Volunteer Survey
December 2013
## Contents

Executive Summary ................................................................. 3

Volunteer Survey ........................................................................... 5
  Background.................................................................................. 5
  Objectives.................................................................................... 5
  Methodology................................................................................ 5

Questionnaire Analysis ................................................................. 6
  Application Process...................................................................... 6
  Volunteer Role and Support......................................................... 7
  Communication............................................................................ 8
  Training....................................................................................... 9
  Recognition.................................................................................. 10
  Role Satisfaction....................................................................... 11

Recommendations .......................................................................... 12
Executive Summary

This report details the findings from the 5th annual Volunteer Survey. The purpose of this survey is to gain a greater understanding of volunteers’ perceptions. This information will be used to inform Positive Futures’ strategic direction. Trends from previous surveys are presented alongside the 2013/14 results.

Respondents who answered “I am satisfied with Positive Futures as an Organisation” received 90.4% agreement level. This diagram is reflective of most the agreement levels throughout this year’s survey in that, when compared to 2012/13, there has been a decline. However, this year’s results compare favourably with those from 2011/12.

Strengths

Strengths included:
- Support received during the application process.
- The sense of good morale amongst volunteers and staff.
- Appreciation/acknowledgement of volunteers’ efforts from staff.
Key Recommendations

- Manage Volunteer application more effectively, particularly ensuring the reasons for any delays in the commencement of volunteering are clearly and regularly communicated.
- Provide greater clarity around expectations for volunteers.
- Training on dealing with challenging behaviour of children should be provided as well as more training around infection control / prevention, Autism and First Aid, where relevant.
- Increase opportunities for evening / weekend training sessions and increase the use of e-learning.
- Improve communication through more effective use of our website, Facebook, Twitter, the Volunteer Newsletter.
- Promote recognition of volunteers within the local press.
Volunteer Survey

Background

This report outlines the findings of the 2013/14 Volunteer Survey which was carried out between October and December 2013. This was the fifth annual Volunteer Survey carried out within Positive Futures. This anonymous survey aims to develop an understanding of volunteer perceptions, which in turn will inform strategic planning within Positive Futures.

Objectives

To:
• engage volunteers in a consultation process which seeks to understand their perceptions of Positive Futures’ volunteers;
• identify strengths and areas for improvement which will be used to inform business planning throughout Positive Futures.

Methodology

“Volunteers” are people involved in the work of Positive Futures who are not paid for what they do. A questionnaire, which consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions, was forwarded to all active volunteers. As at 30 September there were 131 active volunteers. 38 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 29.0% response rate. In 2012/13 the response rate was 29.4%.

The valid percentage\(^1\) is represented throughout this report.

This report follows the structure of the Volunteer questionnaire:
• Application Process
• Role and Support
• Communication
• Training
• Recognition
• Satisfaction

Each section will show quantitative year on year comparisons. A “weighted” approach has been adopted (i.e. each point on the Likert scale is weighted) to enable accurate agreement percentages to be calculated.

\(^1\) The valid percentage only counts given responses (blanks are not included).
In this section, there were 2 statements. Agreement with both statements declined by 1.8% and 4.5% respectively. Respondents to Q3, “Tell us what worked well for you about the application process to be a volunteer?” valued a simple clear process which provided: concise information about their role and Positive Futures; opportunity to discuss the available options; support from their point of contact; flexibility around the needs of the volunteer and ability to meet face to face with staff.

“I received good support from Ruth and Bernice about my application”
(Volunteer)

The majority of respondents to Q4, “What else could we have done during the application process which would have improved your experience?” believed there was nothing else that could be improved about the process. Those who did, noted improvements around communication, particularly around explaining the reason for any delays in the commencement of volunteering.
In this section there were 4 statements. The greatest decline was in relation to clarity of expectation (7.2% decline when compared to 2012/13). This potentially links to the decline experienced in Question 2.

Respondents to Q9, “Which aspects of the support you receive from Positive Futures benefit you the most?” noted the following themes:

- Having regular contact with a named person and support staff who are approachable and friendly provides a sense of assurance and confidence. Volunteers noted that having someone at the end of the phone provides reassurance.
- Training and being provided with key information has been very useful and relevant. Notably information within Risk Assessments, the range of learning disabilities / traits which children might have and Studio 3 training.
- General appreciation and flexibility they receive from staff.

“The support from my coordinator has been excellent, with constant contact and guidance given. Much encouragement and praise has also helped”

(Volunteer)

In response to Q10 “What else could we do to support you better in your role (including how we take care of your health, safety and wellbeing)?” training (notably on challenging behaviour) was the most commonly referenced area for improvement.
Volunteer agreement with Q11, “Communication from Positive Futures is helpful and assists me to make the most of my volunteer role” declined by 3.7% when compared to last year.

As per Figure 5, the majority of volunteers responding to Q12, “Which aspects of communication from Positive Futures works well for you?”, referenced text messaging. The other main aspects of communication were face-to-face meetings with the co-ordinator, email and telephone. Interestingly, no volunteer identified with the Positive Futures’ use of Twitter and limited numbers referenced our website.

![Figure 5: Aspects of Communications Which Work Well](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Ticks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Messaging</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face meetings with supervisors</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Meetings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Newsletters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Website</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter (@PFtweets or @PFMDtweets)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents to Q13, “What could we do to improve communication with Positive Futures?” did not identify any areas for improvement. Some suggested that Positive Futures should use Facebook, forum pages, create a volunteer newsletter as well as more regular contact via email.
Training

Volunteer agreement with Q14, “I have been provided with adequate training relevant to my role”, has decreased by 3.6% when compared to last year. Q15 “I think that the amount of training time required is reasonable for my role” was a new statement which received 76.4% agreement.

In response to Q16, “What training has been most relevant to your role?”, respondents noted Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Training, Induction Training, autism awareness. There was a clear theme of being provided with the training required to enable confidence in fulfilling their role.

In response to Q17 “What other training would benefit you most?” respondents noted they would like to have training on dealing with challenging behaviour in children, infection control / prevention, autism, First Aid and one volunteer mentioned Makaton Training.

In response to Q18 “Is there any different way in which you would like training to be delivered (e.g. e-learning, videos, Saturday or evening training events etc)?” two themes emerged: (1) providing training sessions in the evening / weekends and (2) use of e-learning (particularly the use of videos).

“Evening training events or e-learning if possible, meaning it can be done at any time, rather than finding a time to suit everyone”
   (Volunteer, 2013/14)
“Agreement” levels with Q19, “Through my volunteering, I believe I can make a difference to the lives of people with a learning disability”, decreased by 1.2%.

The majority of respondents to Q20, “In what ways do you think Positive Futures recognises your contribution?” noted how they valued the fact that Positive Futures’ staff thanked them for their efforts (via thank you cards, text messages, appreciation nights). In addition, volunteers valued being included on newsletters, websites and awards / certificates.

“The staff always thank me and having volunteer stories on the website lets everyone see what we do and how much we are appreciated.”
(Volunteer, 2013/14)

Most respondents to Q21, “How could we better recognise your contribution as a volunteer?”, the majority of respondents reported that the recognition they got could not be built upon. There was one suggestion for recognising volunteers within the local press as well as a suggestion for arranging an evening out solely for volunteers.

“Perhaps an occasional mention about volunteering in the local press would be a good way of recognising volunteers and this would encourage others to get involved.”
(Volunteers, 2013/14)
There were 4 quantitative questions in the Role Satisfaction section. Questions 22, 24 and 25 declined when compared to last year but were all greater than when compared to 2011/12. Agreement with Q23 “There is a good sense of morale amongst the volunteers and staff in Positive Futures” increased.

In response to Q26, “What 3 specific things would improve your current level of satisfaction with Positive Futures?”, more training (particularly around challenging behaviour), more frequent support sessions and the creation of a Volunteers newsletter to enable better communication and awareness of what other volunteers are involved in were noted.

In response to Q27 “Is there anything else you want to tell us that would make us a better Organisation?”, comments focused on continuing to identify and promote Volunteering opportunities.
Recommendations

Overall, the 2013/14 Volunteer Survey was very positive, however, Positive Futures may wish to consider the following recommendations:

- Manage Volunteer application more effectively, particularly ensuring the reasons for any *delays in the commencement* of volunteering are clearly and regularly *communicated*.
- Provide greater *clarity around expectations* for volunteers.
- Training on dealing with *challenging behaviour of children* should be provided as well as more training around infection control / prevention, Autism and First Aid, where relevant.
- Increase opportunities for *evening / weekend training* sessions and increase the use of *e-learning*.
- *Improve communication* through more effective use of our website, Facebook, Twitter, the Volunteer Newsletter.
- Promote *recognition of volunteers within the local press*. 