



Volunteer Satisfaction

October – December 2007

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Executive Summary

- Between 22nd October and 11th December 2007 2,253 registered users of do-it.org.uk (538 aged 16 to 25) completed YouthNet's Volunteer Satisfaction Survey.
- Respondents were most likely to have found out about do-it.org.uk through a search engine (46%).
- Almost all (94%) respondents found the search and registration facilities on do-it.org.uk easy to use.
- do-it.org.uk met the expectations of 59% of respondents and exceeded the expectations of 12% of respondents.
- More than three quarters (77%) of respondents who had read the monthly email newsletter rated it as either excellent (16%) or good (62%).
- Seven in ten (72%) respondents had applied for at least one volunteering opportunity through do-it.org.uk, and a further 12% had not applied for an opportunity but had requested further information.
- The most popular opportunities amongst respondents were those involving children, those related to health, hospitals or hospices, and those relating to education.
- 63% of respondents who had applied for an opportunity or requested further information had been contacted by the time they completed the survey.
- Half (50%) of those who had been contacted (52% of 16 to 25 year olds) were contacted less than a week after their enquiry – 23% were contacted within 3 days. 78% of contacted respondents were satisfied with the speed of response to their enquiry.
- Respondents were most likely to have been contacted by a Volunteer Centre (55%) and by email (54%).
- 86% of respondents who had been contacted agreed that the response they received was helpful, and 79% agreed that they had been provided with all the information they required.
- 41% of those who had applied for an opportunity had started volunteering by the time they completed the survey. Of these respondents, 88% had started an ongoing role.
- Six in ten (60%) volunteers found their role challenging, and only one in ten (9%) found the work boring. Very few (7%) respondents were disappointed by their volunteering experience.
- More than eight in ten (82%) respondents felt valued by the organisation for which they volunteered, and 69% thought the work they did made a real difference to the organisation.
- One in ten (11%) respondents thought their volunteering placement was disorganised, but very few (2%) thought it had been a waste of time. The majority (76%) of those who had volunteered agreed that their experience had made them more likely to volunteer in the future.
- Four in ten (38%) respondents (51% of 16 to 25 year olds) would have been unlikely to volunteer if it hadn't been for do-it.org.uk.

- The most popular reasons for volunteering amongst respondents were 'to do something positive with spare time' (69%) and 'to help other people' (68%). Younger respondents were most likely to say they were interested in volunteering 'to gain work experience'.
- Although a quarter (23%) of respondents said they volunteer regularly and a further four in ten (38%) said they've helped out once or twice before, 38% of all respondents and 36% of 16 to 25 year olds were new to volunteering.

Introduction

www.do-it.org.uk is the first and only national volunteering database in the UK. Created and managed by YouthNet, and launched by the Prime Minister in 2000, do-it.org.uk connects people, communities and organisations to inspire positive change.

Fast and simple to use, do-it.org.uk provides details of over 850,000 opportunities to volunteer throughout the UK, any of which can be found with a simple postcode search. Over 60,000 people visited do-it.org.uk in January 2008 and on average, 10% of visitors go on to register for at least one of the volunteering opportunities listed – that's an average of 17,000 applications each month.

Thanks to YouthNet's network of partnerships with Volunteer Centres in England, and local and national charities UK-wide, volunteering opportunities with 21,000+ organisations are promoted via do-it.org.uk. The volunteering opportunities are managed by do-it.org.uk's partners at a local level and YouthNet provides a range of products and services to help ensure the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities, as well as tools to ensure a positive volunteer experience.

On the 22nd October 2007, a questionnaire was administered to all those who had registered on do-it.org.uk between 1st November 2006 and 16th October 2007 and had said they were willing to be re-contacted. Respondents were asked about their experiences of and motivation for volunteering, as well as about the usability of the website and associated services.

By the 11th December 2007 when the survey was closed, there had been 2,253 responses, representing a 6% response rate (original sample = 37,690).

Alongside the results for all respondents, this report breaks down the results to show those for 16 to 25 year old volunteers only (538 respondents belonged to this age group).

Demographic profile

The demographic profile of respondents is shown in this section.

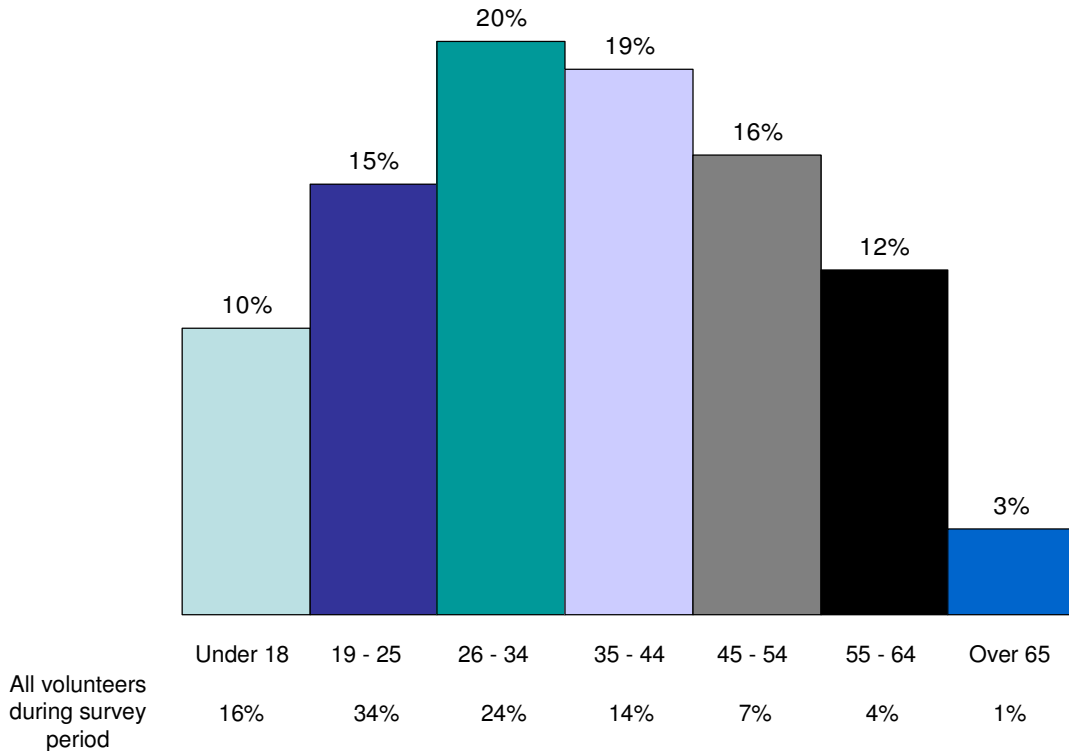
It is common practice to 'weight' data to correct for sample bias i.e. a sample not being a true reflection of the population it was taken from. If, for example, there were an equal number of males and females in a population, yet a sample taken from that population contained more females than males, responses from males would be weighted up so they have a greater impact on percentages, and responses from females weighted down to reduce their impact on percentages.

There was no weighting applied to the data for this survey. Although the gender profile of respondents matched that of all volunteers registered during the survey period well, older respondents were slightly overrepresented in the sample (as shown in the next section), creating a slight bias in results.

1.1 Age and Gender

The age profile of survey respondents is shown below in chart 1.1.1. The chart also shows the equivalent profile of all volunteers registered during the period covered by the survey – from 22nd October 2006 to 1st November 2007.

Chart 1.1.1 Age of respondents



Base: All respondents (2,253), all volunteers during survey period (66,378)

Survey respondents were most likely to be between the ages of 26 and 44, with four in ten (40%) respondents falling into this age group. Respondents were slightly more likely to be older than younger than this, with 31% aged 45 or older and 25% 25 or younger.

Data from the 24% of respondents (538) who were aged between 16 and 25 have been analysed separately in this report alongside results for all respondents.

Almost nine in ten (88%) volunteers registered between 22nd October 2006 and 1st November 2007 were under 45 years old compared with 65% of survey respondents. This means older respondents were overrepresented in the survey sample. As there has been no weighting applied, results shown in this report are slightly biased towards older respondents.

The gender profile of survey respondents was very similar to all volunteers registered during the period. Three quarters of both groups (77% of survey respondents and 75% of volunteers) were female.

1.2 Ethnicity

When asked their ethnicity, three quarters (76%) of respondents described themselves as white. One in ten (9%) respondents said they were Asian (inc. Chinese), 3% said they were black, and 2% mixed race.

A greater proportion of 16 to 25 year olds were from ethnic minorities, with only two thirds (66%) describing themselves as white. Almost two in ten (18%) 16 to 25 year old respondents said they were Asian, one in ten (9%) said they were black, and 3% mixed race.

do-it.org.uk attracts a disproportionately high number of volunteers from ethnic minorities, and the ethnic profile of survey respondents reflects this well. In 2001, 92% of the UK population was white, 4% were Asian, 2% were black, and 1% mixed race.

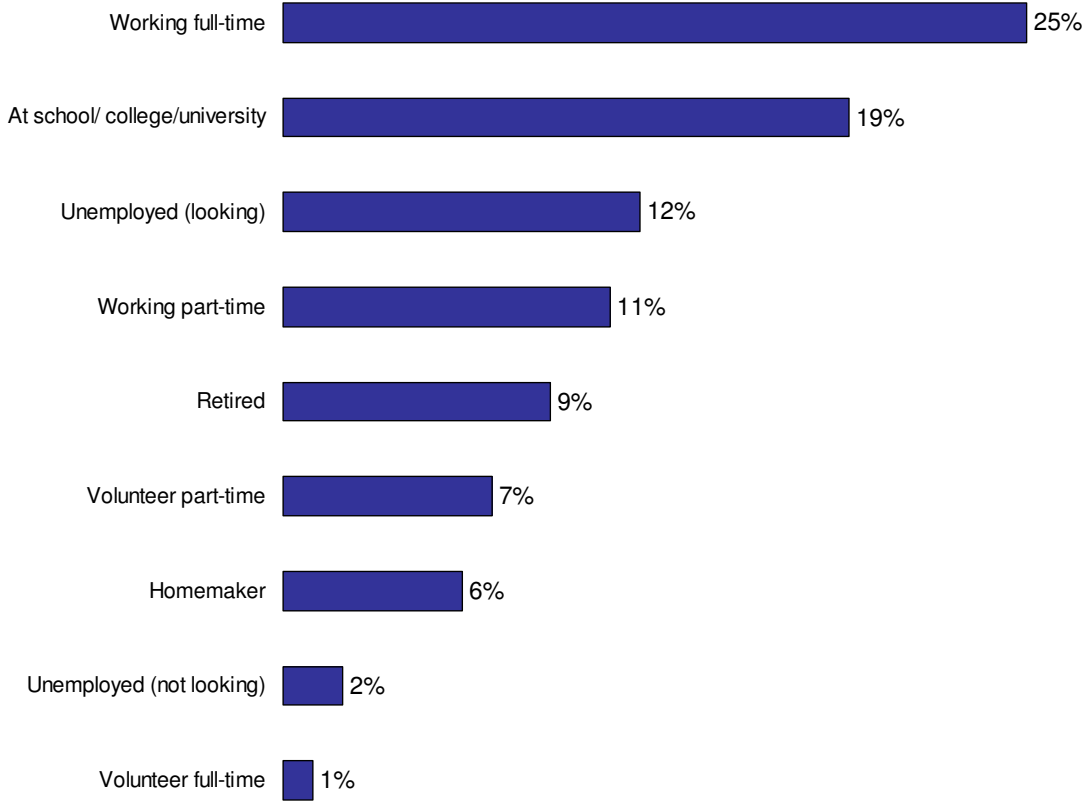
1.3 Disability

When asked whether they would consider themselves to have a disability or impairment, one in ten (11%) respondents said they would (6% of 16 to 25 year olds). Using the widest survey definition, it is estimated that there are around 11 million disabled adults in the UK, which is one in five of the adult population (Office for Disability, 2005). This implies that disabled people were underrepresented in the sample when compared with the UK population. However, it is noted that many of these people would not classify themselves as disabled, which provides a possible explanation for the low proportion of respondents doing so.

1.4 Working status

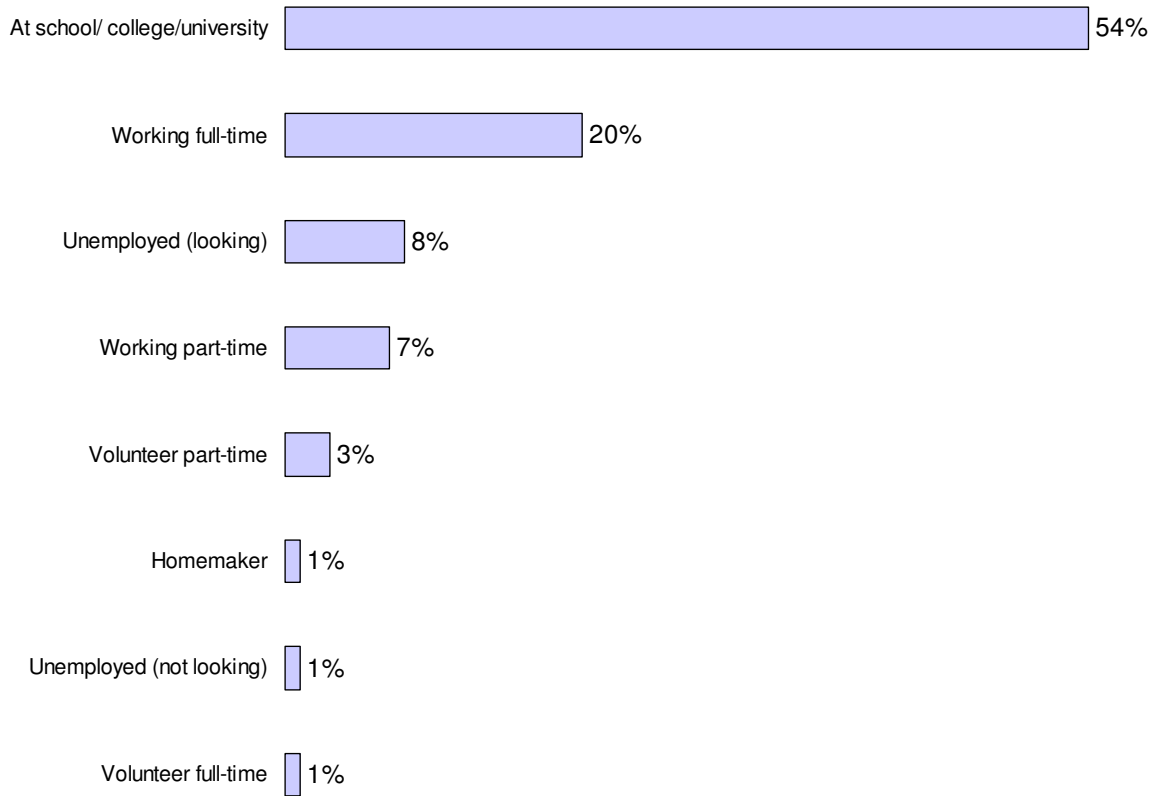
Chart 1.4.1 shows the working status of all respondents, and chart 1.4.2 breaks the data down to show the working status of 16 to 25 year olds only.

Chart 1.4.1 Working status – all respondents



Base: All respondents (2,253)

Chart 1.4.2 Working status – 16 to 25 year olds



Base: All respondents aged 16 to 25 (538)

Respondents were most likely to be working full-time with a quarter (25%) of all respondents saying this was their working status at the time of the survey. Two in ten (19%) respondents were at school, college or university - probably due to the high proportion of younger respondents in this category (54%).

A fairly significant 12% of respondents (8% of 16 to 25 year olds) were unemployed and looking for work. It is possible that these respondents were using volunteering to develop their skills and experience as a route into paid work.

do-it.org.uk website and newsletter

This section of the report looks at response to questions directly relating to do-it.org.uk.

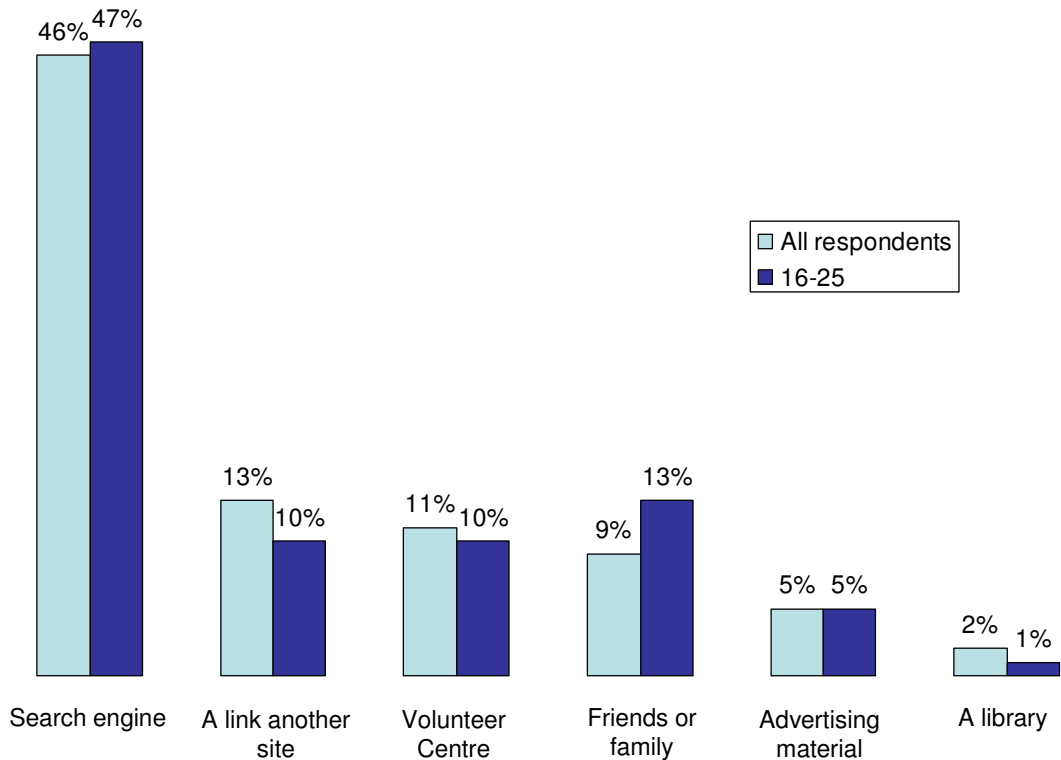
Once volunteers have applied for an opportunity or requested more information through the website, YouthNet has limited control over the experience of volunteers – the responsibility is transferred to those brokering and hosting volunteering opportunities.

YouthNet endeavours to ensure that a good service is provided to volunteers by ensuring that all organisations that wish to add volunteering opportunities to the national volunteering database have in place essential policies and procedures to support volunteers. If organisations do not meet our requirements they are referred to Volunteering England's Investing in Volunteers standard.

2.1 *Where heard of do-it.org.uk*

Chart 2.1.1 shows where respondents heard of do-it.org.uk.

Chart 2.1.1 Where heard of do-it.org.uk



Base: All respondents (2,253), 16-25 (538)

Half (46%) of respondents – regardless of age group – found out about do-it.org.uk through a search engine. This was most likely to be Google. A further one in ten (13%) respondents were directed to do-it.org.uk by another website – usually a local council or specialist volunteering website such as Volunteering England.

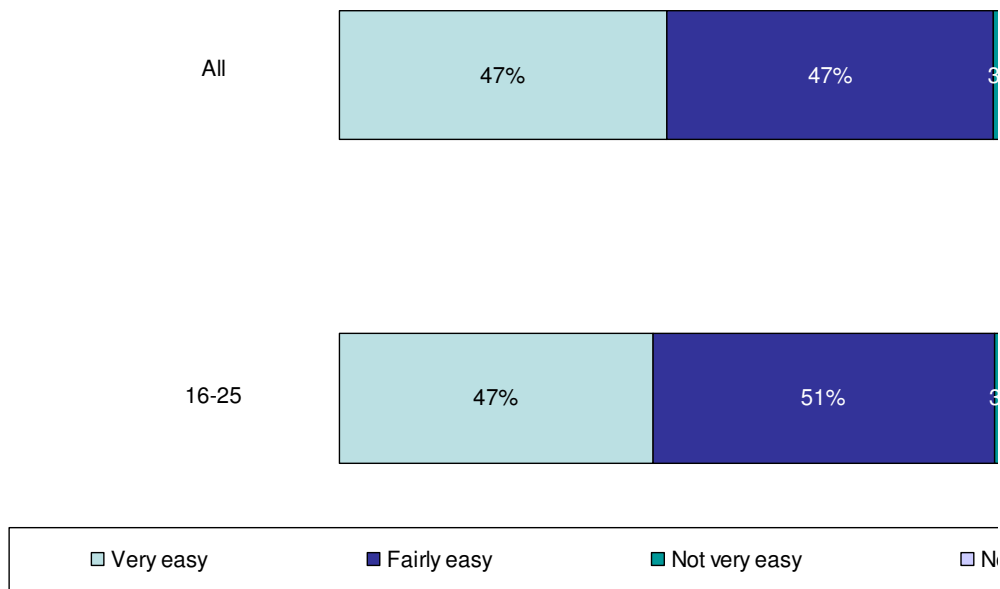
One in ten (11%) respondents found out about do-it.org.uk through a Volunteer Centre, and a similar proportion through friends or family, showing that word of mouth is an important means of generating awareness of the website.

2.2 Ease of using do-it.org.uk search and registration processes

Users of do-it.org.uk are able to search for volunteering opportunities in their local area and have the opportunity to focus their searches. For example, they can search according to the type of activity they would like to do, the type of organisation they would like to volunteer for, or the time of day they are available. Before applying for an opportunity or requesting more information, potential volunteers are required to register on the website by completing a simple registration form.

Respondents were asked how easy the search and registration facilities on do-it.org.uk were to use. The results are shown in chart 2.2.1.

Chart 2.2.1 Ease of using search and registration facilities



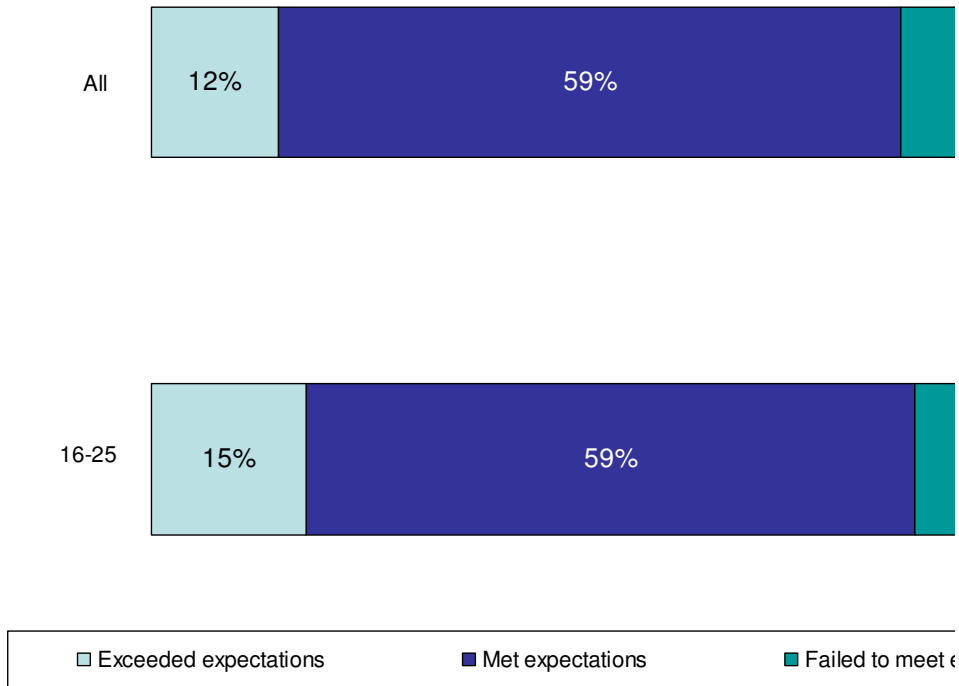
Base: All respondents (2,253), 16-25 (538)

Almost all (94%) respondents found the search and registration facilities on do-it.org.uk easy to use, with half (47%) saying they were very easy to use. There was no difference between younger and older respondents on these measures.

2.3 Whether website met expectations

Respondents were asked whether, taking all aspects of do-it.org.uk into account, the website met, exceeded or failed to meet their expectations. Chart 2.3.1 shows the results of this question.

Chart 2.3.1 Whether website met expectations



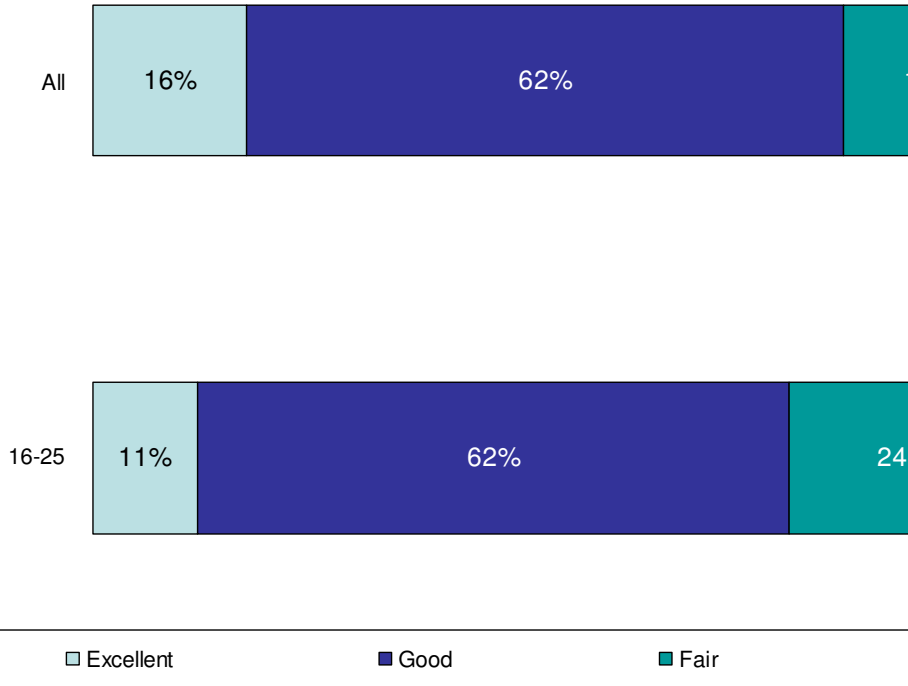
Base: All respondents (2253), 16-25 (538)

do-it.org.uk exceeded the expectations of 12% of respondents (15% of 16 to 25 year olds), and met the expectations of a further six in ten (59%). Although a fifth (20%) of respondents said the website failed to meet their expectations, it's important to remember that some respondents may have had a negative overall experience due to the fact they were not contacted after applying for a volunteering opportunity, or had undertaken some volunteering that they did not enjoy. These respondents' evaluation of the website may have been influenced by these negative experiences, over which YouthNet had no control.

2.4 Monthly do-it.org.uk email newsletter

All registered users of do-it.org.uk who request to receive regular updates from the website are sent a monthly email newsletter. Three in ten (28%) of all respondents and a similar proportion (31%) of 16 to 25 year olds received the newsletter. Chart 2.4.1 shows how respondents who had read the newsletter would rate it on a four-point scale from excellent to poor.

Chart 2.4.1 Rating of email newsletter



Base: All who had received and read newsletter (556), 16-25 (168)

More than three quarters (77%) of respondents (71% of 16 to 25 year olds) who had read the newsletter thought it was either excellent or good. Only 5% said they would describe the newsletter as poor.

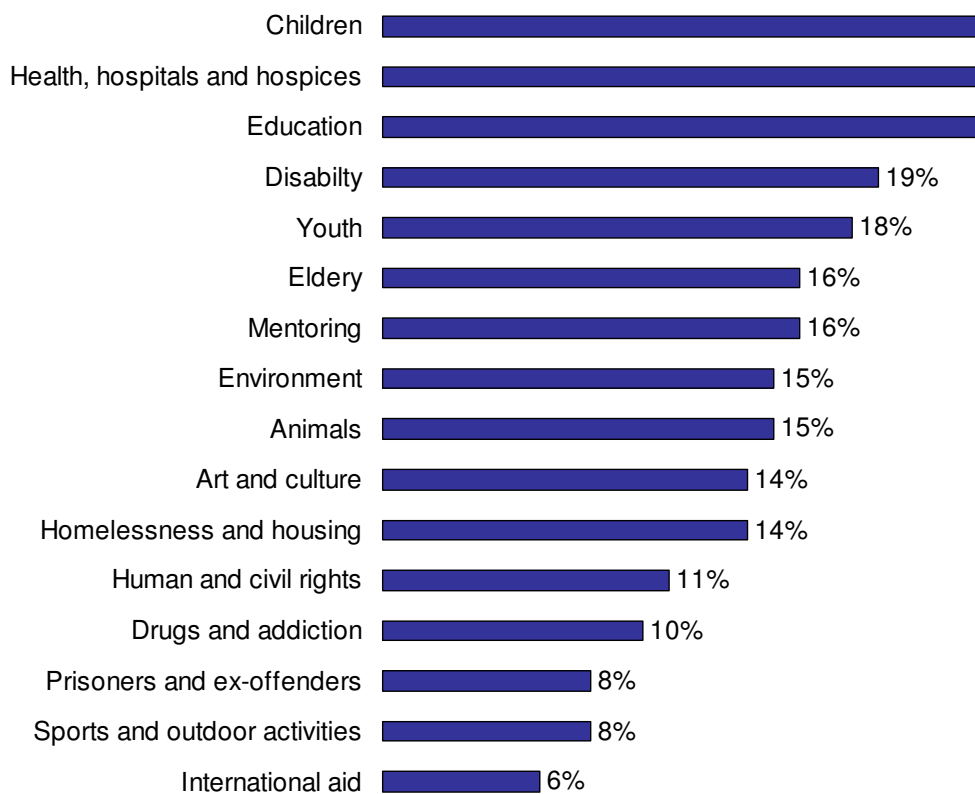
Opportunities enquired about and applied for

This chapter looks at the type of opportunities applied for or enquired about by respondents.

Seven in ten (72%) respondents (69% of 16 to 25 year olds) had applied for at least one volunteering opportunity through do-it.org.uk, and a further 12% (16% of 16 to 25 year olds) had not applied for an opportunity but had requested further information about at least one.

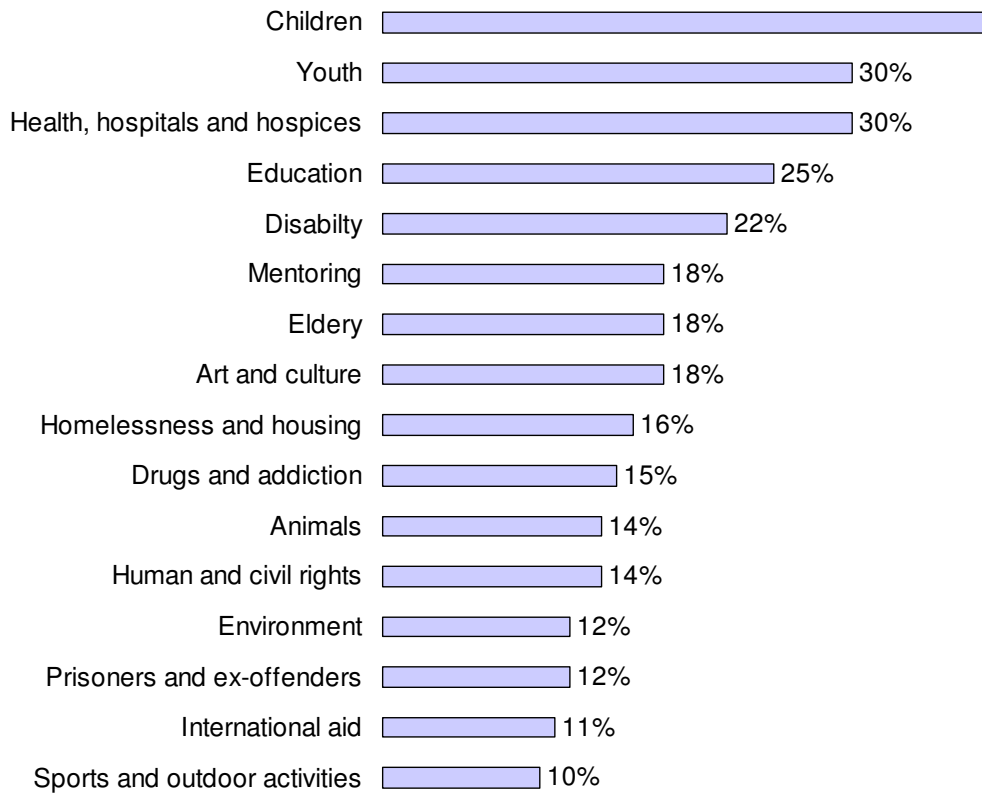
Respondents were given a list of types of organisation/areas of interest and asked into which categories the opportunity or opportunities they applied for, or expressed interest in, would fall. Charts 3.1 and 3.2 show results for all respondents and 16 to 25 year olds respectively.

Chart 3.1 Type of opportunity – all respondents



Base: All who had expressed an interest in an opportunity (1,891)

Chart 3.2 Type of opportunity – 16 to 25 year olds



Base: All 16 to 25 year olds who had expressed an interest in an opportunity (457)

Respondents expressed interest in a range of opportunities. However, those involving children were the most popular, with three in ten (28%) respondents saying they had requested further information about or applied for an opportunity of this kind. Other popular areas of interest were health and education - mentioned by 24% and 23% of respondents respectively, and disability and youth – mentioned by 19% and 18% of respondents respectively.

Opportunities involving children were also the most popular amongst 16 to 25 year old respondents, with four in ten (42%) saying they expressed an interest in this type of opportunity. A larger percentage of younger than older respondents expressed an interest in most types of opportunity, implying that younger respondents tend to apply for more opportunities than their older counterparts. Youth-related volunteering opportunities were particularly popular amongst respondents aged 16 to 25 – possibly because of their greater connection to the cause.

Contact

As mentioned at the beginning of chapter 2, once volunteers have applied for or asked for further information about an opportunity, responsibility for contacting them falls to those responsible for brokering or hosting that opportunity. Organisations must meet stringent quality standards set by YouthNet before they are able to advertise opportunities through do-it.org.uk. However the control the charity has over whether volunteers are contacted, or over the quality of this contact, is limited. YouthNet suggest to partner organisations that they follow up volunteers' enquiries as soon as possible. If volunteers have not heard anything within 10 working days it is suggested they contact the opportunity provider directly. The opportunity provider's details are supplied in the confirmation email sent to the volunteer.

As contact is a fundamental aspect of the volunteering process (if volunteers are not contacted, they cannot volunteer their time), it has a huge bearing on volunteer satisfaction, so questions about contact received were included in the questionnaire. This chapter shows results of these questions.

4.1 Whether contacted

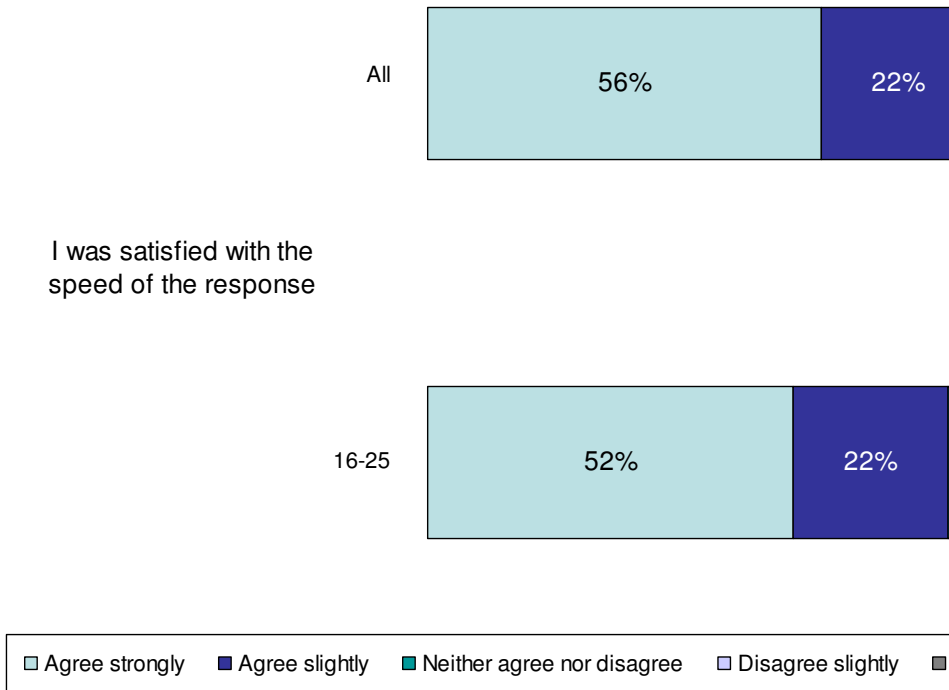
Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents (58% of 16 to 25 year olds) who had expressed an interest in an opportunity had been contacted by the time they completed the survey.

4.2 Speed of response

Half (50%) of those who had been contacted (52% of 16 to 25 year olds), were contacted less than a week after their enquiry – 23% were contacted within 3 days. Only 6% of respondents who received a response (5% of 16 to 25 year olds) did so more than a more than a month after making their enquiry.

Those who received a response to their enquiry were asked to say how satisfied they were with the speed of contact by saying how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I was satisfied with the speed of the response'. Chart 4.2.1 shows the results.

Chart 4.2.1 Satisfaction with speed of response



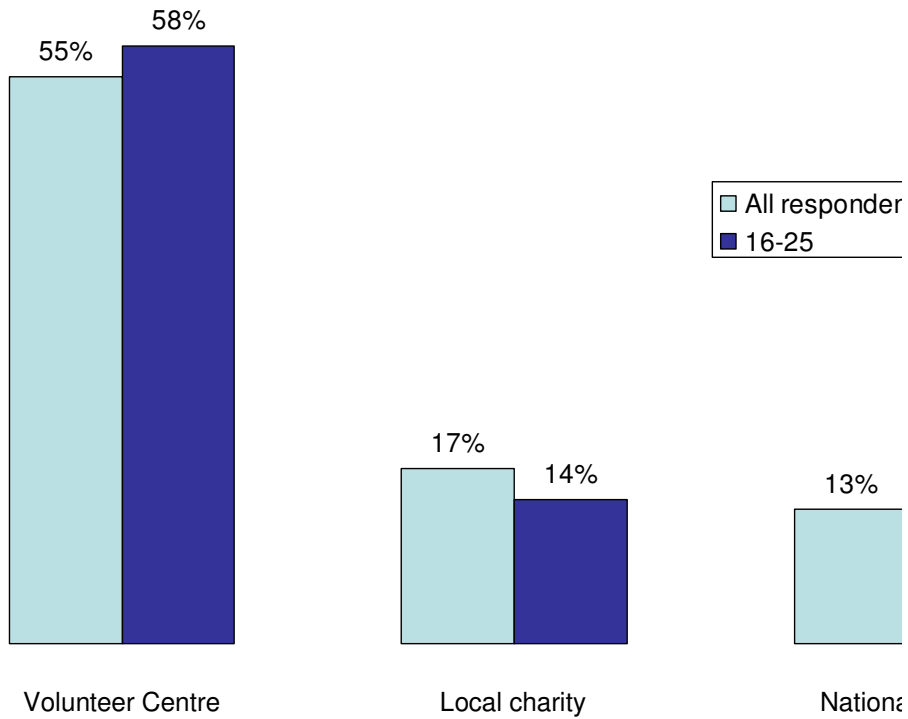
Base: All who had been contacted, (1,192), 16-25 (265)

Encouragingly, eight in ten (78%) respondents who had been contacted (74% of 16 to 25 year olds) agreed with the statement, and therefore were satisfied with the speed of response to their enquiry. Only 4% (5% of 16 to 25 year olds) strongly disagreed with the statement and were therefore very dissatisfied.

4.3 Who made contact with respondents

Chart 4.3.1 shows who made contact with respondents after they had applied for, or asked for more information about, an opportunity.

Chart 4.3.1 Who made contact with respondents



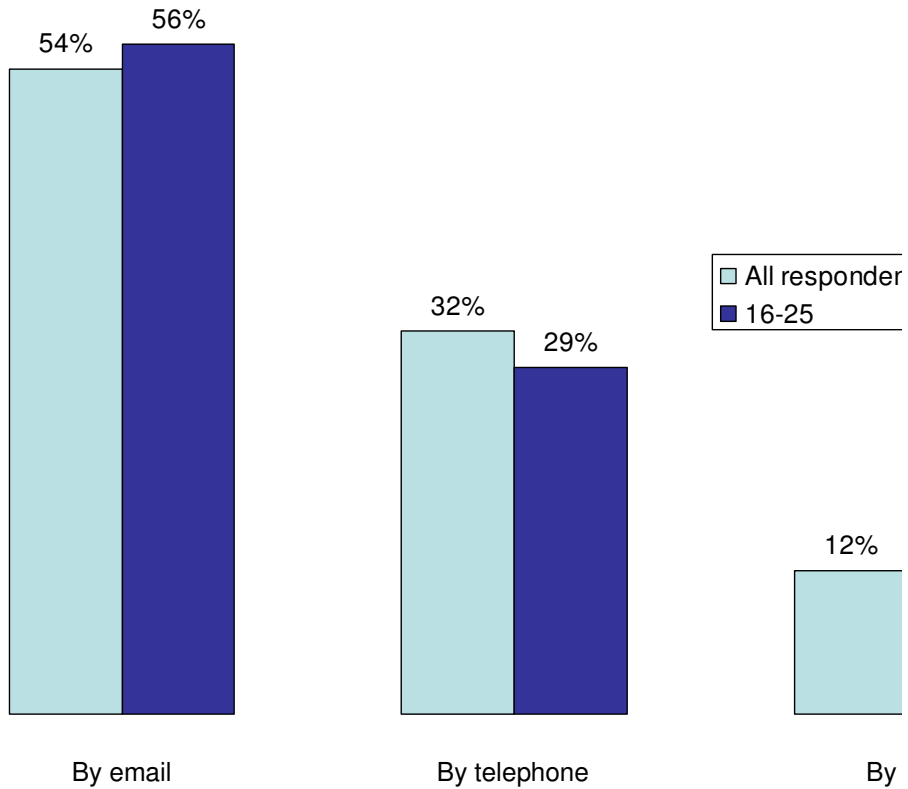
Base: All who had been contacted, (1,192), 16-25 (265)

As expected, considering the majority of volunteering opportunities are advertised by Volunteer Centres, the majority of those who received a response to their enquiry were contacted by a Volunteer Centre (55% of all respondents, 58% of 16 to 25 year olds). A significant proportion of respondents were contacted by a local or national charity (30% and 26% of all respondents and 16 to 25 year olds respectively).

4.4 How respondents were contacted

How respondents were contacted in response to their enquiry is shown in chart 4.4.1.

Chart 4.4.1 How respondents were contacted



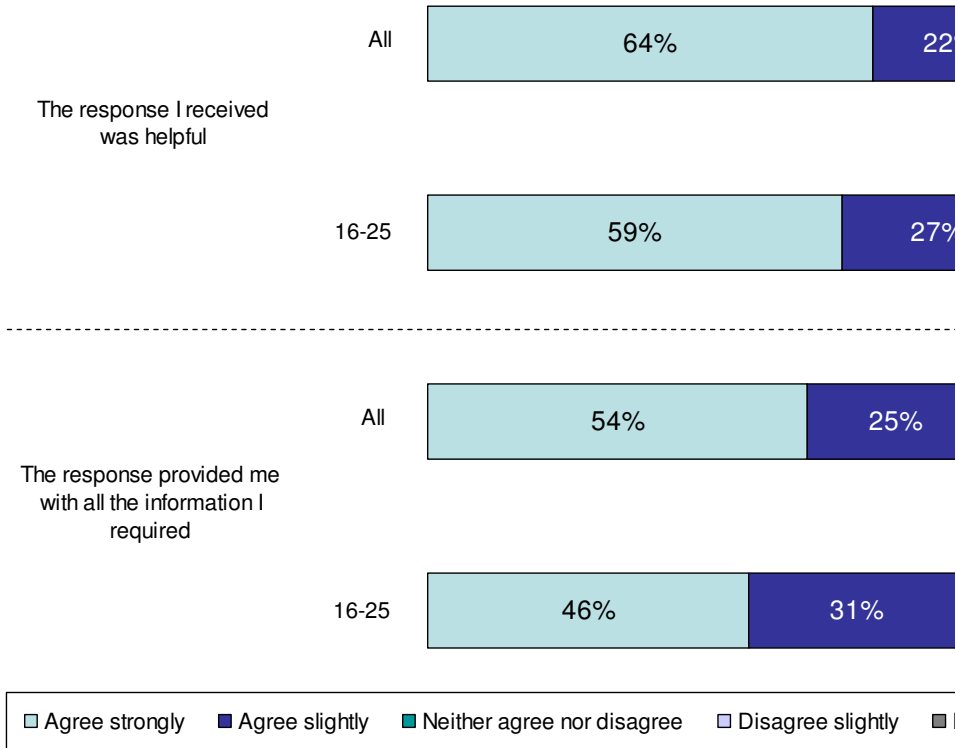
Base: All who had been contacted, (1,192), 16-25 (265)

The most common method of contact was email, with 54% of all respondents and 56% of 16 to 25 year olds who received a response to their enquiry saying they had been contacted in this way. Three in ten (32%) respondents (29% of 16 to 25 year olds) who had been contacted received a telephone call, and 12% received information by post.

4.5 Quality of information

Respondents who had been contacted were presented with the statements about the response they received shown in chart 4.5.1 and asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each.

Chart 4.5.1 Agreement with statements about response



Base: All who had been contacted, (1,192), 16-25 (265)

Almost nine in ten (86%) respondents who had been contacted agreed that the response they received had been helpful. Eight in ten (79% of all respondents and 77% of 16 to 25 year olds) agreed that they had been provided with all the information they required. 16 to 25 year old respondents were more likely than older respondents to strongly agree with either statement.

Volunteering undertaken

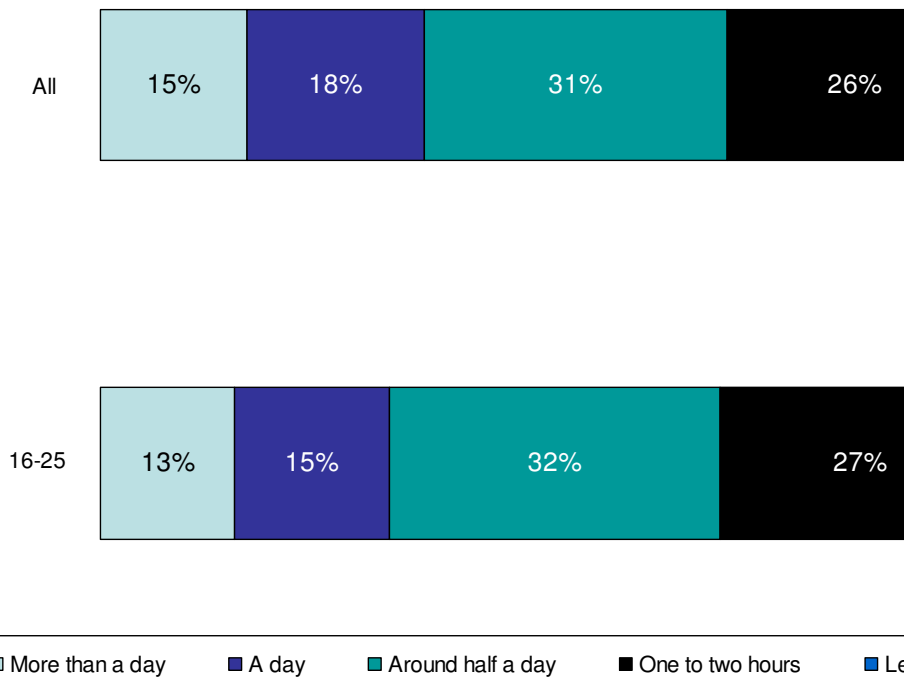
Four in ten (41%) of those who had applied for an opportunity through do-it.org.uk had actually started volunteering at the time they completed the survey. This equates to 30% of all respondents (28% of 16 to 25 year olds).

This chapter looks at response to questions about volunteering placements undertaken by respondents.

5.1 Time spent volunteering

The vast majority of those who had started a volunteering opportunity had started an ongoing as opposed to a one-off opportunity (88% of all respondents, 81% of 16 to 25 year olds). Chart 5.1.1 shows how much time per week volunteers spend in their ongoing roles.

Chart 5.1.1 Time spent in ongoing volunteering role per week



Base: All who had started ongoing volunteering opportunity, (601), 16-25 (124)

Whilst the majority (65%) of those who had started ongoing volunteering opportunities said they spend no more than half a day a week in their roles, more than one in ten (15% of all respondents, 13% of 16 to 25 year olds) said they volunteer for more than a day a week.

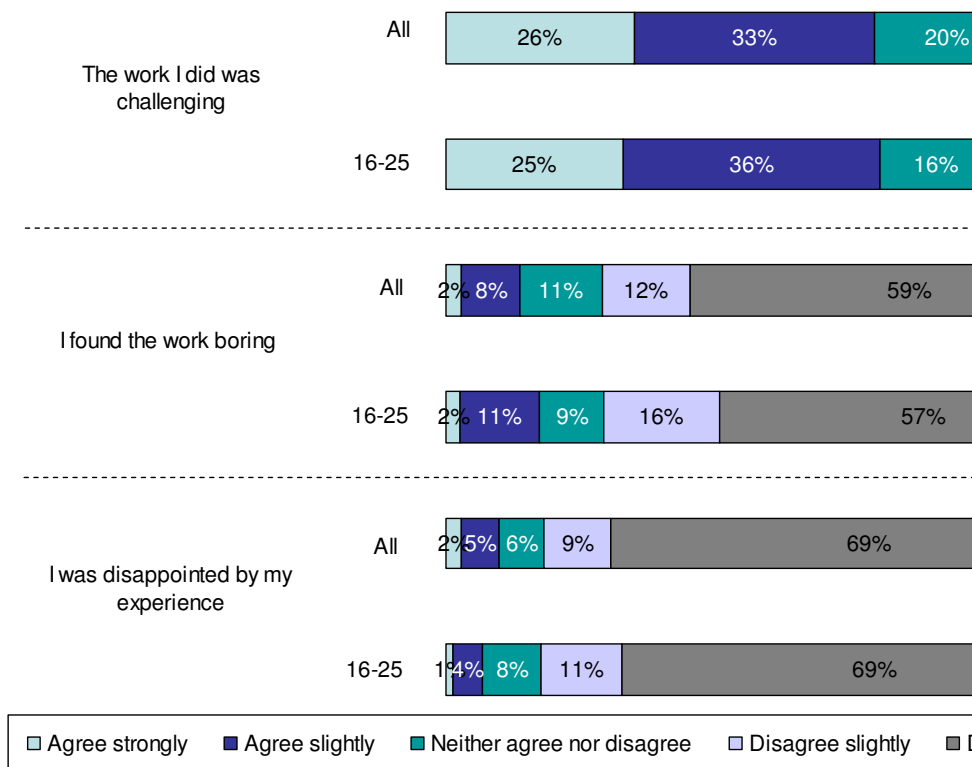
Of the 57 respondents who had undertaken one-off volunteering opportunities, 20 had volunteered for one week or more and a further 17 had volunteered for less than a week but more than one day.

5.2 Evaluation of volunteering placement

All respondents who had started a volunteering opportunity that they had applied for through do-it.org.uk were presented with a number of statements and asked to say how much they agreed or disagreed that each one applied to them and their experience. Charts 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 show some very positive results.

Chart 5.2.1 shows agreement with statements relating to volunteers' personal feelings about their placement.

Chart 5.2.1 Agreement with statements about placements – personal feelings



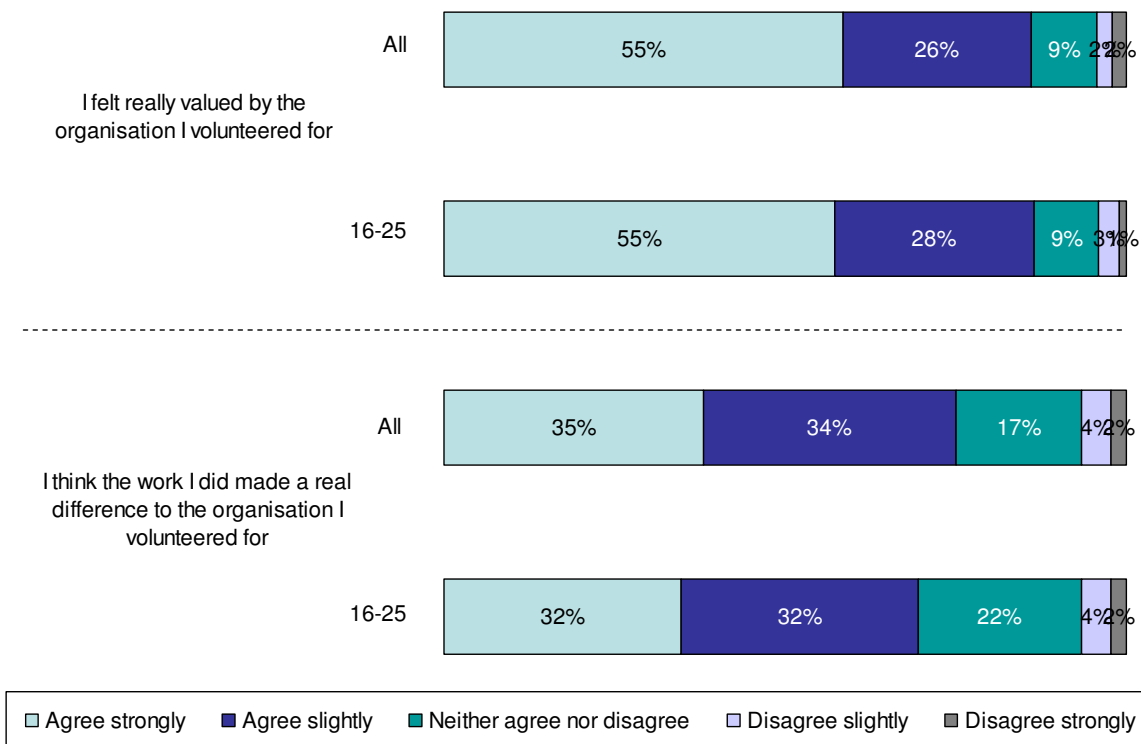
Base: All who had started volunteering opportunity, (682), 16-25 (152)

Six in ten respondents (60% of all respondents, 61% of 16 to 25 year olds) agreed that they found their volunteering role challenging, with a quarter (26% of all respondents, 25% of 16 to 25 year olds) strongly agreeing.

Only one in ten respondents (9% of all respondents, 13% of 16 to 25 year olds) found their placement boring, and an even smaller proportion (7% of all respondents, 5% of 16 to 25 year olds) were disappointed by their experience.

As has been highlighted by past research, for example that conducted by the Commission for the Future of Volunteering to inform its recent “Manifesto for Change”, it is important that volunteers feel valued by organisations benefitting from the time they give, and that their time makes a real difference to these organisations. Chart 5.2.2 shows agreement with statements relating to these aspects of their experience.

Chart 5.2.2 Agreement with statements about placements – impact on organisation



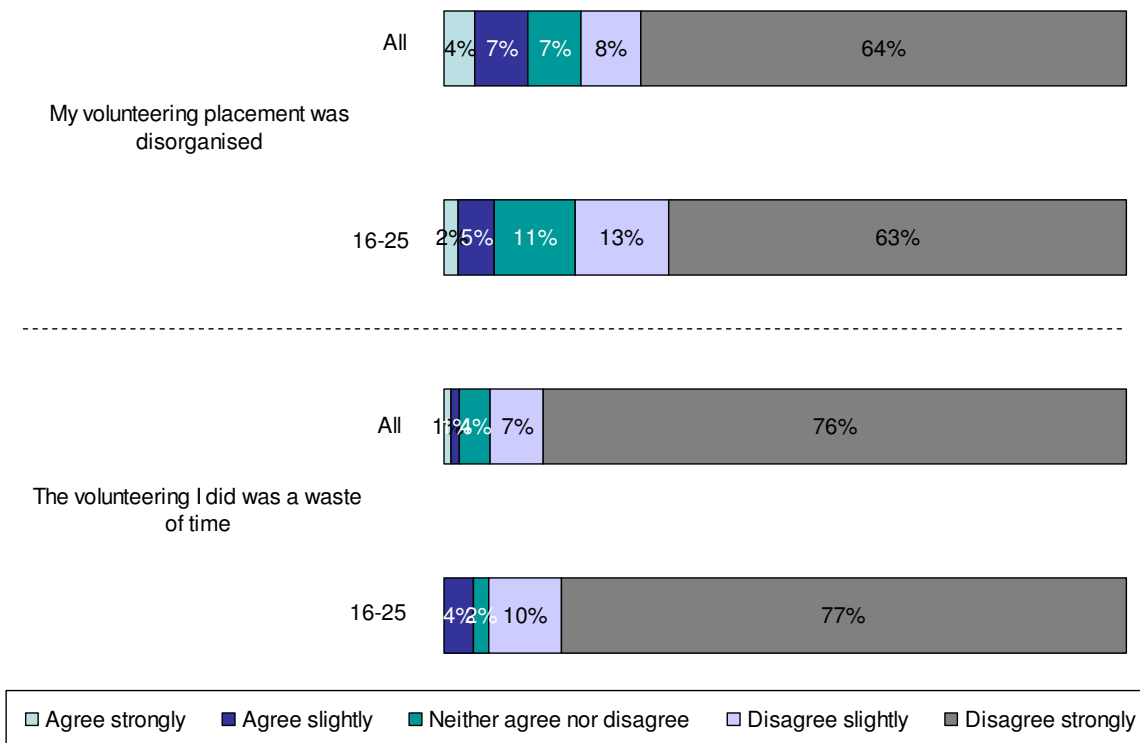
Base: All who had started volunteering opportunity, (682), 16-25 (152)

More than eight in ten (82% of all respondents, 83% of 16 to 25 year olds) felt valued by the organisation for which they volunteered.

A smaller proportion (69% of all respondents, 64% of 16 to 25 year olds) agreed that the work they did made a real difference to the organisation. However, the majority of those who did not agree with this statement said they neither agreed nor disagreed, implying that they were unsure of the impact their work had had rather than that they thought their work had made no difference.

Chart 5.2.3 shows agreement with two negative statements – ‘My volunteering placement was disorganised’ and ‘The volunteering I did was a waste of time’.

Chart 5.2.3 Agreement with statements about placements – whether disorganised/waste of time

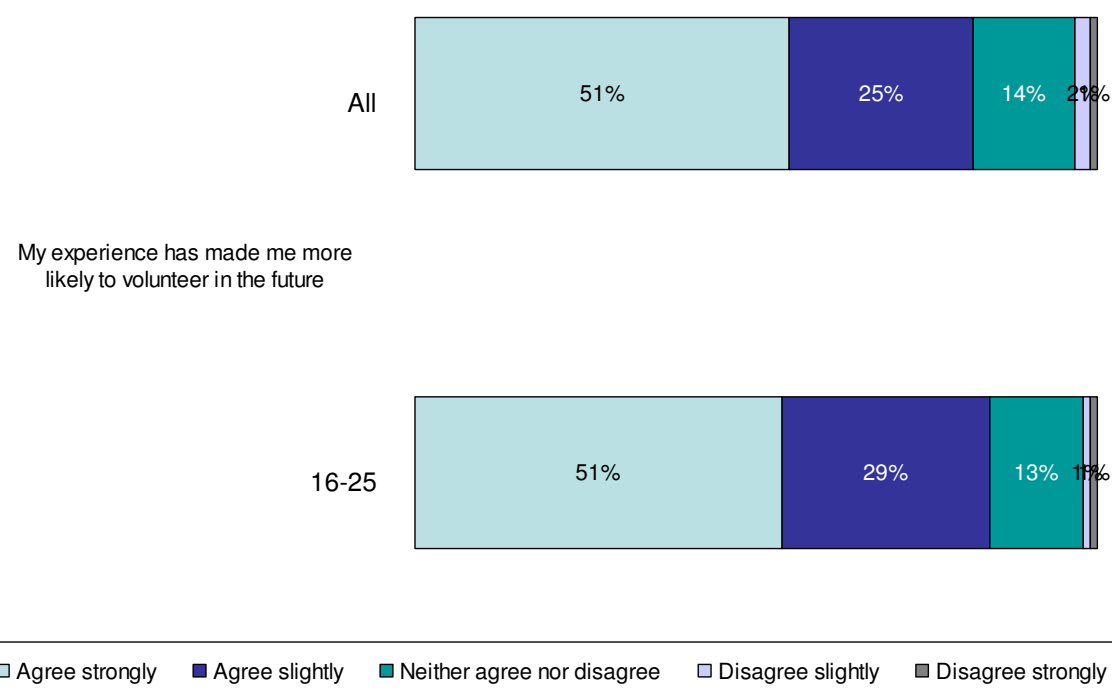


Base: All who had started volunteering opportunity, (682), 16-25 (152)

One in ten respondents (11% of all respondents, 7% of 16 to 25 year olds) thought that their volunteering placement was disorganised. This is a slight cause for concern, but not entirely unexpected in light of the recent “Manifesto for Change” produced by the Commission on the Future of Volunteering, which highlighted the need for and challenges regarding careful volunteer management. However, very few respondents (2% of all respondents, 4% of 16 to 25 year olds) agreed that the volunteering they had done had been a waste of time, which is much more encouraging.

As shown in chart 5.2.4, the majority of respondents who had volunteered (76% of all respondents, 80% of 16 to 25 year olds) had experiences that had made them more likely to volunteer in the future.

Chart 5.2.4 Agreement with statements about placements – impact on likelihood of future volunteering

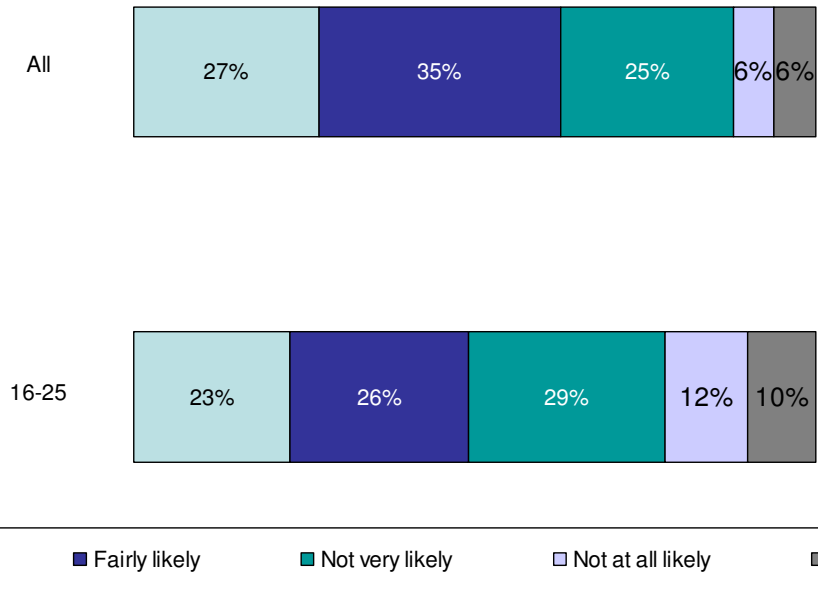


Base: All who had started volunteering opportunity, (682), 16-25 (152)

5.3 Likelihood of volunteering without do-it.org.uk

In order to measure the true impact of do-it.org.uk, respondents who had volunteered were asked how likely they would have been to do so if it hadn't been for do-it.org.uk. Chart 5.3.1 shows the results.

Chart 5.3.1 Likelihood of volunteering without do-it.org.uk



Base: All who had started volunteering opportunity, (682), 16-25 (152)

Although the majority of respondents (62%) said they would have been likely to volunteer without the help of do-it.org.uk, four in ten (38%) said they would have been unlikely to volunteer without the website or were unsure. This shows that do-it.org.uk had a significant impact on the uptake of volunteering opportunities amongst this group of volunteers.

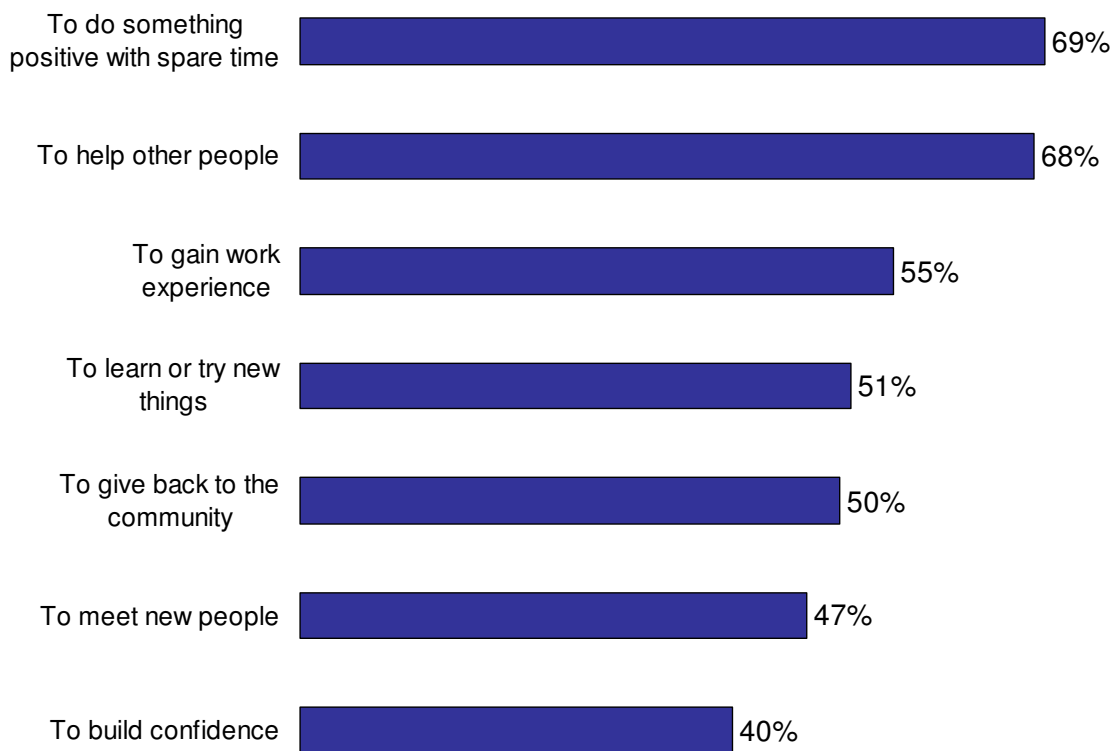
do-it.org.uk appears to have had an even greater impact on the uptake of volunteering opportunities by young people. More than half (51%) of 16 to 25 year old respondents who had undertaken volunteering opportunities said they would have been unlikely to do so without the help of the website, or were unsure.

Motivation for interest in volunteering

There are many reasons why people volunteer. The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) recently reported¹ that the top three reasons were to improve things or help people, because the cause was important to volunteers, or to fill spare time.

All respondents of the do-it.org.uk volunteer satisfaction survey were presented with a list of potential reasons for their interest in volunteering and asked to select those that were important to them when deciding to register on do-it.org.uk as a potential volunteer. Charts 6.1 and 6.2 show the results for all respondents and 16 to 25 year olds respectively.

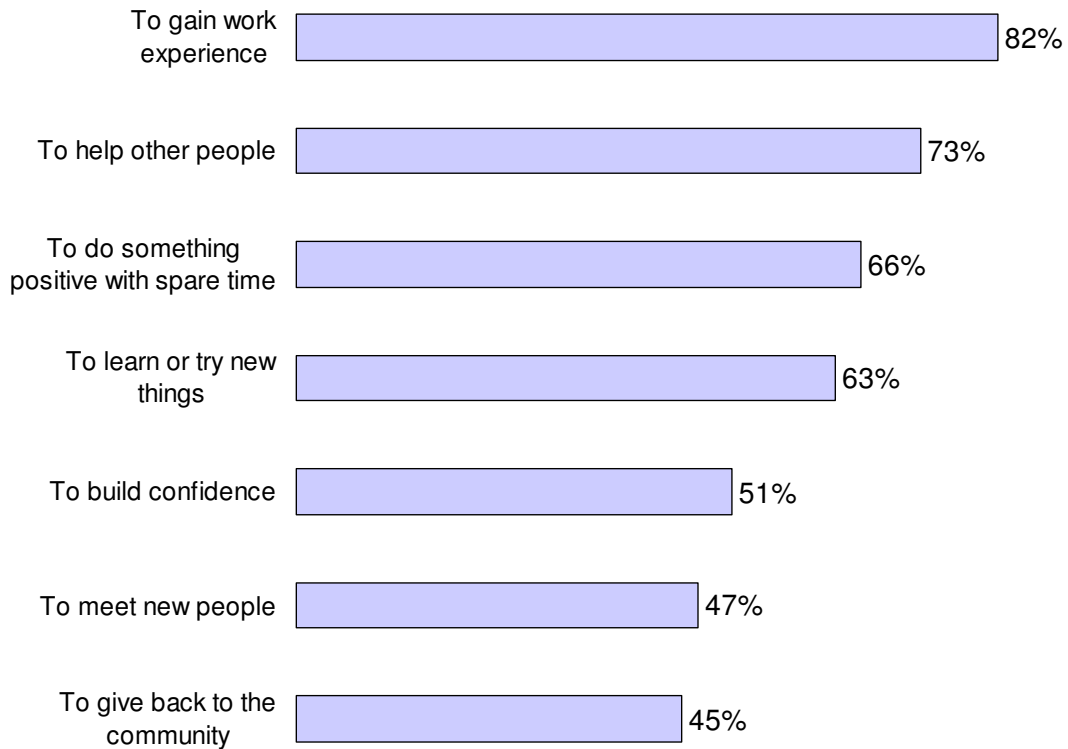
Chart 6.1 Motivation for volunteering – all respondents



Base: All respondents (2,253)

¹ *Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving (2007)*

Chart 6.2 Motivation for volunteering – 16 to 25 year olds



Base: All 16 to 25 year old respondents (538)

The most popular reasons for interest in volunteering were ‘to do something positive with spare time’ or ‘to help other people’ – both mentioned by seven in ten respondents (69% and 68% respectively). This is in line with the findings reported by the OTS.

Respondents of the do-it.org.uk survey were more likely than respondents of the OTS survey to say their interest in volunteering stemmed from a desire to develop or gain skills. ‘To gain work experience’ and ‘to learn or try new things’ were selected by 55% and 51% of do-it.org.uk survey respondents, where as ‘to learn new skills’ and ‘to get on in my career’ (the most comparable of responses provided to respondents of the OTS survey) were selected by only 19% and 5% of OTS survey respondents.

One possible explanation for the above could be the fact that younger respondents of both surveys were particularly likely to say they were interested in volunteering to improve their skills or gain experience, and such respondents constituted a greater proportion of the do-it.org.uk sample than the OTS sample (24% of the do-it.org.uk sample were aged 16 to 25, and only 5% of the OTS sample were aged 16 to 24).

Eight in ten (82%) 16 to 25 year old respondents of the do-it.org.uk survey said they were interested in volunteering to gain work experience, making it the most popular reason for interest amongst this age group.

All suggested reasons for volunteering were selected by a larger proportion of 16 to 25 year old respondents than older respondents.

Past experience of volunteering

Finally, in order to estimate the proportion of those registered on do-it.org.uk who are 'new' volunteers, respondents were asked about their past experience of volunteering.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said they volunteer regularly, and a further four in ten (38%) said they've helped out once or twice before. 38% of all respondents and 36% of 16 to 25 year olds were new to volunteering.