initially funded through the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative of the UK Department for Education and Employment) and the Liverpool Science Shop (established with a grant from the Nuffield Foundation). MCRE which began work in 1991, was inspired by the earlier model of the Manchester Research Exchange ([www.commex.man.uk/commex/home.htm](http://www.commex.man.uk/commex/home.htm)), and involved students from all three local universities – Liverpool University, Liverpool Hope University College and Liverpool John Moores University – undertaking research projects with local NGOs. Liverpool Science Shop had provided access to scientific information at Liverpool University through one-off requests and student projects, and the merger was intended to provide a more coherent service to the community. In 1995 Interchange received the Partnership Trust Award for “Learning through Service” with the citation specifically noting the success of Interchange in creating partnership, not only with the local NGOs but across three universities which gave it a uniqueness among the applications for the Award.

Paradoxically, this uniqueness has exacerbated Interchange’s funding problems – there has been a lack of willingness by university management to work across institutional boundaries. With no one institution taking responsibility, it has proved difficult to find the resources to staff the office, and the last paid Co-ordinator left post in 2001. Since then, support for Interchange projects has come through Student Community Action at the University of Liverpool and through the efforts of committed academic tutors and support staff. Currently, Liverpool Student Community Action is receiving (short term) funding from the Higher Education Active Community Fund, which has been created to support student volunteering as part of the current Government’s policy to support the regeneration of civil society through intermediary

and voluntary sector activity – social capital. ([www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf/default.htm](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf/default.htm)).

For undergraduate students at Liverpool University and Liverpool Hope in the Sociology Departments, the applied research project for an NGO is equivalent to a dissertation / double module (30 credits) and is undertaken in the final (3<sup>rd</sup> year) of their degree, where it comprises one quarter of their assessment. The project is an option rather than a required module, and students need to demonstrate a sufficient level of attainment in their second year sociological research modules to be accepted on to the programme. Students can undertake projects either singly or in groups. Students from a broad spectrum of other departments in Liverpool University have, in the past, also produced final year project reports, while Liverpool John Moores University students have normally come from the Department of Applied Community Studies.

Since 1997, students from the MSc in Applied Social Research (taught jointly by Liverpool Hope and Liverpool University) have also been able to undertake a research-based dissertation through Interchange. Both undergraduates and postgraduates are required to produce two reports – a Client Report for the NGO and a Reflective Report for the academic department. Students use as their key text for this work, Hall & Hall (1996) *Practical Social Research*.

The lessons learned from Interchange have been disseminated through the CoBaLT Project (community based learning teamwork), a government-funded teaching and learning project, which shared ideas and experiences with sociology departments in England through a series of workshops, conferences and via a set of videos and workbooks, available at <http://www.hope.ac.uk/cobalt>

CoBaLT funded a survey of 30 former Interchange students who had completed projects between two and nine years previously, and a complementary survey of NGO managers whose organisations had received research reports. (Hall, Hall & Lockley, 2000; Hall & Hall, 2002). Further research has been conducted on the Interchange experience, with the most recent development being the focus on small scale evaluation through partnership as the methodology for postgraduate projects in particular (Hall & Hall, 2003).

### **1.1.2 Student Link: Wolverhampton**

Student Link at the University of Wolverhampton is the comparison science shop example. It enables final year undergraduate students to conduct applied research projects for one semester (15 credits) or two semesters (30 credits). Most of the “Student Linkers” are from sociology (around 15 – 20 a year), although other students

are involved as well – from social policy, women’s studies, criminal justice, media, drama and sometimes history or English.

The objectives of Student Link are:

To provide organisations with a forum to gain access to additional skills which will support them in their work.

To give students the opportunity to develop research, vocational and personal and transferable skills in a practical and useful way.

To match student undertaking independent study with organisations wanting project work carried out

To enable students to be assessed as part of their academic programme on a range of skills demonstrated outside the academic context

To enable students to evaluate their own learning and skills development in the context of an organisational based project.

(University of Wolverhampton Student Link Handbook)

In an article for an academic journal, two of the staff most involved with Student Link noted that the university had become more aware of the diversity and talent for innovation in the voluntary sector as a result of this programme, with the high commitment to training and supportive management style of NGOs being a particular feature. Students have reaped particular benefits from engagement with this sector:

*“Because of the voluntary sector’s innovative tradition, students can find themselves engaged on work at the leading edge of social policy and practice, evaluating pilot projects in drug abuse prevention or community care initiatives. Similarly, voluntary sector organisations have proved a very willing, accessible and ‘permeable’ avenue for student placement, unlike their commercial or statutory counterparts which frequently prove more bureaucratic and unreceptive to student placement or involvement.”*

(Cameron & Green: 1996)

### **1.1.3 Comparison of Interchange and Student Link**

Both science shops received start-up funding from the Enterprise in Higher Education programme in the early 1990s, taking advantage of its extension from an original focus on the business community to a wider environment which included NGOs. Both science shops support applied research projects and have assessment procedures and academic guidance and tutorial teaching which are not identical, but broadly similar. Hall & Hall’s text is used for project guidance and methodology in both science shops, where the emphasis is on social science research – though not exclusively – both science shops have a record of a variety of departments undertaking science shop projects.

There are some differences, however, with Student Linkers being more encouraged to find their own projects with local NGOs in the city, than is the case with Interchange – where, because of administrative assistance, the science shop has been able to facilitate projects. However, Wolverhampton University has recently agreed to fund Student Link from its Higher Education Active Community Fund, with full time staffing to provide development. At Liverpool University and Liverpool Hope this Fund has not gone directly to resource a science shop, though science shop activity is being supported by the appointment of additional staff to Student Community Action, which benefits students from both institutions who are involved with NGOs.

Both Student Link and Interchange are diversifying their activities to include support for curriculum-based student volunteering as well as applied research, adapting the pedagogy of Service Learning developed in the USA (Lisman, 1998; Eyer, & Giles, 1999). The relationship between the two science shops forged through CoBaLT has now grown into a strong research and publishing partnership between staff in the two organisations (Cameron, Green, Hall & Hall, 2002; Hall, Hall, Cameron & Green; 2002).

## **1.2 Choice of Case Studies**

The three case studies reported here have been chosen because of an INTERACTS decision to highlight health issues as one of the key themes for the report (along with environmental issues). The first two projects, Benington Hospital and Lakeview Day Centre were conducted by Interchange students in Liverpool, in the North West of England and were supervised by the INTERACTS members writing the report. The third case, Midlands Befriending Service, is from the Student Link science shop based in Wolverhampton, a city in the English West Midlands region, 150 km from Liverpool.

The Benington Hospital case has been selected because it involved a number of interlinking projects, which together resulted in an accumulation of scientific knowledge within one organisation. These projects focused on aspects of the Volunteer Scheme and explored how the Scheme related to issues of high importance to the hospital – such as nurse recruitment, infection control and the tackling of staff stress.

Lakeview Day Centre is an example of a typical project undertaken by Interchange – a pair of students undertook the research and the focus was on service evaluation from the viewpoint of users, in this instance, older people. The Midlands Befriending Service project similarly provided an external review of service provision, and was also conducted with older people, receiving support in their own homes, rather than in an

organisational setting. This project was undertaken by an individual student working for Student Link.

### **1.3 Link to national issues in WP3: The State of the Art Report on Science and Society in the UK**

The UK has a sophisticated and historically significant voluntary sector with NGOs increasingly being recognised as important deliverers of service as state provision is “rolled back” and citizens are encouraged to take responsibility for their welfare. The ideological underpinning of the present Third Way politics of New Labour is to be found in communitarian philosophy (Etzioni, 1995) and social capital discourse (Putnam, 2000). Volunteering by students, or engagement with the community through applied research projects are also seen as important ways of producing graduates with “real world” and employable skills as well as active citizens

The three cases illustrate the nature of the relationship which can be forged between educational institutions and community groups and the resulting benefits in terms of student learning and improved knowledge for NGOs which can result in improved service provision. This ‘win-win’ situation does require support, specifically from the mediation of science shops, and behind these, from the management of higher education who have responsibility for resourcing the activity. NGO awareness of the value of scientific knowledge also needs to be encouraged, and the three case study ‘success stories’ show how confidence and awareness can be enhanced when projects go well.

All three cases have wider policy implications – the two projects with older people, for instance relate to current concerns with social inclusion and the effects of an increasingly ageing (and isolated) older population. Benington Hospital’s projects illustrated current developments in ethical governance of research in health and social services, as well as highlighting how student projects can provide valuable resources for indicating previously unrecognised scientific problems – such as the infection control implications of volunteer activities within a health care setting.

## **1.4 Methodology**

### ***1.4.1 Application of Questionnaire***

The questionnaire was administered to all participants by 3 different interviewers. For the two Interchange projects, the interviewers were also the academic supervisors (and INTERACTS partners), while for the Student Link project, the interviewer was unconnected with the project and locally recruited.

For Level 1 respondents, the questions asked were exactly as produced on the agreed questionnaire, and explored aspects of the research conducted with the NGO.

However, as the term “science shop” is virtually unknown in the UK and has no intrinsic meaning in English, for Level 2 participants, it was necessary on occasion to depart from the written questionnaire to explore policy issues which were relevant both to the respondent and to the science shop. This meant focusing discussion on the specific science shop involved (Interchange or Student Link) rather than science shops more generally. Wider issues were considered under the headings of science policy and applied/ community based research more generally and the role of academia in society. This produced data which could still be analysed under the headings agreed by the INTERACTS partners and conformed with the discussion at the 2<sup>nd</sup> INTERACTS meeting at Chester on flexibility at this Level.

It was agreed by INTERACTS partners that the interviews using the questionnaire should be tape-recorded where possible, with the knowledge and consent of the interviewees. This permitted the production of verbatim transcripts which were used in the analysis. In only one case was permission to tape record refused, and written notes were used instead to record the answers.

## **1.5 Selection of Interviewees**

For the level 1 interviews, 5 students were interviewed, 3 supervisors, 2 science shop co-ordinators and 5 NGO managers - making a total of 15 interviews. One interview with a student was conducted by telephone, because she now lives at a distance.

For the level 2 interviews, 3 senior managers from the NGO or related statutory agency were interviewed and 4 senior members of academic staff, totalling 7 interviews. One interview with a senior hospital manager was conducted on the telephone, because of his time constraints.

Students consented to the reflective accounts of their projects being used, as well as the research reports for the NGO and this provided additional material on student perceptions of their experience, immediately after completing the research. The interviews with the students provided reflection from a more distant point in time, and included their career experiences after graduation.

## **1.6 Reflective Report**

The Interchange project interviews were conducted by the two INTERACTS partners who had also supervised the research. Gaining access to participants was eased by the researchers' prior knowledge, while in-depth awareness of the research meant they could explore issues which had occurred during the research. However, it could be argued that participants may have been reluctant to discuss negative aspects, knowing the interviewers' involvement – or that they might have felt that future student projects would be jeopardised if they were too critical. The responses were certainly very positive, but the interviewers did ensure that questions about problems and barriers were fully probed.

The interviews with the Student Link project were conducted by a graduate recommended by the academic supervisor for the project, but the interviewer was himself unconnected with Student Link or the project. This may well have provided freedom from interviewer bias and the tapes revealed the interviews were conducted in a professional and competent manner, where the interviewer stayed close to the questionnaire (even for level 2). It is possible that some understanding was lost, because of the non-involvement, although there is little evidence of this.

Two of the interviewers were male, and one was female, and they interviewed a gender mix of respondents. In terms of power relationships between the participants, there were no obvious disparities – past students are now graduates, for instance, and no longer dependent on tutors for their marks, while managers who were being interviewed were on a professional level similar to, or above that of the interviewers. Respondents were encouraged to speak freely during the interview, and as all the questions were open-ended, this allowed for development of argument, and for expression of feelings and views to emerge.

Consent for the use of the data for INTERACTS and for publication was gained prior to the interview, and again at the start or conclusion of the interview. All participants were happy to have their own names used, and that of the organisation, although it was explained that for INTERACTS a decision had been made to anonymise the data. In

recognition of the value of the information given, each participant was subsequently sent a book token (for £10), as a literal “token” of appreciation for their input and of the values of the researchers to non-exploitative research, which values participants as research partners.

As all participants expressed an interest in the INTERACTS project, it was decided they should be sent a copy of the report of their case study and policy outcomes, when that was available, preferably as a draft, to which they could make comments.

## **1.7 Documentary Evidence Available (see References for each case study)**

References for Part 1 (Introduction) and Part 2 (Methodology)

Cameron, A and Green, P *Forging a Student Link: projects with voluntary organisations*, New Academic, Spring 1996

Cameron, A, Green, P, Hall, D, Hall, I (2002) *Quick Fix or a New Dawn? An exploration of HE - voluntary sector relationships and student volunteering in the light of the implementation of the Higher Education Active Community Fund initiative*. National Council for Voluntary Organisations Annual Research Conference, University of Nottingham, September 2002

CoBaLT Project (<http://www.hope.ac.uk/cobalt> )

Etzioni, A (1995) *The Spirit of Community*, Fontana Press

Eyler, J & Giles, D, (1999) *Where's the Learning in Service Learning?* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass)

Hall, D, Hall, I, Cameron, A and Green.P (2002) *Student Volunteering and the Active Community: Issues and opportunities for teaching and learning in sociology*, British Sociology Association Annual Conference, Leicester University, March 2002.

Hall D & Hall, I (1996) *Practical Social Research*, Basingstoke: Macmillan

Hall I & Hall D (2003, forthcoming) *Evaluation and Social Research*, Basingstoke: Palgrave,

Hall I, Hall D and Lockley, S Third sector/university partnership:  
*developing experiential research as community resource*, The international Society for  
Third-sector Research (istr), Trinity College, Dublin, July 5-8, 2000

Higher Education Active Community Fund,  
[www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf/default.htm](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf/default.htm)

Lisman, C. D. (1998) *Toward a Civil Society: Civic Literacy and Service Learning*

Manchester Research Exchange [www.commex.man.uk/commex/home.htm](http://www.commex.man.uk/commex/home.htm)

Putnam, R (2000) *Bowling Alone*, New York, London, Toronto: Simon & Schuster

University of Wolverhampton, *Student Link Handbook for Students*, School of  
Humanities Languages and Social Sciences, Wolverhampton

## 2 Case Study 1: Benington Hospital

### 2.1 Fact Summary:

#### 2.1.1 Participants

A total of 4 (inter-linked) applied research projects have been conducted at Benington Hospital through their Volunteers Scheme involving 6 students (4 undergraduates, two Masters), 2 supervisors from two universities, 3 hospital managers directly, and the Interchange co-ordinator. Mainly through the enthusiasm of the Volunteer Manager, managers have learned about the opportunity for Interchange research relating to their service. Each project has built on the success of the previous one, as confidence in the Interchange programme has developed. The students and supervisors have also gained from the long-term relationship which has resulted, and contacts and networking have developed as a result.

#### 2.1.2 Project 1)

##### 2.1.2.1 *The Volunteer Scheme: its Role in Nurse Recruitment*

Final year undergraduates – Jaime Arnold, Jackson Li, Joanna Rice:  
Supervisor, Liverpool Hope University College:  
Volunteer Manager

**Aims:** to assess the benefits of volunteering for student nurses.

**Outcomes Summary:**

**Report** - disseminated and used.

**Students:** dissertations, careers enhancement, conference presentation, article in Times Higher Education Supplement.

**Supervisor:** material for conference papers, publication

#### 2.1.3 Project 2)

##### 2.1.3.1 *Befriending and Counselling in Accident and Emergency (A+E)*

Masters student, Andrew Kirkcaldy B.A.  
Supervisor, Liverpool Hope University College:  
Family Support Manager

**Aims:** main focus to evaluate the ARC Befriending service (volunteers who support the relatives of patients), as well as an investigation of staff stress, and of the Trauma and Bereavement counselling service.

**Outcomes Summary:**

**Report** – disseminated and used.

**Student:** dissertation, employment

**Supervisor:** material for conference papers, publication

### **2.1.4 Project 3)**

#### *2.1.4.1 Volunteers and Infection Control*

Final year undergraduate – Hameera Waheed  
Supervisor, Liverpool Hope University College  
Volunteer Manager, and Nurse Consultant

**Aims:** to evaluate infection control (I. C.) practices by hospital volunteers; to identify volunteers' fears/ concerns about I. C. control and to identify their information needs.

Outcomes Summary:

**Report** – disseminated and used

**Student:** dissertation, careers enhancement (for work in health service), forthcoming Journal article (with supervisor).

**Supervisor:** material for conference papers, publication

### **2.1.5 Project 4)**

#### *2.1.5.1 Senior nursing staff and infection control*

Masters student, Aileen Scott B.A.  
Supervisor, University of Liverpool  
Nurse Consultant

**Aims:** to explore the role of opinion leaders and decision-makers in providing suitable care in relation to infection control

Outcomes Summary:

**Report** – presented and used

**Student:** dissertation, careers enhancement, Journal article with supervisor (forthcoming)

**Supervisor:** material for conference papers, publication

### **2.1.6 Duration**

The undergraduate projects were conducted between October and May (8 months), the postgraduate projects between December and September (10 months).

### **2.1.7 Costs**

The Volunteer Scheme registered all students as volunteers, and covered travel expenses, photocopying and the ordering of Journals.

## **2.2 Brief Description of NGO**

Benington Hospital is a thirteen hundred bedded National Health Service Acute Trust in the North West of England. The Volunteers Scheme at the hospital is a highly successful activity, which has won a number of national awards and attracted national and European funding (*The Independent on Sunday*, 4 August 2002). Around 400 volunteers provide over 1,600 hours of service in the hospital in an average week, supplying tea and refreshments to patients and staff on the wards, help with meals, talks with patients and the relaying of messages. Over the last 5 years, around two hundred volunteers have proceeded to nursing training, thus contributing to nursing recruitment.

The Scheme is managed by a Volunteer Manager on a full time basis, supported by a part-time secretary and volunteers. Two Development Workers have recently been appointed, from ESF funding.

The Interchange projects have either evaluated an aspect of the Volunteer Scheme or another service within the hospital – with contact and support being provided by the Scheme (student researchers register as volunteers, which provides them with access, expenses and training if required).

## **2.3 Process of Project Origination**

Project 1 began with the Volunteer Manager approaching Interchange, having heard about the applied research programme from a voluntary service manager locally, who had had several successful Interchange projects with his own organisation which works with young people with special needs. Following the success of the first project, the Volunteer Manager suggested to the Family Support Manager in Accident and

Emergency (A+E) that she should contact Interchange for a student researcher for Project 2. Projects 3 and 4 followed on from this, with the Volunteer Manager also suggesting to the recently appointed Infection Control Nurse Consultant that student researchers could be provided through Interchange.

## 2.4 Process of Project Negotiation

Interchange provided an initial point of contact with the NGO, with the Co-ordinator exploring research possibilities and sharing information on past projects to help develop research awareness. The Interchange Co-ordinator also talked to prospective students and to the supervisors. Supervisors met with hospital managers, after students had already had several meetings with them, and the projects were firmed up and the research agreements and briefs issued after the supervisors' involvement.

“Q [asked to level 1 manager] Are there any features of the negotiations or the planning which stand out to you, was there any difficulty?

*A. Definitely, definitely very professional, very well organised, with the research agreements clearly written and with the opportunity to discuss it – and really looking far ahead to things like publications, what would come out of it, so it was quite clear and succinct”. (JH, Nurse Consultant)*

However, typically, negotiation on sampling and methods continued after the projects were set up, because of access or institutional blocks. For instance, with the first project, the original intention was to interview a sample of nurses who had been volunteers and an equivalent sample of those who had not. In the event, more ex-volunteer nurses were accessible and the numbers were skewed towards this group.

Both students studying infection control faced a potential blockage after their research had been negotiated, when the hospital Research and Development Committee, which has responsibility for approving research project, changed its procedures and demanded that research with non-patients (such as staff and volunteers) would now also require ethical approval, on the basis of a rigorous and lengthy proposal document. The Nurse Consultant was able to steer both research projects through the process, by being designated the Principal Investigator for the Trust. However, the findings which concerned the volunteers and infection control could only include the interview data which the Committee had agreed, and not the students' observations.

“We could quite quickly get ethical approval for a questionnaire or an interview topic, but there’s reservations about observations....is it covert or overt, do you ask everybody’s permission, not just the Ethics Committee but the person you’re observing, so because you’re also looking at a potentially delicate subject – i.e. volunteers who give their time freely, they might feel difficult about being observed.” (JH)

The research in the A+E Department was limited by a poor response rate to a postal questionnaire to past users of the bereavement counselling service. This had been foreseen by the supervisor but the study was part of a “trade off” with the manager who wanted a survey done, as part of the package of research. Negotiation means the wishes of the NGO have to be considered, with awareness that some methodologies employed may be more successful than others.

## **2.5 Aims and Objectives**

All the projects shared a common aim of providing research designed to be of benefit to the NGO.

### **Project 1:**

to assess the benefits of the Volunteer Scheme for student nurses who had previously been volunteers, through comparison with nurses without prior volunteering experience.

### **Project 2:**

to the explore ARC Befrienders programme from the viewpoint of the volunteers involved;  
to examine the stress levels of staff in A+E and the support networks available;  
to evaluate the Trauma and Bereavement support service, through the experiences of past service users

### **Project 3:**

to evaluate infection practices by hospital volunteers, focusing particularly on their perception and understanding of their own risks of acquiring and transmitting nosocomial infection; to identify any fears/ or concerns regarding infection control; to identify what volunteers felt they needed regarding infection control

Project 4:

to examine the views of nurse managers on training, role models and communication systems with reference to effective dissemination of infection control information and awareness.

## 2.6 Data Collection and Analysis

All 4 projects relied on semi-structured interviews, using schedules with open-ended questions to supply the bulk of the data. Self-completion questionnaires were also used, when appropriate – especially when staff were busy – and all students kept diaries of their observations and experiences. Observation provided orientation to the research, and featured more in the students' reflective accounts rather than in the client reports.

Researchers were required to be reflective and ethical throughout their projects and each student produced a discussion of methodological issues in their reflective account.

## 2.7 Channels of On-Going Communication

Students were advised by their supervisors to have regular (weekly) contact with the NGO manager, to keep the manager informed of progress. This contact could be via e-mails, telephone calls, or face-to-face meetings. For instance, one student noted:

“My relationship with the [NGO] was mainly based on my contact with JH. J and I got on very well, and I appreciated her enthusiasm, and how frequently she told me she was pleased with how things were going, and that [the NGO] would be grateful for the eventual outcomes of the project.” (AS, Student)

The NGO manager in turn said:

“I asked to see them [the students] regularly, even if they felt they didn't need it, first of all for support, both to see how they were going, and with me being put down as Principal Investigator, because it was a Trust, really to know that they were doing things correctly, the right way, and that they were being treated correctly in the Trust as well – also [I kept in contact] by phone and e-mail. E-mail was excellent.” (JH)

The Interchange Co-ordinator also checked on the progress of the projects, from time to time, and students also kept in touch with her, although contact was not regular.

## 2.8 Project 1

### 2.8.1 Outcomes

Report *Assessing the Benefits of the 'Benington' Volunteers Scheme for Student Nurses*: (2000): This was disseminated by the Volunteer Manager to managers within the hospital and to the Executive of the National Council of Voluntary Sector Managers: it was also quoted by the Volunteer Manager in papers to conferences, (e.g. 'Disability Need Be No Handicap' Conference, the Sadlers Wells Theatre Conference Centre, London June 2000).

**Student** dissertation (first class): Student careers - health service related: **Student and supervisor** gave presentations in London at the Council for Voluntary Service/ Cobalt Presentation, February, 2000 and they were interviewed and featured in a subsequent article in the Times Higher Educational Supplement, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2000 *Volunteer learning on the increase*, by Jennifer Currie. Jackson Li is quoted as follows:

"This is definitely better than a normal module...You are learning all the time, although the workload is quite heavy...But I would recommend it to anybody".

The **supervisor** quoted the project in a paper *Community based research and science shops: an update on the INTERACTS project* (with D. Hall) to the Voluntary Sector Studies Network, 4 November, 2002, University of Manchester,

### 2.8.2 Findings and recommendations

*The findings were very positive in terms of the learning volunteering had provided nurses with into ward conditions and hospital organisation, and higher levels of awareness and satisfaction were recorded by those with volunteer experience. Senior management who were interviewed also expressed support for the Scheme and a willingness to consider how it could be expanded, its potential for helping solve the current crisis in nurse recruitment being particularly noted as well as the evidence that nurses with volunteer experience are less likely to drop out of training.*

### 2.8.3 Usage

The findings were used in publicity to recruit potential nurses and volunteers e.g. through displays in the hospital foyer and at local colleges.

The Report, and the supervisor's name were included to show evidence-base in a successful bid to the ESF for funding for two development workers.

## 2.9 Project 2

### 2.9.1 Outcomes

**Report** Evaluation of Bereavement and Trauma Support Services in Accident and Emergency: Benington Hospital : (2001)

**Student** Masters dissertation. Student career – the student is now employed as a research worker in a University Medical Faculty.

“Q. Did [the research] actually feature in the interview for your job? Did you talk about this?

A. *Yeah, it was a big factor, because I had to do a presentation for the interview for my job, the importance of ethics when involving service users in research. I just basically talked about the project I did which was just so relevant to the post I was going for, and it probably had a big part in swinging that position for me.* (AK, Student)

**Supervisor:** Ethical and methodological issues included in a forthcoming book (Hall I & Hall, D *Evaluation and Social Research*, Palgrave, 2003).

### 2.9.2 Findings and recommendations

There were 3 elements to the research:

- i) an evaluation of the ARC volunteer befriending program for bereaved relatives
- ii) a survey of A+E staff – on their experience of stress and their support needs
- iii) an evaluation of the trauma and bereavement counselling service as experienced through previous users of the service.

The ARC Volunteers Program was the major focus, and posed important issues for the Manager concerned.

“I was losing volunteers, I might keep them 8 months to a year but then I’d lose them. People would tell me that was quite good but I wasn’t quite sure about whether I was supporting them enough, whether they were getting what they wanted out of doing the volunteering. So that needed to be looked at, because I spend 36 hours - 40 hours training individuals...and that’s a lot of my time, you know, each year...I didn’t want to be wasting time after putting a lot of work into it. So that needed something.” (CT, *Family Support Manager*)

*The findings and recommendations in the Report were felt to be useful.*

“With the volunteers, I got some really useful information back and it has helped us develop up the support of the volunteers, so things have changed... The

volunteer recruitment has improved and that was based on Andy's recommendation. We're up to 25 - that's the most we've ever been."

The report found evidence of some friction between paid staff and volunteers in A+E which was felt to be a contributory factor in the turnover of volunteers. It was recommended that clearer job descriptions would help, along with training development, while recruitment could be increased through publicity on the hospital websites and Internet advertising, as well as extending coverage of the service on local radio and in the local press.

The staff survey found that at least half the sample had experienced symptoms of stress, that morale within the department was low and that a comfortable space for staff interaction and de-briefing had been lost with the removal of the 'smoking room'. It was recommended that the work-related stress initiatives being evolved by the service should continue, and that the relaxation space be re-instituted.

According to the Manager, the findings in relation to the staff were "no surprise. A place for staff to relax became a "health and safety issue, because they were being forced outside in the middle of the night, and it's dangerous, people get attacked - A & E is quite a 'hairy' place on Friday and Saturday nights - so they were very unhappy. I think they just felt shunted out a bit and not being treated properly." (CT)

The Report recommended that the relaxation policy should be investigated, and that "staff should be regularly updated and reminded of the services that are available to them [to deal with work-related stress]."

Relatives who had used the counselling service were largely positive about the home visits they had received, but the Manager recognised that the response to the survey had been poor – partly because people are reluctant to discuss bereavement issues which can stir up the past, and partly because contact addresses had changed (as a result of the bereavement).

### **2.9.3 Usage**

The Report was used to make staff more aware of the volunteer service, through displays in the foyer and articles in the hospital newspaper. This has helped to reduce friction between paid and unpaid staff. Awareness of the support service available to nurses suffering stress has also increased as the result of improved publicity about the service. The relaxation room for staff to debrief and wind down through informal interaction was restored, partly as a result of the evidence in the Report, and as a

result of this decision, and others taken by the Trust management, the Manager felt that staff morale had definitely improved. And a record number of volunteers have been recruited to the ARC Scheme as a result of increasing advertising in the ways recommended - through publicity on websites, and in the local media.

Q What were the main recommendations?

A Promoting the different services. A lot of staff were unaware of what was available to them in relation to stress support. The wards in the departments, some of them hadn't heard about us. Although we are mainly for A & E, if we have time and energy and resources we can go out to the wards, but a lot of the wards didn't know about us. The service needs to be promoted. Andy suggested the Internet - we've done that, but we've also done promotions, you know, in the foyer of the hospital, and different things like that. And then there's been releases in the hospital paper and in local papers too, saying all about us. There are two booklets put out by social services saying the services are available in Liverpool, and we are now mentioned in them and we're on different websites, and that was also Andy's recommendation, hospital websites. (CT, Family Support Manager)

## 2.10 Project 3

### 2.10.1 Outcomes

**Report** Hospital Volunteers' Perceptions and Understanding of Infection Control: An Exploratory Study: (2002)

This was referenced by the Volunteer Manager in the Volunteers' Conference, 2002  
Research presented to the Research and Development Committee of the hospital

**Student dissertation (first class):** *Student career - health service related:*

**Student and supervisor**

Student and supervisor to publish article in the British Journal of Infection Control, in 2003

**Supervisor's** inclusion of material from the case in a forthcoming book, in a chapter on ethics and the use of negative findings (Hall I & Hall, D *Evaluation and Social Research*, Palgrave, 2003)

### 2.10.2 Findings and recommendations

Nosocomial (hospital acquired infection) currently affects almost 10% of patients in British hospitals, causing as many as 5,000 deaths a year but to date no research has been published on volunteers' understanding of this problem. The research revealed

that volunteers did not perceive themselves to be at risk of acquiring infection and there was little awareness of infection control issues, especially among new volunteers. The report suggested the need to review the volunteers' orientation program and the induction pack materials, and to provide annual updates in information.

### **2.10.3 Usage**

Recommendations have been incorporated into the training and information now given to volunteers.

Findings to be incorporated into new training project for housekeepers

## **2.11 Project 4**

### **2.11.1 Outcomes**

**Report** Views and Understanding of senior nursing staff of infection control procedures: (2002)

Student presentation of research findings to the Infection Control link Group

Research presented to the Research and Development Committee of the hospital

Research referenced in Hughes, J *The Role of the Nurse Consultant in Infection Control*, British Journal of Infection Control, October 2002

**Student** Masters dissertation. Student career - now enrolled on a medical degree, partly as a result of this research

Student and supervisor

Student and supervisor to publish an article in the British Journal of Infection Control, in 2003

Findings and recommendations

'Cascade training' on infection control was seen as a positive means of strengthening channels of communication, along with educational programmes and guidelines with clear instructions regarding the care of patients carrying infections. The study noted, however, that cultural shifts are also needed within the nursing sector, to ensure that infection control is given sufficient importance and this can best be achieved by ensuring ward managers are properly informed and involved in the formulation and dissemination of information, and transmit their commitment to their staff as positive role models.

### **2.11.2 Usage**

Volunteers and clinical support workers have now been added to a mandatory training programme for infection control. Before the reports, infection control was not mandatory in the Trust, but “best practice” – but partly as a result of the reports, infection control is now mandatory.

### **2.12 Students’ Evaluation**

All students completed reflective reports to accompany the research report to the client. These reports, which were for assessment and internal to the academic department, all contained a section on evaluation, and students typically discussed their learning experience and skills development, both academic and personal. For instance,

“Very early on in the research, I came to realise that what I was doing and involved in was very different to my friends and other final year sociology students, in that it was not strictly textbook stuff. There were many situations where I had to draw on my own personal experience, social skills and initiative, all of which are not described in textbooks. It is personal to me...” (HW)

“Firstly, I feel that I have been able to develop my communication skills, both written and oral...Secondly, while I feel that I already had good planning skills, I believe that conducting the research has enhanced them...A further important skill I developed was that of problem solving, especially in time constrained situations...While in academic courses my decisions can be easily rectified, within the research project I saw how earlier decisions could effect the outcome of future goals”. (JR)

Students also discussed what they learned about research methods, from conducting a “real life” study, such as the problems of accessing samples and conducting interviews satisfactorily. Ethical issues were also evaluated.

“The importance of considering all ethical aspects of a piece of a research was emphasised and underlined in several modules on the MSc in Applied Social Research course. The experience of actually encountering ethical dilemmas and problems when designing the research plan, however, was an invaluable experience. The lessons learnt in lectures were absorbed and applied to a real piece of fieldwork and I feel this was crucial in my development as a researcher.” (AK)

Where a project was conducted by more than one researcher, students evaluated the team work involved. One example shows how the working on a project to benefit others provided a high level of involvement.

“Working closely as a team meant there were times when we shared differences of opinion. However, we overcame these problems through logical discussion and showing respect for each others’ point of view... because of our overall motivation and commitment to the project, [problems] rarely happened”.  
(JR)

The students’ high level of motivation was also noted by the managers:

“The students themselves have a major impact, commitment and enthusiasm” (JH, Nurse Consultant)

## 2.13 References

Arnold, J. Li, J & Rice, J (2000) *Assessing the Benefits of the Hospital Volunteer Scheme for Student Nurses*, unpublished dissertation, Liverpool Hope University College

Jennifer Currie (2000) *Volunteer learning on the increase*, Times Higher Educational Supplement, 10<sup>th</sup> March

Hall I & Hall, D (2002) *Community based research and science shops: an update on the INTERACTS project*. Paper to the Voluntary Sector Studies Network, 4 November, University of Manchester,

Hall I & Hall, D (2003 forthcoming) *Evaluation and Social Research*, Basingstoke: Palgrave,

Kate Hilpern (2002) *In all walks of life, they keep the country running*, The Independent on Sunday, 4 August

Hughes, J (2002) *The Role of the Nurse Consultant in Infection Control*, British Journal of Infection Control, October

Kmietowicz Z (2000) *Hospital infection rates in England out of control*, British Medical Journal, 320: 534 (26 February)

Mayor S (2000) Hospital acquired infections kill 5,000 patients a year in England, British Medical Journal, 321: 1370 (2 December)

Public Accounts Committee (2000) The management and control of hospital acquired infection in acute NHS Trusts in England, London: House of Commons

Scott, A (2002) Views and Understanding of Senior Nursing Staff of Infection Control Procedures, MSc Dissertation, Liverpool Hope University College

Waheed, H (2002) Hospital Volunteers' Perceptions and Understanding of Infection Control: an exploratory study, unpublished dissertation, Liverpool Hope University College

## 3 Case Study 2: Lakeview Day Centre

### 3.1 Fact Summary:

#### 3.1.1 Participants:

Shirley Fong and Annemarie Cronin, final year undergraduate students, BA Sociology, University of Liverpool

Chief Executive of Lakeview Hospital Trust, a non-profit making charitable organisation;

Student Supervisor, Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Studies, University of Liverpool;

Co-ordinator of Interchange, a mediating 'science shop' organisation;

Senior Manager, Social Services Department of the local government authority of the area

Dean of Faculty, University of Liverpool

Senior Academic Manager, University of Liverpool

**Duration:** Project begun in October 1999, completed in May 2000 (8 months, part-time)

**Costs:** Lakeview Hospital paid for the students' travelling expenses from the University to the hospital, and for multiple copies of the final report. No other costs or charges were made.

**Aims:** To provide an independent evaluation of a day centre for older people, from the service-users' perspective.

#### **Outcomes:**

Report:

S Fong & A Cronin (2000) A Cottage Industry of Care, unpublished BA dissertation, Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Studies, University of Liverpool

NG Organisation: report disseminated internally and externally and used by the organisation as evidence of effectiveness of care

Student: report assessed as part of BA degree, relevant to aspects of current employment

Supervisor: material for conferences papers, publications

### 3.2 Brief Description of NGO

Lakeview Hospital Trust is a non-profit making charitable organisation providing social and medical care to older people. The Hospital itself has been in existence since the early 1900s, first as a voluntary institution, then as part of the National Health Service from 1948, but it has been an independent charitable trust since 1983.

A number of services are provided on site, all for the care of the older person, that is, people who are of pension age and older. There is:

a nursing unit with 40 in-patient beds providing 24 hour care;

a day hospital, caring for 20 people a day with different levels of mental illness / dementia, under contract with the National Health Service;

residential flats for single occupancy by older people, with main meals provided;

the day centre, which is a club for older people, used by up to 25 people a day from the local area, and partially funded by the local authority Social Services Department.

As a registered charity, the Hospital also runs a charity shop in the local town to provide additional income.

The day centre, which is the focus of the research project, is nearly all run by volunteers; there is a paid driver to bring people in and take them home at the end of the day, and each day is organised by a day leader and a number of volunteers. Day centre users can include up to 4 physically frail people a day, a limit set by the number of wheelchairs that can be managed in the transport. The centre does not cater for people with severe mental difficulties or those who require medical supervision. Although most service users attend once a week on set days, some people come twice or more – the maximum being one person who attends four times a week.

The aim of the Day Centre is to

“provide friendly companionship and social support for elderly people who live in their own homes. It aims to help them keep their independence and alleviate loneliness.”

(Project Report)

The Chief Executive describes the organisation as:

“a medium sized business with one and a quarter million pound turn over in round figures, a payroll of regular contracted employees of 72, and something like 120 volunteers who assist in the Trust each week.” (JM)

### 3.3 Process of Project Origination

The project began with a request from the NGO for an external evaluation of the Day Centre. The Chief Executive commented:

“We rang the University, and asked them the question, would it be possible to arrange for someone to have a look at our day centre. We didn’t know who we were talking to. This was like casting a stone into a lake really ... I think we got a professor’s name from somewhere.” (JM)

The request eventually found its way to the office of Interchange, where the Co-ordinator takes up the story:

*“It was I think the actual initial letter that came through somebody at the University. It was a request, the day centre manager got in touch with somebody at the University. If I’m correct, it came through that way to the Science Shop. It was to evaluate an elderly care group, and I went to visit the centre manager. And I was highly impressed with the centre. I was taken round on a guided visit of the hospital and introduced to some of the elderly people that were actually at the centre at the time. We talked in detail with the manager about the research project.”* (SL)

*“I remember distinctly having a couple of conversations with the manager [on the phone] and then arranging the visit and everything just went so smoothly.”* (SL)

From there, the project was listed by Interchange as a possible student research project. Two undergraduate students chose this for their applied social research project, on course module SOCI303 Applied Social Research.

One of the students comments on the process:

*“The research module that I was taking was obviously to do a research project and we were, I think, given a list of some that were available. And myself and Shirley just agreed that that seemed to be one that we’d both be fairly interested in.”*

Q: Right. Was this project related to any previous research that you’d done?

“Not really. I mean, Shirley had nursing experience and also I think she’d done a couple of modules the year before on ageing maybe, or welfare issues. So she was quite interested and I was happy to do it. I thought it’d be, of the ones that were there, I thought that would be quite a good one as well.”

Q; Yes, any particular reason why you thought it would be a good one?

“I don’t know, I think it’s quite a big issue; obviously we’ve got an ageing population and I was brought up with my grandmother when I was quite young anyway, so I just thought it’d be fairly interesting.” (AC)

So the project finally got resourced as a student research project, co-ordinated through Interchange as the access point within the University. Why did the NGO approach the University rather than any other agency to do the evaluation? The Chief Executive explains the importance he attached to independence and objectivity:

“We felt at the time it made good sense to us to have it looked at by an external body who was seen to be reputable and having an awareness of the wider scene.”

*“If we look at ourselves and say, who would be the best the people to give us some thoughts and advice? If you go to someone in the area, even if you went to somewhere like the Department of Social Services, I doubt they’d have found the time or they could help us anyway, but they’d have an agenda. The University by definition from our point of view would not have an agenda. They’d have an overview.” (JM)*

### 3.4 Process of Project Negotiation

The process of negotiation began with the visit of the Interchange Co-ordinator to Lakeview Hospital to discuss the proposed project with the Chief Executive and the Day Centre Manager. This was followed by the students visiting the Hospital and the Day Centre to negotiate and plan the project. When these initial negotiations had moved to a shared view of the project, the academic supervisor also attended a meeting at the Hospital with the students and the Chief Executive to reach final agreement on the nature and scope of the research. This is summarised in the negotiation agreement signed by all parties.

The Chief Executive recalls that agreement was easily reached:

“Then, yes, we did get the phone call, ‘Yes, we would be interested, yes, we could do it between x and y’, and I have to say it was pretty painless. It wasn’t like having your teeth out. I mean, sometimes when you get into negotiation with people it can be quite traumatic, can’t it? It can be horrendously difficult, but this wasn’t. It was friendly, it was reasonable, everyone understand everybody else and we said, ‘Yes, let’s go and do it.’” (JM)

From the student’s point of view it was also easy to agree over the project:

*“I remember meeting, we met up with the Manager of the Centre and he was very keen for the project to go ahead, so it was lucky that we got someone who was quite enthusiastic about it. So, he basically gave us pretty much a free reign. And, when we put some ideas across to him he seemed to be quite happy with them. I mean, I’m sure he would’ve told us had he not been, and wanted something else.”*  
(AC)

Some of the basic arrangements for the project, such as how it would fit into an academic time-table, and over the payment of expenses, had already been raised by the Interchange Co-ordinator in her prior meeting with the Chief Executive.

*“I think in the initial meetings it was always stated clearly about the students’ time as well, and how they had certain sections for gathering the data and then for writing up the report, and the deadline the students were under.”* (SL)

So the negotiations with the students could concentrate on what was the main research question, and how the information could be collected. The Chief Executive wanted an evaluation of the Day Centre, to know how well or poorly it was performing. Internal questionnaires had shown a high level of user satisfaction with the services, but he wanted to know if this would be confirmed by an external assessment. He also wanted to know the social backgrounds of the service users.

*“One thing we wanted to know, were we doing the right thing? I mean, was it needed, you know? Did the people value the service? Did they care for the service? What did they gain from it? What did they think of the people that did it? What did they think about the transportation? What did they think about the food? What did they think about the entertainments and the days out, and while we ran questionnaires, it again helped us to say, ‘Yes, that does reinforce what we’re saying.’”* (JM)

The student agreed that the broad purpose of the research was to find out what service users thought about the service, and any improvements that could be made:

*“I guess just looking at the services the social centre offered and finding out what the people who used those services thought. And trying to get their views as to whether they thought there could be changes or improvements or that kind of thing.”* (AL)

Both the students and the Chief Executive felt that made the project to be fairly tightly structured rather than a looser, more exploratory study, though that did depend to some extent on the type of information volunteered by the service users. The student recalled:

*“In a way it was fairly structured but it really depended on the people we were interviewing, what kind of answers they were going to give us as to which way the report would end up, really.” (AL)*

The Chief Executive agreed:

*“It had to be structured to some extent because it was focused on the particular entity that we were looking at in the older people, and their backgrounds.” (JM)*

### **3.5 Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection was largely by questionnaire and interview: 44 Day Centre users responded, 20 by self-completed questionnaire and 24 by interview. The ages of those interviewed ranged from the youngest at 66 to the oldest at 95, with an average age of 81 years. A further 16 volunteers completed questionnaires, and more talked informally with the students during their visits. In all, around half the volunteers and just under half the service users provided information for the research.

The student researchers visited the Day Centre on 13 separate occasions between October and January, spread across the different days of the week, when there were different service users and different volunteers on duty, thus ensuring coverage of the range of service users and service provision.

Sensitivity to the service users as information providers was a requirement of the organisation, and a strong feature of the ethical stance of the researchers, that they should not just appear, collect information, and disappear again. Instead, they felt it important to get known by the service users before starting to ask for personal information, along with questions about their views of the services.

In doing so, they were following guidelines from the appropriate professional body, the British Sociological Association, which states among other things that

*[1a] Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. They should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy.*

*[1d] Members should consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one and, normally, should attempt to minimise disturbance to those participating in research.*

[1e] Special care should be taken where research participants are particularly vulnerable by virtue of factors such as age, social status and powerlessness.

(British Sociological Association (2002) Statement of Ethical Practice)

Observation, then, played a part in the research as a preliminary to gathering information by questionnaire and interview, and as part of the student's understanding of the services provided in the Day Centre. But as the Day Centre was fairly compact, it would have been impossible to observe without engaging in interaction with the people in that setting. So observation became participant observation, as the students acted as volunteers themselves, helping out in various ways.

Their report states:

“Much of our time was spent getting to know, and getting known by, the [service users] and volunteers. As well as chatting to people informally, we helped hand out the lunches, or did the washing-up, played bingo, joined in the exercise session, or took part in the quiz.”

“This hands-on approach was used so that we could get first hand experience of what the club was like and also gain the trust of the [service users], volunteers, and paid staff. We became familiar faces very quickly.”

In her reflective report, one of the students noted that this approach was not without problems. The students felt they had not been introduced to centre users in a way which made their research role clear, and the students also had some ethical dilemmas to resolve through their participatory role.

*“It was then we decided to introduce ourselves in a proper way [through] flyers stating our names and our purpose in the club, and our photos, too. [However] it did not really matter to the [service users] who we were and what we were there for. They were just happy to see new faces ... and new people to talk to rather than repeating the same topic to the same group of people over and over again. ... Consequently, we ‘did rather a lot of sympathetic listening to catalogues of problems’ (Bresnen, 1988: 44) and sorrows. Although much as I would like to help them out by telling their problems to a member of staff, I was afraid that I would breach the contract of confidentiality. Furthermore, I was in no position to provide any constructive suggestions to their problems ... but only provide a good ‘listening ear’ (Crompton and Jones, 1988: 70)” (SF)*

The positive outcome of these methods meant that

*“people opened up to us, they were happy with us being there. We weren’t seen as social workers who were prying. So yes, I think that worked quite well.” (AC)*

The Chief Executive also commented on the appropriateness of this approach to gathering information from older people in the Day Centre setting.

*“In principle we agreed there was, sort of, a certain level of questions and answers. And they would do face-to-face interviews with people, but on the understanding that names wouldn’t be used. But they would sit down and talk with people, talk about the values of coming to the cottagers’ club, but also, about their life’s experiences and what sort of age were they, all of those sort of things.”*

*“They did all the right things; they took time to get to know people before they talked to people, which is very important isn’t it? That there’s not some stranger asking some questions. But they came along to the club and they came and had lunch with people, they came to the Christmas lunches.”*

*“They could sit alongside them, and I suppose for the older person, they’d look at them like daughters or grand-daughters, and have a chat. And the good thing about it was, I had absolutely no bad reaction from anybody. That you expect, that someone’s going to say, ‘I don’t want to talk to you,’ or whatever, but we had none of that. And it was done openly but with a degree of sensitivity.” (JM)*

Because the Hospital Trust operates as an independent charitable organisation outside the state-run National Health Service, there was no requirement for the research to receive prior approval from a Local Research Ethics Committee (compare with the Benington Hospital case study).

However, exactly the same considerations that Research Ethics Committees would look at - issues of voluntary informed consent on the part of participants, requirements of confidentiality of information, and individual anonymity, plus the concern to minimise any disturbance or upset to participants - were in the forefront of the research design and influenced how the research methods were used.

### 3.6 Channels of On-Going Communication

While the research was in progress, communication was readily maintained between the researchers and the Hospital Trust through their weekly visits to the site, where they could check that the information they would be requesting through questionnaire and interview did actually meet the requirements of the organisation.

The student recounted:

*The [Day Centre] co-ordinator, she was there pretty much every time we were. If we had any problems, we'd speak to her on the day. And very occasionally we'd phone if there was something that we wanted to find out in advance of going, or something we'd covered the week before and just wanted to clarify, so we'd occasionally phone her up. But generally just seeing her there on the day and also the manager who was usually on site as well, so we could wander down to his office and just say hello and give him a quick update on how things were going."*  
(AL)

At the same time, the students had weekly meetings with their academic supervisor as part of the regular tutorial arrangements for their learning module, where they would meet either with other students undertaking different applied research projects, or for separate supervision sessions. The academic supervisor explains it thus:

*"There was a regular programme of supervisions – weekly supervisions – together with the other students who are also doing projects with different organisations. In the early stages you see all the students together, in the later stages it's probably better to see them for a shorter period of time, one after another, or one project after another, so you can deal with the things that arrive particularly in that particular project."* (DH)

Academic supervision is part of the learning, where students can get instruction and support for the methods they will be using, and report back on progress and any problems they are facing. It is part of the 'quality control' mechanisms for ensuring, as far as possible, that the research project will be properly conducted and have a valid outcome.

The student explained that, despite their involvement in the Day Centre as participant observers, they held no preconceptions about how the research finding would turn out:

*"I just wanted to hopefully get some good feedback, or not necessarily positive feedback, it doesn't matter if it's positive or negative as long as we got feedback. I think the worst thing that could have happened is if we would have got middle of the road answers. Luckily we didn't, it was quite, people had something to say."*

*They really had something to say, it wasn't just you know, wishy-washy answers. So I'm glad it turned out the way it did."* (AC)

### 3.7 Outcomes

The findings of the research were published in a report that was sent to the Hospital Trust. The Chief Executive then arranged for a number of copies to be made, for circulation both within and outside the Trust.

The information from service users and volunteers corroborated the Trust's own internal feedback to show high levels of user satisfaction with the range of services provided. In addition, the research provided some qualitative information about the social circumstances of the service users, and their views about the services they received.

The student researcher talked about the main findings from the research project, and how these and other findings were presented in the report.

*"I think [the main point] was, that the centre plays a huge part in the lives of the people who go there, and I think that was the main finding. It really is central to a lot of their lives even if they only go once a week."*

*"There was quite a lot of actual evidence. What the organisation were looking for as well was to find out more about the people who used the centre. I mean, things like average age, how long they'd been attending, that sort of thing, so the hard evidence, hard facts. And we were able to do that and they were, I think, they were really pleased with that. Things like how many of the people that go there actually still have their partners and how many live on their own, how many live with relatives, that sort of percentage wise, they were quite pleased with that evidence."*

*"In the report, it was set out in different sections, and it was a combination of quotes from interviews, to sort of illustrate the points that we'd made. There were a few charts in there to illustrate some of the really interesting stuff, you know, the average ages, that sort of stuff. And there were also photos, included to make it a bit more interesting, and to give people a bit of an idea of what we were actually talking about. I think that was it, there were a couple of case studies typed up as well."* (AC)

Examples of the findings about the characteristics of service users are as follows:

The average age for newcomers joining the club is 78 years.

45% of the sample had been attending the club for between 1 and 3 years  
 89% of the sample were either widowed or single  
 72% lived alone (including 12% in sheltered accommodation)  
 47% had been introduced to the club through friends and relatives, with a further 18% referred from local authority Social Services.

Her impression that the research was what the organisation wanted was confirmed by the Chief Executive.

*“The end product was excellent because, again, it gave a wider view. What we were trying to do was to understand ourselves and what lessons were there that we could learn, or what was it that we could reinforce that what we do was all right, which is largely what turned out to be the case.” (JM)*

The findings, summarised from the report’s conclusions, are as follows:

The club provides a valuable service, keeping many of the people that go from slipping into complete isolation, and provides a caring, supportive and fun day out.

The volunteers create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere each day of the week, and the club provides a community feeling and network of friends that would otherwise not exist.

The services provided by the club are very much appreciated and enjoyed by the service users. Every effort is made by the volunteers to accommodate individual needs and preference. Any criticisms found are minor and based on individual tastes rather than any specific problems with the club.

The transport service is invaluable, efficiently run, and provides a safe means of getting to and from the club.

The researchers considered that, as few older people took up the initiative themselves to go to the club, but often needed some ‘gentle persuasion,’ there may be others in the community who could benefit from the service to relieve isolation. They suggested that family doctors (General Practitioners) could be made more aware of the club, if that was not already the case.

Other recommendations included involving service users even more than at present in the choice of entertainment and outings.

### **3.7.1 Usage of the Report**

*“The end product was very valuable, we ourselves use it, and we in turn sent copies of it to people, like the Director of Social Services, who also welcomed it and*

*said he found it very, very interesting research and helped them, as a locally based organisation, to look at the elderly.” (JM, Chief Executive)*

The Chief Executive explained that the report had been useful in a number of ways. Internally it provided ‘reinforcement’ that the Day Centre was operating effectively to meet service users’ needs, while externally the report provided evidence for the Social Services Department which referred several service users and funded their places.

“I think the value, the huge value, was that it was done externally, done with people who were younger, who were not local, they had no agenda, they just came in from the outside.” (JM)

The Social Services manager confirmed that the report is viewed with interest as information which complements her in-house evaluations of service performance.

“We do an annual survey, we have to, as a Social Services Department ... so that would pick up people [recently assessed for need], but it wouldn’t be in-depth qualitative information about the service. So I think [this kind of research] information is always useful in getting a proper view of the service.” (JO)

The report had wide circulation within the Hospital Trust, being seen by the people in the Day Centre, the Matron and management team, as well as by all Directors of the Trust.

“JM: We then circulated [the report] to a wide area of people and obviously back to the people in the club, because it was about them.

Q: Yes. What was their reaction?

*JM: Oh, they were very pleased with it. They thought it was interesting and informative, and they thought it was good, they thought it was useful information. It was useful for us because we wanted to be certain, to repeat myself, that we were doing the right solutions.”*

The students had handed the report to the Chief Executive, and then went back a few weeks later to get his response. He had been pleased with the report.

This was confirmed by the academic supervisor. For him, the research project was an example of student research evaluation in accordance with the ideals of Interchange, negotiated as a partnership with a local non-profit organisation, meeting its needs and of good academic standard. The project has been used as an example to succeeding year’s students of what they could do in applied social research.

*“The feedback I got was the organisation was very pleased with the report. One indication of this is that the students delivered a copy of the report to the organisation on their agreement, and the organisation paid for a number of copies; I think 10 or 12, to be done. And that was quite expensive because there were some colour photos in the report.” (DH)*

For the student herself the report was part of her final year assessment. It had also been useful in gaining her first employment on graduation, but she had since moved jobs so the research element was now less relevant but the experience of having done actual research remained important.

*“AC: I think the only thing I’ve used it for is in the first job that I’d applied for, I can’t remember what they wanted now, but I think I’ve actually used it in applying for a job and in a presentation on a research project.*

*Q: And do you think that was helpful for getting the job?*

*AC: Yes, I think so.*

*Q: But since then you’ve moved on to something else, is that what you’re saying?*

*AC: Yes, that’s right. My IT job doesn’t call for that much research, but I think it was definitely worth doing, definitely. A general understanding of what sort of work goes in to a project like that or any research project where you’re writing a paper on something, or anything that you have to go and research. I think it definitely stayed in my memory that it’s a lot easier to do if you get your hands dirty, and if you actually dive straight in and look at it from the inside as well as looking at it from the outside in.”*

### **3.8 Students’ Evaluation**

*“We became closely knitted to the volunteers as well as to the centre users. We were even invited to the Christmas parties and also the Matron’s party ... we declined because of the possibility of bias, as suggested by Douglas (1976) that ‘when one has enjoyed the hospitality of a group it may become harder to offer criticism of their efforts’ (Hall & Hall, 1996: 14). This also relates to the gifts we received from Friday’s volunteers [which we accepted]. Nevertheless, we returned the appreciation by presenting a gift (an Arts and Craft book) to the club.” (SF)*

The evaluation emerges out of the previous discussion of use of the report. The report had been used because participants felt it was objective – based upon the observations and questions of external researchers with ‘no ‘axe to grind.’ It was participatory, in that it allowed service users freely to express their opinions, valuing their input. It had authenticity, in that those involved could recognise their organisation,

with its strengths and one or two weaknesses that could be addressed. It added to knowledge about the characteristics and conditions of service users, as well as about their preferences for services.

### 3.9 References:

Bresnen, M (1988) 'Insights on Site: research into construction project organisations' in A Bryman (ed) *Doing Research in Organisations*, London: Routledge

British Sociological Association (2002) Statement of Ethical Practice, [www.britsoc.org.uk](http://www.britsoc.org.uk)

Crompton, R & Jones, G (1988) 'Researching White Collar Organisations: why sociologists should not stop doing case studies, in A Bryman (ed) *Doing Research in Organisations*, London: Routledge

Fong, S & Cronin, A (2000) *A Cottage Industry of Care*, unpublished dissertation, Department of Sociology, Social Policy & Social Work Studies, University of Liverpool

Hall, D & Hall, I (1996) *Practical Social Research*, Basingstoke, Macmillan

## 4 Case Study 3: Midlands Befriending Service

### 4.1 Fact Summary

#### 4.1.1 Participants

One final year undergraduate BA Applied Social Studies student at the University of Wolverhampton who completed the research report;  
 the academic supervisor in the Department who is Module Leader for Student Link in Sociology;  
 the Co-ordinator of 'Student Link', which is the Science Shop equivalent at the University of Wolverhampton;  
 the Befriending Service Co-ordinator  
 the Manager of the NGO.  
 The Acting Dean of Faculty at the University of Wolverhampton

**Duration:** Project begun in January 2002, completed in May 2002 (4.5 months, part-time)

**Costs:** The NGO registered the student as one of their volunteers, which covered insurance, and met travel expenses and postage up to a low pre-agreed maximum budget

**Aims:** The NGO was interested in a review and evaluation of the Befriending Service, by finding out the views of the clients who had received the service in their homes, as well as the views of the volunteer visitors.

#### **Outcomes Summary:**

**Report:** Liz Tunnicliffe (2002) *Evaluation Study of Age Concern Wolverhampton's Befriending Service*, unpublished dissertation, University of Wolverhampton, School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences.

**Student:** dissertation, careers enhancement – for a career working in social work with older people

**Supervisor/ Student Link:** material for conference papers, publication

**NGO:** evaluation report used as feedback on service provision, and a guide for incoming staff and volunteers.

## 4.2 Brief Description of NGO

Age Concern is a national registered charity, a federation of over 400 independent charities with

“a shared name and a shared commitment to making later life fulfilling, enjoyable and productive... Age Concern is the largest charitable movement in the UK concerned with the needs and aspirations of older people and the leading authority on ageing related issues.” [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

Through the provision of services, Age Concern helps older people to continue living independently, promotes the role of older people as citizens (enabling them to influence decisions that affect them, and to contribute their experience and skills to their communities and to society as a whole) and organises campaigns to influence policy relating to what older people value.

Age Concern Midlands is an independent local charity and limited company which targets local people over 50, who are frail or who are suffering from loneliness. The Befriending Service is one of a number of services and provides a volunteer visiting service to older people who have recently returned home after being discharged from hospital or from a Social Services (local authority) residential Community Resource Centre.

“A volunteer provides companionship and friendship on a short term basis to older people in the City who after an illness may otherwise experience loneliness or isolation. Volunteers come from all backgrounds and age groups and will visit for an hour or so each week while the older person recovers.

As the person returns to good health the visits decrease and other services are offered to provide continued and empowering support.”

(Befriending Service leaflet)

The Befriending Service was a pioneer scheme which began in June 2000, with Age Concern working in partnership with the local authority (Social Services Department) and the local Health Authority, with 5 years funding to be reviewed after the first two years. The student's evaluation study was therefore part of monitoring the progress of this new scheme.

### 4.3 Process of Project Origination

Student Link is a science shop based in the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences at the University of Wolverhampton which has been running successfully for ten years (Cameron & Green: 1996). Students are required to register with the Student Link Co-ordinator in the semester preceding the research project “to allow sufficient time for initial approval and subsequent negotiations to take place”. (Student Link Handbook for Students)

The project was part of an ongoing relationship with Age Concern and originated in a pilot scheme set up in 1996, as a development of Student Link. The Student Link Age Concern Scheme pilot was reported as differing from Student Link generally because several students could be allocated to the organisation to work in a team, and there was to be a rolling programme of research rather than the normal one-off research project.

The pilot scheme involved considerably more initial liaison between university tutors and Age Concern staff to determine the area of provision to be evaluated than would normally be involved in a one-off project. The benefit was that in succeeding years, tutors would be able to spend less time in negotiation. The benefits for the NGO manager were that the Scheme would:

“allow for the construction over time of a detailed picture of various aspects of the day centre service, involving the perspectives of different people – users, their carers and families, volunteers, day centre leaders and referring agencies...[and] for flexibility in focus in that new batches of students can concentrate on particular areas of concern which Age Concern may identify”. (Watson, Cameron, Cameron and Farmer: 1996)

The student approached the sociology supervisor initially about an interest in doing a Student Link project, and explained she was keen to work with older people. The student had already spent two years studying for a social work diploma, and was finishing her third year at university in order to gain a BA degree in Applied Social Studies.

*“I was interested in applying what I had learned to my field of interest, which was older people, and I thought it would also be useful when it came to looking for a job in this area.” (LT)*

She expressed a special interest in working with older people and was especially concerned with studying “the problem of isolation in older age”. The supervisor suggested she get in touch with Age Concern directly and she

*“then came back to [him] and said ‘Oh yeah, I’m evaluating a day centre, they’re interested in somebody doing this particular piece of evaluation research,’ and it went on from there.”* (AC, Academic Supervisor)

*“What [the NGO] simply wanted was for an outside person to evaluate that service, which involved interviewing some of the volunteers concerned, talk to the people actually running the scheme, and some of the users of the service.”*  
(AC)

The student cited her social work diploma course as relevant for the Student Link project, and was also doing a research methods module in tandem with the research project.

#### **4.4 Process of Project Negotiation**

The student was provided with a handbook with clear and concise information about Student Link, and the project was overseen by the Student Link Co-ordinator, as part of a process which involves

*“4 or 5 lunchtime workshops for all Student linkers, spread throughout the semester ... so the first one will be before they start, which is a preparation workshop, then there’s a workshop which is geared to writing up the contract and dealing with any problems which arise from that, workshops which deal with what to put in the reflective learning log”.* (AC, Academic Supervisor)

The project was part of the student’s final year undergraduate programme of study, counting for 15 credits (out of 120). Assessment in this program is split as follows:

Component 1:

Element 1: Negotiation and drafting of contract and project plan, 10%

Element 2: Submission of written diary or log, 30%

Component 2:

Submission of research report, or other agreed substantive outcome, 60%

Negotiation is therefore part of the assessment, with students being required to complete a pro forma agreement.

Prior to beginning the research project, the student states in her report that she was

*“enrolled as a Befriending Service volunteer which involved “being interviewed, supplying references and confirmation of my existing police check from the*

*University Social Work Department. I also signed a confidentiality agreement” (LT).*

The student had initially gone to Age Concern because it was an organisation listed in the Student Link details, which had an ongoing research relationship with the Department.

*“I heard about Student Link and went to a lunchtime information session. I was given a list of organisations looking for students, and I spotted Age Concern. There was already an ongoing university project on mental health in day centres, and I thought I might do that, but when I went to Age Concern and said what I was interested in, they suggested the befriending service in response to my interest in isolation. It had been going for about a year, of a five year project supported by Social Services and the Health Service, and they wanted an independent evaluation.” (LT)*

## 4.5 Aims and Objectives

According to the student, the aim of the research project was:

*“To evaluate a befriending service operated by the Wolverhampton branch of Age Concern. The service had been running for about one year, and was provided on behalf of Social Services and Health Services for older people who had been recently out of hospital or rehabilitation unit. The befriending service was provided for a specified length of time, around 6 months from the service user’s return to home.” (LT)*

“The project was to interview service users and volunteers. They were one year into what was meant to be a 5 year project, and they were quite keen to have someone independent to evaluate the project. The main question to be answered was, Is this service fulfilling its original intentions?” (LT)

The expected outcomes of the project were listed in the agreement as follows:

“Expected Outcomes:

A research report which:

Gives the comments/ views of a random sample of clients who have received the Befriending Service.

Gives the comments/ views of the volunteers of the Befriending Service from a questionnaire sent to all current volunteers, and interviews with a small follow-up sample of volunteers.

Summarises the findings from the above.

Makes appropriate observations and/or recommendations arising from the study.

A reflective learning journal which:

Gives factual details of action taken

Discusses difficulties/ dilemmas that arise and the solutions chosen to overcome them.

Discusses advantages and disadvantages of methods chosen in the light of practical experience.

Includes reflections on the experience of working with the host organisation, including meeting the volunteers and clients. This may include power issues such as how I think I was perceived, and how that affected the results etc.”

## 4.6 Channels of On-Going Communication

The research involved the student visiting the premises of the NGO on a weekly basis for around 6 hours per week, where she could meet with volunteers and attend their training sessions, devise her questions for the interviews and conduct interviews with clients and volunteers.

While at the NGO centre, she had access to the Befriending Service Co-ordinator and could have the support of the office for making contact with clients and volunteers. The Co-ordinator recalled weekly meetings face-to-face, supplemented by e-mails, fax, mobile phone calls and answer machine messages, and that the student used the office next door to him on a weekly basis for her work.

The student also attended a number of brief meetings with her supervisor concerning the methods to be used, and attended the series of Student Link seminars for all Link students.

*“When the student was initially discussing it and planning it, we discussed what methods she would use in an evaluation study, and made some suggestions on who should be contacted, not all of which she was able to act upon, but I gave her advice about the general shape of it, and then later on in the process looked at the drafts of the interview schedules and gave her some advice. She was concerned about some issues to do with sampling, that was the main thing, I discussed all the methodology side of it.” (AC)*

*“I actually went to Age Concern and discussed the [befriending] service with them. It was up to me to devise the methods, with advice from my tutor, which I then presented to Age Concern and they agreed.” (LT)*

One issue which did arise in the course of the research was noted by the student. It was a practical problem, but also had an ethical dimension, and impacted on the research in terms of the number of volunteer respondents that could be contacted. The student explained that the Befriending Service Co-ordinator was 'quite protective' of the volunteers, and didn't want them to be pressurised into responding to the student's questionnaire, so they were just 'invited' to respond. The result was that, contrary to normal social science practice, no reminders were sent to volunteers who did not respond to the questionnaire, and this reduced the potential field of replies.

The student reflected that this 'slight constraint' prevented her from following up volunteers who had not responded to the invitation to participate. With hindsight, she might have had greater concern to make Age Concern allow further access to the volunteers. There was also, however, another practical issue – the service operated on very limited means and even the cost of a postage stamp was significant.

*"That is part of learning about research. I didn't know it before, but I know it now. It was useful for learning purposes."* (LT)

## 4.7 Outcomes

**Student dissertation** (first class):

**Student career** – the student is looking for a career in social work with older people.

*"I think that there will be a long term benefit for my career. It's an extra for employers to have experience in this field, working with older people. That's not yet proved, but I'm optimistic. Personally, the practical work experience, it was a chance to take some of my social work and incorporate that into my third year. It was applying research to practice, it reinforced that, and increased my confidence."* (LT)

**Student and supervisor** – regarded as a "very successful project" by the Student Link Co-ordinator, and feeding in to the mission of the University to "reach out into the community." The student thought it had been a 'worthwhile' project, which was valued all round. She stated that the organisation had sent her a letter of thanks for the project.

What had contributed to the success? The student commented:

*"Partly because it was self-contained, had a specific purpose, and was of manageable proportions. Not too complicated."*

**NGO** – The research showed the service was greatly valued by service users.

#### 4.7.1 Findings and recommendations

Interviews were conducted with 5 clients. Nine volunteers completed questionnaires and 5 of these were subsequently interviewed in person. The majority of clients were very appreciative of the Befriending Service, which provided “someone with time to spare to listen and chat”. Two people mentioned that the service was most valuable when they first came home from residential care and 5 people “felt the visits had helped them to ‘move on’ in their recovery. Reasons given included having something to look forward to which one person described as being ‘mentally good for you’. Another said that they were always ‘cheered up’ by the visits.” (Report: page 20)

The report noted that:

“Clients often have people coming into their home on a regular basis such as home carers, home helps, district nurses etc. Whilst this assistance is greatly appreciated, clients value greatly the fact that someone is coming for a social visit rather than primarily for another reason”. (Report page 28)

The student explained:

*“It was a greatly valued service. The service users appreciated the volunteers, that someone was bothering about them. Most of all, someone would go along for 1 hour a week to talk to them, and listen to their concerns. The service users did have specific workers calling in, like district nurses or people to do the shopping, but they were always doing something and had no time to spare to stop and talk.” (LT)*

For the volunteers, the most common reason for enjoying the visits was the “social aspect”, including “sharing news and views”, “sharing a joke and having a laugh” and “talking and listening”. A couple of volunteers said they liked “feeling valued and useful”, one saying that they enjoyed “feeling that I had brought some happiness to an empty day for my client”.

A number of negative aspects were also shared, which related to the volunteers feeling concerned about the clients – with one person mentioning they found it difficult not to take the clients’ worries on to their own shoulders, another felt helpless because they felt the client should have access to more services and another felt their role could have included visiting the client in hospital. In the interviews, three volunteers wanted to be able to do more practical tasks for the clients, such as shopping and three volunteers found it difficult to stop visiting, because of the friendships which had formed. The report concluded from this that

“...it is clear that the Befriending Service volunteers are very caring and dedicated people, who wish to do as much as possible to help their clients”.

The student explained some of the ‘niggles’ reported by volunteers:

*“sometimes service users weren’t there when the volunteers called; sometimes the volunteers wanted to help more, to do little jobs like shopping, and not give up calling after 6 months. Some service users weren’t going to recover their independence, but the service was planned around withdrawing after six months.”* (LT)

The report recommended volunteer training should stress that the visiting is intended to be only for a short term basis, and that clients who need a longer term of recovery should be referred to a long-term visiting service instead. Practical tasks could be undertaken by volunteers if both parties are willing, and more frequent short visits could be made for an initial period after homecoming, rather than the current weekly visit. Volunteers who work in the day time miss out on the social events (e.g. coffee mornings) and occasional weekend or evening events would help them to update their training.

The report also suggested there was a need to record the ethnicity of service users and volunteers more accurately, and to include more people from ethnic minority groups as the befriending service was predominantly to White British service users. This could be achieved through “a review of information and advertising material as well as volunteer recruitment information, with a view to recruiting more volunteers from ethnic minority background”.

The recommendations also included detailed ideas for building in evaluation of the service in the future by the organisation, for instance by a short telephone survey, through an annual questionnaire to volunteers, through an in-depth evaluation every 2 – 3 years, and through recording of the ethnic background of clients and volunteers.

#### **4.7.2 Usage of the Report**

The report has been used as a guide to incoming co-ordinators.

*“I’ve used the report almost as a ‘mark’ of the service at this time, and we’ve since had two co-ordinators”.* (SW, Manager)

The report was helpful in indicating that staff should not be complacent about volunteer training – although volunteers are told in training of the specific nature of the service,

and its limitations, the report revealed that one or two volunteers were still unhappy. The Service Manger emphasised that

“Our services are operated on a contract – and we have contractual obligations – we can do some things, and not others ... A lot of volunteers said they wanted to go in and do the dishes or cook a meal, which is ordinarily done by other agencies. Where to draw the line? It also involves insurance and what we’re asked to do – which is Befriending and it’s a constant reminder to say to people ‘you can’t do that’, it’s making the problem – you could cook one day [on the visit] but what about the other 6 days of the week? So, you have to sort out the long and short term effects”. (SW)

Although the Service Manager felt the report should have noted these issues were covered in training (and the failure to do this had been a ‘gap’) he nevertheless accepted that this showed there was a post-training need to reinforce the message to volunteers regularly about what Befriending does and does not involve. The Report also recommended that staff development (“coffee mornings”) should be held in the evenings and at weekends, as well as during the week. However, the Service Manger noted that volunteers had been asked in three newsletters, prior to the research, if they were happy with the times, and only one had wanted a change. He noted, “This highlighted that you can ask people and they’ll say something, but someone else can ask and get a different answer. That’s quite intriguing!” (SW)

However, the Report’s findings meant that volunteers will continue to be asked if they are happy about the times of their meetings – it was important for volunteers to be satisfied, if they were not, this would impact on the clients.

### **4.7.3 Students’ Evaluation**

The student noted in her reflective account that she had learned about conducting research in the real world and how to work through the bureaucracy of the organisation.

“I have learned that research is ‘messy’ with nothing quite going according to the careful plans made beforehand. Hardly surprising, on reflection, when dealing with people. I appreciated the experience of working with a voluntary organisation which has been very enjoyable, although slightly frustrating at times when small administrative issues caused delay. However, once I got used to the ‘set-up’ I found this easy to work round”. (LT)

The student also appreciated the opportunity to conduct research in her own area of interest, although the experiences she encountered had rather saddened her.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the Student Link experience and the chance to do some real research. I have been very fortunate because I have been able to do something I thoroughly enjoy, which is talking to older people...However, it seems to me that it is a sad reflection on today’s society that volunteers need to be “allocated” to visit older people.” (LT)

The Service Manager felt that the student did not have much time (8 – 10 weeks) to do a substantial piece of research, and because of his own experience in doing research, he tried to help by giving time to it. A prior concern had been that it might be too time consuming for him, but “it complemented what we were doing, it wasn’t a problem or a hindrance”.

The main bonus for the Service Manager was in having an independent researcher to conduct independent research into a new service, someone who did not have “baggage – preconceptions”. The main disadvantage was that the student did not understand how the Befriending service “locked in” with the other services offered by Age Concern, the focus was too bounded, and the final report did not reflect that “we send people to whatever service is appropriate when they come to us”. The manager felt strongly enough to make this point in a written response to the Report.

## 4.8 References

Age Concern UK [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

Cameron, A and Green, P Forging a Student Link: projects with voluntary organisations, New Academic, Spring 1996

Tunncliffe, Liz: (2002) *Evaluation Study of Befriending Service* (University of Wolverhampton)

University of Wolverhampton, *Student Link Handbook for Students*, School of Humanities Languages and Social Sciences, Wolverhampton

Watson, P, Cameron, A; Cameron, E & Farmer, E: *Evaluating a charity’s operations*: Charities Management, Summer 1996

## 5 Policy Evaluation – the Cases Compared

### 5.1 NGO Perspectives

#### 5.1.1 *The Application of the Research to Wider Policy Objectives*

According to the senior hospital manager at Benington Hospital, the initial research into volunteering and nursing was envisaged as part of wider policy formulation, as research that would be disseminated to a national audience.

“I wanted research and methods which were very simple – to show results in black and white – as I wanted to put over to other managers the role of the voluntary scheme in nurse recruitment and retention – that the findings would be transferable throughout the country. And [the Volunteer Manager] has been selling this round the country – and using the report.” (TG)

Within Benington Hospital, there have been policy implications from the research into volunteers’ perceptions of infection control, which go beyond this specific group, to other groups.

“I’ve been able to use the work on the volunteers already to influence long-term training, not just for the volunteers, for other new roles ... new clinical workers, new housekeepers ... there’s a big project going on, but it’s still in its infancy, where we’re looking at these new roles, and the work that we’ve been able to do [through Interchange] will influence that ... It will influence other training policies, hopefully it will influence patient care, it’s got to.” (JH, Nurse Consultant)

Policy evaluation from the infection control manager has also been positive. The research was tackling an issue of national importance, and providing information that could feed in to changing practice at the local level in order to maintain and improve quality of service.

“Q. How do these projects relate to the wider objectives of your organisation?

A. *Big style. There’s a lot of government directives on infection control now, lot of our performance management in the NHS [National Health Service], a lot of our environmental cleanliness, hospital acquired infection is really high on the political agenda. Clinical governance – no matter what hospital a patient goes to, that they have the same degree of quality ... and infection control is a big indicator of quality ... So it’s a really wide perspective, and the volunteers have an angle on that, the senior managers have an influence on that.” (JH)*

### **5.1.2 Evaluation and Quality Assurance**

For Lakeview Day Centre, as for the Midlands Befriending Service, the research was mainly seen as an issue of quality assurance, through an external evaluation of a particular service for the older person.

“The day club had been going since the Trust had been formed in 1983, and to some extent it tends just to perpetuate [itself]. And looking at ourselves, as we should as a business, we say this is what we’re doing, and should we continue this, should we change it, should we enlarge it, should we find different ways?” (JM)

*The service provided by the Day Centre was meeting a local need, but additionally it was in the forefront of providing a service that will increasingly be required throughout the UK and Europe.*

“Clearly in [this area] where we are, we have a higher percentage of older people per head of the population. And the demography says that’s going to continue to grow over the next twenty years, so another twenty years the number of 80-85 year olds is going to double or something and it’s quite staggering, really. So there’s going to be increasing need.” (JM)

### **5.1.3 Isolation and Caring for Older People**

For the Lakeview Chief Executive, the report was also relevant to the broader issues of care of older people for which the Day Centre had been established – isolation and loneliness, as well as relief for carers of older people – against the demographic trend of rising numbers of people of advanced age.

*“I mean, one of the biggest problems that the older person has is loneliness ... Older people so often find themselves alone. These days families move away, children live abroad, partner dies, husband/wife passes away, they find themselves living in the family house where they’ve lived for years on their own. And people effectively give up going out, or are concerned about what might happen if they go over the front door. With, at least with the club we have a driver, an escort, they go to the front door, brings them, takes them home, puts them back inside the front door at the end of the day. And they get out and they meet people. We know then that they’ve had at least a good day, they’ve had proper meals and perhaps some entertainment and some social company.”*  
(JM)

Also of concern was another national, as well as local issue, the impact on the carers of older people, who support them in their own homes.

*“And again, the huge benefit [of the day centre] is for the carer. In many ways the carer gets more benefit than the patient does. The fact that they know that one or two days a week that there going to be able to go and do their own thing or go to town, or have their hair done or whatever. And this again, is a huge thing, it’s a huge national thing. I mean, I was listening to a programme on radio, week or two ago, that said if all the carers gave up caring, and I don’t know how they put a mathematical figure on to it, but they were talking several billion pounds it would cost the economy to care for the people that are cared for by carers, which of course is true”. (JM)*

The Befriending Service research had its origin in the student’s concern, from a social work background, with isolation in the older person, and the NGO’s desire to evaluate befriending as social support, with impact on both the older person and the befriender.

#### **5.1.4 Supporting Older People in their Own Homes**

The day centre and the befriending service both aim to support people in their own homes, and in the case of the befriending service, to ease the transition from hospital to home. This is to avoid the problem of ‘bed blocking’, where acute hospital beds are occupied by older people who no longer require medical services but are unable to be discharged because of the lack of adequate social care and support at home.

The Borough Council’s Department of Social Services, which provided financial support for the Lakeview day centre, was also under government pressure to review services for older people and facilitate more home-centred care. A Joint Review by the Audit Commission and Social Services Inspectorate (2002) reported that:

“The balance of services for older people needs to shift in order to help to provide the support people need in their own homes. This will also help to prevent people getting stuck in hospital waiting for care in the community.”

The review also recommended:

“Focus on outcomes for service users, through, for example, developing quality standards and better measures of effectiveness. Councillors and managers need to be better informed about what works in order to make evidence-based decisions.”

For the senior manager in Social Services, a key concern was providing for older people’s needs through contracting relationships with the ‘independent sector,’ a term used to mean both voluntary and private provision of care. Her view was that the voluntary sector should be able to think more widely than statutory services about potential service developments, because of their closer contact with service users or

potential service users, and she would look to well-researched applications to make such a case.

### **5.1.5 Volunteer Recruitment and Active Citizenship**

Finding and holding on to volunteers to support services is a major issue for all NGOs. The day centre, for example, depended almost entirely on the services of volunteers, who were themselves older people. Though current recruitment was not a problem, fears were expressed about the future, however.

*“People’s attitudes are changing. Fewer people I think are inclined to want to volunteer and do things. Now maybe as society moves on things will change again, but we’ve never had a problem recruiting volunteers so far. Though most of our volunteers are by definition older people themselves. But we do sometimes ask ourselves in the fullness of time, is that source going to be there?”* (JM, Chief Executive)

Although not explicit in the individual studies, there is a developing societal discourse around ‘active citizenship’ and the contribution this can make to civil society, which is being encouraged by the Government. There is also, through the Home Office, a particular concern to encourage older volunteers who have both life and business experience to offer. One of the explicit aims of Age Concern is to involve older people in community life:

promotion of the role of older people as citizens, enabling them to influence decisions that affect them, and to contribute their experience and skills to their communities and to society as a whole. (Age Concern website)

At the younger age range, it is also noted that experience gained through volunteering can pave the way into employment, and the Benington Hospital volunteer scheme provided good evidence of that in terms of nurse recruitment.

## **5.2 University Perspectives**

### **5.2.1 Outreach and Mission**

For the senior academic manager interviewed at Liverpool Hope University College in relation to the Benington Hospital studies, the research relates to the four policy aims of higher education which Howard Newby, Chair of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has flagged up –

*“teaching, research, widening participation, working with the community ... The QAA (Quality Assurance Authority) asks for the relation between research and teaching to be explicit – but all four aims are interrelated.” (LG)*

Similarly, the Dean of the University of Liverpool involved with the Lakeview Hospital study remarked on what he termed ‘third arm’ activities, those relating to the university’s mission in outreach to the community, though these were felt to be not well established at the present.

“I think the University is ‘dipping its toes in’, the senior management team is committing itself to outreach, partly because money was on offer. It’s taken a long time to set up infrastructure for ‘third arm’ activities with outside organisations. Where the University hasn’t thought about this carefully, is whether there’s a range of activity beyond working with private industry. ‘Third arm’ type activity is still at a primitive stage, though there is grassroots activity at department level. But centrally directed activity lags behind.” (PB)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) uses the term ‘third leg’ for such outreach activity:

“A key role for universities and HE colleges, alongside the provision of teaching and research, is 'Third Leg' activity to meet the needs of business and the community, contributing to economic and social development both regionally and nationally.”

(<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/>)

At Wolverhampton University, the Dean also commented on the impact of Hefce funding for spreading the science shop / student link project throughout the University:

“Given that the University has now secured some funding from the [Higher Education] Active Community Fund, the intention is that what has been [in the faculty] will be much more widely implemented.” (RP)

### **5.2.2 Barriers and Benefits**

Links with the community were seen as important with benefits to students in terms of employable skills, but the barrier is one of resourcing.

“If you are going to do it as an academic tutor, and think it through and monitor it, then it’s time-consuming, if you already have a full teaching and admin. load – work placement modules are a lot of work ... It needs recognition from the people who make the decisions, that it’s worth doing.” (LG, Academic Manager)

There are a number of barriers to be overcome, because of the conflicting pressures on academic staff.

“University academics increasingly have conflicting demands on their time. They are a lot busier in teaching and assessment, and expected to produce more research on a regular basis. There are no tangible rewards associated with outreach, at least as far as promotion is concerned, for work with local communities. People ought to ask, what gives me job satisfaction? That might help. ... But people aren’t that relaxed working in universities these days, so won’t do outreach unless they feel very strongly about it, or unless they’re in an established position. I feel it should be part of our remit.” (PB)

Another senior academic manager noted that outreach to business and the community was supported by modest amounts of resource under initiatives promoted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2003) in conjunction with various government departments. These included the HEROBC (Higher Education Reach Out to Business and the Community) initiative, plus the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). But the resources were tight. He had no problem with science shop projects in general, but felt that because of issues around liability, universities were becoming more ‘risk averse.’

Similar constraints existed at Wolverhampton University, where the Student Link Co-ordinator believed that senior management approved of the student projects and their value to the community, but when it came to wider support, it was a different matter.

“We feed into the [University’s] mission, when we do that the University is very supportive of that. There’s a political answer and a more honest answer. Yes, we are being supported, there’s the Active Community Fund. On the downside, it’s all fine if I do it all, and it doesn’t impact on anyone else’s workload.” (PG, Student Link)

However, there were indications that the student research projects were impacting on the academic curriculum of teaching and learning.

“Yes, in two ways. We have those modules that students like, because they’re not in the classroom, but it has also impacted on some taught modules where they are looking at students going out and doing a mini-project as a case study.”

With origins in curriculum development, some projects at Student Link were supply-led rather than demand-driven, in the sense that students would pro-actively contact organisations to set up projects for themselves. This was considered by student supervisors to be a good thing, as it increased students’ own confidence and negotiating skills. It could also be seen as a response to lower institutional support for mediation and outreach. There is a possible danger in that some kinds of issues most attractive to social science students, for example, around domestic violence, result in

certain organisations feeling overwhelmed with offers of students coming in. Similar issues arose at Interchange, where it was felt important to be able to distinguish, both for students and for NGOs, the difference between student placements – predominantly as learning opportunities for students – and science shop projects with an applied research focus determined by the needs of the NGO.

### **5.2.3 *Developing a Tradition of Outreach***

At Liverpool University, a ‘traditional’ university, the Dean gave other instances of ‘science shop’ related activity, where over a period of years postgraduate students in Civic Design had provided a research input in to a local NGO, the Mersey Basin Campaign, aimed at cleaning up and improving water quality in the rivers in the region. This had come through the introduction into the curriculum of project work with outside organisations. There were a small number of departments which had an ‘applied’ outlook towards the community, though many did not have an applied tradition.

At Liverpool Hope, a smaller university college, with a community-related mission statement, a number of departments have forged links with local groups and organisations, for example, in drama and the arts. Similarly at Wolverhampton University, a ‘new’ university with a background as a polytechnic, there is a long tradition of applied knowledge and of student placements. The Student Link Co-ordinator knew of history students who did external projects with museums and National Trust (heritage conservation) properties. The Dean at Wolverhampton commented:

“I think that for this University, given its geographical position, given the manner in which it positions itself in relation to the community, given its access mission, such [Student Link] research and such activity must be of critical importance.” (RP)

Yet in none of these three very different institutions of higher education was there a coherent management policy towards engagement with NGOs or an understanding of science shops as a central part of their activity. There was no apparent overall mapping of departmental outreach activities, so that different activities, such as they were, existed in isolation. In fact, it was stated by one that the costs of mapping outreach might be prohibitive. However, all managers recognised that these issues were now on the agenda of government, and expressed a personal interest in developing them, and publicising staff expertise more visibly to external bodies.

#### **5.2.4 Science shops and volunteering in higher education**

A literature review of university-based volunteering (Ellis, 2003 forthcoming) notes that the current (New Labour) government has increased the level and intensity of government promotion of volunteering, which is linked to citizenship and employability, and to widening participation in higher education.

“The HEACF, part of the government’s Active Community fund, is a partnership initiative between the Higher Education Funding Council (HECF), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and the Home Office. £27 million has been made available for all English HEIs. [It has] the dual aims of creating 14,000 more volunteers among university students and staff by August 2004 and of establishing closer links between HEIs and communities...

However, as Hall, Hall and Lockley (2000) note, there is some contradiction between the move towards partnership working and community based learning and other trends in the higher education sector. For example, they contend that at the same time as government is talking about widening participation and encouraging active citizenship, there is also a trend towards decreasing student grants which means students have to work, increasing student numbers [in higher education] which make it hard to find vocational placements, and the Research Assessment Exercise and subject benchmarking which tend to reinforce closer disciplinary focus and discourage more vocational work with a lower theoretical content”.

It is unclear at present, whether the HEACF funding for volunteering will provide support for much science shop activity or whether the new science shop at Brunel will be an exception. Evidence so far appears to show that much of the funding has been channelled to teaching and learning units within universities, rather than to academic teaching departments (or staff) and that on the whole there is little application of this funding to curriculum based learning in the community. The emphasis on non-curriculum based volunteering may be worthy, but without being embedded in the curriculum, the fear is that the initiatives will be short term (the duration of the funding). The experience of science shops is that long term funding for development and staffing is essential if in-depth quality work in the community is to be achieved.

#### **5.2.5 Importance of Collaborative Research**

Much appreciation was expressed by NGO managers for the students’ input. Although in the case of Benington Hospital, the senior manager felt that the university had not shown much interest in the students’ achievements, “the work was not acknowledged by the universities or colleges – it was not high profile – and this was disappointing to

me ... the work was good, but the attitude seemed to be ‘So what?’” Collaborative research, then, should also involve recognition at a higher level within the academic setting – to match the acknowledgement it is receiving within the organisation at managerial level.

In each of the students’ cases, the report had achieved a high academic assessment, which contributed in part to their final degree result. The students had the satisfaction of knowing that their reports, unlike the alternative dissertation or taught module equivalents, were being taken seriously by the organisations and influencing future action, though there was no special recognition within the universities for their achievements. Nor, it might be added, was there any tangible recognition for the staff involved as supervisors.

### **5.2.6 *Applicability to Practice***

According to the senior hospital manager at Benington, collaborative research should aim to be “relevant and practical” because nursing research “needs to be transferable into practice if it is to be credible to practitioners.” There was recognition, from the start, that this research would also benefit students:

“I felt there were small areas of research – around volunteers and nurse retention – which students could tap into. This would be an opportunity for local colleges and universities to give students an opportunity to put theory into practice, to do what I did in my Masters – to collect information in a real organisation, and to present findings which were a surprise to them”. (TG)

All four projects at Benington were negotiated with a relevant manager, to provide answers to their research questions, and to provide information which would be applied to policy and practice. The needs of the students to have an appropriate amount of work for assessment, which could be researched in their time scales, were recognised, while the interest of the supervisors in publication (subject to consent) was also accepted. The research model of collaboration worked well, and it was interesting that a key issue emerging from the interviews was the positive response by the managers to having an outside / independent researcher to evaluate the services.

### **5.2.7 *Role of the External Researcher***

For both the day centre and befriending service, there was value in having an external researcher to look at the services, and in some cases to complement ongoing internal audit of services. An outside researcher, it was felt, would bring a different perspective. The manager at Lakeview put it this way:

“The University by definition from our point of view would not have an agenda. They’d have an overview. The overview would be much wider than our overview, because academically we believe they would be looking at things on a much wider scale.” (JM)

The Wolverhampton NGO management were already research minded. This NGO collaborates with the national Age Concern network on a research process, managed by the University of York, into service provision for older people – the findings of which are fed into policy recommendations to Government for service and pensions provision. The NGO has recently also collaborated with the local Primary Care Trust (a health service authority) in research contributing to the National Social Framework for Older People. Locally, for the last 7 years, Sociology and Social Policy students from the neighbouring university have conducted a range of external reviews of the organisation’s lunch clubs. This successful collaboration is a backdrop for the research with Student Link, where the mutual benefits of collaboration are recognised by the Chief Executive:

“part of the agenda is ours, and part of the agenda is theirs. That’s perfectly fair. There has to be a gain in both respects ...we gain from having a fresh view from people who have no axe to grind about what we do.” (GW)

Within the model of collaboration, it was typically the students who would suggest the research methods, with the input of their academic supervisors, which were then discussed with the organisation managers to ensure that the right questions were asked, and that they were asked in a manner appropriate to the organisation practitioners and service users.

### **5.2.8 Problems of Understanding the NGO Culture**

However, it was also noted that there were problems posed by having an external researcher who did not understand the system or the culture of the organisation. So, for example, at Benington Hospital it was stated that

“The advantages were they [students] were coming in clean and fresh, they had no allegiances or anything else, so that was useful. Disadvantages were I suppose ... and I wouldn’t call it a disadvantage, it was just a minor thing, the need to explain the culture, the different types of personality that are drawn into this work. Yes, I think that’s the only disadvantage” (JH)

“Yes, I felt it was really important because with [the student] not being from a hospital environment, I felt it was important that he understood the different cultures, and it was important for me to sort of explain how things were, and also to explain that staff within the NHS [National Health Service] are really quite defensive and they’re not the sort

that will say 'I need help' easily. So we needed to look at the way the staff are questioned, so it might be, 'Do you find yourself having difficulties sleeping?' rather than...[do you suffer from stress?]. Things had to be worded properly so it didn't look like a problem with them". (CT, Family Support Manager)

*At Lakeview the student researchers spent time in the day centre with service users before going on to interview them, and the student at the befriending service made regular weekly visits to the organisation to learn about the service and to make contact for interviews. Nevertheless, there were still things to learn by both parties. Student projects can be seen by the organisation as "a little naïve" so that the findings can be questioned:*

"We may feel that if they had more experience they wouldn't say it, but the fact that they have said it makes us feel 'Are we that right?' It can be challenging, I find it stimulating." (GW, NGO Manager)

### **5.2.9 Successful Collaboration**

Collaborative research, then, meant that the managers had to put time into working with the student, particularly in orienting them to the culture of the organisation. The Interchange Co-ordinator noted that projects such as at Benington Hospital went well when the NGO managers were clear about what was wanted from the project, and prepared to offer the students time and guidelines for the research, despite being overworked themselves.

## **5.3 Response to and Support for an Intermediary Organisation or Science Shop**

### **5.3.1 Role of the Science Shop**

Most of the participants interviewed felt there was a need for an intermediary organisation. Interchange had performed a useful role in ensuring that appropriate students had been involved, and sensitised to the needs of the NGO, through preparing them for the specific issues concerning the research placement. For Benington Hospital, the Interchange Co-ordinator had been able to explain to students what a hospital-based project would mean, and had clarified with the Volunteer Manager the specific qualities which would be helpful. The Co-ordinator had also been able to find students who were interested in health issues and who were considering the health service for a future career. One manager appreciated the way students had been selected.

*“Well I think there needs to be somebody because I don’t think anybody could just come into a hospital environment, I think they do need to be sensitive people, particularly if they’re going to be working with patients and relatives. I think it would be different if they were only working with the staff and personnel ... I think you’ve got to match the students to the placements and see what experiences they’ve got or what area they’d like to go into in the future. I think when you do that there’s more enthusiasm in the subject.”* (CT, Family Support Manager)

Students also found the Interchange role beneficial. One student mentioned that the reputation of Interchange was important in providing credibility with organisations, as well as ensuring that students were given support.

“...Interchange have a history of doing projects and producing good work, then, you know, when students come, [they can be told] this is the kind of thing you’ll be getting. I think the students really appreciate it because they’re not going in cold, they’re getting advice off people who have an expertise in research who they can learn off, and also, you know, debrief if needs be, because if a student has a problem with a project – who are they going to talk to? Who else are they going to talk to if it’s just two parties? So it’s good to have another organisation in the middle which can be a support if it’s needed. I think that an organisation like that is in place to serve the area, because there’s just nothing else like it.” (AK)

### **5.3.2 Science Shop as Contact Point**

However, the senior manager at Benington Hospital wondered if an intermediary organisation could be a barrier between hospital / university links, although this was based more on his experience of having to approach college nurse tutors directly about teaching, rather than on research projects. He did feel that there was not enough information disseminated from universities and colleges about what was available to the community, and he knew about the importance of approaching universities at the right time in the academic year, and “knowing the right person to speak to” – all needs which an intermediary science shop can address.

The issue of “knowing the right person to speak to” was particularly significant for the Lakeview study, where an approach from the NGO had ‘gone the rounds’ of the University before ending up with the Interchange Co-ordinator, who then placed the request on a list for students. This resulted in a suitable match – a sociology student who had nursing experience chose the project, in collaboration with another student who did have an interest in issues around aging.

With Student Link, however, the contact between the NGO and the university was more established, with a series of projects over several years. Expectations about what could be done in a project were well established, though the actual project with the befriending service arose out of a combination of the student's interest in and experience of problems of isolation in older people, and the specific opportunities arising from the need to evaluate a new service.

### **5.3.3 Science Shop as Repository of Knowledge**

A point made by the befriending service manager was that where an intermediary organisation, like Student Link or Interchange, had facilitated a number of research projects in similar areas, there was a background of knowledge to draw upon which went further than the immediate case.

"Where science shops go into other organisations they'll draw together a broad base of experience which will give them the intuition into what they're looking at, and this will feed into their reports...So if the science shop looks at a range, then their reports together will be a totality of experience, and we'll gain from that." (GW)

The Social Services manager in the Lakeview case also made it clear that they would respond positively to community based initiatives aimed at prevention, and there was a role for the transmission of findings from science shop research projects.

"I think we'd be very willing to respond because we've got a modernising agenda ... and we're very keen on social inclusion in the Department. ... we're not just about the heavy end of activity in terms of assistance to people, we're also about – should also be about the prevention agenda ... it would be a trick for us, in looking at the grants available and the funding available, to try to meet some of these ideas." (JO)

And the Dean at Wolverhampton explicitly cited knowledge transfer as one of the benefits of university-NGO cooperation.

"It really is at this point of, as it were, knowledge transfer and interchange. And the University can act, I think, most effectively in that field." (RP)

### **5.3.4 Removing Barriers for Smaller NGOs**

With other NGOs in the area, however, particularly the smaller ones, there was less confidence in making these links. The Student Link Co-ordinator stated:

"Organisations around the region are very keen to pose those kinds of [research] questions, but (a) they don't know how to, (b) they don't have much funding, and (c) they are reluctant to apply research methods to their own projects because of a lack of

confidence. If we had got something like a Research Shop, that would be very rewarding indeed, enhancing communication between community and university.” (PG)

The Interchange Co-ordinator spoke from experience about the intermediary role.

“I think it’s very important [to have a science shop] because it takes an awful lot of time and effort to actually set up the projects. It’s very time-consuming and the university or the supervisor doesn’t necessarily have that time to do all the preliminary work which can happen over a number of meetings, and a number of phone calls can take place before you actually get the grounds of the project together, so it’s good to have a separate science shop.” (SL)

The science shop has a role to play in encouraging NGOs to come to the university with their requests, and to develop a relationship with them.

“Sometimes the community groups, especially the smaller ones, may feel a bit threatened coming into a university campus, which seems awfully large, and knowing who the right person is to speak to about it to try and set up their research, so having that independent person, a named person who can set up all different kinds of research [is important]” (SL)

*This is echoed by the Student Link Co-ordinator at Wolverhampton, who saw the main role for the science shop to be:*

“Reaching out to the community and collaborating and working with the community. It offers the possibility of having a two-way communication with the community organisations, so they feel much more confident coming in to the university.” (PG)

## **5.4 Development of Relationship between the Community, NGOs and Academic Institutions**

### ***5.4.1 Knowledge Production and Appropriate Methods***

The projects all provided ways where the academic community could make a contribution to the knowledge requirements of the NGOs, and where the NGOs provided valuable learning experience for students. Interchange facilitated this relationship, which benefited all parties. Research is increasingly being seen as a requirement for providing evidence to assure the quality of service provision, and the projects were all based on recognised research methodology using systematic means for gaining information from relevant stakeholders and participants.

Qualitative research, in terms of semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary evidence, which was the methodology most used, is increasingly being recognised as a valuable way of collecting evidence in evaluation and nursing research. This was seen as providing the depth data and understanding of issues which managers required. For instance, one manager at Benington Hospital noted:

*“For me, you were just getting evidence, it wasn’t anecdotal stuff, I just felt it was important to get evidence. You can sort of collude with people and you can make your own assumptions, but it’s not black and white, it’s not evidence, it’s just.. .it’s important to get stuff to go on, proper evidence.”* (CT)

#### **5.4.2 Influencing Public Attitudes**

For the Chief Executive at the Midlands NGO, the potential impact of science shops in developing the public understanding of science was “enormous”.

“It can tell us things about ourselves which we don’t know...a view of ourselves, but maybe also where we sit in terms of the voluntary sector.” (GW)

He continued by explaining that voluntary sector organisations today are living in an increasingly commercial world, where funding is competitive. Accordingly, they are required to raise their profiles, to develop their “brand image”, and this means it is increasingly important to consider not just the internal view of organisation members, but also what other people think of the organisation in terms of “professionalism, relevance and whether or not we deliver.”

Similarly, the Social Services manager in the Lakeview case identified a role for science shops with the smaller voluntary sector NGOs in relation to advice about proper systems and management procedures, and identifying more precisely which service needs could be funded externally.

The Chief Executive at the Midland NGO continued by saying that to raise the profile of a charity which is not fashionable (such as the needs of older people), it was important to adopt a methodology so the public becomes more aware of the charity and what it does, and this requires collaboration rather than isolation. But raising the profile requires “substance, not hype or spin.” Working with the science shop is seen as one of the opportunities to let people know what the organisation does, and to use the science shop as a conduit to the academic world, which will also take an objective and broader view of the work.

Such a relationship is part of the increasing importance for NGOs’ survival. According to the same manager, the criteria for bidding for funds has moved in the last 5 years

from “partnership” bids to “consortium” bids (involving 3 or more members) so that science shop linkages are seen as a natural part of this development.

“A broad stake of money is available through regeneration funds – mainly European. This is not available for smaller organisations, so they need to work together with the statutory organisations – and the only satisfactory external monitoring from a European political view is an academic one.” (GM)

### **5.4.3 Universities’ Role in Community Development**

The Midlands manager also spoke of the changing nature of communities – losing their neighbourliness – and the emphasis in urban regeneration to think in terms of partnership with local voluntary and community agencies, local and regional government, and the private sector.

*“I think the university is the adhesion which could rebind us together – it works with Local Government, other statutory services like the Health Service, and it works with an extensive tranche of the voluntary sector, and it works with the physical sciences, and the commercial and manufacturing sector. It can give a snapshot of what we are and help us to devise a path as to what we want to be. The universities need to raise their profile, and do the PR the NGOs do.” (GM)*

Interestingly, the Dean at Liverpool University pointed to its involvement in local and regional regeneration as starting at a time when relations between the local and national government were at a very low ebb, and the University and the Churches (Anglican and Roman Catholic) offered an alternative source of cohesion, supported by a new incoming Vice-Chancellor [chief executive].

“The late 1980s was a turning point. ... It was a time in the city where the University could offer stability and a neutral ground, when local government was in disarray. There was a gap in strategic leadership on Merseyside, and the University led by developing ‘urban studies.’”

Similarly, the senior academic manager quoted instances where the University had helped local government to identify and bid for resources for enhancing the capacity of the local economy. While the Dean at Wolverhampton University identified community development as part of the intended work of the faculty:

*“The School [of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences] has a bid in for ESF [European Social Fund] provision, and if it were successful, the objective is to make a relationship between the University and the community in fields of training, research and citizenship ... ‘to enable the transfer of knowledge to*

*individuals who work with disadvantaged communities, and beneficiaries from disadvantaged communities themselves.” (RP)*

For the Interchange Co-ordinator, there was satisfaction in accomplishing this role of developing the links between university and community, and vice versa.

*“Actually going round and meeting all these different community groups, voluntary groups, large organisations, small organisations, and meeting people, that was a real positive bonus for me. I really enjoyed that aspect of the job. The variety of it as well with all the research being different ... and ironing out the problems as well.” (SL)*

Additionally, science shops provide an opportunity for staff to learn skills that can lead to further community regeneration work and professional development. For instance, all previous Interchange Co-ordinators have used their experience with science shops and with research and administration to move on to posts in the voluntary or statutory sectors with a community focus.

#### **5.4.4 Role of Academic Staff and Researchers**

All the research reported in these case studies was conducted by final year or postgraduate student researchers, who were supported by their academic supervisors on a regular basis. Most students had also successfully completed research methods modules prior to undertaking science shop research (this was a compulsory requirement for Interchange students). Quality assurance therefore came from the research being supervised by academic tutors with expertise in research, and conducted by students with research training whose work was being assessed. The students were doubly motivated - to do a good job for the NGO (with whom they had come to identify) and to do a good job for themselves, in terms of a high mark towards their degree.

NGO managers commented on the independence and critical awareness of student researchers, which was respected. It was recognised they had come into the work “with an academic and inquiring mind”. This could produce findings which were “uncomfortable, but if we’re fearful of that we shouldn’t be seeking an external review”. (GW)

The same manager also commented on the ability of external review to allow the voice of the service user to be heard, a voice which sometimes was ignored in the delivery of services.

“I’ve found we’re only scratching the surface – we need to go into the niches and crevices we’ve discovered [in service provision]. We can’t do it on our own. Interaction between social science research and service users is perhaps the one clarity that we need ... so that services are not developed at the expense of the things people actually value. It’s the way the voice of the user can be heard.” (GW)

It is not always possible to predict which students will produce the highest quality work, (although quality can also be an issue with paid research) but supervision provides confidence, and the research is conducted for “free” (expenses only) so that the only loss incurred by the NGO if the project does not turn out well, is likely to be the time invested in it. In the event, all case study projects were successful. However, during the same period, a further project was conducted at Benington Hospital by a postgraduate student into the disabled volunteers’ experience, which to date has not been completed, and the student has not graduated. Even in this situation, an interim report has been submitted and used, as the manager noted,

“I have been able to use A’s Report and it’s been passed on to a mental health charity, Mainstream ... to show what volunteers actually can do.” (TO, Volunteer Manager)

With Student Link at Wolverhampton there was a clear demarcation between the general advice and support provided by the Student Link Co-ordinator, and the specific guidance and supervision provided by the Departmental Co-ordinator. This was appropriate as students came from a fairly wide range of departments within the School, but it meant that intending students faced the requirement of finding an appropriate supervisor from their department if they wished to proceed with a Student Link project. With Interchange at Liverpool, a slightly different procedure has been followed. The Interchange Co-ordinator liaised with NGOs which requested projects, briefed the students and introduced them to the organisation. Once an initial interest had been shown, it was then left to the students’ supervisors (who were also Board Members of Interchange) to take over supervision and to support the students in their negotiation of the projects, and their subsequent completion.

## **5.5 Relationship with National Policy on Science and Society Research.**

### **5.5.1 Ethical Governance**

The national scandal (2000 – 2001) about the retention of children’s organs following post mortem examination (at Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, Liverpool and other children’s hospitals), has led to the establishment of a Retained Organs Commission

([www.nhs.uk/retainedorgans/default.htm](http://www.nhs.uk/retainedorgans/default.htm) ) and a considerable rethink by the UK Department of Health about a research governance framework, which would provide guidance about which health-related research projects should be permitted to proceed, and which would include ethical scrutiny ([www.doh.gov.uk/research/rd3/nhsrandd/researchgovernance/govhome.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/research/rd3/nhsrandd/researchgovernance/govhome.htm) ). Key issues being discussed are accountability, responsibility and the protection of staff, with a focus on research design, but with little agreement, so far, on ethics. The Alder Hey issue also impacted on the University, as it was a university teaching hospital, and the controversy made senior managers vividly aware of liabilities that might arise from research activity across the board.

Concern is being expressed by researchers that if the structure produces a proliferation of local research ethics committees, then there could be a lack of consistency in application, as well as a brake on potentially valuable research (Janet Lewis, paper to British Sociological Association/ Social Policy Association Joint Conference, Ethics and Research, Manchester, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2002). More stringent research governance also creates a climate of risk avoidance, where universities and individuals are less willing to engage in research or provide recommendations that may be subject to later challenge.

The Dean at Wolverhampton, for example, noted that:

“the University has, of recent years, insisted that all student projects of whatever kind, involving interaction with third parties are very carefully considered for their ethical implications, both in the conceptualisation and in their implementation.” (RP)

### **5.5.2 Research Ethics Committee Approval**

Within the case studies, those involving research in National Health Service facilities, even though not directly involving patients, required formal ethical approval. So both infection control projects at Benington Hospital encountered difficulties, when the criteria for vetting research for ethical approval changed as the Research and Development Committee in the Hospital responded to the more stringent guidelines being required by the Department of Health. In contrast, Lakeview Day Centre and the Midlands Befriending Service operated outside the NHS, and were not subjected to ethics committees – though questions of ethics, confidentiality of information, and so on were discussed with the organisations, and research was conducted in accordance with guidelines from the relevant professional body, the British Sociological Association ([www.britisoc.org.uk](http://www.britisoc.org.uk))

The Nurse Consultant at Benington, herself an active researcher, was able to take action to ensure the infection control projects proceeded, which involved her being named as the Principal Researcher. This meant that she had responsibilities for ensuring the research was conducted properly within the Trust. However, this structure also meant that there was potential for conflict if the academic supervisor were to give different guidance to the student. In one case, as this new ethical approval structure was evolving, a student did record that she felt there was a difference of emphasis in the approach taken by the Principal Researcher (at the Trust) and the academic supervisor which caused her some disquiet. In the event, all parties were able to work together effectively, but clearly in future, the negotiation of health-based research projects will have to take greater account of the roles of all parties involved, including supervisory and accountability roles. Also, more time will need to be allowed for what might become very demanding requirements of ethical review, and it is to be hoped that student projects will continue to be possible in the time scales which result.

The House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, Third Report, 23 February 2000 (page 27, State of the Art Report) noted that public confidence in scientific advice to Government was low. In Liverpool, public confidence in the local hospitals has been particularly shaken following the Alder Hey Children's Hospital scandal in the city, referred to above. Ethical issues and patient rights are therefore high on the agenda, along with public anxiety concerning the outbreaks of infection in hospitals, nationally as well as locally. (National Audit Office: 2000, House of Commons Public Accounts Committee 2000, Kmietowicz, 2000). The two projects which dealt with nosocomial infection were therefore researching an area of current scientific and political interest, where Benington Hospital has undertaken innovatory policies (for instance by appointing a Nurse Consultant for Infection Control). The research projects provided information and evidence which is groundbreaking and therefore publishable (hence two articles are expected in the British Journal of Infection Control in 2003).

### **5.5.3 Building Community through NGO Research**

The INTERACTS State of the Art Report (page 22) noted that combating social exclusion is often part of the agenda in university / community collaboration in the UK. Interestingly, a policy change on language here is becoming apparent, as the Social Services manager commented,

“We talk about social inclusion, not exclusion.” (JO)

The projects at Benington Hospital were all conducted via the hospital Volunteer Scheme, and like most volunteering projects, this scheme is based on awareness of current trends in social policy. The Volunteer Scheme is intended to increase quality

care of patients through the inclusion of a variety of people as volunteers. These volunteers include those who are often on the receiving end of care and are socially marginalized, such as disabled and older people. The Volunteer Scheme can be located within the social capital discourse (State of the Art Report page 22/ 23) – with the Manager specifically seeing the hospital as part of the neighbourhood community, and volunteering as a way of empowering local people, through providing skills and opportunities for social interaction.

“The hospital is the local community. Tapping into that community provides us with a vibrant workforce” (Terry Owen, *The Independent* on Sunday, 4 August 2002).

For the senior manager interviewed at Benington, the collaborative research of these four projects sits well with the current government strategy of relating hospitals to the communities around them, as embodied in the current NHS Plan (National Health Service, 2000, *The NHS Plan*). While for the senior academic manager in the university college most involved, although there were currently problems in funding a science shop, such collaborative research did demonstrate the commitment of the academic institution in forming links with the surrounding community, a commitment which is now regarded as an essential part of higher education in the UK.

This view connects with that of the Dean at Liverpool University, who thought that there was a role for science shops within the mission of the institution, but that it would be necessary to prioritise requests for research to those which offered the greatest potential for generalisable knowledge, particularly if academic staff were to be involved. “Some science shop work could be accommodated, but there may be an argument for saying that we should be selective about what we take on. To involve staff, it would need to lead to publication, though for lower level data collection, you could ask students to do that, I’ve learned that.” (PB)

As noted above, the funding body for higher education has since 2000 been actively pursuing through dedicated funding a strategic aim to

‘promote and support productive interaction between Higher Education (HE) and industry and commerce in order to encourage the transfer of knowledge and expertise and enhance the relevance of programmes of teaching and research to the needs of employers and the economy.’ (*Hefce, 2003*)

The manager at the Midlands Befriending Service commented on how present government policy is increasing the role of the voluntary sector, while also stressing evidence-based practice. These trends open up a role for science shop facilitation of research with NGOs. For the government recognises that

*“as the statutory sector reduces what it does, then the load comes on to the voluntary sector ... I think linked, connected, extended research across the sector with various client groups – age groups, rural and urban, deprived and other environments – must be the background against which the Government determines its future relationship with and policy for the voluntary sector”.* (GW)

For Universities and NGOs, the increased regionalisation of government throughout Europe is an important factor in establishing an effective research role for science shops. Champions of science shops would need to argue their case at the regional level as well as in individual institutions. The last word on this comes from an NGO manager:

*“If the science shop can frame itself and target itself towards key strategic aims of government, national and regional, then it can begin to do some very structured work rather than piecemeal work. It’s piecemeal at the moment, where people offer an opportunity for collaboration but it has the reputation now to start looking at a more structured approach which will be in its reports and the outcomes will be more relevant to the regionalisation of funding. So it ought to push itself to do research at the regional level.”* (GW)

## **5.6 Conclusions about the Effect of Science Shop Research**

### **5.6.1 Non-Governmental Organisations**

From the perspective of the NGOs, each had a need for research that was effectively answered by the student projects. As we have seen above, the research questions arose out of either a concern to add an external evaluation of service delivery to internal audit, or to research the effectiveness of new ways of working to address service issues.

The research questions were largely determined by the NGOs, for projects which were quite well structured, though the determination of research methods was mainly left to the student researchers in conjunction with their supervisors.

The existence of science shops or their equivalents meant that there was an organisational structure in place for linking across university and community, and an initial process of negotiation was evident in which each party could understand the requirements of the others, and the research questions could be operationalised in a student research project within the limits of student capability and academic requirements.

A central feature of the transformation of the research question by mediation was a continuing and close relationship between the NGO managers and the students, whereby assurance was given that the research questions were appropriate, and that the methods of research paid appropriate respect to those participating as stakeholders, practitioners, and service users. It was recognised that there were important ethical issues involved in how such people were engaged in the research, how the information was treated with confidentiality, and how the results were reported.

In each case, the results have been utilised by the client organisations, either internally within the organisation, or also externally through dissemination in related quarters. The proposed publication of the infection control studies in an international journal is somewhat unusual for student projects, but represents a genuine addition to knowledge that deserves wider dissemination.

Each of the case study reports has contributed to knowledge production relevant to general issues relating to the welfare of older people, for example, or the use of volunteers in an active society and the increase of social capital. Cumulatively they can have an impact on the wider social and political discourse in society regarding these topics.

### **5.6.2 *The Research Perspective***

Science shops are still relatively unknown in universities in the UK, though there is a considerable undercurrent of such activity – without the formal designation of a science shop – where individual departments and members of staff have a philosophy incorporating outreach to the community. There are indications that universities are increasingly thinking about outreach as an aspect of mission, though this starts from a low base, and is held in check by the many other priorities being placed on staff for their core activities of teaching and research. The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report), for example, promoted university links with external organisations.

However, university finances in general are under extensive pressure, which the government now accepts, as seen in the review of higher education funding published as a ‘white paper’ (consultation proposal) at the end of January 2003 (DfES, 2003). Senior managers focus on the ‘core’ business of teaching and research, and the ‘bottom line’ of financial management. They are unwilling to consider supporting community outreach unless a relevant income stream can be identified, and a strong case made for its value and benefits. In this respect, the Government white paper may be helpful as it includes a commitment to draw out a permanent stream of funding

under the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) to be worth “£90 million a year in 2005-06” (DfES, 2003)

The evidence from those acting as science shop staff or equivalents is that there is a complex job to be done in translating questions from outside organisations into a research perspective. Some larger NGOs are already adept at formulating research questions, though they may not have the resources to undertake research themselves or to commission funded research. Smaller NGOs are less able to formulate research questions, and may be hesitant about approaching universities or lacking knowledge in who to approach in the first place.

Nevertheless, the evidence of the case studies is that small scale evaluations and other research can answer the questions posed by NGOs, and that an external perspective, which is provided through collaboration, is both welcomed and beneficial.

With few exceptions, the outcome of these case studies has been a report aimed squarely at the client NGO, and contributing to ‘grey’ literature which may receive wide circulation within the organisation, and with its relevant partners, but does not achieve notice within the wider scientific community. Nevertheless, it is also clear that many NGOs are looking to university research to flag up that wider context in which their own activities are located, and that the cumulative impact of science shop work with different NGOs can be relevant and important and worth wider publication. Issues of the recruitment, training, satisfaction and retention of volunteers, within a society where volunteering is being promoted by government, but is actually static or even falling, is one such issue (D Scott et al, 2000).

Another conclusion would be that community concerns, through science shop projects, can find their way into academia, and provide both the practical examples to illustrate general social scientific discourse, as well as stimulating further research on contemporary issues facing the NGOs and the voluntary sector in general. There is evidence here of such research having an impact on the curriculum both at postgraduate and undergraduate levels (Hall & Hall, 2002).

### **5.6.3 *The Mediation Perspective***

At Wolverhampton, the project developed as an offshoot from an ongoing relationship between the university and the NGO; at Benington Hospital, the first project resulted from the Manager hearing about Interchange projects from a different NGO, and making a request for a project, which then led to further projects with the hospital; in

the third case, Lakeview, the request arrived 'out of the blue.' The mediation channels were different. But having an organisation structure to respond to requests is important, and completed projects create a reputation that can lead to further projects.

Improving science shop relations with NGOs requires developing marketing and publicity functions, to raise initial awareness of the possibilities of research, and then to manage demand – where effectively the service is free – through negotiation such that those research questions are taken on which will both increase the students' and the NGO's knowledge and provide results that can be used and taken through to action.

While the Social Services manager in the Lakeview case could see a potential role for a science shop in relation to social welfare organisations, it was clear that from her perspective only a strong partnership with local NGOs delivering on social inclusion was likely to attract funding from local government. Even here there were difficulties, the local authority had a big deficit in its overall budget, and funding would depend on identifying resources from dedicated streams of funding coming in to the council for social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal.

Mediation and marketing also needs to be directed towards university staff and students. For while those students who choose science shop projects find them interesting and confidence-building, and relevant to their future careers, they are still very much in a minority. Most teaching and learning is conducted in the traditional manner. Staff, even if they are sympathetic to the idea of community outreach, are put off by the lack of support for arranging projects, and the risk to their careers from engagement outside of mainstream academic research.

There are few rewards in academia for applied research with the community, as the system is geared heavily around a particular type of scientific publication, and the older universities in the UK have less of a tradition of outreach than the post-1992 universities (of which Wolverhampton and Liverpool Hope are examples). Most importantly, status and government funding for research have until now accrued mostly to the older universities, thus bolstering the traditional 'pure research' ethos of these institutions, and encouraging the newer universities to follow in this path. The Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) in British universities have prioritised papers in 'leading journals' as the main indicators of research excellence, and further encouraged this tradition.

Establishing science shops and community outreach means shifting the sights of university managers as part of the new discourse of 'third mission' activity in higher education. There is evidence that university managers increasingly accept that

teaching and learning must be joined by this third type of activity in order to justify public funding. But at present this third mission is almost exclusively dominated by the contribution of universities to scientific knowledge production on behalf of society. This is expressed within a business / innovation orientation whereby the scientific advances of academia are exploited commercially. Nevertheless, within the third mission there are other, less obviously commercial, undertones of civic responsibility, of taking up responsibilities for urban regeneration, for example, which will related more readily with science shops.

Recommendations for improvement lie in publicising the benefits of science shop work for NGOs and for the wider community, through case studies such as these; in accumulating systematic evidence across a variety of projects which bear on current issues in social science and social policy; and in latching on, opportunistically, to current political and educational discourses which favour third mission activity, while at the same time providing evidence that such activity is both possible and worthwhile.

## 5.7 References

Age Concern website, [www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageconcern/about.htm](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageconcern/about.htm)

Audit Commission and Social Services Inspectorate (2002) 'Social Services in Wirral are Improving, but There is Still Some Way to Go,' Joint Reviews Website, [www.joint-reviews.gov.uk/prs/prwirral.html](http://www.joint-reviews.gov.uk/prs/prwirral.html)

Department for Education and Science (2003) 'The Future of Higher Education', Cm5735, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hestrategy/pdfs/DfES-HigherEducation.pdf>

Department of Health Research Governance website, [www.doh.gov.uk/research/rd3/nhsrandd/researchgovernance/govhome.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/research/rd3/nhsrandd/researchgovernance/govhome.htm)

Ellis, Angela (2003, forthcoming) 'University Based Volunteering: A review of current literature', Institute of Volunteering Research, [www.ivr.org.uk](http://www.ivr.org.uk)

Hall, I & Hall, D (2002) 'Incorporating Change through Reflection' in R Macdonald & J Wisdom (eds) Academic and Educational Development: Research, Evaluation and Changing Practice in Higher Education, Kogan Page: London

Hall, D., Hall I., and Lockley, S (2000) Third Sector/University Partnership: Developing experiential research as community resource, paper presented to the ISTRR Fourth International Conference, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland July 5-8.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2003) Business and the Community, [www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout)

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2000) The Management and Control Of Hospital Acquired Infection in Acute NHS Trusts in England, Forty-Second Report, [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmpublicacc/306/30602.htm](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmpublicacc/306/30602.htm)

Kmietowicz Z (2000) 'Hospital infection rates in England out of control,' British Medical Journal, 320: 534 (26 February)

National Audit Office (2000) Briefing, The Management and Control Of Hospital Acquired Infection, [www.nao.gov.uk/guidance/chiefexec1c.htm](http://www.nao.gov.uk/guidance/chiefexec1c.htm)

National Health Service, 2000, The NHS Plan, [www.nhs.uk/nationalplan/execsum.htm](http://www.nhs.uk/nationalplan/execsum.htm)

Retained Organs Commission website, [www.nhs.uk/retainedorgans/default.htm](http://www.nhs.uk/retainedorgans/default.htm)

Terry Owen, 2002, Interview in The Independent on Sunday, 4 August

Scott, D, Alcock, P, Russell L, and Macmillan R (2000) *Moving pictures: Realities of voluntary action* (Bristol: The Policy Press and Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 INTERACTS – Questions for Case Studies / FINAL VERSION March 2002

#### 6.1.1 1<sup>st</sup> level Participants in Project

	<b>BACKGROUND</b>		
1	Briefly describe your organisation	Briefly describe the programme of study and institution (student or supervisor) Briefly describe your organisation (research worker)	Briefly describe your organisation
2	Is there any written information on your organisation you can let me have?	Do you know where I could find written information on your course of study?	Is there any written information on your organisation you can let me have?
3	Describe your own role in the organisation	(student / researcher) Describe how the research fitted in to your degree / role at the institution (supervisor) Describe your own role as supervisor for the research	Describe your own role in the organisation
	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>		
4	How would you (briefly) describe the research project?	How would you (briefly) describe the research project?	How would you (briefly) describe the research project?
5	What was/were the main research question(s)?	What was/were the main research question(s)?	What was/were the main research question(s)?
6	Did you have an input into the research methods used? If so, what input?	What was your input into the research methods used?	Did you have an input into the research methods used? If so, what input?
7	What were the main findings?	What were the main findings?	What were the main findings?
8	What were the main recommendations?	What were the main recommendations?	What were the main recommendations?

	<b>ORGANISATION OF THE PROJECT</b>		
9	Who initiated the project?	Who initiated the project?	Who initiated the project?
10	Did the project build on previous activities of your organisation? (Why did the project need to be done?)	Did the project build on previous activities of your organisation? (Why did the project need to be done?)	Did the project build on previous activities of your organisation? (Why did the project need to be done?)
11	How was the project planned or negotiated?	How was the project planned or negotiated?	How was the project planned or negotiated?
12	What are the main features you remember of the negotiations /	What are the main features you remember of the negotiations /	What are the main features you remember of the negotiations /

	planning? (Was it difficult to reach agreement?)	planning? (Was it difficult to reach agreement?)	planning? (Was it difficult to reach agreement?)
13	What time-frame did you agree on? (Any intermediate milestones?)	What time-frame did you agree on? (Any intermediate milestones?)	What time-frame did you agree on? (Any intermediate milestones?)
14	What was the budget of the project? (Who was finally responsible for the funding?)	What was the budget of the project? (Who was finally responsible for the funding?)	What was the budget of the project? (Who was finally responsible for the funding?)
15	What channels of communication were used? (meetings / phone / email)	What channels of communication were used? (meetings / phone / email)	What channels of communication were used? (meetings / phone / email)
16	How regular was the communication? (How easy or difficult was the communication?)	How regular was the communication? (How easy or difficult was the communication?)	How regular was the communication? (How easy or difficult was the communication?)
17	Was the project to be open-ended and exploratory, or structured and focused? (How did it turn out?)	Was the project to be open-ended and exploratory, or structured and focused? (How did it turn out?)	Was the project to be open-ended and exploratory, or structured and focused? (How did it turn out?)

18	What were your specific interests and expectations for the project?	What were your specific interests and expectations for the project?	What were your specific interests and expectations for the project?
19	How did the knowledge and experience of the different participants contribute to the project? (NGO members / public, student / researcher, supervisor, Science Shop)	How did the knowledge and experience of the different participants contribute to the project? (NGO members / public, student / researcher, supervisor, Science Shop)	How did the knowledge and experience of the different participants contribute to the project? (NGO members / public, student / researcher, supervisor, Science Shop)
	<b>PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
20	To what extent did the research actually fulfil the original objectives set by your organisation?	To what extent did the research actually fulfil the original objectives set by your organisation?	To what extent did the research actually fulfil the original objectives set by your organisation?
21	Were there any questions that did not get answered by the research?	Were there any questions that did not get answered by the research?	Were there any questions that did not get answered by the research?
22	How did the results get presented? (reports / oral presentations / press etc.) Who now has access to the results?	How did the results get presented? (reports / oral presentations / press etc.) Who now has access to the results?	How did the results get presented? (reports / oral presentations / press etc.) Who now has access to the results?
23	Are the findings available to the public? (Do you know where I can get hold of a copy / publication details?)	Are the findings available to the public? (Do you know where I can get hold of a copy / publication details?)	Are the findings available to the public? (Do you know where I can get hold of a copy / publication details?)
24	Have you used, or will you be using, the research?	Have you used, or will you be using, the research?	Have you used, or will you be using, the research?

	(specify, internal to the organisation, external, direct, indirect) e.g. improve service provision, as evidence of outcomes for own funding, raise awareness generally, answer specific questions, put pressure on other agencies	e.g. career, publication, degree, curriculum development	(specify, internal to the organisation, external, direct, indirect) e.g. promote science shop, raise public awareness of an issue, get other projects, as evidence of outcomes for own funding
--	--	--	---

25	How successful has this use been?	How successful has this use been?	How successful has this use been?
26	What accounted for the success? (What hindered you achieving success?)	What accounted for the success? (What hindered you achieving success?)	What accounted for the success? (What hindered you achieving success?)
	<b>POLICY</b>		
27	Has there been any long term benefit from the project for your organisation? (How was this long term benefit achieved?)	Has there been any long term benefit from the project for your career / research interests? (How was this long term benefit achieved?)	Has there been any long term benefit from the project for your organisation / research interests? (How was this long term benefit achieved?)
28	How does the project relate to the wider objectives of your organisation?	How does the project relate to the wider objectives of your organisation?	How does the project relate to the wider objectives of your organisation?
29	Has this project led to further projects with Science Shops or related agencies?	(supervisor / research worker) Has this project led to further projects with the same or similar organisations?	Has this project led to further projects with the same or similar organisations?
30	What are the advantages and disadvantages of having someone from outside the organisation investigating the issue you have raised?	What are the advantages and disadvantages of having someone from outside the organisation investigating the issue you have raised?	What are the advantages and disadvantages of having someone from outside the organisation investigating the issue you have raised?
31	What, if anything, was the added value from cooperation with a science shop / intermediary agency rather than directly with a university or research organisation?	What, if anything, was the added value from cooperation with a science shop / intermediary agency rather than directly with a university or research organisation?	What, if anything, was the added value from cooperation with a science shop / intermediary agency rather than directly with a university or research organisation?

	<b>SUMMARY</b>		
32	Can you summarise the most positive aspects of the project	Can you summarise the most positive aspects of the project	Can you summarise the most positive aspects of the project
33	Can you detail any problems or barriers which were encountered (e.g. conflicts, uncertainties, relationships)	Can you detail any problems or barriers which were encountered (e.g. conflicts, uncertainties, relationships)	Can you detail any problems or barriers which were encountered (e.g. conflicts, uncertainties, relationships)
34	(If problem mentioned) How did you deal with the problem?	(If problem mentioned) How did you deal with the problem?	(If problem mentioned) How did you deal with the problem?

35	If you could do it again, would you do the project the same way or differently?	If you could do it again, would you do the project the same way or differently?	If you could do it again, would you do the project the same way or differently?
36	What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of (social) scientific research being applied to tackle issues in the community?	What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of (social) scientific research being applied to tackle issues in the community?	What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of (social) scientific research being applied to tackle issues in the community?
	Thank you very much for your cooperation.		

### 6.1.2 2nd level Participants in Project

	<b>BACKGROUND</b>		
1	Please describe your own role in the organisation	Please describe your own role in the organisation	Please describe your own role in the organisation
2	How much collaborative research with Science Shops goes on in your organisation / consortium?	How much collaborative research with local NGOs goes on with Science Shops in your university?	How much collaborative research with local NGOs goes on in your university / city with Science Shops?
3	And how much collaborative research with universities not involving Science Shops?	And how much collaborative research with NGOs not involving Science Shops?	And how much collaborative research with NGOs not involving Science Shops?
4	Can you give me an example of Science Shop research?	Can you give me an example of Science Shop research?	Can you give me an example of Science Shop research?
5	Can you give me an example that did not involve a Science Shop?	Can you give me an example that did not involve a Science Shop?	Can you give me an example that did not involve a Science Shop?
6	What comparisons would you draw between Science Shop and non-Science Shop research?	What comparisons would you draw between Science Shop and non-Science Shop research?	What comparisons would you draw between Science Shop and non-Science Shop research?
7	Have you heard of the (case study project)? If so, what do you think of it? (positive outcomes? problems or negative outcomes?)	Have you heard of the (case study project)? If so, what do you think of it? (positive outcomes? problems or negative outcomes?)	Have you heard of the (case study project)? If so, what do you think of it? (positive outcomes? problems or negative outcomes?)
	<b>SCIENCE SHOPS</b>		
8	How much do you know about Science Shops, here and in other countries?	How much do you know about Science Shops, here and in other countries?	How much do you know about Science Shops, here and in other countries?
9	What do you see as the most important features of Science Shop research?	What do you see as the most important features of Science Shop research?	What do you see as the most important features of Science Shop research?
10	Are there any negative features for you of Science Shop research?	Are there any negative features for you of Science Shop research?	Are there any negative features for you of Science Shop research?
	<b>SCIENCE SHOPS EVALUATION</b>		
11	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for your organisation?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for your university?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for your university / city?
12	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for improving the public understanding of scientific knowledge (including social science)?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for improving the public understanding of scientific knowledge (including social science)?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for improving the public understanding of scientific knowledge (including social science)?
13	What other mediation procedures do you think are	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for improving	What other mediation procedures do you think are

	important for improving the public understanding of scientific knowledge?	the public understanding of scientific knowledge?	important for improving the public understanding of scientific knowledge?
14	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for the development of national science policy (including social science policy)?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for the development of national science policy (including social science policy)?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for the development of national science policy (including social science policy)?
15	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for allowing public input into the development of national science policy?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for allowing public input into the development of national science policy?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for allowing public input into the development of national science policy?
16	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for building capacity in civil society / empowering NGOs?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for the building of capacity in / empowering NGOs?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for the building of capacity in / empowering NGOs?
17	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for building capacity in civil society / empowering NGOs?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for building capacity in civil society / empowering NGOs?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for building capacity in civil society / empowering NGOs?
18	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for developing relations between universities and the community?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for developing relations between universities and the community?	How important is Science Shop activity / community based research for developing relations between universities and the community?
19	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for developing relations between universities and the community?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for developing relations between universities and the community?	What other mediation procedures do you think are important for developing relations between universities and the community?
	<b>FUTURE OF SCIENCE SHOPS</b>		
20	Should Science Shop work be developed further? How do you think this work could be developed?	Should Science Shop work be developed further? How do you think this work could be developed?	Should Science Shop work be developed further? How do you think this work could be developed?
21	What are the problems or barriers to its development? (specify: in NGOs, universities, science shops, financial, administrative, political etc.)	What are the problems or barriers to its development? (specify: in NGOs, universities, science shops, financial, administrative, political etc.)	What are the problems or barriers to its development? (specify: in NGOs, universities, science shops, financial, administrative, political etc.)
22	What changes would be necessary to encourage more organisations to take part in Science Shop activity /	What changes would be necessary to encourage more universities to take part in Science Shop activity / community based research?	What changes would be necessary to encourage more NGOs and universities to take part in Science Shop activity /

	community based research?		community based research?
23	How do you see Science Shop activity / community based research relating to Research and Technology policy in this country? And in Europe as a whole?	How do you see Science Shop activity / community based research relating to Research and Technology policy in this country? And in Europe as a whole?	How do you see Science Shop activity / community based research relating to Research and Technology policy in this country? And in Europe as a whole?
24	Do you have any other suggestions about how the concerns of civil society could be reflected in Research and Technology policy?	Do you have any other suggestions about how the concerns of civil society could be reflected in Research and Technology policy?	Do you have any other suggestions about how the concerns of civil society could be reflected in Research and Technology policy?
25	Do you think Science Shop activity is relevant to any other current policies affecting the NGO sector?	Do you think Science Shop activity is relevant to any other current policies affecting universities?	Do you think Science Shop activity is relevant to any other current policies affecting the NGO sector or universities?
	<b>FINALE</b>		
26	Would you like to be kept informed about the INTERACTS project as it develops, and to be involved further in any way?	Would you like to be kept informed about the INTERACTS project as it develops, and to be involved further in any way?	Would you like to be kept informed about the INTERACTS project as it develops, and to be involved further in any way?
	Thank you very much for your cooperation.		