

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT SUMMARY



Volunteer *Centres*

Hertfordshire

March 2010

IMPACT ASSESSMENT – February/March 2010

Volunteer Centres in Hertfordshire conducted an extensive impact assessment exercise in February / March 2010.

The Centres also collected information as part of an internal survey. This was used to assess the changes that had taken place within the Centres as a result of the ChangeUp and Local Area Agreement initiatives. All 10 agencies completed the survey.

Volunteering England's Impact Assessment Toolkit for Volunteer Development Agencies was used as a basis for the surveys which was distributed to organisations and volunteers who had used Volunteer Centres services in the last 18 months. Each Volunteer Centre was responsible for contacting organisations and volunteers in their district. Use was made of Survey Monkey to collect and analyse results.

A total of 733 volunteers and 127 organisations Hertfordshire responded to the questionnaires.

The results from the Hertfordshire-wide impact assessment exercise have been filtered to give each Centre access to their own results for future planning at a local district level and the Volunteer Centres in Hertfordshire network will use the results to plan future joint work.

There is a wealth of valuable data in these surveys and it will take some time to fully take on board the views of our "customers". We have however incorporated the key issues in the Volunteering Herts Action Plan 2010 – 2014.

This document has the key results from the 3 surveys. The links below can be used to access the full survey results in Survey Monkey.

Volunteer Centres – internal survey

Pages 2 - 5

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=vhFSa2vOLtu26fC7zY1SohVSZ_2fQvAoxxMU_2bVqeB9uwM_3d

Volunteers survey

Pages 6 - 9

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=5rcl_2b_2fs3IfEKTQJL6Fol0BqZWpBDGIInnGxSQy6KAJA_3d

Organisations survey

Pages 10 - 20

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=sV991vZ3y7qhNq8E9jOVaW5jqwlologT7qBZhZsYUqc_3d

VOLUNTEER CENTRES HERTFORDSHIRE – INTERNAL SURVEY FEBRUARY 2010

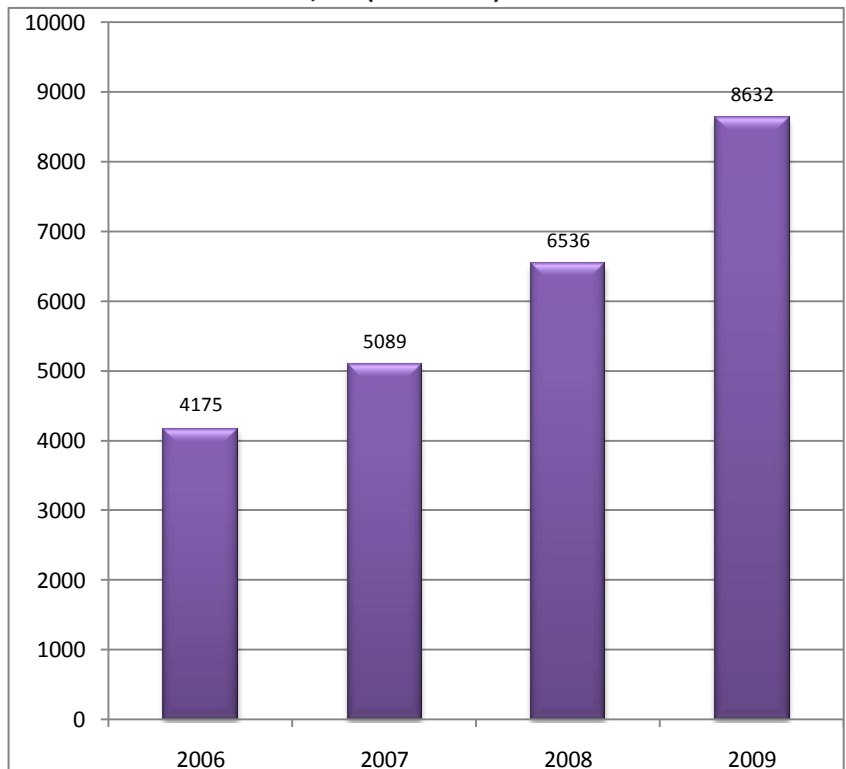
Brokerage statistics - totals

- 32% increase in 2009
- 28% increase in 2008
- 22% increase in 2007

Volunteer Centres Hertfordshire ran a very successful recruitment campaign in 2007 as part of the work around the Local Area Agreement. (NI.6 Increase participation in Volunteering)

Valuing Volunteers in Hertfordshire was the strap line adopted by many agencies throughout the county.

Volunteer recruitment
2009 total = 8,632 (10 Centres)

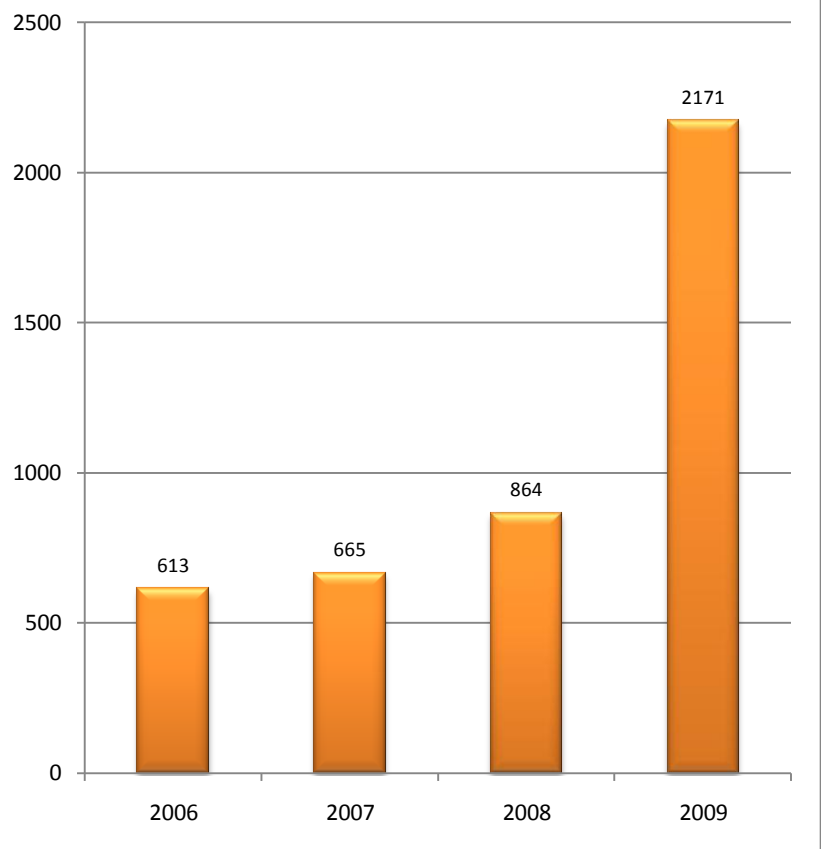


Brokerage statistics - Unemployed

The recession has had a huge effect on the numbers of people wanting to volunteer, with over 2,000 people seeking out Volunteer Centre services in 2009.

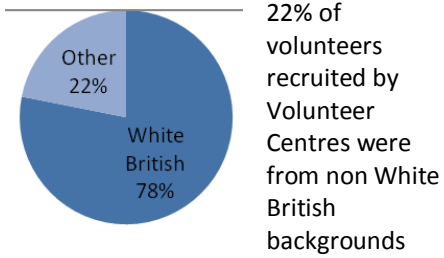
- 151% increase in 2009
- 30% increase in 2008
- 8% increase in 2007

Many of the people coming forward to volunteer have no experience, or understanding, of what volunteering is all about. The use of introductory workshops has become an important service offered by Volunteer Centres. Countywide funding supported this development in 2009. The Centres also worked with JobCentre Plus on the DWP Brokerage scheme. It is anticipated that unemployment figures will remain high for at least the next 18 months.

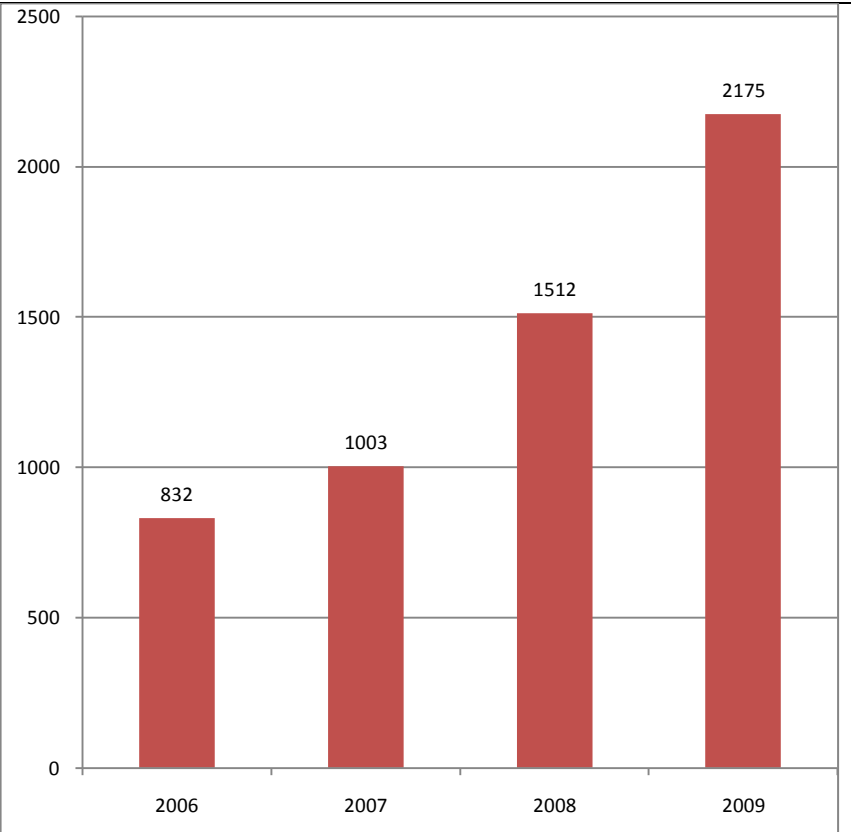


Brokerage statistics - minority ethnic groups

- 44% increase in 2009
- 51% increase in 2008
- 21% increase in 2007



% of people from ethnic minority groups in Hertfordshire is approximately 9%

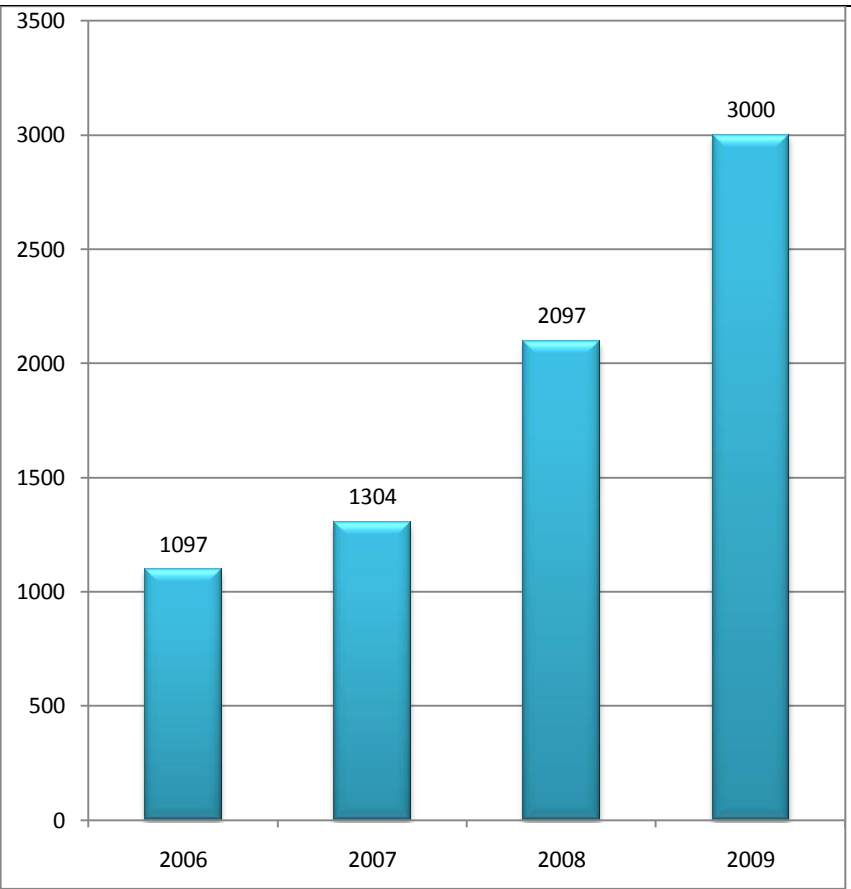


Brokerage statistics – young people

- 19% increase in 2007
- 61% increase in 2008
- 43% increase in 2009

For the majority of Volunteer Centres in Hertfordshire the 16 – 25 year old age group represents the largest single age group using their services.

The introduction of vinvolved in 2008 will account for some of the increase although when young volunteers responded to our survey only 42% had been contacted by the vinvolved team.



VOLUNTEER CENTRES IN HERTFORDSHIRE – SUSTAINABILITY

- Hertfordshire has 9 Volunteer Centres (VCQA) plus 1 Volunteer Bureau (Welwyn Hatfield)
- 7 of the Volunteer Centres are integrated with Councils for Voluntary Service
- 3 are independent charities
- Of the 7 integrated Volunteer Centres, 4 have a VC Champion on their Trustee Board, 3 don't. (This seems to account for many of the sustainability issues).
- Volunteer Centre Broxbourne has extended its geographical coverage into East Herts in the last 3 years. In all others the districts covered have remained the same.
- The Volunteer Centres Herts network has 6 full time staff, 19 part time and 33 volunteers engaged in day to day service delivery. (Figure does not include trustees).
- 248 hours of volunteer time is given to Volunteer Centre services each week – mainly on brokerage and marketing tasks. Specialist volunteers help with web design, photography etc. in some Centres. Taking just the minimum wage this equates to nearly £70,000 per year.
- All Volunteer Centres report a change in the way they operate with more emphasis on brokerage to meet the increase in recruitment. All have adopted modern technology to meet some of the demand on services, but all report less time available to devote to the other core services. Even the brokerage service has suffered with increased demand – there is less time for “follow up” which comes out of the Volunteers Survey (below).
- 2,700 organisations (voluntary, community and statutory volunteer involving agencies) are registered with Volunteer Centres Hertfordshire
- 2,692 “live” voluntary opportunities were being advertised by the Centres at the time of the survey in February 2010.
- Funding is a real issue for Volunteer Centres. A variety of funders currently support Volunteer Centres but the support is inconsistent and patchy to say the least
- 3 of the Centres reported receiving no funding from their district councils: Welwyn Hatfield, Watford and Hertsmere. Levels of funding from district councils to the other 7 ranged from £5,000 to £57,000.
- Hertfordshire County Council provided funding for 5 Centres with amounts ranging from £832 to £35,000.
- Primary Care Trusts have no funding relationship with Volunteer Centres in Hertfordshire.
- Where Volunteer Centres have a reasonable level of core funding they are able to access other funding e.g. Lottery, LSC, ESF and Charitable Trusts.
- 3 of the Volunteer Centres face a very uncertain future and the others have no guarantees of sustainable funding beyond 2011.

VOLUNTEERS SURVEY – FEBRUARY 2010

Volunteers

733 volunteers responded to the survey.

All Volunteer Centres were represented in the results.

The respondents were representative of the volunteers recruited through Herts Volunteer Centres:-

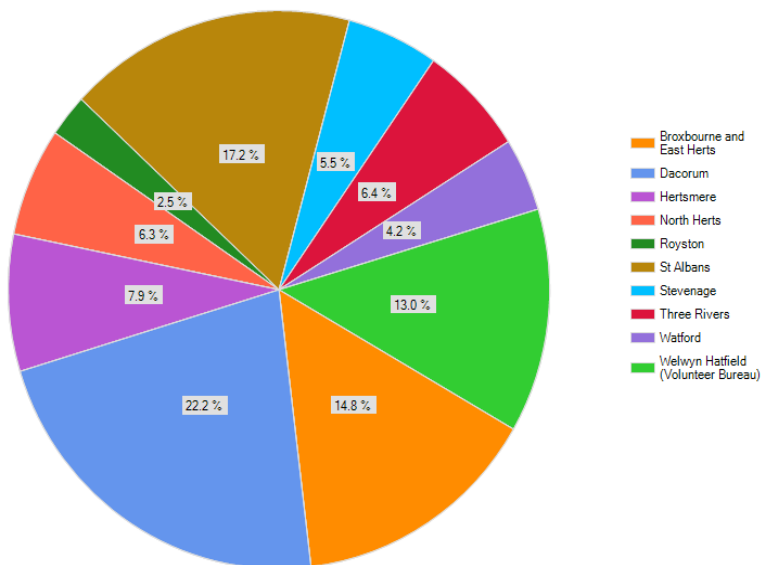
30% Male
70% Female

Disability: 10% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled in some respect

Ethnic background: 75% were White British which is representative of people using Volunteer Centre services.

All age groups were represented with between 6 – 13% in each age band.

Which Volunteer Centre did you contact to find out about volunteering?



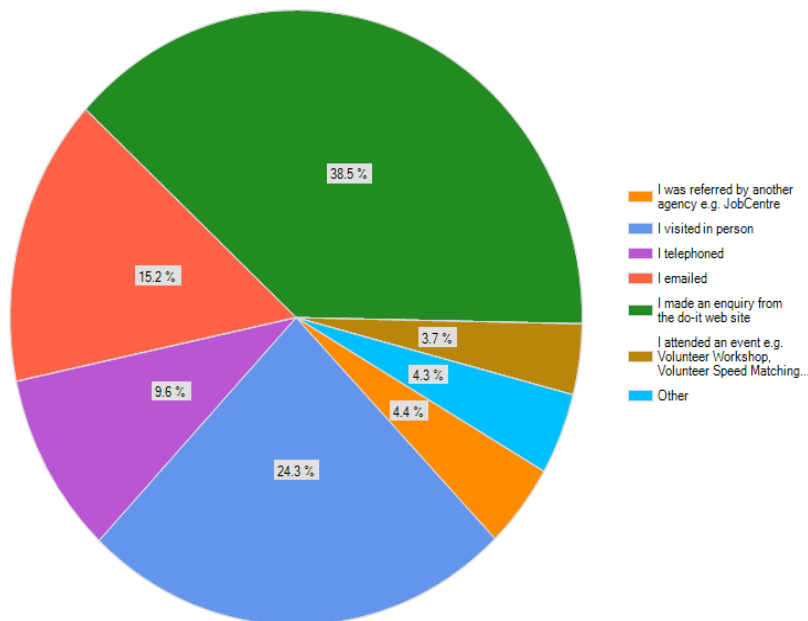
Making contact with a Volunteer Centre.

38.5% of respondents used the do-it website to access volunteering opportunities, whilst 24.5% visited in person and 15.2% telephoned.

The use of modern technology has enabled the Centres to work with more than double the number of enquiries compared with 2005 when a previous countywide survey was completed as part of ChangeUp.

236 different organisations and over 400 different voluntary roles were mentioned in volunteers responses.

How did you first make contact with the Volunteer Centre?

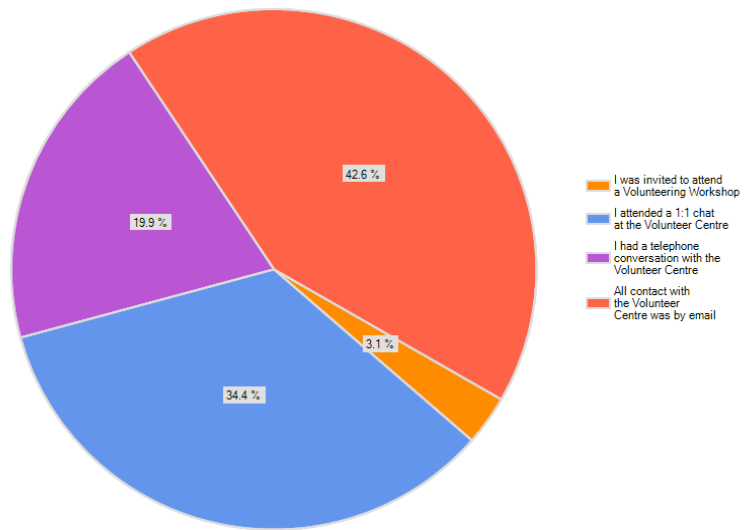


Dealing with enquiries

Again using the Internet and email enabled us deal with an evergrowing number of enquiries. Still 34.4% attended Centres for 1:1 chats to help them find their ideal voluntary opportunity.

The use of workshops to introduce volunteering to people who may never have volunteered before is a growing activity – particularly in light of increasing numbers of unemployed volunteers

How was your enquiry followed up?



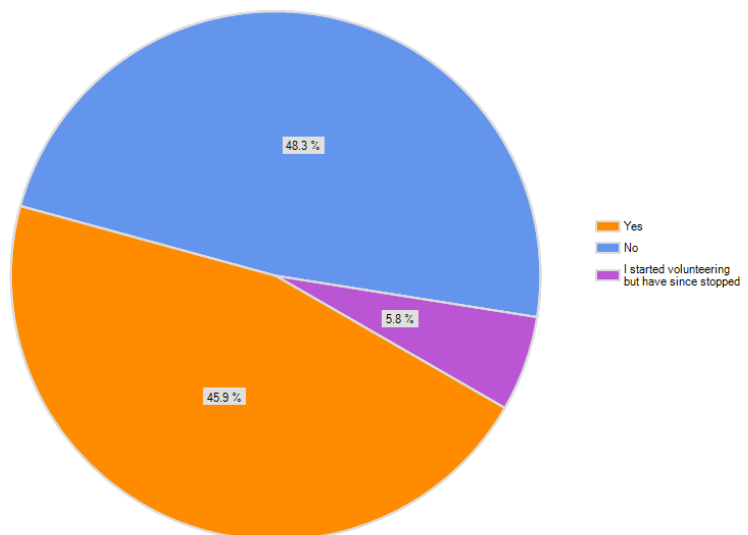
Converting enquiries to volunteer placements

Results varied across the 10 Volunteer Centres. This was a reflection on current funding, resources and priorities.

For example: VC Broxbourne and East Herts is currently focussing on training to get people back into work, hence their relatively low conversion rate. Other lower rates are explained by limited resources / restricted opening hours.

Once recruited, 81% of volunteers help out once or more each week.

Did you start volunteering after contacting the Volunteer Centre?



Did you volunteer as a result of your visit to a Volunteer Centre? COMPARING ACROSS VOLUNTEER CENTRES IN HERTS:-

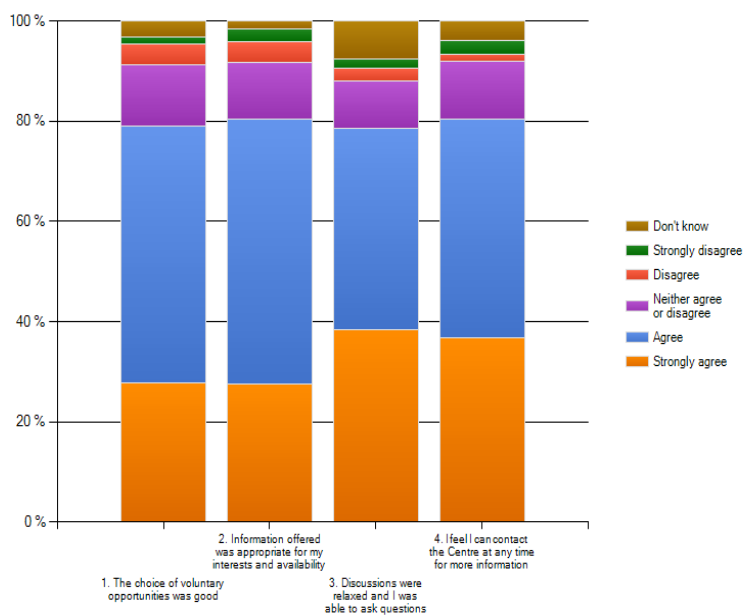
	Yes	Yes but I've since stopped	No	Yes including now stopped	Number of respondents
Broxbourne & East Herts	31.00	8.00	61.00	39.00	108
Dacorum	65.60	8.40	26.00	74.00	162
Hertsmere	30.80	11.50	57.70	42.30	58
North Herts	37.20	7.00	55.80	44.20	46
Royston	58.80	5.90	35.30	64.70	18
St Albans	46.70	4.20	49.20	50.90	126
Stevenage	37.50	2.50	60.00	40.00	40
Three Rivers	71.10	2.20	26.70	73.30	47
Watford	48.30	0.00	51.70	48.30	31
Welwyn Hatfield	27.90	2.30	69.80	30.20	95

Positive comments included:-

- The staff and volunteer helpers were very polite and knowledgeable
- Quick to reply and lots of opportunities offered
- very helpful and friendly staff
- very informative
- No problems, all very easy and friendly

There were 49 other similar positive comments.

How well does the Volunteer Centre help people who want to volunteer?



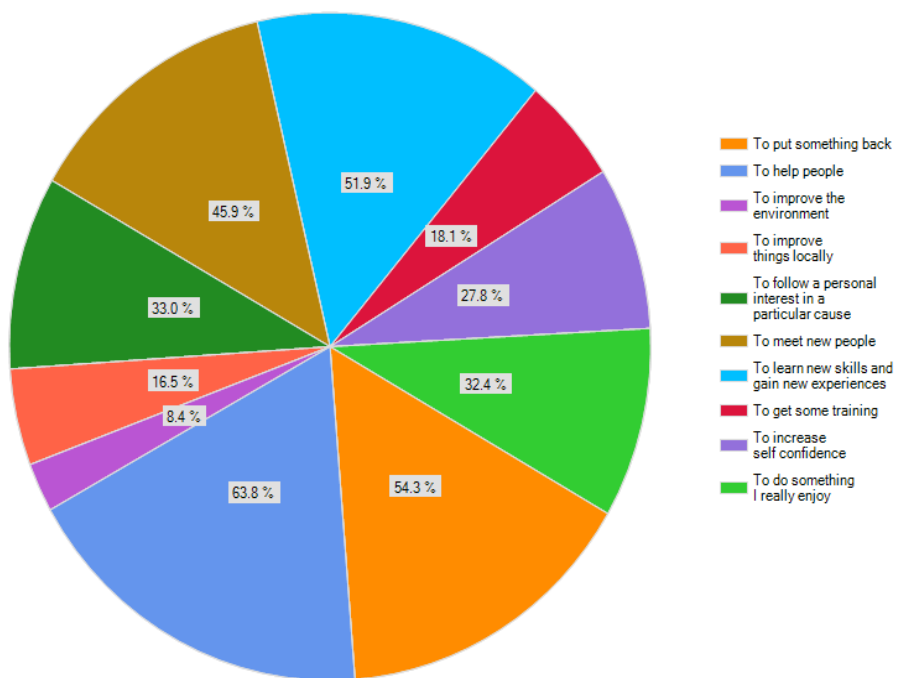
Motivation for volunteering

Understanding people’s motivation for volunteering is important and volunteers get the best placement results when motivations are met.

Although website referrals are becoming more common, Centres to realise that 1:1 chats are more likely to achieve a better understanding of volunteer’s motivation for volunteering. This is especially true for people with some disadvantage or extra support need.

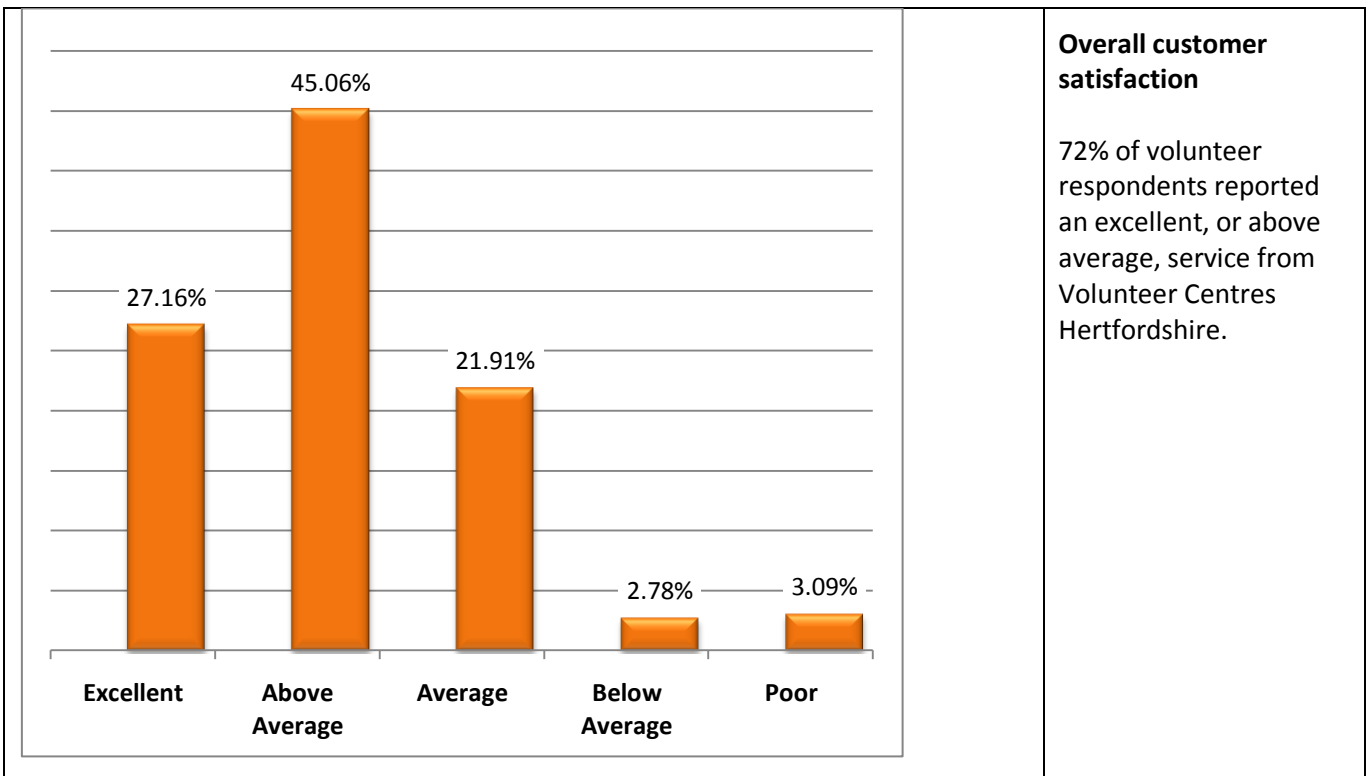
So although web referrals are becoming increasingly important in delivering the brokerage service, IT can never entirely replace the valued personal service offered by Volunteer Centres.

What reasons did you have for volunteering? What motivated you?



“Whilst websites help thousands of people find the volunteering opportunities they want, expert face-to-face support through local Volunteer Centres is still needed - especially to help people who aren’t familiar with how to volunteer and the types of opportunities available”

Volunteering England



LEARNING FROM THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT – VOLUNTEERS

The majority of volunteers were happy with the service they received from Volunteer Centres in Hertfordshire.

BUT ... negative comments included those from people who:-

1. had not been contacted by the organisation they chose to help
2. had not been followed up by the Volunteer Centre
3. had to wait up to 3 weeks for an appointment with a Volunteer Centre
4. had registered online and then heard nothing

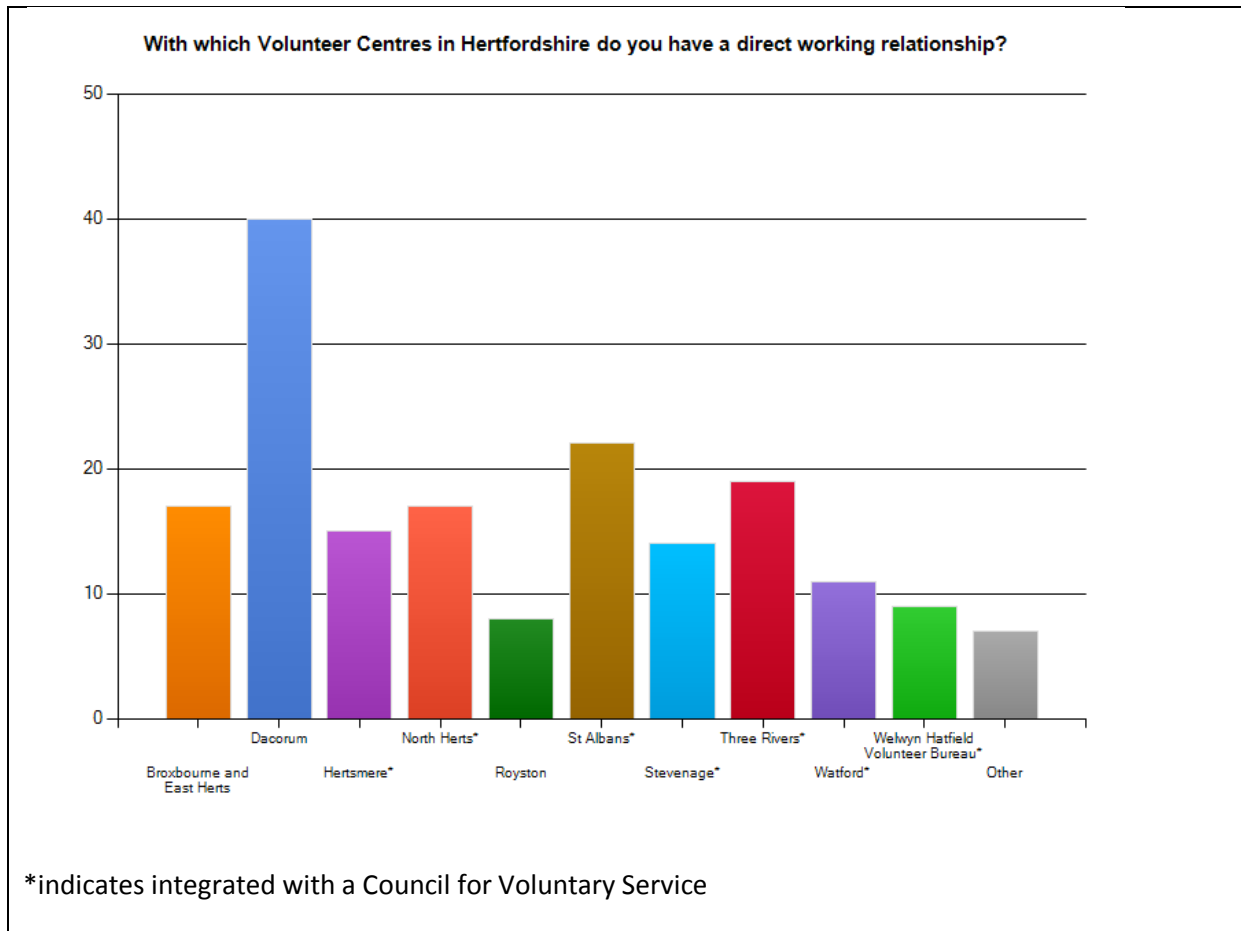
Many comments were received about the lack of take up of volunteer help by volunteer involving agencies. This highlights the need for more activity from the Centres in promoting Good Practice in volunteer management. This will be a key area for development if funding can be secured.

For comments relating to the Volunteer Centre service itself, most were resource linked. Volunteer Centres with 3 or 4 hours a week opening time cannot keep up with the level of enquiries currently being received. This is a funding issue and representation has been made to statutory funders to this effect.

There is concern that the potential legacy of volunteering which could come as a result of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games will be hard to deliver in Hertfordshire with the current funding structure. Volunteering is being highlighted as a key priority in the Herts Ready for Winners Action Plan. Having a strong sustainable volunteering infrastructure to support the legacy will be an aim.

VOLUNTEER CENTRES HERTS – IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ORGANISATIONS

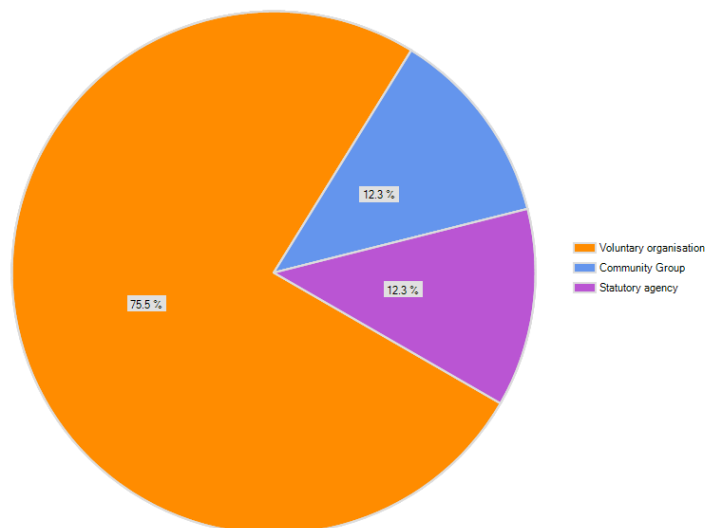
There were 127 responses from organisations



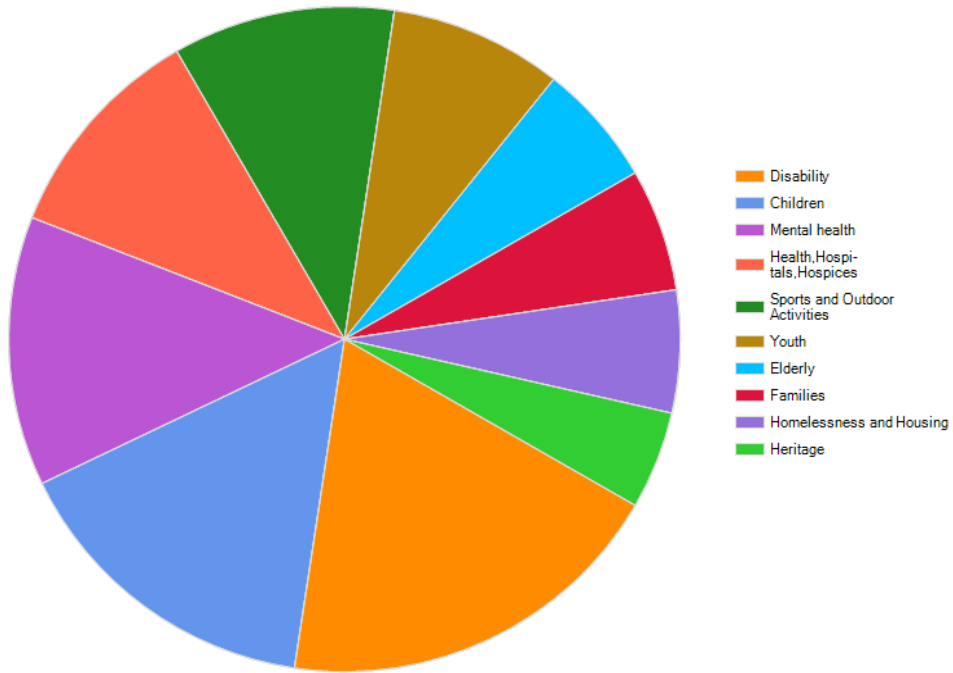
Make up of organisations responding to the survey.

The respondents were representative of the organisations registered with Volunteer Centres in Herts.

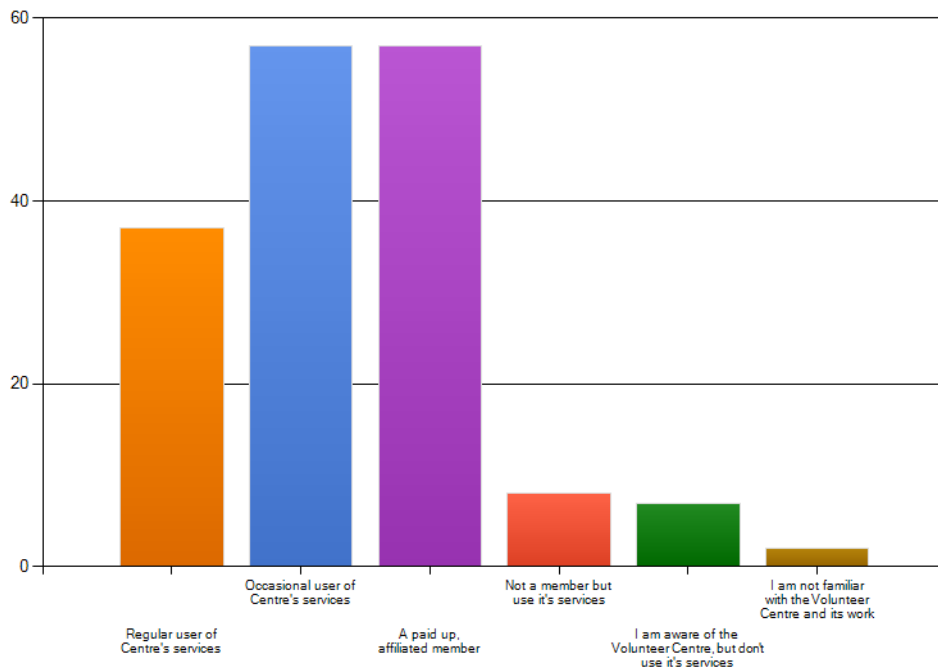
- 76% Voluntary organisations
- 12.3% Community agencies
- 12.3% Statutory agencies



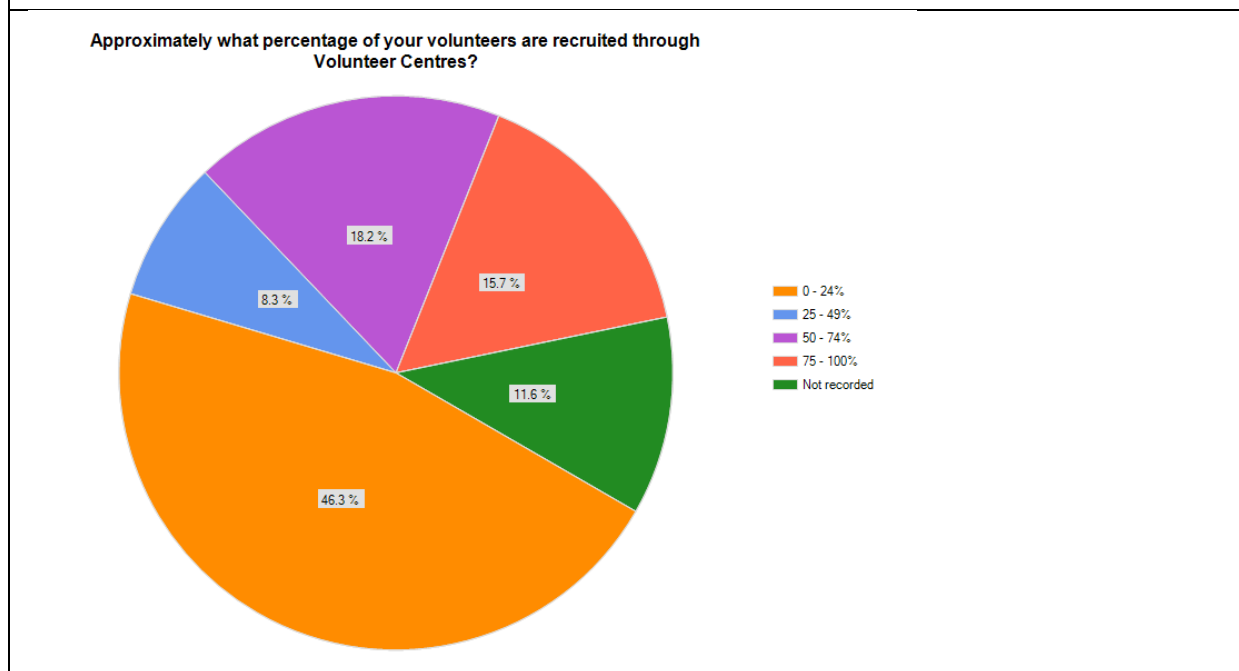
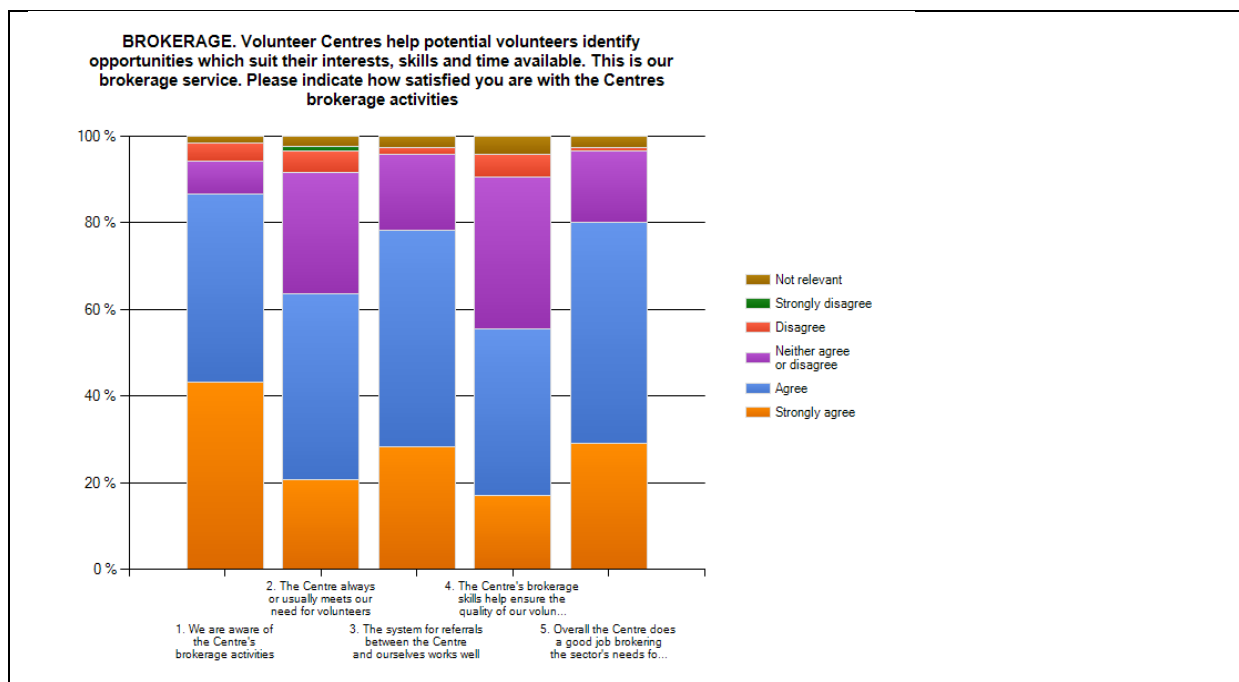
What is the main area of interest for your organisation?



What is your connection with Volunteer Centres? Please tick all that apply



BROKERAGE

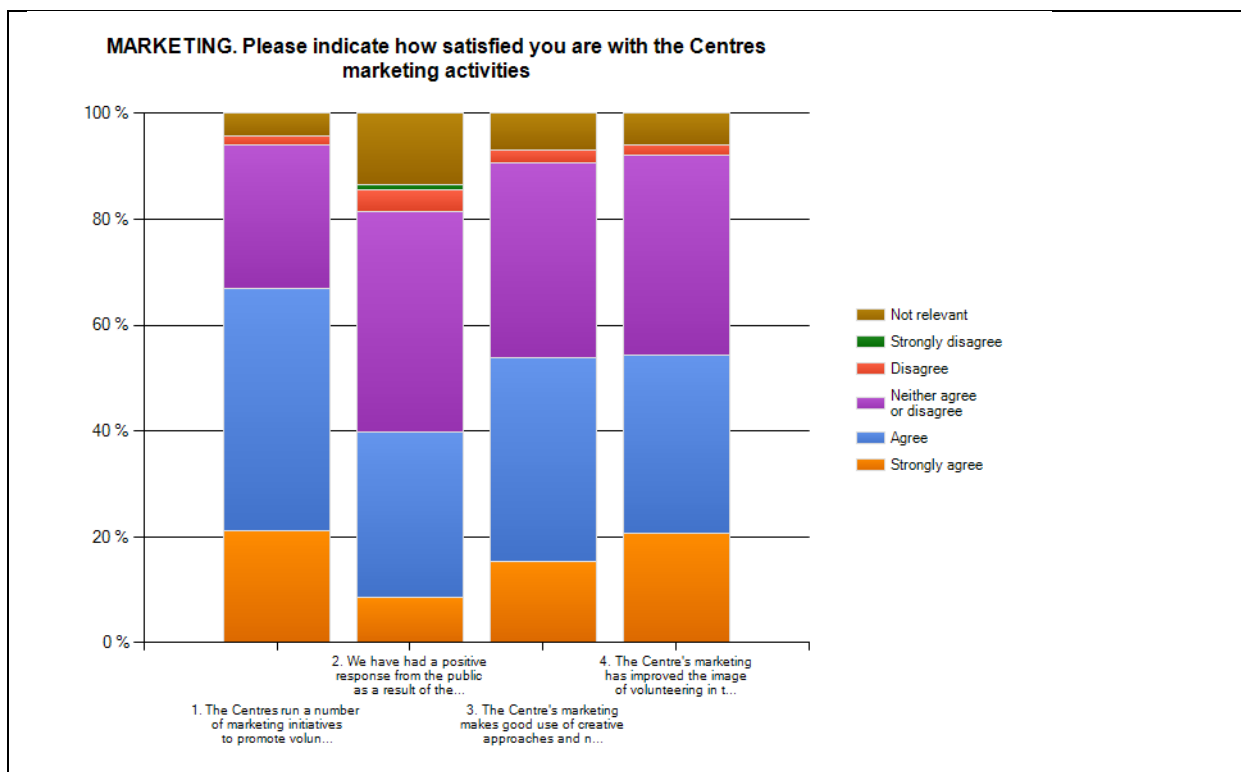


Organisations were asked if there any voluntary opportunities that are hard to fill

These results indicate recruitment priorities for Volunteer Centres in Herts:-

- Drivers x 6
- Trustees/ Committee Members x 6
- Fundraisers x 6
- Admin assistant (good IT skills) x 4
- Minutes secretary x 3
- Treasurer x 3
- Webmaster / IT support x 2
- Database experience x 2
- Evenings and weekend volunteers / male volunteers 18+

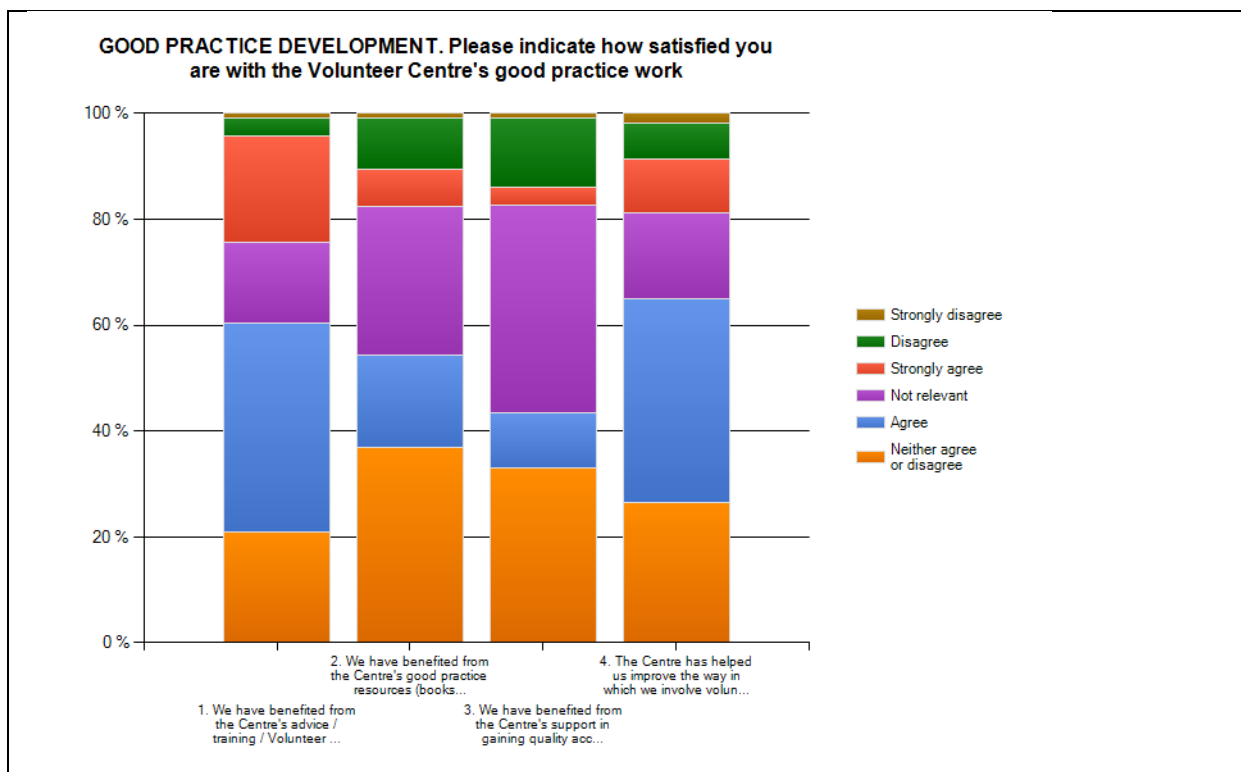
MARKETING



In what ways, if any, could we improve marketing of volunteering to organisations and the public? Your answer may include issues that should be promoted, groups that should be targeted or Volunteer Centre's marketing methods. Comments included:-

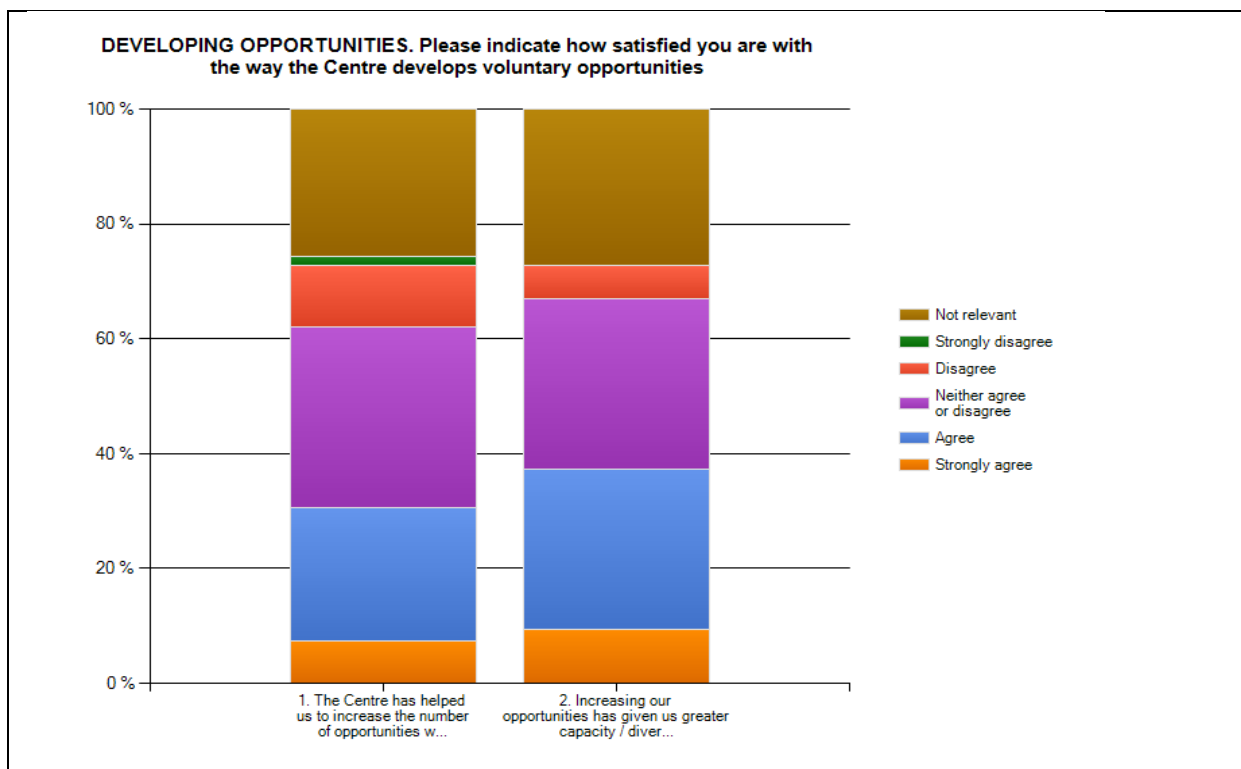
- We would like to see more 'meet the organisation' events within local communities, rather than at a Volunteer Centre. Some people may want to volunteer, but feel uneasy going to such a centre.
- The recruitment of volunteers from different ethnic groups has proved difficult. Perhaps some targeted marketing effort regarding this will help.
- I am happy with what I see
- All seem to be covered
- Where are those people who are not or unable to work? Perhaps targeting the areas where they are would be good - unemployed, students, mums/dads not working whilst children at school, retired, disabled etc.
- It seems that the services offered are very well marketed in our local area. Furthermore, the regular piece in the local paper regarding volunteering opportunities is a tremendous idea.
- Centres need to be smarter at engaging with the charity to promote volunteering for that specific charity.
- Help provide ideas how to get to specific groups e.g. retired people
- Use posters on local notice boards, including church notice boards and church magazines, and town/parish council offices to attract potential volunteers.
- Distribute leaflets in residential areas.
- Do not rely solely on local free newspapers as these are VERY POORLY DISTRIBUTED.
- We would like help marketing ourselves to potential ethnic minority volunteers.
- Too many referrals are people with special needs of their own or are out of work for reasons of rehab/disability. These people tend to be 'needy' and take up staff time
- Target who have recently, or are about to, retire
- We have identified the need for targeted marketing.
- Reach out to volunteers in the BME communities
- By increasing the number of sport organisations who use their services
- More targeting of specific age groups; gender and cultural backgrounds
- Marketing is good, particularly local press and volunteering Herts website
- I think they do a very good job

GOOD PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT



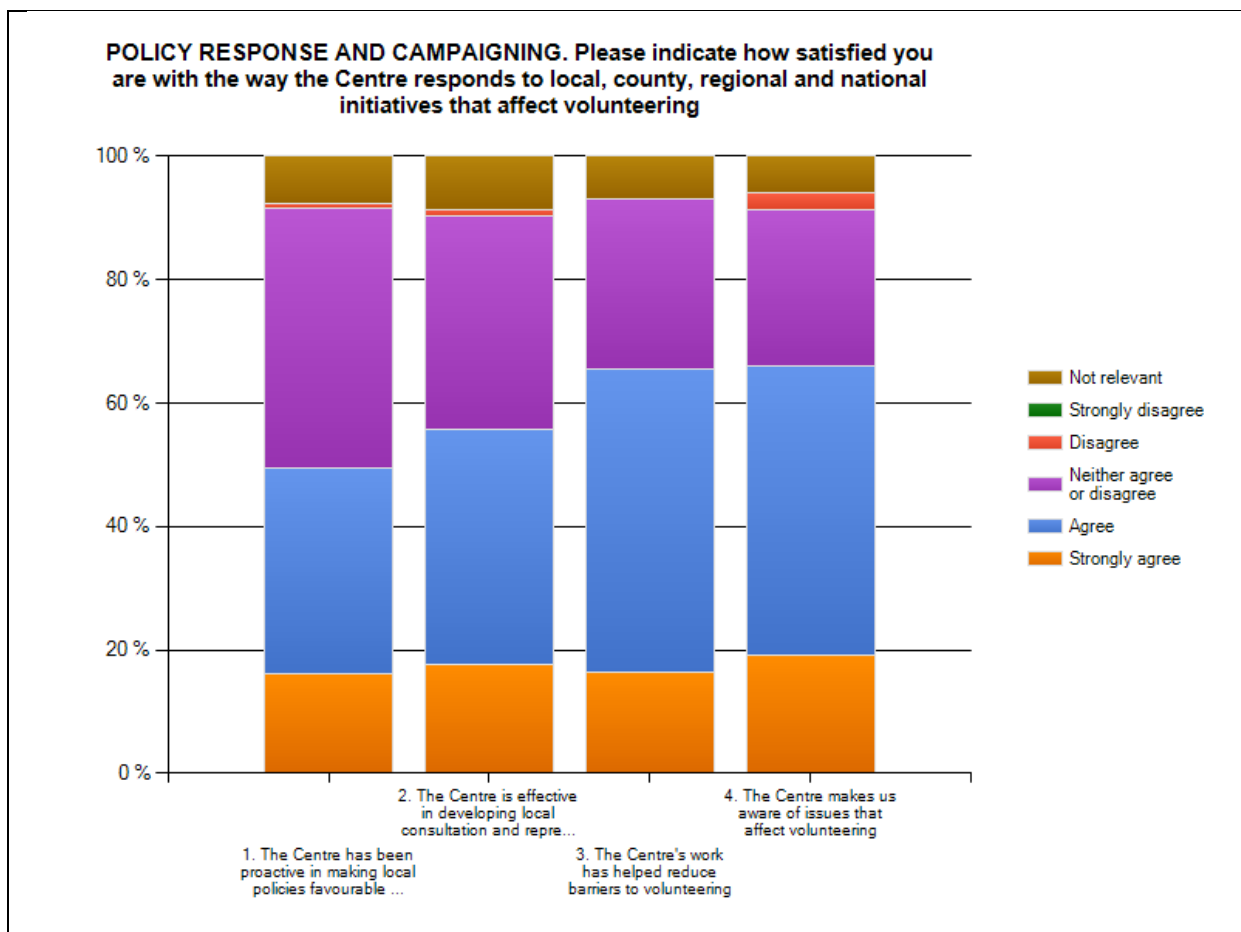
- I am currently involved in revising our volunteer handbook and am grateful for the support I have received, including being given a copy of the VC volunteer handbook to use as a guide.
- As our organisation is part of a larger national organisation and with contracts with County Council we have to comply with good practice so good practice from VC would not necessarily apply to us.
- Be more proactive in providing the charity with information - when they do this, the outcomes are excellent
- I can't think of any improvements
- We need more development with Risk Assessments
- At the time of submission of a role description for a new volunteer post, would be useful to run through the completed form with someone from the centre to ensure that the role will be appealing to volunteers. For roles that are countywide, such as the two roles I seek to fill, it would be useful to have a single review of the forms and confirmation that the forms are then circulated to all centres without the need for me to individually visit each of them in turn.
- Maybe find us a volunteer coordinator who has the time to do all the above!!!!
- More training could be useful.
- To gear specific training opportunities to targeted organisations that have similar work priorities.
- An email newsletter for local voluntary organisations to keep them updated.
- More inter-group meetings to discuss relevant issues and developments.
- Local area support groups for volunteers? Somewhere to meet other volunteers for those who are 'needy' and wish to talk & meet others i.e. social side
- Continue to run courses for trustees and ensure courses are available to keep us updated on current legislation.
- The important area is legal aspects of volunteering; the booklet that was issued a few years ago was very useful. Also the courses on volunteering issues were useful too.
- Improve understanding of sporting associations
- It would be great to have a guide produced that is simple and easy for staff and volunteers to follow on good practice development

DEVELOPING VOLUNTARY OPPORTUNITIES



- I am not aware of any ways in which this can be improved. The help and support received for initiating volunteering opportunities for young people has been very good.
- I find this difficult to answer because VC's rely on the public wanting to volunteer, being aware of opportunities and I feel that in this area the VC has advertised the many volunteering opportunities within their resources. They contact local business, advertise in the local paper and have a good relationship with Borough and Council for Voluntary Service. In the present climate funding to voluntary organisations is being cut or curtailed and opportunities for us to expand mirror this.
- We would like to be used more in giving local talks re volunteering alongside your organisations.
- Get closer to the charity and understand its needs
- I think maybe volunteers need more incentive - which is a shame, but I think to regularly give up a whole day once a week or fortnight is difficult
- We have one specific need / vacancy - garden maintenance - that we feel we should be able to fill, but haven't so far. Could there be a link to garden centres? How are the Volunteers Centres linking in to the Universities / colleges of further education?
- Regular interviews or visits to our workplace maybe annual so that our needs are better understood and we could discuss different opportunities.
- Have 'link worker' scheme so that it is more personal and we know who to speak to at Vol Centre
- As I have said previously, we need more trustees. Also possibly, to encourage people to undertake our relationship counselling training.
- One current issue for us is the rise in the number of applicants who are seeking volunteering opportunities because they have been made redundant but may not be interested in the longer term. Because of the length of time it takes to get through the process before a person is accepted as a volunteer at the prison there is no point in sending us information about people who only see this as a stopgap measure.
- The staff are always helpful in providing advice on how to word opportunities. How can we make trustee roles more exciting? Also I don't think Joe public now what a trustee is - great if we could 'sex' it up a bit!!!!

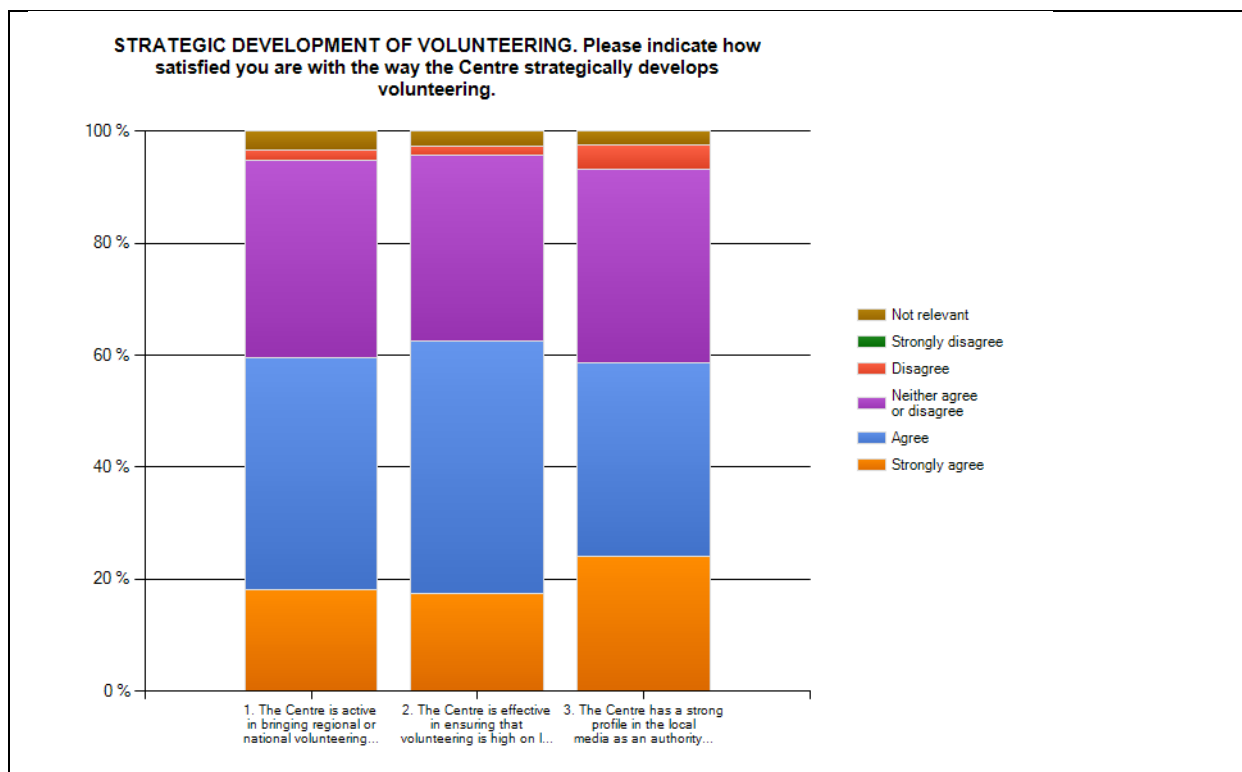
POLICY RESPONSE AND CAMPAIGNING



A selection of comments on this topic:-

- I have not closely followed this area of the Centre's work. However, we are kept well informed of all the work undertaken via regular newsletters and emails.
- I have not seen anything about this - the centre needs to be more proactive to specific charities, email would do just to make us aware
- I can't think of any improvements
- Assistance and guidance on utilising local radio and newspaper media would be a real advantage. Some local papers allocate space each week for the local centres to advertise/focus on local volunteer opportunities
- Centres should help all organisations that use volunteers understand and react to changes in the law which affect the use of volunteers.
- Be persistent - and evidence the link between volunteering and moving into employment.
- A big issue for all voluntary groups, at the moment, is Vetting and Barring. I have researched this on my own and felt a bit more guidance or advice from the Volunteer Centre would have been of great help. This is an enormous issue and I appreciate that it is still to come into force properly but it would have been good to have the Volunteer Centres taking the lead on publicising and advice to organisations such as ours.
- News feeds perhaps?

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING



Comments included:-

- From our perspective, this seems to be done well, can't think of any improvements.
- Get closer to the specific charities, one size fits all does not work
- Contact the personnel departments of local employers with a view to attract those who have recently retired and those coming up to retirement.
- More involvement with Local Media.
- Nationally although the Home Office has signed up to the Volunteer Compact the issue of paying volunteer expenses for volunteers in prisons is still unresolved and will continue to be so in the current economic climate

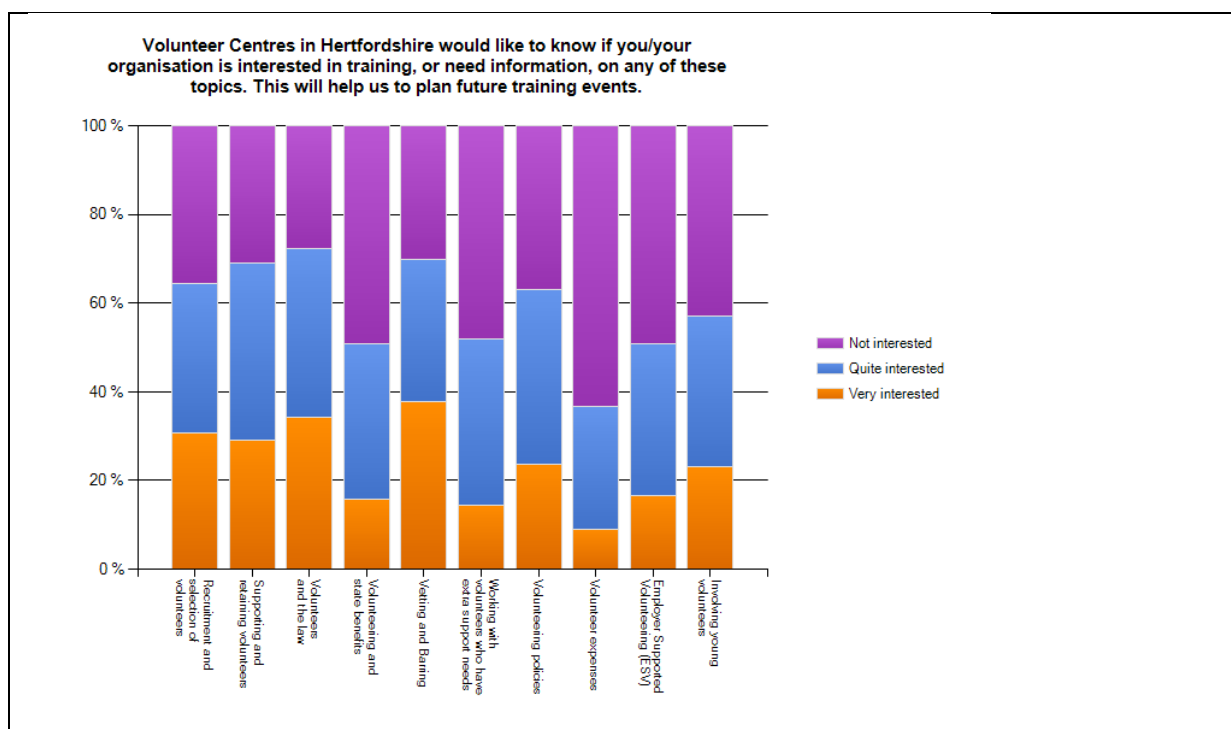
NEW WORK AS A RESULT OF VOLUNTEER CENTRE ACTIVITIES

25% of organisations reported that they had been involved in new projects as a result of Volunteer Centre involvement.

These were some of the activities described:-

- The Time-to-Time and the one off business organisations volunteer groups have helped us to achieve several gardening projects.
- A new set up for young people
- Building Better Boards
- We are looking at working with 15-18 year olds for the first time as a result of the work of the Centre.
- Volunteer Speed Matching
- Dacorun is always there for us.
- Projects to support unemployed people
- Development of our grounds as a result of groups coming to help improve our environment.
- Created a volunteer opportunity for people with IT skills to contribute to the wider work of cancer services at Watford General Hospital.
- Social projects with people with learning difficulties
- We are recruiting a large number of volunteers to fill new roles in the CAB following increased client demand.

TRAINING NEEDS



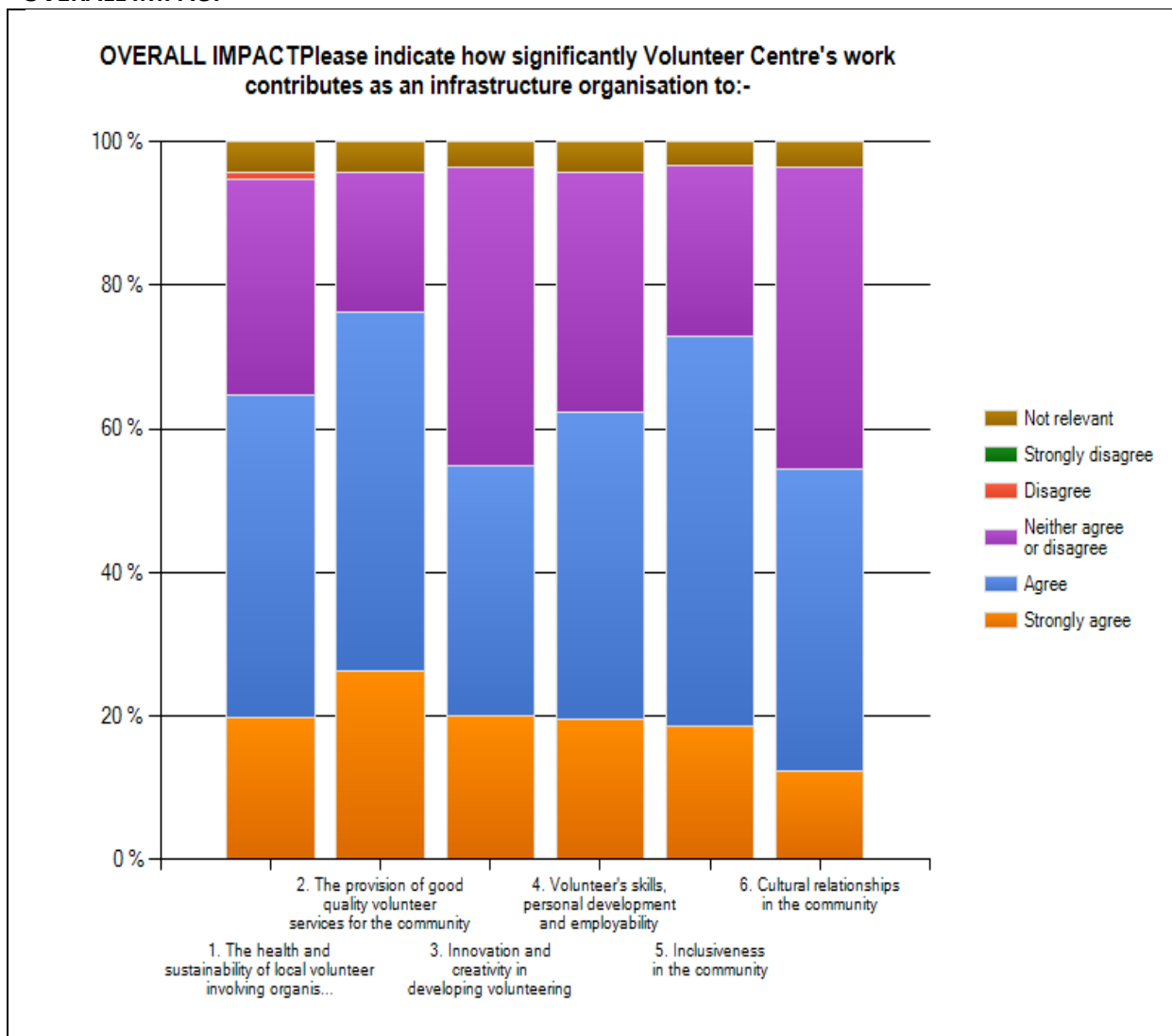
Other general comments

- I think that it would be good if you have a Hertfordshire wide volunteer opportunity that you only need to register the opportunity once and pay one fee. I find it time consuming and lose sight of who I am a member of when joining them individually.
- We think the volunteer Centre provides an excellent service to all of Dacorum
- We advertise voluntary 'suggestions' with St Albans CVS and receive phone calls from interested people. Apart from this we have no contact or reason to know about marketing / training / impact etc
- Using volunteers entails a certain amount of give and take for us - and I would assume, for many organisations which are as small as we are. It may be partly because of the type of people who have come our way, as we understand we are viewed as a 'supportive organisation'. We have to be sure, before we accept a new volunteer, that there will be enough staff capacity to ensure that both parties derive benefit from the time any volunteer spends working with us.
- Overall, we have found working with the Volunteer Centre a very positive experience.
- At the moment we don't have the resources in the fundraising department to support volunteers who have extra support needs.
- Only to say well done to Dacorum and keep up the good work.
- I do not use the service a great deal but they keep me updated and know they are always available if I need them. Great Team.
- I think they are excellent but like many understaffed and under resourced and need more funding. They try very hard to be excellent in what they do and achieve this more for some charities than others I suspect. I would be very interested to know what they are able to do for us so they should be better at letting us know.
- I have greatly appreciated working with the volunteer centre to gain volunteers for my group; they have always been there to support me.
- We need to encourage greater volunteering opportunities for young people. 'V involved' helps to promote this but programmes should be extended via the Volunteer Centres.
- Thank you for all the people referred over the years - Volunteer Centre Dacorum has made an impact on the provision of service that we offer our pupils with very special needs
- As we are only a small charity we have only have a small number of volunteering opportunities. We have been very happy with the Volunteer Bureau service when we have needed volunteers in the past. It is an invaluable service and really important to both organisations and volunteers. Voluntary organisations rely heavily on Volunteers to help with their work as there is often not enough funding for paid staff,

alternatively Volunteers often gain confidence, skills and opportunities to do some training to prepare them for the world of work or for some just to get out and meet people it can be life changing.

- We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the Volunteer Centres.
- It is difficult for our volunteers who work to go to the training sessions which are held during the day.
- We are very grateful to Three Rivers team for sending us prospective volunteers who are often very suitable. The team are always efficient and helpful and we are very grateful for their help.
- My only negative comment about the work of the volunteer centres in Herts, as in general I think they do a great job, is that we have struggled in the past to get our volunteer opportunities listed accurately. There have been a few occasions when I or my colleagues have sent all or specific centres new copy to update their database and the local area listing for doit.org but the opportunity has defaulted back to out of date, inaccurate information, which we haven't supplied.
- We have found that Hatfield CVS have provided services and support that we could not find anywhere else. It is not just the work they do in respect of volunteer services but the support they offer small, new and developing voluntary organisations such as ours, that has been invaluable to Resolve.

OVERALL IMPACT



SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR ORGANISATIONS

The following sheet summarises the scores organisations gave Volunteer Centres Herts in each of the 6 core functions.

% of organisations strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statements

Brokerage

1. We are aware of the Centre's brokerage activities	82%
2. The Centre always or usually meets our need for volunteers	61%
3. The system for referrals between the Centre and ourselves works well	74%
4. The Centre's brokerage skills help ensure the quality of our volunteers	51%
5. Overall the Centre does a good job brokering the sector's needs for volunteers	76%

Marketing

1. The Centres run a number of marketing initiatives to promote volunteering	62%
2. We have had a positive response from the public as a result of the Centre's marketing	37%
3. The Centre's marketing makes good use of creative approaches and new technology	50%
4. The Centre's marketing has improved the image of volunteering in the local area	50%

Good Practice Development

1. We have benefited from the Centre's advice / training / Volunteer Manager's Forum	56%
2. We have benefited from the Centre's good practice resources (books / videos etc)	22%
3. We have benefited from the Centre's support in gaining quality accreditation	13%
4. The Centre has helped us improve the way in which we involve volunteers	45%

Developing New Opportunities

1. The Centre has helped us to increase the number of opportunities we offer	29%
2. Increasing our opportunities has given us greater capacity / diversity	35%

Campaigning and Lobbying

1. The Centre has been proactive in making local policies favourable to volunteering	46%
2. The Centre is effective in developing local consultation/representation of volunteering-involving organisations	50%
3. The Centre's work has helped reduce barriers to volunteering	60%
4. The Centre makes us aware of issues that affect volunteering	60%

Strategic Development of Volunteering

1. The Centre is active in bringing regional/national volunteering initiatives/events to the local area	54%
2. The Centre is effective in ensuring that volunteering is high on local agendas	57%
3. The Centre has a strong profile in the local media as an authority on volunteering issue	54%

OVERALL IMPACT

How significantly does the Volunteer Centre's work contribute to:-

1. The health and sustainability of local volunteer involving organisations	59%
2. The provision of good quality volunteer services for the community	71%
3. Innovation and creativity in developing volunteering	50%
4. Volunteer's skills, personal development and employability	57%
5. Inclusiveness in the community	68%
6. Cultural relationships in the community	49%