Reviewer's report

Title: 'Reaching the Hard to Reach' - Lessons learned from the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector)

Version: 5 Date: 15 September 2009

Reviewer: Jane South

Reviewer's report:

Overall the central themes of the paper are much clearer and link to the study objectives. In relation to the major/minor revisions indicated on the previous submission:

1. The abstract does summarise findings satisfactorily and therefore will be of more help to readers. One minor point is that oddly the emerging themes on definitions (unengaged – non users; hard to reach from a service stance; and the difficulties of definition) are still not reflected here.

2. Reference is made to academic literature on the VCS and while the paper does not really provide any critical discussion of the nature of VCS in relation to hard-to-reach groups, there is some discussion of service issues and the conclusion now highlights the key points both in terms of VCS and health service provision.

3. The presentation of results is satisfactory and the authors are clear that anonymity is not compromised. The inclusion of more discursive elements do help to draw out the central themes.

Minor essential revisions

Following editing, there are a number of punctuation errors including missing full stops and inconsistent punctuation for introducing quotations.

Page 10 - Last para replace 'were' with 'was'.
Page 14, Line 6 'may be'
Page 27 Line 11 –should be 'engaging'

All references will need to comply with author guidelines, particularly with referencing URLs.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests