



# Committee Matters

*An assessment of the characteristics,  
training needs and governance role of voluntary  
management committees in Northern Ireland*

A report by the  
NICVA Research Unit  
for the Volunteer Development Agency

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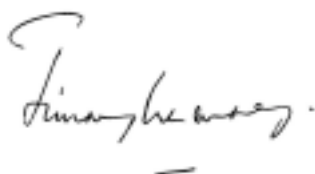
## Foreword

For many years, the Volunteer Development Agency has been at the forefront of research into aspects of volunteering in Northern Ireland. Among them, studies that establish baseline information against which trends and further developments can be measured. Membership of voluntary management committees is an important dimension of volunteering. The Agency's publication *Volunteering in Northern Ireland 2001* showed that 30% of volunteers were involved in committee work.

The Agency is to be congratulated on its initiative in commissioning this major study of the governance role of voluntary management committees. It is another "first" for the Agency and for Northern Ireland. It is one component of a wider initiative by the Agency — Investing In Building Active Communities, which is concerned with enhancing the effectiveness of volunteer involvement by building the capacity of volunteers, of volunteer involving organisations and groups and of the local volunteering infrastructure.

Management committees are one, crucial element of the governance process. They are at the heart of the voluntary and community sector, yet until now we knew relatively little about their number, composition and characteristics. We knew even less about issues such as the satisfaction levels of committee members, how they perceive their governance role and what their support and development needs were. This project provides a wealth of information on these issues and a baseline against which future trends can be monitored.

The report reaches a number of conclusions and makes a number of recommendations. These require prompt and careful consideration and action by a range of players to ensure that voluntary management committees have access to the support services that they need. The Volunteer Development Agency will work with other networks, support agencies and funding bodies to ensure that this happens.



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The Volunteer Development Agency expresses its gratitude to all individuals and organisations that took part or assisted in any way with this important piece of research.

## **Summary**

This research project aims to provide baseline information that will assess the capacity and governance role of voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland, and inform the work of the Volunteer Development Agency's Investing in Building Active Communities through Governance Initiative.

### **Committee involvement**

- 'Management committee' (58%) is the most commonly used term to describe an organisation's governing body.
- On average ten individuals serve on a single management committee.
- There are an estimated 42,315 places on voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland. This translates into an estimated total of 33,519 individuals.

### **Committee composition**

- 54% of all committee members are female (estimated total of 18,200 females).
- 66% of individuals serving on management committees are aged 45 and over. Only 3% are aged under 25 years old.
- In organisations with an income of more than £500,000, three out of every four Chairpersons are male (75%).
- 7% of all voluntary management committee members are disabled.

### **Recruitment of committee members**

- 81% of individuals serve on a management committee in their own time (includes service users). This equates to 27,150 individuals volunteering their own time.
- 53.9% of organisations have an election where their members or the community decide upon the new committee.
- 7% of organisations have no formal process to select new committee members.

### **Motivations**

- The majority of individuals have served on a committee for between one and three years (31%). 13% have served on a committee for more than eleven years.
- The main reason for becoming a committee member is the individual's 'commitment to the cause of the organisation' followed by 'wanting to be more involved in their community'.
- 'Reduced or inadequate funding' and 'not being able to do everything that is needed' represent the two main areas of dissatisfaction individuals associate with serving on a management committee.

### **Training and support**

- 35% of organisations operate a formal induction process for new committee members.
- Almost three quarters of organisations, which have a formal induction process, provide 'printed materials' or 'briefings by staff or other committee members'.
- The majority of committee members would like to see made available an 'updateable handbook of current good practice' in relation to management committees.

### **The governance relationship**

- Where no formal selection process is in place, the balance of skills and experience on a committee is greater than in any other category. For other selection processes there is a general consensus that the balance of skills on the committee is consistent regardless of how the individuals were selected.
- As the economic size of the organisation increases, then the likelihood that the committee will be more involved in some form of strategic development also increases.
- The committee's relationship with management is constantly shifting between consent, difference and disagreement depending on the issues being faced and the circumstances. The attitudinal items used to test this connection found that no consensus exists concerning the exact nature of this relationship.

### **Structures and processes**

- On average organisations will hold nine committee meetings per year.
- In total 85% of all organisations stated that average attendance at committee meetings totalled more than half of all committee members.
- 37% of committee members serve on committees where they are re-elected every year. This is followed by 28% of committee members serving on committees where they are permitted to serve for an indefinite period.
- In total, 44% of organisations have some sort of formal sub committee(s), with this being far more likely amongst the very largest organisations (91% in £1million organisations).



## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this research project and are aimed at the Volunteer Development Agency, policy makers, funders, trainers and the wider voluntary and community sector.

***Raise awareness of the valuable role undertaken by voluntary management committees.*** A Northern Ireland wide awareness campaign to promote the valuable contribution made by management committee members should be developed.

***More effort should be made to attracting new and more diverse committee members.*** A number of initiatives should be developed which are designed to help organisations, particularly smaller ones, attract new and more diverse committee members.

***Greater focus should be placed on the co-ordination and promotion amongst key networks/organisations of their existing services for management committees.*** The Volunteer Development Agency should take the lead with regard to the co-ordination and promotion of such an approach.

***There must be greater recognition of the diverse role and capacity that exists across management committees depending upon economic size and stage in the development of the organisation.*** Policy makers, training providers and funders need to ensure policy, advice and guidance recognise these differences and are more clearly targeted.

***Clarification is required surrounding responsibility for setting standards of practice and the regulation of management committees.*** Under the current Scoping Study of Charity Law in Northern Ireland and any subsequent consultation the role of the Charities Branch (Voluntary and Community Unit, DSD) in relation to setting standards of practice should be clarified.

***Information surrounding good practice for management committees should be made more accessible in the form of an updateable handbook.*** The Volunteer Development Agency, the Charities Branch, DSD and other key support organisations in the voluntary and community sector should coordinate a review of good practice relating to voluntary management committees.

## 1. Introduction

*"Voluntary management committees are at the heart of both the community and voluntary sectors in Northern Ireland. Anything we do to support and develop them must not only lead to more people feeling more confident and capable of working on a committee, but also increase their passion, commitment and motivation".* (Kevin Ford, Rural College, April 1997)

We know that voluntary management committees exist and have some idea about their overall function. We know there is a large body of individuals who commit their energy and time, voluntarily, to ensuring the organisation they represent is given a sound basis from which to develop and serve the community or individuals it intends to help. However beyond these simple facts we know very little else about the people and relationships that make up voluntary management committees or the specific contribution they make to the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.

Equally, we know that to underestimate the contribution such individuals make would be a mistake. In reality however it is often the case that the level of personal involvement invested by these individuals is overlooked and undervalued. These individuals through their altruistic obligation to a community or issue are essentially the invisible force driving forward the voluntary and community sector. And yet they remain an unknown and under-researched population.

Considering that information on the type of person who volunteers their time to sit on voluntary management committees is scant, then our knowledge about their attitudes towards their role on committees is even less. This research project has two very clear objectives at its core — first, to determine the demographic profile of voluntary management committee members and second, to assess the attitudes of such individuals towards governance, training and support and their ultimate motivations for devoting time and energy towards fulfilling this vital role.

Prior to any assessment of individual committee member's attitudes towards their governance role on a committee, the specific characteristics of these individuals and the committees they serve on has to be carried out. In order to address this problem, the Volunteer Development Agency commissioned NICVA (the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) to carry out a baseline survey of voluntary management committees.

Allied to the general lack of knowledge in Northern Ireland about the characteristics of voluntary management committees, there is confusion at a more basic level in relation to what management committees and the individuals who sit on them are called. The term used to describe the governing body can vary depending on the organisation. Variations include the Management Committee, Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, Board of Governors, Governance Board, Council of Management, Executive Committee, etc. This undoubtedly adds to the confusion surrounding the definition and functions of governance. Therefore the research will also aim to disentangle some of the confusion surrounding the use of different terminologies or, at the least, provide some measure of what is the most common term used.

The importance of management committees and their development is an area that is increasingly concentrating the minds of the voluntary and community

sector, policy makers, funders and trainers and is a debate that is central to the continued development of the sector as a whole. The situation is perhaps best summed up by the Department for Social Development (DSD) which stated that "trusteeship is a serious matter and should not be undertaken lightly." (DSD, 2002). This statement is one which underlines the importance of the undertaking made by individuals when serving on a management committee and is also a message to organisations not to undervalue the contribution a committee and its members make. This dichotomy is one which is core to the entire debate about governance and the role individuals have to play in developing organisations and ensuring their effective day to day running.

### **1.1 Aims and objectives of the research**

This research project aims to provide baseline information that will assess the capacity and governance role of voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland, and inform the work of the Volunteer Development Agency's Investing in Building Active Communities through Governance Initiative. The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To gather information on the current characteristics of volunteers on voluntary management committees, for example, age, gender, disability and other socio-economic characteristics.
- To examine the involvement, satisfaction levels and attitudes towards volunteering of voluntary management committees.
- To identify how voluntary management committees perceive their governance role, including organisational policy/practice.
- To identify significant issues and challenges relating to governance faced by voluntary management committees.
- To identify the collective training and support needs of voluntary management committees.
- To assess the quality and quantity of and satisfaction with, existing training and support provision accessed by voluntary management committees as a group.
- To identify areas of weak provision/gaps in terms of the training infrastructure for voluntary management committees.
- To provide a baseline against which to monitor future trends.
- To direct the work of the Volunteer Development Agency by clarifying priorities for the development of services to voluntary management committees, eg support, information, training.

It is perhaps important to note at this stage the overall remit of this study with regard to the examination of the governance relationship on management committees. Only one aspect of the governance of organisations has been taken into consideration, that being the role of management committees. However, there is a growing body of work concentrating on the importance of organisations which take a multi-stakeholder approach to governance (to include staff, volunteers, users, members, funders and management committees). Unfortunately due to the timescale under which this research was carried out, a full examination of the multi-stakeholder perspective and its prevalence in the

voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland could not be achieved. Nevertheless some aspects of the level of user involvement have been covered later in this report.

## **1.2 Policy context**

Throughout Government policy there is a wide recognition of the contribution that volunteers make to society. For instance government policies such as the Active Community Initiative, Partners for Change and the Programme for Government all highlight the value and impact of volunteerism.

However two Government policies which have emanated from Whitehall which do not directly affect the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector, could have the greatest impact on management committees. The first of these documents is a consultation that was published by the Strategy Unit (part of the Cabinet Office) in September 2002. This document entitled *Public Action, Public Benefit* attempted to set out to create an environment in which the voluntary and community sector to thrive.

The review made recommendations about the legal and regulatory framework which currently underpins the voluntary and community sector in England and Wales. The report also looked at the removal of unnecessary legal restrictions on investment, entrepreneurial activities and mergers and acquisitions. Of course this only applies to England and Wales where such frameworks exist and are implemented by the Charity Commission.

In the absence of a Charity Commission style body in Northern Ireland the Charities Branch, Voluntary and Community Unit, DSD, have commissioned a scoping study looking at the review of charity law in Northern Ireland. This paper is expected to be published May 2003 and will go out to consultation in the sector. Clearly if any full scale review of charity law is to be undertaken in Northern Ireland the potential impact on management committees will be significant. Obviously the outcome of any review will not be known for some time but many commentators believe the catalyst for the scoping paper is directly attributable to the *Public Action, Public Benefit* consultation.

The second piece of government policy that will have an impact on how management committees govern organisations and the role individuals will be expected to fulfil is the Treasury's Cross Cutting Review. The delivery of public services by the voluntary and community sector is continuing to increase and the Cross Cutting Review is creating an environment where such relationship between government and the sector will increase. Although this review is not applicable to Northern Ireland the impact of contracts with government to deliver public services will directly affect the management committees of organisations. As government withdraws from the direct delivery of public services and programmes the amount of regulation and scrutiny focussed on management committees will increase.

## **1.3 Literature review**

As part of this research project a more detailed scoping paper has been produced which outlines models of good practice and current research into the role management committees play in relation to governance. This scoping paper is available from the Volunteer Development Agency.

Stimulated initially by public concerns over the behaviour and accountability of some senior business executives, there has been a growing interest in how to

improve the quality of organisational governance, which has spread to the public and voluntary sectors (Cornforth, 2003). The research literature on boards has grown considerably from the 1980s although the field is largely dominated by work in the USA (Ostrower and Stone, 2001). However, much of the literature is prescriptive in nature and points to the need for a greater understanding of the way boards work that is grounded in empirical studies of actual behaviour. This section presents a review of the latest findings into the whole area of governance and participation in management committees that is applicable to the voluntary and community sector.

Throughout all the research carried out in the UK and Republic of Ireland into the issues of good governance, one overriding message dominates. That is that the role of the management committee within each individual organisation depends very much on the size of the organisation. By way of a hypothesis, previous research claims that members of management committees within a smaller organisation will have a greater involvement in the decision and monitoring process within the organisation, compared to their equivalents in larger organisations that are much less likely to be involved in day to day decision making. This level of analysis based on the economic size of the organisation will be a recurring feature of this research.

Perhaps the definitive work carried out into board size has been by National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). The first report to provide a baseline of the numbers involved in the governance of voluntary and community organisations was *Building on Trust* (Kirkland and Sargent, NCVO, 1995). The purpose of the project was to obtain information about trustees, including their responsibilities and the types of support that they would find useful. The research focuses on individuals, their characteristics, what they do as trustees, support sources and information that they would see as useful to help them carry out their role.

This report was followed in 2002 by *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (Cornforth, NCVO, 2002) which attempted to look at how boards are changing and whether initiatives that had been introduced were having a desired effect on what management committees do. The characteristics of different management committees were also assessed according to the size and type of charity organisation.

To date very little research into the size or extent of management committees has been carried out in Ireland, North or South. One exception to this has been the work carried out by Gwen Jaffro, who herself recognised the lack of research into this area.

*"While there is today a wide range of publications on the subject of governance in the voluntary or non-profit settings, there appears to be no existing or published research on the workings of boards of Irish voluntary organisations."*  
(Jaffro, Trinity College Dublin, 1998)

In her report *Insights into the Boards of Irish Voluntary Agencies* (1998), Jaffro attempted to provide a benchmark report on patterns of governance and board functioning in a number of Irish voluntary agencies, that is those employing paid staff, be they full or part-time. From the research, Jaffro concluded that the board and the staff tend to be involved in both governance and management, and in some cases act only as a rubber stamp to decisions made by the staff. The research also highlighted the high degree of informality regarding selection and induction, and also development and definition of the management committee.

Research examining the informality or otherwise of procedures on management committees was undertaken by the Charity Commission in their report entitled *'Trustee Recruitment, Selection and Induction (2002)*. The research found that within the voluntary and community sector, boards take responsibility for overseeing charity management, administration and distribution of income. However poor training of management committee members was found to lead to a lack of control over staff, financial and legal problems and conflict of interests. The research also found that many charities are at risk due to the fact that they fail to check if prospective management committee members are disqualified by law from holding such positions, or for example convictions relating to deception or dishonesty. The informal approach of 'word of mouth' recruitment means that boards are often 'exclusive' and socially unrepresentative. According to the Charity Commission, *'roughly one in ten large and very large organisations advertised for vacancies within their management committee'*.

When we talk of governance in relation to voluntary management committees it is a difficult term to define. What must be made clear at this initial stage is that governance is not necessarily about doing, but about ensuring that things are being done within the organisation.

In relation to the governance of organisations there have been a number of studies examining this complex and often misunderstood area. The most notable of which have been the recent book edited by Chris Cornforth (*The Governance of Public and Non-profit Organisations, 2003*) and research carried out by Kumar and Nunan for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2002.

First, *The Governance of Public and Non-profit Organisations* examines the changing role of boards within the overall policy context taking into account changing historical and theoretical perspectives relating to governance. The book examines how recent contextual changes have impacted upon the governance of public and non-profit organisations in the UK and identifies the main problems and issues that have arisen as a result. Second, Cornforth lays out the main theories that have been put forward to explain organisational governance. Cornforth argues that each of these theories only give a partial and limited account of governance and suggest that a new multi-paradigm perspective is required, which highlights the paradoxical and situational nature of governance.

*The Governance of Public and Non-profit Organisations* has been an important basis for the Governance Section in this report as the theoretical constructs that have been applied to organisational governance allowed the researchers to examine various relationships on management committees.

On the other hand Kumar and Nunan took a less esoteric look at the issue of governance on boards. Their study concluded that a definition of 'governance' is an elusive concept, defined and conceptualised in different ways. This results in confusion and sometimes contradiction between views of governance. The report goes on to state that government policies have focused on different aspects of governance, fuelling the confusion surrounding the term. This has led to difficulties in developing governance especially within smaller organisations. Again at the policy level the research found there was a tendency for the Charity Commission, funders and local development agencies to assume that community groups and small voluntary organisations were new, wanted to grow and develop along a linear path.

Although there are a number of directories relating to the provision of training, there has been little research into the extent and the issues surrounding training provision for management committees. NICVA's report *Are You Being Served?*

(2003) provides a detailed picture of training provision for management committees and where the gaps in provision are. The report found differences in the provision of training between groups which are affiliated to a larger umbrella or network organisation and those which are not. The findings also highlighted the shift towards the accreditation of training which may be unsuitable for management committee members within smaller voluntary and community groups. Finally, the research found that a more flexible support and development approach is favoured over the prescriptive training that is currently being offered to management committee members.

Looking at the wider context in relation to volunteering and what motivates individuals to give their own free time, there are a number of definitive studies in Northern Ireland. Research carried out by the Volunteer Development Agency looking at *Volunteering in Northern Ireland* (2001) and *Volunteering in Organisations* (2001) both give invaluable insights into how many people volunteer in Northern Ireland, the reasons why and possible developments for the future to facilitate even more voluntary activity.

### 1.4 Structure of the report

As outlined in Section 1.1, the aims and objectives of this research have posed a number of questions and the structure of the report represents the various themes that the research addresses.

Sections 2 through to 7 examine in turn the main issues surrounding the composition of management committees to training and support needs.

<b>Section 2</b>	Provides an overall estimate of the number of voluntary management committee places in Northern Ireland and how variables such as the purpose of the organisation or its economic size affect committee size or definition.
<b>Section 3</b>	The composition of voluntary management committees is examined in Section 3 and is essentially a profile of the individuals who serve on committees in relation to age, gender, race, disability and perceived religious background.
<b>Section 4</b>	A key component of good governance is the adherence to good recruitment policies for new committee members and in Section 4 such policies and procedures are examined.
<b>Section 5</b>	Section 5 asks why do these individuals voluntarily devote time and energy to serving on management committees and what ultimately motivates their continued participation.
<b>Section 6</b>	A key issue for individuals serving on management committees is the level of training and support they receive in relation to the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities on a committee. It examines the level of satisfaction with training and what, if any, training or support new committee members receive. This section also examines the gaps in the provision of training and support for voluntary management committees.
<b>Section 7</b>	Taking the notion of a relationship between the organisation and the committee, Section 7 delves into the 'governance relationship' and how individual committee members perceive their role in the strategic or day to day management of their organisation.
<b>Section 8</b>	Developing the theme of good practice within management committees, Section 8 of the findings relates specifically to the procedural relationships that exist between a committee and the organisation.

<b>Section 9</b>	To ensure the survey is representative of the sector, Section 9 looks at the organisational profile of respondents which will serve as a base for more detailed analysis throughout the report.
<b>Section 10</b>	This section draws out the main conclusions from the research and presents a series of recommendations that will direct the policy and practices of the Volunteer Development Agency and others in relation to support and development of voluntary management committees.
<b>Section 11</b>	This section presents the main recommendations derived from this research. Recommendations have been made which apply specifically to the Volunteer Development Agency and to wider policy makers, funders, trainers and the voluntary and community sector as a whole.
<b>Section 12</b>	Section 12 outlines the main methodologies that were undertaken to examine issues surrounding management committees from both an organisational and individual committee member perspectives.

More detailed analysis of the findings in relation to economic size, primary purpose and main beneficiary group can be found in an accompanying Annexe document relating to Sections 2 through to 9.

### **1.5 Definitions**

A number of terms have been used throughout this research to attempt to encapsulate the multitude of differing definitions and terminology used to describe voluntary management committees and their individual members. Throughout the data collection process the following definitions were offered to the respondents in order to ensure they were in complete understanding in relation to the nature of the research.

*Volunteers* and *volunteering* refer to individuals and the work or action they undertake for the benefit of others and the community, undertaken by free choice and not directly for wages.

The *Management Committee* (governing body/board/executive) is the group which has ultimate legal responsibility for a voluntary or community organisation's activities.

A *Management Committee Member* is a voting member of the Management Committee, responsible for the general control and management of a charity or voluntary/community group. Individuals may also be referred to as board members, trustees or executive committee members.

*Governance*, derived from the Greek word 'to steer', refers to the skills required to manage and regulate an organisation. It covers a range of activities such as ensuring the organisation has clear objectives and priorities, an agreed programme of work, leadership, safeguards for its money and other assets, supervision for paid workers and the capacity to manage its work within the law.

*Disability* — In line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, a disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

*Director/senior staff member* refers to the individual who is the link between the organisation and the management committee. In a number of instances this may be the Co-ordinator or Chief Executive of the organisation.



Although *Trustee* is not a widely used term in Northern Ireland to describe individuals who serve on boards or management committees, it was felt necessary to include its definition here so as to avoid any potential confusion regarding a management committee member or a trustee.

The Charity Commission defines a *Trustee* as the following:

Charity trustees are the people who are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the charity, regardless of what they are called. You are a charity trustee if you are:

- A member of the committee which is responsible for running a charitable group such as a community association or a parent teacher association;
- The director of a charitable company (a charity that is a company with a memorandum and articles of association as the document which sets out how the charity is to be run); or
- The trustee of a charitable trust (charitable trusts can be created by a declaration of trust or by someone's Will).

It was deemed necessary to provide such definitions because of the danger of confusion over the different terms used to refer to governing bodies and their members. Therefore throughout this report the terms 'management committee' and 'committee member' will be used to denote the governing body and its individual members.

## **1.6 Methodology**

In the absence of a centrally maintained register of charities in Northern Ireland, a sample was constructed from NICVA's database, SectorNet. This database contains information on over 5,000 organisations and it was from this population that a sample of 1,600 voluntary and community organisations were drawn for the purpose of this study. The sample was constructed using a multistage cluster sample based upon economic size in relation to geographic location. The sample was stratified based on seven main income bands and District Council areas.

Each organisation in the sample received a questionnaire which asked for information regarding the composition, structure and procedures in terms of their management committee. The individual whose responsibility it is to administer the management committee was then asked to forward a number of questionnaires to individual committee members. These management committee questionnaires dealt with the attitudes and experiences of individuals who serve on management committees. This multi-staged methodology was selected for a number of reasons. First, given time and resource implications this method provided the best option in terms of gathering the widest possible range of information that was required to fully answer the research question. Second, this method recognised the 'gatekeeper' status of the organisation in relation to contacting the management committee. It was deemed important that the organisation was fully aware and in agreement with any approach which was to be made to individuals serving on their management committee.

Finally, to add greater understanding and depth to the results garnered by the questionnaires a series of focus groups (seventeen in total) were scheduled to take place across Northern Ireland. These focus groups were designed to help develop the understanding of the experiences and attitudes of individuals who volunteer their time to sit on management committees.

In total 558 organisation questionnaires was returned, which from a sample of 1,600 gave a **return rate of 34.9%**. In relation to the management committee questionnaires, a total of 1,094 were returned, giving a **return rate of 6.8%** from a sample of 16,000.

## Findings

### 2. Committee involvement

The initial starting point for this investigation covers the very basic structure of management committees including the key area of how respondents to the survey referred to themselves as a group. The demographic composition of management committees is also reported and compared to similar data from the wider UK using data collated by NCVO (the National Council for Voluntary Organisations). Overall estimates are also made of the number of voluntary management committees in existence within the sector in Northern Ireland, as well as the estimated number of individuals participating in these committees.

#### Summary

- 'Management committee' (58.4%) is the most commonly used term to describe an organisation's governing body.
- On average 10 individuals serve on a single management committee.
- There are an estimated 42,315 places on voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland.
- This translates into an estimated total of 33,519 individuals.
- On average, an individual will sit on two additional management committees.
- Almost one out of every four individuals who serve on a management committee represents an organisation located in Belfast.

Voluntary and community organisations use a variety of terms to describe their governing body and the individuals that serve on them. This section aims to disentangle some of the confusion relating to the typology of governing bodies as well as presenting an overall estimate of the number of individuals serving on management committees.

**Table 2.1: Terms used to describe the governing body of organisation by economic size**

	<£1,000	£1,001-£10,000	£10,001-£100,000	£100,001-£250,000	£250,001-£500,000	£500,001-£1 million	>£1 million	Row Total
Board of Trustees	3	1	8	10	14	24	14	<b>6.9</b>
Board of Directors	2	9	21	28	24	29	36	<b>17.3</b>
Board of Governors	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>0.2</b>
Management Committee	62	72	61	52	38	35	14	<b>58.4</b>
Executive Board	12	11	6	7	21	0	7	<b>8.7</b>
Governance Board	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	<b>0.4</b>
Other	20	7	4	1	3	6	25	<b>8.2</b>

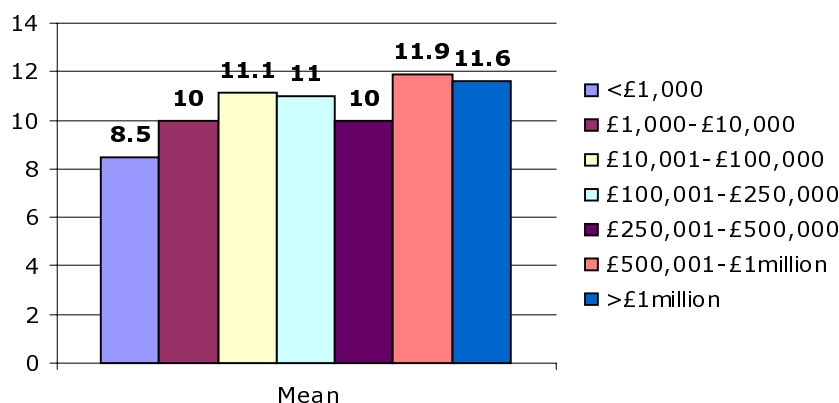
546 respondents

As Table 2.1 shows, respondents to the survey report 'Management Committee' (58.4%) as the most commonly used term to describe their governing body, with

'Board of Directors' (17.3%) as the next most common. On closer examination of Table 2.1, although the term 'Management Committee' is the most frequently used, it is more predominantly used in smaller organisations (for organisations with an income less than £100,000 approximately two out of every three organisations use this term). This may reflect the fact that smaller organisations have few or no staff, and hence their governing bodies are more involved in management issues. Whereas the terms 'Board of Directors' and 'Board of Trustees' tend to be used by the larger organisations (>£100,000). Again this may be a possible reflection of the more strategic nature of governing bodies associated with organisations this size.

The pattern associated with the use of various terms used to describe governing bodies in relation to the size of an organisation is somewhat different to the findings from research in England and Wales. The NCVO study *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) found 'Board of Trustees' (37%) to be the most commonly used term, followed by 'Management Committee' (26%). This confirms a long held belief that the term 'trustee' is a more commonly used description of an individual serving on a governing body throughout the rest of the UK compared to Northern Ireland.

**Figure 2.1: Average size of management committees by economic size**



As shown in Figure 2.1, the economic size of an organisation has a bearing on the average size of a management committee. However, the range between the smallest and the largest organisations is not particularly accentuated, but is represented by a gradual increase in the average size of committees.

Overall estimates based on all responses place the average number of people serving on a management committee at 10.4, which when compared to 9.5 reported for England and Wales (NCVO, 2001), demonstrates that in relation to average size Northern Ireland committees are relatively comparable with those in the rest of the UK.

## 2.1 Additional committees

Data collected from the individual management committee member survey found that 50% of management committee members are on the management committee of more than one organisation. On average those individuals who sit on additional committees will sit on **two** other management committees.

**Table 2.2: Percentage of individuals involved in additional committees**

<b>Additional committees</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Actual individuals</b>
1 committee	32.2	6,813
2 committees	35.2	3,732
3 committees	14.2	1,004
4 committees	8.6	454
5 committees	5.3	223
6 committees	2.3	82
7 committees	1.0	29
8 committees	0.2	5
10 committees	0.6	12
12 committees	0.4	7
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,361</b>

A total 513 respondents stated they sit on more than one committee from a total population of 1,071.

A total of 21,157 committee places (50%) are filled by individuals who only sit on one management committee. Table 2.2 gives a breakdown of the number of individuals who sit on more than one committee which translates into 12,361.

## 2.2 Number of individuals serving on management committees

One of the problems of trying to produce an accurate estimate of the number of individuals serving on management committees is that there remains no centrally maintained register of voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland. This problem is a long established one but for the researcher attempting to estimate figures for the total voluntary and community sector, the lack of a definitive total population means this procedure must be undertaken with some caution. Fuller descriptions of the various methodological issues considered when producing this estimate are listed in Section 11.

Another issue that must be addressed is the fact that individuals may sit on multiple committees, bearing this in mind two figures have been produced. The first one gives an overall estimate of the number of management committee places there are in the voluntary and community sector. The second one — the statistics giving the average number of committees individuals serve on has been used to estimate the total number of individuals.

The overall estimated number of management committee places in the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector is **42,315**.

Using the analysis in Table 2.2, the overall estimated number of individuals serving on committees is **33,519**. This figure has been derived from taking 50% of management committee places which are filled by individuals who do not sit on any additional committees (21,157) and the weighted figure for those individuals who commit their time to more than one committee (12,361).

Analysis for *State of the Sector III* (NICVA, 2002) revealed that there are approximately 72,908 volunteers engaged in some form of formal volunteering for voluntary and community groups across Northern Ireland (this excludes volunteering which is carried out on an ad hoc and more informal basis). Given there are an estimated 33,519 individuals involved in management committees, it can be stated that these individuals make up 45.9% of all formal volunteers, as defined in *State of the Sector III*.

This analysis is further substantiated by the Volunteer Development Agency's report, *Volunteering in Northern Ireland (2001)*, which stated that of the 448,116 formal volunteers, 32% have been involved in committee work at least once a month (Volunteer Development Agency, 2001).

*Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) estimated that in England and Wales there are approximately three-quarters of a million trustees actively engaged in the governance of organisations.

**Table 2.3: Estimating the number of management committee members in Northern Ireland**

	Stated Committee Members	Average Committee Members	Organisations responding	%	Overall Population	Proportion	Estimated Committee Members	%
<£1000	740	8.5	87	17	643	13.53	5,469	13
£1001-£10000	1,117	10.0	112	21	936	11.97	9,335	22
£10001-£100000	2,029	11.1	183	35	1,296	14.12	14,369	34
£100001-£250000	748	11.0	68	13	506	13.44	5,566	13
£250001-£500000	281	10.0	28	5	214	13.08	2,148	5
£500001-£1million	203	11.9	17	3	154	11.04	1,839	4
>£1million	302	11.6	26	5	309	8.41	3,589	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,420</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,058</b>		<b>42,315</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3. Management committee composition

#### Summary

- 54.3% of all committee members are female (equates to an estimated total of 18,200 females).
- 66% of individuals serving on management committees are aged 45 and over. Only 3% are aged 25 years old or under.
- In organisations with an income of more than £500,000, three out of every four Chairpersons are male.
- In organisations with an income of over £500,000, 95% of Treasurers are male.
- 99.1% of all individuals serving on management committees are white.
- 28.1% of organisations monitor the perceived religious background of their management committee members.
- 7.0% of all voluntary management committee members are disabled.

#### 3.1 Gender

When considering the gender mix of management committees, it is evident from this research that there is a fairly even spread of males and females, with 54.3% of all committee members being female. Taking the overall individuals (33,519), rather than committee places, there is an estimated total of 18,200 females serving on committees in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Looking at formal volunteering in its entirety, previous research by the Volunteer Development Agency (*Volunteering in Northern Ireland, 2001*) found that 58% of formal volunteers are female.

When compared to the *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001), the gender mix on the governing body of organisations is the reverse of the situation in Northern Ireland (55% males compared to 45% females).

Taking the gender balance in relation to the paid workforce in the voluntary and community sector, females account for 72% of the people who work in the sector (NICVA, 2001). From the statistics above, the numeric dominance of females in the paid workforce of the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland is not reflected in the gender profile of voluntary management committees.

The following tables and figures attempt to demonstrate any difference in the gender composition of committees based on variables such as size of organisation, main purpose and main beneficiary group.

**Figure 3.1: Gender of individual committee members by income**

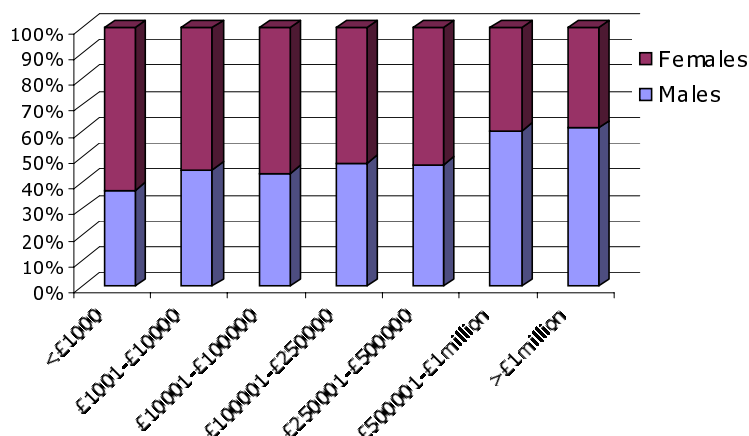


Figure 3.1 paints a very interesting picture of the gender composition of management committees when considered against the size of an organisation. It shows that the ratio of males to females serving on a management committee increases as the size of the organisation increases. For voluntary and community organisations with an income between £100,000 and £500,000 the gender balance is fairly even. However, at either end of the spectrum in terms of the size of the organisation, the balance is skewed in favour of males in the larger organisations, whereas the reverse is true for smaller organisations.

When compared to other studies in the UK, the gender composition of management committees in Northern Ireland is similar, in so far as males tend to dominate the committees of larger organisations that tend to be the organisations that control the greatest financial resources<sup>1</sup>.

Table 3.1 examines how the gender composition of management committees varies when taking into account the main beneficiary group of the organisation.

**Table 3.1: Proportion of males and females on management committees by main beneficiary group**

Main beneficiary group	Male (%)	Female (%)
Adult training	38.3	61.7
Carers	23.5	76.5
Children/young people	43.9	56.1
Drugs/substance/alcohol abuse (general)	60.5	39.5
General public	58.6	41.4
Mental health	56.3	43.8
Older people	41.3	58.7
Other	53.1	46.9
Other charities/voluntary bodies	47.8	52.2
Parents	34.8	65.2
People with a particular ethnic or racial background	57.1	42.9
People with disabilities/special needs	43.9	56.1
Unemployed	62.0	38.0
Victim support	41.9	58.1

<sup>1</sup> In *State of the Sector III* (NICVA, 2002) it was found that organisations with an income of £1million plus account for 55% of the sector's income but only represent 7% of the total number of voluntary and community organisations operating in the sector in Northern Ireland.



Volunteers	47.1	52.9
Women	8.2	91.8

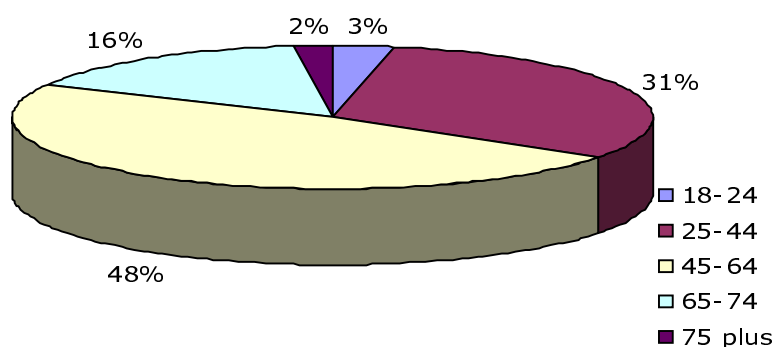
What is perhaps unsurprising is that the management committees of organisations which have women as their main beneficiary group are made up of 92% females. This dominance of females in relation to the gender composition of committees is repeated to a lesser degree in organisations where the beneficiary groups are carers, parents and adults returning to training. Male dominance of committees is not as accentuated as compared to their female counterparts but organisations which deal with drugs/substance abuse and the unemployed tend to have more males than females serving on their committees.

### 3.2 Age

As stated in *Volunteering in Northern Ireland* (Volunteer Development Agency, 2001), individuals aged between 35 and 49 years old (28%) and 50 and 64 years old (23%) account for the majority of formal volunteers. The following statistics will endeavour to produce a profile of the age of individuals who serve on management committees.

Figure 3.2 shows the age distribution of management committee members by the size of the voluntary or community organisation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the responsibilities associated with management committees and the skills individuals are expected to bring to the committee, there are very few management committee members (3%) under the age of 25.

**Figure 3.2: Age composition of voluntary management committees**

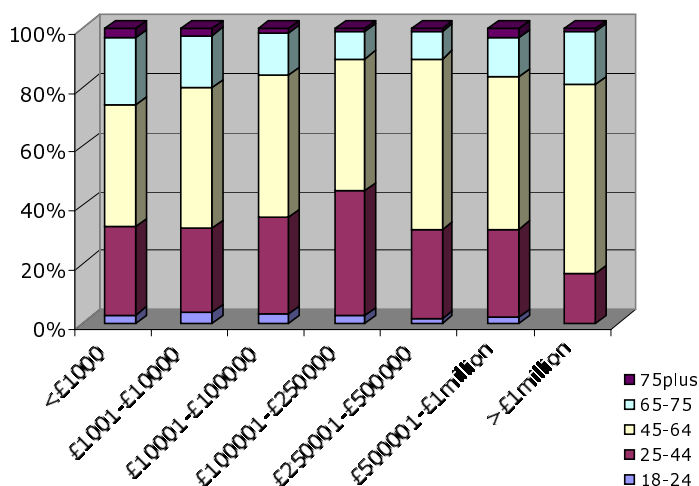


Management committees are dominated by individuals who are aged between 45-64 years old (48%). In fact almost one out of every two committee members are in this age range. Overall about 66% of individuals serving on management committees are aged 45 and over. As will be shown in Figure 3.3 and Table 3.2, the size and function of the organisation often affect the age distribution of individuals serving on the management committee.

In relation to other studies in the UK, the pattern associated with age distribution on committees is pretty well replicated when compared to Northern Ireland. *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) found that individuals in the age range 45-65 years old made up 48.2% of boards. However in Northern Ireland there tends to be slightly more individuals aged 25-44 years old (31%) than in England and Wales where the figure is 27.2%. The same is true for under 25 year olds where the number engaged in management committees in Northern Ireland is double that as reported by the NCVO report (under 25 year olds 1.6%).

**Figure 3.3: Age composition of management committees by size of organisation**

The proportion of management committee members aged over 45 years old tends to increase with the size of the organisation. This is particularly evident in organisations with an income greater than £1 million. As mentioned previously this could be attributable to the greater financial and resource based responsibilities individuals have whilst



serving on a committee of a £1million plus organisation. This point is perhaps reinforced further by the fact that there are no individuals aged under 25 years old serving on management committees of organisations with an income of £1 million plus.

Just as is the case with the economic size of the organisation, its primary purpose has a bearing on the age distribution of the individuals who serve on the management committee.

**Table 3.2: Age composition of management committees by main purpose**

Main purpose	18-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	75 plus
Accommodation/housing	2.9	29.2	49.3	14.8	3.8
Advice/advocacy/information	1.0	31.1	46.7	17.1	4.1
Arts/culture	3.5	25.9	42.7	23.1	4.7
Community transport	4.0	33.1	46.2	15.6	1.1
Counselling/support	0.0	38.5	57.3	4.2	0.0
Cross border/cross community	5.1	39.8	37.0	15.7	2.4
Disability	1.2	23.8	53.0	20.0	2.0
Economic/community development/employment	2.9	36.7	47.8	11.1	1.5
Education/training	3.2	35.9	46.1	13.4	1.4
Environment/conservation/heritage	2.3	18.0	46.8	31.5	1.4
General charitable purposes	4.1	33.1	51.3	10.2	1.3
Medical/health/sickness	2.3	27.3	60.8	9.7	0.0
Other	0.0	33.3	44.7	18.4	3.5
Overseas aid/famine relief	0.0	30.8	46.2	19.2	3.8
Playgroup/after schools	5.3	15.8	78.9	0.0	0.0
Relief of poverty	4.1	24.7	43.8	27.4	0.0
Religious activities	3.3	11.7	66.7	15.0	3.3
Rural development	1.9	40.9	50.5	5.3	1.4
Sport/recreation	3.5	28.6	45.8	21.6	0.4
Urban development	0.0	39.1	52.2	8.7	0.0
Volunteering development	0.0	50.0	33.3	12.5	4.2
Youth work/development	9.4	32.1	43.4	15.1	0.0

The clearest indication of an organisation's primary purpose affecting the age distribution on a committee is when the organisation is involved in youth work/development or playgroup/after schools activities (<25 years old 9.4% and 5.3%). In both these cases the number of individuals is significant (albeit small in relation to other age groups) because it represents a higher concentration of younger individuals than in any other activities undertaken by organisations in the sector. For instance, the committees of organisations engaged in youth work/development have almost one out of every ten committee members aged 25 years old or under. This statistic, relatively speaking, is not necessarily encouraging but it does give some insight into the representativeness of committees which focus on a specific issue or group.

Table 3.3 reinforces this point further when organisations that deal with older people as their main beneficiary group are examined. In these organisations the concentration of individuals aged over 75 years old increases in relation to other organisations. Again the figure is relatively low (7.0%) but it does show that certain activities or groups which organisations target have certain stakeholder or user representation on their committees. The same can be said for organisations which work with carers (6.5% of such committees are made up of individuals aged 75 years old plus).

**Table 3.3 Age composition of management committees by main beneficiary group**

Main beneficiary group	18-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	75 plus
Adult training	2.5	32.1	59.3	4.9	1.2
Carers	1.3	26.0	35.1	31.2	6.5
Children/young people	5.0	40.5	44.4	9.0	1.1
Drugs/substance/alcohol abuse (general)	0.0	16.7	61.1	22.2	0.0
General public	2.1	29.7	49.4	16.9	1.9
Mental health	2.6	28.6	58.4	9.1	1.3
Older people	0.6	13.0	37.5	41.9	7.0
Other	3.3	29.6	55.6	10.9	0.7
Other charities/voluntary bodies	4.2	22.5	62.0	9.9	1.4
Parents	1.9	53.7	34.3	9.3	0.9
People with a particular ethnic or racial background	0.0	71.4	28.6	0.0	0.0
People with disabilities/special needs	1.4	29.1	54.0	14.0	1.5
Unemployed	2.5	33.1	43.8	15.7	5.0
Victim support	1.4	39.2	51.4	8.1	0.0
Volunteers	0.0	28.0	58.7	12.0	1.3
Women	0.4	33.5	49.0	16.7	0.4

### 3.3 Office-bearers

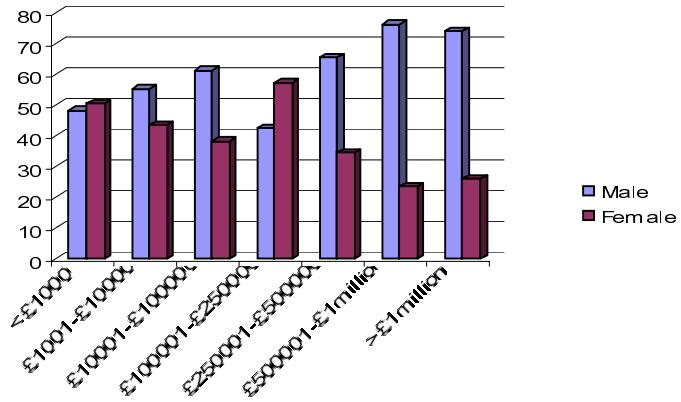
As has been shown above, the primary purpose, beneficiary group and the economic size of the organisation all have a bearing on the gender and age distribution of individuals serving on the committee. The next set of statistics attempt to discover if factors such as gender and economic size have an effect on the roles individuals fulfil on committees.

Figure 3.4 shows that on average a slightly higher proportion of men hold the position of Chair (57.1% of Chairpersons are male, whereas 42.8% are female).

This relative equal distribution of males and females in the position of Chair masks a much more significant pattern in relation to the gender of this important position.

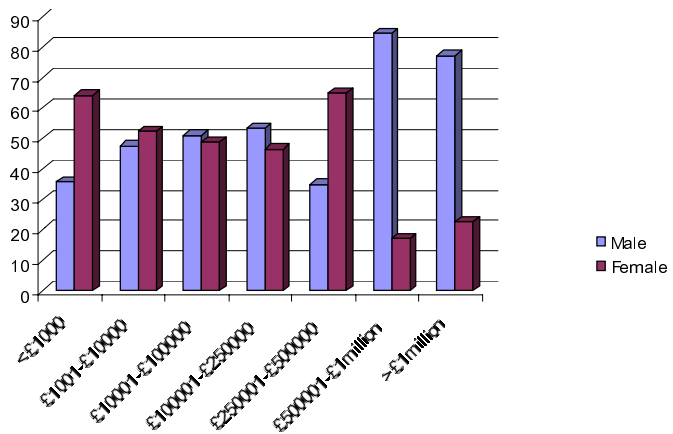
**Figure 3.4: Gender of Chairpersons by income**

As the economic size of the organisation increases, the proportion of males compared to females in the position of Chair increases significantly in favour of males. For instance, in organisations with an income of less than £1,000, there is almost a 50:50 split between males and females. Whereas in organisations with an income of more than £500,000, three out of every four Chairpersons are male.



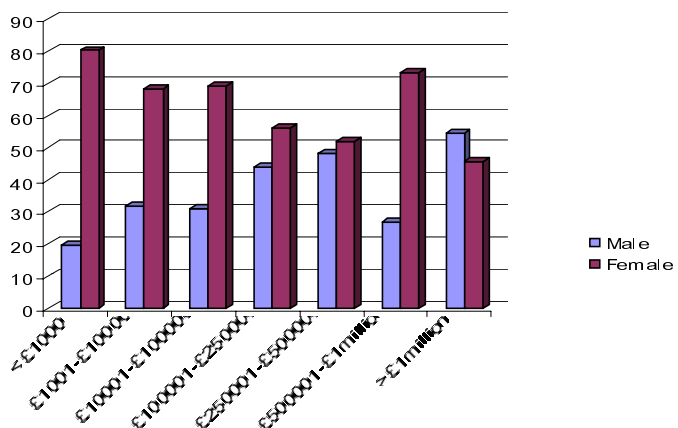
**Figure 3.5: Gender of Vice-Chairs by income**

A similar, if not as clear, pattern emerges when the role of Vice-Chair is considered in relation to gender. However, the overall proportion of males to females is much more skewed towards males than that of the Chairperson. Overall, three out of four Vice-Chairs are male, with the greatest concentration of males as Vice-Chairs in organisations with an income of £500,000 or more.



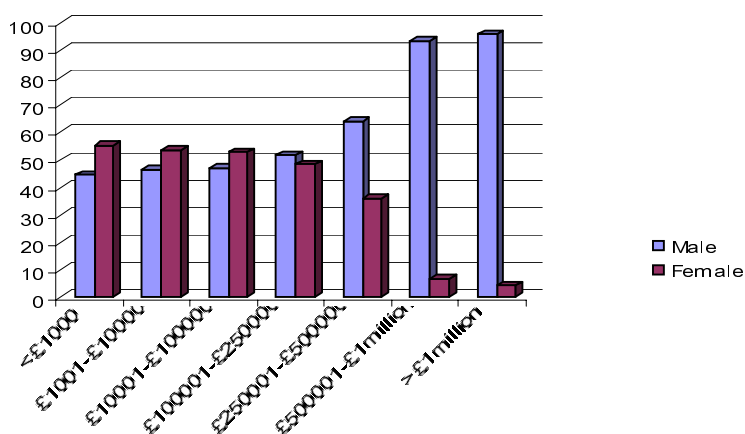
**Figure 3.6: Gender of Secretary by income**

Overall, females dominate the role of Secretary in organisations but as with the other analysis associated with committee role, the proportions are dependent upon the size of the organisations. It is very clear from Figure 3.6 that in the small to medium sized organisations the role of Secretary is undertaken, in the main, by a female. However, in the case of £1 million organisations this situation is reversed, where more males than females fulfil the role of Secretary.



**Figure 3.7: Gender of Treasurer by income**

A very typical pattern of the roles and responsibilities in relation to office-bearers is apparent for the role of Treasurer. In small to medium sized organisations there is parity between the genders but as the economic size of the organisation increases, the dominance of males in the Treasurer role increases. So much so in fact 95% of treasurers are male in those organisations with income of over £500,000.



This particular situation was perhaps best articulated during one of the focus group sessions.

*"One frustration is how people assume when you join a committee your background dictates the expertise you will bring. For instance the role of Treasurer is almost always a man with some financial background. Where women are Treasurers, they may be no less able but often express they can't do it but are often more able."*

Overall the task segregation in relation to gender reinforces a very stereotypical view of the role different genders can perform. Far more females are Secretaries on committees (67.2% of Secretaries are female whereas 32.7% are male). Despite the fact that overall there is an equal distribution of male and female Treasurers (50.5% are female), there are some very large disparities depending upon the size of the organisation.

### 3.4 Ethnic background

Table 3.4 looks at the ethnic composition of management committees and as would be expected in Northern Ireland, where people from different ethnic backgrounds account for only a small percentage of the overall population, the level of representation on management committees is reflective of this.

**Table 3.4 Ethnic composition of management committees**

Ethnic Group	%	% Northern Ireland <sup>2</sup>
African	0.03	0.03
Bangladeshi	0.00	0.01
Chinese	0.21	0.25
Indian	0.07	0.09
Irish Traveller	0.03	0.10
Pakistani	0.03	0.04
White	99.1	99.15
Mixed ethnic group	0.05	0.20
Other ethnic group	0.39	0.13

<sup>2</sup> Source: Northern Ireland Census 2001 Key Statistics, NISRA, 2003

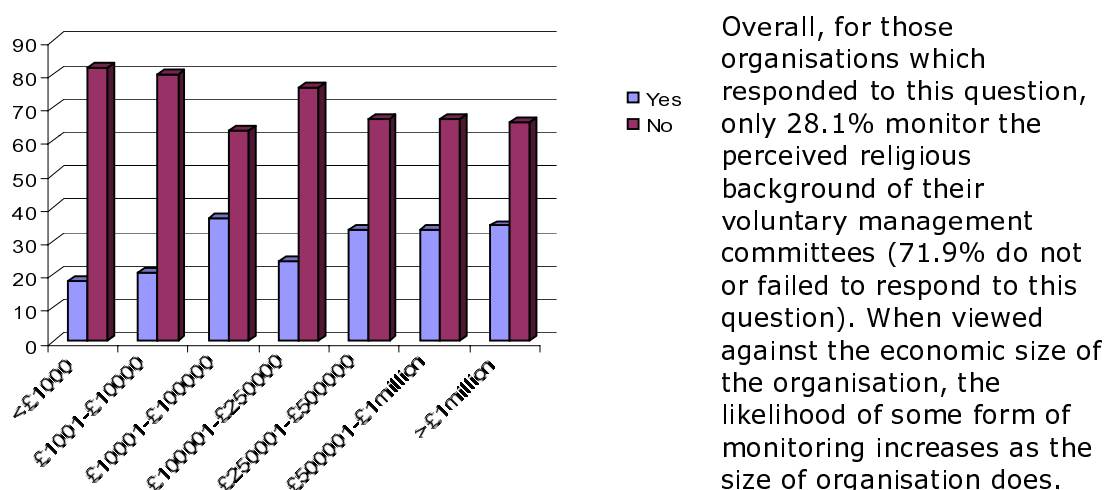
When the figures for ethnicity on management committees are viewed in the context of the Northern Ireland Census 2001 (see Table 3.4), there is a very strong correlation between the ethnic make-up of the Northern Ireland population compared to that of management committees.

Like age and gender it is reasonable to assume that many of the ethnic minorities listed above would be concentrated in organisations that reflect their own particular issues. However, the cell counts for these variables are very low which makes a more detailed analysis very difficult to achieve.

### 3.5 Perceived religious background

As equal opportunities legislation becomes an accepted part of recruitment in the labour market in Northern Ireland, it was felt necessary to examine if any monitoring of appointments made to management committees is undertaken. Although not covered by any legislation, this particular question provides an insight into how far good practice in relation to equal opportunities employment legalisation has filtered into the recruitment and selection process of management committees. It is therefore the intention of the following statistics to attempt to gauge the level to which such monitoring is taking place in relation to management committees.

**Figure 3.8: Is the religious background of management committee members monitored?**



When organisations were asked to provide a breakdown of the perceived religious background of management committee members, it was found that 49.8% come from a Protestant background, 43.0% from a Catholic background and 4.7% claiming to come from neither religious affiliation. Placing these figures into an overall Northern Ireland context, the 2001 Census found 40.3% of the population stated their religion to be Catholic.

### 3.6 Disability

The NCVO report *Building on Trust* (NCVO, 1995) provides the only comparable statistics on the number of disabled individuals serving on management committees. In this report it was found that 5% of individuals serving on boards in England and Wales were disabled. Looking at the current situation in Northern Ireland, of all the organisations surveyed for this research, 7.0% of all the voluntary management committee members are disabled (see Section 1 for the definition of disabled which was used for the purposes of this study).

Putting this figure of 7% into context, there are an estimated 2,346 disabled individuals serving on voluntary management committees throughout Northern Ireland. In relation to the Northern Ireland population as a whole, 17.5% of persons of working age reported having a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or the work they can do (Census 2001, NISRA).

## 4. Recruitment of committee members

The second main phase of data collection focused on the actual processes used by management committees to recruit, train and maintain committee members. It also reports on the skills that committee members are expected to bring to a committee as well as the difficulties experienced by committees in recruiting new members.

### Summary

- 81% of individuals serve on a management committee in their own time (includes service users). This equates to 27,317 individuals volunteering their own time.
- 53.9% of organisations have an election where their members or the community decide upon the new committee.
- 6.8% of organisations have no formal process to select new committee members.
- 62.4% of organisations state they recruit new committee members on an annual basis.
- 59% of organisations reported that they 'sometimes' experience difficulties recruiting new members.
- The most common method of recruiting new committee members is through 'word of mouth/personal recommendation' (28.2%).
- 52.7% of organisations believe a central register of individuals willing to serve on a management committee would assist in recruitment.
- Individual committee members believe the most important reason why they are asked to serve on a committee is related to their 'knowledge of relevant work'.

According to the Charity Commission, the recruitment, selection and induction of new members within a management committee can be an opportunity to improve the overall effectiveness of a charity. With co-ordination of these three elements (recruitment, selection and induction) in an appropriate way, a balanced, well informed and effective management committee can result in a well-governed and effective organisation as a whole. *"Where the process is weak, or absent, then at best the effectiveness of the trustee board is hampered; at worst it can lead to major problems for the charity and its beneficiaries"* (Charity Commission, 2002).

The major factors that must be considered by management committees when recruiting new members include the selection method used and the support information given to new management committee members at the induction stage. At the selection stage the management committee must endeavour to choose the best person for the role that needs to be filled in terms of both the skills that they possess and the experience that they can bring to their new position.

It is the intention of this section of the report to provide a detailed assessment of the various methods by which organisations recruit new committee members, if



they are experiencing any difficulties and the skills new committee members are expected to bring when recruited.

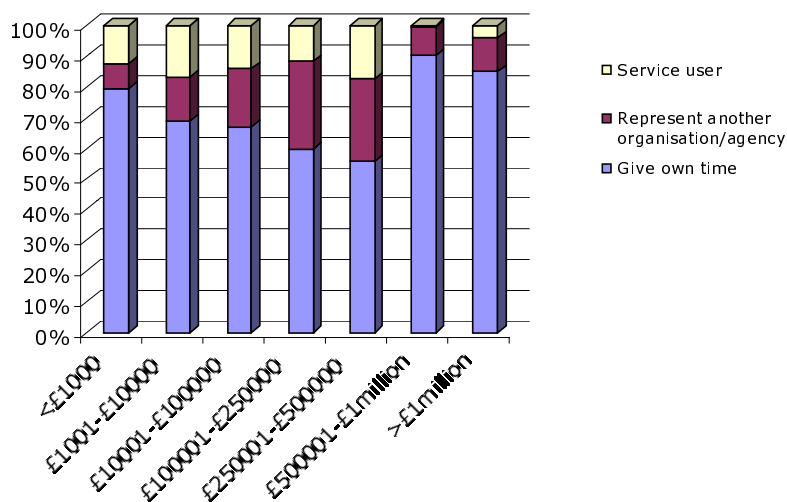
#### 4.1 Reasons for participation

To begin it is necessary to assess the reasons why individuals sit on management committees ie do they give of their own time, are they service users or are they representing another organisation.

Figure 4.1 clearly demonstrates that the majority of individuals give their own time to serve on management committees. In fact 68.3% give their own time, 18.3% are representing organisations and 13.2% are service users. This equates to 22,893 volunteering their own time, 6,133 representing another organisation and 4,424 participating on management committees as service users. This gives a total of 27,317 individuals who give of their own time to serve on a management committee.

A peculiar pattern of the number of individuals who give their own time to sit on a committee is apparent in Figure 4.1. Moving from the smallest to medium sized organisation the number of individuals giving their own time decreases but it rises quite dramatically in the two largest income strata. One possible explanation could be attributable to the election process and length of office in organisations of this size, which are characterised by recruitment through personal recommendation and indefinite periods of service. Methods of recruitment will be examined in more detail later in this section.

**Figure 4.1 Reasons for participation by income**



#### 4.2 Methods of recruitment

Table 4.1 shows how organisations recruit new committee members with just over half of all organisations (53.9%) stating they conduct an election where their members or the community decide upon the new committee. This is followed by a process of co-optation which occurs in almost one out of every three organisations.

**Table 4.1: Methods by which appointments to the management committee are made**

	%
Elected	53.9
Nominated/co-opted	30.5
No formal process	6.8
Appointed by virtue of position held in another organisation	5.0
Appointed by another body/agency	3.8
	100

659 Respondents

**Figure 4.2: Methods by which appointments to the management committee are made by income**

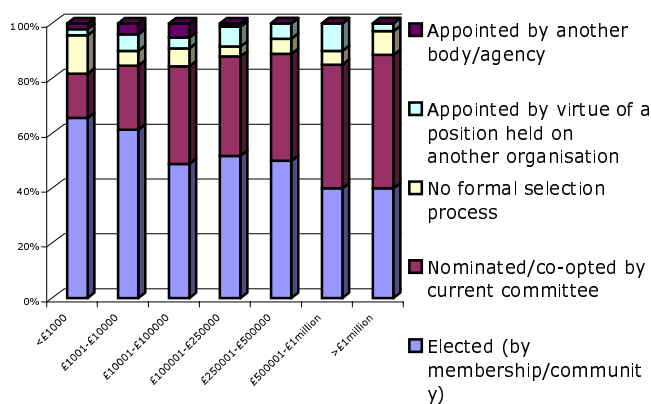


Figure 4.2 substantiates the points made above as it is very evident that the prevalence of a formal election process decreases with the size of organisation, whilst co-optation by the current committee increases. Although in the very smallest organisations, an election is the most common form of

appointment, there is a significant number of organisations which have no formal appointment process. This is clearly linked to the size and development of the organisation and as organisations become larger and therefore more accountable, this statistic decreases. Nevertheless 6.8% of all the organisations surveyed have no formal process for recruitment and in the largest organisations an alarming 8.8% have no formal process to select new committee members.

Another important issue surrounding recruitment is the frequency by which it occurs. Good practice literature states it is imperative that the process of recruitment is not allowed to stagnate, as it is important that levels of enthusiasm and experience are maintained.

Table 4.2 gives an overview of how often organisations in Northern Ireland recruit new committee members. With 62.4% of organisations stating they recruit on an annual basis it is clearly the most common frequency of recruitment. The report *Trustee Recruitment, Selection and Induction* (Charity Commission, 2002) found that only 31% of organisations recruited annually, with the next most common response being 'when the need arises' (12%). Proportionally speaking Northern Ireland is different from England and Wales but the actual pattern of the frequency of recruitment is very similar. Nevertheless one out of every four organisations in this survey recruits on an ad hoc basis and have no formal time period for recruitment in place.

**Table 4.2 Frequency of recruitment**

	%
Annually	62.4
When need arises	13.6
As vacancies occur	9.8
2-5 years	8.2
Always/constantly	1.5
Rarely/hardly ever	1.3
Never/don't need to	0.9
Twice a year	0.7

Table 4.3 shows a very common feature in terms of recruitment policy in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Upon examination of £1 million plus organisations, a process of recruiting annually is the least common formal method (17.9%), whilst more ad hoc methods such as 'as vacancies occur' (32.1%) and 'when the need arises' (17.9%) make up the majority of how often recruitment occurs in organisations of this size.

**Table 4.3: Frequency of recruitment by income**

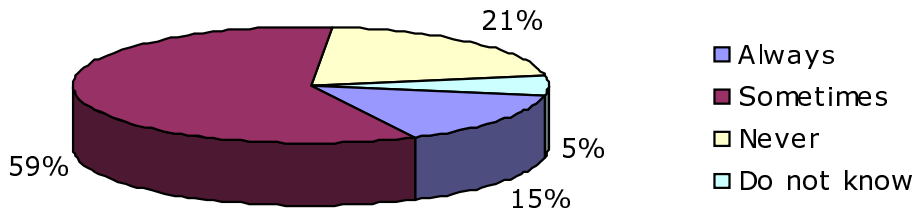
Income Strata (%)	<£1,000	£1,001- £10,000	£10,001- £100,000	£100,001- £250,000	£250,001- £500,000	£500,001- £1 million	>£1 million	Row Total (%)
Twice a year	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	<b>0.7</b>
Annually	67.8	68.9	69.9	57.7	39.3	31.2	17.9	<b>62.4</b>
2-5 years	6.7	5.9	6.5	11.3	21.4	6.25	28.6	<b>8.2</b>
As vacancies occur	6.7	10.9	9.1	11.3	10.7	12.5	32.1	<b>9.8</b>
When need arises	11.1	10.1	10.8	16.9	25.0	50.0	17.9	<b>13.6</b>
Always/constantly	2.2	2.5	0.0	1.4	0.0	0	3.6	<b>1.5</b>
Rarely/hardly ever	1.1	0.8	1.6	1.4	3.6	0	0.0	<b>1.3</b>
Never/don't need to	3.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	<b>0.9</b>

### 4.3 Difficulties associated with recruitment

Before undertaking this research, anecdotal evidence suggested organisations were often finding it very difficult to recruit new committee members. As is reported in *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) there was some evidence to suggest that in order to counter problems with recruitment, charities were becoming more professional in their recruitment of new board members, moving away from informal recruitment patterns to more formal ones. The following set of statistics aims to determine if this is the case in Northern Ireland.

First, organisations were asked if they were finding it more or less difficult to recruit suitable management committee members (Figure 4.3). Overall, almost 60% of organisations reported that they 'sometimes' experience difficulties recruiting new members. On the other hand, one out of every five organisations claims they never have any difficulties recruiting new committee members.

**Figure 4.3: Difficulties experienced by organisations when attempting to recruit new committee members**



**Figure 4.4: Difficulties experienced by organisations when attempting to recruit new committee members by income**

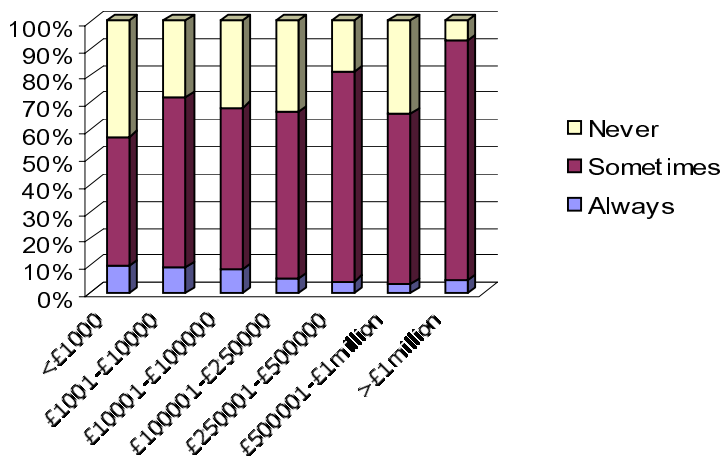
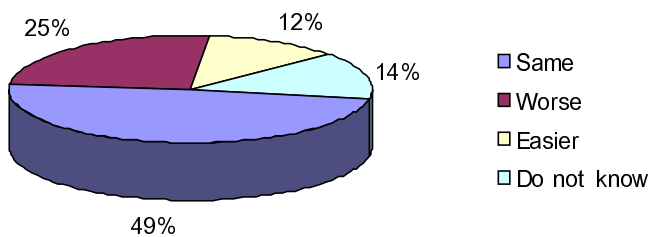


Figure 4.4 shows that as the size of the organisation increases the likelihood it will face some difficulties recruiting new members increases. When the distribution of those organisations which claim to 'always' have difficulties recruiting new members is considered, it appears that smaller organisations have the greatest difficulties.

**Figure 4.5 Comparison of current recruitment situation with five years ago**



Second, organisations were asked how the current situation regarding the recruitment of new committee members compares with five years ago. Figure 4.5 shows that almost half

of all organisations found the situation to be the 'same'. However, one out of every four organisations found the current situation regarding recruitment to be worse now, than five years ago.

Organisations were then asked to give reasons as to why they believe they are facing difficulties recruiting new committee members. Table 4.4 clearly shows that 'finding people to make the commitment' is the single greatest impediment faced by organisations with regard to recruiting new committee members. In fact, this type of problem relating to the commitment or enthusiasm of people is repeated for the next two most common difficulties faced by organisations.

**Table 4.4: Reasons for difficulties associated with recruitment**

	Rank	Mean <sup>3</sup>
Finding people to make the commitment	1	1.6
People do not want the responsibility	2	2.6
Finding people who are interested	3	2.8
Finding people who have the skills and experience	4	3.1
Shortage of applicants	5	3.3
Finding younger people	6	3.7

From Table 4.5 it can be seen that all organisations, regardless of economic size, unanimously believe 'finding people to make the commitment' is the most difficult issue to overcome when attempting to recruit new committee members. However, some interesting variations can be seen in Table 4.5. When the option of 'finding people who have the skills' is considered, it is not a particular difficulty for the smallest organisations but for the medium to large sized organisations it ranks as the second most difficult issue.

**Table 4.5: Reasons for difficulties associated with recruitment by income**

Rank	Shortage of applicants	Finding people to make the commitment	Finding people who have the skills	People do not want the responsibility	Finding people who are interested	Finding younger people
<£1000	4	1	7	2	3	6
£1001-£10000	4	1	6	2	3	6
£10001-£100000	5	1	3	2	3	7
£100001-£250000	5	1	2	2	4	7
£250001-£500000	3	1	2	6	5	7
£500001-£1 million	5	1	3	2	3	7
>£1 million	4	1	2	7	3	6

As is shown in Figure 4.3, 21% of organisations do not experience any difficulties when it comes to recruiting new committee members. Therefore, Table 4.6 examines why these organisations believe they are distinct from the majority of the voluntary and community sector when it comes to recruiting new members.

**Table 4.6: Not experiencing difficulties during recruitment process**

	Rank	Mean
People are interested in our aims and values	1	1.8
We are a small group/organisation	2	2.1
We have long serving committee members	3	2.2
Good reputation of charity/organisation	4	3.1
Small duties involved	5	3.5
Members are always willing to join	6	4.0
Suitable/high calibre experienced people available	7	4.2
It is a matter of prestige/honour to be a committee member	8	4.6
Appointments are made through local authorities	9	5.1
Large number/pool of people to choose from	10	5.4

<sup>3</sup> Respondents were asked to rank their preferences for this question and the 'mean' column is the overall average score for each of the items.

Clearly the aims and values of the organisation have a bearing on how difficult or not it is to recruit new committee members. This is consistent with the reasons why individuals volunteer their time to serve on a management committee (see Section 5). The next two reasons cited for an organisation not experiencing difficulties are also very interesting and relate to other findings in this research. First, the fact that the organisation may be small may be directly related to the fact that people are willing to get involved if the commitment or level of responsibility expected of them is not too great. Second, and perhaps more obviously if the organisation has 'long serving committee members', the difficulties associated with recruiting new members will be less. This is substantiated by the findings associated with selection policies that found 6.8% of organisations have no formal process to select new committee members.

#### 4.4 Attracting new committee members

As mentioned earlier in the section, *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) stated charities were becoming more professional in their recruitment of new board members, moving away from informal recruitment patterns to more formal ones. Table 4.7 attempts to determine if this is the case in Northern Ireland or is it still the case that informal processes characterise recruitment methods employed by organisations.

**Table 4.7: Methods to attract new committee members**

	%
Word of mouth/personal recommendation	28.2
Asking/approaching suitable people	16.9
Asking members/people already involved in the organisation	13.4
Personal contact with users/members	12.1
Committee members are elected directly from the membership	11.2
Networking with other organisations	8.5
Use of persuasion	6.8
Advertising in the press	2.4
Use of an external agency	0.3

By far the most common method of recruiting new committee members is through 'word of mouth/personal recommendation' (28.2%). As can be seen in Table 4.8 there is a slight increase in the prevalence of the use of 'word of mouth/personal recommendation' as the size of the organisation increases.

Combining all the methods that are ad hoc or not formalised, ie asking suitable people or the use of persuasion, almost 80% of all organisations employ one of these methods. This is not just common to Northern Ireland as *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) found that 93% of charities used word of mouth and networking to recruit new members.

Like England and Wales the number of organisations using the press or an external agency to recruit new committee members is negligible and perhaps disproves the point that organisations are becoming more professional in how they recruit new members. However, as some of the quotations from the focus groups show, there are some concerns about the recruitment of individuals who are not known to the committee and particularly what skills they may be bringing with them.

*"The problems that are inherent in this democratic process mean that you could get people you don't want on the committee versus selecting individuals you know who will make a contribution."*

*"I think that established committees are sometimes reluctant to bring on board new members, particularly if they do not know the person or their work."*

**Table 4.8: Methods to attract new committee members by income**

	Word of mouth	Networking with other organisations	Elected directly from membership	Advertising in press	Use of external agency	Use of persuasion	Asking/approaching suitable people	Asking members	Personal contact with users/members
<£1000	25.0	4.2	15.4	5.0	1.2	8.1	14.6	15.4	11.2
£1001-£10000	27.8	5.9	12.2	2.8	0.2	8.7	17.2	13.2	12.0
£10001-£100000	28.4	9.0	10.8	2.1	0.1	6.4	17.2	13.5	12.5
£100001-£250000	28.0	12.1	7.8	1.4	0.0	6.0	17.0	13.8	13.8
£250001-£500000	28.4	12.8	12.8	0.0	0.9	3.7	16.5	15.6	9.2
£500001-£1 million	30.8	3.8	11.5	0.0	0.0	7.7	25.0	5.8	15.4
>£1 million	34.6	8.7	5.8	2.9	0.0	4.8	20.2	11.5	11.5

Given some of the problems associated with finding suitable people to serve on management committees, organisations were asked to express their opinion on whether a central register of individuals willing to serve on a committee would help. As can be seen in Table 4.9, just over half of all organisations believe an initiative of this type would assist them in the recruitment process.

**Table 4.9: Attitudes towards a central register of individuals**

%	Agree	Neither	Disagree
A central register of individuals willing to serve on a management committee would assist in recruitment.	<b>52.7</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>

#### 4.5 Internal recruitment processes

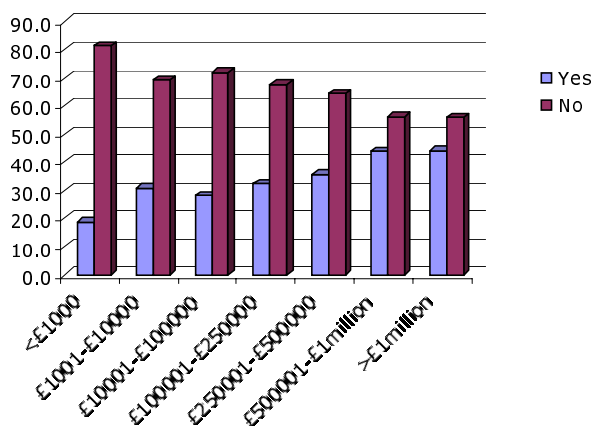
Just over two thirds of organisations have no formal strategy for the recruitment, development and training of its committee members.

**Table 4.10: Existence of a committee member recruitment, development and training strategy**

Item	Yes	No
Your organisation operates a committee member recruitment, development and training strategy	<b>29.4</b>	<b>66.2</b>

From Figure 4.6 it can be clearly seen that the existence of such a strategy is directly related to the economic size of the organisation.

**Figure 4.6: Existence of a committee member recruitment, development and training strategy by income**



This is an important element in not only the recruitment of new committee members but also in the retention of existing members. As before, the extent and areas which any such strategy may cover have not been examined but clearly good practice in relation to this issue is not very prevalent across the sector in Northern Ireland. These findings are perhaps not surprising given the ad hoc and informal nature of recruitment that is adopted by organisations surveyed for this research.

#### 4.6 Specific skills

Finally, individual committee members were asked what specific skills or knowledge they believe they were expected to bring to the committee upon which they had been asked to serve.

**Table 4.11: Specific tasks/skills individuals were expected to bring to the committee**

	Mean	Rank
Knowledge of relevant work	1.76	1
Enthusiasm/energy	2.53	2
Knowledge of local community	2.69	3
To take a particular post (ie Chair)	2.98	4
Managerial skills	3.39	5
Previous work in similar role	4.11	6
Financial skills	4.26	7
Fundraising skills	4.29	8
Personnel skills	4.73	9
Public relations skills	4.87	10
Access to funding	5.65	11
IT skills	6.10	12
Political skills	6.61	13
Property skills	7.23	14
Legal skills	7.42	15
Marketing skills	22.29	16

The first three most common reasons why individuals felt they were asked to serve on a committee relate specifically to acquired knowledge and personal characteristics as opposed to more professionally based skills. Clearly individuals do not believe skills such as financial management and fundraising are as important as their own personal knowledge of the organisation or the local community, when being selected for a committee.



## 5. Motivations

A key area for the future development of voluntary management committees is identifying the motivations that inspire individuals to participate and persist in their voluntary activities. This section outlines findings related to this issue as well as the varying causes and levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction identified by respondents as consequent to their involvement with voluntary management committees.

### Summary

- The majority of individuals have served on a committee for between one and three years (31.0%). 13.4% have served on a committee for more than eleven years.
- The main reason for becoming a committee member is the individual's 'commitment to the cause of the organisation' followed by 'wanting to be more involved in their community'.
- Satisfaction is derived from the 'organisation standing for a worthwhile cause' and 'ensuring the organisation meets the needs of its members/community'.
- 'Reduced or inadequate funding' and 'not being able to do everything that is needed' represent the two main areas of dissatisfaction.

As stated in the introduction to this report, the commitment in terms of time and often resources that individuals make to serve on management committees cannot be underestimated. This section asks why do these individuals voluntarily devote time and energy to serving on management committees and what ultimately motivates their continued participation?

### 5.1 Length of service

In order to fully assess the motivational factors that drive people to serve on management committees, it is first necessary to look at the length of time people have devoted to committees.

**Table 5.1: How long have you served on this management committee?**

	%
0-1 years	15.7
1-3 years	31.0
3-5 years	21.6
6-10 years	18.4
11-25 years	10.8
25 years plus	2.4

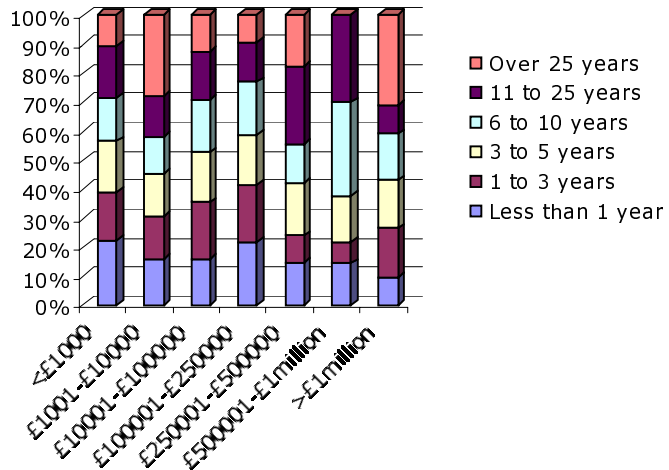
1,086 respondents

The majority of individuals have served on a committee for between one and three years (31.0%) followed by three to five years (21.5%) with 13.4% having served on a committee for more than eleven years. Figure 5.1 provides a more in-depth profile of the length of time individuals serve on management committees by size of organisation. The most striking feature of this graph is the relative decline of individuals who have served less than one year on a committee

as the economic size of the organisation increases. This is countered by a high proportion of individuals serving for 11 years or more (in organisations with an income of £1 million plus just over 30% of individuals have served on a committee for more than 25 years).

**Figure 5.1: Length of time individuals serving on current committee by income**

This situation of a declining base of new members and a significant number of well established members serving for over a quarter of a century is attributable to a number of factors. Most pertinent perhaps is the method by which individuals are recruited to the committee. As outlined in Section 8, it is the larger organisations in general which are more likely to state that they allow an indefinite stay on the committee. In contrast, the very smallest groups are far more likely to insist that there is a turnover of members after just one year. Allied to the fact that the most frequent method of recruitment for new committee members tends to be through 'word of mouth or personal recommendation', the view that some individuals expressed during the focus groups relating to an 'old boys network' is perhaps substantiated.



*"However, in Northern Ireland the old boy's network is rife... [so] that you could get people you don't want on the committee versus selecting individuals you know who will make a contribution."*

We can see from the analysis above that individuals in terms of length of service commit on a long-term basis and this level of commitment is all the more remarkable given that many individuals feel theirs is a thankless task. This begs the obvious question of why do these people give up their own time to participate on management committees.

**5.2 Why volunteer?**

Table 5.2 gives some insight into this question and on the survey it was structured in such a way as to allow individual committee members to give more than one reason for becoming a committee member.

**Table 5.2: Reasons for becoming a committee member**

	Mean	Rank
Committed to the cause of the organisation	1.62	1
Wanted to be more involved in my community	2.48	2
Work in the particular field	2.85	3
A sense of duty	3.03	4
Personally affected by the organisation's work	3.16	5
Representing another organisation	3.25	6
Knew a board member	3.79	7

The main reason for becoming a committee member is the individual's commitment to the cause of the organisation. This clear commitment to the organisation and wanting to be more involved in my community both represent very deep seated altruistic motives for becoming a committee member. As will become evident, when the findings from the focus groups are considered in more depth later in this section, self-gain or personal advancement through involvement on a management committee are not countenanced by those who were interviewed. However, when discussing the motives of others it did become an issue.

### 5.3 Reasons for satisfaction

Evidently for individuals to commit to an organisation for such long periods of time and not to receive payment for their contribution, they must by definition derive some degree of satisfaction from their involvement on the committee. Individual committee members were asked what gave them the most satisfaction and the most dissatisfaction in relation to their time spent serving on a management committee.

**Table 5.3: Areas from which the most satisfaction is derived from serving on a management committee**

	Mean	Rank
The organisation stands for a worthwhile cause	1.95	1
Ensuring the organisation meets the needs of its members/community	2.21	2
Like to see the organisation develop	2.56	3
Providing help/guidance in my own area of expertise	3.13	4
Having contact with a variety of different people	3.94	5
Engaging in debates on policy formulation	4.76	6

Satisfaction derived from serving on management committees is attributed to a number of factors. Individual committee members consider the 'organisation standing for a worthwhile cause' as the most important factor in terms of where they feel they gain satisfaction from. 'Ensuring the organisation meets the needs of its members/community' and satisfaction from 'seeing the organisation develop' are also important areas by which individuals derive satisfaction. It is perhaps a very encouraging sign that the reasons for an individual's initial involvement on a committee are mirrored in the areas that give them the most satisfaction.

Participants in the focus groups were quite clear about the benefits they derived from volunteering, in spite of the difficulties and frustrations they encountered, many of which revolved around personal satisfaction, altruism or a desire to make a difference to their local community:

*"From my work with people who suffer from MS I can see the difference that I'm making to other people's lives. I am repaid for volunteering when I see people enjoying themselves."*

*"There are times I would rather sit in the house and watch Coronation Street but the thanks I receive from my clients is the reward."*

*"Primarily because I can make a difference, it drives me very hard."*

*"The benefits of being on a management committee include experience and training that can help in terms of future career opportunities."*

This altruism was often expressed as a wish to help a local community or individuals with a particular disability or medical condition:

*"My main motivation for becoming a volunteer with the organisation is the positive impact of the service within the rural community. Transport is a real problem and older people are most likely to suffer if the voluntary bus service was not provided."*

*"To give something back to the community and to get involved in a good cause which will benefit the community."*

When the benefits individuals attribute to volunteering in general are considered, the research report *Volunteering in Northern Ireland* (2001) found amongst formal volunteers that personal enjoyment (74%) and meeting people (57%) are the two main areas where individuals derived satisfaction. These findings are essentially much more focused upon personal enrichment whereas the results shown in Table 5.3 are much more based on satisfaction derived from the ongoing development of the organisation.

#### **5.4 Reasons for dissatisfaction**

Despite the findings from the survey, other views were expressed relating to the motivation of some individuals in terms of why they serve on management committees. Such questions about the motivations of others have for some, become a source of dissatisfaction:

*"Many people are on management committees to see what they can get out of it rather than what they can put in."*

*"The committees include people from legal and professional backgrounds. Some take what they can get from the management committee and rarely give anything in return."*

*"A wage for the time devoted to the committee would be an added incentive."*

In relation to the factors that contribute to an individual's dissatisfaction with serving on a management committee two very different reasons emerge. The main reason for dissatisfaction is derived from an external factor and one that often is outside the control of the organisation or the committee. 'Reduced or inadequate funding' is a common lament throughout the voluntary and community sector and the circumstances surrounding Peace II and gap funding have left many organisations in a perilous situation. The threat of closure or a loss of staff, manifesting itself in a reduction of what the organisation can achieve, is clearly an area of concern for management committee members. During research carried out by NICVA into the gap funding crisis, it was often the management committee that bore the brunt of the financial and personnel implications of this situation and for many it meant the strategic development of the organisation was put on hold (NICVA, 2002). When related to the reasons individuals have cited for their involvement on a committee and ultimately the satisfaction they derive from volunteering, it becomes very clear fire fighting and the continual search for new sources of funding are in direct conflict with the reasons why they are there.

**Table 5.4: Areas from which the most dissatisfaction is derived from serving on a management committee**

	Mean	Rank
Reduced/inadequate funding for organisation	1.96	1
Not being able to do everything that is needed	2.31	2
Insufficient time to do tasks	2.33	3
Bureaucracy	2.35	4
Large amounts of information to be digested	3.16	5
Lack of support from other committee members	3.49	6
Lack of training and guidance in relation to my role	4.14	7
Poorly organised meetings (no agenda, etc)	4.83	8
Conflict between staff and members	5.04	9

Very clear opinions were expressed during the focus groups relating to the current situation surrounding funding and the constant struggle to sustain projects.

*"In a lot of these groups the focus seems to be on how we can get money or funding and this is not very attractive for many volunteers, they want to be involved with things that actually help people on the ground, where they can see benefits."*

*"I feel that arrangements and structures are becoming too sophisticated. The old days of the amateur volunteer are going and organisations have to become more accountable. And if they want to get grants they need to become more sophisticated by encouraging more talented individuals to become board members."*

*"The complexity and inadequacy of funding sources in the light of increased European bureaucracy and shrinking available funds makes this issue increasingly complex and diverts management attention away from vital organisational and management issues."*

The second most common reason for dissatisfaction amongst individual committee members relates to 'not being able to do everything that is needed'. This phenomenon can be attributable to a great number of factors such as poor planning, lack of clear objectives or poor delegation of tasks among the committee leaving a core of one or two people to do everything. Such concerns associated with poorly chaired meetings and the effects of bureaucracy were expressed during the focus groups.

*"They [boards in the UK] run by a strict timescale and are not allowed to run over this. In Northern Ireland, committees tend to get side tracked talking about different people they know, etc, this is due not just to poor chairing but also to the culture, where people are more sociable."*

*"I think that there is too much red tape involved in the voluntary and community sector which is very off putting especially for smaller organisations. People are being forced to do more than they are capable of."*

*"Every challenge is welcomed but bureaucracy is making the work of voluntary management committees very difficult."*

*"Committees need to be strictly managed to ensure continuity of attendance, otherwise management is not possible at an effective level and this causes frustrations for regular attendees."*

*"There is a legal minefield faced within the sector that often puts off potential volunteers due to the potential problems that could arise. The exchange of good will is destroyed through regulations."*

However, such factors are open to conjecture and the dissatisfaction of not being able to do everything may relate to the fact that individuals are volunteering their own time and must fit their commitment to the organisation within an already busy schedule. This point perhaps carries more weight than any other, particularly when the average number of committees individuals serve on (on average an individual will serve on two committees) and the frequency of meetings throughout the year (the average number of meetings per year is nine) are considered.

Again the findings from the focus groups gave more insight into concerns expressed about the lack of involvement by some members of a committee and the workload resting with a few core members:

*"However, the same problem arises when something needs done, it is always the same people doing it."*

*"People are on committees because they have a particular interest and want to offer their services. However, the more you take on, the more you can be bombarded with requests for help."*

*"The difficulty with volunteering is that things can be left to others and some say 'I'm only a volunteer' resulting in things never being done."*

*"What I get out of it is grey hairs! Ultimately it is experience — experience in terms of learning about other people, committees and becoming more tolerant of others' limitations and problems."*

*"It can be difficult to sustain the commitment of committee members, reflected by members attending meetings only now and again. Sometimes it can be a 'thankless task', which can affect levels of motivation."*

*"After so many years it becomes increasingly difficult to donate your time and energy voluntarily."*

*"A lack of financial support to continue the work of the group and therefore committee members tire, are burnt out and are always expected to do work not recognised by external agencies."*

Finally an area of potential dissatisfaction associated with serving on a management committee that was not considered on the questionnaire, was the issue of professional paid workers. This debate was raised on several occasions throughout the focus groups concentrating on the effect of the involvement of professional paid workers on supposedly voluntary management committees and the larger issue of what this could mean for the future of the sector:

*"The replacement of committed amateurs with paid staff risks the loss of the volunteering ethos."*

*"More often than not individuals are asked by their employer to sit on management committees as a representative of their organisation ... and in such cases staff were coerced and consequently could affect the degree to which they actively participated on the committee."*

*"Almost all the members of the management committee are there voluntarily. I feel that if there were more paid individuals on the management committee there would be less local support for them."*

*"As an employee of a professional public service, it is difficult not to see my role as token on the committee."*

*Volunteering in Northern Ireland* (Volunteer Development Agency, 2001) also examined what drawbacks individuals involved in formal volunteering believe existed. The drawbacks that were identified included a view that things could be better organised (16%) and the volunteer's efforts are not always appreciated (14%). The results as identified in Table 5.4 are much focused around the organisation but issues of time and not being able to do everything rank very highly with individual committee members when they are asked to consider things that cause dissatisfaction. In *Volunteering in Northern Ireland* (2001) the issue of time and the fact that volunteering takes up too much of it, was deemed to be a drawback by 11% of respondents.

From the analysis above and a comparison with general levels of satisfaction or otherwise with volunteering, there are some differences between individuals volunteering on management committees and those identified as formal volunteers. In terms of levels of satisfaction, it appears that committee members are more altruistic than volunteers in general and are much more concerned with the development of the organisation and meeting the needs of their community. The reasons for dissatisfaction are less distinct between committee members and volunteers in general. Both cite a lack of time and the inability to do everything that is needed fairly highly in terms of areas where they derive dissatisfaction from (Volunteer Development Agency, 2001).

## 6. Training and support

Best practice guides in relation to governance advocate a clear-cut and structured induction process for new committee members. At the same time there is a wide, and confusing, range of training and support available for voluntary management committees. This section reports results on actual practice in relation to the induction process and the experience of committees of various training and support inputs as well as their satisfaction with such experiences.

### Summary

- 35% of organisations operate a formal induction process for new committee members.
- Almost three quarters of organisations, which have a formal induction process, provide 'printed materials' or 'briefings by staff or other committee members'.
- 28% of organisations have a budget for committee member training and development.
- Most satisfaction in terms of training was associated with 'committee roles and responsibilities' and 'management skills'. Least satisfaction in terms of training with 'legal issues', 'fundraising' and 'equal opportunities'.
- Majority of members would like to see available an 'updateable handbook of current good practice' in relation to management committees.
- 'Committee roles and responsibilities' and 'legal responsibilities/issues' were stated as the priority areas relating to further training and support.

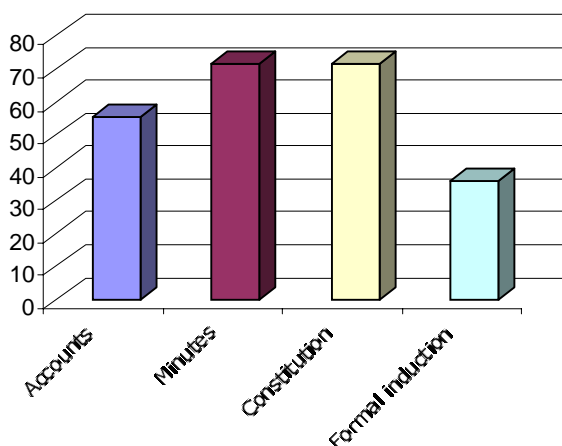
This section covers a range of factual items relating to procedures for integrating new committee members, the availability of training and support as well as attitudinal items concerning the relationship between the committee and the organisation.

### 6.1 The induction process

The induction process for new committee members is perhaps one of the most important pieces of training or support an individual should receive when taking up a new position on a committee. It allows the new member to be made aware of the purpose of the organisation, the financial position of the organisation and the current issues faced by the organisation. Good practice dictates that copies of the organisation's governing document, accounts and minutes from recent management committee meetings should be provided to help ease the transformation of the new member into their role within the management committee. The following set of statistics attempts to develop a picture of the level of induction that is currently being undertaken by organisations and the types of methods that are being employed.



**Figure 6.1: The induction process – materials provided to new committee members**



Although the majority of the 550 organisations surveyed provide new committee members with minutes of previous meetings and their constitution, only one out of every two organisations provides new committee members with a set of accounts (54.7%). Perhaps of more concern is that two out of every three organisations do not have a formal induction process (35.8%).

**Table 6.1: The induction process – materials provided to new committee members by income**

	Accounts	Minutes	Constitution	Formal induction
<£1000	20.0	37.9	36.4	5.7
£1001-£10000	22.0	33.5	34.3	10.2
£10001-£100000	23.7	31.5	29.6	15.1
£100001-£250000	23.7	28.0	28.0	20.3
£250001-£500000	26.1	23.9	27.2	22.8
£500001-£1 million	24.4	24.4	31.7	19.5
>£1 million	27.5	22.5	27.5	22.5
Total	54.7	71.3	71.1	35.8

Formal induction is more common amongst larger organisations but the overall level is generally quite low. Financial priorities of larger organisations compared to smaller groups are clearly reflected as they are much more likely to provide accounts to new members.

Of the 198 organisations which state they operate a formal tour/induction process for new committee members, the following methods by which this induction process is carried out are listed below. The provision of 'printed material' or 'briefings by staff or other committee member' is the most common method of undertaking this induction process with 'attendance on an external course' being ranked by far the lowest.

**Table 6.2: The induction process – methods by which the induction process is undertaken**

	%
Printed material	75.1
Briefing by staff	75.6
Briefing by other committee members	70.1
Training workshops	34.6
Attendance on an external course	14.2

n=198

Within the context of this induction process the principal areas covered include roles and responsibilities of committee members and information about the

organisation itself (Table 6.3, below). Legal structures and requirements and equal opportunities are much less frequently covered.

**Table 6.3: The induction process – which areas are covered under the induction process**

	%
Responsibilities of committee members	84.8
The role of committee members	84.8
The organisation itself	81.7
The constitution or governing document	72.1
The legal structure or legal requirements	55.8
Equal opportunities	54.8

n=198

## 6.2 Attitudes towards training and support

Organisations and individual committee members were asked a series of attitudinal items about the skill and experience within committees and the range of support available. Table 6.4, below, shows that the vast majority of organisations, no matter what their size, are happy with the balance of skills and experience within their management committee and the ability of the Chair and other officers to effectively carry out their roles. They were also generally happy with the support and supervision provided by the organisation to the committee. Feedback from the majority of individual management committee members confirms that there is sufficient support and appraisal for Directors and senior staff members. Finally, it is clear that a relatively large number of organisations (28.3%) are willing, or are in a position to devote resources to the training and development of their management committees. This seems to be the case more often in middle-income organisations.

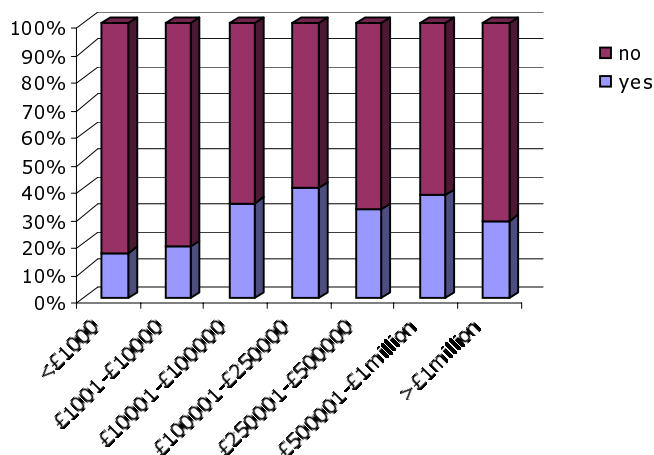
**Table 6.4: Attitudes towards skills and support**

Organisation attitudinal items (%)	Agree	Neither	Disagree
The committee contains a suitable balance of skills and experience to effectively guide the organisation.	85.6	4.5	9.9
The Chair and other officers have the appropriate skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively.	89.8	2.5	7.7
The committee is provided with effective support and supervision by the organisation.	79.5	12.0	8.4
Individual committee members attitudinal items (%)	Agree	Neither	Disagree
The committee ensures that the Director/senior staff member receives support and appraisal sessions.	86.5	10.3	3.2

**Table 6.5: Provision of committee member training and development**

%	Yes	No
Is there a budget for committee member training and development?	28.3	71.7

**Figure 6.2: Provision of committee member training and development by income**



Individual management committee members were then asked about their level of satisfaction with the range of training they had received (Table 6.6). Top of this satisfaction list were 'committee roles and responsibilities' and 'management skills'. The areas of training that received the lowest levels of satisfaction concerned 'legal issues', 'fundraising' and 'equal opportunities'. Interestingly, 'legal and equal opportunity issues' were also those least likely to be covered in induction training.

**Table 6.6: Individual committee members' level of satisfaction with training they have received**

	Mean	Rank
Committee roles and responsibilities	1.94	1
Management skills	2.44	2
Personnel and employment issues	2.64	3
Developing policy issues	2.67	4
Finance management/investments	2.79	5
Equal opportunities	2.80	6
Fundraising	3.02	7
Legal issues	3.26	8

The way in which training and support are offered to committee members is as, if not more, important as the type available. Responses indicate (Table 6.7) that the majority of members would like to see available an 'updateable handbook of current good practice' in relation to management committees. Specific training/support areas were next on the list, followed by professional advice and access to resource materials. Access to professional advice may well reflect anxieties, mentioned earlier by those who attended induction training, about competence in relation to legal and equal opportunity issues. There was also some support for innovative types of resources such as access to a helpline and open learning/correspondence courses for members of management committees.

**Table 6.7: Most suitable types of support or advice for individual committee members**

	Mean	Rank
Updateable handbook of current good practice	2.12	1
Training/support on specific topics	2.23	2
Access to professional advice	2.44	3
Access to resource materials	2.84	4
Access to a network of fellow committee members	3.01	5
Access to a helpline for personal queries	3.57	6
Open learning/correspondence courses	4.01	7

Of the 593 individuals who stated they would require training/support on specific topics the main areas of assistance requested related to 'committee roles and responsibilities' and, yet again, 'legal responsibilities/issues'. Despite the wide availability of training courses, it appears that many volunteers are still unable to access the information and support they need regarding their roles and responsibilities as management committee members.

**Table 6.8: Specific training and support topics identified as important by individual committee members**

	Mean	Rank
Committee roles and responsibilities	2.96	1
Legal responsibilities/issues	3.07	2
Finance management/investments	3.45	3
Developing policy issues	3.48	4
Fundraising	3.49	5
Personnel or employment issues	3.73	6
Planning (strategic development)	3.83	7
Management of day to day activities	4.05	8
Selection/recruitment of committee members	4.78	9
Managing/chairing meetings	5.09	10
Equal opportunities	5.69	11

Some of the findings in this section are supported by comments made by participants in the focus groups. Despite the fact, for instance, that a majority of management committee members stated they were satisfied with training they had received around the issue of 'roles and responsibilities', there were still numerous requests for further training in this area. One possible reason for this may be that:

*"There is a lot of training programmes and many groups are simply 'trained out'. There is that much training out there that people don't know where to take it from."*

The view was also expressed that there may be resistance amongst certain types of committee members towards accepting that they indeed had any training needs:

*"They can also be set in their ways, with the view that they have done it all before and therefore they may feel insulted if training is suggested to them."*

*"One problem with training is that some professionals feel that they don't need any."*

*"The value of training for the management committee is often undermined as people seen as community leaders because of their profession are placed in leader roles within management committees even though they may have had less relevant training than others on the management committee."*

A second source of resistance identified by focus group participants was a feeling that perhaps training was either being forced on committee members or was too technical for their needs:

*"It is important that support provided to the management committee is not over professionalised. Individuals need to know their responsibilities and also that support is available to them if they need it."*

*"If support is to be provided to the members of management committees it is important that you build and support people without contaminating them. Once people are engaged they are often changed. Let people know that advice is available to them without pushing it down their throat."*

*"A one stop shop for advice for the management committee and volunteers may be useful but it is important that the groups approach the service provider first when they need assistance."*

*"Possibly a graduated system would be useful (similar to the LEDU, IDB relationship that used to exist) where organisations move up to support more relevant to them when they become larger."*

There was widespread support for the idea of an updateable manual of best practice:

*"The idea of a handbook to be used by the members of the management committee for training purposes is a good idea in principle. However there is a problem in that people may see the recommendations from the handbook as the only way of doing things. This is not the case and different approaches will suit different organisations. A better option for a handbook may be a less formal structure setting out the main achievements that a management committee should aim to meet, without the guidelines becoming too restrictive."*

There were several useful and valuable suggestions to come out of the focus groups session with regard to the types of support for voluntary management committees:

*"One thing that I would change about management committees would be the introduction of a community based mentor who is totally independent of the organisation. This person could come to the management committee meeting and offer guidance and attempt to draw things together."*

*"A facilitator is useful also as it gets around the problem of internal politics which is often a problem in community based*

*organisations. This person could act as an advisor and counsellor as well as having a hands on approach."*

### **6.3 Provision of training and support**

The remit of this research has focussed very much on the individual committee member and their needs, frustrations and expectations but the actual provision of training and support has yet to be discussed. This section aims to draw together the findings of previous research into the provision of management committee training and support and examine them in relation to the findings of this research.

*Are You Being Served?* (NICVA, 2003) showed that there are at least 70 organisations which provide a wide range of structured training courses targeted at voluntary management committees. From the analysis carried out into the type of courses that are provided in Northern Ireland, 'committee skills' and 'strategic planning' are the most predominant courses offered in terms of numbers. This is somewhat of a contradictory view when compared to the training needs as expressed by respondents to this research. 'Committee roles and responsibilities' featured as the main priority for individual committee members but 'strategic development' only ranked as the seventh most important training area. Of course it is difficult to draw any conclusion from this but perhaps there is some difference between what is provided and what is actually needed.

Also highlighted in *Are you Being Served?* (NICVA, 2003) was the very high density of training providers in Belfast and Derry. This was in contrast to areas such as Fermanagh and Tyrone which have a relatively large number of voluntary and community groups but are very poorly served in terms of training provision. It was found that many training organisations claim to offer courses throughout Northern Ireland but it was very difficult to discern if their actual presence was at a local level. Although this research project did not focus upon the geographic location of training provision, it was stated during the focus group sessions that the presence and provision of training and support at a local level is an essential element in terms of the development of committees.

*Are You Being Served?* (NICVA, 2003) found that wide variations in the nature of voluntary and community groups increase the difficulty of arriving at generic solutions to providing training and support for voluntary management committees. Subsequently this research project found that many of the groups participating in the focus groups, are quite happy with their current situation with regard to training and support but are only concerned about formalised training and governance issues as a result of external pressures. Other organisations, particularly the larger voluntary organisations, already have the skills and resources necessary to negotiate the maze of training and governance issues impacting on their management committees. This underlines a fundamental dichotomy within the sector, apparent from both the survey findings and focus groups, when it comes to trying to identify and meet the needs of voluntary management committees. The dichotomy relates to the size and nature of the organisation, small community-focused groups having quite different needs to those of the larger voluntary and charity bodies.

In another piece of research by Kumar and Nunan (2002), the needs of smaller groups relate much more to a 'bottom-up' needs-led approach that is responsive to short-term issues and concerns and involves trust-building and the development of an ongoing relationship:

*"The [governance] project found that a 'hands-off' approach was not conducive to governance development, and mostly had to work closely with groups and organisations from 'assessment' through to 'exit'. It was important to establish trusting relationships before groups and organisations would reveal their governance development needs."*

For larger voluntary and charity organisations a more formal training approach is generally more appropriate to their circumstances and needs. What the findings of this research and the other publications recommend is that a more strategic and focussed approach towards the training and support of management committees is delivered at the point of need.

## 7. The governance relationship

### Summary

- Where no formal selection process is in place, the balance of skills and experience on a committee is greater than in any other category. For other selection processes there is a general consensus that the balance of skills on the committee is consistent regardless of how the individuals were selected.
- As the economic size of the organisation increases, then the likelihood that the committee will be more involved in some form of strategic development also increases.
- The committee's relationship with management is constantly shifting between consent, difference and disagreement depending on the issues being faced and the circumstances. No consensus was reached over the exact nature of this relationship.

As was outlined in the literature review there are a number of theoretical perspectives that have been used to try to understand management committees and the role they play in governance. The work by Cornforth (2003) stated that none of the theories describing organisational governance listed below can be viewed in isolation as they do not fully describe the roles and issues management committees face.

**Table 7.1 Theoretical perspectives on organisational governance**

Theory	Board Role
<b>Agency</b>	<i>Compliance/conformance</i> Individual committee members safeguard beneficiaries interests, oversee management and check organisational compliance.
<b>Stewardship</b>	<i>Improve performance</i> Individuals add value to organisation; make decisions concerning strategy, partner/support management. Individuals selected because of skills/expertise.
<b>Democratic</b>	<i>Political</i> Committee members represent constituents/members, reconcile conflicts, make policy, control executive. Individuals directly elected by community/constituency.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<i>Balancing stakeholder needs</i> Individuals must balance stakeholder needs whilst making policy/strategy and controlling management. Individuals represent a wide range of stakeholders/beneficiaries.
<b>Resource dependency</b>	<i>Boundary spanning</i> Committee members must secure resources whilst maintaining stakeholder relations and ensuring they maintain an external perspective on the operations of the organisation.
<b>Managerial hegemony</b>	<i>Largely symbolic</i> Committee members ratify decisions and give legitimacy to managers. Committee has no real power but merely 'rubber stamps' decisions made by management.

(Cornforth, 2003)

Therefore an approach which looks at the conflict or tensions which exist between the theories is necessary to fully appreciate the relationships and tensions which



exist on management committees in relation to governance. Therefore this section assesses the findings of this research to determine if the potential for tensions which exist on management committees is dependent upon size of organisation or the selection process for new committee members. The analysis in this section is based on a number of attitudinal items asked during the course of this research which relate to the governance relationship

**7.1 Representation versus effectiveness**

One of the main tensions faced by management committees is that between committees which are representative or those which are made up of professionals. The tension exists because committees which have been selected for their professional expertise and skills can often be seen as undemocratic and lacking a representative base. Based upon the attitudinal questions on the organisational survey the relative agreement or disagreement with a number of statements were measured against the method of selection used by organisations to recruit new management committee members.

This tension can be described the stewardship theory and the democratic perspective as outlined in Table 7.1. Stewardship theory stresses that committee members should have expertise and experience that add value to the performance of the organisation. In contrast, the democratic perspective stresses that committee members are there to serve their community, beneficiaries or the stakeholders they represent.

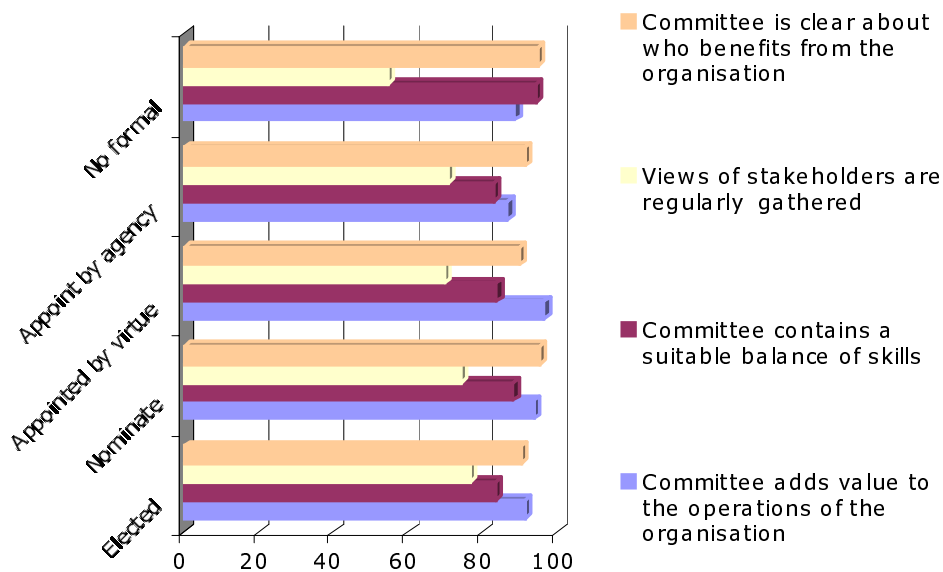
For the purposes of this research a number of attitudinal items which demonstrate the characteristics as described under each theoretical perspective have been selected to test whether or not such tensions or paradoxes exist on the committees included in this research.

**Table 7.2: Democratic and stewardship attitudinal items**

Democratic perspective	Stewardship perspective
The committee is clear about who benefits from the organisation.	The committee contains a suitable balance of skills and experience.
The views of stakeholders are regularly gathered.	The committee adds value to the operations of the organisation.

For ease of interpretation the percentages for each of the attitudinal items have been combined in a single graph. Only the agreement scores have been presented as they represent the positive affirmation of the existence of such a theoretical perspective. Figure 7.1 attempts to demonstrate where any tensions or possible conflict may exist when considering the effects of the selection process.

**Figure 7.1: Skills and expertise versus representation**



So what does Figure 7.1 tell us about management committees in Northern Ireland regarding to how they perform in relation to how individual members are selected? First, taking the items designed to test the democratic model it is evident that the likelihood that organisations with an elected committee will take on board the views of stakeholders is greater in organisations where no formal process exists or committee members are appointed by another body. That aside, the other attitudinal item ('the committee is clear about who benefits from the organisation') used in this instance to signify the presence of a democratic model, is not so clear cut. There is a fairly consistent level of agreement across all methods of selection in relation to whether or not the committee is clear about who benefits from the organisation.

As mentioned above, one of the key characteristics of the democratic model is greater accountability and representativeness in relation to the local community, stakeholders or beneficiaries. This distinction regarding the democratic model is not particularly well developed in this instance. Therefore it can be assumed that the selection process does not have any significant bearing on their ability to serve the community or beneficiaries they represent.

Examining the stewardship model a slightly different perspective on the influence of the selection process becomes apparent. From Figure 7.1 it is evident that where no formal selection process is in place the balance of skills and experience on a committee is greater than in any other category. This is perhaps understandable as the organisation is in a position to hand pick individuals who they deem to be best suited for the role. For the other selection processes there is a general consensus that the balance of skills on the committee are consistent regardless of how the individuals were selected.

Taking the second attitudinal item ('the committee adds value to the operations of the organisation') a general level of consensus is also apparent across all the selection processes. However, those organisations which have committee members serving on their committee by virtue of their position in another organisation believe the committee adds a greater degree of value to the organisation than any other method of selection. This makes sense as individuals who serve on a committee because of their position elsewhere, often bring extensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant issues which is of benefit to the organisation.

Cornforth (2003) poses the question can the paradox between effectiveness and accountability, and between expert and representative boards be better managed. In the case of management committees in Northern Ireland it is difficult from the above analysis to truly say that such paradoxes exist. Perhaps the most striking feature of Figure 7.1 is that on committees where no formal process exists the balance is firmly in favour of the stewardship model of governance which appears to be to the detriment of committee members understanding the views of stakeholders.

As always such tensions and relationships are best articulated by those individuals serving on committees. The analysis above gives a somewhat crude insight into one small aspect of the governance relationship and the comments from individuals during the focus groups show that whilst elections may be the best way to ensure democratic accountability, it is often the skills and expertise of individuals that are the key consideration.

*"Always the problems that are inherent in this democratic process mean that you could get people you don't want on the committee versus selecting individuals you know who will make a contribution."*

*"If [I] could change anything about the management committees that I am involved with it would be to hand pick those on it. Although the open election process is more democratic the organisation runs the risk of getting people who are not capable of carrying out the tasks that are asked of them."*

## 7.2 Conformity versus performance

Moving on from this perspective, the next tension facing committees is that of the main role of the committee. In this instance the tension exists between the agency and stewardship perspectives. Agency theory emphasises the need for the committee to ensure the organisation acts in the interests of its beneficiaries and stakeholders and to be a careful steward of resources. It requires committee members to carefully monitor the performance of the organisation. On the other hand, stewardship theory emphasises the role of the committee in a strategic and developmental perspective, requiring vision and an understanding of the wider environment amongst committee members.

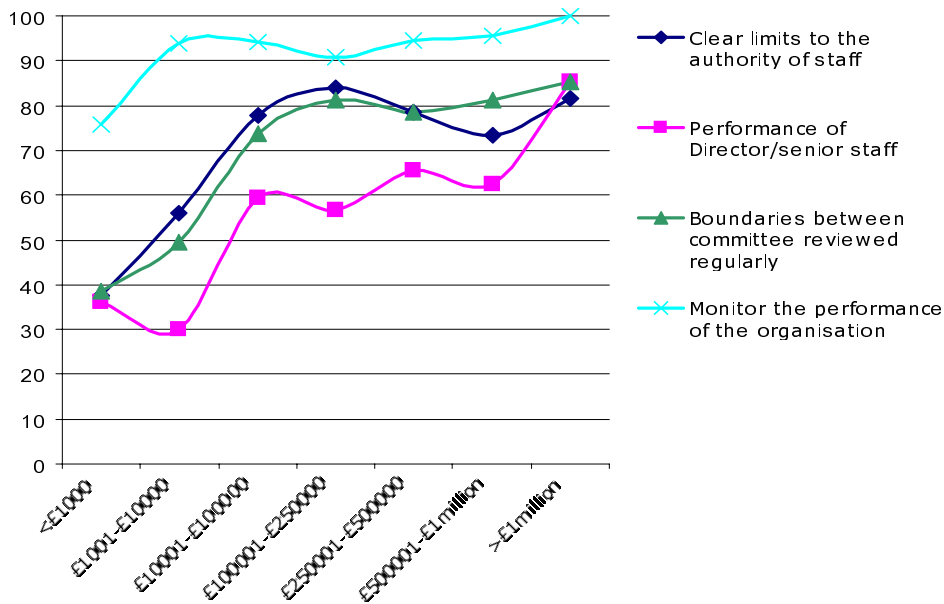
The following attitudinal items have been selected to test if such tensions between the two perspectives exist based upon the economic size of the organisation.

**Table 7.3: Agency and stewardship attitudinal items**

Agency perspective	Stewardship perspective
There are clear limits set by the committee with regard to the authority of staff.	The committee agrees a long-term strategy for the development of the organisation.
The performance of the Director/senior staff is monitored by the committee.	The committee reviews the external environment on a regular basis.
The boundaries between the committee and staff are reviewed regularly.	The committee should play no relevant role in the strategic development of the organisation.
The committee monitors the performance of the organisation.	The committee makes policy decisions that reflect the organisation's mission purpose.

First, the attitudinal items that were selected to determine the extent of the agency model of governance were examined.

**Figure 7.2: Attitudes towards 'conformance'**

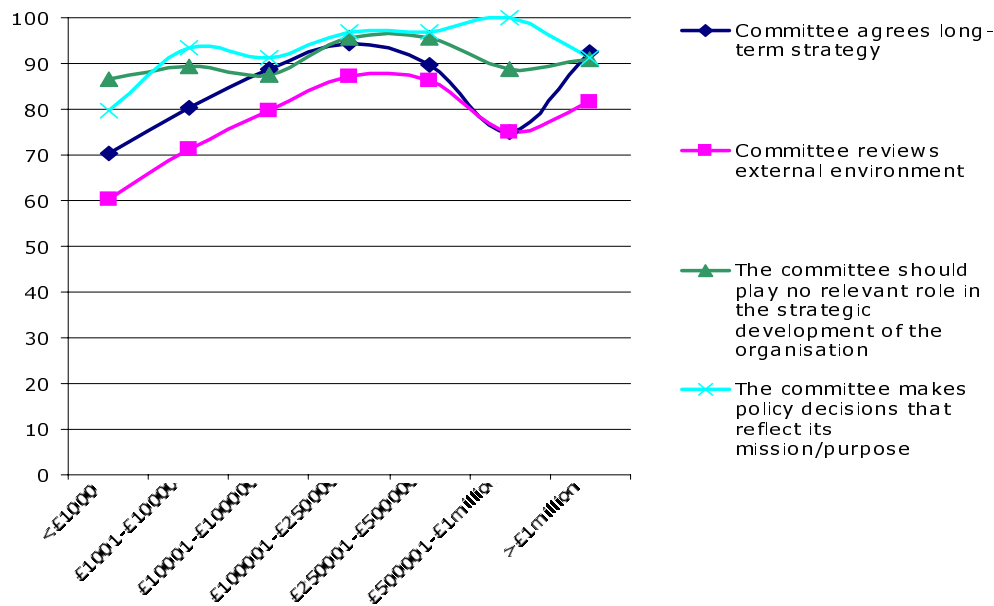


In relation to the agency perspective, Figure 7.2 clearly shows that the economic size of the organisation is a determining factor in relation to the role the committee is expected to perform. For obvious reasons, such as no or small numbers of paid staff, organisations with a small economic size do not expect their committee to have a monitoring or evaluation role of the Director/senior staff. Nevertheless, organisations of all sizes expect the committee to monitor the performance of the organisation.

Clearly as the number of staff increases, the expectation that the committee will monitor the performance of the Director/senior staff also increases. It however does not increase in a significant way until organisations with a £1 million income are considered. For medium sized organisations this role is only expected to be carried out in approximately two out of every three committees. The prevalence of limits set by the committee in relation to the authority of the staff and the boundaries between the committee and the staff all increase with the economic size of the organisation. Such findings are perhaps unsurprising as the resources and people the organisation is responsible for increases the level of monitoring and evaluation should in theory also increase.

Therefore, under the attitudinal items selected to represent the agency perspective it can be stated that on committees the level of monitoring and scrutiny of the organisation's performance increases with economic size. Or as Cornforth (2003) puts it, the 'conformance' role of the committee, as espoused under agency theory, increases with the size of the organisation.

In direct opposition to this theory is the stewardship model which demands a committee should take a long-term strategic view of the development of the organisation. Cornforth (2003) calls this the 'performance' role of a committee which requires very different skills from those required on a committee which fulfils a 'conformance' role.

**Figure 7.3: Attitudes towards 'performance'**

As in Figure 7.3, economic size is a determining factor in relation to the role the committee plays. As the size of the organisation increases, then the likelihood that the committee will be more involved in some form of strategic development also increases. It must however be noted that the differentiation between organisations of different size is much less pronounced for the stewardship model than that associated with the agency perspective.

Albeit a rather crude assessment of the differing roles committees are expected to fulfil, there are some clear features emerging from this analysis. Clearly committees of small to medium sized organisations fulfil a stewardship focused role which is looking at the strategic development of the organisation. However, the committees of such organisations are still expected to monitor the performance of the organisation as is shown in Figure 7.2.

Where the tension or more precisely the paradox occurs, is to be found on the committees of the largest organisations. Here the expectation is clearly one which dictates the committee must both monitor and scrutinise the performance of the organisation (agency theory) whilst providing the strategic overview for the continued development of the organisation (stewardship theory). Both these roles require different skills and require the formation of different relationships between the committee and the organisation. Committee members which serve organisations of this size face the difficult task of striking a balance between 'performance' and 'conformance'. The balance, as articulated by Cornforth (2003), is that issues of long-term or strategic importance do not get squeezed off the committee's agenda, whilst at the same time the committee's capacity for independent scrutiny is not compromised.

Although this research did not delve specifically into this issue, some of the comments made during the focus group sessions highlight instances where tensions between 'conformance' and 'performance' emerge.

*"Some members of management committee are very enthusiastic and want to become more hands on in their approach. This can result in the Director feeling undermined as the management committee is their employer. When there are difficulties in terms of*

*personnel for example, there is then much less enthusiasm shown by members of the management committee."*

*"The relationship between management committee and paid staff needs to be clarified in terms of who manages who?"*

*"Our management committee at [name] takes a strategic view on the development of the organisation as opposed to getting involved in the day to day running of the organisation. We receive quarterly reports from the Chief Executive so that we can ensure that targets are being achieved."*

*"The management committee does not have any involvement with the day to day running of the organisation as this is the job of the Chief Executive and staff. The board should not interfere with the running of the organisation. We receive reports from the Chief Executive and directors so that we can ensure that the organisation is meeting its aims."*

### **7.3 Controlling or supporting the management relationship**

The final tension that is of great importance to committees is the relationship with management more precisely the need for the committee to both control the Director/senior staff whilst providing support and being a partner in the decision making process. This dichotomy is expressed through the agency, stakeholder and democratic perspectives which stress monitoring and control, set against the stewardship theory which stresses the role of partnership (Cornforth, 2003).

As before, a number of attitudinal items have been selected to attempt to uncover any potential conflicts or areas of tensions that may exist for organisations of different economic size.

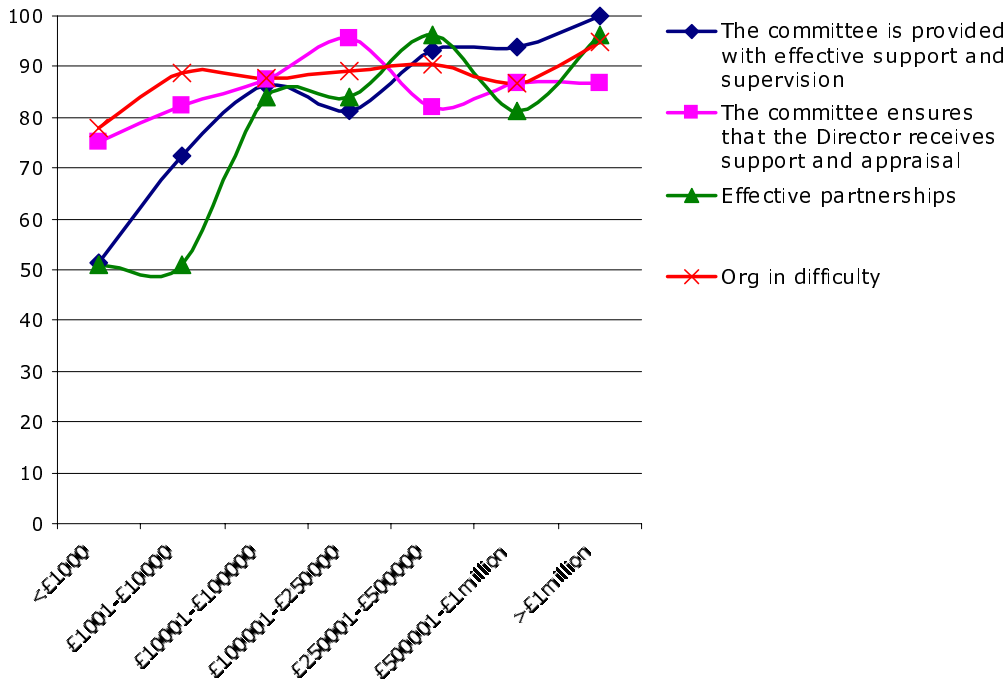
The following items have been selected to demonstrate the prevalence or otherwise of characteristics that are consistent with the democratic, agency and stakeholder theories and stewardship theory.

**Table 7.4: Democratic and stewardship attitudinal items**

Democratic, Agency and Stakeholder perspectives	Stewardship perspective
Only the Director/senior staff member should attend committee meetings.	The committee is provided with effective support and supervision.
The committee should periodically consider whether to discontinue or develop activities/areas of work to meet changing needs.	The committee ensures that the Director receives support and regular appraisal.
The role of the Chair in linking the committee to the Director/senior staff member is clearly defined.	There are suitable processes to ensure an effective partnership between the committee and the Director/senior staff member.
The role of the Director/senior staff member in relation to the committee is clearly defined.	The management committee should only become involved when the organisation is in difficulty.

Figure 7.4 shows the scores for the attitudinal items which characterise the partnering relationship as outlined under the stewardship model.

**Figure 7.4: Attitudes towards 'partnering'**

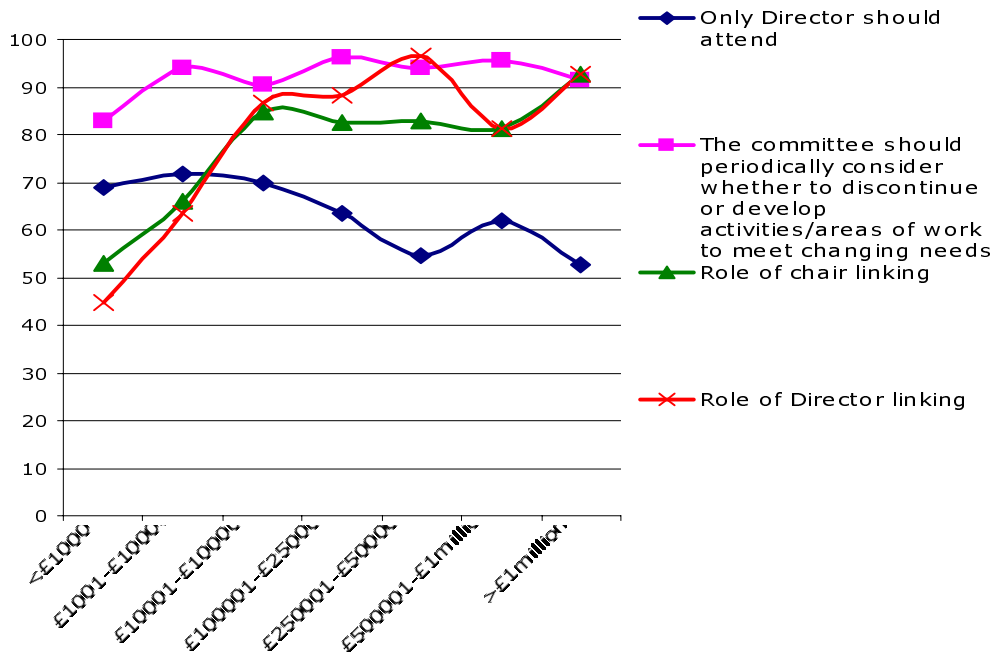


As with the previous findings in this section, the level of support the committee receives and the presence of procedures which foster effective partnerships between the committee and management are dependent upon paid staff. Therefore the stewardship model is less applicable to smaller organisations as the committee is often the organisation as well. The committees of larger organisations can expect greater support and supervision from the organisation as well as the presence of effective partnerships to foster this relationship.

There is however a degree of consensus across all organisations when it comes to supporting the organisation not only in times of difficulty and providing the Director/senior staff with support.

Figure 7.5 examines the opposition to the theory of partnering, where attitudinal items have been selected which represent components of the democratic, agency and stakeholder theories.

**Figure 7.5: Attitudes towards 'controlling'**



The level of control the committee may exert over the Director/senior staff member is a potential source of conflict on committees and Figure 7.5 attempts to demonstrate the areas where conflict may arise.

Figure 7.5 shows once again that as the organisation size increases, clarity surrounding the role of the Chair and the Director/senior staff member in terms of linking with each other also increases. This suggests that the level of control and the nature of the working relationship between these key positions become more formalised as the size of the organisation increases. This linkage between the two entities is important as the holders of the role of Chairperson and Director/senior staff member have special obligations to develop a good working relationship. As Dowsett and Harris (LSE, 1996) found in their research of this relationship, it is a complex and multi-faceted one in which the concepts of 'accountability' and 'communication' as well as 'negotiation' and 'interdependence' are all important.

If such conditions do not exist between the Chairperson and the Director/senior staff member, the lack of transparency may have an effect on the rest of the committee which can be quite damaging. For instance, during the focus group sessions this point was alluded to on a number of occasions.

*"At times I feel decisions are already made or discussed prior to our meeting."*

*"At times when issues within the organisation come to the committee where decisions have to be made, it sometimes feels like those decisions have already been made before they reach the main committee."*

*"The chairperson within the organisation was very secretive and there was a lack of trust within the management committee. In my experience a lack of trust is a prominent problem within many smaller community organisations."*

Across all organisations there is a belief that the committee has an important role in the decision making process with regard to sensitive and potentially controversial decisions (consideration of the discontinuation or development of



activities). This suggests that committees believe they have an influential role and a certain degree of control over the direction and development of the organisation.

The examination of the tension that exists between 'controlling' and 'partnering' in terms of the relationship between the committee and the staff is inconclusive. To attempt to assess if one theoretical perspective of governance and the working relationship that characterises each model, is more prevalent than another is fraught with some danger. As Cornforth (2003) suggests, the committee's relationship with management is constantly shifting between consent, difference and disagreement depending on the issues being faced and the circumstances. Nevertheless, the analysis does show that there is a slight leaning towards a 'partnering' or stewardship model. As this research has shown this is particularly the case as the size of the organisation increases.

The attitudinal items used here to assess tensions between 'controlling' and 'partnering' management are in no way an exhaustive list but they do show how conflict and tensions may be produced between a committee which believes it should have a controlling role but where the expectation in the organisation is one of support and critical assessment.

#### 7.4 Improvements

No matter how well things are going and the unanimously positive outlook that organisations and committees have of their roles and responsibilities, improvements can still be made. Table 7.1 below shows how individual committee members responded when they were asked if there were any improvements that could be made to allow them to function more effectively on their committee. Perhaps in slight contradiction to the degree of satisfaction individual committee members expressed in regard to the relationship of the organisation, only 14.4% of individual committee members felt that no improvements were necessary.

**Table 7.5: Improving the governance relationship**

	Mean	Rank
More involvement of members/users	1.89	1
Greater training/advice in terms of my role	2.53	2
Clearer role definition needed	2.60	3
More committee members	2.67	4
More time	2.89	5
Assessment of future committee needs	3.00	6
Smaller groups (sub-committees)	3.34	7
Clearly presented briefing papers	3.23	8
More frequent meetings	4.10	9
Committee needs reduced in size	5.03	10

The issue of accountability in relation to the engagement with beneficiaries/members of the organisation appears to be most relevant to individual committee members. As is outlined in the section on Recruitment, only 13.2% of committees are made up of service users/beneficiaries. 'Greater training and advice in terms of my role' and 'clearer role definition follow' on from this desire for greater involvement of more users and members. This is perhaps reflected in the low levels of induction for new committee members that are taking place across the sector (two out of every three organisations do not have a formal induction process).

When compared to the *Building on Trust* report (NCVO, 1995) a similar pattern emerges. The main suggestions for improvement to management committees were the greater involvement of members, a streamlining of the governing body and clearer role definition.

Some of the reasons behind why certain improvements may be necessary in the view of individual committee members were perhaps best articulated through the focus group. Considering that in Table 7.5, 'the need for more committee members' and 'more time' rank fourth and fifth respectively, one may conclude that the division of labour on committees is not always equitable. There were some very clear examples of participants questioning the motivation of some management committee members to the extent that they made no real or useful contribution:

*"The management committee find it difficult to make clear progress and this leads to frustration. Many people are on management committees to see what they can get out of it rather than what they can put in."*

*"I find that there are a lot of people on the periphery within the management committee and not many want to take on more responsibility. There is a lack of communication resulting in people not being kept up to date. This results in a breakdown in trust which is an essential element within a management committee."*

*"The committee includes people from legal and professional backgrounds. Some take what they can get from the management committee and rarely give anything in return. They take the glory when photographers and funding awards are achieved. People are constantly making excuses and shifting the work onto others."*

These complaints reflect a common issue for many voluntary management committees whereby the majority of work is undertaken by a core group of members and a feeling that others on the committee are just being carried, or are there because their presence lends gravitas to the committee:

*"There are some professionals in the area who sit on 10-20 management committees and are the most ineffective members."*

*"However, the same problem arises when something needs done, it is always the same people doing it."*

## **7.5 The conundrum of governance**

In relation to the governance relationship it appears that management committees must be simultaneously strategic, a careful steward of the organisation's resources, accountable to the organisation's stakeholders, provide a critical but yet supportive perspective on the operations of the organisation and yet remain aware of what is going on in the external environment.

Clearly no management committee, no matter how committed the individuals, can effectively fulfil all these roles. It is however clear from the analysis above that different tensions and conflicts potentially exist on management committees which often mean a committee may drift from one extreme or another. Or put another way, committees may try and achieve everything without ever really focusing on the issues and this paradox is central to the theories outlined by Cornforth (2003). In his study Cornforth continually reiterates the point that

committees need balance, whether that is in composition, the roles individuals play, measurement of performance and how they work together and with management. Such issues must be reviewed regularly and as is stated by Cornforth, "rather than search for the right committee model or approach, committees need to try to find the right balance between the different 'pulls' created by the paradoxes given the circumstances they face."

The findings in this section have clearly demonstrated that size matters when it comes down to the governance relationship. As the size of the organisation increases the expectations placed on individual committee members to fulfil a number of contradictory roles increases. This creates tension and the potential for conflict so it is therefore up to the management and individual committee members to work together to ensure a balance between such opposing expectations can be reached.

## 8. Processes

This section covers data on the whole range of structures and processes essential to the effective running of a voluntary management committee, from the number of committee meetings held to the management structure and the relations between committee and executive officers of an organisation. It also covers the essential internal processes such as the existence of sub-committees and the length of time officers are allowed to remain on the management committee.

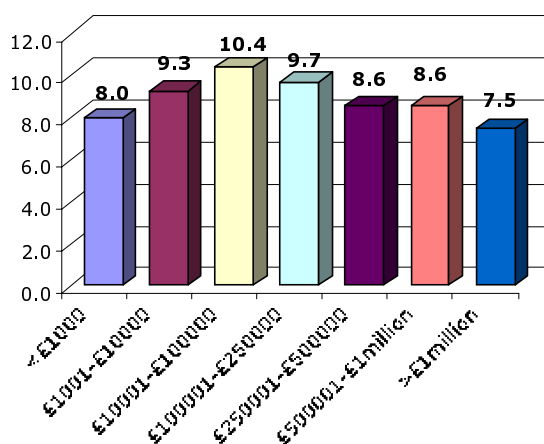
### Summary

- On average organisations will hold nine committee meetings per year.
- In total 85% of all organisations stated that their average attendance included more than half of their committee members.
- 37% of committee members serve on committees where they are re-elected every year. This is followed by 28% of committee members serving on committees where they are permitted to serve for an indefinite period.
- In total, 44% of organisations have some sort of formal sub-committee(s), with this being far more likely amongst the very largest organisations (91% in £1 million organisations).

### 8.1 Frequency, attendance and length of office

It was found that there is an average of nine committee meetings per year. As is shown in Figure 8.1 medium-sized organisations tend to have slightly more meetings on average than other types.

**Figure 8.1: Average number of committee meetings per year by income**

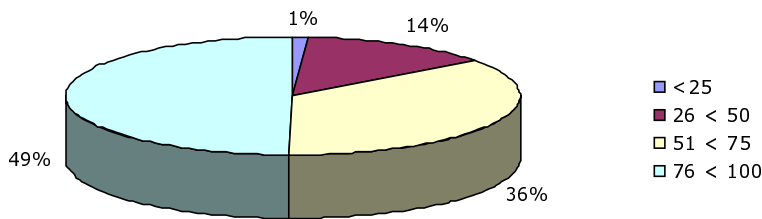


When the average number of meetings was examined for charities in England and Wales, *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (Cornforth, 2001) found the average was 5.7. The average varied between 5.0 and 6.8 meetings a year for the different income bands. Unlike the situation in Northern Ireland the number of board meetings appears to vary little with the size of the organisation.

What is clear, however, is that the expectations and pressures placed on management committee members in Northern Ireland are somewhat higher than in England and Wales, if the physical commitment of attending meetings is considered.

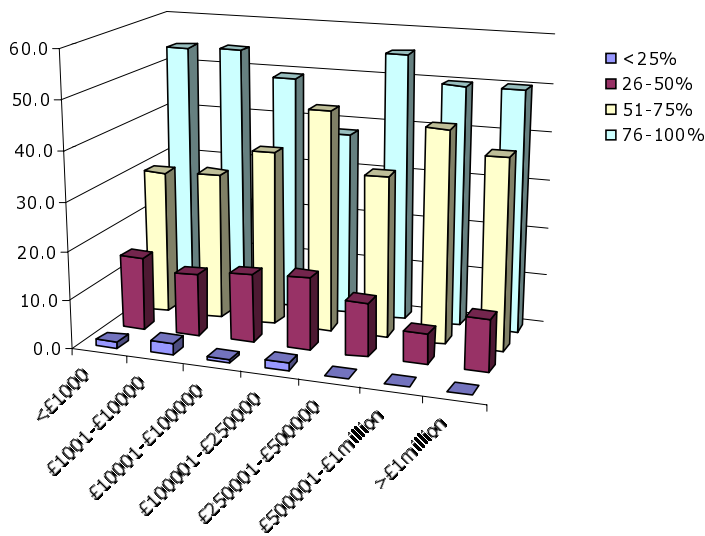
The average attendance at committee meetings (Figure 8.2) is gratifyingly high with nearly half of all organisations having three-quarters or more of their members in attendance. In total 85% of all respondents stated that their average attendance included more than half of their committee members. Somewhat surprisingly the highest level of attendance was recorded for both the largest and the smallest organisations (Figure 8.3). What can be concluded from this analysis in levels of attendance is that it does not appear to be related to the size of the organisation.

**Figure 8.2: Average attendance at committee meetings (%)**



Such patterns of good attendance levels at committee meetings are replicated in the study of charities in England and Wales (NCVO, 2001). *Recent Trends in Charity Governance and Trusteeship* (NCVO, 2001) reported that 65% of charities have between 76-100% attendance and 91% of charities have over 50% attendance.

**Figure 8.3: Average attendance at committee meetings by income**



Respondents were asked about the length of term of office committee members could hold (from a list provided) and whether there was such a policy in use (Table 8.1 below). Overall the most common position was that committee members were re-elected every year (37.2%) followed by the other extreme, that is members could serve for an indefinite period (28%). Another large group of organisations, 13.2%, stated that members could serve for a period of three

years before retirement from the committee with a slightly smaller proportion stating that the organisation had no fixed policy in relation to this. It was the larger organisations in general which were more likely to state that they allowed an indefinite stay on the committee. In contrast the very smallest groups were far more likely to re-elect committee members after just one year.

**Table 8.1: Length of term of office by income**

	Serves a maximum of one year (re-elected each year)	Serves for a period of two years and retires	Serves for a period of three years and then retires	Serves for a period of five years and then retires	Members may serve for an indefinite period	No fixed policy	Other
<£1000	44.7	4.7	8.2	2.4	23.5	15.3	1.2
£1001-£10000	44.9	5.1	6.8	2.5	28.0	9.3	3.4
£10001-£100000	37.5	1.6	16.8	2.7	27.2	12.0	2.2
£100001-£250000	37.7	1.4	10.1	1.4	29.0	13.0	7.2
£250001-£500000	10.3	3.4	27.6	6.9	31.0	10.3	10.3
£500001-£1 million	12.5	6.3	12.5	0.0	43.8	6.3	18.8
>£1 million	21.4	3.6	25.0	3.6	32.1	0.0	14.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>4.5</b>

## 8.2 What is discussed?

Not surprisingly finance and budgeting together with current issues facing the organisation were topics most likely to dominate committee meetings (Table 8.2). Close behind these two topics was planning for the future which is surely related to the next most common topic of discussion funding and fundraising. Policy issues were clearly not a priority on the agendas of most organisations.

**Table 8.2: Main issues discussed at committee meetings**

	Mean	Rank
Finance and budgeting	2.57	1
Report on current issues	2.85	2
Planning for the future	2.95	3
Funding/fundraising	3.03	4
Provision of services	3.11	5
Staffing and personnel	4.45	6
Premises	4.78	7
Policy issues	4.93	8

There were some interesting variations on this priority discussion list according to the size of organisations (Table 8.3). 'Funding and budgeting' is the main discussion priority for all organisations regardless of their economic size. For further examination of the figures for medium sized organisations the 'reporting on current issues' also ranks as the main discussion priority on committees. Only in the largest organisations (£500,000 plus) did 'policy issues' rank anywhere in terms of significance in terms of the committees agenda.

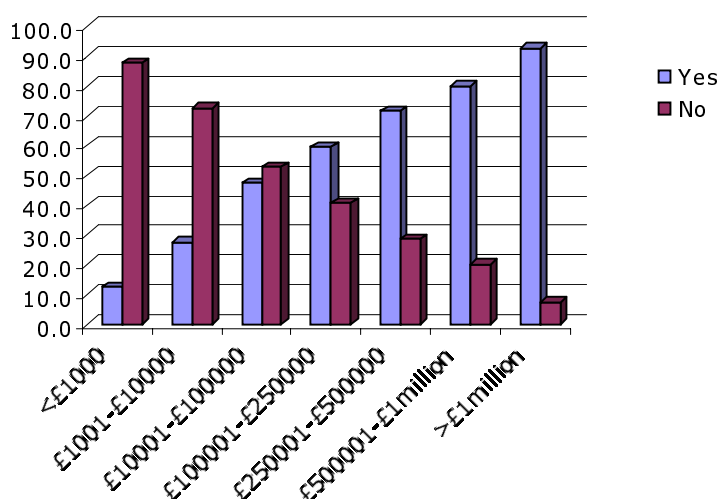
**Table 8.3: Main issues discussed at committee meetings by income (rank)**

Rank	Finance and budgeting	Funding/ fundraising	Planning for the future	Premises	Provision of services	Report on current issues	Staffing and personnel issues	Policy issues
<£1000	1	3	1	6	3	5	7	8
£1001-£10000	1	3	2	6	4	5	7	8
£10001-£100000	1	3	3	7	5	1	6	8
£100001-£250000	1	3	5	8	3	1	6	7
£250001-£500000	1	3	4	8	5	1	6	7
£500001-£1 million	2	7	6	8	3	1	4	4
>£1 million	1	6	2	8	4	3	7	4

**8.3 Sub-committees**

Accepted best practice in relation to governance specifies the creation of sub-committees to effectively deal with the amount of work faced by voluntary management committees. In total, 43.8% (224) of organisations responding to this question have some sort of formal sub-committee(s) with, unsurprisingly, this being far more likely amongst the very largest organisations (Figure 8.4). In fact, the likelihood that this will be the case is directly proportional to the size of an organisation.

**Figure 8.4: Formal sub-committees by income**



Reflecting upon the situation in England and Wales (NCVO, 2001), 67.1% of organisations surveyed have no formal sub-committees, which suggests that committees in Northern Ireland are based on a more structured basis, in relation to the utilisation of sub-committees. As is the case in Northern Ireland the NCVO report found that size matters with regard to the use of sub-committees (93.0% of the largest charities have a sub-committee structure).

In an attempt to determine the issues such sub-committees deal with, organisations were asked to give an indication of the types of areas these sub-committees cover. From the analysis it was found that sub-committees are most likely to be established to deal with the difficult issues of finance, future planning, personnel and resources (Table 8.4). There were clear variations in these arrangements according to the size of organisation with smaller groups being most concerned with future planning issues to the extent that a sub-committee had been established. In contrast the need for sub-committees dealing with personnel and finance issues was more common amongst the larger organisations.

**Table 8.4: Type of sub-committee by income**

	Finance	Personnel	Resources	Future planning
<£1000	28.6	0.0	14.3	57.1
£1001-£10000	17.5	20.0	22.5	40.0
£10001-£100000	32.0	22.0	16.0	30.0
£100001-£250000	38.2	32.9	7.9	21.1
£250001-£500000	35.7	33.3	9.5	21.4
£500001-£1million	52.4	23.8	14.3	9.5
>£1million	40.8	22.4	14.3	22.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>19.6</b>

Some comments made during the focus groups provide a possible explanation for the prevalence of sub-committees that concentrate on financial issues.

*"There are a lot of funding-led committees, you know, they are preoccupied with getting funding for whatever purpose so they lack focus and direction."*

*"Organisations have to become more accountable and if they want to get grants they need to become more sophisticated by encouraging more talented individuals to become board members. There is a danger of losing volunteers as organisations professionalise and this would be devastating as these people bring their heart into the organisation."*



## 9. Organisational profile

The following set of tables presents the profiles of those organisations which took part in this survey compared to the voluntary and community sector as a whole.

**Table 9.1: Distribution by primary purpose (%)**

	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Overall Sector</b>
General charitable purposes	8.9	9.5
Education/training	18.4	17.6
Medical/health/sickness	2.9	6.3
Disability	8.9	5.3
Relief of poverty	1.5	1.0
Overseas aid/famine relief	0.5	0.4
Accommodation/housing	4.2	2.9
Religious activities	1.5	7.5
Arts/culture	5.1	6.6
Sport/recreation	4.7	3.2
Animals	0.0	0.6
Environment/conservation/heritage	3.8	4.6
Economic/community development/employment	10.9	14.1
Cross border/cross community	4.5	2.8
Rural development	2.4	1.2
Urban development	0.5	0.2
Advice/advocacy/information	6.9	6.9
Community transport	1.1	0.9
Other	5.1	3.6
Youth work/development	1.3	2.7
Volunteering development	0.4	0.2
Counselling/support	2.0	1.2
Playgroup/after schools	0.4	0.5
Search and rescue	0.2	0.1
Unclassified	4.0	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>4,678</b>

Table 9.1 demonstrates the distribution of responses to the organisation survey compared to the make up of the voluntary and community sector in relation to an organisation's primary purpose. The figures for the overall sector are based on the 2001 Voluntary and Community Sector Census<sup>4</sup> which asked organisations to rank their primary activities in terms of the most applicable to them. The return rate for each of the categories are in approximately the same proportions as the sector as a whole.

<sup>4</sup> NICVA was commissioned by the Voluntary and Community Unit to carry out a census of the voluntary and community sector in 2002 which looked at the operations of the organisation, its economic size and geographic remit.

**Table 9.2: Distribution by main beneficiary group (%)**

	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Overall Sector</b>
Children/Young people	29.4	17.3
Older people	8.5	5.0
People with disabilities/special needs	10.8	4.9
People with a particular ethnic or racial background	0.2	0.3
Other charities/voluntary bodies	1.4	1.2
Mental health	1.3	1.0
Parents	2.2	0.8
Drugs/substance/alcohol abuse (general)	1.1	0.4
Unemployed	2.0	1.3
Victim support	1.3	0.9
Women	5.2	2.7
Adult training	1.8	1.0
Gays/lesbians	0.0	0.2
Carers	1.3	0.4
General public	16.0	8.0
Volunteers	1.1	0.9
Other	7.7	3.7
Unclassified	8.8	50.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>4764</b>

Table 9.2 demonstrates the distribution for an organisations main beneficiary group in relation to the make up of the entire sector and returns to the organisation survey. As in Table 9.1 the return rate for each of the categories are fairly representative of the sector as a whole.

**Table 9.3: Distribution by income (%)**

	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Overall Sector</b>
<£1,000	16.9	15.8
£1,000-£10,000	22.7	22.9
£10,001-£100,000	34.1	31.3
£100,001-£250,000	13.1	12.3
£250,001-£500,000	5.3	5.2
£500,001-£1million	3.2	3.7
>£1million	4.7	4.8
Unknown	3.2	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>2,375</b>

A key component of this research has been the impact the economic size of the organisation has had on the role of management committees. Therefore, Table 9.3 is an important analysis in order to ascertain how representative the returns to the survey were in terms of the overall sector. As can be seen above (Table 9.3) the representativeness of the sample and subsequent returns is very strong across all income strata.

## 10. Conclusion

This report presents baseline information on the characteristics and governance role of voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland. In this section we draw out a number of important themes and issues, which have important implications for policy and practice.

The most basic message to emerge from this report is that 'size matters' and greatly affects the characteristics and capacity of management committees.

For example, the management committees of larger organisations tend to be more structured, making more use of sub-committees and tend to have greater numbers serving on their committees. They also appear to hold on to their management committee members for much longer than smaller groups. The management committees of smaller organisations tend to have more formalised processes in terms of the election of new committee members but are more inclined to have difficulties recruiting new committee members. The formal support available to committee members tends to increase with the size of the organisation. Larger organisations are more likely to provide a formal induction process and have a budget for committee member training and development.

It is, therefore, very unwise to make generalisations about the needs and characteristics of management committees. Many issues such as the activity of the organisation, its stage in terms of development and where it accesses funding from, must be considered. Although this report has focused on the economic size of the organisation, issues such as the primary purpose of the organisation and the main beneficiary group all have a bearing on how committees are structured and function. Advice and guidance given in many publications and training sessions treats management committees as if they are all the same and do not reflect the diversity among committees. This must be addressed.

***Objective 1: To gather information on the current characteristics of volunteers on voluntary management committees, for example, age, gender, disability and other socio-economic characteristics.***

The question of diversity in relation to the demographic make-up of committees is an important issue and one that was very clearly articulated throughout this research. The research found that 66% of individuals serving on management committees are aged 45 and over but only 3% are under 25 years old. Although the gender composition of committees is fairly even overall, there is a very large disparity between males and females when it comes to certain roles on committees. These differences, allied with the general issue of finding people to commit time to serving on a committee must be given consideration for the future.

Organisations of all sizes, need to consider how they can broaden the recruitment net for new committee members, for example by making more use of internal and external advertising and perhaps by targeting under-represented groups. Where organisations elect their committee members, they may need to be more proactive in encouraging people with different skills and backgrounds to consider standing for election.

Generally the research found that, in most organisations, there is a high degree of informality with regard to committee selection and induction, as well as committee development and role definition. This may be detrimental insofar as it sustains the existence of opinions and expectations, from both committee and

staff members, of what the committee is about. This may be as a consequence of the relatively low provision of formal induction processes on committees.

***Objective 2: To examine the involvement, satisfaction levels and attitudes towards volunteering of voluntary management committees.***

In terms of the level of satisfaction, it appears that committee members are more altruistically motivated than other formal volunteers and are much more concerned with the development of the organisation and meeting the needs of their community. The reasons for dissatisfaction are less distinct between committee members and volunteers in general. Both cite a lack of time and the inability to do everything that is needed fairly highly in terms of areas from which they derive dissatisfaction.

Certain individuals also articulated their frustration at a lack of recognition in relation to the role they fulfil, either by the organisation or by government and statutory agencies. As mentioned before the role these individuals play in the voluntary and community sector cannot be understated.

***Objective 3: To identify how voluntary management committees perceive their governance role, including organisational policy/practice.***

***Objective 4: To identify significant issues and challenges relating to governance faced by voluntary management committees.***

As outlined in Section 7 attempting to disentangle the governance relationship that exists between a committee and the organisation is a difficult one. Nevertheless the analysis of the attitudinal items relating to the various theoretical models did provide some insight into how management committees interact with management and each other. As has been mentioned previously the economic size of the organisation and consequently the stage in its development, is a determining factor in how these relationships operate.

As the size of the organisation increases the expectations placed on individual committee members to fulfil a number of contradictory roles increases. This creates tension and the potential for conflict so it is therefore up to the management and individual committee members to work together to ensure a balance between such opposing expectations can be reached.

Despite what this research has shown the inevitable truth about the governance of organisations is one that is shaped by the internal and external environment. Ultimately the governance of organisations is multi-faceted, the concepts of 'accountability' and 'communication' as well as 'negotiation' and 'interdependence' all dictate how relationships work.

**Objective 5: To identify the collective training and support needs of voluntary management committees.**

**Objective 6: To assess the quality and quantity of and satisfaction with, existing training and support provision accessed by voluntary management committees as a group.**

The prime responsibility for ensuring that committee members receive the advice, support, resources and training that they need rests with the organisation of which they are a committee member. It is also the responsibility of training providers and networks and resource bodies which operate in the voluntary and community sector to ensure they work in partnership wherever possible to share experience and good practice and, perhaps most importantly, to avoid unnecessary duplication. One particular area that received considerable support during this research was the concept of an updateable handbook on good practice and resources that are available to management committees. However, experience has shown that many good handbooks have been produced in the past but that not everyone has been aware of their existence.

In relation to actual training provision the research underlined the difficulties faced by small organisations, particularly those unaffiliated to larger network or umbrella organisations, when attempting to access training and support. Training and support provision to such organisations was identified as sporadic, unsuitable and inaccessible. Despite the existence of the Volunteer Development Agency's *Signposting Directory*, which signposts organisations and groups to training, support and information, the difficulty appears to be around raising the level of awareness surrounding such directories or publications. General awareness of this and other useful services was found to be low.

Clearly resources are an issue in the voluntary and community sector and this is also relevant for the development and support of management committees. This raises two important questions that must be considered. Should more resources be devoted to supporting the committees of organisations and in particular the committees of smaller organisations? And if so, how can this be best achieved to ensure that training and support has a lasting impact?

As stated previously 55% of the sector's financial resources rest with only 7% of organisations and it could be argued that organisations in the medium to large income strata need to be well supported because of the financial resources they control. On the other hand it could be argued that 70% of organisations have an income of less than £100,000 and that this is where the vast majority of individuals make their contribution to management committees. This poses an important dilemma for policy makers and support organisations about where to target resources to support committees and their members.

***Objective 7: To identify areas of weak provision/gaps in terms of the training infrastructure for voluntary management committees.***

Findings from previous research shows there are at least 70 organisations that provide a wide range of structured training courses targeted at voluntary management committees (NICVA). From the analysis carried out into the type of courses that are provided in Northern Ireland, committee skills and strategic planning are the most predominant courses offered in terms of numbers.

Throughout the course of the research, however, it became apparent that there were difficulties on the ground that resulted in a fragmented, funding driven, ad hoc approach to training and support. This research and other key documents would indicate that it is essential at this stage in the life cycle of the sector that a more strategic and focused approach is developed to ensure that the commitment of individuals towards governing organisations is acknowledged, properly supported, and continued.

In conclusion, this research reflects a very diverse picture of the state of voluntary management committees in Northern Ireland. It goes without saying that the majority of individuals serving on these committees make a vast contribution to society in Northern Ireland. This is all the more remarkable considering they receive little or no recognition for the contribution they make. This raises a serious point about just how long can organisations rely on this contribution. Volunteerism is what makes the voluntary and community sector unique and the fact that organisations can rely upon this form of independent governance must not be undervalued. It is therefore imperative that support and advice are available at the point of need to allow these individuals to function as effectively as possible. Otherwise, the heart of the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland may not beat as strongly as it should.

## 11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research a number of recommendations have been made which apply specifically to the Volunteer Development Agency, and to wider policy makers, funders, training providers and the voluntary and community sector as a whole. Therefore the recommendations has been organised into two sections.

### 11.1 Recommendations for the Volunteer Development Agency

In relation to the Volunteer Development Agency and any future policy development this report recommends the following:

***Recommendation 1: Raise awareness of the valuable role undertaken by voluntary management committees.***

*A Northern Ireland wide awareness campaign to promote the valuable contribution made by management committee members should be developed.*

The Volunteer Development Agency, should in conjunction with the Voluntary and Community Unit, Department for Social Development, co-ordinate an awareness campaign highlighting the invaluable contribution committees make. Some of the following areas should be considered for inclusion in such a scheme:

- Give recognition to the public service undertaken by management committee members.
- Highlight the immense contribution that management committee members make to society.
- Educate the general public about the role individuals play in directing and overseeing the management of voluntary and community organisations.
- Highlight the fact that, particularly for younger people, participation on a voluntary management committee can impart useful skills that can be useful for career development.

Such a public awareness campaign should be coupled with complimentary work aimed at organisations and committee members. It is recommended that the Volunteer Development Agency take a lead in coordinating large network organisations such as NICVA, Rural Community Network and Community Change in getting the following messages across:

- Increase awareness that serving on a management committee is important and a position of trust, and deserves appropriate training and support.
- Encourage organisations to provide proper support to their management committee, recognising that their contribution can be central to the success of the organisation in achieving its aims.

***Recommendation 2: More effort should be made to attracting new and more diverse committee members.***

*A number of initiatives should be developed which are designed to help organisations, particularly smaller ones, attract new and more diverse committee members.*

For example, the Volunteer Development Agency acting as the coordinating body, in conjunction with other relevant bodies in the voluntary and community sector, should:

- Support and develop innovative schemes that attempt to attract more individuals from under-represented groups such as younger people, disabled individuals and ethnic minorities to become more involved.
- Develop a scheme in conjunction with the Volunteer Bureaux network and other local networks that will provide a brokerage service that will help match the skills of potential management committee members with the needs of voluntary and community organisations.

***Recommendation 3: Greater focus should be placed on the co-ordination and promotion amongst key networks/organisations of their existing services for management committees.***

*The Volunteer Development Agency should take the lead with regard to the co-ordination and promotion of such an approach.*

It is recommended that a coordinated approach to identifying and accessing materials and resources for management committees should be developed. The Volunteer Development Agency should co-ordinate this work in order to ensure that the diversity of such materials and the current infrastructure that is in place are duly included. In order to meet many of these training and support issues this research recommends that the Volunteer Development Agency should consider the following actions:

- Training and support provision must be coordinated and delivered at the point of need. To avoid duplication of training resources in the voluntary and community sector, a more coordinated and strategic approach to the delivery of training and support should be developed.
- Maintain a database of management committee support, in order to co-ordinate provision, identify gaps in provision and act as a catalyst to stimulate effective provision and support.
- Provide an information point, giving information and advice on management committee issues such as governance and training and support, and signposting callers to other sources of support where appropriate.
- Examine the feasibility of establishing local networks of committee members and a network for providers of training and support services. Dialogue of this nature will help avoid duplication of services as well as provide an opportunity to share experiences and problems from the perspective of the individual as well as from the organisation.

Obviously if committee members are encouraged to take up training and support then such training and support will need to be provided at a local level. At the moment provision is very patchy and there seems little co-ordination of what is available. There is obviously greater scope for the Volunteer Development Agency to work more closely with local support organisations to improve provision. In addition to this the staff of voluntary and community organisations also play an important role in the development of committees and more attention needs to be paid to how they can be supported in this role.



## 11.2 Recommendations for policy makers, funders, training providers and the voluntary and community sector

***Recommendation 4: There must be greater recognition of the diverse role and capacity that exists across management committees depending upon economic size and stage in the development of the organisation.***

*Policy makers, training providers and funders need to ensure policy, advice and guidance recognise these differences and are more clearly targeted.*

This recommendation is a key consideration for all those actively engaged with voluntary management committees and should underpin any future policy development.

- Policy makers and funders must recognise the impact that their requirements have on management committees which do not necessarily have the capacity or expertise to effectively deal with such requests.
- Policy makers, training providers and funders need to ensure that support and guidance materials are appropriate for the diverse range of organisations, taking into account different economic size and stage of development.

***Recommendation 5: Clarification is required surrounding responsibility for setting standards of practice and the regulation of management committees.***

*Under the current Scoping Study of Charity Law in Northern Ireland and any subsequent consultation the role of the Charities Branch (Voluntary and Community Unit, DSD) in relation to setting standards of practice should be clarified.*

It is recommended by this report that the Charities Branch (*Voluntary and Community Unit, DSD*), should play an increased and more proactive role in the promotion of good practice. This promotion of good practice, in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, should include the following areas as identified by this research:

- In consultation with the voluntary and community sector set standards of good practice for management committees;
- Promote the need for effective governance of voluntary and community organisations, to both staff and committee members;
- Encourage organisations to have more open committee member recruitment procedures in order to draw committee members from a wider group of society.

***Recommendation 6: Information surrounding good practice for management committees should be made more accessible in the form of an updateable handbook.***

*The Volunteer Development Agency, Charities Branch (DSD) and other key support organisations in the voluntary and community sector should coordinate a review of good practice relating to voluntary management committees.*

A key finding from the research was that an updateable handbook on good practice was seen as important development for individuals serving on management committees. In relation to any such handbook this report recommends the following:

- Any handbook should be designed for a number of different audiences, ranging from those small organisations early in their development, to more general versions encompassing information that is of relevance to larger organisations.
- It should be tailored to allow for different legal structures used by organisations.
- Any guidance in this form should be made available in accessible ways and promoted as widely and as frequently as possible throughout all organisations in the voluntary and community sector.
- The handbook should also be promoted in a way that it reaches committee members as well as staff of voluntary and community organisations.

## 12. Methodology

In total 558 organisation questionnaires were returned, which from a sample of 1,600 gave a **return rate of 34.9%**.

In relation to the management committee questionnaires, a total of 1,094 were returned, giving a **return rate of 6.8%** from a sample of 16,000.

The population chosen from this study consisted of voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland. Organisations were drawn from NICVA's SectorNet database where basic information on organisations' income, primary purpose, beneficiaries and method of operation is held. The sample was constructed using a multistage cluster sample based upon economic size in relation to geographic location. The sample was stratified based on seven main income bands and District Council areas. The choice for the use of the income bands allows for ease of comparison with documents such as *State of the Sector III* (NICVA, 2002).

Table 12.1 below shows a breakdown of the voluntary and community sector by income and the sample and subsequent return rates for this survey. Table 12.2 shows the distribution of the sample in relation to geographic location and the survey return rates in relation to the sector as a whole.

**Table 12.1: Return rates by income**

Income Strata	Returned	%	Total Sample	%	Return rate %
<£1,000	88	15.8	182	11.4	48.4
£1,000-£10,000	116	20.8	373	23.3	31.1
£10,001-£100,000	189	33.9	538	33.6	35.1
£100,001-£250,000	76	13.6	227	14.2	33.5
£250,001-£500,000	32	5.7	81	5.1	39.5
£500,001-£1million	20	3.6	65	4.1	30.8
>£1million	30	5.4	125	7.8	24.0
Unknown	7	1.3	9	0.6	77.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34.9</b>

**Table 12.2: Return rates by district council**

	Survey %	Sector %	Return Rate %
Antrim	2.4	1.6	17.3
Ards	1.9	1.6	13.3
Armagh	3.9	5.5	8.0
Ballymena	3.0	2.8	12.0
Ballymoney	1.5	1.0	16.0
Banbridge	1.1	2.9	4.3
Belfast	26.5	23.8	12.5
Carrickfergus	1.3	1.1	13.2
Castlereagh	3.3	2.5	15.3
Coleraine	5.2	5.1	11.4
Cookstown	1.9	3.2	6.6
Craigavon	4.5	4.7	10.7

Derry	8.3	7.9	11.9
Down	3.2	2.7	13.1
Dungannon	3.3	4.5	8.3
Fermanagh	2.8	5.0	6.2
Larne	2.6	0.8	35.9
Limavady	2.6	1.2	25.0
Lisburn	3.2	3.3	10.8
Magherafelt	1.7	1.5	12.5
Moyle	1.3	0.8	18.9
Newry and Mourne	3.9	4.2	10.6
Newtownabbey	1.5	1.8	9.5
North Down	4.6	4.3	12.2
Omagh	2.6	4.0	7.4
Strabane	2.0	2.3	10.2

### 12.1 The survey

A random sample of 1,600 organisations was selected from each of the income bands dependent upon geographic location. Each of the 1,600 organisations was sent two self-administered questionnaires, one relating to the organisation and the other for individual committee members.

As mentioned above a two-stage methodology was adopted for the administration of the survey component of this study. Using the contact details held on SectorNet 1,600 organisations were sent the organisational survey which provides the figures for the baseline of voluntary management committees. The organisational survey examined basic demographic details of the voluntary management committee from which the estimates of the total number and profile of voluntary management committees has been developed (see Section 2). The organisational survey also investigated the basic structure and procedures for the election of voluntary management committees and issues surrounding recruitment of new committee members and issues surrounding governance and good practice.

The survey was accompanied with a covering letter asking that the questionnaire be passed on to the person who serviced the management committee (for completion).

The next stage in the methodology was to request that the person who services the committee forward a series of questionnaires to the individual committee members. These questionnaires (a total of 16,000 were circulated) asked basic attitudinal questions relating to the motivation and experiences of training and support an individual committee member may have had.

The overall objective for the organisational survey was to obtain useable results from 400 organisations and for the management committee survey was to obtain 1,000 returns. In the end a total of 558 organisation surveys were returned, whilst 1,094 management committee questionnaires were received. This was seen as both a large enough number to present a broad picture of the attitude of individual committee members and provide a sound statistical basis for the estimation of the overall number involved in management committees.

### 12.2 The focus groups

Following the initial data collection process a series of focus groups were convened to provide a greater depth of analysis of attitudes towards governance,

training and support, and volunteering. Focus groups are used widely in social research as a form of group interviewing with the key characteristic that distinguishes them being the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants. The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon participants' attitudes, feelings and beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that would not be feasible using other methods (Gibbs, 2002). Focus groups are particularly useful when there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers of professionals, when the everyday use of language and culture or particular groups is of interest, and when one wants to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Morgan and Krueger, 1993). A major benefit of focus groups is that they elicit information in a way which allows researchers to find out why an issue is salient (Morgan, 1988) and, as a result, the gap between what people say and what they do can be better understood (Lankshear, 1993). The benefits to participants of focus group research should not be underestimated either. It has been shown that the opportunity to be involved in decision making processes (Race et al 1994), to be valued as experts, and to be given the chance to work collaboratively with researchers can be empowering for many participants (Goss and Leinbach, 1996).

The focus groups were scheduled to take place in either the evening or over a lunch time. These focus groups consisted of no more than ten committee members who have put themselves forward from the management committee questionnaire. The focus groups were also advertised across the sector and were open to any member of a voluntary management committee (achieved via *NICVA News*, *SCOPE*, *Newslink*, regional and sub-regional networks).

The focus groups allowed for a greater exploration into the main issues arising from the management committee questionnaire and the initial discussion group sessions. This was particularly the case for issues surrounding training and support for management committees which need to be viewed from a group rather than an individual's perspective. Table 11.3 provides details of the focus group schedule.

**Table 12.3: Focus groups**

<b>Town/Venue</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Attending</b>
<b>Strabane</b> , Strabane Enterprise Agency	1	6
<b>Derry</b> , The Junction	4	0
<b>Coleraine</b> , Focus on Family	5	3
<b>Omagh</b> , Omagh Business Complex	3	1
<b>Armagh</b> , Armagh Confederation of Voluntary Groups	4	3
<b>Cookstown</b> , Rural Community Network	5	3
<b>Newry</b> , Newry Confederation of Community Groups	5	1
<b>Enniskillen</b> , Intec Centre	3	1
<b>Newtownards</b> , Ards Development Bureau	4	1
<b>Portadown</b> , Portadown Library	5	1
<b>Ballymena</b> , Ballymena Community Forum	2	1
<b>Lisburn</b> , Civic Centre, Lisburn City Council	3	2
<b>Bangor</b> , North Down Community Network	3	0
<b>Downpatrick</b> , Down District Partnership Board	4	3
<b>Newtownabbey</b> , Ballyearl Leisure Centre	5	0
<b>Belfast</b> , Volunteer Development Agency	3	3
<b>Belfast</b> , NICVA	9	6

In relation to the questions asked at each of the focus groups specific themes were covered using a semi-structured schedule that was developed in order to

allow the facilitator to examine areas that may otherwise have been missed. The themes covered in the focus groups are as follows:

- Experience of volunteering;
- Governance issues;
- Significant issues and challenges;
- Training and support needs;
- Other issues particular to group/geography.

Despite the wide publicity devoted to the focus groups the overall turnout was disappointing. In total 38 individuals turned up to all the focus groups. The expected average turnout for the focus groups was 170 (10 per session) which results in a participation rate of 3.6%. Despite the poor turnout for the sessions, those who did participate contributed some useful insights to the research and some interesting personal perspectives that would not have emerged through the survey alone. The small numbers attending also meant that a greater depth of discussion was possible allowing participants to explore widely the topics and themes. Relevant examples of these views and insights are used throughout the report to illustrate the personal experiences of voluntary management committee members and support particular findings from the survey.

### **12.3 Estimates**

In order to estimate the total number of voluntary management committee places that exist in the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector, a number of calculations were applied to the data. As samples are unlikely to be perfect reflections of the population, we cannot simply use the sample mean to work out the actual mean for the entire voluntary and community sector. Therefore any estimates produced for this study are based on a weighted calculation based on the level of returns for each income strata, thereby allowing variances in the different strata taken into account in the final overall estimated total.

One note of caution must be expressed concerning the production of estimates for the voluntary and community sector. Because no central register of voluntary and community organisations exists, the overall population is an unknown quantity. Therefore estimates of this nature relating to the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland have always been surrounded by some degree of conjecture. In essence the figures used for the overall population of the sector are estimates themselves but do represent the most up to date and current information on organisations which are active in the sector.

However, this is a dilemma that researchers in the voluntary and community sector must face but due to financial and time constraints it was necessary to proceed with sample units which are already held on SectorNet.

There are a number of caveats attached to the estimation of the overall population of the voluntary and community sector, the most notable being the removal from the overall population count of organisations which are part of UK-wide, all-Ireland or international organisations. This disaggregation of the overall population was carried out as no figures exist as to the geographic remit of their respective committees, ie large charities often have a single UK committee which has a representative from Northern Ireland. However, this procedure only represents 12% of the overall population.

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## List of respondent organisations

Abode Housing Assoc	Belfast Travellers Education & Development Group
ACCORD NI	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
Ace Ventures	Benedy Community Association
ACOVO	Beragh Care & Development Association Ltd
Action Cancer Belfast	Big Telly Theatre Co
Action Mental Health Belfast	Blackie Community Groups Association
Aghadowey Badminton & Youth Club	Blackmountain Equestrian Centre
Aghalee Village Hall Management Committee	Blind Centre For NI
Ahoghill Development Committee	Boys Brigade Belfast Battalion
All Saints Youth Club	Braniel Community Forum
Altram	Braniel Youth Club
Alzheimers Society Derry	British Red Cross Society
An Creagan Visitors Centre	Brook Belfast
Anahilt Community Assoc	Brookeborough Historical Society
Antrim People First	Broughshane & District Community Assoc Ltd
Antrim Reminiscence Group	Bryson House
Antrim Towns Development Company Ltd	Bushmills & District Community Association
Arbour House Project	Busy Bees Playgroup
Ark Family Centre	CAB Bangor
Ark Housing Association Northern Ireland Ltd	CAB Lisburn
Armagh & District Floral Arts Society	CAB Newtownabbey
Armagh Athletic Club	CAB Newtownards
Armagh Confederation Of Voluntary Groups	Cairde Bhunscoil Phobal Feirste
Armagh Unemployed Group	Cairncastle Playgroup
ArtAbility NI Ltd	Callanbridge Legarhill Residents Association.
Arthritis Care Dungannon	Camphill Communities Trust NI
Arthritis Care North West Branch	Camphill Community Trust Clanabogan
ASBAH Ballymena Branch	Cane & Able Club For The Visually Impaired
ASBAH Belfast & District	Care for Cancer Omagh
Ashfield Riding For The Disabled Group	Carlisle House
Association for Residential Care	Carrickfergus Childminders Drop In Group
ATLAS	Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development Group
Atticall Childcare Limited	Carrickfergus Women's Forum
Ballinderry Bridge Credit Union Ltd	Cashel Community Development Association
Ballnamore & District Community Association	Castle Community Assoc
Ballybeen Women's Centre	Castlereagh Standing Conference Of Women's Organisations
Ballymena Club For The Hard Of Hearing	Castlerock Senior Citizens Wednesday Club
Ballymena Community Forum	Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd
Ballymena Over Fifties Forum	Cathedral Youth Club
Ballymoney Women's Institute	CAUSE for Mental Health
Ballymore Open Centre	Causeway Area Peace Network
Banbridge Stroke Club	Causeway University of the Third Age (U3A)
Banbridge Youth Centre	Causeway Volunteer Bureau
Bangor & North Down Camera Club	Centre Of Creative Energy
Bangor Credit Union	Christian Aid Dungannon
Bangor West Nursery Playgoup	Chrysalis Women's Centre
Bannagh Women's Group	Church Of The Nazarene Playgroup
Bannside Development Centre	Churches Training Company
Beechmount Community Project	Churchill & Tully Historical Society
Bees Nees Early Years Centre	City of Belfast Youth Orchestra
Belfast Activity Centre	City West Action Ltd t/a City Wide Action
Belfast Association For The Blind	Claudy Rural Development
Belfast Carers Centre	Clogher Development Association
Belfast Cognitive Therapy Centre	Coalisland & District Development Association Ltd
Belfast Common Purpose	Comchoiste Na Gaeilge (Aontrom Thuaidh)
Belfast Community Housing Association Ltd	Comhairle na Gaelscolaiochta

Community Change	Drumachose Cross Community Association Ltd
Community Development for Positive Ageing	Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre
Community Development Services Ltd East Antrim	Drumaroad Community Hall Steering Group
Community Dialogue Armagh	Drumellen Resource Centre
Community Empowerment Larne	Drumreagh Crescent Residents Association
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	Dundonald Credit Union Ltd
Community Games Derry	Dungannon Carers Group
Community Network Portadown	Dungiven Community Resource Centre
Community Recreational Arts in Coalisland (CRAIC)	Dungiven Retirement Association
Community Work Education & Training Network	Dungoyne Veterans Ballybeen
Compass Advocacy Group Ballymoney	Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre Cliftonville
Compassionate Friends	Dunsford Arts & Crafts Group
Conway Education Centre	Dyslexia & Dyspraxia Support
Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network	Eating Disorders Support Group
Cookstown Benefit Uptake Campaign	Eco Seeds Ltd
Coolcreaghy Community Assoc	Ederney Community Development Trust
Coral Crescent Housing Association Ltd	Edward Street Hostel
Corkley Development Association	Eglinton Community Association/Ltd
Corpus Christi Services	Empire Community Centre
Corrymeela Community Ballycastle	Empire Residents Association
County Armagh Wildlife Society	Euro Children
Craigavon & District Vietnamese Club	EXTERN
Craigavon Independent Advice Centre	Families In Agriculture & Rural Management Support Group
Craigavon Tinnitus Self-Help Group	Family Caring Centre
Creggan Community Care	Family Information Group
Creggan Early Years Network	Federation of Women's Institute for Northern Ireland
Creggan Hall Management Committee	Feeny Community Association
Creggan Pre-School & Training Association	Feis Committee Coalisland
Croft Community	Feis Fhearmanach
Crossfire Trust	Fermanagh CAB
Crossgar War Memorial Hall Committee	Fermanagh Shadow Youth Council
Crumlin Community Playgroup	Fermanagh Voluntary Association Of The Disabled
CRUSE Bereavement Care Bannside	Fermanagh Women's Network
CRUSE Bereavement Care Belfast	Fibromyalgia Support Group NI
Culloville Community Association	First Coleraine Wednesday Club
Culturlann MacAdam O Flaich	First Key Northern Ireland
Cumann Gaelach Chnoc na Ros Doire	Fitness NI
Cumann Na Meirleach Ard Mhacha Theas	Focus Forums
Cunamh	Fold Housing Trust
Curryneirin Community House	Foreglen Community Association
Cushendall Development Group	Forum For Action On Substance Abuse
Delphic Players Drama Group	Foyle Connect Rural Transport Scheme
Derry Childrens Commission	Foyle Cruse Bereavement Care
Derry Healthy Cities Project	Foyle Women's Information Network
Derry Well Women Centre	Friends & Carers Engaged
Derrychara Community Association	Friends Of The Park Association
Derryinver Community Assoc	Friendship Centre
Disability Action NI	Gaelscoil an Lonnain
Dismas House Ltd	Galliagh Community Development Group
Dixon Hall Management Committee	Garden Reach
Donacloney Housing Association	Garvagh Historical Society
Donaghmore Historical Society	Gateway Club Coleraine
Donemana Community Playgroup	Gelvin Community Association Ltd
Downpatrick & District/Listowel Linkage Committee	Girlguiding Ulster
Dromara Village & District Community Assoc	Girona Orchestra
Dromore & District Local Historical Group	Glen Rural Community Group Armoy
Dromore Diocesan Youth Commission	Glenanne Loughgilly & Mountnorris Community Development Assoc

Glenarm Village Committee	Jonesborough & Dromintee Community Enterprise Ltd
Glenavy Community Support Group	Keady Community Playgroup
Glenlough Group	Kesh Development Assoc Charitable Trust
Glenluce Quality Caring Centre	Kidzone Playgroup
Glenravel Community After Schools Project	Kilcooley Central Residents Association
Glenravel Environmental Improvement Association	Kilcooley Women's Education & Development Group
Glenshane Care Association	Kilcranny House
Glenshane Community Development Ltd	Kilcronaghan Community Association
Glenside & Iona House	Killycurragh Regeneration Group
Glenside & Iona House Com PFA	Kilrea Ageing Well Club
Glenullin Youth Club	Kilrea Reconciliation Group
Goal Line Youth Trust Portadown	Kilskeery Community Association
Gortnaghey Community Association	Knockloughrim Community Development Assoc
Gracehill/Galgorm Community Association	Largy Community Development Association
Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association	Larne & District Citizens Advice Bureau
Greenaway Women's Centre	Larne & District Housing Assoc
Greyabbey Senior Citizens Monday Club	Larne Community Care Centre
Greyabbey Village Hall Management Committee	Larne Community Development Project
Greysteel Community Enterprises	Laurencetown/Lenaderg/Tullylish Community Association
Guildhall Press	Law Centre NI Belfast
Hammer Community Complex	Learmount Community Development Group Ltd
Hampsey School of Traditional Music & Harp	Lenadoon Women's Group
Happitots Playgroup	Life NI
Hard of Hearing Coleraine District	Lifestart Templemore
HARPS	Ligoniel Association For Play Development
Harpurs Hill Early Years Project	Ligoniel Community Enterprises Ltd
Haven Christian Trust Templepatrick	Ligoniel Improvement Association
Headway Ballymena	Limavady Volunteer Bureau
Hearth Housing Association	Lisburn Prisoners Support Project
Hearth Revolving Fund	Lisburn Road Community Forum
Help & Advice With Victims Every Needs	Lislea Youth & Community Association
Highfield Residents Association	Lisnacree Community Association
Hillcrest House	Little Friends Playgroup
Holy Trinity Friendship Club	Little Villagers Playgroup & After School Parent & Toddler Group
Home Accident Prevention Committee - Londonderry	Loughgiel Community Association Ltd
Home Accident Prevention NI	Loughgiel Farmers Development Group
Home Mission Society	Loughinisland Playgroup
Home-Start Carrickfergus	Lower Andersonstown Mothers Support Group
Home-Start Causeway	Lower Falls New Start Project
Home-Start Down District	Lower North Belfast Community Council
Home-Start East Belfast	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
Home-Start North Down	Lurgan Carers Association
Home-Start South Belfast	Lurgan Community Festival
Horn Drive Drop In Centre	MacMillan Cancer Relief
Hospital Radio Craigavon	Manxie Club
Housing Association Dungannon	Markethill District Enterprise Ltd
Housing Rights Service	Marrowbone Community Assoc
Hysterectomy & Endometriosis Support Group	Massford Project Association
Inner City Trust	McCracken Memorial Presbyterian Church Outreach To Africa
International Tree Foundation	Meadow & Armagh Road Community Association
Ionad Uibh Eachach	Melmount Community Forum
Irish Amateur Rowing Union Ulster Branch	Middletown Friendly Club
Irish Ladies Golf Union Northern District	Mid-Ulster Community Services
Irish Street Community Centre	Mitre Trust Appeal
Irish Worldwide Rescue Team	Money more Community Group
ITTA Ulster Branch or Table Tennis Ulster	
Jennys Youth Projects	
Jigsaw Northern Ireland	

Moneyneena & District Development Group	Orchard County Vintage Vehicle Club
Moree Community Assoc.	Oxfam NI
Mornington Community Project Limited	PAPA Coleraine
Mourne Youth Community Association	PAPA NI
Moy Cosy Club	Parents Advice Centre NI
MS Society Coleraine	Peace & Reconciliation Group
MS Society Dungannon	Peninsula Community Transport
Muinterevlin Historical Society	Peter Thompson Hall Management Committee
Mulholland After Care Services	PHAB NI Inclusion Matters
Musicians of Antrim District Development (MADD)	Pioneer Total Abstinence Association
N I Federation of Sub Aqua Clubs	Playhouse Community Arts Centre
Newcastle Community Development Association	Portadown Deaf and Friendly Club
Newcastle Parent & Toddler Group	Portglenone Thursday Senior Citizens Bowling Club
Newry & Mourne Carers Association	Poultry Industry Education Trust
Newry Confederation Of Community Groups	Praxis Care Group Belfast
Newry/Mourne Leader	Prison Arts Foundation
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Forum	Prisoners Enterprise Project South Belfast
Newtownards Road Women's Group Ltd	Proteus NI Ltd
Newtownstewart & District Ulster Scots Assoc	Pushkin Prizes Trust
NI 2000	Randalstown ARCHES Association Ltd
NI Chest Heart & Stroke Association	Rathcoole Churches Community Group
NI Childminding Assoc	Rathfriland Historical Society
NI Council For Ethnic Minorities	Rathfriland Women's Institute
NI Council For Integrated Education	RDA NI Region Minnowburn Group
NI Deer Society	Reconciliation Education & Community Training
NI Environment Link	Regeneration Of South Armagh
NI Gymnastic Association Trampoline Tech Com	Rehability
NI Hospice Ballymena Support Group	Relate NI
NI Housing Association Charitable Trust	Rethink
NI Mixed Marriage Association	Richhill Morning Out Group
NI Transplant Association	Riding For The Disabled Association Moy
NI Volunteer Development Agency	Riding for the Disabled Association NI Regional
NI Women's Aid Federation	Riding For The Disabled Coleraine District
NIACRO Belfast	Road Safety Council of Northern Ireland
NICHS	Roe Valley Rural Transport
North & West Housing Ltd	Rosemount House
North Antrim Community Network	Royal British Legion Belfast Women's Section
North Belfast Communities in Action Project	Samaritans Belfast
North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum	Sandes Soldiers & Airmens Centres
North Down & Ards U3A Club	Sandholes & Tullyhogue Development Group
North Down Home Accident Prevention Committee	Save the Children Fund Omagh
North West Branch Diabetes UK	Scarva & District Women's Group
North West M E Support Group	Scoil Na Fuisseige
North West Mountain Rescue Team	Seagoe Youth Group
Northern Counties Development Association	Seawaves Community Social Club
Northern Ireland Community Addiction Service	Shankill Women's Centre
Northern Ireland Crime Prevention Panel	Shelter NI
Northern Ireland Institute for the Disabled	Shopmobility Bangor
Northern Ireland Volleyball Association	Shopmobility Belfast
Northern Visions	Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust
O Gras Youth Club	Skeoge House Women's Group
Oakleaf Rural Community Network	Slatequarry Community Association
Oasis Caring in Action East Belfast Good Neighbour Project	Society of St Vincent De Paul Kilrea
Off The Street Community Youth Initiative	Somme Heritage Centre
Old Library Trust	South Armagh Rural Women's Network
Old Mill Senior Citizens Club	South Armagh Victims Encouraging Recognition/NAVER
Omagh Boys & Girls Club	South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association
One World Centre NI	Southcity Resource & Development Centre

Special Olympics NI	Threshold
Speedwell Trust	Toome Industrial Development & Leisure
Springboard Opportunities	Top of the Hill 2010
Springfield Inter Community Development Project	Training For Women Network Ltd
St Bridgets Women's Group	Tuberous Sclerosis Association
St John Ambulance NI	Tudor Renewal Area Residents Assoc
St Marys Youth Club & Community Association	Tullyally Community Resource Centre
St Patricks Senior Citizens Club	Twaddell/Woodvale Residents Association
Starting Point	Twisel Lodge
STEER Mental Health	Ulster Clans Trust
Stepping Stones Creche	Ulster Wildlife Trust Crossgar
Stepping Stones Lisburn	Ulster Women's Hockey Union
Strabane & District Multiple Sclerosis Group	Understanding Conflict Trust
Strabane & District Women Together	Upperlands Community Development Ltd
Strabane Association For Temporary Homeless	USEL
Strabane Community Music Studio	Valley Fold Tenants Association
Strangford & District Playgroup Association & After School Club	Victims and Survivors Trust
Strathfoyle Women's Activity Group Ltd	Vincent's Centre
Streetbeat Youth Project	Vine Centre Limited
Support Drugs Awareness Initiative	VOICE Of Young People In Care Ltd
Sure Start Newtownabbey	Voluntary Service Lisburn
Talking News Coleraine & District	Waringstown Ulster in Bloom Committee
Talking Newspaper Association East Belfast	Waterside Women's Centre
Talking Newspaper Association Mid-Ulster	Welcome Trust Ltd
Talking Newspaper Association Newtownards - Sound Around Ards	Westside Project
Talking Newspaper Association NI	Whiteabbey Community Group
Talnoy Avian Care Trust	Whitehead Community Association
Tamlaght O'Crilly Local History Group	Whitehead Playgroup
Tandragee Development Initiative Ltd	Willowbank Ltd
Tar Anall	Women In Touch
The BYTES Project	Women's Aid North Down & Ards
The Covenanter Residential Association Ltd	Women's Forum NI
The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group	Women's Support Network
The Link Family & Community Centre	Woodlands Social Club For The Visually Impaired
The Royal Lifesaving Society UK - Ulster Branch	YMCA Larne
The SPRING Trust Limited	YMCA Lurgan
Think Again Project	Youth Initiatives
Thomas Doran Training Centre	Zero-8-Teen