

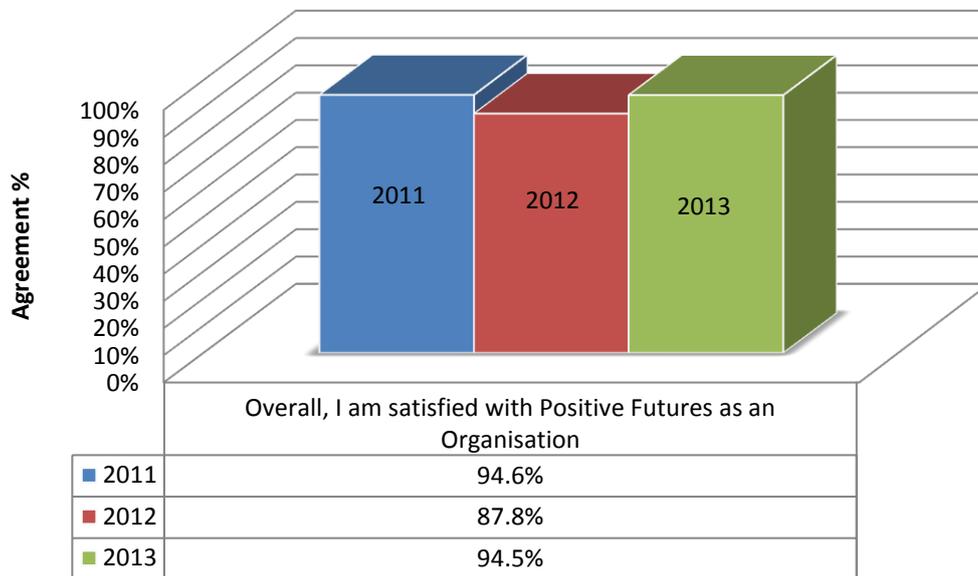
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Executive Summary

Positive Futures particularly value the energy, desire, skills and experience volunteers bring to our Organisation. This report details the findings from the fourth annual Volunteer Survey and aims to gain a greater understanding of volunteers' perceptions across a range of topics. This information will be used to inform Positive Futures' strategic direction. Trends from 2011 and 2012 surveys are presented alongside 2013 results. An anonymous questionnaire was forwarded to all 79 volunteers.

Figure 1: Overall satisfaction



Respondents who answered “I am satisfied with Positive Futures as an Organisation” increased by 6.7% in 2013 when compared to the responses in 2012.

Strengths

Strengths included:

- **The volunteer application process:** Volunteers reported the application process was quick and easy.
- **Staff and support:** Staff were described as being “kind”, “helpful” and “approachable”. Volunteers particularly appreciated being valued by staff.
- **Training:** Volunteers stated training in general was very relevant and made reference to courses such as Induction Training, Epilepsy, Positive Behaviour Training, First Aid and Child Protection.

- **Recognition and Role Satisfaction:** There were high levels of agreement with these areas, with every respondent feeling supported by Positive Futures. 100% of volunteers either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “I find my time spent in Positive Futures rewarding and interesting”.

Key Recommendations

This report recommends that Positive Futures should:

- Improve access to **information** for volunteers, with suggestions including clear, precise and detailed text messages and monthly emails.
- Provide more **information** to volunteers on the individual needs of the people they support.
- Promote more **volunteer opportunities**.
- Provide more **training** specifically for volunteers.
- Develop an **appraisal process** for volunteers.

Conclusion

In summary, there remains a high level of agreement with the various statements throughout the Volunteer Survey. Volunteers have been particularly helpful in highlighting key areas for improvement such as information provided, volunteer opportunities, training and appraisals.

Volunteer Survey

Background

This report outlines the findings of the 2013 Volunteer Survey which was carried out by the Business Excellence Department between December 2012 and February 2013. This was the fourth annual Volunteer Survey carried out within Positive Futures. This anonymous survey aims to develop a greater understanding of volunteer perceptions, which in turn will inform strategic planning within Positive Futures.

Objectives

To:

- understand perceptions of Positive Futures' volunteers.
- identify strengths and areas for improvement which will be used to inform business planning throughout Positive Futures.
- engage volunteers in a consultation process which in itself provides an opportunity for increased communication within Positive Futures.

Methodology

“Volunteers” are people involved in the work of Positive Futures who are not paid for what they do. A questionnaire was forwarded to all volunteers, which consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions. The questionnaires were administrated by Service Secretaries in each Positive Futures office. A total of 99 Volunteer Surveys were issued and 23 Volunteer Surveys were returned.

The response rate this year was 29.4%, which was a significant decrease when compared to last year (2012: 93%). Last year, respondents could return surveys via a web-based emailing system or by post. However, due to data security concerns, this web-based emailing system was not used this year.

The valid percentage¹ is represented throughout the report. Within the benchmarking section, in which comparisons are made to EFQM European Award Finalists, an average rating of the Likert scale is used (eg if on a 4 point Likert, the average was 3.0, this would be 75%).

¹ The valid percentage only counts given responses (blanks are not included).

This report is structured in the same way as the Volunteer Survey itself:

- Application Process
- Role and Support
- Communication
- Training
- Recognition
- Role Satisfaction

Each section will show year on year comparisons with 2011 and 2012, overall “agreement” levels for the statement(s) within each section, as well as a discussion of the findings for each statement. Within each section, the report will make use of the “What’s Working / What’s Not Working” person-centred tool.

Questionnaire Analysis

Volunteers Profile

An anonymous questionnaire was forwarded to all volunteers in Positive Futures. A total of 99 questionnaires were administered and 23 surveys were returned.

Figure 2: Service / Department Breakdown

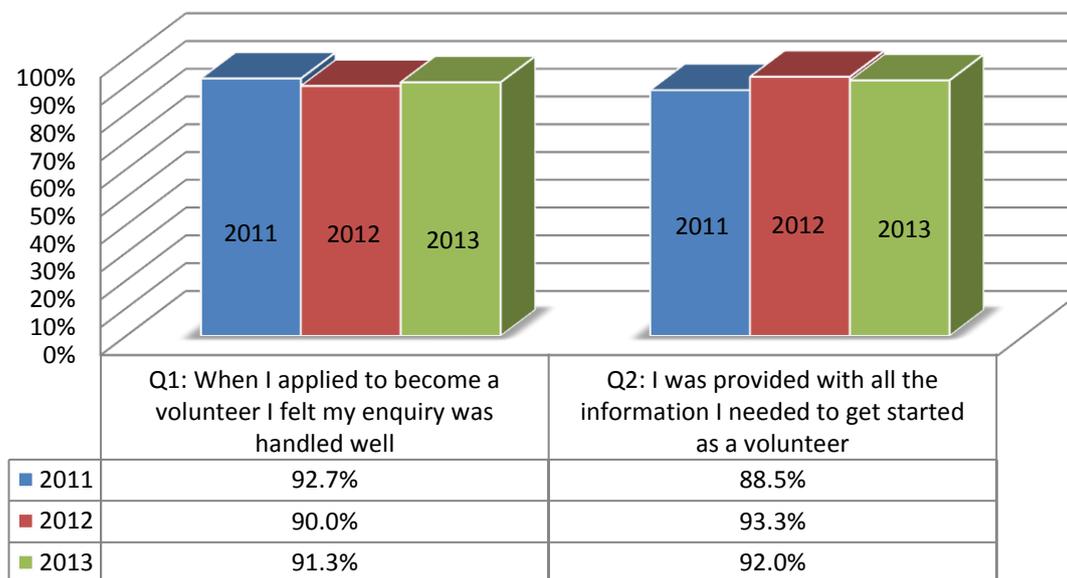
Services	Number of volunteers (as at 31 Dec 2012)	Number of surveys issued by Services	Surveys returned
Crescent SBS	0	1 ²	0 (0%)
Crescent SLS	0	0	0 (N/A)
Cookstown SLS & PS	2	2	1 (50%)
East Coast SLS (Bangor and Portavogie)	7	2	0 (0%)
Lakeland SLS	6	5	3 (60%)
Magherafelt SLS	3	3	0 (0%)
Southern Area HSS	2	1	0 (0%)
Sperrin SLS & PS	0	0	0 (N/A)
Windermere SLS	3	2	1 (50%)
Lakeland Families	5	4	4(100%)
North West Outreach	0	2	0 (0%)
Lisburn Families	35	38 ³	5 (13%)
Bangor Families	45	27	5 (19%)
Better Futures	3	2	0 (0%)
Better Together	11	10	4 (40%)
Totals	122	99	19

² There was 1 volunteer in January 2013 (after the reporting period ending in 31 December 2012).

³ There were 3 new volunteers in January 2013 (thus 3 more in place than the "35" as per the above table).

Application Process: Trend 2011-2013

Figure 3: Application Process



In this section, there were 2 statements. Agreement with Q1, “When I applied to become a volunteer I felt my enquiry was handled well”, increased by 1.3% (from 90.0% in 2012 to 91.3% in 2013). Q2, “I was provided with all the information I needed to get started as a volunteer”, declined slightly by 1.3% (from 93.3% in 2012 to 92.0% in 2013).

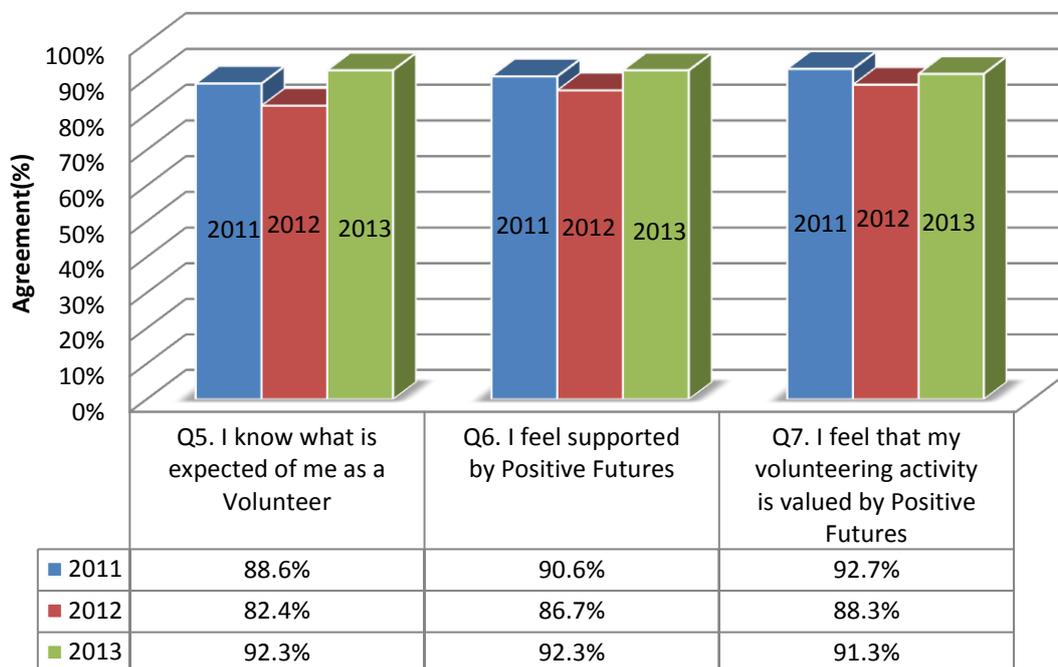
Respondents to Q3, “What worked well for you about the application process to be a Volunteer?”, stated that the overall application process was “easy”, “the staff were helpful” and “quick”.

*“[The Manager of the Project] was very helpful at getting me to understand all that Positive Futures does and what my role would entail”
(Volunteer, 2013)*

Respondents to Q4, “What else could we have done during the application process which would have improved your experience?”, commented that the process “could have been quicker”. The majority of respondents stated they were happy with the application process. Those who noted some areas for improvement referenced increased advertising of volunteering opportunities as well as the possibility of training prior to commencing with Positive Futures.

Volunteer Role and Support: Trend 2011-13

Figure 4: Volunteer Role and Support



In this section there were 3 statements. All of the questions showed a slight increase since 2012 due to the majority of volunteers ‘strongly agreeing’ instead of ‘agreeing’ with the statements.

Agreement with Q5, “I know what is expected of me as a volunteer”, increased by 9.9% (82.4% in 2012 to 92.3% in 2013). Agreement with Q6, “I feel supported by Positive Futures”, has increased by 5.6% (from 86.7% in 2012 to 92.3% in 2013). Agreement to Q7, “I feel that my volunteering activity is valued by Positive Futures”, increased by 3.3% (from 88.3% in 2012 to 91.3 in 2013).

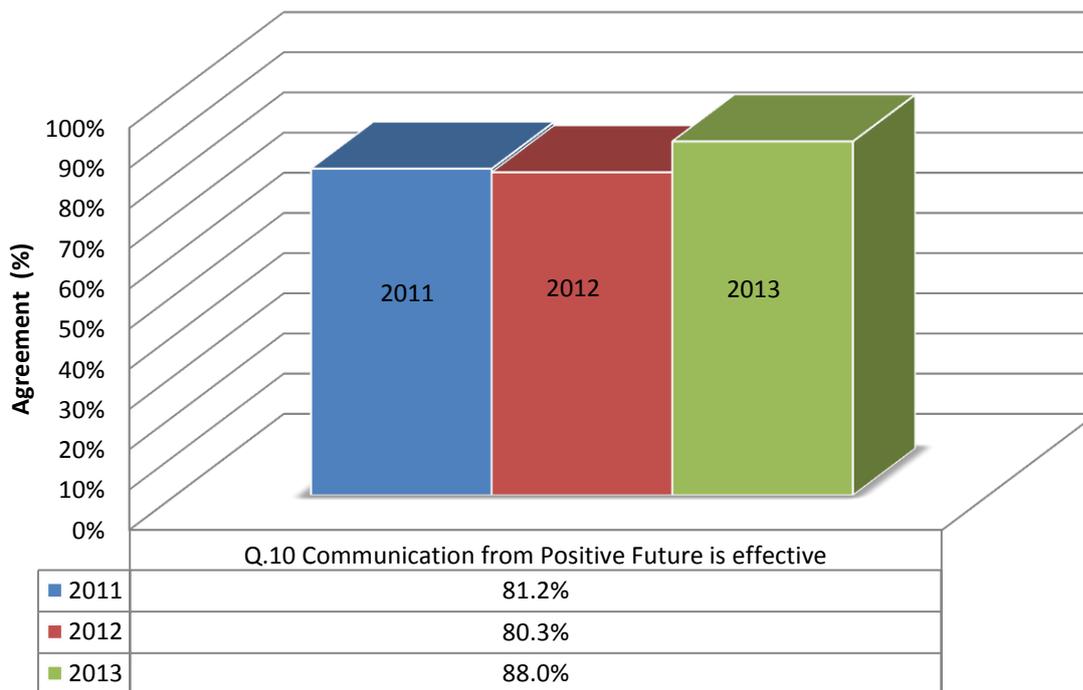
Respondents to Q8, “Which aspects of the support you receive from Positive Futures benefit you the most?”, stated that the staff are “understanding”, “approachable” and “very supportive”. Volunteers also commented that they benefit from the high quality of training they are provided with and being kept informed of any changes to the service by staff.

“[Family Worker] contacts me regularly to see how I'm getting on” (Volunteer, 2013)

65% of volunteers responding to Q9, “What else could we do to support you in your role?”, stated “nothing at present”. Some volunteers commented that they would like more guidance and information about the people they support and what is expected of them whilst they are volunteering.

Communication: Trend 2011-13

Figure 5: Communication



Volunteer agreement with Q10, “Communication from Positive Futures is effective”, has risen by 7.7% over the past year (from 80.3% in 2012 to 88.0% in 2013).

The majority of volunteers responding to Q11, “Which aspects of communication from Positive Futures works well for you?”, referenced that face to face meetings worked well for them as they can discuss any problems or difficulties directly with staff. In addition, volunteers also commented that they like to receive texts, emails and information through the post. Furthermore, volunteers also commented on how they liked the fact that when they phoned the office, the person answering the phone knows who they are.

*“The fact that when I ring the office, the person answering the phone knows who I am and can help or can let me talk to someone who can help”
(Volunteer, 2013)*

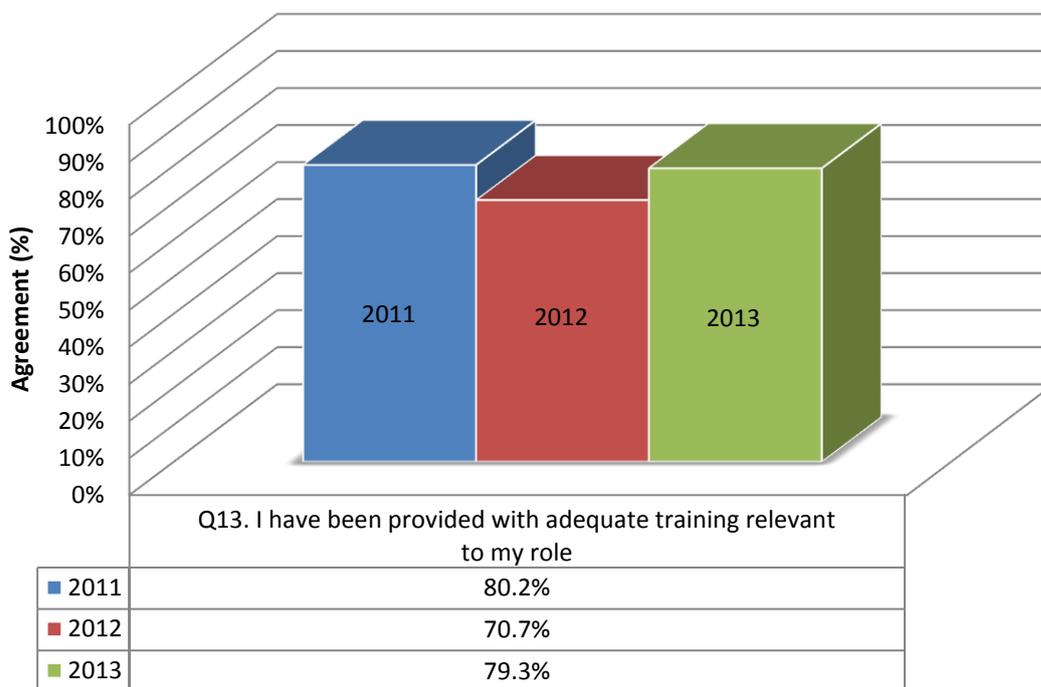
52% of respondents who responded to Q12, “What could we do to improve communication with Positive Futures?”, stated that they were happy with the communication they received from Positive Futures. Some respondents highlighted, however, that text messages should be more clear and precise.

Respondents also recommended that there should be a yearly meeting with all volunteers to highlight how their efforts link to the goals of Positive Futures.

“I strongly believe an appraisal should be done at least once a year with all volunteers to let them know what they are doing is meeting Positive Futures’ requirements.”
(Volunteer, 2013)

Training: Trend 2011-13

Figure 6: Training



Volunteer agreement with Q13, “I have been provided with adequate training relevant to my role”, has increased by 8.6% over the past year (from 70.7% in 2012 to 79.3% in 2013).

For Q14, “What training has been most relevant to your role?”, the majority of respondents commented that they have attended training courses such as Behaviour management, Autism awareness, Induction, Epilepsy, Child protection and Positive behaviour awareness.

Furthermore, other volunteers commented that they were informed of the procedures and policies and that staff would often show them what to do in commencing their volunteering role.

*“During my interview prior to becoming a volunteer, having the opportunity to understand the files and how to cope in different situations was very useful”
(Volunteer, 2013)*

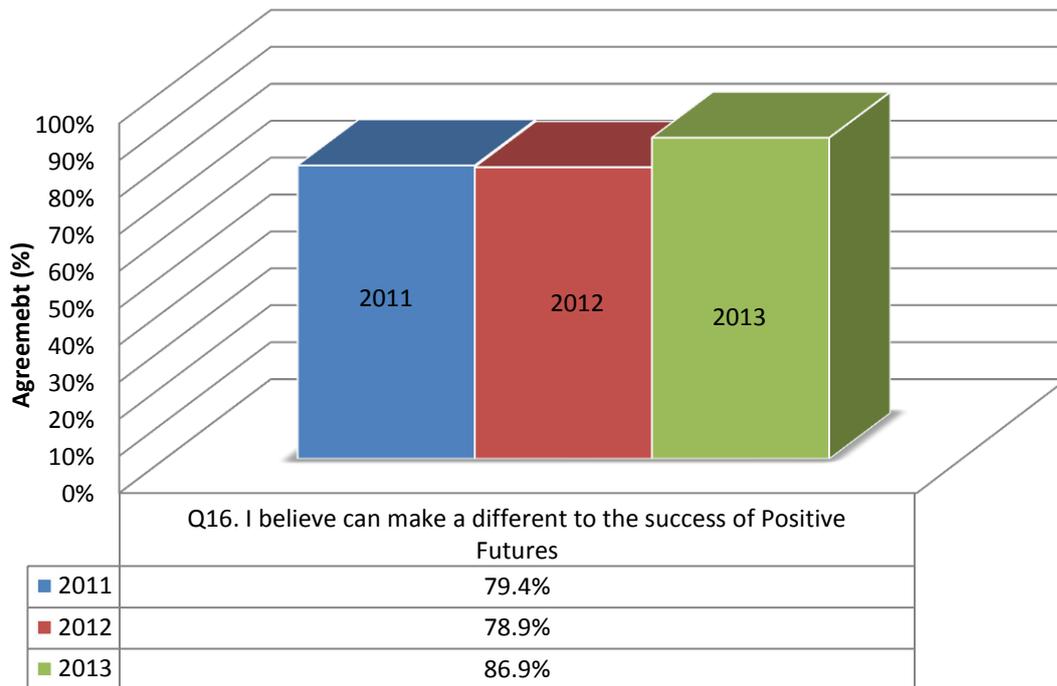
In response to Q15, “What other training would benefit you most?”, the majority of respondents commented that they would like the opportunity to go through more role plays prior to commencing volunteering as well as receiving more training (such as First Aid, Health and Safety and British Sign Language). Others commented that they would like to receive training specifically aimed at volunteers, as there is quite a lot of training specifically for members of staff.

*“I feel having opportunity to go through more situations / role plays could be beneficial”
(Volunteer, 2013)*

*“All the training has been useful, however quite a lot of it is geared to staff and I found myself the only volunteer attending with the rest of staff”
(Volunteer, 2013)*

Recognition: Trend 2011-13

Figure 7: Recognition



“Agreement” levels with Q16, “I believe I can make a difference to the success of Positive Futures”, increased by 8% (78.9% in 2012 to 86.9% in 2013).

The majority of respondents to Q17, “In what ways do you feel Positive Futures recognises your contribution?”, stated that “receiving praise” and the staff showing their gratitude were the most important forms of recognition. Others commented on activities specifically for volunteers such as team building days, volunteer nights, receiving thank you cards or a text message thanking them for their help at an activity.

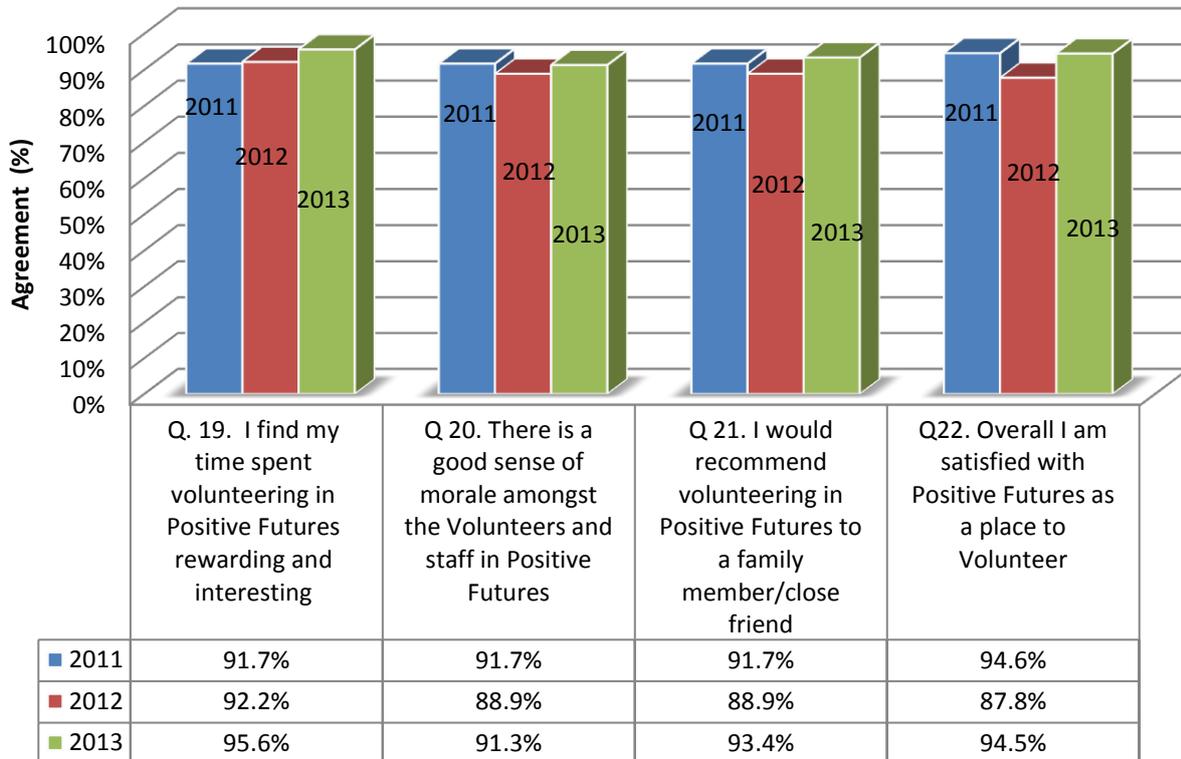
*“Staff are always telling me how valuable they think it is for me giving up my time”
(Volunteer, 2012)*

Most respondents to Q18, “How could Positive Futures better recognise your contribution?”, left the space blank or noted “nothing”, however, some respondents requested “more training”.

*“They already do plenty”
“Just training that will be of benefit to get paid work”
(Volunteers, 2013)*

Role Satisfaction: Trend 2011-2013

Figure 8: Role Satisfaction



Agreement with Q19, “I find my time spent in Positive Futures rewarding and interesting”, increased by 3.4% (92.2% in 2012 to 95.6% in 2013). Agreement with Q20, “There is a good sense of morale amongst the volunteers and staff”, increased by 2.4% (88.9% in 2012 to 91.3% in 2013).

Overall agreement with Q21, “I would recommend volunteering in Positive Futures to a family member / close friends”, increased by 4.8% (88.9% in 2012 to 93.4% in 2013).

Again agreement with Q22, “I am satisfied with Positive Futures as a place to volunteer”, has increased by 6.7% (87.8% in 2012 to 94.5% in 2013).

In response to Q23, “What 3 specific things would improve your current level of satisfaction with Positive Futures?”, the majority of volunteers noted “more training especially for volunteers”. Other responses included “getting to volunteer with different groups of people”, “appraisals once a year”, “more activities” and “a newsletter for volunteers”.

Recommendations

Overall, the 2013 Volunteer Survey was very positive, however, Positive Futures may wish to consider the following recommendations:

- Improve access to **information** for volunteers, including clear, precise and detailed text messages and monthly emails.
- Provide more **information** to volunteers on the individual needs of the people they support.
- Promote more **volunteer opportunities**.
- Provide more **training** specifically for volunteers.
- Develop an **appraisal process** for volunteers.