Annual Return for Volunteer Centres 2011/12

Funding, capacity and demand

ARVC 2011/12 Statistical Bulletin 1

This bulletin presents data from the latest Annual Return for Volunteer Centres covering the year 2011/12 (hereafter referred to as ARVC 2011/12). This is an annual survey which has been running for over a decade and is sent to all Volunteer Centres in England. It captures key information around funding, capacity, demand and various other issues. It is a valuable tool in assessing the changing nature of Volunteer Centres and the environments they operate in over time.

This first bulletin looks at the characteristics of Volunteer Centres and their funding, capacity and demand.

Methodology

ARVC 2011/12 was an online survey sent to 261 Volunteer Centres in late 2012. It was completed by 160 Volunteer Centres, a response rate of 61 per cent,[1] down slightly from the previous year (64 per cent). The Volunteer Centres were asked to record various data relating to the 2011/12 financial year.

Due to the wide range in size of Volunteer Centres and their income, the median is used in this bulletin unless stated, as it was last year, and referred to as 'the average' in order to provide a picture of typical Volunteer Centres. The use of the mean average would skew the results due to a small number of large organisations. However, the appendix features data tables that also include the mean average for reference.

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[1] 186 surveys were completed, but when duplicates were removed there were 160 unique usable entries.

Headline findings from ARVC 2011/12

Characteristics of the Volunteer Centres[2]
Of the 160 responding Volunteer Centres:

- **99 per cent are members of Volunteering England** (now merged with NCVO), 1 per cent are not.
- **96 per cent are accredited/working towards accreditation**, 4 per cent are not.
- **33 per cent are independent** and **67 per cent are integrated**, 94 per cent of which with a CVS.
- **10 per cent have branches** (unchanged from last year); **53 per cent have outreach points**, a rise from 41 per cent the year before.
- On average they have **one full-time member of staff** and **two part-time members of staff**, both unchanged from the previous year.
- Are **open 35 hours a week** to enquiries about volunteering.
- **Devote 57 paid staff hours** to the Volunteer Centre per week.
- **Engage 12 volunteers in running the Volunteer Centre**, a rise from eight the year before.
- Have **269 volunteering opportunities posted online** through Do-it on any given day.[3]

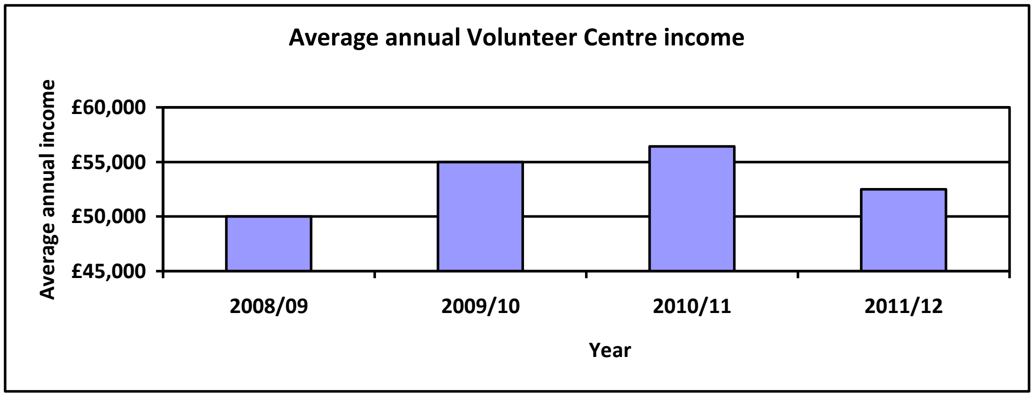
Funding[4]
Volunteer Centres depend on funding from a variety of sources. This includes local government and central government initiatives. The public sector spending cuts have affected this over the last few years. First of all, the average for the network as a whole will be examined, before looking at the situation for Volunteer Centres at an individual level (i.e. has their income fallen or risen since the previous year).

Funding for the Volunteer Centre network as a whole
In 2011/12 the average income for Volunteer Centres was £52,500, a fall of £3,932 from the year before. This is the lowest rate since 2008/09. The income ranged from nominal amounts to significant sums for the larger Volunteer Centres, the highest being £863,751. It should also be noted that these figures do not take into

[2] See tables 1-7 in the appendix.
[3] Based on the number of opportunities they had posted on the day they completed the survey.
[4] See tables 8-11 in the appendix.

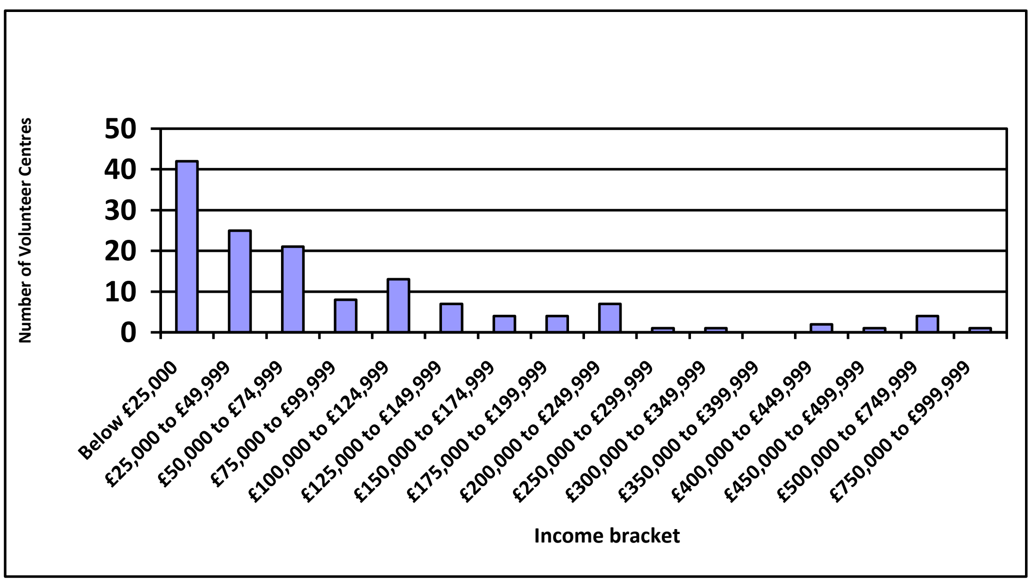
account inflation, so even if funding levels had remained the same it would be a loss in real terms. There was a stark decline in mean average income. It was £100,028 in 2011/12, a fall of over £34,000 from the previous year. Again, on this measure the overall funding figure was the lowest since 2008/09.

Figure 1. Average annual Volunteer Centre income 2011/12



The variation in income between the 160 Volunteer Centres is highlighted in the figure below, which categorises Volunteer Centres by income bracket.

Figure 2. The number of Volunteer Centres within each income bracket



This income can be broken down by different funding sources:

- **Local government** remained the most common funding type, with 83 per cent of the Volunteer Centres receiving some money from a local authority, although this was a drop of six per cent from the previous year. For those receiving money from their local authority in 2011/12, the average was £32,000. This represented a rise in the median average by £3,587.

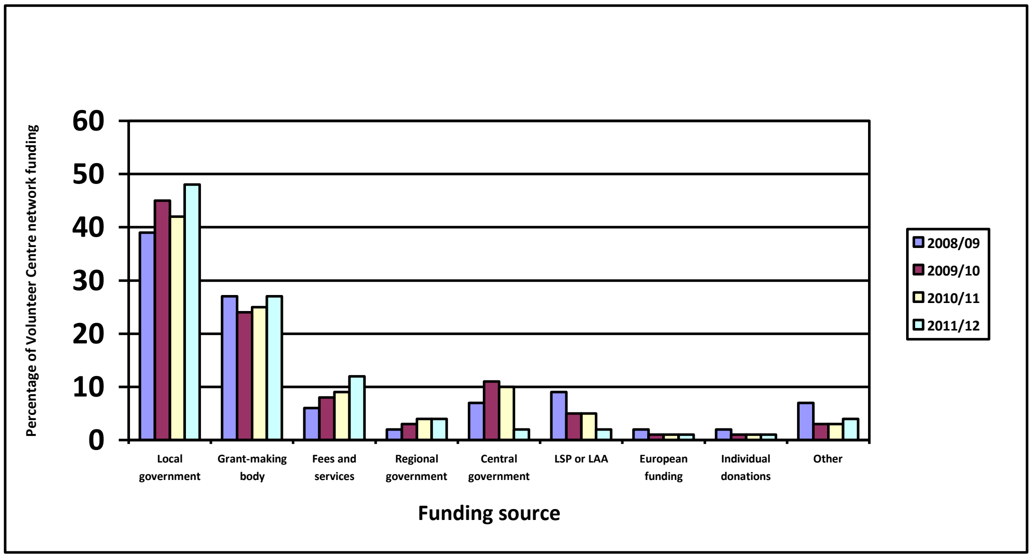
- There had also been a sharp fall in the proportion of Volunteer Centres receiving some funding from **central government**. Whereas in the year before nearly one in four did (24 per cent), only seven per cent did this year. For those still receiving funding from this avenue the amount had fallen dramatically, by £18,316. This is indicative of the ending of various national programmes supporting volunteering infrastructure.

- The proportion of Volunteer Centres receiving funding from the phased out Local Strategic Partnerships (**LSP**) or Local Area Agreements (**LAA**), was the lowest in four years by some distance, with only one in ten Volunteer Centres receiving funding from this source in 2011/12. This compares to 20 per cent in 2011 and 30 per cent in the peak year of 2009. Of those still in receipt of income from this source, they received £6,000. This was a decrease on the previous year of £8,611.

- An important countertrend last year had been the rise in those **receiving fees for services**. But this had fallen from 43 per cent in 2010/11 to 38 per cent in 2011/12, a similar level to 2010 yet still higher than 2009. Those Volunteer Centres receiving fees gained £6,466 through this source. This was an increase from the year before of £875.

The chart below shows the overall income for the Volunteer Centre network broken down by source of funding.

Figure 3. Volunteer Centre network income by funding source 2008/09 – 2011/12 (%)



Local government, grant making bodies and fees and services make up an increasing proportion of funding, whereas funding from central government, LSPs or LAAs and European funding bodies have steeply declined in this respect.

Changes to funding at Volunteer Centre level
The average funding level in the survey masks considerable variations between individual Volunteer Centres. This section draws on matched datasets from Volunteer Centres that completed ARVC in both 2010/11 and 2011/12, and provided financial data for both years. This was the case for 107 Volunteer Centres. This group compares with the overall sample in the following way:

- The 107 Volunteer Centres closely matched the 2011/12 overall funding figures, with a median income of £52,606 and mean income of £106,022.
- However, the 107 Volunteer Centres' income was higher in 2010/11 than the average in the ARVC as a whole for that year, with a median income of £67,180 and mean average of £162,055.
- This subsample of 107 Volunteer Centres have therefore experienced more drastic cuts, as reflected in the data presented below, than the overall sample, and may not be entirely representative of the network as a whole.

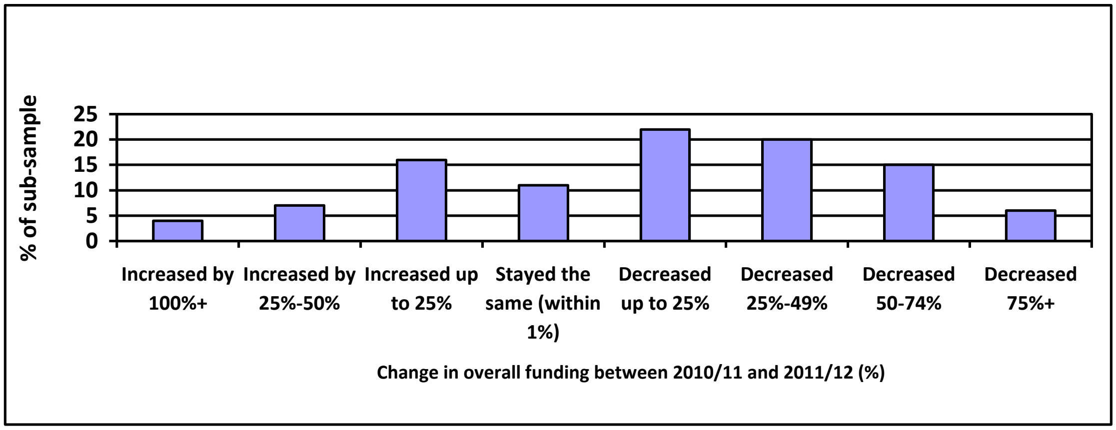
In terms of comparing the income of 107 Volunteer Centres in 2011/12 to the previous year:

- 63 per cent of these Volunteer Centres had experience a cut in funding in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11.

- 11 per cent had either had their funding stay the same, or it is within 1 per cent either way of the 2010/11 levels.
- 26 per cent had had an increase in funding in 2011/12.

The scale of the increases and decreases that these Volunteer Centres had in funding between 2010/11 and 2011/12 are outlined below (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Change in funding for Volunteer Centres in sub-sample (n=107)



- 4 per cent had an increase in funding of 100 per cent or more;
- 10 per cent had an increase in funding of 25 per cent or more;
- 16 per cent had an increase in funding of up to 25 per cent;
- 22 per cent had a fall in funding of up to 25 per cent;
- 40 per cent had a fall in funding of 25 per cent or more;
- 21 per cent had a fall in funding of 50 per cent or more;
- 6 per cent had a fall in funding of 75 per cent or more.

Capacity and demand[5]
Demand on Volunteer Centres remained high, often outstripping capacity:

- Volunteer Centres received **an average of 1086 volunteering enquiries**, a slight increase from last year, and placed an average of 189 volunteers. This is a conversion rate of 21 per cent[6] (i.e. approximately one in five people who enquire about volunteer are placed in an organisation).
- **33 per cent of enquiries were from people who were unemployed** and looking for work, the highest in the last four years of data.
- **25 per cent of enquiries were from black and minority ethnic groups**.
- Volunteer Centres have an average of **283 volunteer-involving organisations registered**, with 37 new registrations in 2011/12.
- **72 per cent of Volunteer Centres felt that, in general, they were able to meet demand.**
- Yet **demand outstripped capacity in five of the six core functions** of Volunteer Centres:
    - Brokerage
    - Marketing
    - Good practice development
    - Developing volunteering opportunities
    - Strategic development of volunteering
- The proportion of Volunteer Centres finding **a high demand for developing volunteering opportunities was 44 per cent**, a fall from 53 per cent in 2010/11.

Summary and future bulletins
Volunteer Centres had lower funding levels and received income from fewer funding sources in 2011/12. The average also masks huge variations between Volunteer Centres. At the two extremes, one in ten had had an increase in funding of 25 per cent or more, while two in five had had a cut of 25 per cent or more.

Demand had generally held up, often outstripping capacity. Local authorities continue to be the largest funding source for the vast majority of Volunteer Centres, although the proportion of Volunteer Centres receiving income from this source was the lowest in four years.

[5] See tables 12-16 in the appendix.
[6] This is the median figure of all the Volunteer Centres' individual conversion rates.

Future bulletins to be released in 2013 will explore the data in more depth, looking at variation by region and by other characteristics, such as whether they are independent or integrated Volunteer Centres.

Appendix: The Volunteer Centre network – tables

Characteristics of Volunteer Centres (VCs)

Table 1: Independence/integration of VCs

%	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Independent	33	28	33	31
Integrated	67	72	67	67

Table 2: Characteristics of those 67 per cent of integrated VCs

%	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Integrated within a CVS	94	92	90	60
Discrete budget	55	72	69	n/a
Separate governance	0	1	1	n/a
Host delivers functions	44	43	35	n/a

Table 3: VCs with outreach points and branches

%	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
With branches	10	10	10	9
With outreach points	53	41	47	46

Table 4: VC staff composition

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Full time staff (mean)	1	2	2	2
Full time staff (median)	1	1	1	-
Part time staff (mean)	3	4	4	3
Part time staff (median)	2	2	2	
Volunteers (mean)	17	12	12	11
Volunteers (median)	12	8	8	

Table 5: Level of perceived engagement with the local funding agenda

Percentage specifying:	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Very engaged (1) or Engaged (2)	71	77	74	67
Neither (3)	20	17	19	24
Not really engaged (4) or not at all engaged (5)	9	7	8	9

Table 6: Level of perceived engagement with the local political agenda

Percentage specifying:	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Very engaged (1) or engaged (2)	58	59	60	51
Neither engaged or not engaged (3)	25	22	25	26
Not really engaged (4) or not at all engaged (5)	18	19	16	16

Table 7: Percentage of VCs involvement in consultations

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Responded to consultation	59	84	72	66
Facilitated consultation with VIOs or volunteers	79	68	58	47

Funding of the Volunteer Centre network

Table 8: Total income for the VC Network

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Total income (median)	£52,500	£56,432	£55,000	£50,000
VCs income (mean)	£100,028	£134,371	£122,246	£89,000

Table 9: VC Income (percentage receiving income from source)

% total network income	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/9
Local Government	83	89	88	84
Grant-making body	55	56	57	56
Fees and services	38	43	37	32
LSP or LAA	10	20	24	30
Central Government	7	24	22	14
Regional Government	11	11	12	10
Other	35	38	29	35
European funding	3	8	7	4
Individual donations	29	25	25	27

Table 10: Total network income: percentage of income from each source

Funding source	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/9
Local Government	48	42	45	39
Grant-making body	27	25	24	27
Central Government	2	10	11	7
Fees and services	12	9	8	6
LSP or LAA	2	5	5	9
Regional Government	4	4	3	2
Other	4	3	3	7
European funding	1	1	1	2
Individual donations	1	1	1	2

Table 11: Change in income between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in sub-sample (n = 107)

Funding source	Change in income (% of VCs in sub-sample)
Increased by 100%+	4
Increased by 25%-50%	7
Increased up to 25%	16
Stayed the same (within 1%)	11
Decreased up to 25%	22
Decreased 25%-49%	20
Decreased 50-74%	15
Decreased 75%+	6

Capacity and demand

Table 12: Percentage of total volunteer enquiries by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	% 2011 census
White	75	72	72	71	86
Asian	11	10	10	10	7.5
Black	8	10	11	11	3.3
Chinese	1	1	1	2	0.7
Mixed	3	4	4	3	2.2
Any other background	2	3	2	4	0.3

NB: 20 per cent of enquirers did not record their ethnicity. These have been omitted.

Table 13: Percentage of volunteer enquiries by employment status

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Employed	21	21	23	27
Non-employed and not seeking work	13	13	17	15
Retired	4	5	-	-
Self-employed	2	3	3	3
Student	23	23	23	26
Unable to work (legal status)	3	4	3	5
Unemployed and seeking work	33	31	30	24

Table 14: Rating averages for the capacity, demand and difference between these for the six core functions of VCs. The ratings lie between 1 (low) and 3 (high)

	Demand		Capacity		Difference	
	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11
Brokerage	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.5	0.5	0.4
Marketing	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1	0.3	0.3
Good practice development	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.3	0.2	0.1
Developing volunteering opportunities	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.2	0.3	0.3
Policy response and campaigning	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	0	0.0
Strategic development of volunteering	2.1	2.2	1.8	2.0	0.2	0.2

Table 15: Percentage of VCs with high demand for their core functions

% VCs with high demand	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Brokerage	88	86	88	92
Marketing	49	47	57	52
Good practice development	42	42	46	43
Developing volunteering opportunities	45	53	57	55
Policy response and campaigning	10	15	26	15
Strategic development of volunteering	33	37	36	31

Table 16: Volunteering opportunities developed

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Mean number of VIOs registered	333	274	298	251
Median number of VIOs registered	283	-	-	-
Mean number of new VIOs registered	48	46	45	-
Median number of new VIOs registered	37	-	-	-
Mean number of volunteer roles currently registered (Do-it)	341	382	445	-
Median number of volunteer roles currently registered (Do-it)	269	-	-	-