

Volunteer Survey 2014 – Findings

Firstly we would like to thank the 447 volunteers who took the time to complete the survey. Some of the questions are repeated from last year's survey and some are new, so there is a mixture below of comparison's to last year's data and trends and priorities to deal with in the future.

This report contains comments on actions taken by the Volunteer Talent Support project, resulting from the survey *quoted in italics*.

Overall Conclusions

Overall, results are good and show that recent changes are starting to show a positive impact. Given that some changes have only been implemented towards the end of 2013 it would be unreasonable to expect any significant changes at this time, but the progress to date is encouraging.

The headline figure – used for our key performance indicator (KPI) – is the percentage of volunteers who are satisfied with their IET volunteer experience. Due to changes in the way the information is gathered (this question was previously asked in the Member Satisfaction Survey in Autumn 2012) a direct comparison is unreliable, although it is broadly the same as last year.

2012 result (from member survey)

Number of respondents: 102

Result: 78.4%

Margin for error (assuming population size of 3565) = 9.56%

Therefore range of population result is 68.64% to 87.96%

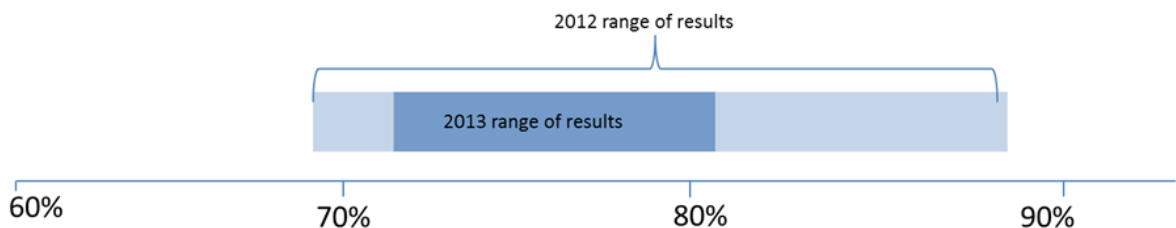
2013 result (from volunteer survey)

Number of respondents: 438

Result 76.5%

Margin for error (assuming population size 3565) = 4.39%

Therefore range of population result is 72.11% to 80.89%



More evidently positive are the increases in satisfaction with working relationship with staff (70.6% compared with 66.6%), understanding the value of contributions to the achievement of the IET's objectives (83.2% compared with 78.5%) and feeling that staff and volunteers are working as one team (54.4% compared with 60.4%).

Within the open-ended questions there is understandably more of a diversity of responses, and so direct comparison and categorisation is difficult. However, the following themes did emerge:

- Volunteers value the training that is provided to them and a number commented that some annual or refresher training would be helpful.
- A desire for online training was a key theme, particularly for volunteers outside of the UK, in full time employment or UK volunteers outside of the London area.
- Communication was, unsurprisingly, a key theme, with volunteers expressing a desire for more face-to-face access to staff members and more personalised communication.
- A wish for more volunteer events, both for recognition and networking purposes, was also articulated.
- Feedback was a key theme, with a number of volunteers commenting that they wished to have more feedback on the outcome of their volunteering. This is also reflected in the fact that 26% of volunteers reporting receiving no feedback on their volunteering activities. *This is a priority action for 2014.*
- Volunteers are still frustrated with the layout and accessibility of the website, particularly the use of the search functionality when looking for resources. *Work is underway to improve searchability of key content.*

Facts and Figures

The majority of our volunteers are based in the UK. However, the percentage of respondents in the UK dropped slightly from 77.8% to 76.4%. Our age demographic has also shifted slightly, with a slight drop in volunteers aged 56 or over (50.8% compared with 53.5%). However, this has not been reflected in a significant increase in volunteers aged under 40 responding (18.9% compared with 18.5%).

Local and Technical Networks, Professional Development and Professional Registration constitute the most active areas of volunteering, with 73.4% of our volunteers citing one of these areas as their most active role.

The proportion of volunteers who have worked with us for more than 10 years is down slightly on last year (37.9% compared with 40.4%) but this is likely a reflection of the slight shift in age demographic referenced above.

Notes on Interpretation

It has been possible to analyse each question against age and main role. For main role, the comparison has only been made between the three most represented roles - Local and Technical Networks, Professional Development, and Professional Registration – and the average scores. It was not possible to provide data on other role types as the number of responses would have been too low to have been statistically sound.

Feedback and Recognition

We know that it is important for our volunteers to receive feedback on the impact of their contributions, and it is encouraging that 74% of volunteers are getting feedback on their activities. Of these, 38% receive formal feedback from staff, 31% from other members and the rest from general communications. This is a small improvement on last year, which is positive but there is still scope for improvement. *Technical issues current limit our ability to provide feedback on the successful of registration candidates but this is being specified in requirements for new systems. Other forms of direct feedback are being investigated.*

Recognition is a key area for our volunteers. As the table below shows, recognition by the IET is considered to be more important than recognition by employers or peers.

	No view or not important	Not very important	Nice to have	Very important
By the IET (445)	4%	8.8%	58.2%	29%
By your employer (395)	28.4%	15.7%	45.1%	10.9%
By those you work with (421)	9.7%	13.1%	56.8%	20.4%

In terms of when and how volunteering activity should be recognised, there are no strong preferences expressed. However, the most popular options in terms of when to be recognised are annually (54.4%) and at times of special achievement (41.4%). The most popular options in terms of how recognition should be expressed are a thank you letter (61.1%) and an invitation to an event or celebration (52.8%).

We are currently working on a new Volunteer Award and encouraging more regional recognition events.

Communications and Support

Communications were identified as a key area for improvement based on the results of last year's survey and there has generally been positive change since then. *We have worked to ensure volunteers have clear contacts and that they receive and value relevant volunteering communications.* This is an area where analysis by volunteering roles highlights some differences, and these are discussed below.

71.3% of volunteers now have a named staff contact compared with 66.5% last year. The Volunteer Update and Member News e-mails are now reaching more people (74.5% compared with 70% and 88.2% compared with 84% respectively) and more people find them useful or extremely useful (33.1% compared with 24.6% and 35.1% compared with 30.9% respectively).

The Volunteer Gateway has now been fully launched (it was in development last year) and 54.8% of volunteers have visited the site in the past 6 months, with 81.3% of volunteers were able to find what they were looking for (from 79% last year). However, comments received in the open-ended questions indicate that there is still development required in this area.

Over three-quarters (76.8%) of volunteers are confident that they know how to access the IET resources that they need to undertake their role (up from 67.2% last year).

Future Volunteering

A very positive finding from the survey is that 73.1% of our volunteers would be interested in a different volunteering role within the IET. Professional Registration is the most popular option (57.4%), followed by Governance (51.8%). To find a role 43.5% would ask their named staff contact for details and 39.1% would ask other members/volunteers, so it is vital that these groups are kept informed about the variety of volunteering opportunities available within the IET.

Induction and Training

Last year we identified the need for better induction and training, and have since piloted a tailored volunteer induction, which has been filmed and is now being scheduled to run regularly. This year 46.8% of volunteers reported having no induction meeting or conversation. This is down slightly from 51.6% last year and we hope will improve further this year. Of those who did have access to induction, 98% characterised it as useful or very useful.

Webinars and online training are not yet widely available (only 10.2% and 11.9% respectively accessing them), but of the two online training was rated the most useful (11% quite or very useful compared with 6.3% for webinars). Face to face training was rated as very useful by those who accessed it (39.9%) but was not available to 45.2% of volunteers. *For some this may reflect geographical issues with access which we are working to resolve by looking at providing more training in virtual formats.*

Our new and revised communications are reaching people, as over 50% of volunteers are aware of the major documents for volunteers – policies (54.8%), volunteer handbook (52.6%), new IET vision and mission (57%) and volunteer code of conduct (61.9%). Whilst these numbers are encouraging, there is clearly room for to do more in communicating these key documents. *The new format Volunteer Update and greater links being forged with Member News are targeted to address this.*

Differences between under-40s and over-40s

One of the key differences between under- and over-40s is that under 40s are more likely to be involved in Local and Technical Networks (63.1% compared with 47.1% for over 40s) whereas over 40s are more likely to be involved in Professional Registration (55.7% compared with 26.2%). This is important as, as can be seen below, there are some key differences in responses to the survey, particularly between Professional Registration and the average. It is worth bearing this in mind when looking at the key differences below, which are:

- Over-40s are more satisfied with their volunteer experience (78.5% compared with 68.7% for under-40s)
- Over-40s are happier with their relationship with staff (41.4% very satisfied compared with 31%)
- More over-40s also believe that one-team working is happening between staff and volunteers (63.2% compared with 48.8%)
- 40.5% of under 40s would definitely consider a new volunteering role compared with 23.9% of over-40s
- Under-40s would be more interested in education and policy related roles (40% compared with 27.2% for over-40s) and publishing (22.9% compared with 8.3%)

Differences between volunteer types

As stated above, it was only possible to break down the results by 3 types of volunteer roles - Local and Technical Networks, Professional Development and Professional Registration.

Interestingly, the results for Local and Technical Networks (LTN) were very close to the average across the board. The only areas in which there was significant variance compared with the average results are the following:

- LTN volunteers are less likely to have served for less than one year (5.1% compared with 11.4%).
- LTN volunteers are less likely than average in most cases to engage in other types of volunteering activity.
- LTN volunteers are more likely to have a named contact (only 6.9% said no compared with 14.2%).
- LTN volunteers are less likely to have had access to induction or face to face training (69.4% had not accessed compared with 46.8% and 79.4% compared with 45.2% respectively).

However, there were significant variances between the results for Professional Registration (PR) volunteers and Professional Development (PD) volunteers compared with the average and each other. The key areas of difference are as follows:

- 85.2% of PR volunteers are satisfied with their volunteer experiences compared with only 57.8% of PD volunteers and 76.5% average.
- 23.4% of PD volunteers are not satisfied with their volunteer experience compared with 6.3% of PR volunteers and 12.6% average.
- 53.4% of PR volunteers are very satisfied with their relationship with IET staff, compared with 39.2% average.
- 80.3% of PR volunteers feel that staff and volunteers are working as one team compared with 45.3% of PD volunteers and 60.4% average. Of more concern, 46.9% of PD volunteers are not sure if staff and volunteers are working as one team compared with only 12.9% of PR volunteers who feel this way.
- PD have a higher than average percentage of volunteers with short service – 52.4% with less than 2 years compared with 29.1% average.
- Conversely, PR have a high percentage of volunteers with long service – 44.9% with more than 10 years' service compared with 37.9% average.
- 51.6% of PD volunteers don't receive any feedback on their actions/contributions compared with 26% average.
- 38.1% of PD volunteers aren't aware of their named contact compared with 14.2% average.
- 88.4% of PR volunteers are confident to access the resources they need to undertake their role compared with 76.8% average.
- Only 39.7% of PD volunteers are aware of the new IET values and mission compared with 57% average.

The main volunteer role within the PD selection is mentor. We are aware that the nature of the role can sometime be isolated and that candidates are not good at providing feedback. However, we will be working to address these issues moving forward. Equally there are lessons to be learned from the very effective practices in Professional Registration which can be shared to enhance the experience for others.

The full results for the Volunteer Survey can be found on the Volunteer Gateway at
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Volunteer Talent Support
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