

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING TO HEREFORDSHIRE



Herefordshire Voluntary Action

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Foreword

This report has been commissioned by the Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium (see Appendix 1 for membership) which was established in December 2003 in response to the Active Communities Unit document: *Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure – a consultation document*. The overall aims of the Consortium are to:

- ◆ To develop and deliver an Infrastructure Investment Plan for Herefordshire that will support a strategy for future investment to develop longer term initiatives for capacity building in the voluntary and community sector
- ◆ To continue to work together to support local needs and priorities involving other partners as appropriate and linking with existing networks to ensure effective communication with stakeholders

In the first year of Change Up infrastructure funding 2005 – 2006 increasing volunteering in Herefordshire was identified by the Consortium as one of six strategic priorities. This was to be achieved through a number of tasks to be undertaken by the two infrastructure organisations that ran volunteer development agencies, namely Herefordshire Voluntary Action (HVA) and Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District (CVALD). It was agreed that HVA would lead on the key objective to Increase Awareness of the Value of Volunteering, a task involving desktop research on the value of volunteering to Herefordshire, both economically and socially.

In accordance with the brief given by the Consortium, HVA has endeavoured in this paper to:

- a) Collate existing information/research
- b) Link to LPSA2 research being undertaken by Herefordshire Council.

We should like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance and advice given by the Research Team of Herefordshire Council.

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Introduction

'The strength of Britain lies in the strength of our voluntary and community organisations. Volunteers give of their time and talents selflessly.'

Gordon Brown Jan. 05 at the launch of Year of the Volunteer 2005

Almost every aspect of everyday life in Herefordshire – the communities in which we live, our places of work and worship, our physical environment, our schools and hospitals, our leisure and recreational activities – all benefit from the input of thousands of volunteers. Many of the vital services delivered in the county such as Meals on Wheels, community transport for the housebound and disabled, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Samaritans, the Magistrates' Court to name just a few, would cease without volunteers' time. The loss of millions of pounds raised annually by volunteers in Herefordshire would have a major detrimental affect on organisations ranging from St Michaels Hospice, Macmillan Nurses and the Air Ambulance to playschemes for children with extra support needs, befriending and mentoring services and telephone helplines. Out in the local communities, residents associations, conservation work, community resource centres, school reading schemes, parish councils and parent teacher associations would all grind to a halt without voluntary activity.

Over the last ten years, there has been increasing recognition from all political parties of the value of volunteering both as a cost effective means of providing services and its positive contribution towards an active and participatory society. A plethora of government initiatives have been set up to involve more people in volunteering, ranging from the Make A Difference programme in the late nineties, the Millennium Volunteers Programme for young people, – www.do-it.org.uk - the national internet-based volunteering database launched in 2000, the £20m funded Experience Corps, 2005 designated as Year of the Volunteer, the establishment of the Volunteering Hub as one of six national Hubs of Expertise to provide support for volunteering and £100m committed this year to the Russell Commission's programme 'V' to encourage more young people to volunteer.

Likewise the value of the impact of volunteering on the volunteers themselves has also received growing acknowledgement. For example, volunteering can help provide a route into employment, education and training, thereby reducing the benefits bill. It can help those experiencing difficulties in their lives such as mental health problems, addiction and homelessness to regain confidence and improve their wellbeing, thus leading to less demand on the health services. For older people, it can reduce social isolation, increase well-being and provide a means to keep active and contribute to the community for longer.

Reflecting this increased interest and awareness, there has been a growth in research over the last decade which has attempted to value the contribution volunteers make both economically and socially to society. Not least, the voluntary and community sector itself has been keen to have a realistic estimate of the quantity and value of voluntary activity so that it can demonstrate the importance of the sector to funding bodies in providing

services and support to the community. Increasingly funders are also recognising the value of volunteers by accepting volunteer time as match funding while at the same time organisations involved in community action are coming under increasing pressure to be accountable and efficient, which has generated demand for improved performance measurement. This report endeavours to summarise some of these studies both on a national, regional and local level and place an economic value on volunteering in Herefordshire.

Volunteering – An Overview

Any quantitative measurement of volunteering is fraught with difficulty. Firstly the term volunteering can be described in many ways and means different things to different people. There is no statutory or universal definition and Volunteering England is currently leading on research and consultation to produce a new, commonly agreed meaning. In the interim it describes volunteering (Strategy for Infrastructure 2004-2014) as:

'The act of a person giving their time for no financial reward; of their own volition for the good of others, society or the environment; and in so doing encompasses all such activity, however it is described by the individuals or organisations involved in the process.'

The recently published Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice has simplified the definition as:

'An activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives'

While fairly similar, some volunteers would not identify their activities with this terminology; people undertaking volunteering may often just simply not see themselves as volunteers. Typically, these are people undertaking activities in their local communities such as involvement with residents associations, serving on the Parish Council, cleaning the church, helping out with a local fete or jumble sale. Certainly when consultation has taken place at promotional events and presentations on volunteering, Herefordshire Voluntary Action has frequently met responses such as 'I'm on the PTA at my son's school but that's not volunteering is it?' or 'It never occurred to me that by being the secretary for my local branch of the Women's Institute I was actually a volunteer!' Conversely there are others who, when surveyed, will say they are volunteering when they actually are not in order to appear public spirited. For young people particularly, the meaning of volunteering can create a significant amount of confusion. In the Youth Survey 2003 conducted by Herefordshire Council, 48 of the 367 young people who stated that they volunteered, were actually involved in activities that could not be classified as volunteering such as football or band practice or even cleaning the house!

A further complexity in calculating the quantity of volunteering is differentiating between formal and informal volunteering. Formal volunteering refers to activities undertaken through a not for profit organisation, be it a small community group consisting entirely of volunteers, a countywide voluntary group or through a national charity or a statutory body such as a school or hospital. Informal volunteering refers to a wide range of different kinds of unpaid mutual help and co-operation between individuals within communities. In the Home Office Citizenship surveys, informal volunteering has been defined as 'giving unpaid help by an individual to people who are not relatives' and

included activities in 2003 ranging from 44% giving advice; 38% looking after a property or pet whilst a neighbour was away. The remaining 28% ranged from providing transport or accompanying someone eg to hospital, babysitting or caring for children, writing letters or filling in forms, doing shopping or collecting pensions, paying bills. Concerns have been raised over as to what the giving advice section means when undertaken informally. Certainly if it includes such acts as telling someone how to get to the railway station, it is very dubious whether that could be regarded as volunteering.

Trying to measure how many hours of volunteering are undertaken also presents difficulties. Volunteering takes place with varying frequency, from those who volunteer a regular number of hours per week to those who volunteer for a one-off project such as arranging a festival through to those who volunteer on an ad hoc basis such as is often the case with fundraising. Many surveys present volunteers with specific frequency categories such as 'at least once a year', 'at least once a month', 'so many hours per week' etc. This can be confusing and may lead to incorrect recording. For example, if someone helps out at a playscheme for 5 hours a day for 6 weeks over the summer holidays, and does no other volunteering, they may consider they volunteer weekly, even though they will not have averaged that over the whole year.

Notwithstanding all these variables, attempts have been made over the last twenty-five years to calculate the level of volunteering, and more recently to allocate an economic value to it. However these surveys have mostly been undertaken on a national basis and as will be seen there is very little historical data available for Herefordshire.

Summary of Previous Research - National

Institute of Research 1997

A series of three national surveys on volunteering were conducted in 1981 and 1991 by the Volunteer Centre UK and in 1997 by the National Centre for Volunteering. All three studies used the same definition of volunteering, the same methodology including differentiating between formal and informal volunteering activity and all respondents were 18 years and over.

Table 1: Volunteering in the UK 1981, 1991, 1997

	1981	1991	1997
	%	%	%
Proportion who volunteered (formally) at least once in past twelve months	44	51	48
Proportion who took part at least once in informal voluntary activity in past twelve months	62	76	74

These figures suggested that volunteering had tailed off in 1997; in terms of the national population volunteering was down from 23.2 to 21.8 million people. Yet when the regularity of volunteering was explored further, it was found that an average formal volunteering week for current volunteers was 4.05 hours and for informal activity 1.7; a significant increase on the 2.7 hours and 1.2 hours respectively recorded in the 1991 survey (see Table 2). In national terms this equated to an increase from about 62 millions hours of formal volunteering in 1991 to 88 million in 1997. In the 1995 study, the notional value of volunteer effort was estimated to be £25billion.

Table 2: Average Mean Hours Volunteered in the UK 1981-1997

	1981	1991	1997
All respondents who volunteered:		Hrs/week	Hrs/week
Formally	n/a	2.7	4.0
Informally	n/a	0.9	1.3

Home Office Citizenship Surveys

Conducted in 2001, 2003 and 2005, each Home Office Citizenship Survey has sought the views and experiences from 10,000 adults in England and Wales on a range of issues, including volunteering. The surveys have differentiated between formal and informal volunteering and, unlike the national 1981, 1991 and 1997 surveys, have included 16-18 year olds thus making it difficult to make comparisons between them.

Table 3: National Citizenship Surveys - Volunteering in England and Wales.

	2001	2003	2005
Formal Volunteering			
Proportion who have volunteered at least once in past twelve months	39% (16.2 million)	42% (17.9 million)	44%
Proportion who have volunteered at least once in past month	27% (11.1 million)	28% (11.7 million)	29%
Informal Volunteering			
Proportion who have volunteered at least once in past twelve months	67% (27.8 million)	62% (26.4 million)	68%
Proportion who have volunteered at least once in past month	34% (14.2 million)	37% (15.6 million)	37%

Not all the information from the 2005 survey is yet available, but while the three surveys have shown a gradual increase in the proportion of the population engaging in formal and informal volunteering over the five year period, both for those volunteering at least once a year and for those volunteering at least once a month (see Table 3), the percentages are lower than those of the 1981-1991 studies. Last year in 2005 44% had volunteered at least once in the past twelve months compared to 48% in 1991.

Table 4: National Citizenship Surveys – Value of Volunteering

	2001	2003
Formal Volunteering		
Average hrs volunteered per year per person	105.8	104
Total Formal Volunteering (hours)	1.7 billion	1.9billion
Economic Value	£17.9 billion	£22.5 billion
Informal Volunteering		
Average hrs volunteered per year per person	62.9	71
Total Informal Volunteering (hours)	1.8 billion	1.9 billion
Economic Value	£18.2 billion	£22.6 billion

Actual volunteering hours were calculated on the average number of hours reported in the past 4 weeks, divided by four to find a weekly rate and then multiplied by 52 weeks.

In 2003 42% had spent an average of 8 hours on formal volunteering in the last 4 weeks, equating to 104 hours per volunteer per year compared to 105.8 hours in 2001. In terms of informal volunteering, it was estimated that an average of 71 hours per year in 2003 and 62.9 hrs in 2001 were undertaken.

Adopting the national average hourly rate, an economic value of volunteering was produced (results for 2005 still to be announced) which showed that in 2003 volunteers contributed a total of £22.5 billion of time through formal volunteering, and £22.6 billion through informal volunteering compared to £17.9 billion and £18.2 billion respectively for 2001 (see table 4). In 2003, adding on the value of volunteering for Scotland and Northern Ireland, formal volunteering in the UK was estimated at more than £40billion or 7.9% GDP.

Summary of previous research - Herefordshire

Valuing the Voluntary Sector

Only one main study so far has been undertaken which has attempted to estimate the level of volunteering activity and its associated economic value in Herefordshire. Commissioned in 2000 by Community First (then the Community Council of Herefordshire and Worcestershire) it examined the contribution made by the whole of the voluntary sector both in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The consultants identified 707 social economy organisations in Herefordshire; social economy being defined by as organisations which were neither publicly nor privately owned and whose activities had a meaningful economic impact. Sports, social, hobby and interest groups were therefore excluded.

Based on completed questionnaires from these organisations (21% return rate), it was estimated that 12,221 people volunteered on a regular basis contributing an average of 9.38 hours per month whilst 1558 volunteered on an occasional basis, averaging 3.42 hours per month. In total, 1,788,643 hours of formal volunteering were undertaken (see Table 5)

Table 5: Volunteering in Herefordshire in 2000

	Number Volunteering	Hours per year	Hrs/Vol/Yr
Regular Volunteers	12221	1721649	141
Occasional Volunteers	1558	66994	43
Average			92
Total	13779	1788643	

Source: Data taken from 'Valuing the Voluntary Sector'

An hourly rate of £8.53 was used to calculate the value of volunteers' time. The researchers took the New Earnings Survey 1999 hourly rate for Herefordshire of £7.60 and appear to have added 12.2%, presumably to take account of employment overheads such as Employers' National Insurance. This produced a **total value of volunteering time as £15,257,124.**

The authors did not show the 13,779 formal volunteers as a percentage of the population. In order to produce some kind of comparison to other studies, and adopting the mid-year 1999 population estimate for Herefordshire of 145,000 (age 15 upwards), we find that only 9.5% of the county was formally volunteering. Even allowing for the population figure including 15-17 year olds, an age range which was not included in other volunteering studies, this level of volunteering activity appears to be extremely low. This can be partly explained by the fact that the study excluded social, interest, hobby and sports clubs, most of which would have had volunteers serving on committees, producing

newsletters or arranging sporting fixtures etc. Certainly the number of voluntary and community groups existing in Herefordshire would have exceeded the 707 identified for the purposes of the study. There is no definitive figure available but it is estimated there are at least 1,350 voluntary and community groups, this figure being based on Herefordshire Voluntary Action's mailing list, the largest of its kind in the county. Consequently the economic value of £15,257,124 for volunteering appears to be far too low.

Herefordshire Voice Survey – Community Participation

In 2002, Herefordshire Council consulted the Herefordshire Voice, a panel of 1000 residents aged 16 yrs upwards on a range of local issues including community participation. 31% of the panel said they had been involved with a local community organisation in the past twelve months, involvement being defined as making contact or attending meetings at least three times. However, when given a list of 19 different community activities, ranging from helping out at school to involvement with religious organisations, the participation rate rose dramatically to 66%, demonstrating that respondents probably had previously not viewed their participation as community involvement. Of these respondents, when asked how much time they had spent in a voluntary capacity in local community groups, 69% had spent less than 50 hours in total over the past year, 18% had spent 1-5 hours per week whilst 6% had spent more than 5 hours per week. However, the activity that recorded by far the largest frequency of involvement, 'Attending Fetes and Fundays', received a rating of 53%. Whilst certainly a community activity it may not necessarily have involved volunteering which was more likely to have been recorded under another activity category 'Organising Fetes and Fundays' (scored 31%).

RAWM – Mapping the Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector to the Economy of the West Midlands – 2003.

Based on a detailed analysis of a random 469 of an estimated 18,300 formal and active voluntary and community organisations across the West Midlands, Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) undertook a study in 2003 to examine the contribution of the voluntary and community sector to the region. It was estimated that there were 435,000 formal volunteers, the equivalent of 37,000 full time staff. Volunteers and trustees gave a total of 23 million hours during 2002 to the region but no breakdown was made on an individual county basis. However, the study recognised that Herefordshire had the highest proportion of general charities compared to other local authority areas in the West Midlands with 7.1 for each 1000 of the population compared to 2.2 for the region generally.

The study used two different calculations for the economic value of volunteering time:

Minimum Contribution

Taking the minimum wage at the time, an hour of volunteer time was priced at £4.10. No on-costs were added. The monetary value was therefore calculated at £255m for the West Midlands.

Upper Rate Contribution

To recognise the different roles undertaken, RAWM's study placed a higher value on trustees' time from that of other volunteers. For the latter an hourly rate based on the salary of an Administrative/Care Officer level of responsibility for voluntary and community sector in the West Midlands was allocated to which was added employment on-costs. This produced an hourly rate of £9.53. Trustees were allocated an hourly rate of £20.68 based on the salary of a functional head working in the Voluntary and Community Sector in the West Midlands. This resulted in an overall total of £658 million – of which £88m was for trustees.

Herefordshire Council 2003 Youth Survey

The 2003 Youth Survey conducted by Herefordshire Council's Youth Services asked young people aged 11-25 about a number of issues including volunteering activity. Although 367 of the 1559 who responded stated they undertook volunteering, answers by 48 of them showed they did not understand what volunteering meant (see p.5). Of the remaining 319 (20% of total respondents) their volunteering ranged from helping at formal organisations to more general community work. However, without any figures on the regularity of this volunteering, it is impossible to place any monetary value on their volunteering. A further survey is to be undertaken in the summer of 2006 and plans to include more specific questions on volunteering.

Volunteering in Herefordshire in 2006

Towards the end of 2005, Herefordshire Council sought information on the level of formal volunteering being undertaken in the county in order to provide baseline data for one of the targets in its Local Public Service Agreement – better known as LPSA2 - with Central Government, namely to increase volunteering by five percentage points over the three years 2005-2008. For the purposes of this particular project, volunteering has been defined by the Home Office as:

'The percentage of adult residents reporting that they have engaged in formal volunteering for an average of two hours a week or more over the previous year.'

Statistics were gathered through the Council's Customer Satisfaction Survey 2005–2006 which was sent to 3,057 households (every 26th address selected from a postcode address file) for completion by any resident of 18 years or over. Under the section headed 'Volunteering Through Organisations', it asked three questions:

- a) In the last 12 months, have you provided unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment
- b) If 'yes', how often do you provide such help?
- c) On average, how much time (in total) do you spend providing such help?

Based on 1,137 returns, 37% responded that they had provided unpaid help in last 12 months to groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment. Of this 37% (412), when asked about how frequently they spent providing such help, provided the following information:

Table 6: Frequency of Those Volunteering in Herefordshire

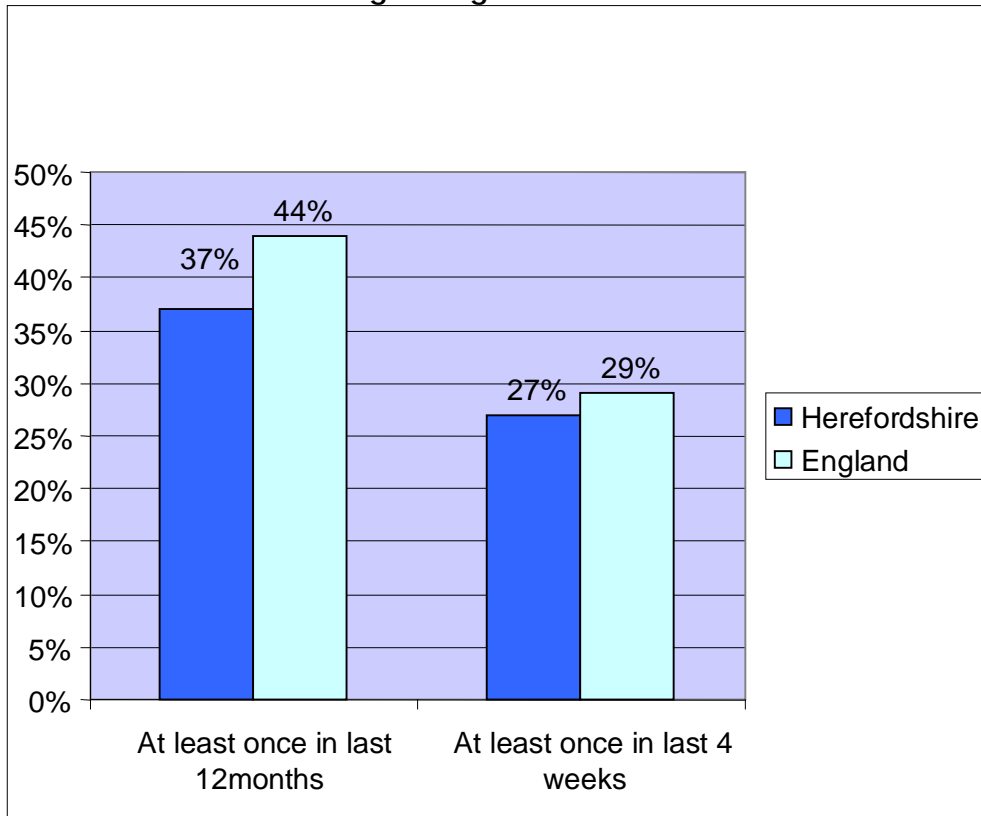
Frequency	%
At least once a week	44%
At least once a month	29%
Less frequently	27%

Source: Herefordshire Council Satisfaction Survey 2005-06

In terms of how Herefordshire compares to the national volunteering picture, it is possible to compare the percentage figures for those volunteering formally at least once in the last 12 months and at least once in the last month. Although fewer people (37%)

appear to be volunteering at least once a year compared to the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005 figure of 44%, the proportion of those volunteering at least once in the last four weeks is fairly comparable to the Home Office's figure of 29% for 2005 (see also Table 3).

Table 7: Volunteering in England and Herefordshire 2005



Of the 37% volunteering in Herefordshire, when asked how many hours they gave on average per week or on an annual basis, 54% gave less than 2 hours per week, 35% between 2-4 hours and 14% undertook 5 hours or more. Further information regarding the age ranges and work status of those who volunteer can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 8: Analysis of time given by those who volunteered

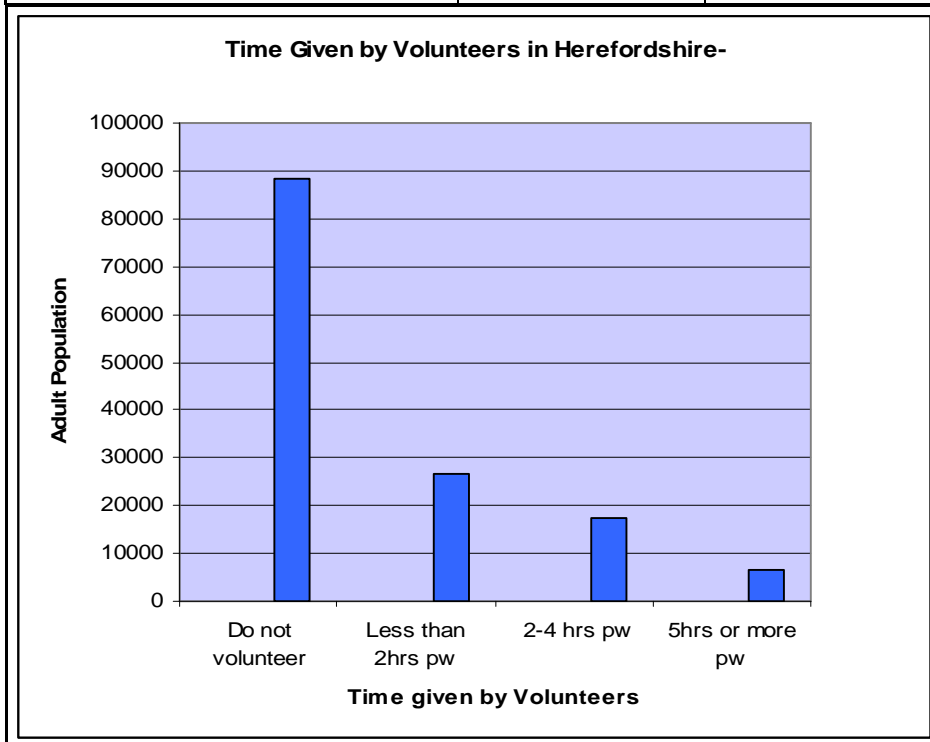
Time Given By Volunteers	%
Less than 2 hours per week (less than about 100 hours a year)	54%
2-4 hours per week (about 100-200 hours a year)	35%
5 hours per week or more (about 250 hours a year or more)	14%

Taking the data for those volunteering from this survey, it is possible to project countywide figures for volunteering activity. Given the population of Herefordshire for

adults (18 years and over) is 140,300 (ONS 2004 mid-year estimates), Table 9 shows the numbers volunteering in the different frequency categories in Herefordshire.

Table 9: Proportion of People Volunteering in Herefordshire

	% (rounded)	Population Size
Do not volunteer	63	88390
Less than 2 hours per week (less than about 100 hrs per year)	19	26800
2-4 hours per week (about 100-200 hours per year)	12	17260
5 hours per week or more (about 250 hours a year or more)	5	6730
Total	99	139180



Source: Figures provided by Herefordshire Council Research Team
NB Figures have been rounded up

Of course, there is a possibility that some respondents may have misinterpreted the question, an issue that was discussed on p.6. It also should be kept in mind that these figures for volunteering in Herefordshire are based on a relatively small sample of just over 400 adults.

Placing An Economic Value on Volunteering in Herefordshire

With these percentages it is now possible to approximate the value of volunteering to Herefordshire but consideration needs to be given to the best method to achieve this. As the various surveys summarised in this report have shown, the most favoured method of valuing volunteers' time has been to multiply the total number of volunteering hours by an average hourly rate of pay to demonstrate what the wage bill would be, either nationally or locally, if the services of volunteers were replaced with those of paid workers.

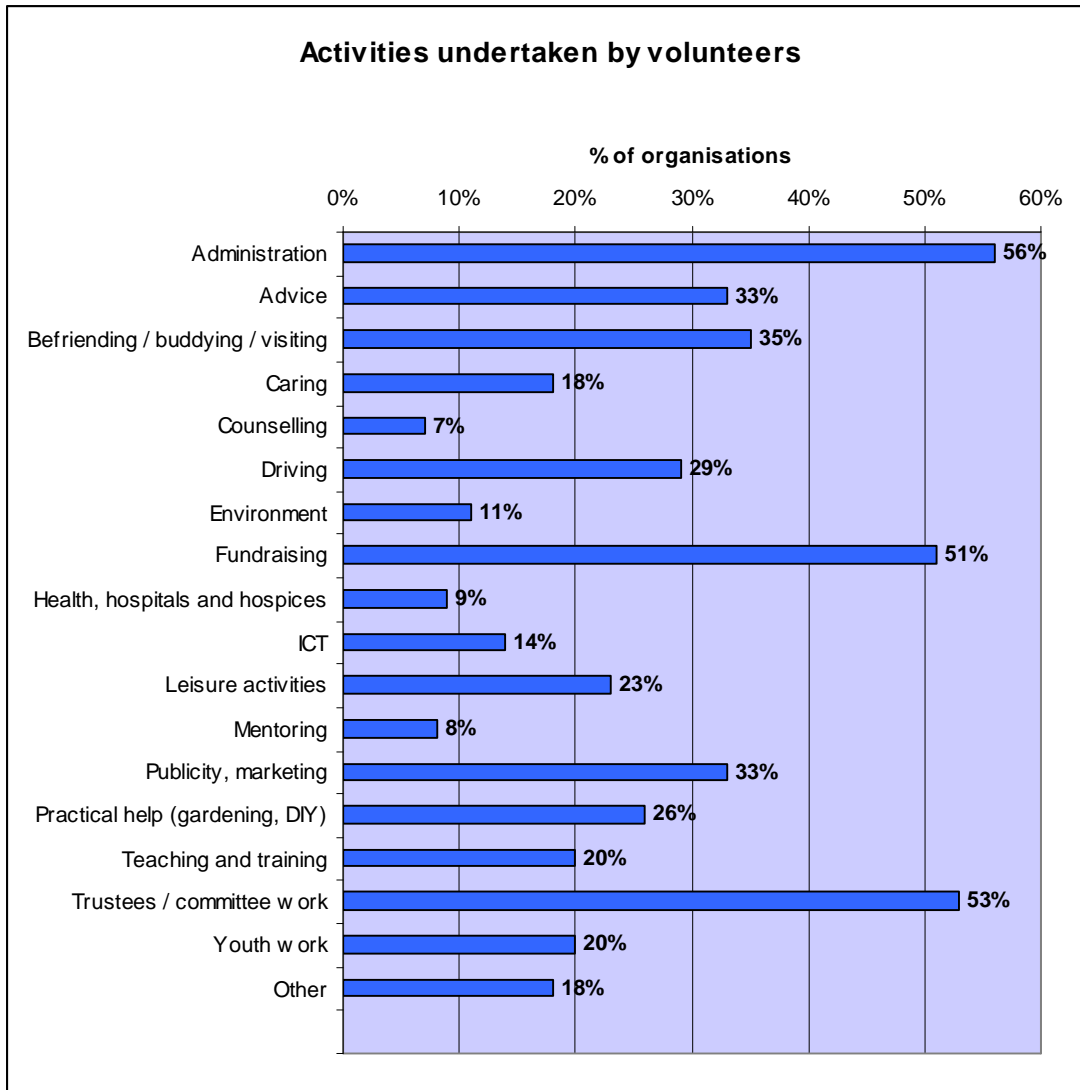
In recent years there has been a growing acknowledgement that if calculating the value of volunteers' time in terms of wages, employers' costs should also be included. This was advocated in The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit, more commonly known by its acronym VIVA, which was first developed in 1996 by the Institute of Volunteering Research. Now a well tried and tested tool, VIVA enables an organisation to measure the value of its volunteers. It recommends that volunteer roles should be matched to the equivalent role in the local employment market and the relevant hourly rate. To this is added a recommended 20% to cover employer's national insurance, holiday pay and a pension contribution. From this figure a deduction should be made for the resources used to support the volunteers such as out of pocket expenses, the cost of a volunteer co-ordinator, recruitment and marketing costs, induction and training.

Whilst it is possible for each individual organisation to allocate an appropriate hourly rate of pay to different volunteering roles and then deduct any costs associated with involving volunteers, it would not be feasible to go in to this level of detail at countywide level. However, as a broad-brush figure Volunteering England has estimated that for every £1 of public funding spent to support volunteering, volunteers give £30 worth of work. Nevertheless the principle of adding employment overheads to capture costs over and above actual wage totals was adopted in Valuing the Voluntary Sector (see p.11), the RAWM study (see p.12) and also very recently in May 2006 Volunteering Development Scotland calculated the value of volunteers in Scotland with 20% employment on-costs added to the average weekly wage.

A further issue concerns the type of hourly rate to attach to volunteering. There is an enormous range of volunteering activities being undertaken in Herefordshire as shown in the Herefordshire Volunteer Survey 2006 conducted by Herefordshire Voluntary Action and Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District. Table 10 illustrates the range and diversity of volunteering roles within the 51% of the 200 organisations surveyed. Even if more information was available as to the numbers undertaking each of these volunteering roles, it would still be difficult to assign a value to each category. For example, within ICT, a volunteer might be word processing or could be training others in ICT skills or they could be designing a database. In the employment market, these roles would be paid at very different rates.

Consequently for the purposes of this study an average hourly rate will be used but consideration also has to be given as to whether the median or mean average hourly rates should be adopted. The median provides a 'mid-point' figure for earnings rather than the mean which can be skewed by high earners. This is exemplified by a significant difference in the mean average hourly rate of £10.04 in Herefordshire in 2005 compared to the median average hourly rate of £7.78 found in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). Given that the Herefordshire Council uses median hourly rates in their Quarterly Economic Reports, it would seem consistent to adopt the median value.

Table 10: Variety of activities being undertaken by volunteers in Herefordshire



Source: HVA & CVALD Volunteering Survey

However, we have not followed their practice of using an hourly rate based on full time employees; instead we have kept to the hourly rate based on all employees, both part-time and full-time which is slightly lower.

In addition we have not chosen to adopt Volunteering England's recommendation to use a financial valuation of £10 per hour to reflect the diversity of the volunteering tasks and the different levels of skills required. As Herefordshire's rates of pay are some of the lowest in the UK - the national median hourly rate for 2005 was £9.98 – this rate would appear to be high. Instead we have added 15% to the £7.78 median hourly rate for Herefordshire to take account of standard employer overheads, a rate that is commonly used in the voluntary and community sector,

resulting in an hourly rate of £8.95. When this figure is applied the following statistics are produced:

50,790 adults volunteer

They give 4,941,500 hours per annum

The equivalent of 2376 full time workers

The value of volunteering is

£44.2million

Table 11: Economic Value of Volunteering in Herefordshire

Frequency of volunteering (mean average per year)	Population Size	Hours per year	Value £8.95ph
25 hrs (less than 100hrs band)	26,800	670,000	£5,996,500
150 hrs (100-200 hrs band)	17,260	2,589,000	£23,171,550
250hrs (more than 250hrs band)	6,730	1,682,500	£15,058,375
Total	50,790	4,941,500	£44,226,425

In all the studies outlined above, no attempt has been made to try and calculate other economic capital created by volunteering. In terms of the volunteers themselves this could be the value of training and the acquisition of skills leading to employment, thereby reducing the benefits bill. In terms of the beneficiaries of the volunteering it could be a community which, through increased voluntary activity, sees improved health or reduced crime thereby reducing the costs for example to the NHS, the police service and the council tax payer. While these sorts of financial and economic benefits would be very difficult to calculate on a local basis, let alone a county level, they do indicate that volunteering in Herefordshire is economically worth more than the £44.2 million estimated in our study.

Social Value of Volunteering

Voluntary activity is the cornerstone of any civilised society. It is the glue that binds people together and fosters a sense of common purpose. It is an essential building block in our work to create a more inclusive society. It contains the principles of commitment and engagement that are the foundation of democracy.

David Blunkett at the NCVO Conference 2001

Over the last few years there has been increasing academic discussion on finding a way to measure the social value of volunteering and move beyond a wage-replacement model such as those described in the previous section of this report. Such a model, it can be argued, devalues the essence of volunteering, which is a gift of time freely given. It also takes no account of the value of an individual's volunteering to themselves, their own family and friends and to the wider community. As Professor Smith stated at the launch of The Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2006) there was a need to:

'Find better ways of valuing volunteering without devaluing it and to move beyond a 'bottom line' wage-replacement model of value to encompass the contribution volunteering makes to the building of human and social capital.'

Some work has already been undertaken; a new comprehensive toolkit was published in 2005 by the Institute of Volunteering Research – The Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) – which enables an organisation involving volunteers to measure the impact of volunteering on the volunteers themselves, the people or things the volunteering aims to assist and the wider community. It treats the impact of volunteering as capital, and breaks these down in to five measurable categories:

- Physical capital: concrete product or output gained through volunteer activity eg the number of trees planted; the number of people receiving mentoring.
- Economic capital: this study has already looked at placing a market value on volunteering.
- Human capital: the acquisition of skills and personal development for the volunteer.
- Cultural capital: volunteering may reinforce people's sense of their cultural and religious affiliation, including language and heritage.
- Social capital: how volunteering contributes to creating a more cohesive community through building relationships, networks and bonds of trust between people.

We have been unable to find any examples in Herefordshire where this toolkit has been used to find a social value of volunteering and like VIVA (p.18), VIAT is best suited to individual organisations rather than the whole voluntary and community sector of a particular geographical area. Consequently, in order to gain some understanding of the non economic values of volunteering to the county, we have looked at some of the

surveys that have been recently undertaken on the benefits of volunteering. Although the findings are national ones, there is no reason to believe that the findings could not be applied to Herefordshire.

Certainly the benefits of volunteering have been well documented; potential benefits that were recognised in the title of the Economic And Social Research Council's 2004 evaluation of its four year study of voluntary activity in 101 district authorities: *'The Art of Happiness: is volunteering the blueprint for bliss?'* The research revealed that people who lived in areas that recorded high levels of voluntary activity in their local areas, also enjoyed better health, students achieved higher GCSE grades and their communities suffered fewer burglaries:

'It means that voluntary activity in the community is associated with better health, lower crime, improved educational performance and greater life satisfaction. Communities with lots of civic and community engagement are also communities that have environments that foster favourable outcomes such as these.'

The research also found strong links between communities with lots of volunteering and those where people were very satisfied with their lives.

Employment

Other studies have provided evidence of the beneficial effects to the volunteer as a route into employment. The TimeBank Employer Attitude Survey conducted in 2004 among 200 of the UK's leading businesses showed that:

94% of employers believed that volunteering can add to skills

73% of employers would employ a candidate with volunteering experience over one who did not

An evaluation undertaken by the Institute of Volunteering Research (2002) on Millennium Volunteers, the youth volunteering programme for 16-25 year olds, provided evidence that volunteering can make young people more employable by improving skills such as communication and team working.

Health

Voluntary activity can help get people back on their feet after illness, or those recovering from addiction, mental health problems and homelessness. Allan Luks in *'Healing Power of Doing Good'* cites medical and scientific documentation of the health benefits of volunteering such as an improvement in insomnia, a stronger immune system, a speedier recovery from surgery and a heightened sense of well-being.

For older people, volunteering contributes positively to the process of "active aging" by helping the newly retired adjust to life without the structure of the workplace and by improving physical and mental well being. In a county with a higher than average ageing population, volunteering can play a significant role.

According to *Giving Time Beats Obesity*, the Make A Difference Day Survey 2004 commissioned by CSV, nearly half (47%) of all volunteers said volunteering had improved

their physical health and fitness, while 25% of people who volunteered more than five times per year, claimed volunteering had helped them lose weight. 20% of people who had volunteered for over two years and 19% of those who volunteered once a month or more said volunteering helped them drink less alcohol, while nearly a third (30%) of 18–24 year old smokers said volunteering helped them smoke less.

A second survey *'Giving Time Beats Stress'* conducted for the CSV later that year found that half of people (48%) who have volunteered for more than two years stated that volunteering made them less depressed with almost 1 in 3 (31%) of 18 – 24 year olds saying they had taken less time off work since volunteering.

Volunteering can also raise self confidence and reduce social isolation, especially helping to integrate people into society who are excluded or marginalized. For example, people with disabilities participating in volunteering challenges negative stereotypes of disabled people as passive recipients of care.

Reduction in Crime

Studies have also provided evidence of a correlation between decreased voluntary participation and a proportional increase in levels of violent crime, mortality levels and an increase in educational outcomes. Certainly as we moved in to the new millennium, Tony Blair believed that volunteering would help to alleviate some of society's problems:

If we succeed in making a more active community, I'm convinced that there will also be other benefits - less anti-social behaviour, less crime, less of the corrosion of values that worries so many people.'

(Active Community Convention Mar 2000)

Community Cohesion and Citizenship

Volunteering has often been described as the social glue of communities. In other words, volunteering plays a substantial role in building strong and cohesive communities by involving grass-roots participation and a network of relationships between people and their communities. Professor J Kearney (2004) demonstrated that volunteering empowers people to fulfil their potential, and acquire new skills and knowledge, building on their own capacity and creativity to contribute to the health and vibrancy of their own communities. Morrow (2001) also found that volunteering often enables people to become connected to people from different backgrounds and different cultures. In so doing volunteering can make a significant difference to tackling the causes and effects of rural and social exclusion, an important consideration for a rural county like Herefordshire.

Studies by academics such as Davis Smith (2001) have also shown that volunteering encourages democratic engagement with volunteers more likely to vote in national and local elections.

Value of Volunteering to Volunteers

Volunteering can have enormous benefits for the volunteers themselves. As there appear to be no studies available that are specific to Herefordshire, Herefordshire Voluntary Action ran a competition in April 2006, asking volunteers to say in their own words what volunteering means to them. Some of the entries are featured here and support far more eloquently the value of volunteering than any words in this study could hope to achieve.

The Value of Volunteering to Volunteers

We all need to be needed in this world and, whilst I have my health, I want to use each day to some purpose. During the 17 years since I have been widowed I have become increasingly involved in volunteering in varying degrees – mainly in fundraising, not necessarily giving money, but giving TIME, the most valuable asset we have these days....So why has volunteering helped me? It has prevented me becoming a selfish, miserable old lady. I now know so many people and have so many commitments, I haven't time to feel lonely.

Jean – aged 83

After leaving university last year it became apparent to me that learning theory alone would not be enough to a job in the profession I wished to pursue. In order to gain experience, I decided to undertake a voluntary placement with SHYPP. Not only have I learnt key skills for future employment, I believe it has helped improve personal qualities such as an increase in my confidence, helped me to communicate with others better as well as increasing my motivation. I would definitely recommend volunteering to anyone who wants to expand their knowledge and skills or simply try something different.

Lucy - aged 22.

I started to volunteer when I was coming to the end of my Army service. I became secretary of Putson Residents' Association and then later, Chair. All this was to help me get better after leaving the army with serious back injury. Through attending a lot of meetings and events I became fitter and I was then able to become a sports leader after completing a course with HVA. Volunteering helped my confidence – I gained employment from my new skills. It also helped me to find out more about the needs of the local community and to try improving their quality of life.

Steve – aged 56.

Volunteering was a life saver for me. I was going through a really low period of my life – divorce, struggling to pay the bills – everything seemed to be collapsing around my ears. I couldn't work as I was so depressed. My doctor suggested volunteering so I started helping in a local charity, answering the telephone, photocopying, sticking labels on envelopes, that sort of thing. Some days I didn't feel up to going in and the staff always understood. Gradually, I built up my confidence again and began to feel much better. I now have a paid job with that charity and life's looking great.

Sue – aged 37

Being confined to a wheelchair I look forward to getting out of the house and I believe that through volunteering, meeting people and helping others, I am having a positive impact on my life

Last year I got asked by my school to help make a film to show all the things that matter to young people. A group of us got together and spent lots of weekends of our own time planning the film and doing interviews. I'm normally very shy but over the months I've become really confident. Volunteering might sound boring –but it isn't.

Jessica, aged 16

For years I had been working in a dead end job and always felt something was missing from my life. I wanted a challenge and felt that I would like to train to become a social worker but didn't know if I would be any good at it. Hereford Volunteer Centre gave me lots of help on volunteering opportunities which would give me a taster of what I might be letting myself in for. I've now been volunteering for a couple of years mentoring young people and I've now started my social work diploma. Volunteering certainly helps if you're thinking about changing direction in your life.

- Chris aged 46

I volunteer with Age Concern because I care about people, especially those less able to help themselves. To me, personally, the rewards from volunteering are greater than any I received in my working life – a happy environment, great people and best of all the thanks from the many I've been able to help – worth much more than a big salary! Try It!

Cynthia 72 and a bit

I had some time on my hands during the long summer vacation, so I decided to do some voluntary work at a local nature reserve.

It was brilliant – I made loads of new friends. It also increased my social life and made me feel that I had made a real contribution to the environment.

James aged 19

Conclusions

The volunteering experience and contribution is unique but is often unrecognised or undervalued. Whilst this study has sought to place an economic value on volunteering, it should be stressed that volunteers should never be seen as a substitute for paid labour or exploited to do work that should be paid. We believe that the amount of time volunteers give should be acknowledged and celebrated by Herefordshire. As a frequently used anonymous quotation aptly states:

Volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

With so little statistical information available on the level of volunteering activity in Herefordshire, it has been difficult to make comparisons not just with the national trends, but also to ascertain whether volunteering has fluctuated on a countywide basis over any period of time. Certainly it can be argued that the economic value we have placed on volunteering in Herefordshire has been based on a relatively low sample and it is hoped that further surveys will be undertaken on a regular basis which will substantiate these calculations.

Herefordshire Council will be conducting another Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2007 to ascertain whether formal volunteering has increased. This summer it will also be consulting the Herefordshire Voice panel to look in more detail at why people do or do not volunteer and the barriers that prevent them from volunteering. It will also be interesting to see whether the ageing population of the county will have a significant impact on the pool of volunteers over time.

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Appendix One

THE HEREFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM

The Membership of the Consortium consists of a core group and a wider reference group:-

Core Group

Herefordshire Voluntary Action
Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District
Age Concern Hereford and Worcester
Community First In Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services

Close relations are maintained with

Herefordshire Council
Herefordshire Partnership

Wider reference group

Herefordshire Community Care Alliance
Herefordshire Community Foundation
Herefordshire Voluntary Sector Assembly
Welcome to Our Future
Cultural Consortium
Churches Together
Statutory Youth Services
Race Equality Partnership
Herefordshire Sports Council
ABLE
Herefordshire Voluntary and Community Sector Learning Partnership
Rural Media Company

Appendix 2

Volunteering in Herefordshire – breakdown by age and work status

NB All data and analysis in this appendix have been provided by the Research Team, Herefordshire Council. For methodology etc, please see the Herefordshire Annual Satisfaction Survey 2005-06 Report.

Data is taken from two questions (Q.25 and Q.27 of the Annual Satisfaction Survey 2005-06):

Question 25: In the last 12 months, have you provided unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment

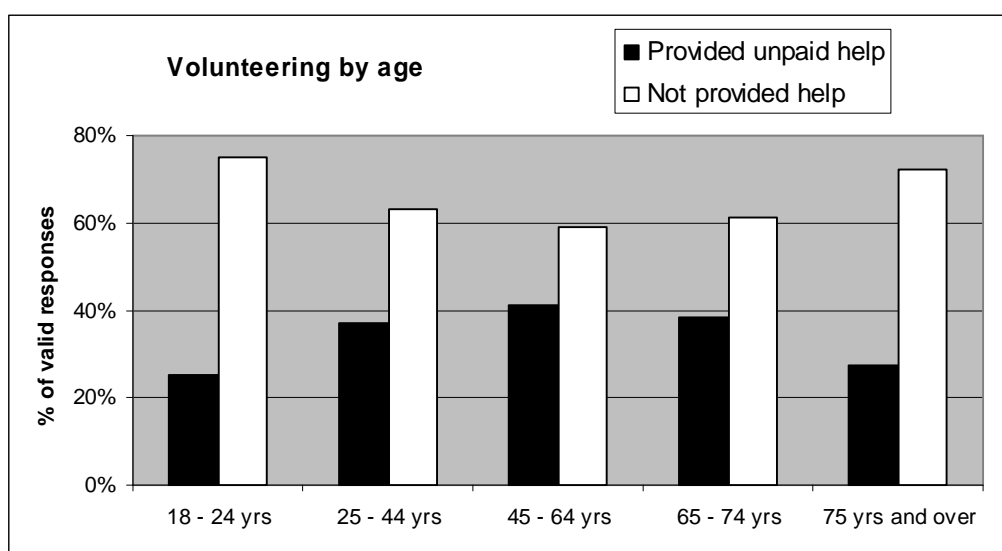
Question 27: If 'yes' on average, how much time (in total) do you spend providing such help?

Age

In each table below, the sample base is quoted. This is the number of respondents on whom the percentages are based. PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR SOME AGE GROUPS, THESE ARE VERY LOW.

Using Q25: (as seen in the Satisfaction Survey report)

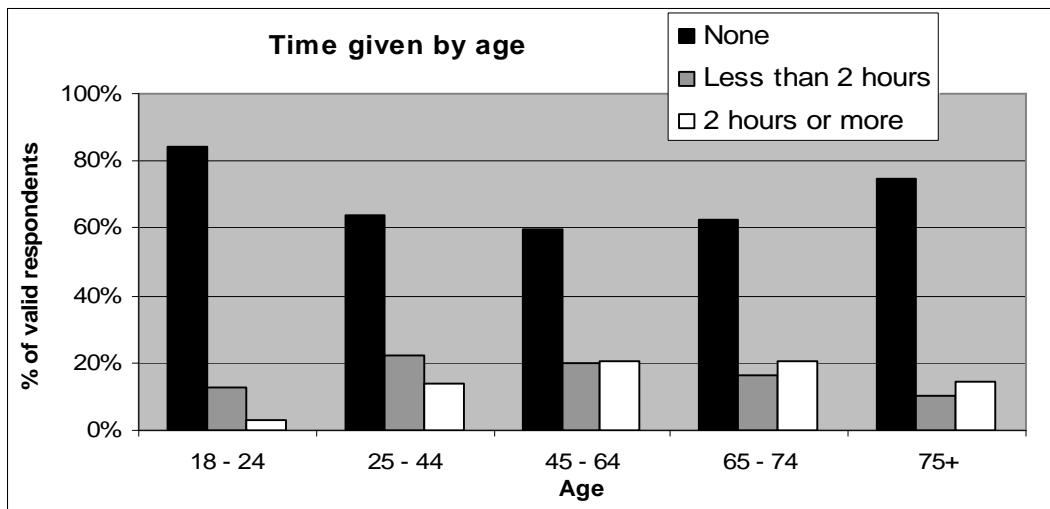
Volunteering by age					
	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 +
Provided unpaid help	25%	37%	41%	39%	28%
Not provided help	75%	63%	59%	61%	72%
Sample base:	32	418	403	145	134



Using Q27:

Note that the percentages given for "None" in the table below are the percentage who did not answer Q27 – not those who said "No" to Q25. As there were a small number of respondents who ticked "Yes" to Q25, but failed to answer Q27, the proportions for "None" given below are slight over-estimates. Q25 therefore provides more reliable figures for non-volunteers.

Time given by age					
	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 +
None	84%	64%	60%	63%	75%
Less than 2 hours per week	13%	22%	20%	17%	10%
2 hours per week or more	3%	14%	21%	21%	15%
Sample base:	32	420	408	151	143

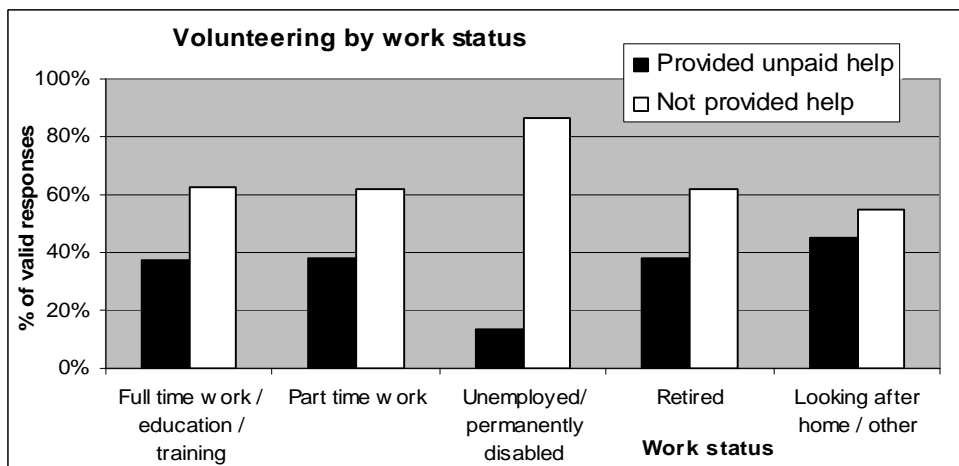


Work Status

In each table, the sample base is quoted. This is the number of respondents on whom the percentages are based. Due to low sample bases, some work status categories have been grouped, but even so, some bases are very low.

Using Q25:

Volunteering by work status					
	Full time work / education / training	Part time work	Unemployed / permanently disabled	Retired	Looking after home / other
Provided unpaid help	38%	38%	14%	38%	45%
Not provided help	62%	62%	86%	62%	55%
Sample base:	522	147	59	322	82



Using Q27:

Note that the percentages given for “None” in the table below are the percentage who did not answer Q27 – not those who said “No” to Q25. As there were a small number of respondents who ticked “Yes” to Q25, but failed to answer Q27, the proportions for “None” given below are slight over-estimates. Q25 therefore provides more reliable figures for non-volunteers.

Time given by work status					
	Full time work / education / training	Part time work	Unemployed / permanently disabled	Retired	Looking after home / other
None	64%	62%	88%	64%	55%
Less than 2 hours per week	21%	22%	5%	16%	23%
2 hours per week or more	16%	16%	7%	20%	22%
Sample base:	529	146	59	336	83

