



# Investing in Volunteers Impact Assessment 2013 - Summary report

**Joni Browne and Matthew Hill, January 2014**

Investing in Volunteers (iV) is the UK quality standard for organisations that involve volunteers in their work. iV is held for three years after being awarded with organisations then having the opportunity to renew it. iV is owned by the UK Volunteering Forum made up of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Volunteer Now, Volunteer Scotland (VS) and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). iV was commissioned to examine the impact of iV on organisations in order to help develop the award strategically and sustainably in the future. The assessment included a survey of award achieving organisations (36% response rate - 141 respondents from 392 valid email addresses) and eleven in-depth follow up telephone interviews. It was beyond the scope of this assessment to speak directly to volunteers or beneficiaries. This short report offers a brief summary of the headline findings. Detailed findings can be found in the final report, which can be requested directly from your relevant country's iV administration team.

## **Satisfaction with the process**

Overall satisfaction with the process was very high (92%) with half of respondents (47%) saying they were very satisfied.

**Table 1: Satisfaction with the iV process**

<b>Aspect of the process</b>	<b>% organisations satisfied or very satisfied</b>
Overall (n=137)	92%
The self-assessment (n=141)	94%
Start-up (n=141)	92%
The assessment process (n=139)	91%
The development plan (n=141)	89%
Post-award support (n=141)	65%



*“I felt that the process was good and our Assessor in particular was a pleasure to work with, plus she accommodated our needs by conducting the assessment during the afternoons and evenings which was really helpful.”*

The impact assessment revealed that respondents were especially satisfied with the *clarity of the process*, which was seen as very straightforward and offering a coherent and comprehensive framework for developing organisational practice around volunteers; and with the *substantial support offered* from awarding bodies, Assessors and, in some cases, buddies and mentors from peer organisations. Despite the high satisfaction rates, 38% of respondents offered suggestions for improvement including facilitating more contact with peer organisations, a greater acknowledgement of the complex differences between different organisations, ensuring that cost is more responsive to an organisation’s ability to pay, addressing logistical problems in organising the assessment, and, most importantly, a number of respondents felt that post-award support should be much more substantial.

### **Motivations for undertaking liV**

Respondents had a wide range of motivations for undertaking liV with a broad distinction between those who saw liV as primarily a developmental process and those who saw it as primarily a validation of existing high quality practice. The most common reasons given for undertaking liV were to increase their profile or status (93%), increase the satisfaction of volunteers (91%), and increase their commitment to fair, efficient and consistent recruitment processes for all potential volunteers (91%). Increasing funding from statutory, voluntary or other sources were less frequently mentioned motivations, although more than four in ten still cited these as motives.

### **Impact experienced by organisations**

*“Since IIV, the profile of the volunteers has improved immensely... they are far more visible and their impact is far more obvious”*

Overall, achieving liV was seen to have a positive impact on volunteering within the organisation by 95% of respondents and as having a large positive impact by 38%. As can be seen from table 2, the positive impacts most commonly perceived were in organisational processes around recruitment (84%), induction (83%), support and supervision (77%) and training (73%). The majority of respondents also saw achieving liV as having a positive impact on the satisfaction of volunteers (77%), the recognition that volunteering is a two-way process (77%), strategic engagement with volunteering (73%) and the value of volunteer management (72%).



*“The award evidences to external volunteer referring organisations how good our volunteer programme is. Likewise staff who recruit volunteers can use the award to evidence to potential volunteers how they will be treated as a volunteer.”*

**Table 2: Impact of liV**

Area of impact	% organisations that experienced a positive impact
Increasing the commitment to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment processes for all potential volunteers (n=134)	84
Retaining more volunteers (n=130)	41
Recruiting more volunteers (n=133)	20
Recruiting more diverse volunteers (n=130)	15
Induction of volunteers (n=128)	83
Support and supervision of volunteers (n=128)	77
Training of volunteers (n=128)	73
Reward and recognition of volunteers (n=128)	70
Satisfaction of volunteers (n=127)	77
Volunteer voice (n=126)	71
Protecting volunteers from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering (n=119)	64
The recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process benefiting volunteers and the organisation (n=125)	77
Strategic engagement with volunteering across the organisation (n=123)	73
The value and status of volunteer management within the organisation (n=126)	72
The amount of time and resources the organisation devotes to volunteer management (n=126)	58
Profile and status of the organisation (n=124)	82
The organisation’s partnerships with other organisations around volunteering (n=122)	65
Funding from statutory sources (n=124)	24
Funding from other sources (n=121)	23
Funding from voluntary sources (n=125)	20

*“It’s something we are proud to tell people of and highlight but outside the volunteer sector I’m not sure how many people are aware of liV.”*



Although achieving liV was seen to positively impact the profile of the organisation by 82% of respondents some felt increasing the profile of liV outside of the volunteering sector is an important potential area for development. A minority perceived it to have a positive impact on actually recruiting more volunteers (41%), recruiting more diverse volunteers (15%) or gaining funding from statutory sources (24%), voluntary sources (20%) or other sources (23%).

*“The liV award is included in statutory funding bids, which we are pleased has contributed towards funding being secured.”*

## Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the impact assessment has demonstrated that respondents have high levels of satisfaction with the process and they perceive it to have considerable positive impacts around a range of different areas of volunteer involvement. More work is necessary to understand the volunteer and beneficiaries’ perspective on these impacts and to better understand the different nature of these impacts for different types of organisations. The impact assessment raised a number of areas for potential development for liV in the future in order to increase its impact including:

- Increase the profile of liV beyond the volunteering sector amongst funders, partner organisations and potential volunteers. Organisations could also be better supported to promote liV themselves;
- Increase post-award support including facilitating peer networks and offering updates on significant policy or legislation;
- Encourage organisations to undertake their own impact assessment around liV and volunteering generally to both measure and strengthen impacts;
- Make the award more aspirational for some organisations especially at the renewal stage and explore the possibility to different levels of award;
- Offer more buddying opportunities with peer organisations who have achieved both during and after the process;
- Explore ways to reduce the time and administrative burden of the process on organisations;
- Keep the same assessor for renewals where possible;
- Explore targeted recruitment drives by sector, size or region;
- Ensure that liV is accessible to smaller organisations across the UK.