



AUDIT REPORT | October 2009

Volunteering in Enniskillen's Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA)



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Foreword

The concept of community wellbeing is often about reducing inequalities and achieving sustainable development. It depends on a number of social economic, environmental and cultural factors. These form part of the strategic objectives for People & Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in Northern Ireland.

Happiness and feelings of confidence and self esteem, health and safety, financial security, appropriate services available to everyone are all key ingredients that enhance our quality of life. The one important ingredient that weaves across all of the rest is people's interest in and engagement with their community and this is where the action of volunteers is so vital to renewing and sustaining community wellbeing.

The audit carried out in Fermanagh is important because it recognises the value of volunteering to the neighbourhood renewal area, it highlights who and how people are involved and indicates some challenges about the issue of supply and demand. Neighbourhood renewal requires people to engage at a practical and strategic level, there is a demand for active citizens, and yet the percentage of individuals involved remains low, lower than the Northern Ireland wide statistics.

However, it is also important to reflect that the supply and demand issue is not just found in Fermanagh neighbourhood renewal areas rather it is a concern for all communities. The 2007 'It's All About Time' research into volunteering in Northern Ireland clearly identified that volunteer numbers are at best static and a substantive number of volunteer involving organisations and groups are finding it harder to recruit.

Yet from this Fermanagh research we also see that where people are involved as volunteers, they give a lot of time, feel they are making a difference and giving something back to their community. These individuals represent an invaluable community resource. There is clear evidence to indicate a potential to grow this number as over half of the individuals interviewed were happy for someone to get in touch about volunteering opportunities. Proving yet again the importance of the 'ask' to influence success. The research also indicates that for non-volunteers what is on 'offer' is of equal relevance to the 'ask'. We do need to help people engage in a way that is meaningful, inclusive and matches their lifestyles. We need to promote flexibility of opportunity and commitment, to offer opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.

I commend the work of VSB and the Fermanagh Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership supported by DSD that has led to this useful and timely piece of research. Timely because it will inform the current development of the Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland and useful because it enhances our understanding of volunteer involvement at neighbourhood level.

Wendy Osborne OBE

Director

Volunteer Development Agency



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings of an audit of volunteering carried out in the Enniskillen Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) in June and July 2009.

This research was commissioned by the Voluntary Service Bureau and is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. No research has previously been undertaken to investigate volunteering in NRAs and there is great potential to undertake more in-depth research in the future to consider the role of volunteering as a tool for active citizenship and positive social change.

The survey had a sample size of 164, which represent 7% of the adult (16 years and over) NRA population.

The key findings of this audit are:

Profile

- 18% of respondents were volunteering (formal & informal)
- Men are more likely to volunteer, with 55% of respondent volunteers being male
- Age group 39 – 49 years is most likely to volunteer
- Volunteers are most likely to be unemployed (29%)
- Volunteers were most likely to be married or co-habiting (43%)
- 50% of volunteers identified themselves as coming from the Catholic community

Type & activity

- 13.5% of individuals surveyed undertook formal volunteering
- Volunteers were most likely to volunteer for just one organisation (59%)
- Volunteers in the Enniskillen NRA are very active, with 69% volunteering at least once a week
- Working with children or young people (both 37%) was the most popular type of volunteering activity
- Charities were the most common type of organisation (42%) that volunteers worked for

Information & motivation

- Information on volunteering opportunities is most likely to come from either another volunteer or by word of mouth (29% each)
- More than half (52%) of volunteers were motivated to volunteer by a sense of giving back to the community

Benefits & challenges

- More than half (55%) of volunteers felt that the biggest benefit of volunteering was giving something back
- 59% of volunteers said that there were no disadvantages to volunteering
- The biggest disadvantage of volunteering was seen as taking up too much time (17%)

Future volunteering

- 44% of volunteers said that they would undertake more voluntary work if asked
- The greatest incentive to undertake more voluntary work by those currently volunteering was an increased flexibility as to when they could get involved (42%)



Non-volunteers

- Illness &/or disability was cited as the most common reason why people did not volunteer (43%)
- A lack of time (33%) & childcare / caring responsibilities (15%) were also key reasons why people did not volunteer
- Non volunteers said that the most likely reason for them to start volunteering was to have more flexibility of when they could get involved (43%)

Other points of interest

- There were local variations in the results e.g. volunteering levels in different estates / areas
- Exceptionally high number of people agreeing to follow up contact about volunteering & volunteering opportunities (89 people)



AUDIT CONTEXT

About VSB

This research was commissioned by the Voluntary Service Bureau (VSB). VSB is a local development agency with 40 years experience of providing an infrastructure to support, encourage and promote citizenship and participation through voluntary activity in Northern Ireland.

VSB is the Volunteer Centre for Belfast, Castlereagh, North Down & Ards and Fermanagh and so provides the support mechanisms to enable individuals to access voluntary opportunities, matching volunteers with voluntary placements, and maximising mutual benefits. VSB provides support each year for volunteers and over 600 organisations whose work involves volunteers. Support includes advice, information, training and good practice standards.

To complement general volunteering opportunities a number of specialist volunteering programmes have been developed including Young Citizen's In Action, Active Age, Employee Supported Volunteers.

In a response to identified need VSB operates a number of practical care services. The emphasis is on participation and social inclusion and services include: Befriending, Transport, Social Outings. VSB provides advice, information and assessment to a range of external Trust Funds designed to help those in need throughout Northern Ireland.

About Volunteer Centre Fermanagh

In 2008, VSB secured the contract to deliver the Volunteer Centre services in Fermanagh. It is based in Fermanagh House, Enniskillen which is in the heart of the local community and is home to many organisations.

The Volunteer Centre Fermanagh is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to everyone. It endeavours to enable participation by socially excluded groups and work with volunteers with specific support needs: the unemployed, people in receipt of benefits, disabled people, young people and the over 55s.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

Under the Government's People and Place strategy, 36 Neighbourhoods across Northern Ireland have been designated as Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs). These communities are experiencing the highest levels of deprivation.

Enniskillen NRA is the only one in the county and local authority area (Fermanagh District Council). A map of the area can be found in Appendix A.

It should be noted that although the North Down (2005) and Northern Ireland (2007) research on volunteering are useful markers, the Enniskillen NRA is not representative of the population and so by its nature the profile of respondents and their responses will not necessarily be representative of the population as a whole.



The 'Volunteering in NI' research¹ identified those who are least likely to volunteer include those from socio-economic group DE (Social Grade Classifications NI – other working class & lowest levels of subsistence), those not working and those who would describe themselves as being from the Protestant community. Given the projected high levels of the first two groups in the Enniskillen NRA, volunteering levels identified through this audit were expected to be significantly lower than the regional average.

Profile of Enniskillen NRA

The population of Enniskillen NRA is 2,939 people with 1,337 households². The demographic characteristics³ relevant to this audit of the people living in Enniskillen NRA are as follows:

- 58% were aged 16-59 years
- 23% were aged 60 & over
- 49% of the population were male & 51% were female
- 75% were from a Catholic Community Background
- 24% were from a 'Protestant & Other Christian (including Christian related)' Community Background
- 0.6% of persons aged 16 & over were single (never married)
- 25% of households were lone parent households with dependent children
- 44% of households were lone pensioner households
- 25% of people had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability
- 22% of people of working age had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability
- 9% of people noted that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others
- 7% of households were without central heating or without sole use of bath/shower/toilet or without both
- 51% had no qualifications

The Volunteer Centre Fermanagh offices are within the Enniskillen NRA.

Current policy context

The Department for Social Development has just published its first ever Volunteering Strategy for consultation. The consultation period began just weeks prior to the completion of this research (2 July 2009) and continued until early October 2009. The DSD Minister, Margaret Ritchie, has set a target to nearly double the number of people volunteering in NI from 282,000 to 500,000.

The numbers of people volunteering has remained static since 1995, yet over 75% of organisations that involve volunteers could not manage without them. The consultation is therefore seeking ideas to enable volunteering to flourish. In particular the consultation is asking how to:

- Support and strengthen the volunteering infrastructure
- Recognise the value of volunteering and promote the benefits
- Enhance accessibility and diversity in volunteering
- Improve the volunteering experience

1 Volunteer Development Agency, 2001

2 NISRA: 2001 Census, 29 April 2001

3 NISRA: 2001 Census, 29 April 2001



Population context

The population of NI is 1,759,148 with the over 16 population being 1,379,080⁴. The population of the Enniskillen NRA is 2,939, i.e. less than 0.2% of the NI population.

Related research & audits

The Volunteer Development Agency (VDA) have undertaken a series of volunteering audits, the latest being *It's All About Time*, its 2007 survey. It describes the number of people volunteering, what they do and also their experiences. Previous audits were carried out in 1995 and 2001. *It's All About Time* played a major role in informing a volunteering strategy for Northern Ireland which is being led by the Voluntary & Community Unit (VCU) at the Department of Social Development (DSD).

In 2005, a similar audit to this one was commissioned by VSB and was undertaken by Millward Brown in the North Down area. This audit of Enniskillen NRA aims to complement both the North Down research and the VDAs 2007 audit, although as it is not based upon the general population there cannot be direct meaningful comparisons.

Finally, a research report from the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) entitled *Active Citizenship and community relations in Northern Ireland* was published in 2008. There are some very useful findings which support the Enniskillen research. In particular, the sections on Volunteering ('Volunteering and its unintended consequences' and 'Can volunteering unite divided communities?') and Community Relations ('Volunteering in a deprived community').

Future research

It is possible that VSB may seek additional funding to extend this study to cover the whole of Fermanagh in the future. It would also be beneficial to undertake further research in other NRA in NI so that comparisons and benchmarking can be made, and the results used to promote active citizenship, design volunteer campaigns, influence local policy and lobby for funding.

⁴ NISRA: Estimated population as of 30 June 2007



ABOUT THE AUDIT

Research Aims & Objectives

This research is being conducted as part of the Department for Social Development (DSD) Neighbourhood Renewal programme. VSB wanted to learn more about levels of volunteering in Enniskillen's Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA). This area includes parts of Kilmacormick, Cornagrade, Windmill Heights, Derrychara, island of Enniskillen and Galliagh estates in Enniskillen. As detailed above, a map of the NRA can be found in Appendix A.

The main objectives of the audit were to:

- Establish levels of volunteering within Enniskillen's Neighbourhood Renewal Area
- Examine the types of volunteering activity undertaken
- Create a basic profile of those volunteering
- Ascertain sources of information on volunteering opportunities
- Consider motivations for volunteering
- Identify disadvantages of & barriers to volunteering
- Collect details of those who wish to be contacted about volunteering opportunities

Sample size

Green Hat proposed a sample size of 150 which was calculated as approximately 6% of the Enniskillen NRA population aged 16 and over. This has a 95% confidence level (this represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval; 95% is a standard confidence level).

Research methodology

Audit activities included:

- Door-to-door survey
- Online survey
- Survey completion & collection through community organisations (e.g. Devenish Partnership)
- Interviews with community organisations working in & around the NRA (e.g. Fermanagh Trust)
- Meetings with Volunteer Centre Fermanagh / VSB
- Interviews with local support / resource organisations including Fermanagh District Council
- Training needs assessment

Green Hat cross-referenced questions that were used in VSB's North Down volunteering audit. To ensure maximum take up of the survey, to raise the profile of the research and of the Fermanagh Volunteer Centre and VSB, a leaflet drop around the relevant estates approximately 2 weeks prior to interviewers calling at houses was undertaken. Approximately 1,000 households were leafleted.



Key challenges

The research posed several challenges. Firstly, the short time scale to undertake the research was a challenge, particularly in the summer time when usual patterns of work, school / college and social activity is different.

Secondly, the timing of the door-to-door surveys was also challenging. Getting responses before mid morning was difficult &/or not well received. The researchers had initially planned to undertake some surveys during the evening when people in full-time employment would be home. However, it was not possible to do this as most people were tied up with making dinner and then television viewing, so again it was difficult / not well received.

Multiple occupancy housing on the island of Enniskillen meant that gaining responses in that geographical area was very difficult. Many properties had just one bell for a number of flats, security systems for complexes that we couldn't access, bells not working and other access issues.

Definitions

The definition of volunteering used in this report is one widely accepted and used in the 2001 North Down audit and all three NI-wide surveys undertaken by VDA:

“Volunteers and volunteering refer to individuals and the work or action they undertake for the benefit of others or the community (outside the immediate family), undertaken by free choice and not directly in return for wages”.

Again, as used above, the definition of Formal volunteering is:

“Unpaid voluntary work carried out with, or under the auspices of, an organisation”.

The definition of Informal volunteering is:

“Unpaid or voluntary work carried out outside organisations, often at neighbourhood level, but outside the immediate family”.

About Green Hat

Green Hat, a community consultancy based in Lisnaskea, was appointed to conduct the audit. The organisation has extensive experience of community-based research including audits and a long track record of community development consultancy across Northern Ireland and the border counties.

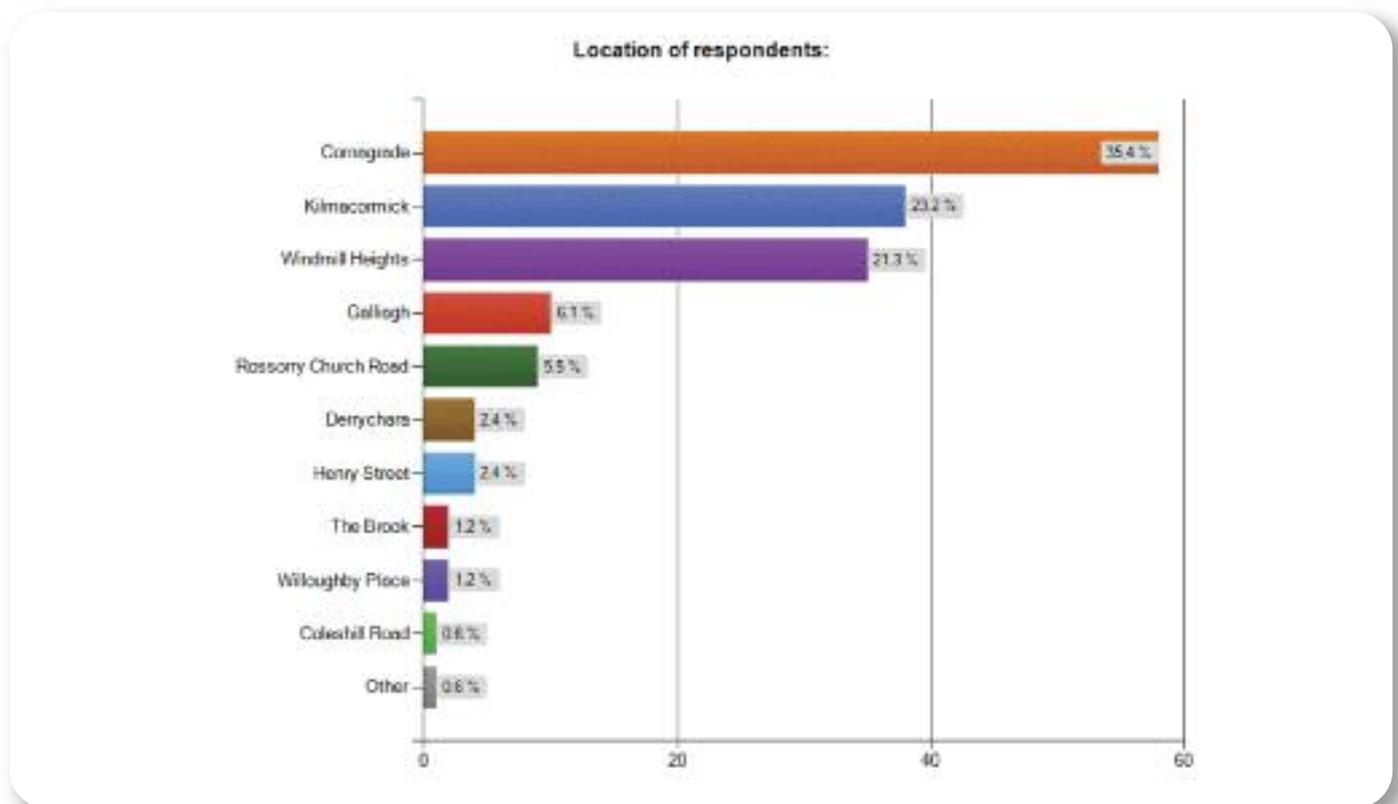


PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

There were a total of 164 respondents to the volunteering audit. This represents 7% of the Enniskillen NRA population aged 16 years and over.

Location of residence

The location of the respondents is set out below and reflect the size of the main estates in the NRA, when compared to the area overall. Some parts of the NRA, e.g. Cornagrade, are densely populated and exclusively residential; other parts, e.g. island of Enniskillen, are mostly retail and business and this was also a factor in the level of response in different parts of the NRA, i.e. ease of accessing houses and residents.

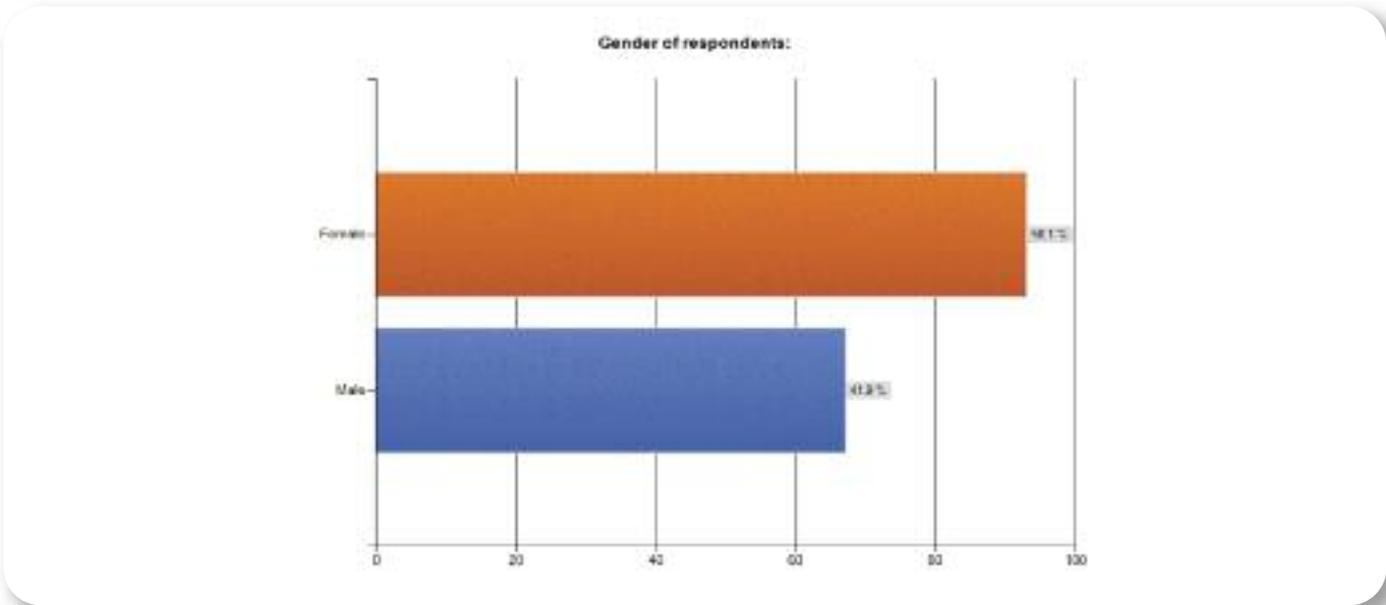


We believe that the geographical spread in terms of respondents' location is representative of the population within the Enniskillen NRA.



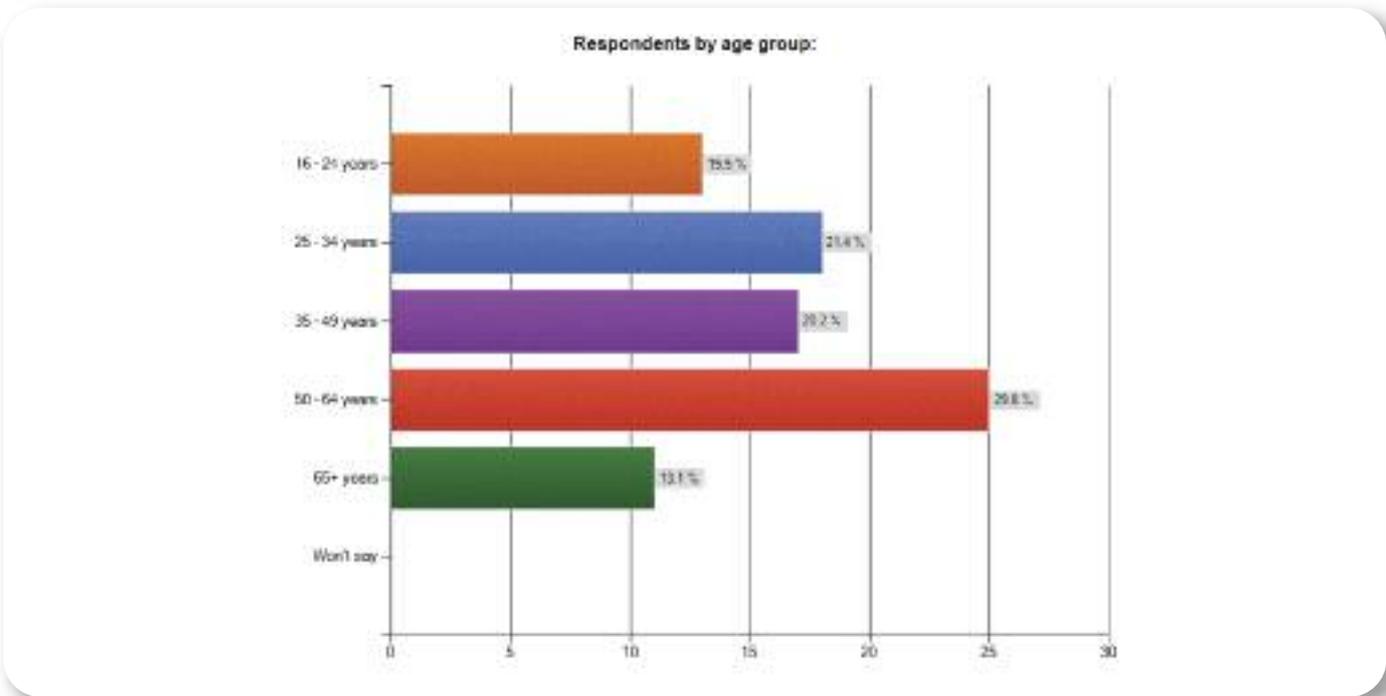
Gender

The gender of the respondents was 58% female and 42% male.



Age

The age of respondents was as follows:

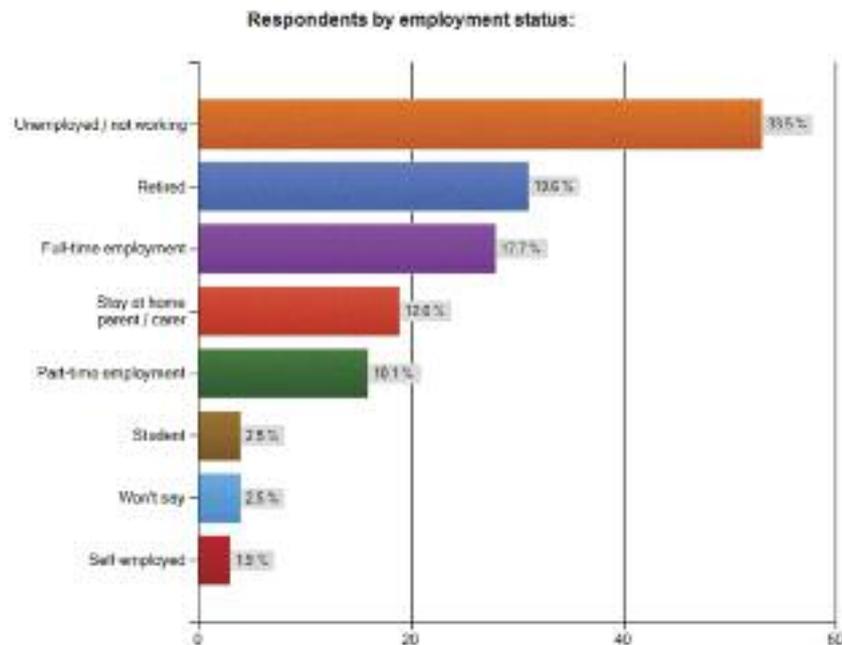


The respondents in the Enniskillen audit covered the full range of age groups with the youngest respondent saying they were 16 years of age through to one who declared that she was 93 years of age.



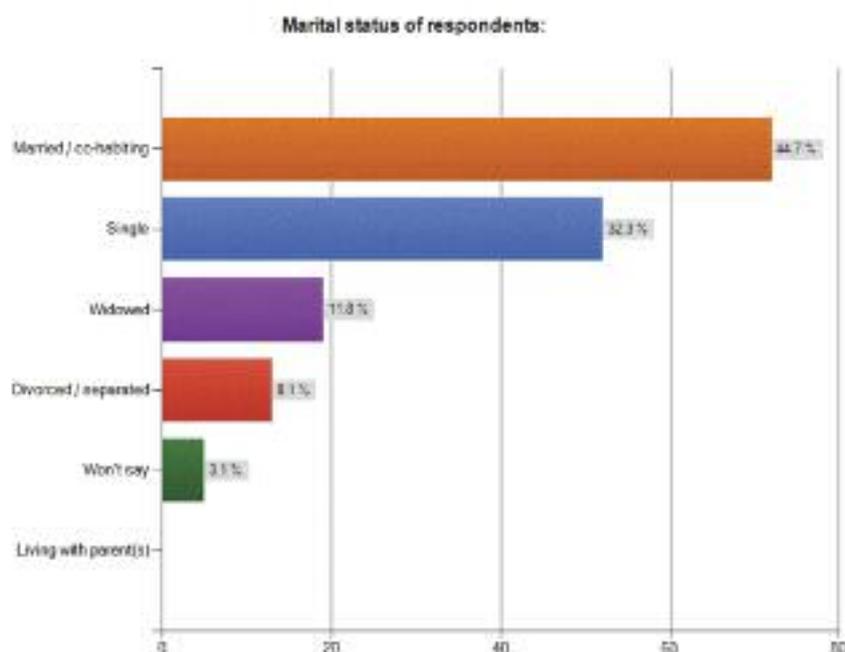
Employment status

The employment status of respondents is shown below, with the biggest single group being unemployment / not working, who made up 34% of all respondents. This is followed by 20% being retired, 18% working full-time, 12% being stay at home parents / carers and 10% working part-time.



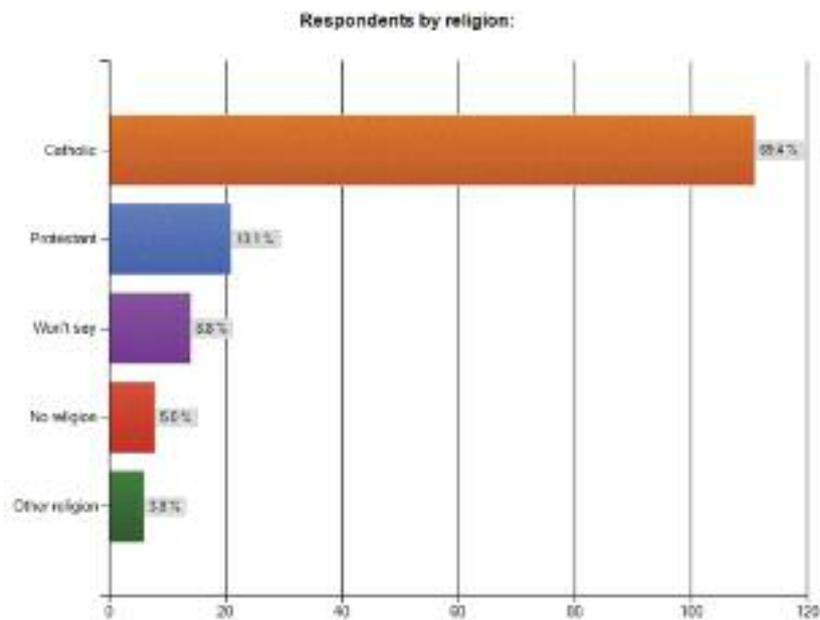
Marital status

Three quarters of the respondents in this survey were either married / co-habiting or single.



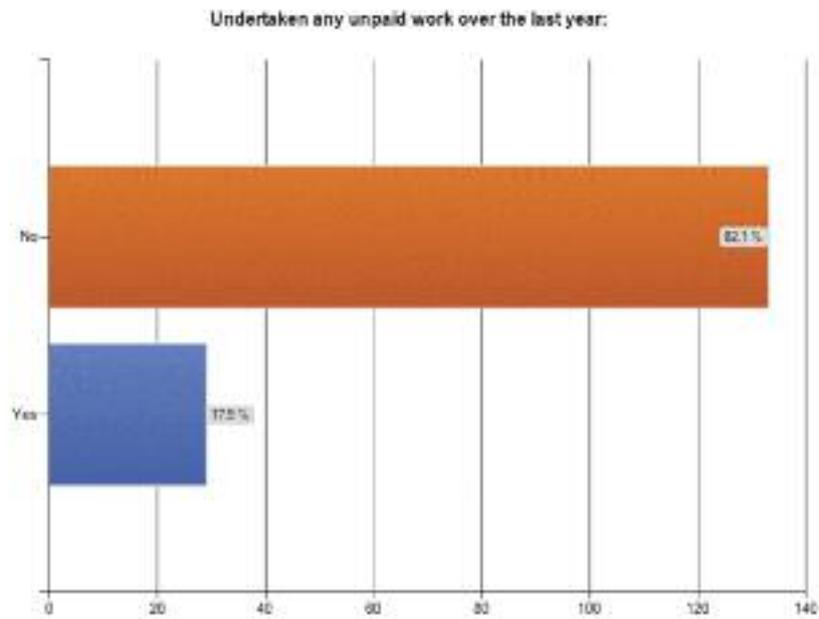
Religion

The religious profile of respondents in the Enniskillen NRA is shown below. 69% of respondents described themselves as members of the Catholic community, with 13% describing themselves as members of the Protestant community. The mainly single identity social housing and estate structure in NI further emphasises these differences. The two largest estates in the Enniskillen NRA (i.e. Cornagrade and Kilmacormick) are both majority Catholic residents and the 2001 Census found that 75% of those living in Enniskillen NRA described themselves as having a Catholic community background.



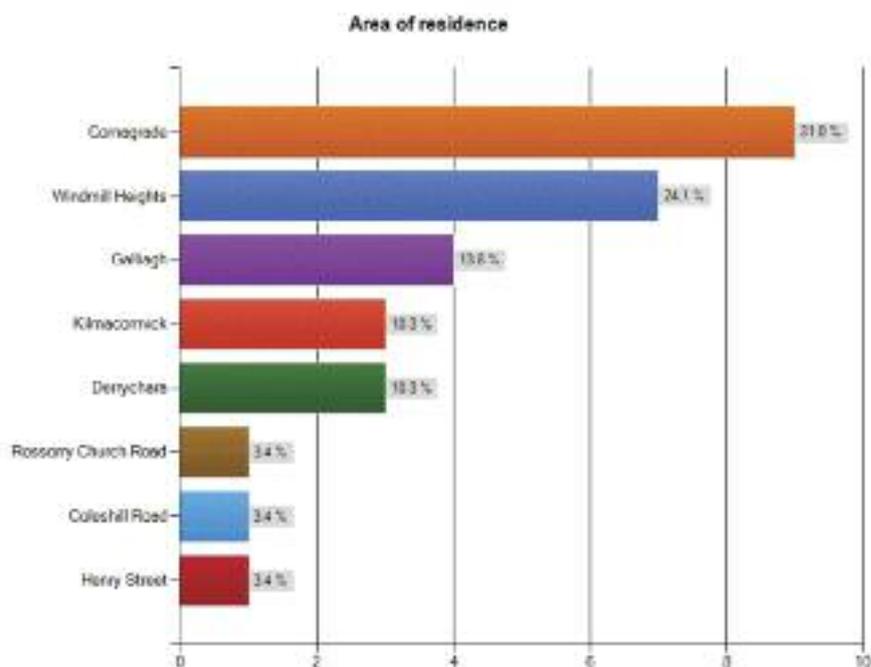
PROFILE OF VOLUNTEERS

There were 164 respondents in the Enniskillen NRA to this survey, and of these 18% had undertaken any kind of unpaid work – either formal or informal volunteering – in the past year. This compares to 37% in North Down and a rate of 45% in the general population through the NI Survey of Volunteering 2007.



Location of residence

The location of those volunteering is as follows:



These results appear to indicate that people living in the more mixed identity estates (i.e. Cornagrade and Windmill Heights) are more likely to volunteer. Demographic information is not available on an estate basis and so we cannot confirm this but believe it is likely.

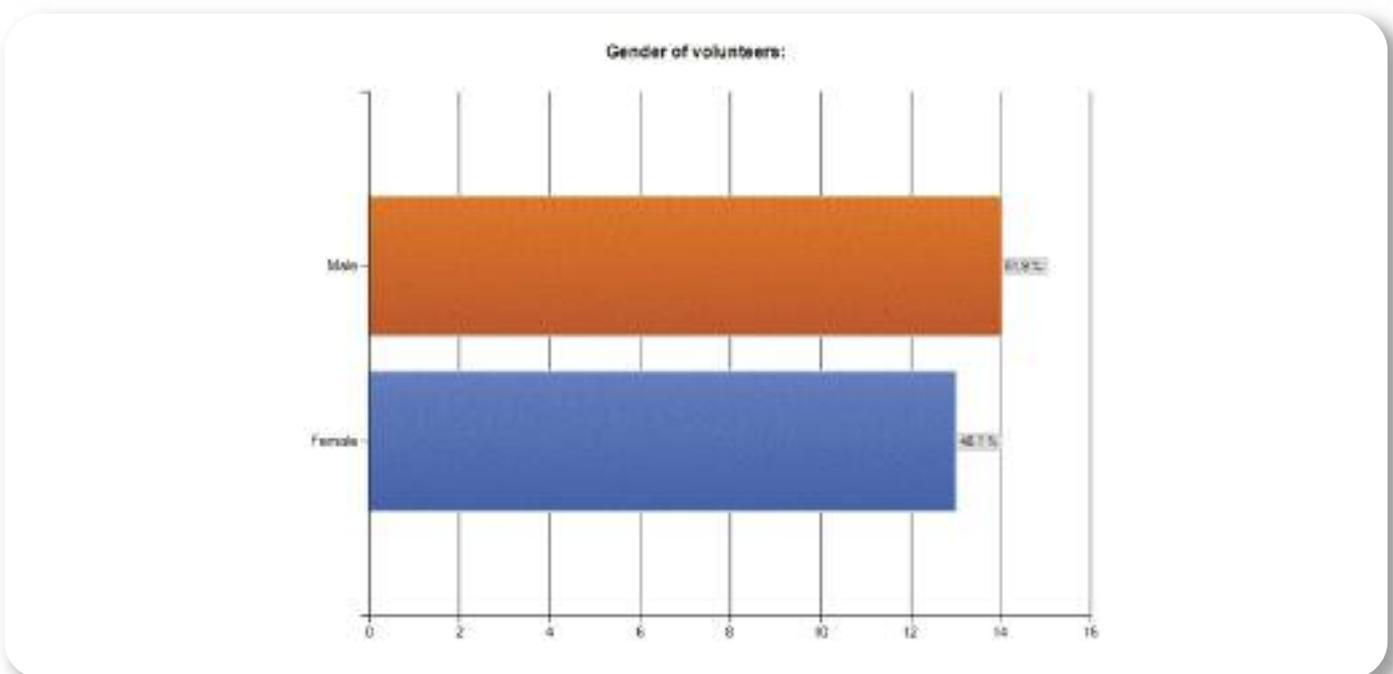
It seems that people living in Kilmacormick are proportionately less likely to volunteer than those in other areas of the NRA. These results are likely to reflect levels of deprivation within the NRA and the strong single identity of the estate.

Whilst more research is needed to support these initial findings, there is a hint that mixed communities support volunteering and through it active citizenship, and in turn volunteering can play a role in sustaining mixed communities.

Gender

The gender of volunteers was 52% male and 48% male. This contrasts with both the North Down and NI-wider surveys where females are more likely to volunteer than males - 53% in North Down and 61% across Northern Ireland.

Male volunteering is even greater in proportion when considered against the gender of respondents which was 58% female.

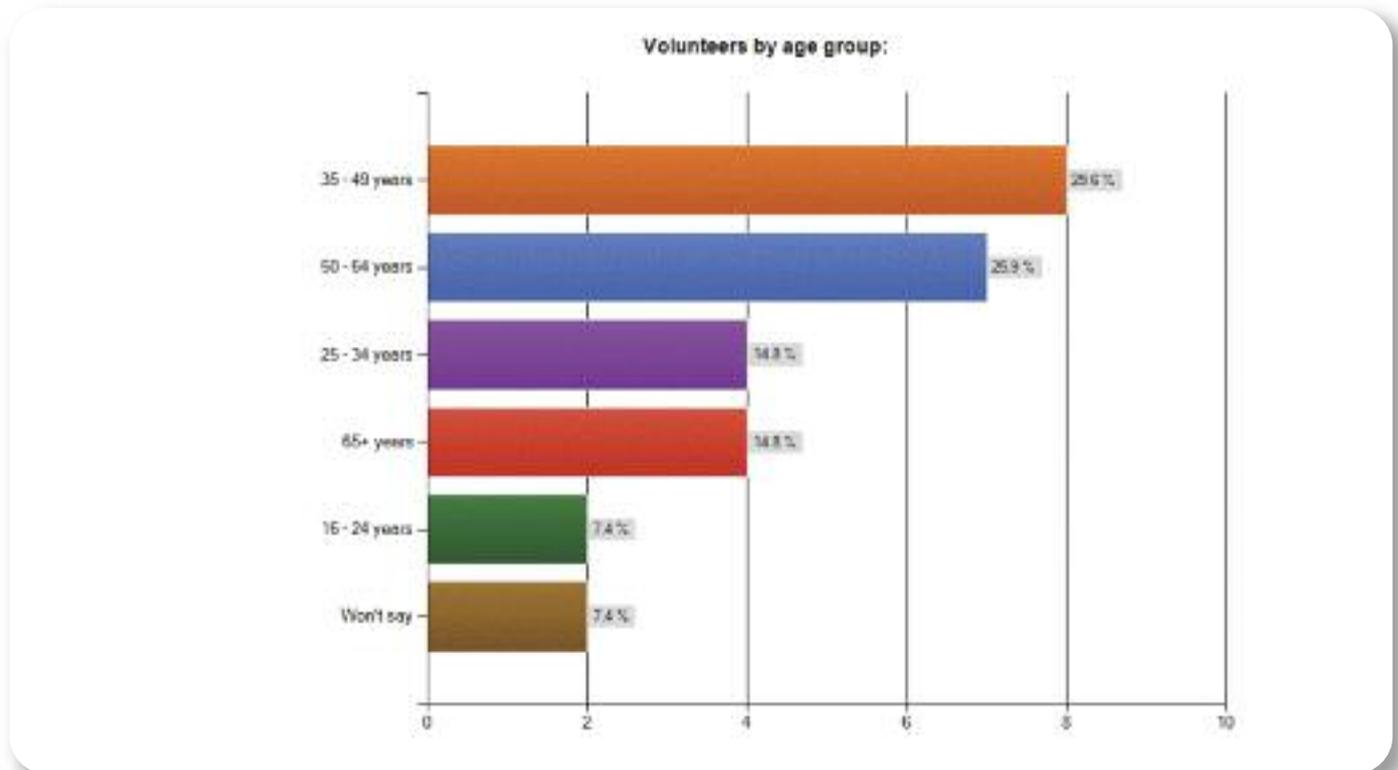


The Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey, an annual survey undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency identified higher levels of volunteering by men than women in its latest survey (2007/08).



Age

The age of volunteers in the Enniskillen NRA was as follows:



The largest single age group volunteering in Enniskillen NRA is the same as North Down – 35 – 49 years and this is 36% in North Down. The 16-24 and 65+ year age groups are both very similar (9% and 19% respectively in North Down).

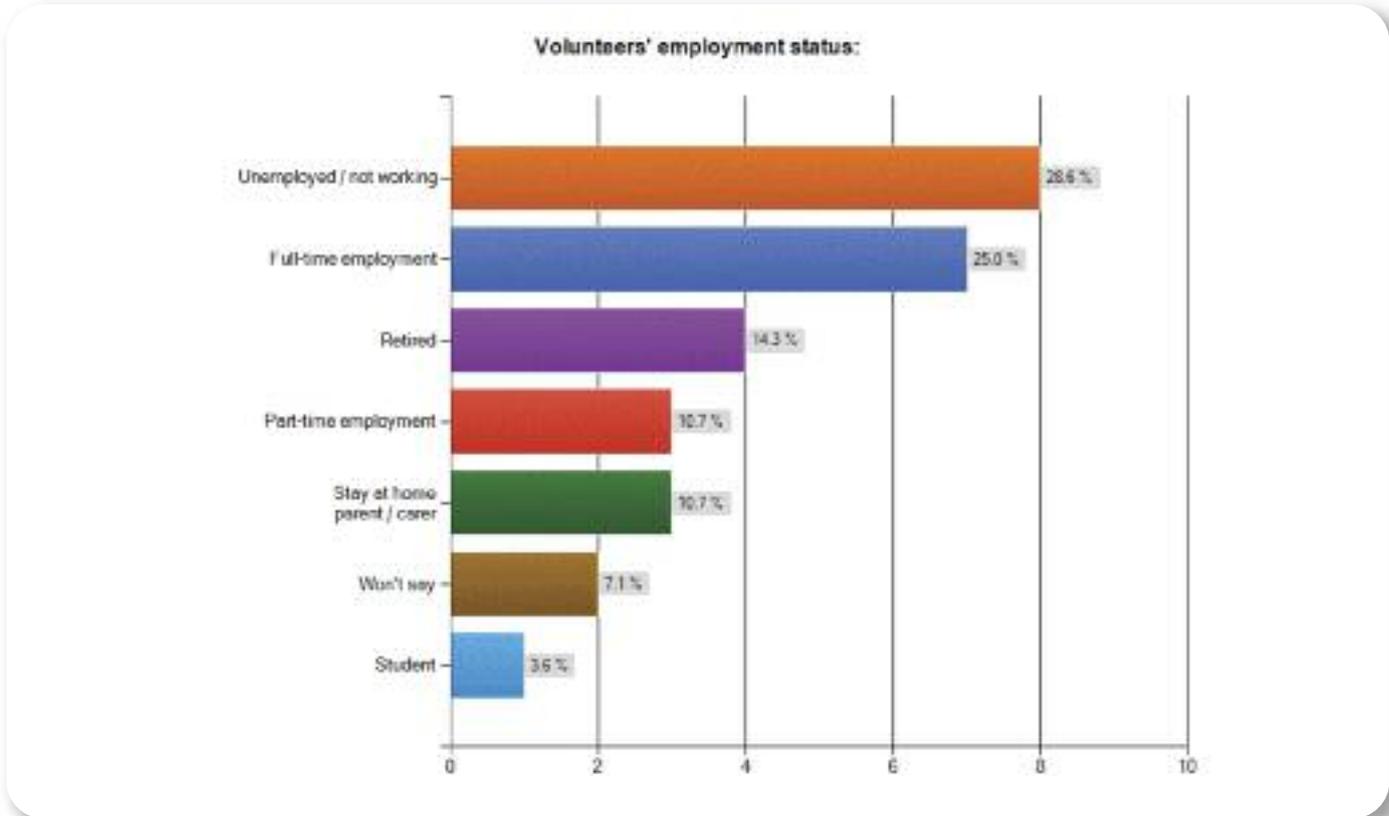
Employment status

The employment status of volunteers is shown below, with the biggest single group being unemployment / not working, who made up 29% of all volunteers. This is followed by 25% working full-time, and 14% being retired.

Whilst the North Down survey identified a high percentage of respondents not currently employed (41%), other employment status' - perhaps unsurprisingly given the NRA status in this audit - were considerably different with 39% of respondents working full-time (half as much again as the Enniskillen statistic), 13% part-time and 6% in full-time education.

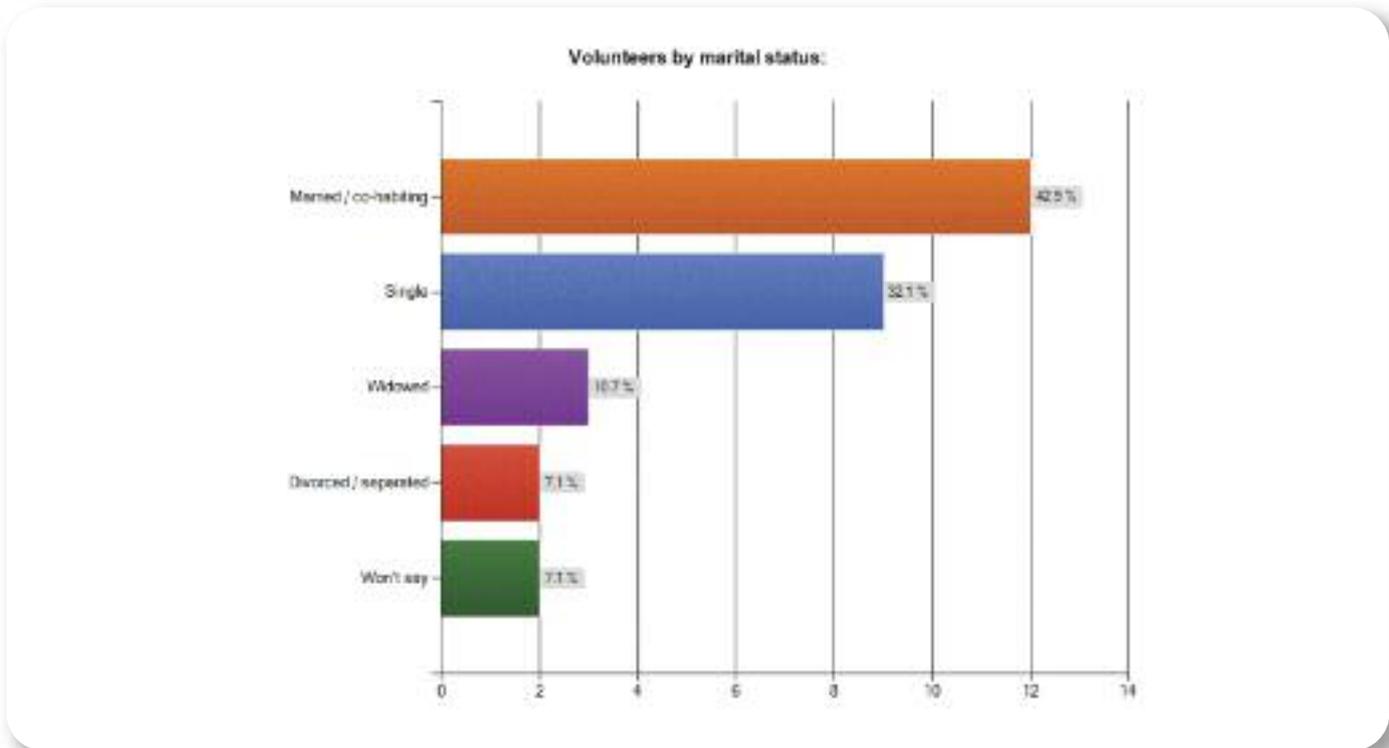
It is worth noting that this survey was undertaken during a worldwide recession, and this is likely to have had some impact on the results (e.g. people volunteering after being made redundant or to get different work experience).





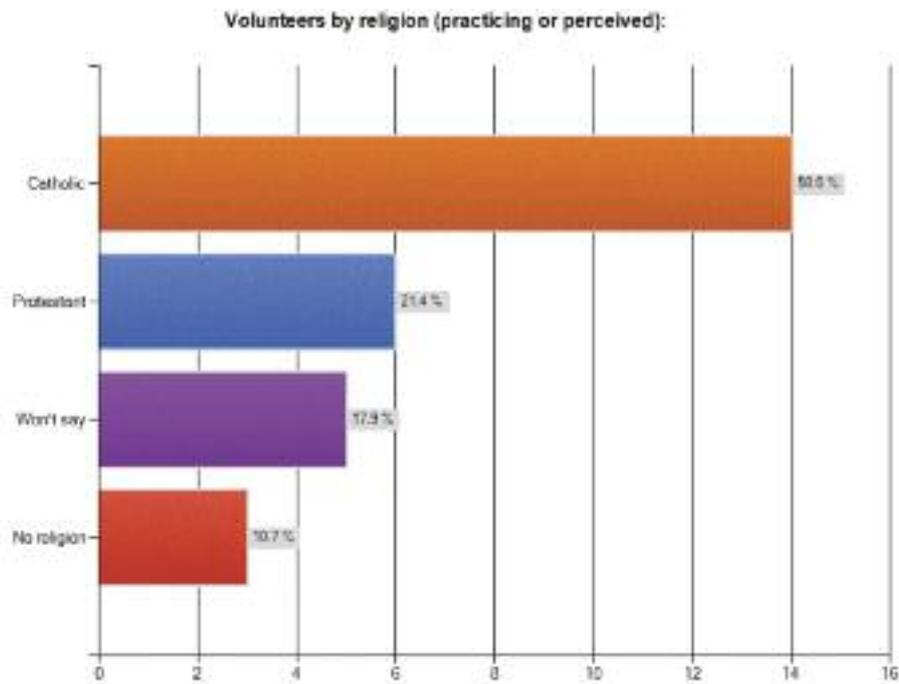
Marital status

The marital status of volunteers in this survey was markedly different from North Down. There, 61% were married with just 17% single, 14% widowed and 3% divorced. 2% were living with their parents and 2% wouldn't say.



Religion

The religious profile of volunteers in the Enniskillen NRA is shown below. These figures are very different to that in North Down and reflect the different religious profile of the two local authority areas. Fermanagh has a religious profile of 56% Catholic and 36% Protestant, whilst the profile in North Down is 64% Protestant and 10% Catholic⁵.



These results show that the half of those volunteers described themselves as being from the Catholic community. However, 18% of volunteers did not give either their practising or perceived religion, which is a significant proportion and presents some difficulty in interpreting the results.

The profile of the Enniskillen NRA shows that 75% of residents describe themselves as being from the Catholic community. Therefore, based on the results of this survey, Catholics in the Enniskillen NRA are disproportionately less likely to volunteer than those from the Protestant community.

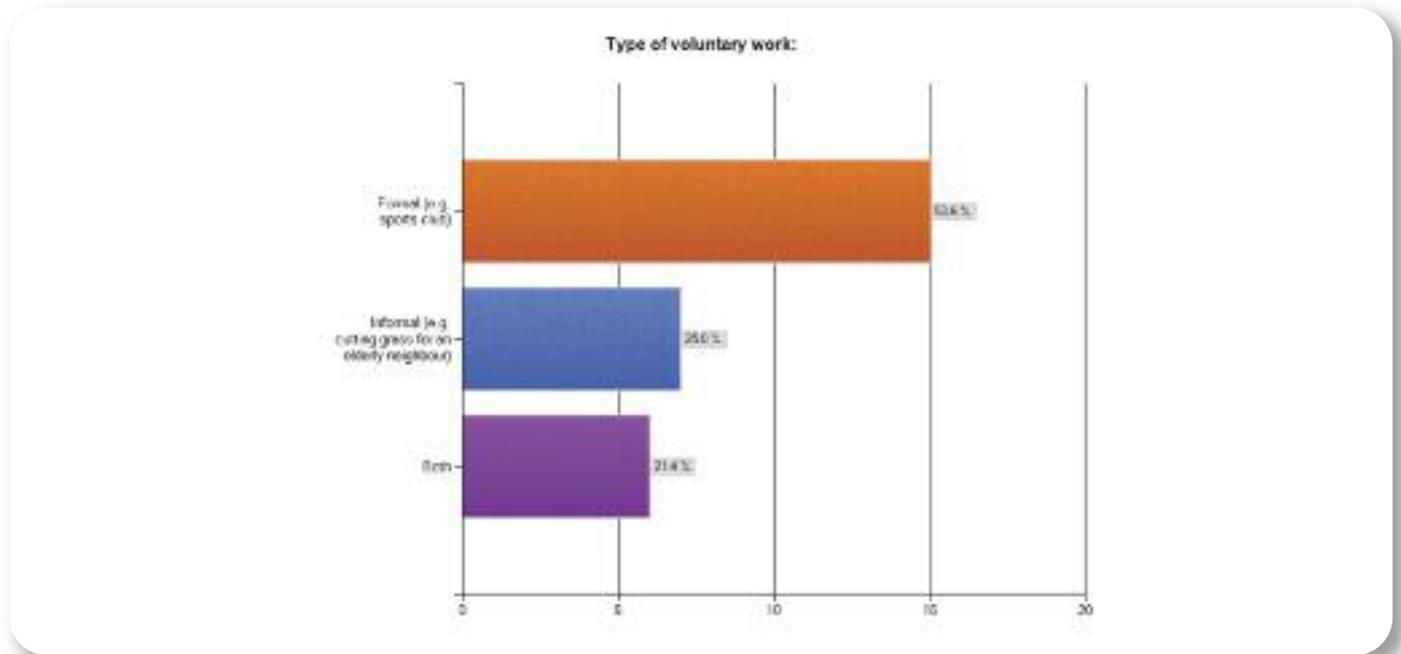
⁵ NISRA: 2001 Census



LEVELS OF VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY

Types of voluntary work

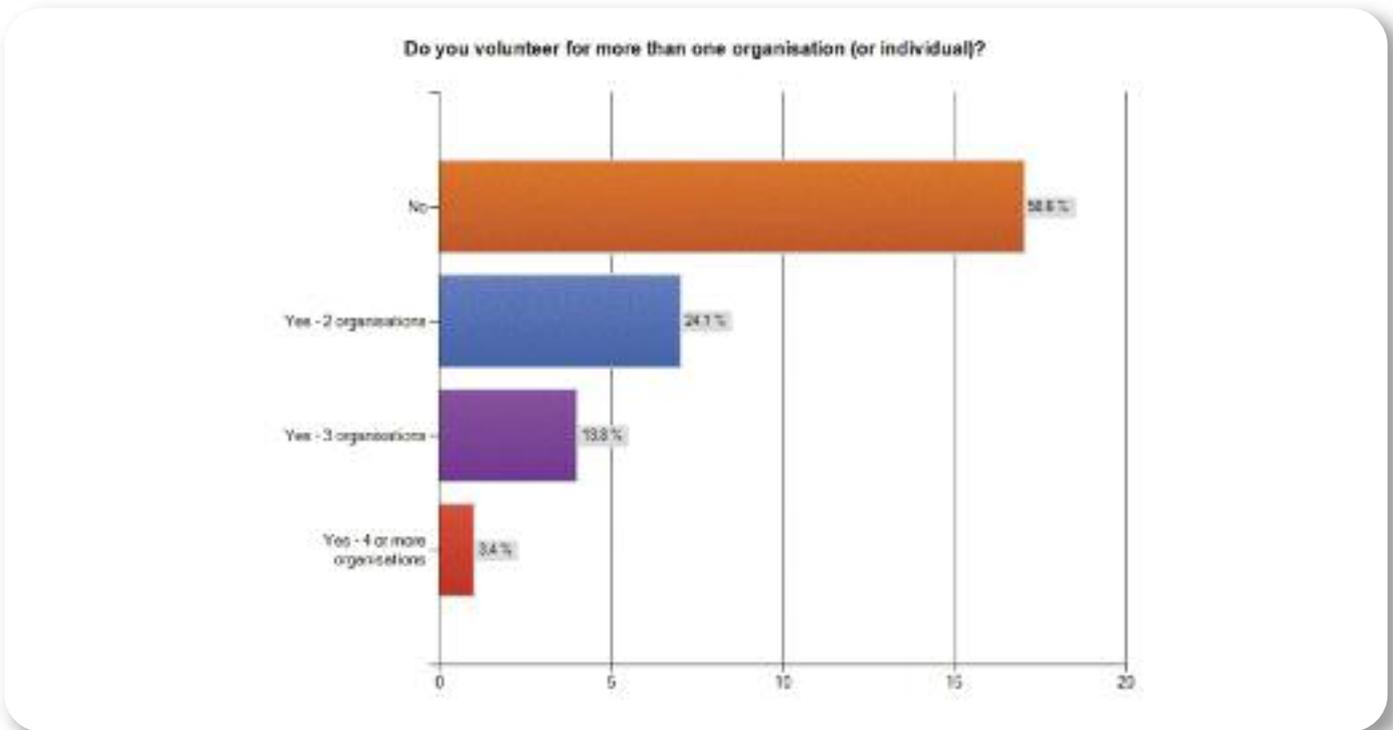
Of the 18% of respondents undertaking some kind of voluntary work, 54% were undertaking formal volunteering for an organisation, 25% informal volunteering (e.g for neighbours, family or friends) and 21% were doing both. In the 2007 NI Survey, 21% of respondents were undertaking formal voluntary work and 35% informal voluntary activities.



Respondents were not asked where their volunteering activity took place, but anecdotal evidence suggested that the vast majority of it took place at a very local level, i.e. within the NRA or elsewhere in Enniskillen.

Pattern of volunteering

59% of volunteers carry out their activities for one organisation with 24% working unpaid for 2 organisations, 14% for 3 organisations and a 3% for 4 or more organisations. The results are broadly similar to the North Down profile of 66% working for one organisation, 17% for 2 organisations, 8% for 3 organisations and 4% for 4 or more organisations.

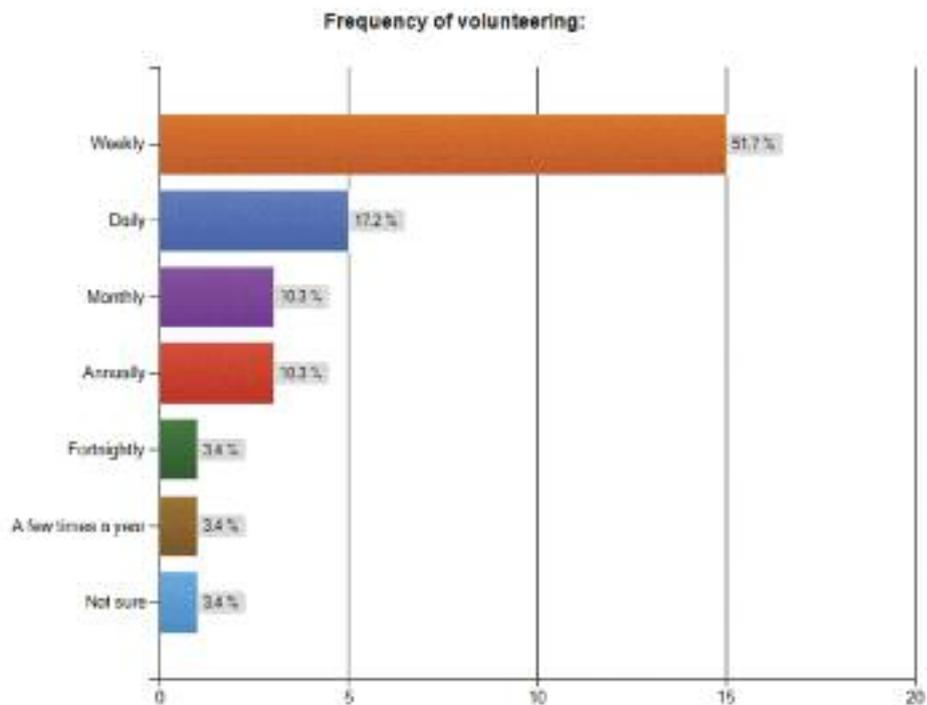


Frequency of volunteering

The frequency of volunteering (both formal & informal volunteering) by those living in the Enniskillen NRA is substantially higher than both the North Down profile and the NI pattern. More than half (52%) of those volunteering do so weekly, with 17% volunteering on a daily basis, a total of 79% volunteering once a week or more. This compares with 36% volunteering once a week in North Down and 49% across NI.

The fortnightly (3%), monthly (10%) and several times per year (3%) frequency in Enniskillen NRA are both less than the North Down (9% fortnightly, 19% monthly & 25% few times a year) and NI average (9% fortnightly, 16% monthly & 18% few times a year).

The extremely high frequency of volunteering (an impressive 79% volunteering once a week or more) indicates that whilst levels of volunteering in the NRA are low, those who do are very committed.

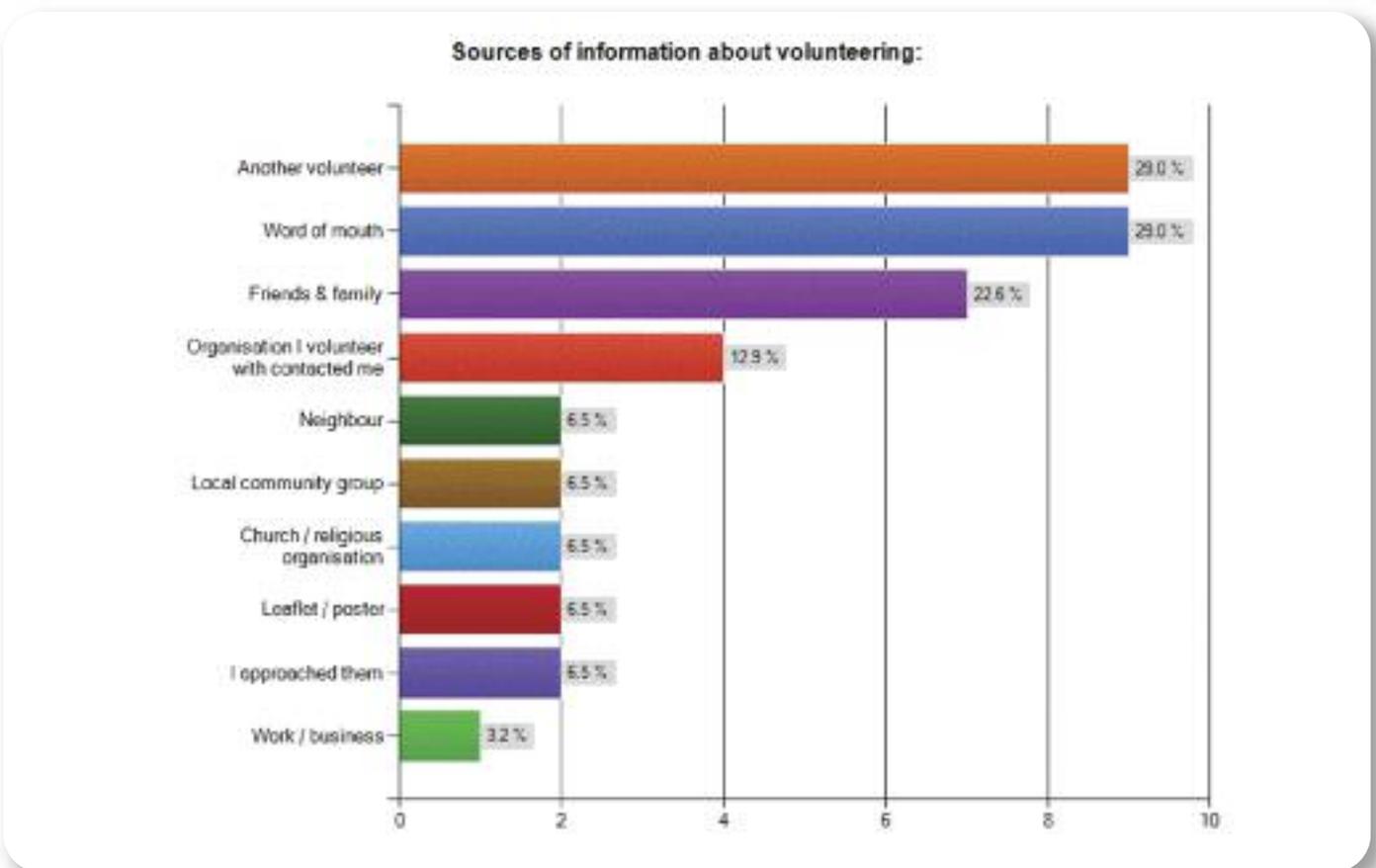


INFORMATION & MOTIVATION

Information on volunteering opportunities

The three main sources of information on volunteering opportunities (formal & informal volunteering) in the Enniskillen NRA are from another volunteer (29%), word of mouth (29%) or through friends & family (23%). Family & friends were the most important source in North Down (41%), with the church / religious organisation coming second (23%). In the 2007 NI Volunteering Survey, word of mouth was the most cited source of information (22%), from another volunteer (19%) with church / religious organisations coming third (15%).

In Enniskillen NRA, no-one highlighted volunteer bureaux as a source of information for volunteering opportunities. This compares to 6% in North Down and 1% in the NI Survey.

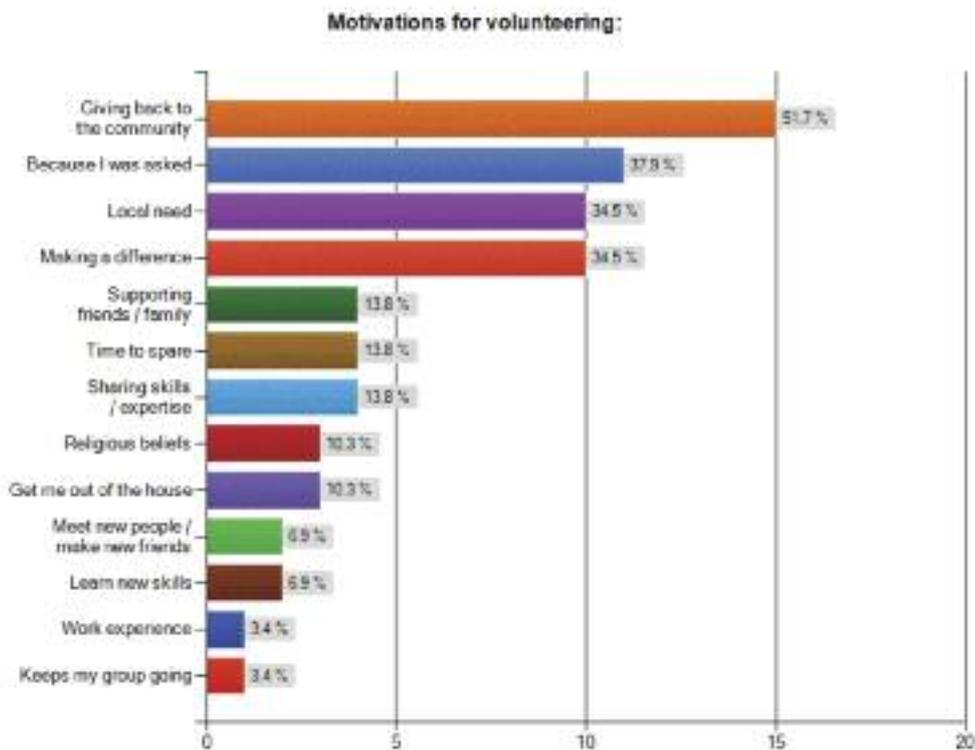


Motivations for volunteering

Over half (52%) of the Enniskillen NRA respondents said their main reason for volunteering was to give back to the community. A further 38% said it was because they were asked, with 35% each citing local need and making a difference as their reasons.

In North Down, 51% of volunteers cited reasons related to their own, family & friends interests / needs, with 41% local need and 25% through religious belief / moral obligation.

The NI Survey highlighted 50% of volunteers did so because they wanted to improve things / help people, 28% said that they volunteered because the cause was very important to them, 24% did so as they had time to spare, 23% citing local need and 22% were motivated to volunteer because of their religious beliefs or philosophy to help.



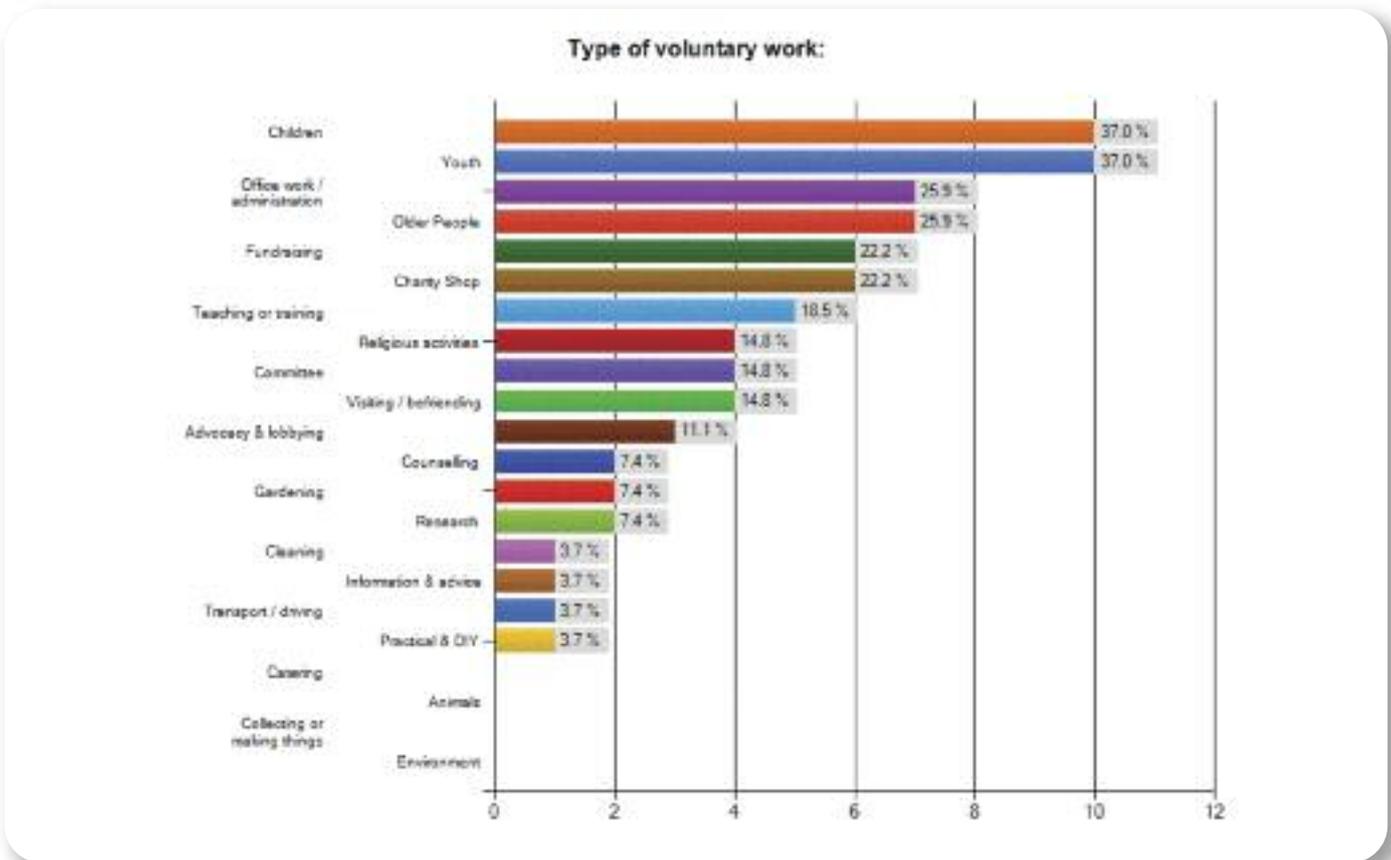
VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY

Type of voluntary activity

The main types of volunteering activity undertaken by those living in the Enniskillen NRA is working with children and young people (both 37%), office work / administration and working with older people (both 26%), followed by fundraising and working in a charity shop (both 22%).

The most popular type of activity in North Down was fundraising (43%), followed by helping in church / religious organisation (21%), organising events / activities (15%) and committee work (13%).

In the NI Survey 2007 fundraising was again the most popular (32%), with organisation events / activities (26%), committee / trustee work (19%), working with young people (15%) and helping in church / religious organisations (13%).



The type of voluntary work undertaken is likely to reflect local initiatives recently established, many of which will be specific to the NRA. Most of the areas was have a high percentage of families and this is likely to explain higher than average levels of volunteering with children and young people.

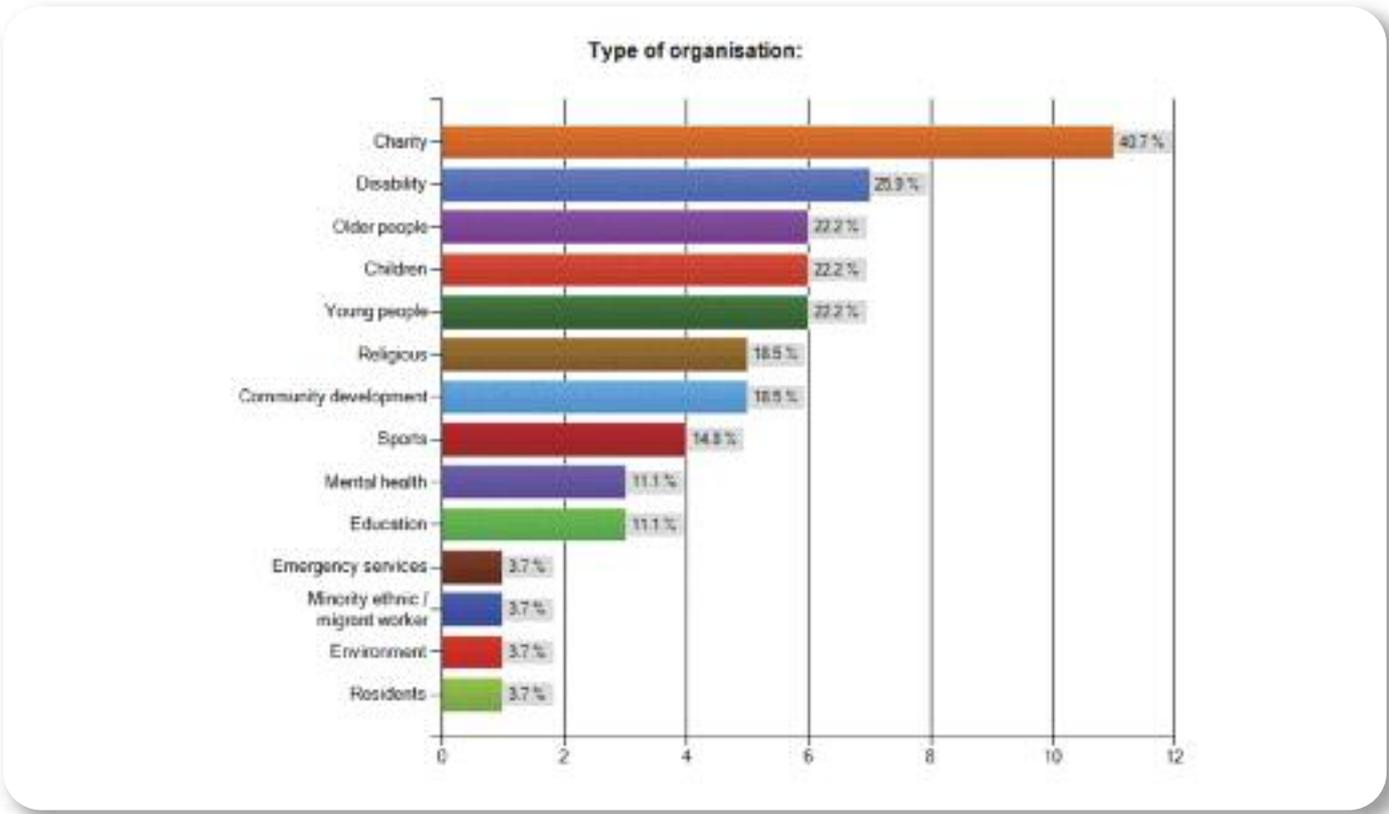


Type of organisation

In the Enniskillen NRA, the organisation which volunteers are most commonly undertaking activities for are charities (41%), disability organisations (26%), services for older people children and young people (all 22%).

North Down volunteers most commonly engaged with health organisations (29%), social services including elderly (20%), children’s education / schools (17%), religious organisations (17%) and sports & recreation (16%).

In NI as a whole sports & recreation are the most common type of organisation volunteers engage with (15%), followed by children / schools (12%), youth / children outside of school (12%) and religious organisations (10%).

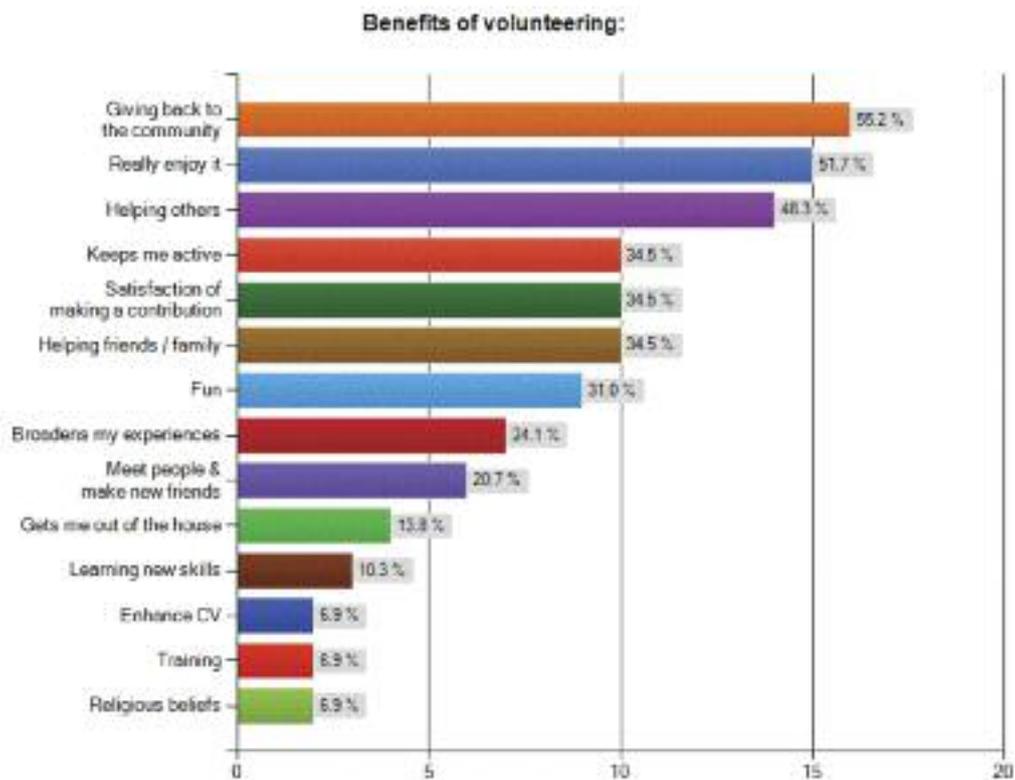


BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

The key benefits of volunteering as cited by volunteers living in Enniskillen NRA were similar to those in both North Down and NI as a whole.

The top benefit was giving back to the community with more than half (55%) described this benefit. Personal enjoyment was second (52%), followed by helping others (48%) followed by keeping me active (35%).

In the NI Survey, benefits per se were not recorded but respondents were asked to rate on a scale how important they felt a series of statements about the benefits of volunteering were. 74% of respondents rated the satisfaction of seeing results as being very important, with the same percentage saying that they enjoyed volunteering. A sense of personal achievement was the statement ranked 3rd as being very important.

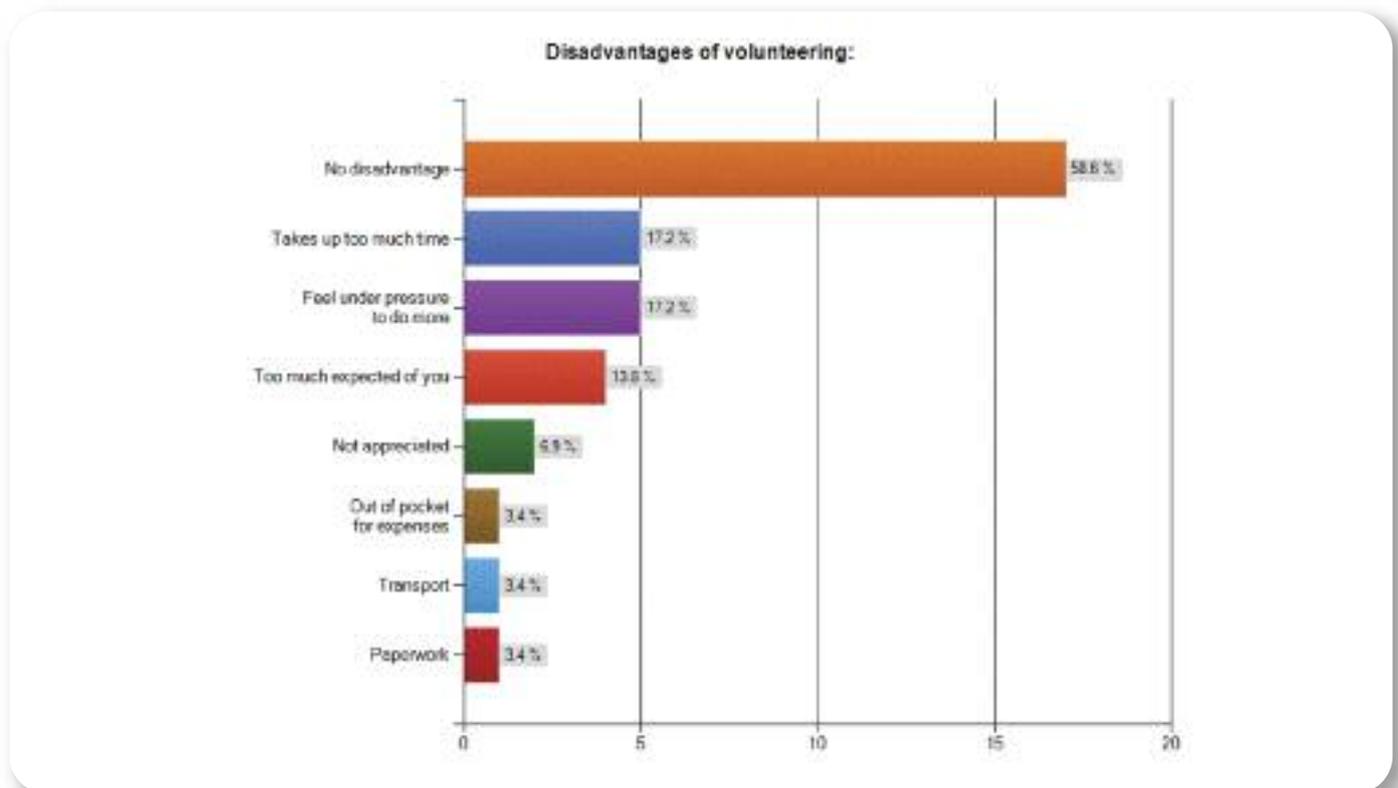


DISADVANTAGES OF VOLUNTEERING

59% of the volunteers in the Enniskillen NRA said that they believed that there were no disadvantages of volunteering. However, 17% of volunteers felt that their voluntary activities took up too much of their time, with the same percentage feeling under pressure to do more and 14% felt that too much was expected of them.

In North Down the disadvantages were generally seen as greater with 43% of volunteers seeing no disadvantage, but similar in specific reasons with 17% feeling that too much is expected of volunteers, 15% felt it took up too much time and 13% said you could find yourself out-of-pocket.

The 2007 NI survey did not record the disadvantages of volunteering, but recorded negative experiences. Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. The three statements that respondents most agreed with were that they were unable to leave their current role as there was no-one to take over (5%), things could be much better organised (5%) and difficulty in balancing volunteering commitments with work / home commitments (4%).



Again, the high levels of satisfaction with volunteering (i.e. people seeing no disadvantage of volunteering) concur with the small but very active group of volunteers in the NRA.

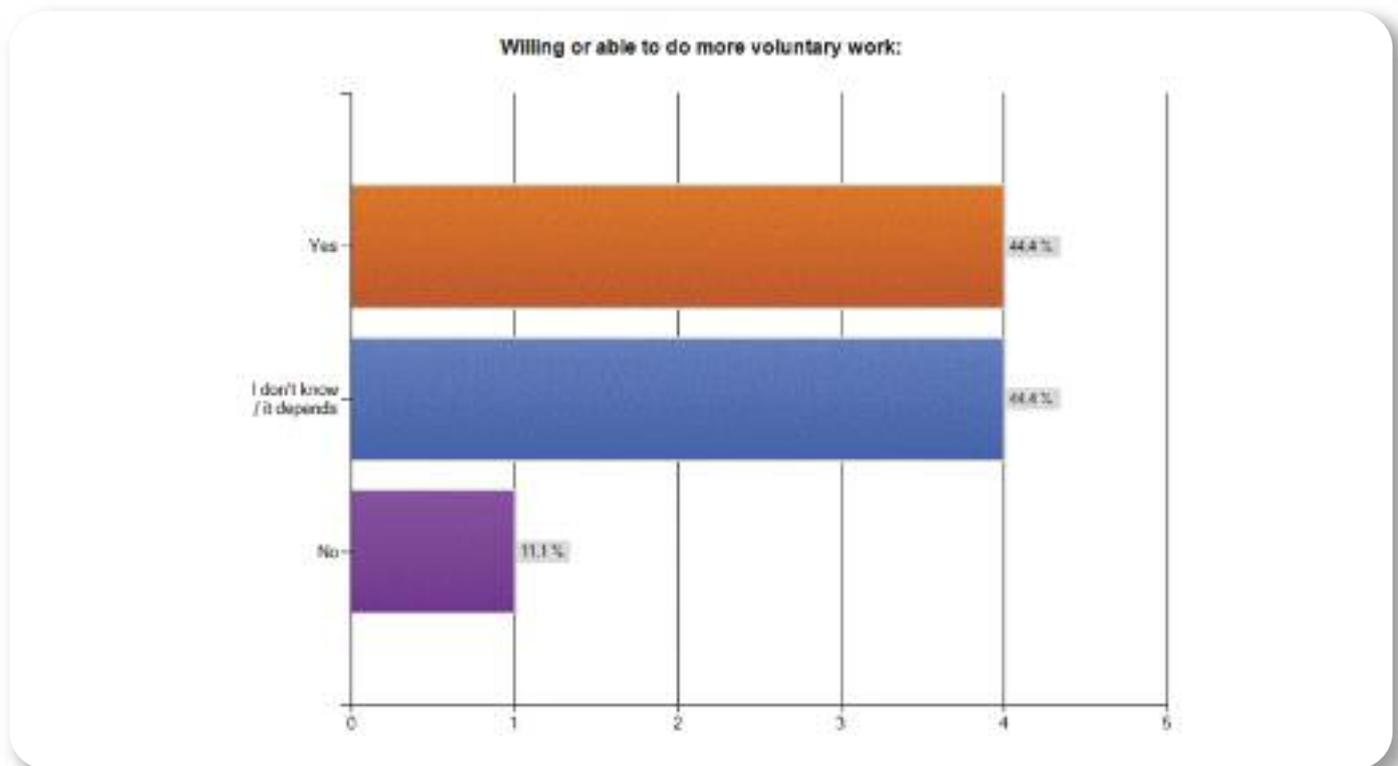
It is worth noting that there was anecdotal evidence of burnout by those volunteers, although they appear unwilling to articulate this as a disadvantage of volunteering. The fact that this survey highlights a small but highly committed group of people volunteering suggests that the time pressure issue is likely to arise.



FUTURE VOLUNTEERING

Undertaking more voluntary work

When asked if they would be willing or able to do more voluntary work, nearly half (44%) of the Enniskillen NRA volunteers said that they would. The same amount (44%) said that they didn't know or that it would depend, with only 11% saying no they would not be either willing or able to do more.



Motivations for future volunteering

For those volunteers who were either willing or able to undertake more voluntary work or who were yet undecided, there were a range of motivating factors that would encourage them to devote more time to voluntary activities.

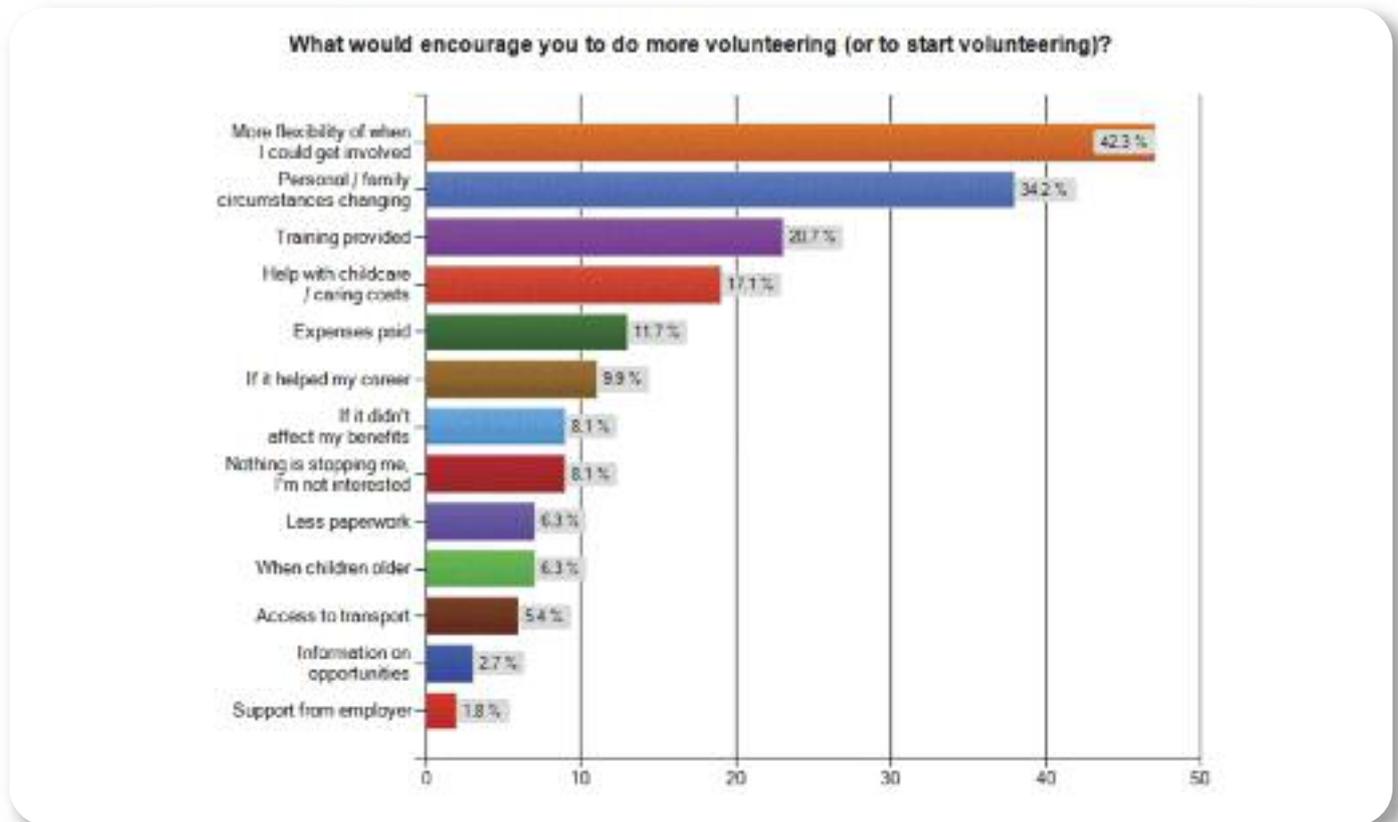
The most common reason was increased flexibility of when the volunteer could get involved, with nearly half (42%) citing this. Other important factors were a change in personal / family circumstances (34%), training provided (21%), help with childcare / caring costs (17%) and paid expenses (12%).

In North Down, the flexibility of when volunteers can get involved was also the top motivating factor (14%), with increased information on opportunities (8%), need arising in the community (7%) and having more spare time available (7%) all being other commonly given factors that would encourage them to volunteer more in the future.

In NI generally, a need arising in the community is the leading factor (22%), with developing new skills / knowledge (20%) and flexibility about timing (10%) also given as factors that would encourage respondents to do more / start volunteering.



There are some interesting messages for organisations delivering services in and around the NRA based on the motivations detailed above, i.e. finding ways to increase flexibility of when a volunteer can get involved.

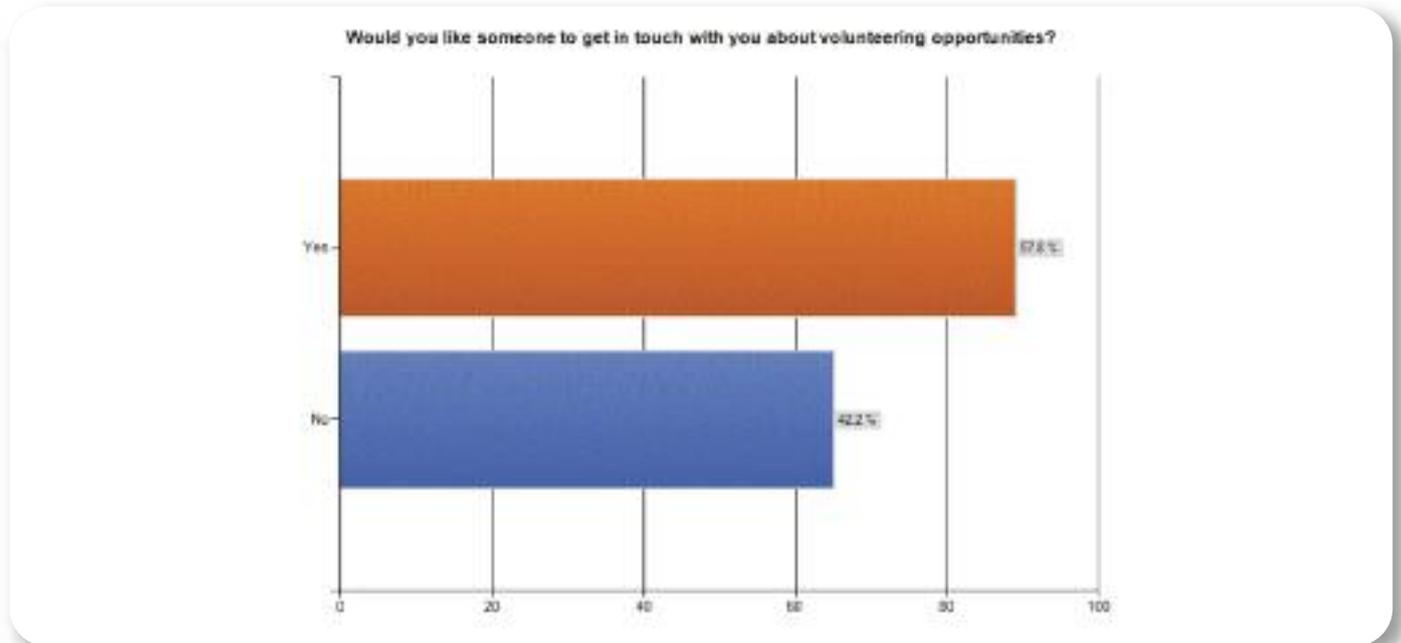


It is worth noting that three of the top four reasons (flexibility, circumstances, help with childcare / caring costs) given as factors which would encourage people to do more volunteering or to start volunteering are linked to family / childcare.



Future contact

All those completing the survey were asked if they would like someone to get in touch with them to discuss volunteering opportunities. More than half (58%) of respondents agreed to be contacted.

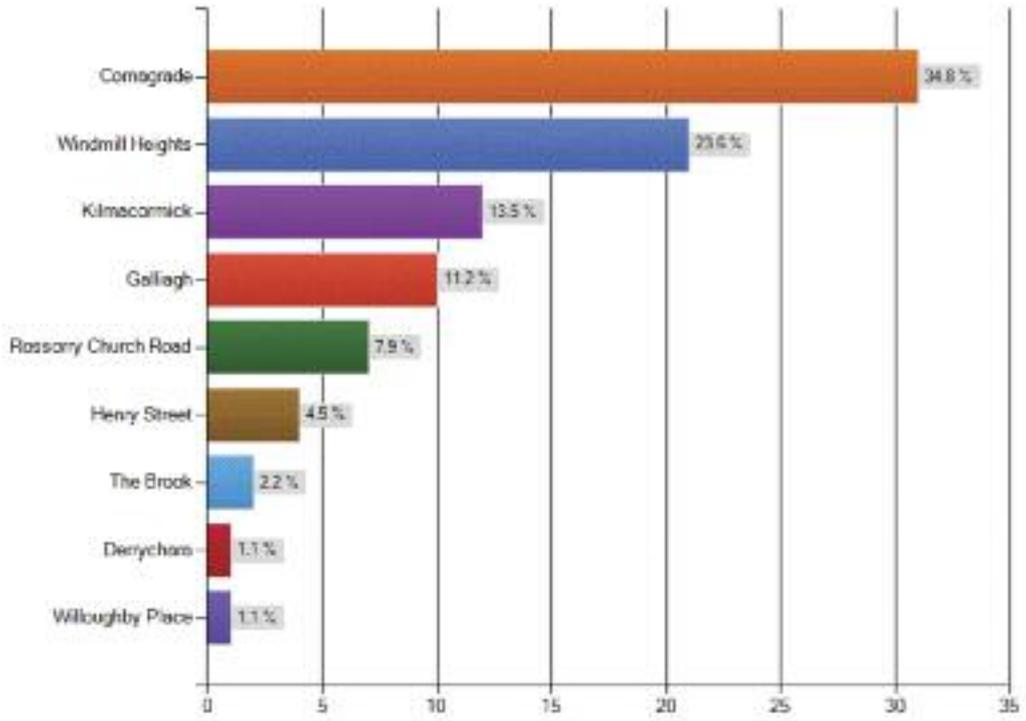


The location of those agreeing to follow up contact on volunteering opportunity is interesting and is slightly disproportionate to the location of respondents in general.

Respondents from Windmill Heights, Galliagh, Rossory Church Road, Henry Street and The Brook were all more likely to request follow up than those from other areas, with those from Galliagh nearly twice as likely as the average respondent. The researchers believe that the rate of respondents agreeing to follow up contact reflect the different demographics within the NRA, with the more mixed identity &/or affluent areas more likely to agree to follow up.



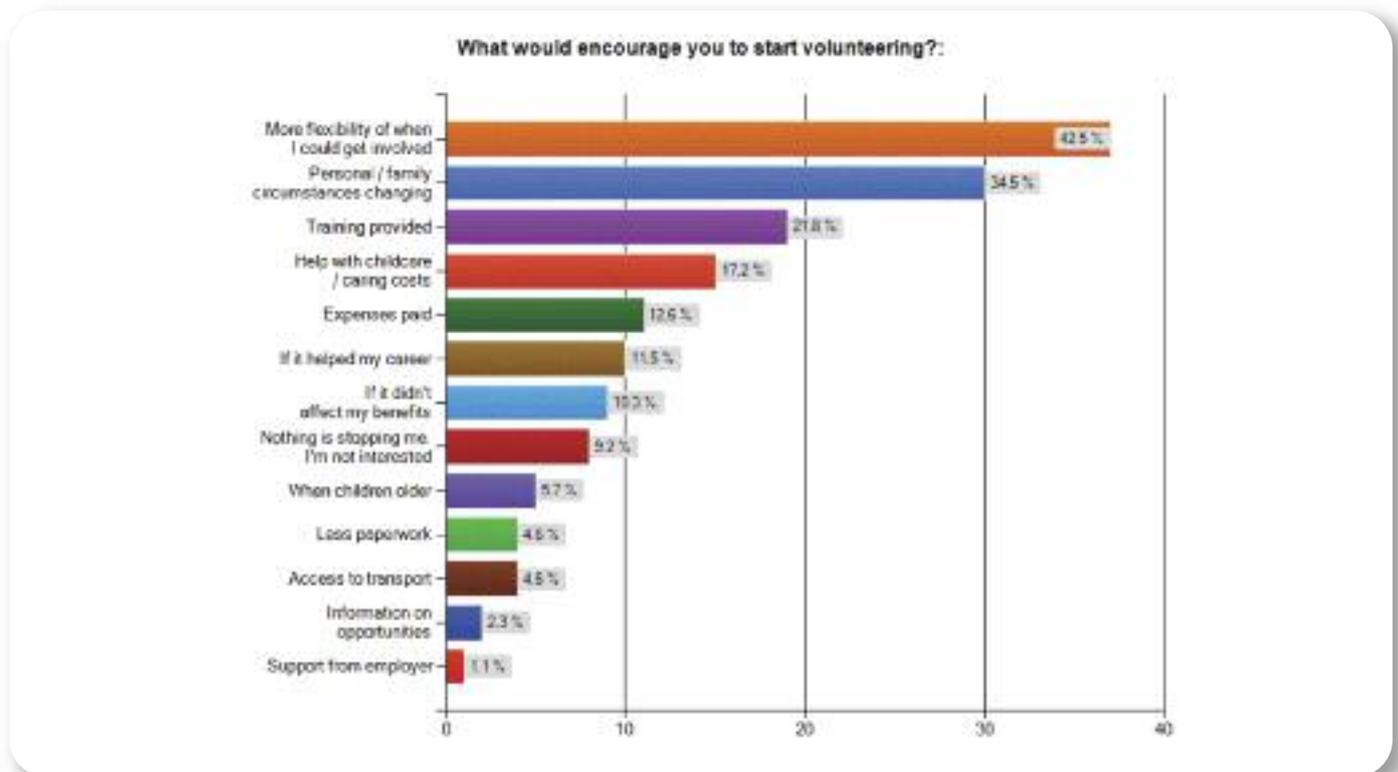
Location of those agreeing to follow up contact:



NON VOLUNTEERS

Those not currently volunteering were asked why they did not volunteer and what the barriers to them undertaking voluntary work were. 43% cited illness or disability as their main reason, with 33% saying they had no spare time and 15% citing childcare / caring responsibilities as the reason they did not volunteer.

This compares to 53% having no spare time in North Down, and 22% citing illness, disability or pregnancy. 12% said they didn't volunteer as they had never been asked. Reasons were slightly different across the NI Survey with 38% saying work commitments prevented them from volunteering, 29% said that they'd never thought about volunteering, 27% said that childcare / home responsibilities were a barrier to volunteering and 23% saying that they felt they were doing enough already.



It is worth noting that the 4th – 7th most common reasons given as being barriers to volunteers are very similar and add up to nearly 20%. These reasons – all loosely in the 'don't know' area provide opportunities to organisations making a volunteering 'ask' and highlight the need for such organisations to be more creative in their approach to potential volunteers.

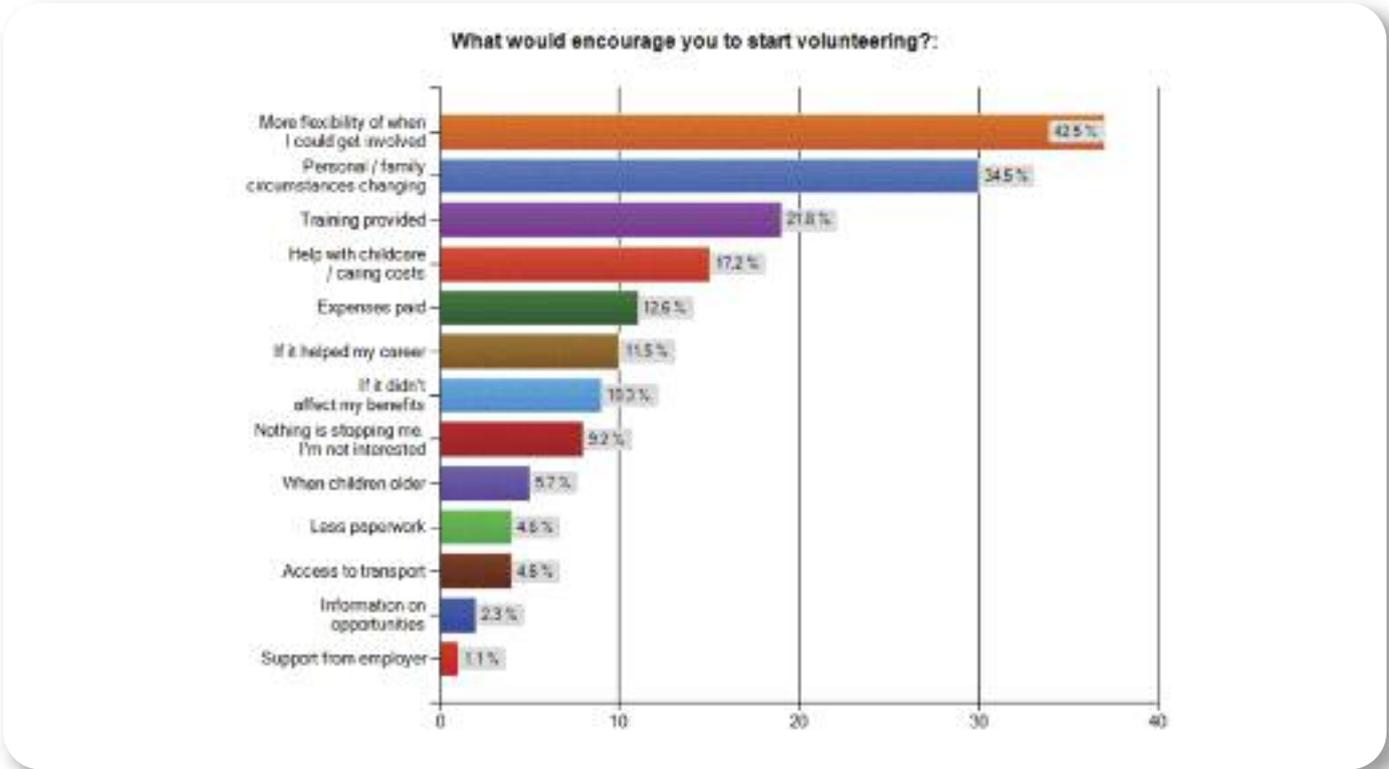


Motivations to start volunteering

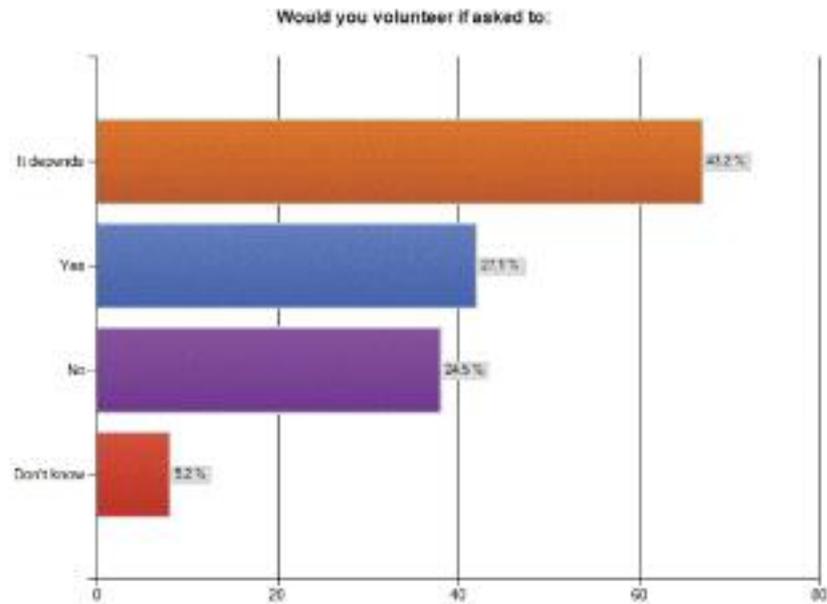
Non volunteers were asked to say what factors would encourage them to start volunteering. Only 9% of non volunteers in Enniskillen said that nothing was stopping them, they just were not interested. Significantly, others gave examples of what would motivate them to start volunteering. 43% said that greater flexibility of when they could get involved would encourage them, 35% said a change in personal / family circumstances, 22% said training and 13% having their expenses paid. This is very similar to the issues raised by those currently volunteering. Therefore, if organisations seeking volunteers addressed these barrier / motivation issues, they would not only encourage existing volunteers to do more but could attract those not currently volunteering.

In North Down 35% said that nothing was stopping them. 16% cited greater flexibility, 16% if they knew it would make a difference and help others in their community and 12% if they got more information on opportunities.

Reasons cited in the NI Survey included if they were able to learn new skills / knowledge (15%), access training & accreditation through the volunteer organisation (13%), becoming aware of a need in the local community (12%), meeting new people (12%) and both greater flexibility of when they could get involved and opportunity to develop career (both 11%).



In the Enniskillen NRA, 27% of respondents said that they would volunteer if asked, with 25% saying no, 43% depending on the circumstances and 5% saying they didn't know. 70% of respondents gave a positive response; this is hugely significant.



ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

As part of this audit, Green Hat interviewed a number of public, community and voluntary sector organisations both working directly with Enniskillen NRA residents and those working more broadly in Enniskillen &/or Co Fermanagh. Due to the time of year that the audit was conducted and the relatively short time-scale of the project, the number and range of organisations interviewed was smaller than the consultants would have liked. Seven organisations were interviewed, all of whom were based within the NRA. A list of these organisations can be found in Appendix E.

Benefits of volunteering

All organisations interviewed believed that volunteering offered a range of benefits to both the individual and the organisation concerned. Benefits to the individual cited included opportunities for social contact, reducing isolation, CV development, sense of giving back, learning new skills, personal satisfaction and keeping people stimulated during the recession.

Perceived benefits to organisations included benefits to vulnerable groups (e.g. older people & children), accessing a wide pool of skills and having an additional resource.

Volunteering & Enniskillen NRA

The organisational perspective was that there were considerable benefits from volunteering for individuals in the Enniskillen NRA, but that currently these benefits are not understood. It was felt that there was both a cultural and class barrier to volunteer in the NRA and that VSB and others will need to work extremely hard to begin to remove the barriers to participating in volunteering.

Organisations felt that volunteering was still very much seen as a middle-class activity, and that there was suspicion from some people about doing 'something for nothing'. It was acknowledged that recruiting volunteers from the NRA was more difficult than other areas. However, several interviewees felt that those involved were particularly committed and gain considerable satisfaction from their volunteering.

Benefits cited included motivation towards unemployment, CV development & increasing employability, raising self-esteem, building confidence, reducing isolation and increasing social interaction.

Promotion of volunteering

All the organisations interviewed said that they felt that they had a role to play in the promotion of volunteers and volunteering in Fermanagh, including in Enniskillen NRA. All were happy to sign-post potential volunteers to Fermanagh Volunteer Centre, and several already do this.

Partnership working

All of the organisations interviewed for this research were interested in developing their relationship with their local volunteer centre, and identified scope for greater involvement in the future.

Several organisations were keen to develop their communication links with the centre. Several others were in search of more &/or different volunteers and so wanted to avail of the volunteer / organisation



matching service provided. Training was another key area of development between Fermanagh Volunteer Centre and organisations working within the Enniskillen NRA. Child protection was one area given as an example.

Other comments

There was an acknowledgement from organisations interviewed that there was a definite need for an organisation like the Fermanagh Volunteer Centre actively working in the county. There was particular interest in developing a volunteering programme linked to unemployed people.

Concerns were also raised about volunteer burn-out and lack of volunteer recognition. The comments from volunteers suggests that organisations need to find public, high profile and creative ways of offering their volunteers recognition.



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The survey did not ask either individual respondents or organisations about specific training and development needs. However, both groups offered information and expressed needs around training and development.

Individuals

The four main areas of training that individuals identified or organisations identified for individuals volunteering for them are:

- Child protection
- Working with young people & children
- Befriending training
- Mentoring skills (particularly for young people)

All of the above training areas will also need to be developed within organisations so that they have the support and resources required to be deliver or facilitate this training for individuals.

Organisations

Training for organisations centred around three areas. Firstly, there was a need to build understanding around and deliver activities to give volunteer recognition. The lack of recognition of their volunteering was an important factor in de-motivating current volunteers and this needs to be addressed.

Secondly, collaborative working is an area where community, voluntary and statutory organisations need to explore, and these organisations need support to build and develop partnerships. The sharing of resources, avoiding of duplication of volunteering activities and increased access to challenging volunteering opportunities are all possible benefits. Youth work was cited as a example of where organisations could work more collaboratively in their volunteering.

Thirdly, organisations require training and support to design and deliver recruitment and marketing campaigns. The first element is building knowledge and skills to be able to target specific groups of volunteers, e.g. young people, unemployed, women. This is all linked to the organisations' ability to 'make the ask'. The research highlighted that many people do not volunteer because they've not been asked, never thought about it or didn't know how to go about it. This offers huge scope for organisations to be more creative about how they approach potential volunteers. Many organisations need to improve their marketing and 'sales' skills to recruit volunteers and move from a passive to proactive role. Putting a poster in a window asking for volunteers is just not enough!



SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

This audit has produced some distinctly different results from its predecessors across a number of key areas, and as such is not directly comparable with either the survey carried out in North Down in 2005 or across Northern Ireland in 2007. These differences are a direct result of the audit being undertaken exclusively within an NRA. It should be remembered that this is a unique piece of research in terms of the demography of the area, but the potential to link volunteering as a tool for increasing active citizenship and civic participation is significant and worth further exploration.

Further exploration around the link between volunteering, active citizenship and community / good relations in single identity areas is one which merits significant resources by government.

Only 18% of respondents had undertaken any kind of voluntary activity in the last twelve month. This is less than half the levels of volunteering in North Down (37%) and the regional average (45%). It is also of interest to note that the level of individuals engaged in formal 13.5% in the NRA is considerably below the Northern Ireland figure of 21%. These levels were not unexpected but do highlight the challenge of recruiting and engaging with volunteers in the Enniskillen NRA. Indeed it would seem that these figures echo findings in the UK where volunteering in disadvantaged communities are estimated to be significantly less than the UK average.

That the typical volunteer in the Enniskillen NRA is male rather than female is interesting although the gap between Enniskillen and North Down / NI is marginal. The higher than average levels of single parent families in the area may be a factor in women not volunteering as much in the NRA as the other NI areas.

The socio-economic profile of volunteers in Enniskillen is different to that of North Down / NI and again this is due to the nature of the NRA. Unemployed and retired people are much more likely to be volunteering in the Enniskillen NRA rather than those in full-time employment. Again, this reflects the profile of the NRA. It also creates challenges for those seeking to recruit volunteers in terms of the 'type' of volunteer available and their skill set and levels. Exploratory work needs to be done in order to find new ways of engaging potential volunteers.

Catholic residents in the NRA are proportionately less likely to volunteer than their Protestant counterparts. However, low levels of volunteering are closely linked with areas of deprivation and as levels of deprivation are higher in the 'Catholic' estates in this area than mixed areas (the Enniskillen NRA is 75% Catholic), this is the likely reason for this.

Whilst there are only small numbers of volunteers in the NRA, the frequency of activity is surprisingly high with 69% of volunteers undertaking their chosen work at least once a week. This exceptionally high level of commitment offers organisations scope to use these volunteers to help recruit new people to the organisation.

Sources of information were informal and create both opportunities and challenges for developing volunteering in the Enniskillen NRA. The most common sources were another volunteer, word of mouth and friends and family. It is unlikely that much progress will be made in increasing levels of volunteering in the NRA in the short to medium term without harnessing these valuable sources of information.

Motivations for volunteering, types of volunteer activity, type of 'host' volunteer organisation, benefits and disadvantages of volunteering were very much in line with elsewhere in NI and there are no special considerations for this audit.



Non volunteers said that the most likely reason for them to start volunteering was to have more flexibility of when they could get involved (43%) and illness &/or disability was cited as the most common reason why most people did not volunteer.

Finally, there is an exciting potential for developing volunteering within the Enniskillen NRA. More than half of those interviewed – 89 people – said (when asked) that they would like someone to get in touch with them about volunteering opportunities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

It was not within the scope of this research to make recommendations for developments / activities arising from this survey. However, Green Hat believes that the findings have wider implications for both the development of volunteering in Co Fermanagh, the learning from this research with regard to other NRAs and issues around active citizenship.

With this in mind, Green Hat is making four key recommendations for developmental activities following this research:

1 Undertake a county-wide volunteering survey

This would leave a legacy of research with which to better understand volunteering in Co Fermanagh, and a mechanism with which to benchmark volunteering levels prior to the Review of Public Administration merge with Omagh District Council.

Such research would give the Fermanagh VSB an excellent foundation with which to develop strategies for developmental work to include rural, urban, outreach, age / gender specific and other targeted programmes.

2 Undertake research in other NRAs & more in-depth research in Enniskillen

There is scope to undertake more in-depth research into attitudes on volunteering by those living within the NRA, both currently volunteering as well as non-volunteers. A focus on qualitative information could form the basis of a marketing and recruitment campaign for volunteers living within the NRA.

Similar research undertaken in other NRAs would allow for comparisons across NRAs and facilitate the development of a volunteering strategy for such areas across NI.

3 Devise & deliver a pilot volunteering project in Enniskillen NRA

Organisations currently delivering services within the Enniskillen NRA are supportive of volunteering as a concept as well as practical support for their activities. There is scope to develop a pilot volunteering project, possibly with either unemployed &/or young people.

4 Present findings to DSD, FDC & others

The findings of this report should be presented to the DSD – ideally as part of a submission to the current public consultation on volunteering. It should also be presented to Fermanagh District Council and other locally-based statutory agencies.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

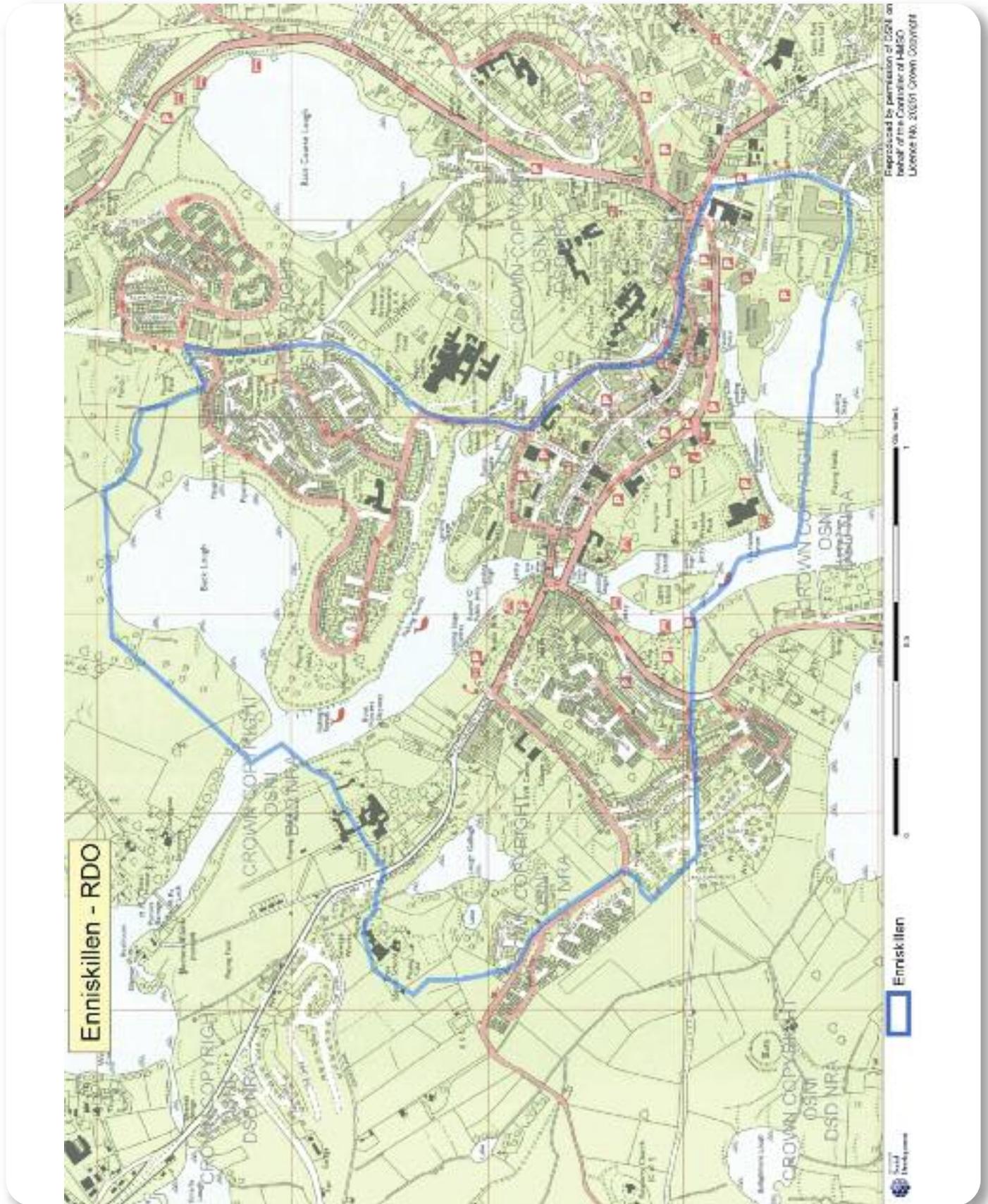
Green Hat would like to thank the following people:

- Maeve Donaghy, Fermanagh Volunteer Centre
- Michelle Baker, NRA Co-Ordinator
- Public, voluntary & community sector groups who participated in audit interviews
- And particularly the residents of NRA area who participated in the audit



APPENDIX A – Map of Enniskillen NRA

Enniskillen's Neighbourhood Renewal Area is the area inside the blue line



APPENDIX B – Acronyms

DSD	Department of Social Development
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency
NRA	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
VCU	Voluntary & Community Unit (part of DSD)
VSB	Voluntary Service Bureau



APPENDIX C – Volunteering Survey

[PDF to be attached]



APPENDIX D – Questions for organisations

- 1 Have you heard of the Volunteer Centre Fermanagh?
- 2 If yes, do you have a relationship with the centre or have you ever had contact with them? In what capacity / way? Is this regular contact or was it one-of?
- 3 Have you ever referred anyone to the Volunteer Centre?
- 4 Do you believe that there are benefits from volunteering for individuals & organisations? If so, what? If not, why?
- 5 Our volunteering audit only covers the Enniskillen Neighbourhood Renewal area (see survey for info on what areas this is). Do you think there's a need to encourage people from specific geographic / social areas to undertake volunteering work? Can you say why?
- 6 Do you think your organisation has a role to play in the promotion of volunteering & volunteers in Fermanagh?
- 7 Can you see any scope for your organisations greater involvement with either the Volunteer Centre or using volunteers in the future? Please tell us more
- 8 Any other comments on volunteering in Fermanagh?



APPENDIX E – Participating organisations

The following organisations contributed to this research:

- Department of Regional Development Roads Service
- Devenish Partnership Forum
- Enniskillen Social Security Agency
- EXTERN
- Fermanagh District Council
- Fermanagh Trust
- Windmill Heights Community Association











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