



# Voluntary and Community Sector Survey 2017-18

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*"Coming together is a beginning,  
staying together is progress, and  
working together is success."*

**Henry Ford**

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## **1. Introduction**

For the last three years we have surveyed the not-for-profit sector in Medway to ascertain their views on two main areas:

- The general state of 'health' of the sector in Medway
- The effectiveness of MVA infrastructure services

Medway Voluntary Action (MVA) has undertaken this research to help inform understanding of its impact on the sustainability and development of the not-for-profit sector in Medway, what value the sector places on its services and what we can do to improve them.

This report also provides evidence to Medway Council on the KPI's on which it is expected to deliver the infrastructure services.

This report is therefore split into two parts as defined above.

## **2. Methodology**

In order to facilitate comparison, this survey broadly used the same questions as the previous survey.

MVA Medway developed an online questionnaire which was distributed to its members and its newsletter subscribers. Responses were incentivised by a prize draw

In order to encourage participation, respondents were promised that the responses would be anonymised, therefore this report analyses aggregated responses to the questions.

The survey was launched in December 2017 and closed in March 2018.

The survey was distributed to 602 individuals with 89 responses received, a similar response rate to the 2017 survey (95). This represents a 14.8% response rate which is consistent with previous MVA surveys and is generally considered a good response rate to an external survey.

The first part of the survey gathered information to enable the identification of the organisation:

- Respondent name
- Respondent e-mail address
- Organisation name
- Organisation postcode

Its focus is on the sustainability of respondent organisations through their reliance on volunteers, their key challenges, how they generate their income, the diversity of their income streams and their engagement in networks.

The second part focuses on the impact of MVA's services as an infrastructure organisation supporting and representing the sector to enable sector development and sustainability.

### **3. Limitations**

Not-for-profit organisations can have a variety of respondents completing surveys on their behalf. Respondents may not have access to detailed or highly accurate information relating to the management or governance of the organisation, and questions were devised to be accessible to people with a 'fair working knowledge' of the organisation, rather than an expert technical knowledge.

For this reason most questions invite 'broad brush stroke' responses, asking respondents to place their group in a band or bracket, rather than give specific detail. It is therefore fair to say that while the survey was carried out with a methodological focus on organisational entities, the views given were fully those of individuals involved with them.

There is a need to be aware of issues around the localisation of services. Some service areas may have very limited local provision but good regional provision; some Kent-based organisations have users and volunteers in Medway and there are a number of national organisations working in Medway. It was decided that the criteria for inclusion was that the organisation delivers services in Medway.

This survey accepted that classifications of activities and client groups must be defined by the group rather than being imposed. In order to facilitate this, a number of questions included an open dialogue box.

### **4. Analysis**

The report details the combined responses to the questions, but also includes analysis by interaction with MVA to indicate the impact of different interactions on the sustainability of the organisation engaging with MVA; in sum whether that interaction made the organisation stronger, better informed and more connected.

## Part 1

### 5. About the organisations

#### **5.1 What type of organisation are you?**

Respondents were given a list of different charity forms (registered charity, social enterprise, community group, or faith group) with an open dialogue box for any other form.

Apart from one, all respondents answered this question.

64.8% of respondents reported that they were registered charities compared to 55.2% of respondents to our previous survey.

There was also a growth in the number of respondents reporting themselves as Community Groups with 11.4% in this survey compared to 8.3% in our previous survey.

This may reflect a change in approach by the sector; however it may also reflect MVA's increasing reach with community groups as our focus increases on empowering and supporting community activity.

35% of respondents were unincorporated community groups, faith groups or in the process of registering as a charity compared to 18% from the previous survey.

This may reflect the continuing activity that MVA has provided to start up groups and our consistent engagement with a wider constituency of not-for-profits.

#### **5.2 What are the main activities your organisation provides?**

Respondents were given a list of activities and asked to tick all that they felt applied and had an option to add their own classification.

In total the 89 respondents listed over 191 activities.

28% of respondents reported delivering just one activity.

#### **Range of activities**

45% of respondents reported delivering Information and Advice. These tended to be registered charities providing this activity as one of many services to a range of client groups, which included Adults and Children, Older People, Ethnic Minorities and People with Disabilities/Long Term Illnesses.

The next most common activity was Volunteering at 25%. Again amongst the specialist groups and providers listed were also a number of Social Enterprises and Community Groups providing their services to a range of client groups which noticeably included people with mental health conditions.

Community Groups again readily appeared amongst the listing of the next commonly reported activity of Education at 22%. Again these groups of respondents provided their services to a range of clients, this time the range noticeably included Adults and Families.

Some respondents reported services such as Advocacy for People with Long Term or Chronic Illness or providing Arts and Culture activities to People with Mental Health Conditions; one organisation reported uniquely delivering Environmental Protection activities for Future Generations.

### **5.3 Who are the main users of your services?**

Respondents were given a list of service users and asked to tick all that they felt applied and had an option to add their own classification.

Respondents defined their client groups as follows:

Only adults	62.9%
Black and ethnic minorities	7.9%
Carers	10.1%
Children	33.7%
Families	38.2%
LGBTQ Communities	2.2%
Older people	27%
People with long term/chronic illness	11.2%
People with mental health conditions	14.6%
People with physical disability	12.4%

A significant difference exists between the numbers of organisations reporting working with adults only this year to our previous survey. In our 2017 survey only 22% of organisations reported working with adults only. There is also an increase in the number of organisations reporting working with children. Data on Black and Ethnic Minority activity was not collected last year nor was data on the last three categories above. Our experience last year indicated it would be helpful to have a fuller breakdown of the client groups of organisations in Medway.

### **5.4 What is the approximate number of people who benefit from your activities in a year?**

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of beneficiaries from their activities from a list of number bands. All respondents answered this as follows:

- 3.4% served 0 to 10
- 12.4% served 11 to 50
- 14.6% served 51 – 100
- 10.1% served 101 – 250
- 14.6% served 251 – 500
- 34.8% served more than 500

The numbers of people benefitting was largely defined by turnover; the larger the turnover the more people benefitted.

However, financially smaller community groups and Arts & Culture based organisations reached large numbers of beneficiaries, as did those delivering Information and Advice and other volunteer led activities.

### **5.5 What is your organisation's annual income?**

Respondents were asked to indicate their annual income from a list of number bands.

83 responses were received to this question.

Using NCVO classifications<sup>1</sup>;

26.5% of respondents are micro organisations with an income of less than £10,000, 31.4% are small (£10,000 to £100,000) 24.1% are medium (£100,000 to £1 million) and 6% are large (£1 million to £10 million). None were 'major' with a turnover of more than £10 million.

Many of those reporting a high turnover and reach were local branches of national organisations (some potentially reporting national rather than local data) and/or those delivering against large national or local contracts.

### **5.6 Do you have salaried staff, if so how many?**

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of salaried staff in their organisation. Ten respondents made no response, of the others:

- No salaried staff                      37%
- 5 or less                                    29%
- 6 to 20                                     25%
- 21 to 99                                    5%
- Over 100                                    3%

Over a third of respondents operate with no permanent staff and two thirds with fewer than five. These were organisations who also reported delivering Information and Advice or Volunteering Activities amongst the various services they provided.

This may suggest the sector's reliance on volunteers and its ability to deliver cost-effective solutions potentially as a result of reduced levels of income which inevitably will have an impact on delivery.

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<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac12/methodology/><sup>1</sup>

## 6. Volunteering

### 6.1 *How many volunteers do you have, including Trustees/Management Committee/members?*

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of volunteers in their organisation. Of the 78 responses that were received to this question:

- none 6%
- 5 or under 10%
- 6 to 10 19%
- 21 to 50 46%
- 51 – 100 5%
- 101 and over 13%

Respondents reported engaging nearly 10,000 volunteers, an average of around 125 each, with one reporting they host more than 7,000 – it is likely that these figures may also include volunteer numbers nationally so may not be a true picture of the number of volunteers in Medway.

### 6.2 *How many of these are Trustees/Management Committee members?*

Respondents were asked to indicate how many trustees/management committee members they had from a list of number bands.

10 respondents did not respond to this question.

Of the remaining 79 responses:

- 1 to 3 20%
- 4 to 5 28%
- 6 to 10 41%
- More than 10 11%

Charity Commission guidance is that organisations should have a minimum of three trustees so it is encouraging to see that although a fifth of organisations report being on or under this number, there is a slight improvement from what was reported last year (22%).

### 6.3 *How dependent are you on volunteers to carry out your work?*

Respondents were asked to indicate how dependent their organisation is on volunteers, completely, partly or not at all.

Of the 87 responses only 8% reported being not at all dependent; these were mostly specialist service providers. 54% reported being completely dependent on volunteers with more than half reporting having more than 10 volunteers engaged.



38% reported being partly dependent. This represents a significant increase in the organisations being completely dependent on volunteers (last year only 40% were in this category) which may confirm findings from paragraph 5.6.

#### **6.4 Which of the following describes your situation most accurately?**

Respondents were asked to choose from the following statements

- We are equally dependent on income and volunteers - 39%
- Most of our resources are in the form of income - 16%
- Most of our resources are in the form of volunteers' time, effort and commitment - 44%

Of the 85 responses, over 80% are dependent to some extent on volunteers, a substantial increase to last year's data which indicated 64% in this category.

Those mostly dependent on income tended to be social enterprises, local branches of large national charities and larger (by turnover) registered charities from the arts or similar specialist group, or from similar well established local organisations.

Those dependent on volunteers tended to be either small or medium sized groups (by turnover).

## **7. Challenges**

### **7.1 What are the main challenges facing your organisation**

Respondents were given a list of challenges (with an option to add their own) and asked to tick all that applied to their organisation.

86 responses were made to this question:

- |                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| • Generating income                                | 66% |
| • Increasing awareness of your organisation        | 67% |
| • Lack of staff/volunteer capacity to deliver work | 39% |
| • Recruiting volunteers                            | 39% |
| • Engaging service users                           | 24% |
| • Space to work in                                 | 14% |
| • Networking opportunities                         | 13% |
| • Safeguarding                                     | 3%  |
| • Other                                            | 4%  |

Other

- Lack of trustee interaction and support
- Training opportunities

Unsurprisingly, the largest area of concern was around income.

In our previous survey 63% of respondents reported generating income as a very important priority and, though not directly comparable questions, it may still be concerning to note that two thirds of respondents to this survey list this as a major challenge.

82% of respondents identified themselves as working with vulnerable groups, however only 3% of respondents reported safeguarding as a major challenge. This identified 'challenge' to do with safeguarding has also substantially dropped from 11% last year to 3% this year. MVA offer training in safeguarding – this drop may be as a direct result of this training.

## 8. Sustainability

### 8.1 *How do you generate income?*

Respondents were given a list of income sources (with an option to add their own) and asked to tick all that applied to their organisation.

84 responses were made to this question:

- Grants from Trusts and Foundations 52%
- Earning income through providing services 30%
- Community fundraising 37%
- Contracts with statutory bodies 23%
- Earning income through Trading 14%
- Fees from members 30%

The results indicate a broad range of funding sources with a minority generating income from trading but an increase in those charging fees from members. It also reflects a substantial decrease in those generating income from statutory bodies.

Other responses included:

- Donations 2%
- Statutory grants 2%
- Legacies 1%
- Corporate Support 1%
- Social investment 1%

### 8.2 *Of your various income streams, which single stream represents the largest part of your income?*

Respondents were given the same list of income sources (with an option to add their own) and asked to tick the one that applied to their organisation.

84 responses were made to this question:

- Grants from Trusts and Foundations 26%
- Fees from providing services 19%
- Fees from members 15%
- Contracts with statutory bodies 13%
- Community fundraising 13%
- Other 12%

Other responses included:

- Donations 1%
- Council funding 1%
- Room/Studio Letting 1%
- Gifts from members and Church attendees 1%
- Last year of (Big) Lottery Funding 1%

Grants from Trusts and Foundations are still the single biggest source of income for not-for-profits in Medway, 26% in comparison to 28% in the previous survey.

Fees from providing services have grown from 16% in the previous survey to 19%.

There is also an increase in Community fundraising.

### **8.3 *What proportion of your income is provided by the income stream that you chose in the previous question?***

Respondents were given a list of income bands and asked to tick the one that applied to their organisation.

88 responses were received to this question:

- Below 25% 5%
- 26-50% 7%
- 51-75% 28%
- 75 -99% 31%
- 100% 16%

Over 40% of respondents are reliant on one source of income for over 75% of their total income. Of these respondents it is worth noting they were a mix of all sizes of organisation, 7% being large (using NCVO classifications), 20% medium, 32% small and 22% micro. 22% were a combination Social Enterprise and Community Groups reliant on both Fees from Members or Services, 15% were reliant on Contracts with Statutory Bodies and 15% on Trusts and Foundations. 1 respondent reported being mainly reliant on Bequests.

## 9. Impact

**This is the first year that we have collected data relating to impact; the rationale behind this is that increasingly organisations are expected to demonstrate impact to justify their funding, potentially using a variety of methods. There is no previous data for comparison.**

### **9.1 How confident do you feel about demonstrating your organisation's impact?**

Respondents were asked to show the extent of certainty that the efforts of their product or service were making a difference to their users, clients or community.

Respondents were asked to rate this level on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very confident and 5 being extremely confident.

Of the 87 responses, they rated their certainty as follows:

1. 2%
2. 13%
3. 21%
4. 36%
5. 28%

The results show that over 80% of respondents range from being confident to very confident in showing their extent of certainty.

### **9.2 What evidence of your organisation's impact do you collect? For example data on improved well-being of your service users or case studies on financial impact.**

Respondents were asked to comment and define what data they gather to show the difference that their efforts, product or service makes on individuals or communities. Of the 74 respondents that answered this question, their comments ranged from defining and reporting key points of their organisation's activities, 'before and after' surveys, measuring or reporting the effect of given service delivery, criteria or similar indicator.

A selection of comments is shown below:

- *Before and After Weekend questionnaires: improvements in eating, sleeping habits, improved mental health and well-being. Better attendance at school."*
- *Each service user is requested to complete a Well-being scale at the beginning and at 3 monthly intervals or at exit.*
- *Numbers using service, numbers into work, numbers into training, numbers into volunteering, numbers completing digital skills courses, numbers successfully supported through PIP and ESA appeals, numbers completing financial literacy sessions.*

- *Numbers into work, education and volunteering. Number of upheld tribunal appeals (ESA and PIP). Numbers completing digital skills and ESOL courses. Collected using Lamplight, a web based CRM.*
- *how do you show improved well-being of a bereaved person*
- *N/A, I feel that one of the things that worked best in the organisation was that it gave women, and a few of the men to network with each other, and also for the children to meet children that they would otherwise not have done. Also the teenage boys were able to network away from their parents and receive some career ideas.*

## 10. Networks

### **10.1 Do you belong to any networks in Medway, for example the VCS Leaders Group, Dementia Action Alliance or Medway Neurological Network? If so, please can you tell us which ones in the box below?**

Respondents were asked to indicate their membership of networks in Medway.

Of the 62 responses to this question, nearly 60% reported being engaged, suggesting a marked improvement in local organisations engaging with local networks compared to 43% from the previous survey.

The most frequent entry amongst the responses was the VCS Leaders' Network, with over 25% of respondents reporting being part of this network.

Respondents engaged in networks reported being part of some of the following:

- DAA
- Dementia Action Alliance and Medway Neurological Network...but this is more because of my interest in dementia as well as dyslexia.
- Dementia action alliance; volunteer network
- Dyslexia House Association
- I'm unsure - our Programme Manager will be better able to answer this question.
- Kent Police Medway Independent Police Advisory Group, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust Patient Engagement Group & Medway Sexual Health Patient Advisory Group.
- Medway Cultural Partnership (I am new to Medway)
- Medway Neurological Network
- Medway Voluntary Action and Medway Youth Trust
- MEMF, MEDWAY INTERFAITH
- MNN, VCS Health Network, MDAA
- MTGC , VCS , TCP , MVA
- MVA
- No but would like to
- No partnerships at present, but we are open to joining
- only loose networking
- VCS Leaders Group (x11)
- VCS Leaders Group, Carers' Partnership, Social Isolation Implementation Group, Medway Neurological Network
- VCS Leaders Group, DAA
- VCS Leaders Group, Dementia Action Alliance
- VCS Leaders Group, Social Isolation Group, Health Network, Dance Network

- We come under the national organisation Interfaith Network UK
- We've had a VCS Leaders Group invitation which was great, thank you

## **11. Safeguarding**

### **11.1 Do you work with vulnerable adults or children?**

Of the 87 that answered, over 70% reported that they did.

### **11.2 How confident do you feel about your safeguarding procedures?**

Respondents were asked to show their extent of certainty in terms of safeguarding procedures in context to working with vulnerable adults or children.

Of the 62 that answered, all respondents said they were confident in varying degrees, with over 85% expressing they were either very or extremely confident.

## Part Two

### 12. Support from Medway Voluntary Action

Respondents were asked to identify the impact of different interactions on the sustainability of the recipient organisation: This was to determine if the interaction made that organisation stronger, better informed and more connected

To identify this, respondents were asked which of MVA's services they had used and to rate their interaction on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. Respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their response.

#### 12.1 MVA Website

##### **Have you visited the MVA website?**

Over 70% of respondents reported having used the website.

##### **How useful did you find the MVA website?**

Respondents were asked to rate their experience on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. They rated their experience as follows:

1. 0%
2. 2.9%
3. 29.4%
4. 45.6%
5. 22.4%

In the previous survey 66% rated their experience as very or extremely useful. Although the most recent survey indicates an increase in satisfaction, there was a favourable shift in this as there were more respondents than previously reporting the newsletter was extremely useful.

This may in part be due to increasing shifts toward the use of social media and mobile platforms. This is reflected in MVA's increasing engagement through social media, (for example our Twitter following has continued to grow in the last year with an increase in the number individuals 'liking' and 'sharing' individual posts).

##### **Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Promoting volunteering opportunities, reading relevant blogs and guidance material.
- Help with creating governance documents
- Great opportunities for networking, keeping up to date with legislation changes and funding opportunities
- Better networking opportunities
- Updated my knowledge in order to pass info on to staff and people in need of help and support
- Sharing information around generating income has provided one source of funding for us
- MVA has provided us with a mailing address, as well as introducing us to organisations and individuals who may be able to help us to develop our organisation.

MVA make every effort to review the website design and content to ensure it meets our audience needs, as well as being easy to navigate to the content that visitors are looking for.

## **12.2 One to One Support**

### **Have you received any one to one support from MVA?**

15.1% of respondents reported having a one-to-one support session.

### **How useful did you find the support?**

Respondents were asked to rate their experience on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. They rated their experience as follows:

1. 0%
2. 7.7%
3. 0%
4. 30.8%
5. 61.5%

In the previous survey 65% rated their experience as very or extremely useful. The level of satisfaction has increased significantly and, based on respondents' comments, the service is clearly valued.

However, this is a resource intensive form of support and as such, provision is limited.



MVA continue to look at developing activities designed to make direct support more widely available. Part of this work is done through events and seminars around specific subjects such as commissioning and social value. This includes organising a recent collaboration event for the VCS Leaders Network, inviting specialists such as the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery funds to run local surgeries, increasing our library of toolkits and templates online and signposting to specialist organisations for free consultations.

### **Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Continued existence
- I had advise on fundraising in the past that was very helpful
- Many of our members are better informed about governance and compliance. We received preliminary help from MVA about how to apply for charity status. Our Trustee Directors have benefitted a great deal from some of the training courses run by NKTS, e.g. Trustees Roles & Responsibilities
- MVA have supported Time Credits by raising profile for the programme in a blog and newsletters
- Successful grant applications

## **12.3 MVA Newsletter**

### **Do you subscribe to the MVA newsletter?**

70.5% of respondents reported subscribing to the MVA newsletter;

### **How useful do you find the MVA newsletter?**

Respondents were asked to rate their experience on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. They rated their experience as follows:

1. 0%
2. 2%
3. 39%
4. 41%
5. 18%

In the previous survey 96% rated their experience as useful in varying degrees, which suggests a slight increase in the level of satisfaction.

Work is underway to broaden the content that is available in order to better connect Medway organisations with the national context; this includes disseminating learning and best practice from national organisations.

### **Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Found out about events and funding opportunities
- Helpful to be reminded and updated on current issues and support available
- Information about funding, local events and directory of local organisations have been useful
- Partnership working
- We attend events that are also very useful

### **12.4 MVA Events**

#### **Have you attended any MVA networking events or seminars?**

#### **How useful did you find the MVA events?**

48% of respondents reported attending MVA events and seminars, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful rating their experience as follows:

1. 0%
2. 2.4%
3. 29.3%
4. 39%
5. 29.3%

In the previous survey 77% rated their experience as very or extremely useful. The latest figures represent a slight decline.

This may reflect the demise of our Community Engagement Network events and the shift to networking and collaboration through the Medway VCS Leaders Network – respondents were not asked to comment on these events.

MVA continues to evaluate events and whilst we will receive overwhelmingly positive responses, where there are concerns we make changes as appropriate as part of an ongoing process.

### **Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Better overall understanding of the subject - Trustees seminar
- Increasing local networks
- Lots of hugely valuable information and contacts
- Trustee work

- More contacts made, more understanding of what is happening in Medway

## **12.5 Medway Volunteer Network**

**Medway Volunteer Network is a new service being delivered by MVA. This is the first time therefore that data has been collected on its impact.**

**Have you used Medway Volunteer Network?  
How useful did you find Medway Volunteer Network?**

23.5% of respondents reported using MVN, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. They rated their experience as follows:

1. 11%
2. 5.6%
3. 27.8%
4. 22.2%
5. 33.3%

MVN continues to build on establishing itself as a recently introduced service from MVA, through its open engagement with various local organisations and similar bodies such as Medway Universities, Job Centre Plus, and at public events, such as Mid-Kent College Job Fair.

**Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- As stated previously, we got new volunteers through this but I don't know the exact number
- I have only just enrolled so not at this time
- Promoting volunteering opportunities
- We had some interest in Volunteering for us

## **12.6 MVA's Online Directory of Services**

**Medway's directory of services, 'Medway Information Hub' is a new service being delivered this year and the data below reflects early feedback.**

**Have you used MVA's online directory of services?  
How useful was MVA's online directory of services?**

20.7% of respondents reported using MVA's online directory of services on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not very useful and 5 being extremely useful. They rated their experience as follows:

1. 5.6%
2. 0%
3. 16.7%
4. 50%
5. 27.8%

The online directory of services is a continuously expanding reference guide made available for use by public, community, business or similar groups and promoted through our main communication channels, including at its launch, through our newsletter.

MVA strive to maintain the information is up to date, as well as collected and maintained in accordance with current data protection laws.

**Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Advise and info availed (*sic*)
- Just looked to see what it contains have passed this information on to many others in Medway
- Knowledge to share information
- Will ask that they add Dyslexia House Association to the Directory

## **12.7 North Kent Training Service**

**Have you attended training with MVA's training arm, North Kent Training Service?**

**How useful did you find the training from North Kent Training service?**

28% of respondents reported receiving training from NKTS; they rated their experience as follows:

1. 0%
2. 0%
3. 0%
4. 52%
5. 48%

In the previous survey 91% rated their experience as very or extremely useful. The increase this year represents the value placed on our training offer delivered by our training arm, North Kent Training Service with 100% expressing their experience as very or extremely useful is the highest level of feedback received over the last three year period.

### **Can you tell us about any actions or outcomes that have come from this support?**

Respondents were asked to comment about any actions following this form of interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix A.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- 1st aid volunteers trained, food safety training, safeguarding
- Increased knowledge in managing volunteers
- This is the main service we use. Very useful, very well run.
- Training is very practical and of high standard, particularly Project Management, how to write funding applications, Fundraising etc. For one of our projects, we employed NKTS to deliver a series of employability workshops which was tailor-made for our service users.
- More effective management of office staff

## **13. Impact & Outcomes**

### **13.1 Please tell us about any outcomes for your service users as a result of support from Medway Voluntary Action. For example is your organisation more sustainable or have you improved your governance?**

Respondents were asked to outline outcomes for their service users as a result of support from MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix B.

Responses included:

- Better governance, happier volunteers
- I am too new but want to work in partnership with MVA
- I believe that our reach has been extended through our interaction with MVA.
- More efficient as office has increased outputs
- More efficient staff performance
- MVA is a consortium member for Ideas Test and we really value your ongoing support
- Training provided by NKTS has been extremely valuable.
- We have increased our ability to recruit volunteers for services in Medway
- We were able to continue support for our counselling service with funding sourced through MVA's work with Medway Council which benefited the LGBTQ service users

### 13.2 Has support from Medway Voluntary Action made your organisation....

Respondents were asked to define the impact of the different interactions on the sustainability of the organisation that engaged with MVA; essentially whether the interaction with MVA made the organisation stronger, better informed and/or more connected?

They rated their experience as follows:

Stronger.	11%
Better informed.	59%
More connected.	46%

Respondents were encouraged to choose more than one definition. More than half of respondents indicated being 'Better Informed', with the impact of being 'More Connected' closely following this sentiment. Furthermore another organisation extended this impact by recording they were "More confident". This would suggest the work carried out by MVA encouraging more engagement within the sector continues to be successful.

#### **Please explain your answer**

Respondents were asked to expand on their specific choice of impact following interaction with MVA. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix B.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- Access to the wider community and excellent support on a one to one basis
- As it is still early days for the MNN the biggest contribution made by the MVA is guidance
- Available and known to more local organisations through the VCS leaders network
- Before involvement with MVA, we had no mailing address or anyone to turn to for support in establishing our organisation.
- I'm just starting out in Medway so am really starting to understand what support is out there
- It is good to know that other voluntary organisation have similar problems
- Links to other members of the network
- Lots of up-to-date information on the website
- More knowledgeable about different charity related information & responsibilities
- We are kept up to date with events and activities taking place in Medway and consequently feel more connected.

### **13.3 What could MVA do to help your organisation to be more sustainable, better informed and/or more engaged?**

Respondents were asked if there were any other provision or service that MVA could provide to help continue or better the respondents' enterprise or activities, notwithstanding being more sustainable, better informed and/or more engaged.

A selection of comments is as follows:

- From my organisation's point of view keeping up to date and informed of possible changes in Medway is invaluable.
- It is already fabulous!
- Keep on providing the networking opportunities and information services.
- Meet with us to understand our business and explain how we could use MVA's services better
- More consistent sign posting and cross referencing
- Nothing radically different, just more of the same - keep up the good work!
- Now I have heard about you, I will be looking into what you do!
- Offer more Training sessions on changes to legislation as it impacts on small charities
- You are already doing a good job

## **14. Conclusion**

The survey indicates that the sector feels more unified than in previous years and the take up of MVA's collaboration portal and attendance at associated events suggests that organisations recognise the importance of working collaboratively now more than before to ensure their sustainability.

However it also indicates diminishing incomes and a greater reliance on volunteers. Whilst volunteers make an extremely effective contribution to the work of organisations, it must be recognised that these increasing numbers will also require increased training, support, supervision and monitoring, often the work of paid members of staff. Where organisations are experiencing declining incomes, these paid members of staff will also be in decline which in the longer term may impact on both the quality and quantity of services. Regulatory body compliance, particularly in the climate of increased levels of scrutiny as a result of recent safeguarding allegations faced by some major charities, has become an even more significant priority for the sector. It is therefore essential that the sector is able to maintain its professionalism.

The challenges of poor housing, increasing demands on health and social care, poverty and inequality, social isolation and loneliness, and climate change against a backdrop of biting austerity, mean the Voluntary and Community sector are more needed now than ever before. The sector continues to provide services that are flexible, best value for money, responsive and sought after; the role of infrastructure to support the sector is therefore vital to ensure communities continue to receive the support of a thriving sector as statutory service budgets reduce still further.

The survey identified that respondents continue to value the services of MVA and consider them to be of a good quality standard. The elements of the current MVA offer continue to make a contribution to its directive of empowerment and providing resources, whether existing or newly introduced, to enable the sector to be sustainable and have a voice, to have an impact on statutory sector strategy going forward, but also to provide opportunities for much needed engagement between organisations and sectors.

Whilst respondents were overwhelmingly positive, MVA will follow up low rankings and comments to gain further insights into how we can improve our services further.

Our services are greatly enhanced by the work of our volunteers, Martin, Fouad, Beth and Robyn – our thanks go particularly to them as 4 of the growing number of people prepared to give their time and commitment to support the work of the VCS.

## **15. Thank You**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals who participated in our survey.



## Appendix A

### Comments on Impact of MVA Support

#### MVA Website

*Information*

*Considering some training courses*

*Promoting volunteering opportunities, reading relevant blogs and guidance material.*

*The website is very useful for finding local data, resources and signposting to other resources.*

*Signing up to collaboration portal and newsletter. Attending event in May*

*Answering this survey*

*We will be booking training courses, first aid etc since young Kent are no longer giving us help*

*Networking, training for staff, grants info, other organisations*

*n/a I used the site to link to training*

*Help with creating governance documents*

*None = general information*

*We used the website in our hunt for volunteers. We have got new volunteers as a result of this (sorry, can't give exact number)*

*Great opportunities for networking, keeping up to date with legislation changes and funding opportunities*

*Successful funding applications*

*Networking opportunities and supply of volunteers*

*I have enquired about some training courses with NKTS.*

*Not at this time*

*Better networking opportunities*

*Updated my knowledge in order to pass info on to staff and people in need of help and support*

*Future stability*

*Sharing information around generating income has provided one source of funding for us*

*Useful information about Funding, Networking and Consultation events*

*Identified grant*

*Reading the leaders network information*

*Grant opportunities*

*Hardly any*

*Shared information via social media*

*Funding opportunities*

*Signed up for first aid training*

*Have found out about funding opps (sic) through it*

*Looking for volunteer work for our young people*

*Training and information*

*We are a one off group who do not fit in with main groups*

*MVA has provided us with a mailing address, as well as introducing us to organisations and individuals who may be able to help us to develop our organisation.*

### **One to One Support**

*Application but not successful*

*continued existence*

*Guidance*

*I decided that I did not wish to continue assisting the organisation with a grant application as the requisite information was not fully forthcoming.*

*I had advice on fundraising in the past that was very helpful*

*Many of our members are better informed about governance and compliance. We received preliminary help from MVA about how to apply for charity status. Our Trustee Directors have benefitted a great deal from some of the training courses run by NKTS, e.g. Trustees Roles & Responsibilities*

*MVA have supported Time Credits by raising profile for the programme in a blog and newsletters*

*successful grant applications*

*We had lots of resources sent on to the organisation*

*will try to arrange first aid training*

### **Newsletter**

*a training course on working with volunteers*

*Absolutely nothing :-)*

*As previous*

*Asked for volunteers*

*Booking on to an event. Sharing information*

*found out about events and funding opportunities*

*Funding applications*

*funding opps*

*Generally being more aware of events and activities taking place in Medway. I supported the volunteering awards by nominating a volunteer.*

*Grant opportunities and useful information*

*helpful to be reminded and updated on current issues and support available*

*Identified funding streams*

*Information about funding, local events and directory of local organisations have been useful*

*Joined training course, learnt of funding opportunities, attended trustee seminar*

*n/a?*

*No*

*No direct outcomes - but find it useful to see what is going on*

*Not as yet*

*not directly often gives us the heads up on things that are happening, I forward on to my staff for their information*

*not received one as yet*

*Only just subscribed so unsure at present*

*partnership working*

*Some interesting information and also attended an advertised training course*

*Successful funding applications*

*Useful for identifying funding opportunities and training opportunities*

*We attend events that are also very useful*

*went to a speed networking event. Made some useful contacts*

### **MVA Events**

*A greater understanding of community needs and challenges answered in the last question!*

*Awareness of new rules*

*Better overall understanding of the subject - Trustees seminar  
bid construction, MEMFA, Interfaith communities*

*Can't think of anything in particular, just general useful information*

*I made useful contacts with local funding organisations*

*Increasing local networks*

*It was a good opportunity for networking.*

*Leads to follow up to grow Time Credits*

*Lots of hugely valuable information and contacts*

*Made some contacts particularly leading to funding options.*

*Making contacts with new organisations; opportunity to work collaboratively with other organisations, and raised profile of MEMF*

*more contacts made, more understanding of what is happening in Medway*

*Networking*

*Networking*

*not at this time*

*partnerships*

*potential new Trustee which unfortunately did not work out but only because of that persons home circumstances changing*

*Provided guidance*

*they were a long while ago but it was appreciated as it gave me confidence early days*

*Trustee work*

### **Medway Volunteer Network**

*As stated previously, we got new volunteers through this but I don't know the exact number*

*Asked for recruiting volunteers*

*I have only just enrolled so not at this time*

*No new volunteers!!!!*

*no we have tried several times to find volunteers but they need certain skills which are not always available so have been disappointed*

*None*

*Promoting volunteering opportunities*

*Too early to say*

*We had some interest in Volunteering for us*

*We have had several volunteers from the Medway Volunteer Bureau*

### **Online directory Services**

*advise and info availed*

*Just looked to see what is contains have passed this information on to many others in Medway*

*Knowledge to share information*

*No new volunteers!!!*

*The training courses are very informative and accessible, we will be using them in future*

*Will ask that they add Dyslexia House Association to the directory*

## **North Kent Training Service**

*Useful for CPD and for certs that I need for my job*

*1st aid volunteers trained, food safety training, safeguarding*

*Increased knowledge in managing volunteers*

*confident in getting a mutual benefit from volunteering*

*Increased knowledge and personal development*

*Useful for CPD and for certs that I need for my job*

*1st aid volunteers trained, food safety training, safeguarding*

*Increased knowledge in managing volunteers*

*It facilitated my volunteering work, which I have unfortunately now had to give up due to time constraints*

*It was a number of years ago but the training was very useful for my work.*

*It was a very long time ago (about 15 years) when MVA was "Under One Roof"*

*More effective management of office staff*

*More structured supervision of staff*

*received my H&S cert which I needed*

*This is the main service we use. Very useful, very well run.*

*Training is very practical and of high standard, particularly Project Management, how to write funding applications, Fundraising etc. For one of our projects, we employed NKTS to deliver a series of employability workshops which was tailor-made for our service users.*

*Updated on Mental Health First Aid*

*Useful for CPD and for certs that I need for my job*

*We were able to up-date some of our policies and procedures.*

## **Outcomes and Support**

### **Impact & Outcomes**

*Better governance, happier volunteers*

*Governance has definitely improved*

*Guidance*

*I am too new but want to work in partnership with MVA*

*I believe that our reach has been extended through our interaction with MVA.*

*Improved Governance*

*Increased number of volunteers*

*It is good to know we can seek advice when required*

*More confident in funding application writing*

*More efficient as office has increased outputs*

*More efficient staff performance*

*More sustainable (x2)*

*MVA is a consortium member for Ideas Test and we really value your ongoing support*

*Training provided by NKTS has been extremely valuable.*

*We have added volunteers*

*We have increased our ability to recruit volunteers for services in Medway*

*We were able to continue support for our counselling service with funding sourced through MVA's work with Medway Council which benefited the LGBTQ service users*

*Well trained and informed staff team*

*We've found out about some funding opportunities*

### **Impact of Different Interactions**

*A useful resource to check things and find out what is happening locally*

*Access to the wider community and excellent support on a one to one basis*

*As it is still early days for the MNN the biggest contribution made by the MVA is guidance*

*Available and known to more local organisations through the VCS leaders network*

*Before involvement with MVA, we had no mailing address or anyone to turn to for support in establishing our organisation.*

*By use of their extensive networks*

*Fees are unaffordable due to our low income.*

*I am now part of the leaders' network so I find out what is happening in Medway. I know who to go to if I have any queries and my organisation is better known I hope.*

*I believe that this is due to it having been set up for a stated reason, for the benefit of the Bangladeshi community and used for another, raising money for the main organisers in actual fact.*

*I did H&S cert (sic) with the organisation*

*I have had advice in the past*

*I'm just starting out in Medway so am really starting to understand what support is out there*

*Increased knowledge*

*Information sharing has been very useful*

*it is good to know that other voluntary organisation have similar problems*

*Just the courses have informed me*

*Links to other members of the network*

*Lots of up-to-date information on the website*

*More confident that doing things correctly and efficiently*

*More knowledgeable about different charity related information & responsibilities*

*MVA opens up wider contacts and networks*

*Networking and information provided invaluable*

*Networking opportunities*

*Overtime learning about other organisations to link into for the benefit of our service users so we are better informed and better connected than we were*

*Provides information on events etc.*

*Services and info available , public service info (sic) made available*

*The newsletter keeps us up to date with what's going on.*

*Through networking opportunities we have made connections with other local organisations and the MVA newsletter and website keep us informed of local opportunities that assist our work*

*Training gave information on legislation*

*Two committee members found the seminar they went to useful*

*Useful information*

*We all aim for a better world*

*We are kept up to date with events and activities taking place in the Medway and consequently feel more connected.*

## **What More that MVA could do**

*Perhaps a one-to-one support session to see what other help/resources is out there for our charity?*

*Access to funding database e.g. funding central?*

*Advice and information*

*At the moment don't know*

**CONNECTED BETTER, PROVIDING SOME HELP FOR FUNDING AND TRAINING**

*Facilitating partnership working between organisations more.*

*From my organisation's point of view keeping up to date and informed of possible changes in Medway is invaluable.*

*Help in raising funds*

*Help us set up our branch in the area and find qualified clinical helpline volunteers*

*Help us to find an admin (sic) volunteer and funding to cover running costs.*

*Hopefully we will benefit from services now that I know you are here (Just taken over as Executive Director)*

*Inform about commissioning and partnering opportunities, as small organisations feel disadvantaged because of their size, yet can make a big difference to the locality*

*It is already fabulous!*

*Just continue to be there to give advice when required*

*Keep on providing the networking opportunities and information services.*

*Meet with us to understand our business and explain how we could use MVA's services better*

*More consistent sign posting and cross referencing*

*More contracts or funding opportunities*

*More courses applicable to charities, especially accounting*

*More courses on First Aid and H&S*

*More training opportunities, offer a free advice or signposting service*

*N/A (x2)*

*Not sure (x3)*

*Nothing (x2)*

*Nothing radically different, just more of the same - keep up the good work!*

*Now I have heard about you, I will be looking into what you do!*

*Offer different, affordable training courses*

*Offer more Training sessions on changes to legislation as it impacts on small charities*

*Offer support by providing volunteers to help in woodland conservation work (x2)*



*Please do continue to stay involved with our work! We are at an exciting time in our development and would love to refresh our relationship with our new Director Lucy.*

*Providing free training for volunteers with IT computer secretarial use in their work.*

*Raise awareness of our services*

*Really don't know*

*"Support our consortium group and steering group for Sea Folk Sing"*

*the cost on the courses is too high*

*The Rob Knox Foundation have launched the Rob Knox Film Academy supporting young people to make films around social issues. We are now looking to identify suitable partners for future film projects in Medway, so networking opportunities and in particular any opportunity to raise our profile.*

*updated contact details for services*

*We haven't found a funding stream yet- help us find one!*

*We NEED new volunteers to maintain our services.*

*We need to find groups that we can work with by providing activities (at a cost) and also develop volunteer options.*

*You are already doing a good job*