



## **Volunteer Survey 2017**

The 2017 Volunteer Survey attracted 547 respondents, comparable with previous years (2016: 574; 2015: 427). As usual, the largest volunteer groups (Professional Registration and Communities) form the majority of responses but a wide spread of other roles provides a good representation of views across the IET.

In response to feedback, the survey was significantly shorter this year. Even so, it provided the opportunity to explore some new areas that will be very helpful in shaping current support projects. For future years it is planned to move to an even shorter survey, supplementing it with small 'pulse' surveys to assist project development.

The key finding of the survey is it's measurement of the corporate key performance indicator (KPI). In 2016 this changed to a question looking at one-team working - 'Do you agree that volunteers and staff work effectively as one team, with shared values towards common goals?' – from the previous measure of volunteer satisfaction. The new measure was benchmarked in the 2016 survey and we are pleased to announce a notable rise in the percentage of those agreeing with this statement, from 73.1% in 2016 to 78.7% in 2017.

We continue to measure volunteer satisfaction and this has also increased, with the percentage of those stating they are satisfied rising from 79.9% in 2016 to 84.4% in 2017.

## **Findings**

The survey informs the way the IET works with its volunteer colleagues in two ways: by tracking awareness and engagement with support so that this can be improved, and by exploring new ideas for support and testing assumptions about volunteer views.

It is important that volunteers feel confident in accessing the tools they need to support their volunteering. Previously we have seen an increase in the number of respondents saying they are confident they know how to access the IET resources they need to undertake their role, but this appears to have plateaued at just over 80% in 2017 (80.2%).

However, this year shows a substantial increase in volunteers stating they have received an induction – up from 32.4% in 2016 to 49.8% in 2017. This reflects our commitment over the last year to give volunteers a good start in their roles by making the induction more accessible. We are still only reaching half of volunteers (49.6%) with the Volunteer Handbook, but 79.9% (up from 71.8% in 2016) say they have received Volunteer Update emails.

We have also worked hard in recent years to raise awareness of the key policies in place to support volunteers. This has been rewarded with a rise in awareness ratings across almost all policies, and most significantly in those relating to UK legislation. For example, awareness of Data Protection, which already had the highest awareness (77.1% in 2016), has risen to 83.0%. Another example is Equality & Diversity which has risen from 64.0% to 75.1%. Even policies introduced only recently, such as Gift and Hospitality, are showing ratings of over a quarter of respondents (37.6% in 2017).



In July 2015 we launched our online support for sign-up to legislative policies and awareness of this initiative has grown from 36.0% in 2016 to 45.8% in 2017. This is helpful for the IET in maintaining compliance with UK legislation and continues to be introduced to all those starting a new volunteering role.

Nearly 6 in 10 volunteers stated they were aware of IET strategy and KPIs in the 2017 survey (57.5%). The 2016 survey asked a slightly different question, whether volunteers had 'ever received or been made aware of' IET strategy and KPIs, but even so, the 2016 figure of 37.1% is notably less. This may be a contributor to the rise in satisfaction as we believe that being able to understand your personal contribution in the context of overall achievement helps people feel engaged. To track this we also ask how well respondents feel they understand the value of their contribution to achieving the IET's objectives, and this year 78.3% rated this 4 or 5 on a five point scale (where 5 is very well), with only 4.0% giving a rating of 1 or 2 (where 1 is not at all). This compares to 67.0% (rating 4 or 5) and 11.2% (rating 1 or 2) in 2016.

Aside from being a KPI, the question on one-team working helps us to establish how effectively we all work together to deliver the IET's objectives. This year, a follow-on question on what would improve the score is helping us understand the barriers to one-team working. It's not unexpected that comments here are often around communication – particularly for volunteers furthest removed from Head Office – and also clarity of understanding about roles and responsibilities. This is something we will continue to focus on improving.

Respondents were asked if their employer supports their volunteering by giving time off. Of this year's respondents, 42.2% already receive support in the form of time off or have the flexibility to undertake volunteering. Almost 12% (11.9%), take holiday or accommodate it in other ways, and 34.8% are not employed or are self-employed.

Following on from the question on employer support for volunteering, the survey asked if it would be helpful to have more support. Of the 411 who went on to answer this question, 42.8% agreed that it would be helpful. The majority of follow-up comments on what would be helpful asked for time off or flexibility to manage activities around work. There was also a strong desire for the IET and its activities to be recognised as useful in terms of professional development, Corporate Social Responsibility and giving something back to industry and other professionals.



New questions this year asked respondents:

- Whether they were aware that the IET will begin the random monitoring of Professionally Active members' CPD records from January 2017. It was encouraging to see that 76.8% of the respondents are aware of this initiative. As volunteers are often approached by members for advice on such matters the survey asked how confident respondents were in being able to support members with questions about CPD recording. Nearly 1 in 3 (29.7%) felt they could point members to relevant information, 17.3% could explain the requirements, 22.8% could suggest ways to complete CPD records, and 21.7% aren't confident but would try. Only 8.5% of respondents said they wouldn't be able to help.
- About their awareness of IET fundraising activities. Even though the IET has been raising funds for only a short while (aside from IET Connect) the reported level of awareness is encouraging: 49.7% for Faraday Challenge Days/*FIRST*® LEGO® League, 37.9% for Legacies (gifts in wills), 30.1% for Diamond Jubilee Scholarships/Horizons Bursaries, and 6.3% for Take Your Place. It is helpful to understand respondent's views on volunteers' engagement in promoting these. While 43.6% do not feel able to help raise awareness (an additional 18.2% don't know), 38.2% do support volunteer engagement in this, and we are particularly thankful to the 12.9% who said they were happy to be contacted to discuss this further.
- About their experience of participating in virtual meetings. Nearly 1 in 3 (28.1%) of volunteers participate in virtual meetings as part of their IET volunteering role. On a five-point scale (where 1 is very poor and 5 very good), 34.4% rated their experience 4 or 5, with a further 40.4% rating it neither good nor bad (3). This is helping us to develop our support for the use of virtual meeting and collaboration support tools. Thank you to all those who shared their experiences and ideas for tools to consider.

## General Statistics

Time spent participating in volunteering remains high. We still find that the majority of respondents undertake IET activities for less than 8 hours per month (46.4%), with just under one third (32.8%) giving 8 – 15 hours, 10.9% giving 16 – 25 hours and 9.2% giving 26 – 75 hours. An amazing 0.7% (4 people) report giving 76 hours and above. This is similar to last year, but doesn't follow the previously observed minor move towards committing less time per month. A cross-reference against age shows no specific trends to predict volunteering time commitment by age.

The age profile of respondents continues to be weighted towards those over 55 years (55.9%) which reflects the known demographic for IET volunteers. Likewise, 79.3% of respondents were based in the UK, with a 7.5% representation from Asia Pacific region, 6.2% for EMEA, 3.9% for South Asia and 3.1% for the Americas.

The results of the survey are available to IET volunteers on the [Volunteer Gateway](#), excluding free text comments which are removed because some may be attributable due to their content.

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