



# Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service

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## **Survey of Trustees and Committee Members of Voluntary and Community Groups in Bournemouth**

Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service (BCVS) exists to make voluntary and community groups stronger in Bournemouth. It does this by providing advice, training, information, services, and a voice for the voluntary and community sector. Trustees and committee members are the ultimate decision makers of voluntary and community organisations and make sure that groups work in the best interests of those they are set up to benefit. Being run by unpaid trustees and committee members is one of the important defining characteristics of voluntary groups and charities. Because of the vital role they play BCVS wishes to better understand their needs and how best support them. Therefore BCVS designed a survey which was sent to about 400 of the groups that it has e-mail contact with and asked that it be distributed to their trustees/committee members. The survey, using SurveyMonkey, was open until 2nd June 2014 and was completed by 112 respondents.

### **Key Findings**

1. Bournemouth's trustees and committee members spend about half a million hours a year running local organisations and groups.
2. The replacement value, if this time was paid for, would be at least £3 million per year (based on the minimum wage) but more likely £10 million (based on the median managerial pay).
3. Half of trustees/committee members serve on just one committee but another 31% serve on two.
4. Half of trustees and committee members have served for 5 years or less.
5. Trustees and committee members reflect the gender and disability breakdown of the local population but have less under 50s and those from black and minority ethnic communities (this is similar to findings across England but better than local councillors in England).
6. 36% were asked to be a trustee or committee member but 15% responded to an advert and 15% contacted the group themselves.
7. Generally trustees and committee members understand their responsibilities but they have identified a need to improve their understanding of charity and company law, being an employer and trading.
8. Trustees and committee members also want to improve their knowledge of liabilities, monitoring and evaluation, income generation and conflict of interests.
9. The most favoured ways trustees and committee members want to improve their knowledge is by using fact sheets, web pages and half day training.

10. Nearly all seek advice and support from fellow trustees/committee members but they find the web and BCVS the most helpful.
11. At least a third of trustees/committee members are unaware of many BCVS services.
12. Those who use BCVS services highly rate the training courses, forums, staff and its monthly update of law and good practice (only available for voting members).
13. At least half of trustees/committee members would use an e-newsletter, fact sheets, web pages, e-group and half day conferences and training if offered by BCVS.

### **What are the characteristics of Bournemouth trustees and committee members?**

94.5% (104) were trustees or committee members of a voluntary/community organisation either based or working in the borough, of which 96% (99) were trustees of a charity. (For the rest of this report we will use the term 'trustee' to describe trustees and committee members and 'board' to describe board, committees, etc.)

When asked how many organisations they were trustees of (see Table 1), half said they were trustees of only one organisation but 31% were members of two boards and two respondents said they served on more than 5 boards each!

**Table 1**

<b>Number of boards</b>	<b>% Trustees</b>
1	52.1%
2	31.3%
3	8.3%
4	5.2%
5	1%
More than 5	2%

Trustees were asked to estimate how many hours a month they spent carrying out their trustee duties. 92 respondents gave a total of 2,008 hours per month, an average of 22 hours per month. However the range of responses was very large (from 2 to 162 hours) therefore the median figure of 12 hours/month (i.e. the midpoint of responses) is perhaps a better indicator of the 'average' monthly time commitment of a trustee. This is a significant amount of voluntary time and if it had to be paid for would cost at least £12,670 a month or £152,000 per year. However these figures are based on the minimum wage and trustees are carrying out a mainly managerial role. Therefore using the median rate for managerial pay<sup>1</sup> the replacement value is £498,000 per year. There are around 340 registered charities in Bournemouth and national statistics suggest each has an average of 5.5 trustees, therefore we can estimate the annual replacement cost of trustees in the borough to be at least £3 million, based on the minimum wage, but £10 million, based on the managerial rate, as a more realistic value.

Individuals had been trustees for periods varying from less than a year to more than 20 however the median was 5 years (national research has shown that less than a third have been trustees for more than 5 years).

<sup>1</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2013, ONS

87 trustees gave equality information about themselves. The following tables compare the statistics with the latest Census information for Bournemouth and those of local councillors in England<sup>2</sup>, who in many ways have a similar role to trustees.

**Table 2**

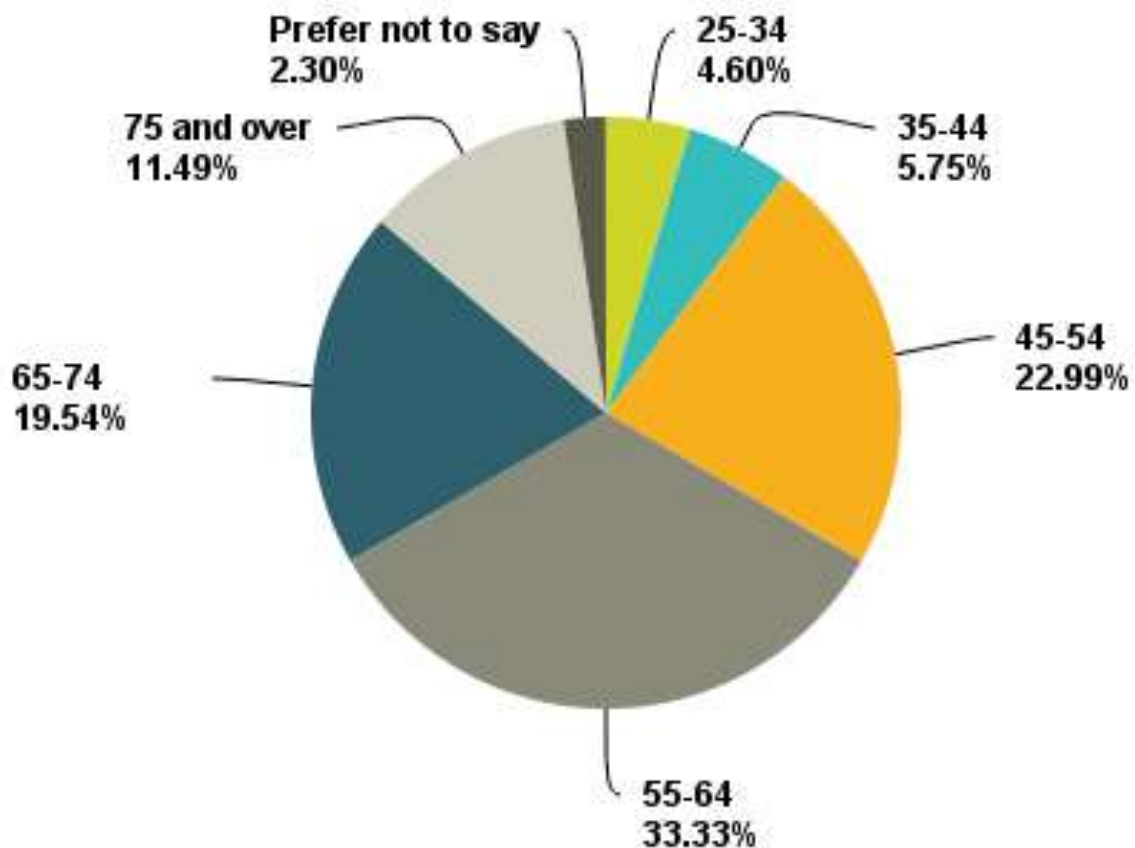
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Census</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>
Female	47.1%	50.2%	30.6%
Male	52.9%	49.8%	68.5%

The makeup of trustees is very similar to the population of Bournemouth and much better than national statistics for trustees and for English local councillors.

**Table 3**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Census</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>
Under 25	0%	18.2%	0.8%
25-34	4.6%	18.6%	2.8%
35-44	5.75%	15.8%	7.1%
45-54	22.99%	14.4%	16.3%
55-64	33.33%	12.4%	32.1%
65-74	19.54%	9.3%	20.6% (65-69)
75 and over	11.49%	11.2%	19.1% (over 69)
Prefer not to say	2.3%		

**Figure 1 (Age breakdown of local trustees)**



<sup>2</sup> National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010, LGA

Amongst our sample of trustees there was no-one under 25. This reflects the national picture as Charity Commission research in 2010 found that only 0.5% of trustees were under 25. The predominance of those over 50 in Bournemouth is also reflected in the national statistics which show that over two thirds of trustees were in this age range and the average age was 57 (the average age of English local councillors in 2010 was 59 and for the borough population was 40 in 2011).

**Table 4**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Census</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>
Yes	12.8%	14.9%	14.1%
No	86.1%	85.1%	85.9%
Prefer not to say	1.2%		

The figures above show that trustees almost reflect the local population and that of English local councillors.

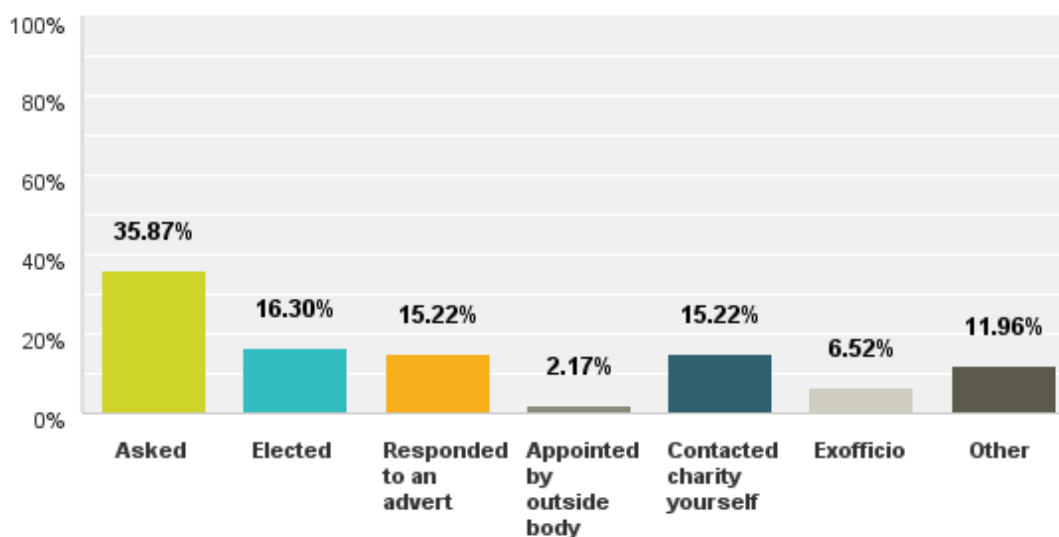
**Table 5**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Census</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>
White English/Welsh/Scotland/Northern Irish/British	92.9%	83.9%	94.7%
White Irish	2.4%	0.7%	1.2%
Other white background	2.4%	7.3%	0.4%
Mixed white and Asian	1.2%	0.8%	0.2%
Asian/British Indian	1.2%	3.9%	2.3%
Mixed white and African/Caribbean	0%	0.9%	0.2%
British African/Caribbean	0%	0.9%	0.7%
Other mixed ethnic groups	0%	0.6%	0.2%
Other ethnic groups	0%	0.9%	0%

Those from an ethnic background other than white was only 2.4% which is much lower than for the borough at 8.1% but compares well with English local councillors at 3.7%. All those who responded said their first language was English.

### How people became a trustee or committee member

**Table 6**



A third of trustees were asked which reflects national findings. However 15% said they responded to an advert and 15% contacted the organisation themselves. Therefore voluntary groups should consider making better use of advertising and promotion of themselves generally to secure new trustees. Interestingly there were 15 comments of which 8 (i.e. 53%) said they started or were a co-founder of the organisation.

### **How well do trustees understand their responsibilities.**

Respondents were asked to indicate how well they understood their responsibilities (if applicable) for a range of areas. Table 7 shows the results. The last column is the difference between those who understand their responsibilities (i.e. indicated either very well or well) from those who do not (indicated not very well or not at all).

**Table 7**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very well</b>	<b>Quite well</b>	<b>So so</b>	<b>Not very well</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Diff</b>
Effective meetings	51.6%	39.8%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	91.4%
Of a charity trustee	40.7%	47.3%	8.8%	3.3%	0.0%	84.6%
Of a committee member	44.0%	44.0%	8.8%	3.3%	0.0%	84.6%
My financial liabilities	39.8%	46.2%	11.8%	1.1%	1.1%	83.9%
Annual reporting	44.1%	41.9%	11.8%	0.0%	2.2%	83.9%
Running high quality organisation/services	37.0%	47.8%	12.0%	2.2%	1.1%	81.5%
Difference between governance and management	43.3%	41.1%	11.1%	3.3%	1.1%	80.0%
Managing conflicts of interests	40.2%	42.4%	14.1%	2.2%	1.1%	79.3%
My legal liabilities	35.9%	43.5%	17.4%	2.2%	1.1%	76.1%
Strategic management	46.7%	34.8%	12.0%	4.3%	2.2%	75.0%
Managing risks	35.9%	42.4%	17.4%	2.2%	2.2%	73.9%
Being a chair	38.6%	35.2%	22.7%	2.3%	1.1%	70.5%
Of boards/committees/etc.	36.7%	37.8%	21.1%	2.2%	2.2%	70.0%
Of a director	40.0%	37.3%	14.7%	5.3%	2.7%	69.3%
Financial management	39.1%	34.8%	18.5%	6.5%	1.1%	66.3%
Monitoring and evaluation	32.6%	35.9%	25.0%	4.3%	2.2%	62.0%
As an employer	21.3%	49.3%	17.3%	6.7%	5.3%	58.7%
Being a secretary	24.4%	35.4%	24.4%	12.2%	3.7%	43.9%
Being a treasurer	18.5%	38.3%	19.8%	17.3%	6.2%	33.3%
Charity law	12.6%	31.0%	36.8%	17.2%	2.3%	24.1%
Company law	13.3%	26.5%	30.1%	25.3%	4.8%	9.6%
Trading (including tax and VAT)	13.3%	18.7%	20.0%	30.7%	17.3%	-16.0%
Rules for Community Interest Companies	10.7%	17.3%	20.0%	30.7%	21.3%	-24.0%

Overall there is a very good understanding by trustees of their responsibilities as a trustee or committee member. However there seem to be some surprising weaknesses in the area of being an employer and in particular charity law. The low understanding of company law may be because this is not relevant to many organisations. The only two areas where there was more lack of understanding than good understanding were in the areas of trading and Community Interest

Companies. Understanding the rules relating to VAT, tax and trading by charities is a quite important area of understanding that all trustees should have some understanding of. Lack of understanding of CICs may not be relevant for many people as this is still not a very common organisational legal structure.

Respondents were then asked to list up to five areas of knowledge they would like to improve. 77 trustees identified 53 areas; however 22 of these were individual requests. Areas that at least 10% of trustees indicated a need are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8**

<b>Training need</b>	<b>% Trustees</b>
Charity Law	30%
Monitoring and evaluation	26%
Legal/financial liabilities	27%
Financial management	19%
Employment/HR	25%
Difference between governance and management	13%
Company Law	22%
Trading	16%
CICs	12%
Quality and effectiveness	12%
Risk management	17%
Strategic management	12%

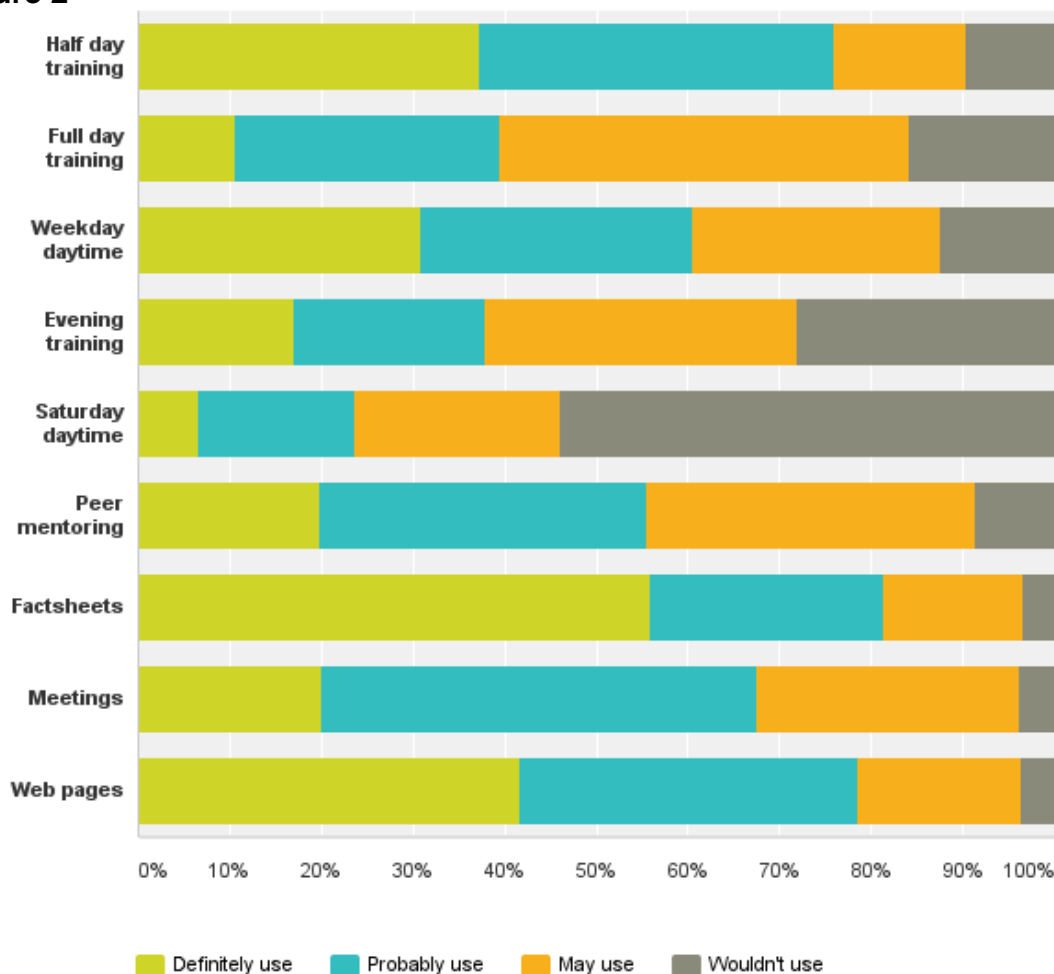
Trustees themselves have identified the needs found in Table 7, i.e. Charity and Company Law, employment and HR. Trading (including tax and VAT) was a less common choice than the need in Table 7 would indicate. Legal and financial liabilities, monitoring and evaluation were the second and third most common choice which is not shown as a weakness in Table 7 but hopefully reflects trustees' wish to be better aware of these areas and so act in an informed and responsible way.

Various aspects of income generation and fundraising were mentioned and if combined would have produced a figure of 16%. Also the issue of conflict of interests was mentioned by 9% of trustees and given the recent publication of new guidance by the Charity Commission may be an increasing need for trustees to consider.

When asked which methods they preferred to use to improve their skills and knowledge the results are shown in Figure 2.

The most favoured method is fact sheets with 56% of trustees saying they would definitely use them and another 26% saying they probably would. 42% would definitely use web pages and 37% half day training. Looking at training, weekday daytime seems to be more favoured than at other times. Interestingly peer mentoring would definitely or probably be used by 56% of trustees. There was the opportunity for respondents to identify other methods and a few references were made to on-line training. Therefore overall the provision of fact sheets, web pages and half day training would meet the preferences of the majority of trustees.

**Figure 2**



**Where do trustees get advice and support from**

When asked who respondents sought advice from, and how they rated that advice, the results are shown in Table 9:

**Table 9**

Answer Options	Use	Very helpful	Helpful	So so	Not very helpful	Useless
Trustees in your organisation	92%	47%	40%	11%	2%	0%
Staff in your organisation	78%	57%	29%	10%	4%	0%
The web	74%	48%	46%	4%	0%	1%
Charity Commission	73%	26%	59%	11%	3%	2%
BCVS	67%	55%	35%	10%	0%	0%
Another charity/voluntary organisation	66%	34%	46%	19%	2%	0%
Accountant	51%	52%	33%	11%	0%	4%
National umbrella body	42%	32%	50%	13%	5%	0%
NCVO	38%	29%	53%	15%	3%	0%
Other professional/consultant	37%	48%	39%	12%	0%	0%
Lawyer	33%	37%	37%	20%	0%	7%
Small Charity Coalition	20%	22%	33%	39%	6%	0%
Other	3%					
No-one	21%					

Relying on those within their own organisation is the most common source with fellow trustees being almost universal, and staff as the second commonest. The web, the Charity Commission, BCVS and other voluntary groups are also fairly common sources. Amongst professionals accountants are the most used with 51% using them whereas only 33% use lawyers. Also 37% use other professionals or consultants. There seems an anomaly in that 21% said they used no-one and yet 92% said they used fellow trustees. Perhaps this was due to respondent confusion caused by poor wording of the question and so should be discounted. Three respondents mentioned their use of the local council, Directory of Social Change, and ACEVO. Overall trustees find all sources of advice helpful. The web seems to be the most helpful (94% rating it as very helpful or helpful), followed by BCVS (90% rating it as very helpful or helpful). It is interesting to see that although lawyers come almost bottom they were still rated as helpful by 73%.

### **Which BCVS services do trustees use and how are they rated?**

BCVS provides a number of on-line, printed and face to face services. Respondents were asked to indicate if they knew about each one and whether they used them or not (see Table 10). The majority of trustees are aware of BCVS training courses, e-mails, website, factsheets and staff but in most cases it is only just a majority. It is disappointing that although 66% know about the BCVS website only 49% know it has some specific pages on it for trustees. For the trustees that are aware of BCVS services the large majority do make use of them, in particular e-mails and the website. BCVS needs to find ways of raising awareness of what it does provide. This was reflected in the 22 comments given to this question that many were unaware of the range of services BCVS provided. One difficulty is getting past any 'gatekeeper'. Although anyone in a voluntary/community group can register their contacts with BCVS for the majority of organisations there is a single contact. Therefore BCVS will always be reliant on that person circulating relevant information to all the trustees.

**Table 10**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Not aware</b>	<b>Know but don't use</b>	<b>Know and use</b>
Training courses	32%	22%	47%
E-mails	30%	9%	61%
Website	33%	20%	49%
Special website pages for trustees	51%	15%	33%
Factsheets	43%	13%	44%
Forums	52%	11%	38%
Senior Advisor	44%	14%	43%
Know Your Stuff (only for BCVS members)	58%	6%	35%
Register of Contacts	51%	15%	33%
Place to Meet guide	71%	13%	16%
VCS Voice	62%	10%	28%

Those who do use BCVS services were asked to rate them, as shown in Table 11.



**Table 11**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very useful</b>	<b>Quite useful</b>	<b>So so</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Useless</b>
Training courses	70%	27%	3%	0%	0%
E-mails	48%	40%	13%	0%	0%
Website	41%	49%	10%	0%	0%
Special website pages for trustees	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%
Factsheets	56%	34%	9%	0%	0%
Forums	59%	37%	0%	4%	0%
Senior Advisor	77%	19%	3%	0%	0%
Know Your Stuff (only for BCVS members)	52%	43%	4%	0%	0%
Register of Contacts	38%	42%	21%	0%	0%
Place to Meet guide	45%	45%	9%	0%	0%
VCS Voice	35%	45%	20%	0%	0%

Forums were the only service to get a negative rating and this was from a single trustee. In general trustees that use the services do find them useful rather mediocre. In particular the training courses, forums (in contrast to the one individual who rated them negatively), Senior Advisor and Know Your Stuff are significantly valued. BCVS should investigate how to improve the relevancy for trustees of VCS Voice, Register of Contacts and particularly the website (including special pages for trustees).

### **What future BCVS services would trustees use?**

When asked about possible new BCVS services trustees responded as shown in Table 12.

**Table 12**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Quite likely</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
One day conferences/meetings	11%	35%	32%	19%	4%
Half day conferences/meetings	23%	46%	22%	6%	2%
E-group (circulating news items of interest)	32%	38%	23%	6%	0%
Q&A (posting of questions for others to answer)	25%	22%	34%	14%	4%
Newsletter sent by e-mail	35%	47%	13%	4%	1%
Newsletter sent by post	12%	28%	26%	23%	11%
Fact sheets	29%	43%	22%	4%	2%
Special web pages	27%	44%	27%	3%	0%
Bespoke sessions for your organisation	29%	28%	27%	10%	5%
Governance audit	22%	36%	25%	10%	6%
Training courses	27%	33%	33%	3%	4%
1-2-1 surgeries	15%	30%	32%	14%	9%
Matching with experienced trustees	19%	20%	39%	14%	8%
Support groups for particular officers e.g. Chairs	19%	35%	26%	13%	7%

At least half of trustees are likely to use an e-newsletter, factsheets, webpages, e-group and half day conferences and training. Significant numbers are also very likely to want to use bespoke sessions for their board or committee and a Q and A service. Given the relatively lower level of usefulness given to BCVS's trustee pages on its website BCVS should investigate to find out what trustees would like to see on the website. BCVS has always made the offer of running, and does provide, sessions for individual organisations therefore perhaps it needs to market this offer better to trustees.

### **Conclusion**

Trustees and committee members in Bournemouth provide a very significant amount of voluntary time running voluntary and community groups. Their make up generally reflects the population of the borough (perhaps more closely than local councillors in England) but, as elsewhere in the country, organisations should look to recruit more younger people, particularly those under 25, and those from Bournemouth's black and minority ethnic communities. Trustees understand their responsibilities very well and have identified areas of knowledge they wish to improve in. They rely very heavily on fellow trustees for advice and support but find the web and BCVS the most helpful. Although many trustees use and value BCVS services a significant proportion of all trustees are unaware of its full offer. Therefore BCVS should investigate how it can raise awareness of its services. In the next few months BCVS will review the services it currently provides to trustees, and explore what new ones it could offer, based on the needs and preferences shown by this research.

**June 2014**