

# Voluntary Action Research

Paper No. 4

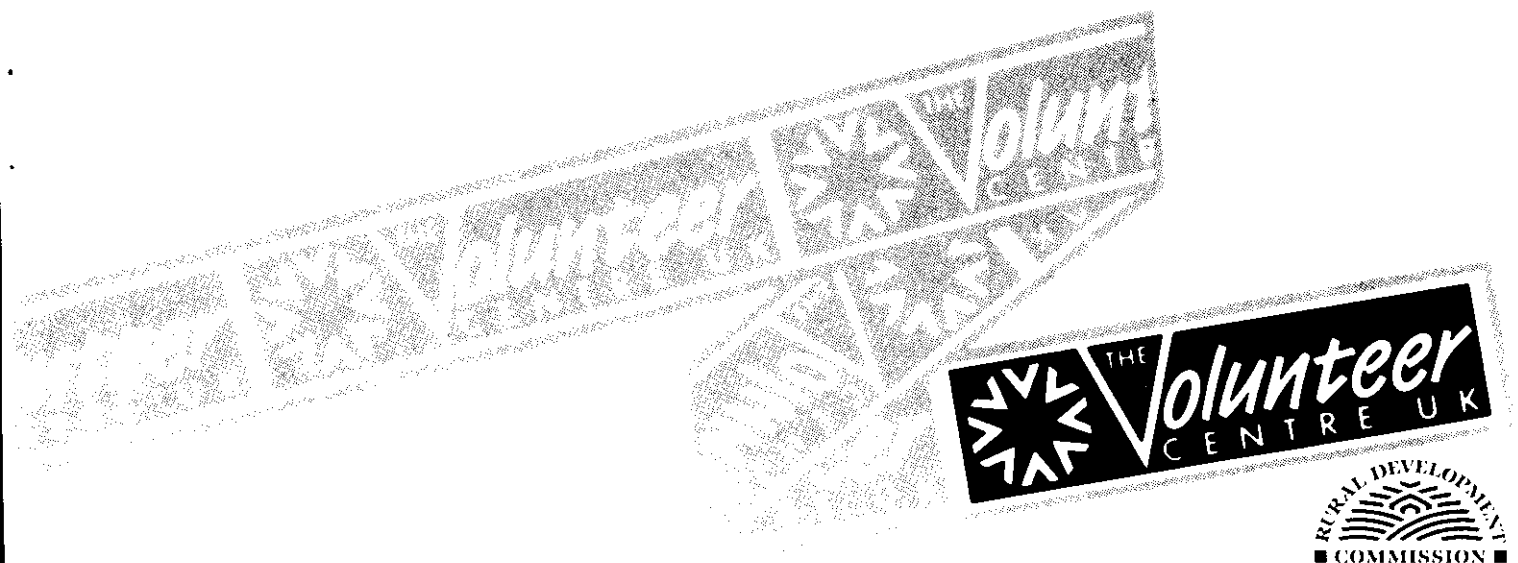
**The Involvement of  
Volunteers in  
Rural Areas of England**



Paper No. 4

# The Involvement of Volunteers in Rural Areas of England

The Findings of a Survey carried out by  
The Volunteer Centre UK, in association with  
The Rural Team at The National Council for  
Voluntary Organisations and The National  
Association of Volunteer Bureaux. Funded by The  
Rural Development Commission



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The working group is grateful to all those national and local organisations who responded so positively to the request for information, and without whose help this paper would not have been possible.

## Preface

'The vital role of volunteer workers within the community and the importance of continuity should be more widely recognised, and positive support should be given to them by the provision of adequate finance and training.'

*Faith in The Countryside*, The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas, 1990 (p.127).

It is generally assumed that the patterns of volunteering are more or less the same whether in urban or rural areas. The national picture does not always differentiate between the two. In the summer of 1990 a survey was carried out to see whether this assumption is correct. This paper describes the findings of this survey. It suggests that there are both similarities and differences in the patterns of volunteering between urban and rural areas.

The paper shows that organisations in rural areas, as elsewhere, are having to work harder to recruit volunteers. However, it also points to the particular problems organisations in rural areas face in involving volunteers, with inadequate transport facilities being identified as a major barrier to involvement. The paper highlights the need to recognise and develop the particular skills required of rural volunteer organisers, arguing that the pattern of life in rural areas demands a proactive and developmental approach to the recruitment and involvement of volunteers.

Of course this is just a first look at rural volunteering and the paper emphasises the need to carry out further research into the range, incidence and motivation of volunteer participation. Nevertheless it raises some important issues and I commend it to you as a starting point for further reflection and action in relation to volunteer activity in rural areas.

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February 1991

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# 1. Introduction

There is an English folk-memory about the rural way of life which involves comely cottages, village greens and people being kind to one another. This picture often informs the popular understanding of the word 'community', although it has not been a very accurate reflection of rural life since about 1910. Nevertheless, it is a perception that is continually reinforced by painting, writing, advertising and popular entertainment: think of long-running series like 'The Archers' and the novels of 'Miss Read'. This is the way we should all be living, if all was right with the world.

During the summer of 1990 the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux, The Volunteer Centre UK, and the Rural Development Commission, collaborated in a survey of volunteers in rural areas of England. The research method for the survey was a questionnaire, distributed by a range of voluntary organisations to their local branches, and aiming to provide a national overview of volunteer involvement. In addition, two areas of the country were chosen for more detailed scrutiny: Wiltshire and Humberside. Approximately 4000 questionnaires were distributed.

Despite the survey title, some returns came from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and these have been excluded from the analysis. The organisers recognised a difficulty in defining what a rural area is, and decided to leave the definition to the national organisations and to respondents, on the supposition that, "if they say they're rural, they probably are". It may be that the English folk-memory was at work again when questionnaires were completed and returned from places like the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Handsworth and Salford. Some respondents completed questionnaires but wrote, "This is not a rural area", across them. Both categories have been excluded from the analysis.

In addition, there were nationally-based voluntary organisations which returned one questionnaire with information about volunteers across the whole country. It was impossible to reconcile information with dissimilar parameters. Separate reference is made in this report to data from these national responses, but the overview analysis uses only data which can be assigned to shire counties.

This overview, based on local responses, draws on **1,162** records. **952** records were returned from **42** English counties. **135** are from Humberside and **75** are from Wiltshire. The national returns came from local organisations with links to 21 national bodies. 8 national organisations returned a single questionnaire with data for the whole country.

Because more than 1000 responses is a large number to analyse, much of this report is based on quantitative evidence from the questionnaires. However, as an addition to the survey, responses were solicited also from individuals living in the countryside, in particular through the magazine of the Women's Institute. The letters which arrived show interesting tendencies which the quantitative survey could not reveal. It is clear from them that at least some volunteers in rural areas are volunteering in several different roles – sometimes as many as ten. The quantitative

information should be viewed against that evidence. The survey may have collected a figure of 368,247 volunteers in total; but how many of these are the same people, doing several tasks, it cannot show.

There is another proviso about definition. 'Rural' has been left to respondents to define. But what about 'volunteer'? The good neighbour, looking after elderly people, available in time of trouble, always ready to help out at fetes and cricket teas, is an integral part of the folk-memory. The range of organisations which distributed the questionnaire at once gives the lie to that part of the halcyon picture: a volunteer at the end of the twentieth century is still working for free, but in increased, varying and often highly skilled roles. There are, however, anomalies in responses which suggest definitions that are not harmonious with one another. For example, one Guide company defines all the Guides as volunteers, as well as the leaders; another sends information about leaders only. The former may be justified, since many young people do some sort of community service as a part of their Guiding experience. The latter is a more generally accepted understanding of 'volunteer' – indeed, the youth service has always depended on this kind of voluntary leadership. Are 'members' volunteers? – of the local football club, for example? Some clubs define them as such, but in these responses it is the figures for the voluntary management committee alone that have been collected.

It is absurd to pretend that surveys like these will produce chapter and verse on the current state of volunteering in rural areas. They are useful first-stage tools in an effort to define the territory and its 'issues' as they are called: the matters that concern people. They can also highlight interesting areas for further examination and research, often about questions well-known to those who work in the rural voluntary sector, but less evident to policy-makers. One of the most interesting findings of this analysis is the correlation between a willingness to travel to do voluntary work, and training and status. Volunteers who have been trained, or who hold an elevated or recognised position in an organisation, will go further distances. This begs questions: do the people who get the training tend to be the ones with cars? or does the fact that the volunteer has a car make training more possible? or does the training make the volunteer more committed? This kind of broad survey can only detect the correlation, it cannot explain why it happens.

## 2. Who are the Volunteers?

In answer to the question, "Approximately how many volunteers (not Management Committee) are involved in your organisation or group?" total figures emerged:

Overview	209,159	(952 records)
8 national bodies	138,550	(8 records)
Humberside	8,587	(135 records)
Wiltshire	11,961	(75 records)

These figures are important only in so far as they demonstrate that large numbers of people *are* being defined as volunteers. It is interesting to see that the average return from Humberside was very much lower than from Wiltshire, but the disparity is explained by the number of county-wide Wiltshire returns. Most of the Humberside questionnaires came from village-based organisations.

### Mostly women . . .

A break-down of the volunteer numbers into percentages for male and female was requested.

	Male	Female
Overview	32%	68%
Humberside	28%	72%
Wiltshire	29%	71%

This shows a huge difference, but it is not, of course, surprising. Far more volunteers in cities, too, are women.<sup>1</sup> But many respondents were returning figures of 100% female volunteers, and it is interesting to divide the responses into those from different types of organisation and to compare the gender proportions then. The result, for five organisations which can loosely be described as "care in the community", and then for one organisation where volunteers work with elderly people, looks like this:

	Male	Female
Five organisations	23%	77%
Age Concern	15%	85%

Here the difference is even more marked. So what is it, in the national overview, which is balancing these figures? The clue lies in the results for two environmental organisations:

	Male	Female
Environment orgs.	55%	45%

Other sections of this report will show that this is not the only aspect of the analysis in which environmental organisations differ sharply from other types of voluntary organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact survey data suggests that the difference in participation rates between men and women is not great. See for example MORI, 'Voluntary Activity: A Survey of Public Attitudes', *Voluntary Action Research*, Paper No. 1, The Volunteer Centre UK, 1990.



### Mostly older . . .

Respondents were asked to divide the volunteers into age-groups. Not everyone was happy about doing this, and comments like, "We would not dream of asking," were not uncommon. A majority did complete this section, however, with the following results:

(Note that these are averages for each grouping and consequently do not total 100%)

National overview :	Under 18	-	4%
	18 - 25	-	9%
	26 - 40	-	21%
	41 - 55	-	31%
	Over 55	-	31%

Five organisations in "community care":	Under 18	-	1%
	18 - 25	-	0%
	26 - 40	-	4%
	41 - 55	-	31%
	Over 55	-	60%

Two organisations in "environment":	Under 18	-	11%
	18 - 25	-	39%
	26 - 40	-	27%
	41 - 55	-	11%
	Over 55	-	8%

Humberside:	Under 18	-	4%
	18 - 25	-	6%
	26 - 40	-	25%
	41 - 55	-	28%
	Over 55	-	30%

Wiltshire:	Under 18	-	2%
	18 - 25	-	3%
	26 - 40	-	14%
	41 - 55	-	27%
	Over 55	-	42%

The overall conclusion must be that volunteers in rural areas tend to be older people, and in particular, that they tend to be retired. The evidence from letters suggests that the 'Over 55' division was too limited: many of these letters were from women in their late seventies and eighties, still driving, (usually a Mini!), and still involved in several voluntary jobs. This contrasts sharply with national surveys which show that older people are under-represented as volunteers. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

Many comments on questionnaires indicated concern at the age of the volunteers.

- "If we cannot find some young people soon the group will fold up."
- "Our regular volunteers are dying off, and we do not know who will replace them."
- "What will happen when we go?"

These are typical examples of these comments. However, as we shall see when looking at questions about recruitment, there is some evidence that older volunteers are replaced by more older volunteers, either because people decide to volunteer when they retire, or, perhaps, because older people often choose to retire to the countryside.

Again the pattern for environmental organisations is radically different, with most volunteers here being young, or young adults. The nature of the work demands fitness and physical strength, which may preclude some older people; the condition of the environment seems to be an issue of current concern to young people; and opportunities to volunteer on environmental projects in the countryside are often targetted at unemployed people.

If the age profiles for Humberside and Wiltshire are compared, there is a detectable difference in the numbers of 26 - 44 year-olds who volunteer. This is interesting, since the gender pattern for these areas was so similar. The larger number of younger adults volunteering in Humberside may be accounted for by the nature of the returns. As we shall see, Humberside produced a larger number of replies from organisations with "leisure" as their objective, aimed at local residents in general, rather than at particular needy groups.

### 3. From town and country . . .

The findings so far have shown an important distinction between environmental organisations and others. There is another difference, which may already be clear. Volunteers working for these organisations often come from urban areas to work in the countryside. 'Volunteers in rural areas' are not only people who live in rural areas. They may fit into one of the following categories:

- a. People who live and volunteer in the country.
- b. People who live in the country and volunteer in local towns.
- c. People who live in local towns and go into the country to do their volunteering.
- d. People who live in cities and go into the country to do their volunteering.
- e. People who live in the country and go to a city to volunteer.

Comment suggests that e. above is extremely unusual, but happened in a few cases. For example, the vicar of a rural parish noted that parishioners sometimes went to Manchester to work in a project for homeless people. Category d. applies especially to environmental organisations, which all noted that their volunteers tend to be 'urban' people with a concern for the countryside, and their volunteering will have a recreational aspect to it.

Category c. is difficult to analyse, and raises a further difficulty of definition. For respondents to this survey, a rural area could be:

- i. a town with a rural 'catchment'.
- ii. a small town or towns, with villages in between.
- iii. a group of villages, including hamlets and isolated houses.

It is not possible to ascertain the proportion of the total figure for volunteers which comes from the rural segment of the catchment area in i., or from the villages in ii. The prevalence of categories i. and ii. in the sample illustrates two things. The first is the nature of English settlements which have developed from a network of market centres at walking distance from surrounding settlements and means that throughout the country most small settlements are within 10 miles of a town.

Secondly, information in the questionnaires has come from organisations which work from bases. Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Samaritans' branches, Relate offices, of necessity situate themselves in centres, and users contact or visit them. These are organisations which are widespread across the country, so that anyone who needs their services is not likely to be too far from a base. In examples like these, there is a likelihood that volunteers will come from the town itself rather than from the rural catchment: volunteers from towns are liable to work in towns. A few may leave the town on occasions, but "Most volunteer locally to where they live", is the commonest response to a question about the provenance of volunteers.

In category b., though, it should be remembered that there are people who come into the towns from the countryside not only to volunteer, but also to work. Several organisations note that volunteers, "stay on after work", especially when, like Samaritans, that work continues in the evenings. It is recorded, too, that people come into town and combine volunteering with shopping, visits to the doctor and collecting children from school.

The fullest information about category a. – people who live in and volunteer in the countryside – comes from the two local area studies. The questions in the survey which explored this matter were quantitative and qualitative. The former did not ask for proportions, (respondents would probably have been unable to give them), but used the word "mainly". In the national overview these answers showed:

	No. of organisations
Volunteers mainly from the rural area	– 291
Volunteers mainly from nearest main town	– 289
Volunteers equally from both	– 351

Comments following this question suggested that respondents had found it difficult to answer, and the results are difficult to interpret. In answer to the same question the two local areas produced the following result:

	Humberside	Wilts
Mainly from rural area	97	46
Mainly from nearest town	13	11
Equally from both	19	16

These proportions are explained again by the nature of the organisations responding. In Humberside they were most likely to be village-based local groups, run by local people for local people, not voluntary organisations with a national profile. In Wiltshire there were more voluntary organisations with a national profile, which may account for the higher proportion of town-based volunteers.

The comments which followed this question emphasised that people "like to volunteer near to where they live." But this is not always possible to arrange. Someone might travel in to a centre, perhaps to a volunteer bureau, and say that they would like to work close to their village home, but an appropriate opportunity may not be available there.

Conversely, a need may be apparent in a village, but no volunteer emerges to meet it.

A Victim Support Scheme wrote, "Two volunteers in outlying villages now, – but it took eight years to get them." And another: "It is difficult to get volunteers for rural areas, difficult to train them, difficult to keep them once they are trained." There are particular problems with this sort of volunteer, who is called upon when required and may spend a long time without being called upon. Research into volunteer motivation in any area has shown that not being used is a prime cause of volunteer drop-out.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See for example Social and Community Planning Research, 'On Volunteering: A Qualitative Research Study of Images, Motivations and Experiences, *Voluntary Action Research*, Paper No. 2, The Volunteer Centre UK, 1990

## 4. How far will they travel?

In an effort to understand the qualitative comments on volunteer willingness to travel, they have been analysed in three categories. Note that there is no distinction here between travelling to do volunteering, and travelling in the course of volunteering. The national overview results show:

	No. of organisations
Some volunteers travel up to 10 miles	- 322
Some volunteers travel 10+ miles	- 207
No volunteers travel	- 371

The "some volunteers" may be a very small proportion of the total working for the organisation. There appears to be a direct relationship between organisations which offer training, qualification and a timetabled 'job' and the distance which volunteers will travel, both to do the work and during the work. Marriage guidance counsellors for Relate, as an example, will come from farther afield to a centre, than will the other volunteers in the organisation, like receptionists.

In the local studies the same question revealed the following results:

	Humberside	Wilts
Some travel up to 10 miles	25	17
Some travel 10+ miles	9	6
No volunteers travel	95	50

Once again, there seem to be distinct patterns, with nationally-linked organisations on the one hand, and grass-roots based local organisations on the other.

One consideration here is whether it is important to the work of volunteers that they are operating locally, among people they know. Some Victim Support Schemes, for example, said, "Volunteers *must* come from the local community". An organisation like Home-Start, however, points out that it can be essential for the volunteer to be a stranger: "The need for confidentiality means that volunteers *have* to work away from the home area. A town may be large enough to ensure confidentiality. In a village everyone may know what is going on." One Volunteer Bureau observes that volunteers often *like* to travel to work "... somewhere new for a change." But an Age Concern group says, "People do not want to waste time travelling". One imperative is the organisation's own financial position: "Because of travel costs we try to use them near to where they live."

There were many observations about the costs of transport in the national responses. Unreliable, infrequent and expensive bus services, a complete lack of public transport, and the costs of operating and parking a car were all mentioned here. "A few rely on lifts," says one youth organisation, "Which is the main restriction on membership." Young people, in particular, find the lack of a car a deterrent to involvement. (And it is interesting to see that those organisations which work on environmental

projects in the countryside often have their own transport, buses and vans, to take volunteers to the site.) A willingness to travel is "less evident in poorer areas," remarks a Scout group. "People who can afford to volunteer are people who can afford to run a car," says a Citizen's Advice Bureau. "On occasions we have been unable to use volunteers who did not have their own transport," was another response.

870 organisations in the national overview paid out-of-pocket expenses to volunteers. However, some noted that though these were offered, they were rarely claimed, and several even cited unclaimed expenses as a source of organisational funding. Several mentioned the extra, and unpredictable, costs and time involved in supporting volunteers in rural areas. "We are not able to offer as much support in rural areas as we would like," said one. In the two localities a smaller proportion of organisations offered expenses: 58 in Humberside and 49 in Wiltshire.

## 5. More or less?

Recent studies have high-lighted difficulties in recruiting volunteers for all kinds of activity. The survey asked organisations whether they had observed an increase or decrease in the number of volunteers over the past two years.

The results look like this:

	Increase	Decrease	No Change
Eight national bodies	5	2	1
National overview	287	279	383
Humberside	31	25	75
Wiltshire	17	17	37

At first sight this suggests that there is really nothing to worry about, at least as far as volunteers in rural areas are concerned. Decreases are off-set by increases and outnumbered by a maintenance of the status quo.

However, many of the organisations which responded to this survey have a fixed number of volunteer placements which would not be increased or decreased anyway. They could not accommodate more volunteers if they had them, because of restricted training budgets, office space and so on. This may be reflected in the high number of 'No Change' responses.

What these organisations, and many others *do* report is an increased *difficulty* in recruiting volunteers. They are getting them, because they have to get them to survive, but it is harder to get them.

In the comments after this question the following reasons for difficulty in recruitment recur:

- higher mortgage rates, poll-tax and general cost of living mean that women have to take paid work;
- there is more part-time work available for women;
- more competition for volunteers, (especially from organisations of a similar type - e.g. phone help-lines);
- "people just don't care any more";
- poor public transport;

Reasons for a decrease in numbers are most often attributed to the age of the volunteers: volunteers die, or are too infirm to continue. However, many organisations which note this also note that fresh older volunteers can be found to continue the work. This may be a reflection of a demographic trend, or a social trend towards retirement in the countryside. It may also indicate an interesting tendency, noted by the late Professor Philip Abrams in the 1970s, for newcomers to an area to use voluntary activity as a means of learning about and integrating themselves into their new locality. Some comments suggested this: "People who volunteer in this village are immigrants, not locals". But Abrams' work, and some comments, indicate that newcomers tend particularly to start

projects for themselves, rather than joining existing ones. "Off-comers provide the main input to new initiatives," notes a Volunteer Bureau.

Volunteer Bureau returns provide an interesting control on this element in the survey. After all, these are the agencies which are best placed to gauge the state of recruitment – they respond to volunteers who come through the door. In rural areas, are there any less of them now? Volunteer Bureaux answered the volunteer numbers question like this:

Increase	Decrease	No Change
22	25	25

Perhaps the "recruitment crisis" is less severe in rural areas?

Where organisations note an increase in volunteers, it is attributed to the following reasons:

- the organisation is new to the area, so had nowhere to go but up;
- publicity, press campaigns;
- increased concern for the environment.

The latter is a factor for a limited group of organisations, but it is notable that 90% of environmental organisations responding noted an increase. Several respondents made their own time division for the question and noted that last year there had been a decrease in volunteers, but this year an improvement. (This was sometimes recorded as 'no change'.) There were enough of these to suggest that there may be some improvement beginning in volunteer recruitment.

Organisations which kept a steady flow of volunteers were those with a clear 'social contact' objective: young farmers' clubs, youth clubs, women's networks. It may be that the 'care' delivery organisations need to look at the extent to which they are providing opportunity for social contact separately from the actual 'work' of volunteering. This has long been recognised as an element in the motivation of volunteers, and was quoted by Spastics Society respondents, in particular, as a reason why volunteer levels had been maintained: people had a good time.

The comments on recruitment were the one place in the survey where reference was made to "the same few people who seem to do everything". Letters from individuals reinforce this picture, though it is always most likely that the widely involved volunteers will be the ones who write. "Like most volunteers in this area, I tend to support a number of different organisations, and am usually a committee member, sometimes accepting a particular office." From these letters it seems that the volunteer tasks of individuals are often related to one another: Victim Support Scheme coordinator, Women's Refuge supporter, volunteer with the Probation Service, adult literacy tutor, "and last, but not least, I visit any of our WI members who are ill." A woman of 39 started the village mother-and-toddler group and the playgroup, ran Brownies for 10 years and now organises the Guides. "Each time I have moved on when someone else takes over from me. I did meals on wheels for three years . . .



Also I visit an old lady in hospital who has no relatives whenever I can and I am on the League of Friends of that hospital . . . " In these individual accounts the charity shop, for Oxfam, cancer relief, Barnardos and other organisations, features very frequently. Women are prepared to travel to centres in order to work in these shops, but it should be noted that this is done on a regular schedule and for a fixed period: for example, half a day, twice a week. The popularity of this activity is attributed to a combination of elements:

- it imposes a discipline, like 'work';
- it has the aura and status of a 'proper job';
- it offers social contact, and with the general public;
- it offers a chance to root through the cheap clothing and other articles before the customers. (Many of these volunteers note that they are on low incomes).

## 6. Organisations using volunteers in rural areas

So far this analysis has concentrated on the people who do the volunteering: who they are and where they come from. The survey also contained questions about the organisations for which they work. For the national overview the Appendix listing responding organisations is the main reference. For the two local areas an analysis of the types of local organisation and their 'clients', was carried out. This produced the following results:

Purpose	Humberside	Wiltshire
Leisure	40	24
Fundraising	20	5
Welfare	10	19
Social	9	11
Communication	8	1
Network	10	7
Education	4	0
Transport	2	2
Environment	4	1

'Clients'	Humberside	Wiltshire
Residents	77	28
Youth	18	0
Women	8	2
Elderly	9	21
Disabled	5	12
Christians	2	0
Families	5	4
Families with under 5s	8	2
Poor people	1	3
Ill people	4	3

These figures gain in interest when those organisations with a 'mutual aid' purpose, as Beveridge called it, are grouped together, and those of the 'helping others' variety are contrasted with them. In both Humberside and Wiltshire the predominant activity is mutual aid: leisure, social and communication (newsletters) activity, open to and aimed at all the residents of the rural area. The philanthropic or 'helping other people' organisations, as exemplified by the 'welfare' and 'network' purposes, are proportionally commoner in Wiltshire. The client groups of organisations bear this out. More clients 'in need' benefit from the reported activities in Wiltshire than from the reported activities in Humberside.

There may be all kinds of explanation for this: demographic, economic, social, chance, and the fact that only some of the organisations in both counties responded to the survey. But what it *does* explain is the disparity in age profiles between the two areas: Humberside has more younger volunteers in more leisure and mutual aid organisations.

Wiltshire has more older volunteers in more 'helping' organisations, especially for older people.

## 7. Age of organisations, and their resources

Organisations were asked their age. This drew some facetious responses, especially from vicars. In order not to pollute the quantitative results with their "c.2000", a superficial analysis simply looks at young and old organisations, and those in between:

	Under 3 yrs	3 -10 yrs	Over 10 yrs
National overview	118	276	517
Humberside	21	33	75
Wiltshire	11	22	35

The pattern is similar. Most organisations which use volunteers in rural areas are well-established, but there is also fresh activity and the creation of organisations, and these are often the ones which report an increase in volunteers.

A question about whether or not the organisation had a formal equal opportunities policy drew the largest number of unsolicited graffiti of any on the questionnaire. For some reason this question was considered more offensive and irritating by more respondents than any other. These comments suggest that 'equal opportunities policy' is usually seen as referring only to women, and that other people to whom such a policy might apply – people from racial and physical minority groups, for example – are not included in the definition. Most comments said, "We do not need one," or "Of course, we have equal opportunities." Many organisations which answered 'Yes' to this question – there were 559 in all – said that the policy had come to them via the national organisation to which they relate. There is an on-going debate in rural areas about the relevance of equal opportunities policies. This study suggests that many voluntary organisations remain to be convinced of their value.<sup>1</sup>

There was a limited question on funding, asking organisations about their *main* source. Since most voluntary organisations receive funding from several sources, these answers provide only a limited illumination:

Funding	Mainly Self	Statutory	Private Sector
Overview	479	546	74
Humberside	114	27	9
Wiltshire	52	28	3

(Some respondents marked two sources as equal.)

The distinction here is clear and hardly surprising. Organisations with a national profile and county-wide interests are likely to be supported, still, by government or local government grants. Small, home-grown, locally-based organisations are not.

<sup>1</sup> For information on applying equal opportunities policies in rural areas see NCVO Rural Team, *Equal Opportunities Policies and Rural Voluntary Organisations: An Information Pack*, NCVO, 1989.

Organisations were asked if they offered training to volunteers, or had access to training offered by others.

Training	Self	Others
Overview	724	641
Humberside	48	48
Wiltshire	35	33

These two categories were not mutually exclusive – quite the opposite. Organisations which could offer training usually also had access to training offered by others.

## 8. Conclusion

This short report has not dealt with all the information available from an extensive survey, and has concentrated on the aspects which have been easiest to analyse. Further work is needed to understand the detailed nature of the work done by voluntary organisations working with volunteers in rural areas, the ways in which volunteers are recruited, and, in particular, the composition of management committees. A superficial perusal of the data on management suggests that here the gender split between male and female volunteers is less one-sided: but this may apply to volunteer management committees in urban areas, too, and may be explained by the need to recruit certain types of professional expertise to management committees.

What is clear, known to the voluntary sector already, but reinforced by this study, is that volunteering in rural areas, while alive, is struggling with costs of transport and an ageing volunteer population. The willingness of people living in the countryside to be involved in community activity is not a part of the folk memory: it persists. But if it is to continue, it will need special kinds of help and support.

## Suggestions for Further Reading

Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas, *Faith in the Countryside*, Churchman Publishing Ltd, 1990.

Action with Communities in Rural England, 'A Rural Strategy', *Rural Voice*, ACRE.

Broadcasting Support Services, *Land of Europe*, Broadcasting Support Services, 1991.

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# Appendix 1

## ORGANISATIONS WHICH DISTRIBUTED QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SURVEY

Samaritans  
Youth Hostels Association  
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers  
Riding for the Disabled  
National Toy Libraries Association  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
Association of Community Technical Aid Centres  
Home-Start Consultancy  
National Association of Volunteer Bureaux  
National Youth Bureau  
National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux  
National Trust  
National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service  
Rural Community Councils (both members and non-members of NACVS)  
Relate  
The Order of St. John  
Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit  
National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs  
Royal Society for Nature Conservation  
The Scout Association  
Arthur Rank Centre  
Age Concern  
The Spastics Society  
National Association of Victim Support Schemes  
Open Spaces Society

## Appendix 2

### BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RETURNS BY ORGANISATION

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Survey Returns</i>
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	27
Samaritans	79
Toy Libraries	5
Youth Hostels Association	35
Royal Town Planning Institute	8
Citizens Advice Bureau	128
Relate	9
Young Farmers Clubs	24
Adult Literacy	32
Society for Nature Conservation	32
Scouts	26
Arthur Rank Centre	74
Spastics Society	33
Age Concern	40
Victims Support	135
Homestart	39
Volunteer Bureaux	70
National Youth Bureau	43
Guides	9
Disability Groups	3
Community Care	15



## Appendix 3

### BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RETURNS BY AREA AND NUMBERS OF VOLUNTEERS

<i>Area</i>	<i>Survey Returns</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>
West Yorkshire .....	20	2507
Shropshire .....	24	2307
Cumbria .....	28	3722
Derbyshire .....	23	4219
West Sussex .....	23	1859
North Yorkshire .....	37	2946
Herefordshire .....	14	1681
Lancashire .....	38	2898
South Yorkshire .....	12	670
East Sussex .....	15	922
Cambridgeshire .....	18	2516
Cheshire .....	14	2185
Dorset .....	20	7057
Cleveland .....	11	1034
Nottinghamshire .....	25	2092
Essex .....	34	7170
Cornwall .....	31	9718
Wiltshire .....	17	3992
Avon .....	28	3242
Devon .....	39	6816
Surrey .....	25	1842
Buckinghamshire .....	18	7067
Suffolk .....	24	2942
Northamptonshire .....	10	1545
Hampshire .....	46	5623
Norfolk .....	30	5208
Bedfordshire .....	11	530
Lincolnshire .....	24	2458
Kent .....	49	14396
Berkshire .....	13	2330
Humberside .....	12	2012
West Midlands .....	2	330
Tyne and Wear .....	2	500
Northumbria .....	14	3781
London .....	3	108
Hertfordshire .....	26	3679
Somerset .....	21	4286
Oxfordshire .....	21	2723
Durham .....	11	438
Gloucestershire .....	19	2717
Leicestershire .....	19	4074
Warwickshire .....	17	2218
Staffordshire .....	20	3825
Channel Islands .....	2	137

## Appendix 4

### LIST OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The Volunteer Centre UK  
29 Lower Kings' Road  
Berkhamsted  
Herts HP4 2AB 0442 873311  
(Free Catalogue of services available)

Rural Team  
National Council for Voluntary Organisations  
26 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3HU 071 636 4066

National Association of Volunteer Bureaux (NAVVB)  
St Peter's College  
College Road  
Saltley  
Birmingham B8 3TE 021 327 0265

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)  
Stroud Road  
Cirencester  
Gloucestershire GL7 6JR 0285 653477

Other titles in the Voluntary Action Research Series; available from  
The Volunteer Centre UK.

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Black Participation in Voluntary Organisations

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ISBN 0 904647 71 4