

Dynamic and Diverse

Research into the Voluntary sector
working in the High Peak 2002/2003



INTRODUCTION

This research project aims:

- To identify the size and numbers of Community and Voluntary groups working within the High Peak area of Derbyshire
- To evaluate their contribution to the local economy
- To record the contributions of staff both paid and voluntary within the sector

This research covers a period of October 2002 – March 2003, with groups being asked about their activities for the financial year. East Midlands Development Agency via the Buxton and Peak District Partnership (SRB6) funded the project with match funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, enabling us to compile a Directory of Community and Voluntary Groups and publish this research paper.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The nature of Community and Voluntary groups

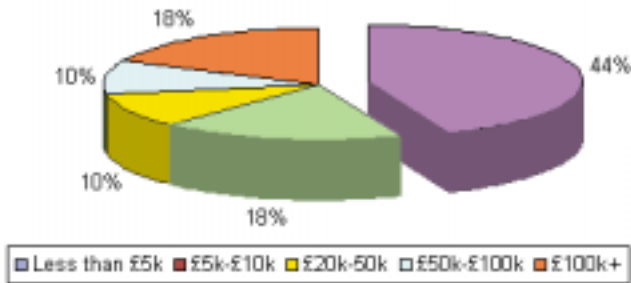
Geographical area covered by groups

Of those who completed the questionnaire, there were 65% of groups working exclusively within the High Peak. The remaining 35% of groups work in a larger geographical area than the High Peak. Many of these groups receive assistance from High Peak CVS in developing links within the High Peak.

Over 61% of High Peak CVS member organisations completed the survey. This compares very favourably with the average response rate of about 20% for postal surveys. We find this statistic encouraging, as High Peak CVS is a new organisation. As our services develop and the number of member organisations grow we would expect a higher number of returns if similar research were carried out in a years time.

Size of groups according to gross income

Breakdown of groups by gross income



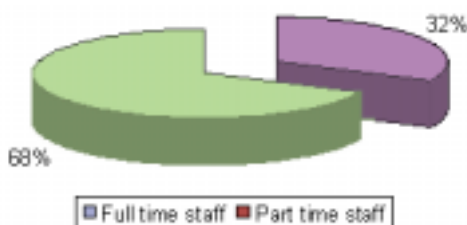
As you can see, there are 18% of groups with an income exceeding £100,000 but nearly half (44%) of groups with an income under £5,000.

In terms of size and financial resources, these statistics demonstrate the diversity of groups operating within the High Peak and the need for specialised development support in order to meet their needs. Furthermore, there is a significant proportion of small groups and from our knowledge there were many small groups who did not complete the questionnaire. *

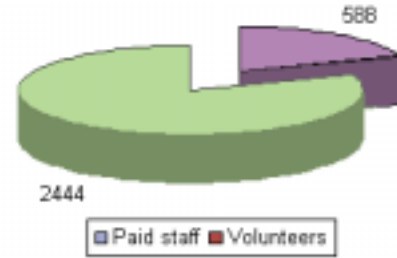
Numbers of paid and unpaid staff working in the Voluntary Sector

From the responses received, there are 588 paid staff working in voluntary sector groups with less than a third (188, 32%) of these being full time and the majority (400, 68%) part time employees.

Paid staff in sector



Ratio of paid to voluntary staff



In terms of unpaid staff, there are 2444 **volunteers** working in voluntary sector groups with the vast majority (over 99%) of these in part time positions.

However, a number of groups responding to the section on unpaid volunteers stated they had no volunteers. By looking at the detail of these replies, it is clear that some organisations did not view management committee member's time as voluntary activity and leads to the conclusion that the amount of volunteer input has been generally under recorded.

The economic contribution of Community and Voluntary Groups

The direct economic contribution of the Community and Voluntary Sector

The research shows that the **voluntary and community sector contributes £3,664,383 directly to the economy of the High Peak.**

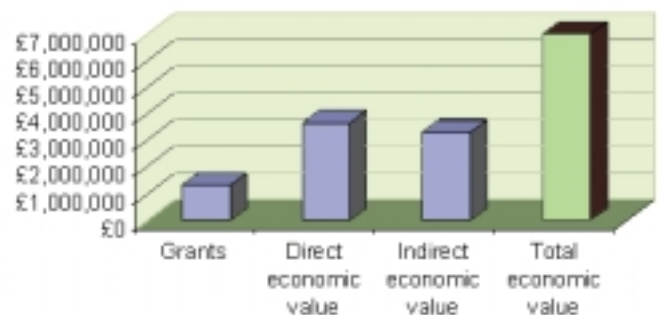
This total has been reached by adding together the total gross income of the groups completing the questionnaire (giving a total income figure of over £8.1 million), including grants. The total budgets were then apportioned according to the percentage of work the groups carried out in the High Peak.

The indirect economic contribution of the Community and Voluntary Sector

As we have seen, the income generated by the Community and Voluntary groups was used to employ 588 paid staff and to support nearly 3000 voluntary staff.

Each group recorded the average hours of volunteer time and the number of volunteers. By adding these together we find that upon average there are 7,010 volunteer hours per week equating to 364,520 per year. Valuing this time at a rate of £9.13 per hour (based on the New Earnings Survey), equates to indirect economic benefit of £3,328,067 per year across the High Peak.

The economic contribution of Voluntary and Community Groups in the High Peak



The total direct and indirect economic impact of the Voluntary and Community Sector across the High Peak is £6,992,450.

* Footnote: the Small Groups Project, a project of High Peak CVS, has been independently evaluated and these findings will be available shortly at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk and www.acre.org.uk

Furthermore, there are **additional indirect economic benefits** that include:

- Monies from the Community and Voluntary Sector being reinvested in the local economy with local businesses.
- Volunteering and paid work increases the skills and training levels of local people which improves their self worth and employability.
- Increases individuals involvement and connection with their local communities.
- Voluntary and community groups play a vital role in determining the most appropriate use of services.
- Reducing demands upon other sectors. e.g. the existence of some voluntary organisations enable people to remain in the community and prevent hospital admission.
- Through information and advice services, there is an increase in individuals taking up activities which may increase income and money circulating in the local economy.
- Voluntary sector childcare enables parents to access training and employment.
- Many groups improve our quality of life and encourage tourism e.g. Access guides encouraging Disabled People to visit the Peak District.

These additional benefits have not been measured in this research.

The impact of grant investments in the sector

The total level of grant income invested in the High Peak amounted to £1,336,216. This investment represents 36% of Voluntary Groups income and constitutes only 16% of economic benefit (i.e. income plus volunteer time, although this is a narrow definition)

We can therefore conclude that every £1 of grant monies invested results in £5.23 of economic benefit.

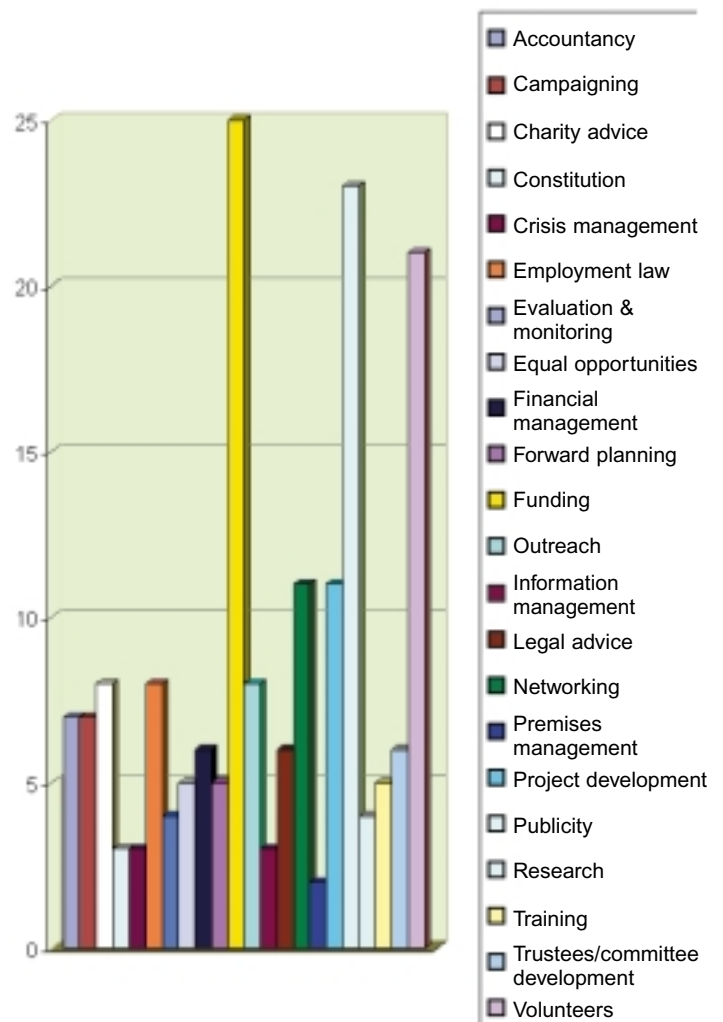
This would suggest that investing in the voluntary sector is economically sound as well as stimulating sustainable local development.

Training needs of voluntary and community groups

29% of those that completed the survey indicated they had a training need, which are summarized below. High Peak CVS has already used this information to devise the training programme it will deliver this year

Footnote: Some organisations indicated more than one area of need.

Areas that groups indicated training required



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

18% of groups responding had an income exceeding £100,000.

44% of groups responding had an income under £5,000.

588 paid staff working in the voluntary sector.

2444 volunteers working in voluntary groups.

Some organisations did not view management committee members time as voluntary activity.

The voluntary and community sector contributes £3,664,383 directly to the economy of the High Peak.

The total direct and indirect economic impact of the Voluntary and Community Sector across the High Peak is £6,992,450.

Every £1 of grant monies invested results in £5.23 of economic benefit.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Investing in the Voluntary sector can have great returns and multiply the investment many times over. Those awarding grants should recognise the potential economic benefit of these awards.

The research highlighted the diversity of voluntary sector groups in the High Peak and their need for specialised development support. Infrastructure organisations (i.e. CVS, Volunteer Bureaux and Rural Community Council) are vital to ensure that this diversity is supported and enhanced. Core funding should be set aside to fund this work to enable the voluntary sector to grow.

A more detailed research project is needed to fully identify the size and numbers involved in voluntary action in the High Peak.

METHODOLOGY

A two page questionnaire was adapted from a model developed by Derbyshire Dales CVS. (copies are available at www.highpeakcvs.org.uk)

Information was gathered from:

Other partners directories and databases

Village and town websites

The Charity Commission website

Searching for Community and Voluntary organisations using an internet search engine.

An initial mailing to 1050 groups in November 2002 was followed by a targeted mailing of 250 in February 2003.

This resulted in 255 completed questionnaires being returned.

A presentation of this research project was made to the High Peak Development Workers Forum with the aim of encouraging workers to support the project by asking groups they work with to fill in the questionnaire. A direct mailing followed this to development workers across the borough.

Factors that reduced the response rate

High Peak CVS is a new organisation and many voluntary and community groups working within the High Peak are not aware of its role and purpose.

High Peak CVS resources were developing rapidly during the term of this research project. However staffing resources were reduced due to the need to re-advertise for the key posts of Chief Officer and Community Development Worker.

We were unable to include prepaid envelopes for the return of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed for a wide range of groups and inevitably there were some non-responses due to groups perceiving that the questionnaire was not directly relevant to them.

Detailed guidance notes would have assisted groups in filling in the questionnaire.

HIGH PEAK CVS

High Peak CVS was first conceived in 1997, when a number of voluntary organisations recognised the requirement for a local Council for Voluntary Service. After a number of meetings involving community groups and voluntary agencies, a feasibility study was commissioned and published, based on in depth research into the support needs of voluntary groups in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales.

From here, voluntary and community groups across the district decided to form a CVS to cover the High Peak borough, and it was officially launched in May 2000. By early 2002, funding was in place to employ a small staff team and, in September 2002, High Peak CVS moved into premises in Whaley Bridge. We are a member organisation, with our management committee made up of members from voluntary and community groups across the borough. High Peak CVS is a registered charity. If you would like to become a member organisation of High Peak CVS, please contact us.

THE ROLE OF HIGH PEAK CVS

Development

- Supporting, encouraging and training groups of individuals who want to create **new organisations** or set up **new projects** to meet needs that they have identified in their community.
- Providing support, encouragement and guidance for **existing groups** so that they meet new areas of need they have identified in their community.

Liaison

- Helping voluntary and community groups **deal effectively with other sectors** (Health, Local Authority, Central Government, Private sector).
- Providing forums for groups to share ideas and information and to learn from each other.

Enabling representation

- Assisting groups in their **concerns and aspirations** and helping them to **voice their concerns** and **mount campaigns**.
- Assisting the voluntary and community sector to **respond to changing laws, rules and opportunities**.

Services

- Providing **practical services** and support for local groups:
 - Computing
 - Internet access
 - Printing and copying
 - Accounting
 - Support in writing funding applications and business plans
- Providing **training** and links to training.
- Providing **information services** through a Directory of Local Community and Voluntary Organisations and Community Resource Library.
- Providing a **communication service** to and between voluntary and community groups through newsletters, web pages, public presentations and telephone advice.

Partnership working

- **Strengthening local partnerships** through the informed and enthusiastic involvement of the voluntary and community sector.

For more information about the work of High Peak CVS, this research or a copy of the Directory of Voluntary & Community Groups, contact us on 01663 735 350 or email hello@highpeakcvs.org.uk. Web www.highpeakcvs.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All groups, organisations and local development workers that completed and returned forms, or encouraged others to do so.

East Midlands Development Agency for funding this project through SRB6, the Buxton & Peak District Partnership, with match funding from The Community Fund.

Derbyshire Dales CVS for project lead and support.

Peak Press for their help and advice

More research about the development needs of voluntary organisations working in rural areas can be found in "Supporting Rural Voluntary Action", published by NCVO and available at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk