



Volunteering in Northern Ireland Research Report

Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey

SEPTEMBER /OCTOBER 2015

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Reader Information

Purpose	This publication presents the results of the Volunteering Module in the September/October 2015 Omnibus Survey. The main themes explored in the survey include levels of volunteering, support for volunteers and reasons for not undertaking volunteering roles.
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Introduction

As part of the Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland, the Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) of the Department for Social Development (DSD) commissioned a project to monitor volunteering levels throughout NI. The primary data used for this purpose was derived from a series of questions that were included within the Northern Ireland Omnibus survey. The questions were included within the Omnibus for the first time in 2013 and were repeated in 2014.

This series of questions was included again in the September / October 2015 Omnibus survey. This report outlines the findings of the latest research.

NI Omnibus Survey

An omnibus survey is a face-to face survey that contains questions about a wide range of issues. The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is carried out by the Central Survey Unit (CSU) of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on a regular basis and is designed to provide a snapshot of the lifestyle and views of the people of Northern Ireland.

The content of the Omnibus questionnaire is agreed in consultation with the customers for the survey. Some sections will appear in every survey, for example sections on household structure, housing and employment. Other bespoke sections/questions will appear in the survey only occasionally, depending on what issues are topical at the time.

A systematic random sample of 2,200 addresses is drawn from a Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. This is the most up-to-date listing of private households and is made available to NISRA for research purposes. People living in institutions (e.g. residential homes) are excluded.

The survey interviewers list all members of the household, and one person aged 16 or over is randomly selected to complete the interview.

The fieldwork was spread over two months. CSU run between 4 and 6 Omnibus surveys each year (usually January, April, May and September and occasionally March and October).

Eight questions regarding volunteering were designed by VCU in conjunction with the DSD Analytical Services Unit (ASU) and were first included within the September 2013 Omnibus survey. These questions have been repeated at annual intervals since then.

This report details the findings from the 2015 survey and provides comparisons with the previous years where appropriate. It is intended that the questions will be repeated in 2016.

Further information on the Omnibus is detailed in Annex A. The response rate for this year's survey was 57% which resulted in 1,109 responses.

Definition of Volunteering

Respondents were asked to consider the following definition of volunteering in their responses:

Volunteering is defined as “the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.”

Respondents were advised that their replies should only refer only to **unpaid** work or activities.

Rounding and Survey Error

It should be noted that in some instances totals may not add up due to rounding or multiple responses.

As the results presented in this report are based on sample survey data they are therefore subject to a degree of sampling error. This error will be reasonably small for the majority of results but will be larger in those estimates based on small numbers of cases (see base numbers).

Weighting

On occasions, in tables showing weighted data, the sum of column totals does not equal the grand total. This is due to the rounding process associated with weighting.

The percentages in the tables are based on weighted data but the totals are unweighted.

For further information on weighting please see Annex A, Technical notes, Section 1.4 – Weighting.

Key Findings

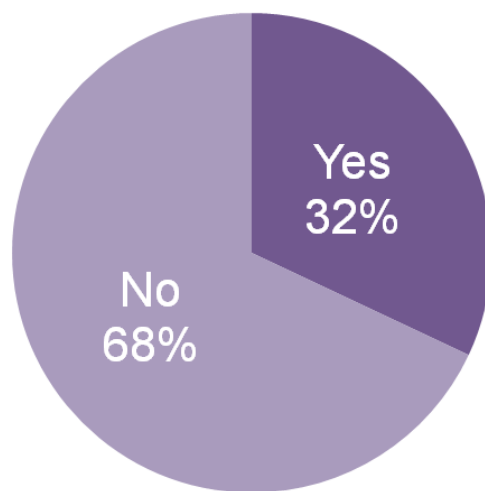
- Just under a third (32%) of respondents indicated that they had carried out voluntary work within the past year.
- Of those who had volunteered in the previous year, 43% had carried out a fundraising activity, 33% had volunteered for a church or religious organisation and 32% of respondents indicated that they had organised or helped to run a community event.
- The most common methods of identifying volunteering roles were from someone already involved in the organisation (43%), by word of mouth (38%), and through a church or religious organisation (32%).
- Around two fifths (41%) of respondents who had volunteered in the previous year indicated that a police or Access NI check was carried out.
- More than three quarters of respondents (80%) stated that their efforts are recognised/appreciated by the organisation for which they volunteer.
- The top three reasons for not volunteering were, 'I have work commitments' (35%), 'I don't have the time' (34%) and 'I have to look after children/the home' (20%).

The next section of the report provides further detail on the responses from the survey.

Levels of Participation in Volunteering

Respondents were asked whether they had participated in any voluntary work that fell under the definition provided. Nearly a third (32%) of respondents indicated that they had carried out voluntary work within the past year. The remaining 68% of respondents indicated that they had not carried out voluntary work within the past year.

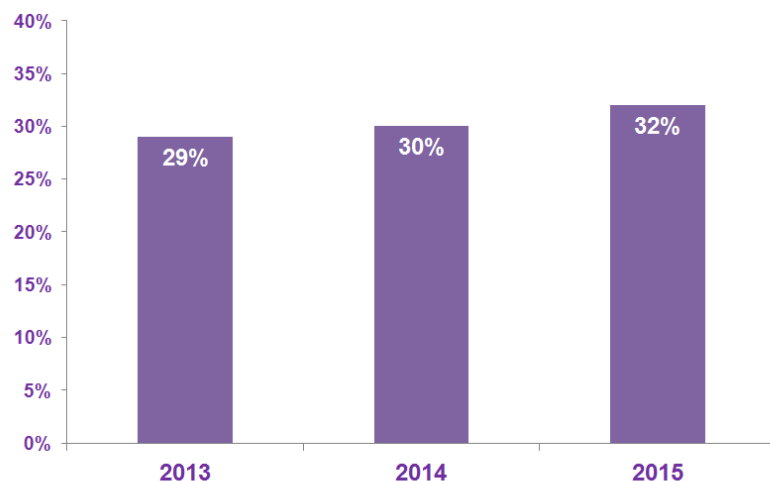
Figure 1: Have you carried out any voluntary work or activity in the past year?



Base: 1,109

This represents a slight increase on results from the previous two surveys. In 2014, 30% answered "Yes" and 29% in 2013.

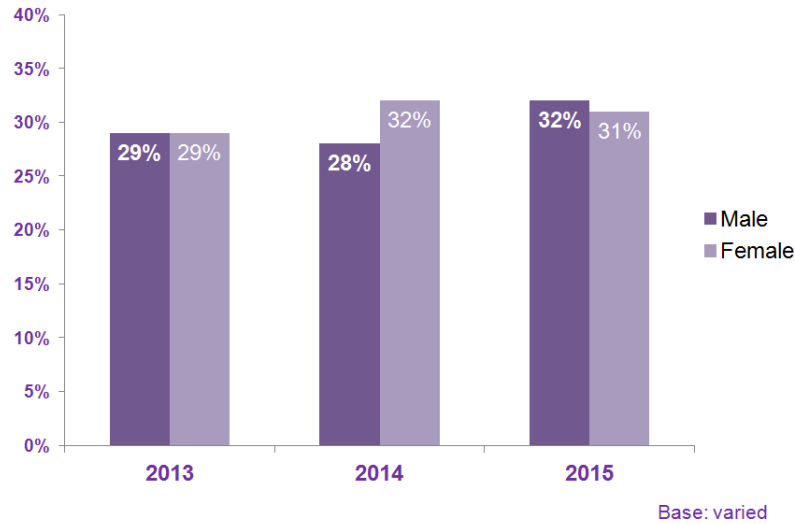
Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who have engaged in volunteering in the last year 2013 to 2015



Base: varied

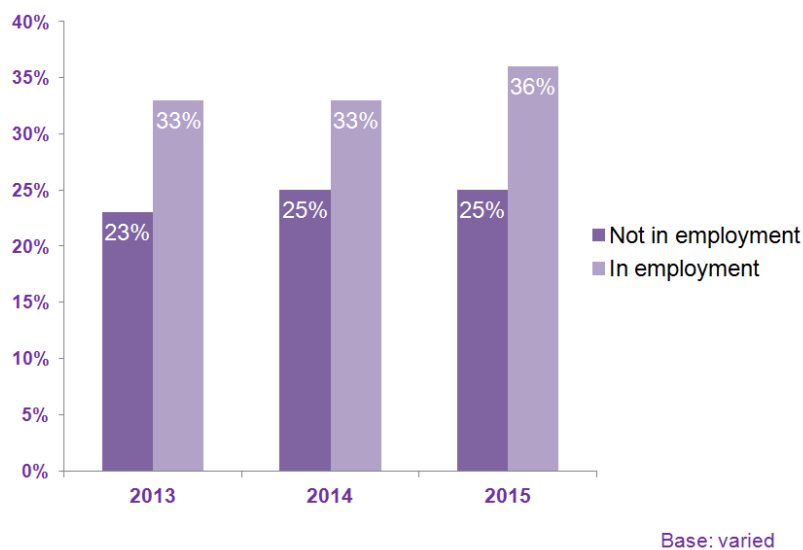
Similar proportions of male (32%) and female (31%) respondents said that they had volunteered in the past year. This has only changed slightly compared to the results from previous years.

Figure 3: Participation in volunteering by gender 2013 to 2015



The proportion of respondents in paid employment who had volunteered was more than one third (36%) which has increased slightly from 2013 and 2014 (33%). The proportion of respondents not in paid employment has remained the same as 2014.

Figure 4: Participation in volunteering by employment status 2013 to 2015



Analysis by disability status closely mirrored the previous year's results. In 2015, 35% of those without a disability volunteered in the past year (33% in 2014), compared to 19% of those with a disability (19% in 2014).

More respondents living in rural areas (39%) stated that they had volunteered in the previous year compared to those living in urban areas (28%).

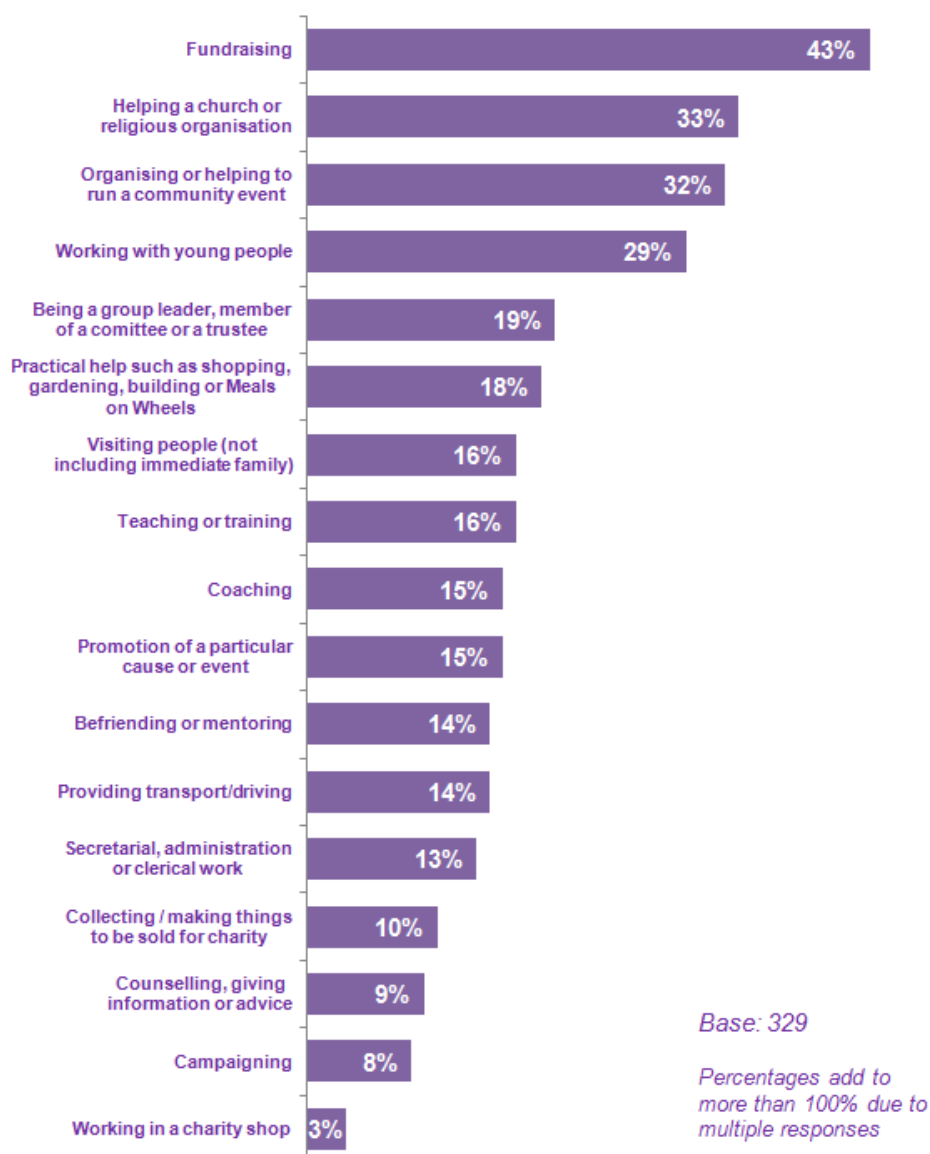
Analysis by deprivation quintile revealed that 21% of respondents in the quintile identified as 'most deprived' had volunteered in the previous year (an increase from 16% in 2014), compared with more than a third (35%) of respondents in the 'least deprived' quintile (also 35% in 2014).

Types of volunteering undertaken

Those surveyed who had volunteered in the previous year (n=329), were asked about the types of volunteering they had undertaken.

The most common answers from respondents were that 43% had carried out a “fundraising” activity, 33% had volunteered by “helping a church or religious organisation”, 32% of respondents indicated that they had “organised or helped to run a community event” and 29% stated that their voluntary work involved “working with young people”. This year’s top three activities are the same as in 2014, and “working with young people” has increased from 23% in 2014.

Figure 5: In the last 12 months, what types of voluntary work have you carried out?



Analysis by gender indicated that a higher proportion of male respondents (25%) were involved in “coaching” as a volunteering activity than female respondents (7%). As well as this, a higher proportion of male respondents (24%) than female respondents (14%) provided “practical help such as shopping, gardening, building or Meals on Wheels”.

A higher proportion of female respondents (46%) than male respondents (39%) undertook “fundraising”. As well as this, a higher proportion of female respondents (35%) had “organised or helped to run a community event” than male respondents (28%).

A higher proportion of Protestant respondents performed their volunteering as “helping a church or religious organisation” (50%) compared to Catholic respondents (17%). This mirrored the trend in 2014 (44% of Protestant respondents compared to 20% of Catholic respondents).

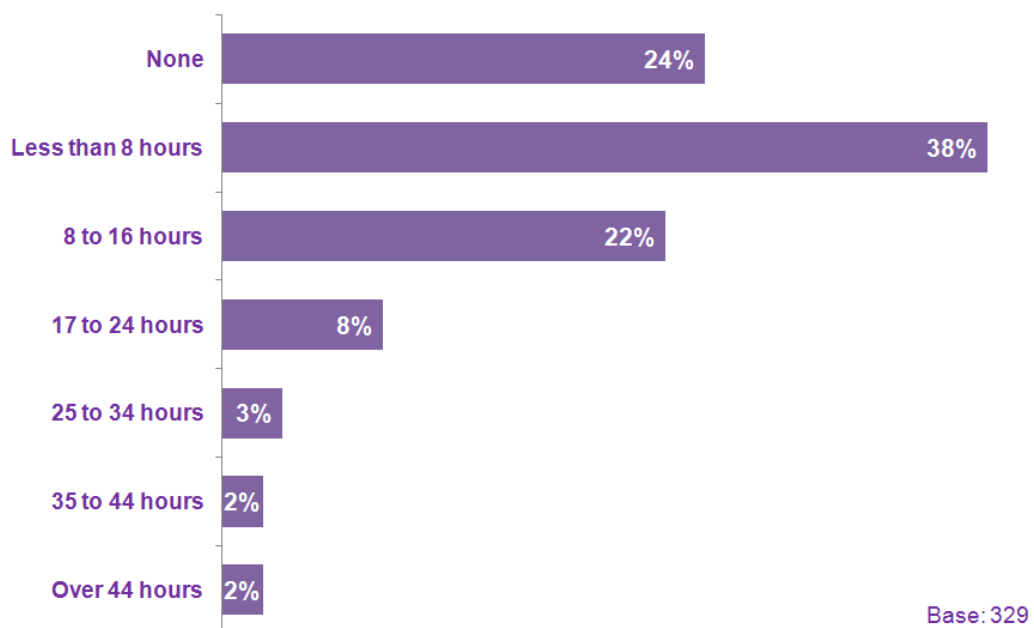
Approximately half (51%) of respondents with dependants were involved in “fundraising” compared with 37% of those without dependants.

Time Spent Volunteering

Respondents who had undertaken volunteering in the last year were asked how much time they had spent volunteering in the last 4 weeks.

The most common length of time spent volunteering in the previous 4 week period was “Less than 8 hours” (38% of respondents) which is slightly higher than the 2014 figure (33%) but the same as the 2013 figure (38%). Around a quarter (24%), stated that they had not volunteered at all within the previous 4 weeks, this is similar to the 2013 and 2014 results (23% and 26% respectively).

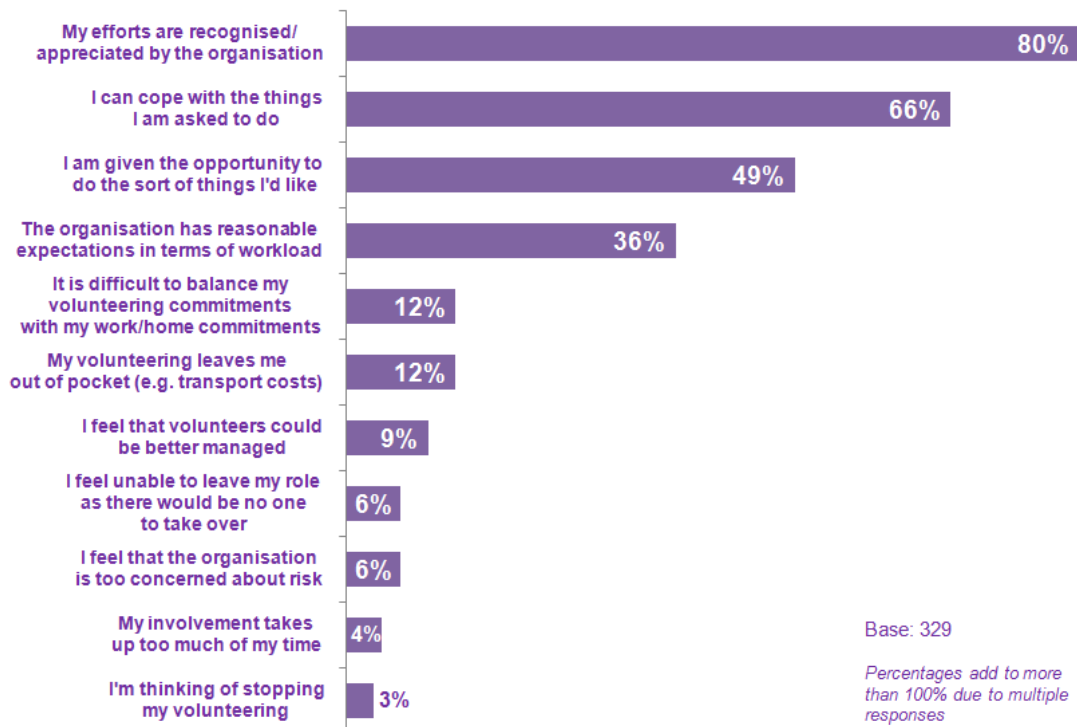
Figure 6: Approximately how many hours have you spent doing these types of voluntary work in the last 4 weeks?



Volunteers' Experiences with their Organisations

Respondents were asked to comment on a range of statements relating to their experience of volunteering with their main organisation. More than three quarters of respondents (80%) stated that their “efforts are recognised/appreciated by the organisation” for which they volunteer which slightly higher than the 2014 figure (76%), but lower than the 2013 figure (83%).

Figure 7: Thinking about the MAIN organisation you volunteer with, which of the following statements apply?



Almost two thirds (66%) of respondents indicated that they are able to “cope with what they are asked to do”, this represents an increase from 59% in 2014.

Under half of respondents (49%) said they are “given the opportunity to do the things they’d like”, a similar proportion to 2014 (47%).

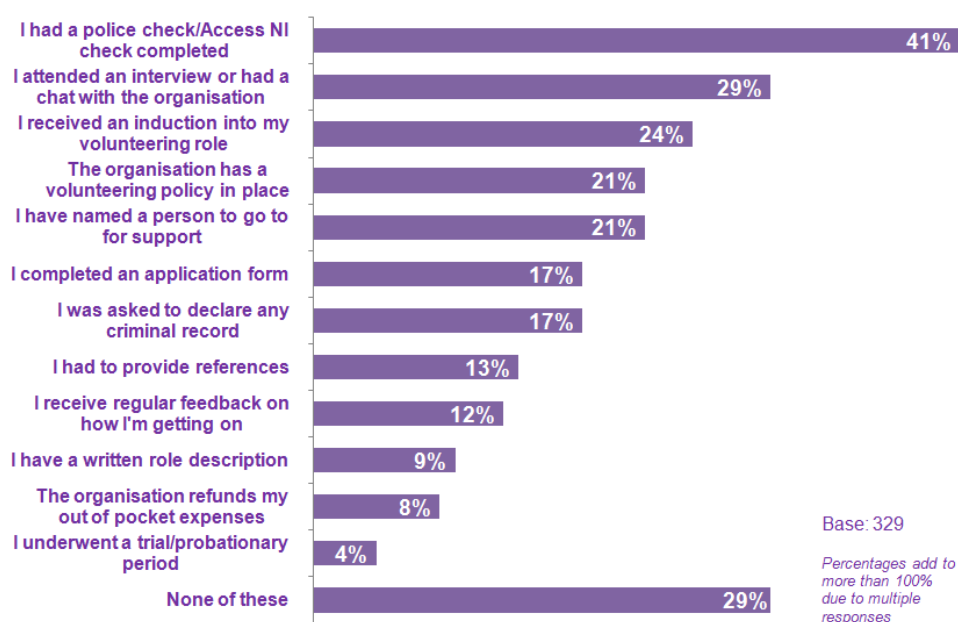
Only 36% of respondents agreed that the organisation for which they volunteer has “reasonable expectations in terms of workload”, slightly higher than in 2014 (31%).

The Volunteer Experience

Respondents were asked to read a number of further statements relating to their main volunteering role and state whether any of them were applicable.

Around two fifths (41%) of respondents indicated that a police or Access NI check was carried out (39% in 2013, 41% in 2014). More than a quarter of respondents (29%) had an interview or chat with the organisation prior to taking up their volunteering role (32% in both 2013 and 2014). Just under a quarter (24%) of respondents had an induction into their role compared with 18% in 2013 and 22% in 2014.

Figure 8: Thinking about your volunteering role and the main organisation you volunteer with, which of the following statements apply?

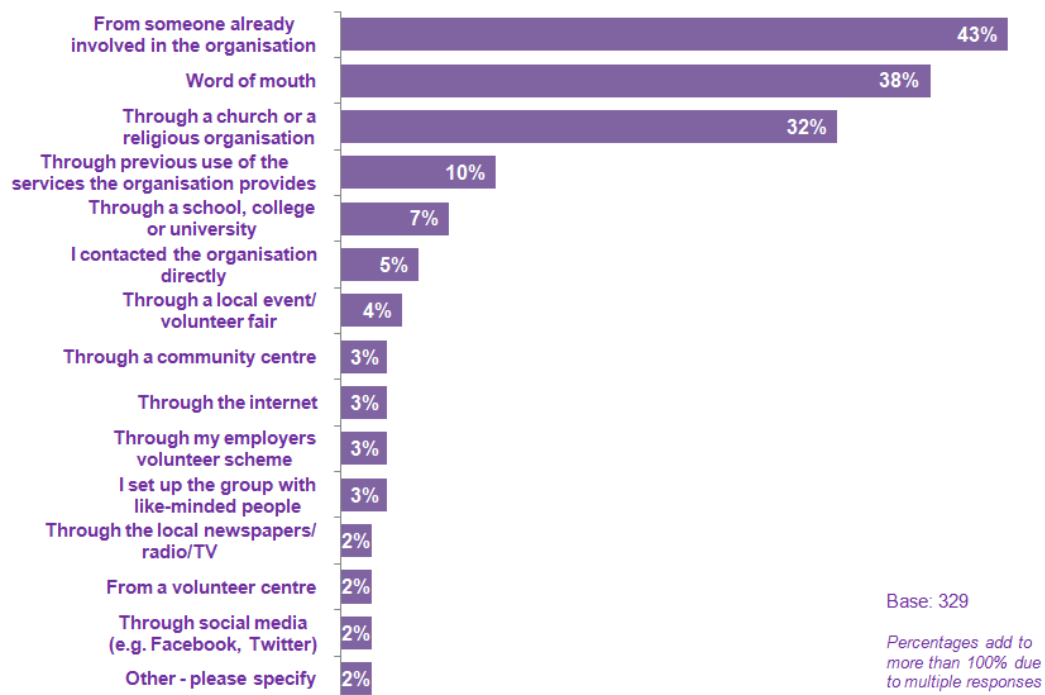


In total 29% of respondents agreed that none of the statements regarding the organisation that they volunteer in apply to them, which compares to the 2013 and 2014 figures (27% and 33% respectively).

How did you find out about volunteering role?

Respondents were asked how they found out about their current volunteering role(s). The most common methods of identifying volunteering roles were from someone already involved in the organisation (43%), by word of mouth (38%), and through a church or religious organisation (32%).

Figure 9: How did you find out about your present volunteering role/roles?

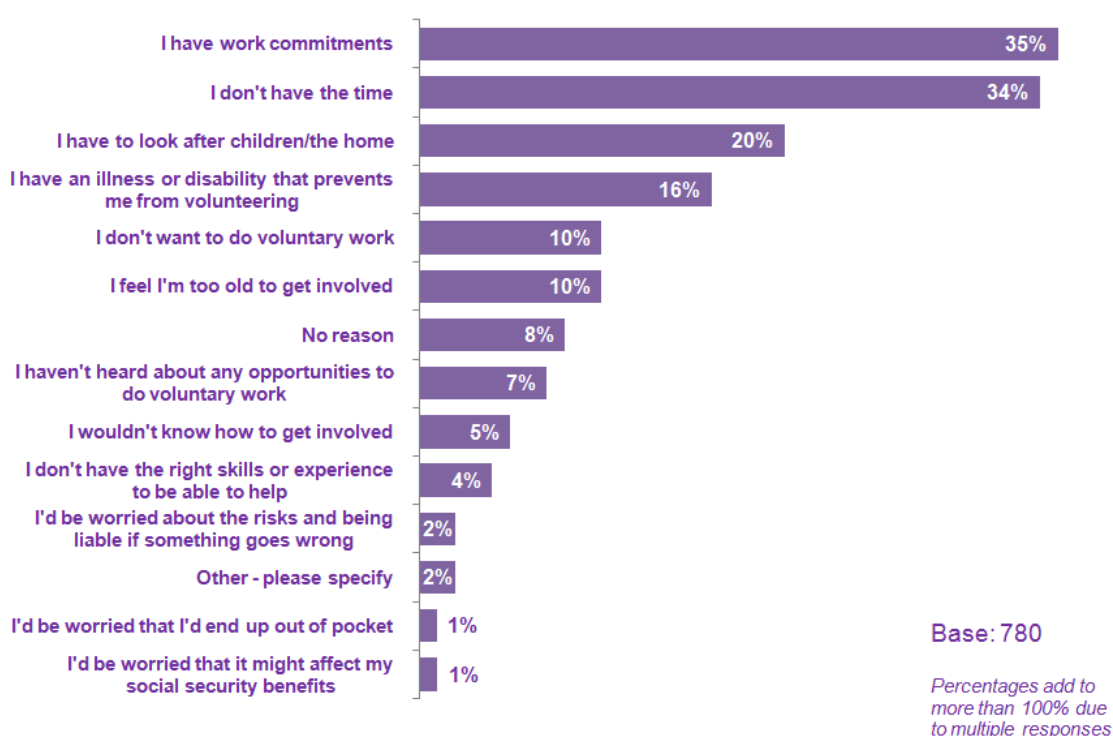


'Other' means of identifying volunteering opportunities stated were through existing volunteering roles, leaflets and that the respondents had always been involved.

Reasons for Not Undertaking Volunteering

Respondents who reported that they had not undertaken any volunteering in the last year (n=780) were asked if there were any reasons for this. The top three reasons for not volunteering were “I have work commitments” (35%), “I don’t have the time” (34%) and “I have to look after children/the home” (20%) and these matched the top three reasons from 2013 and 2014.

Figure 10: Are there any reasons why you have not carried out any voluntary work or activity?



Of those who responded to the question, 10% stated that they “don’t want to do voluntary work” and eight percent said that there was “no reason” why they had not volunteered. Both these percentages remain the same as the 2014 survey.

Analysis by gender indicated that 25% of female respondents said “I have to look after children/the home” (a decrease from 34% in 2014), compared with 13% of male respondents (15% in 2014). A higher proportion of male respondents (40%) than female respondents (30%) stated “I have work commitments” as a reason for not carrying out any voluntary work or activity.

More than a quarter (27%) of those aged 65+ said they felt too old to get involved. This age group had a higher proportion than younger age groups that cited disability as a

barrier, with 26% stating that “I have an illness or disability that prevents me from volunteering.”

Analysis by employment status showed that around half (49%) of respondents in paid employment stated “I don’t have the time (to undertake volunteering)”, compared with 17% of those not in paid employment.

Almost a third (30%) of those not in paid employment said that having an illness or disability prevented them from volunteering, compared with four per cent of those in paid employment.

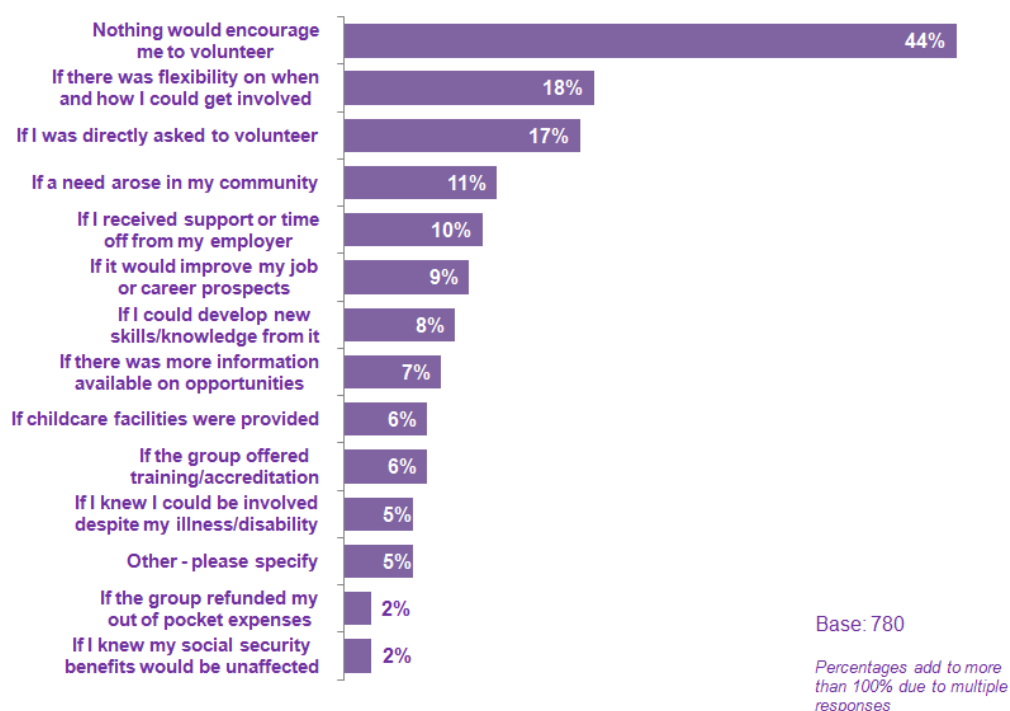
Other responses received mainly referenced caring duties and other commitments as a reason for not volunteering.

Factors that Might Encourage Volunteering

Respondents who said they had not volunteered in the last 12 months were asked what would encourage them or make it easier for them to become a volunteer.

Almost half (44%) of respondents stated that “nothing would encourage them to volunteer”, slightly less than in 2013 and 2014 (48% and 47% respectively). This became more pronounced as age increased, with 32% of the ‘25-34’ group stating that “nothing would encourage them to volunteer”, compared to 65% of the ‘65 and over’ age group.

Figure 11: What would encourage you or make it easier for you to become a volunteer?



Analysis by marital status showed that 20% of single respondents stated that “improving job/career prospects” would encourage them to volunteer, compared with 5% of married¹ respondents.

A greater proportion of those without dependants (47%) than those with dependants (36%) said that “nothing would encourage them to volunteer”, which compares to the 2014 findings (51% and 41% respectively).

¹ Married and living with husband/wife, or in a civil partnership

Analysis by disability status showed that almost two thirds (61%) of respondents with a disability stated “nothing would encourage me to volunteer”, compared to 38% of those without a disability. This is a similar outcome to the 2014 results where the figures were 62% for those with a disability and 41% of those without a disability. However, 17% of those respondents with a disability said they would be encouraged to volunteer “if they knew I could be involved despite my illness/disability”.

Annex A – Omnibus Survey Technical Notes

1.1 The Sample

The sample for the September survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Pointer database of private addresses. This is the most up-to-date listing of private households and is made available to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for research purposes. People living in institutions (though not in private households in such institutions) are excluded. A total of 2,200 addresses were selected for interview.

The Pointer database provides a good sampling frame of addresses, but contains no information about the number of people living at an address. Further selection stages were therefore required to convert the listing of addresses to a listing of individuals from which one person (the ‘selected respondent’) is chosen to complete the questionnaire.

Interviewers are instructed to call at each address issued in their assignments. At the first stage of the survey, they have to identify the number of households resident at the address and, where necessary, select one using a selection table (Table 1.1).

Number of households												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Household selected	1	1	2	3	4	4	2	7	6	8	6	6

The interviewers then list all members of the household who are eligible for inclusion in the sample: that is, all persons currently aged 16 or over living at the address. From this listing of eligible adults, the interviewer's computer randomly selects one adult. This person, the selected respondent, is then asked to complete the interview.

1.2 The Fieldwork

The fieldwork was spread over two months. Addresses were issued to a panel of 174 interviewers in September and 153 interviewers in October 2015. The fieldwork periods were Tuesday 1st September - Saturday 3rd October 2015 and Monday 5th October – Saturday 7th November 2015.

	Number	Percent
Set sample of addresses	2200	
- Ineligible known	259	
- Ineligible unknown (pre-adjustment)	14	
- Eligible known (pre-adjustment)	1927	
- Ineligible (after adjustment)	261	
Eligible (after adjustment) ¹	1939	100
Fully co-operating	1108	57
Partially co-operating	1	0
Total co-operating	1109	57
Refusal to co-operate	598	31
Non-contact	220	11

¹ The adjusted eligible households include all pre-adjustment eligible households and a proportion of the pre-adjustment “eligibility unknown” households. The proportion of the pre-adjustment ‘eligibility unknown’ households reclassified as eligible is set at the proportion of pre-adjustment eligible households in the set sample of households: 88%.

1.3 Representativeness of the Sample

In any survey there is a possibility of non-response bias. Non-response bias arises if the characteristics of non-respondents differ from those of respondents in such a way that they are reflected in the responses given in the survey. Accurate estimates of non-response bias can be obtained by comparing characteristics of the achieved sample with the distribution of the same characteristics in the population at the time of sampling. Such comparisons are usually made to the current Census of Population data.

To assess how accurately the Omnibus Survey sample reflects the population of Northern Ireland the sample has been compared with characteristics of the Northern Ireland population from Mid Year Population Estimates (Table 1.3). The Omnibus Sample has also been compared to the achieved sample of the Continuous Household Survey (CHS).

Table 1.3 Representativeness of the Sample				
	Mid Year Population Estimates 2014	CHS 2014/15 (all members of household)	Omnibus (all members of household 16+)	Omnibus Selected
Age				
16-24	15	13	12	10
25-34	17	16	15	13
35-49	26	25	25	27
50-64	23	24	25	27
65 and over	19	21	23	23
Gender				
Male	49	48	46	46
Female	51	52	54	54
Base=100%	1,456,715	4,810	2,051	1,109

1.4 Weighting

Selecting only one individual for interview at each sampled address means that the probability of selection for the survey is inversely related to the size of the household. In other words individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than individuals in small households.

Before analysis, all households which provided a selected respondent are examined and the data are weighted in relation to the number of eligible adults at the address derived from the details of household structure recorded by interviewers on the questionnaire. This weighting process adjusts the results to those that would have been achieved if the sample had been drawn as a random sample of adults rather than of addresses. In this sample 39% of households consisted of one adult, while 45% of households consisted of two adults. 11% of households contained three adults, while 5% of households consisted of four or more adults.

Note: on occasions, in tables showing weighted data, the sum of column totals does not equal the grand total. This is due to the rounding process associated with weighting.

The percentages in the tables are based on weighted data but the totals are unweighted.

Number of adults 16 and over	Number	Household Size x Number	Relative Scaled
1	431	431	0.5407118479
2	501	1002	1.0814236958
3	117	351	1.6221355436
4	40	160	2.1628473915
5	15	75	2.7035592394
6	3	18	3.2442710873
7	2	14	3.7849829352

$$R = \frac{1109}{2051} = 0.5407118479$$

To demonstrate the effects of weighting on the responses given by selected respondents, the question “Thinking about the definition just given, in the past year, have you carried out any voluntary work or activity?” was analysed both weighted and unweighted (Tables 1.5 and 1.6).

Table 1.5 (Weighted)

Thinking about the definition just given, in the past year, have you carried out any voluntary work or activity?

	N	Percent
Yes	352	31.7
No	757	68.3
Total	1109	100.0

Table 1.6 (Unweighted)

Thinking about the definition just given, in the past year,
have you carried out any voluntary work or activity?

	N	Percent
Yes	330	29.8
No	779	70.2
Total	1109	100.0

1.5 Sampling Error

No sample is likely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population it is drawn from because of both sampling and non-sampling errors. An estimate of the amount of error due to the sampling process can be calculated. For a simple random sample design, in which every member of the sampled population has an equal and independent chance of inclusion in the sample, the sampling error of any percentage, p , can be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{s.e. } (p) = \sqrt{p*(100 - p)/n}$$

where n is the number of respondents on which the percentage is based. The sample for the NI Omnibus Survey is drawn as a random sample, and thus this formula can be used to calculate the sampling error of any percentage estimate from the survey.

A confidence interval for the population percentage can be calculated by the formula

$$95 \text{ per cent confidence interval} = p \pm 1.96 * \text{s.e. } (p)$$

If 100 similar, independent samples were chosen from the same population, 95 of them would be expected to yield an estimate for the percentage, p , within this confidence interval.

The absence of design effects in the survey, and therefore of the need to calculate complex standard errors, means that standard statistical tests of significance (which assume random sampling) can be applied directly to the data.

1.6 Notation

The percentages quoted in tables have been rounded to the nearest number. Where the base was less than 100, the actual number is given rather than the percentages denoted by the column label.

The following symbols are used:

category not applicable - cell is empty
figure less than 0.5% -
cell is '0'

1.7 Respondent Burden.

	Number	Median time (mins)	Compliance burden (mins)
Total households screened for eligibility	2200	5	11000
Total household grid	1109	1.16	1405
Total household section	1109	0.32	591
Total individual section	1109	33.55	37614
Total			50610