



**Engaging
Communities
Solutions**



Engaging Communities Solutions (ECS) volunteer survey report 2022

Introduction

We carried out a volunteer survey in February 2020, which was just before the COVID-19. We listened to the comments and recommendations that our volunteers told us, and processes were put into place. However due to everyone having to work differently and more remotely we changed some of the questions, so we cannot have a full comparison.

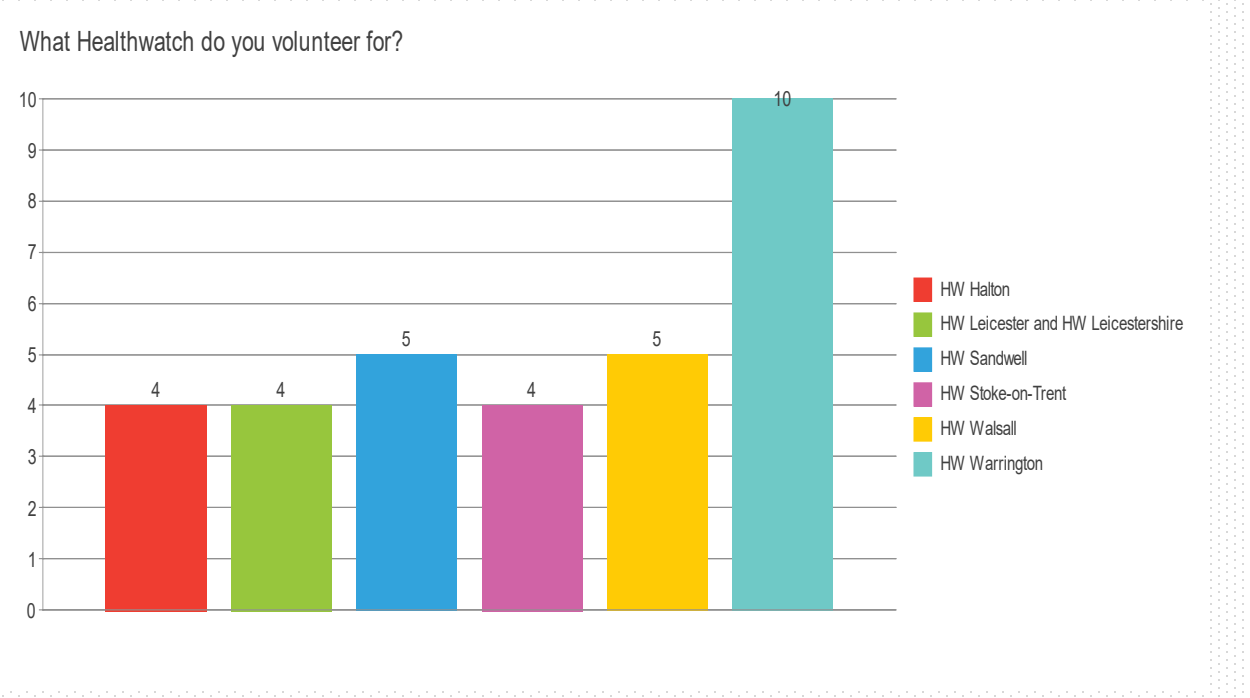
One of the areas that were highlighted in the February 2020 survey were that nearly a quarter of volunteers did not feel valued, however this survey shows that over 90% feel valued as a volunteer for ECS.

Training was asked in both surveys, results from February showed that volunteers did not feel that their training needs were met, however this is much the same from this survey with the main issues being training being offered at different times of the day / week.

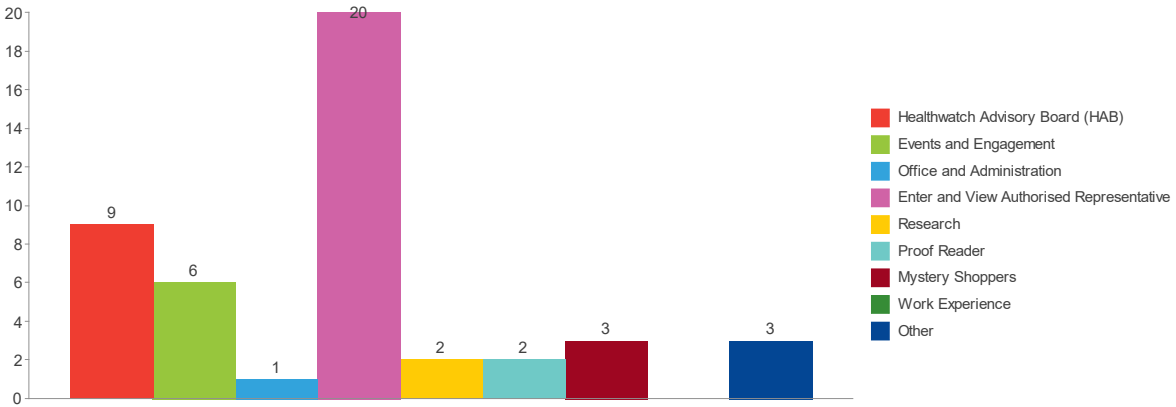
As an organisation we have recruited a volunteer manager to oversee volunteering and supporting the staff within their role. They will be responsible for ensuring that all volunteers have the adequate training and support.

Findings

There was a total of 32 (43%) completed surveys across the Healthwatch with the highest number being from Healthwatch Warrington.



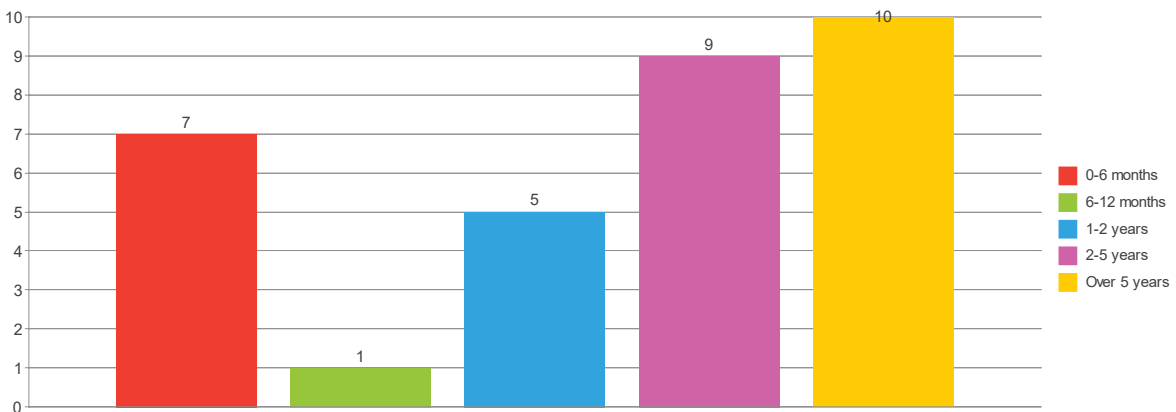
What areas of volunteering do you carry out (please tick all that apply)



The highest number of volunteers act as Authorised Enter and View Representatives (n19). The next highest number (n9) are members of the Healthwatch Advisory Boards (HAB). The third most common activity is undertaking Events and Engagement (n6). There were no volunteers on work experience.

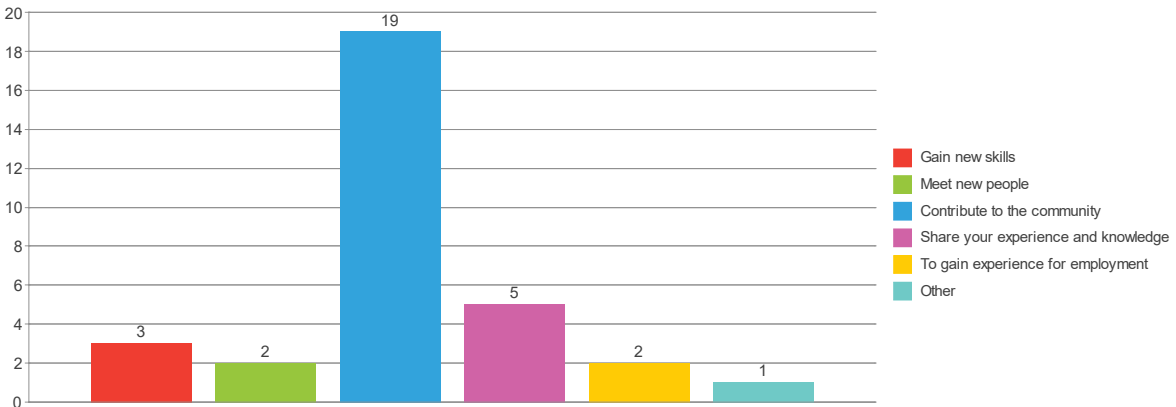
Three volunteers said that they undertook other roles for Healthwatch (HW). One said that they were Chair of a HAB. One said that they represent Healthwatch at local Trust meetings. Three said that they were on the HW Warrington People’s Virtual Panel.

How long have you been volunteering with Healthwatch?



The highest number of volunteers (n10) said that they had been volunteering with Healthwatch for over 5 years; nine said that they had been volunteering for 2-5 years and the third highest group were relatively new volunteers who had been volunteering for up to six months.

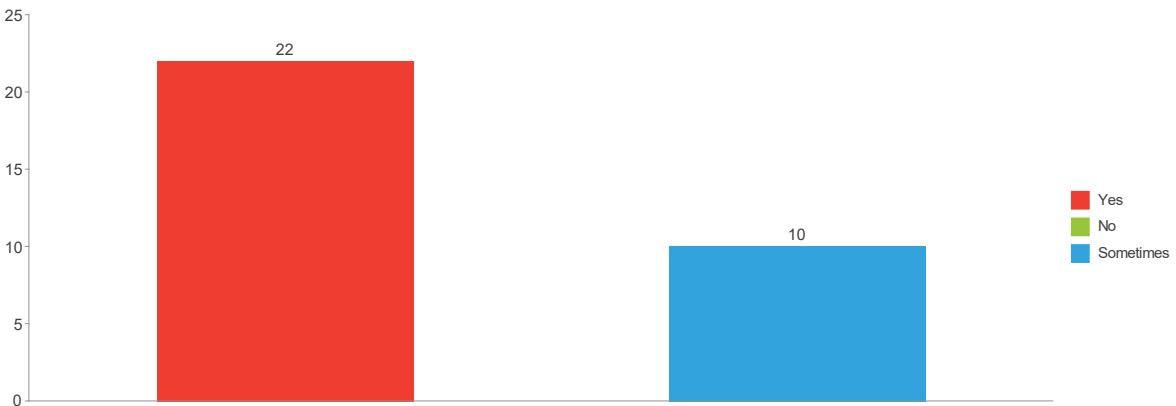
What reason do you volunteer with Healthwatch?



Volunteers were asked to give the reasons that they volunteer and were able to choose more than one reason.

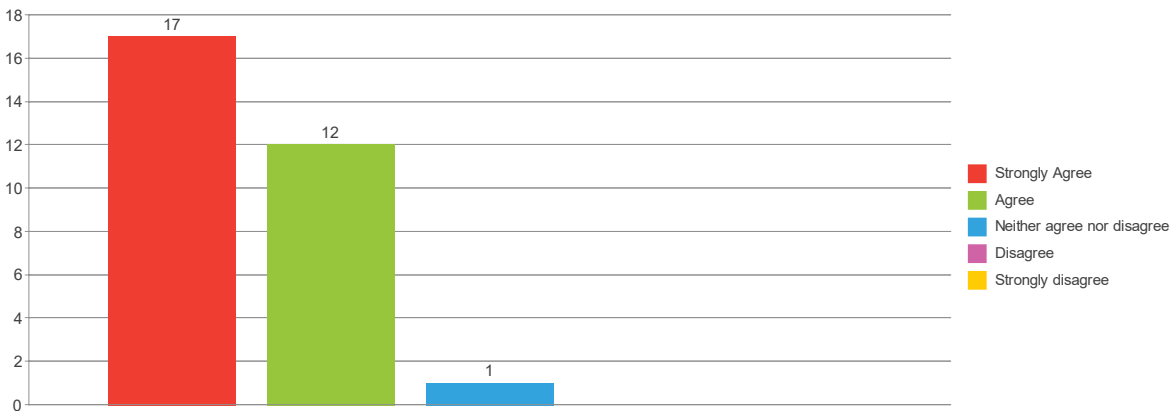
The highest number (n19) said that they volunteered to contribute to society. Five said that they volunteer to share their experience or knowledge and three said it was to gain new skills.

Does volunteering enable you to achieve what you want to according to the reasons you volunteer?



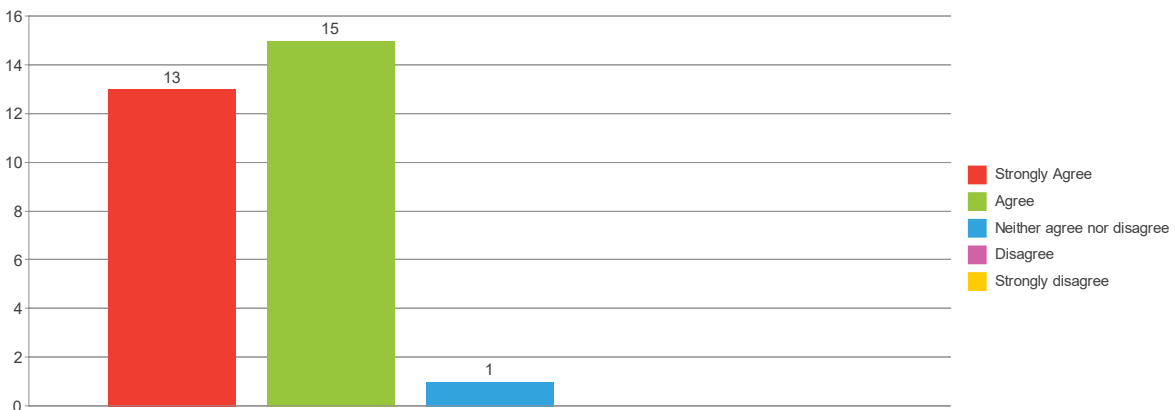
When asked if their volunteering helped them to achieve the reasons for volunteering most said that it did (n22); there were none that it did not achieve what they wanted and ten said that it did sometimes.

I enjoy volunteering at Healthwatch



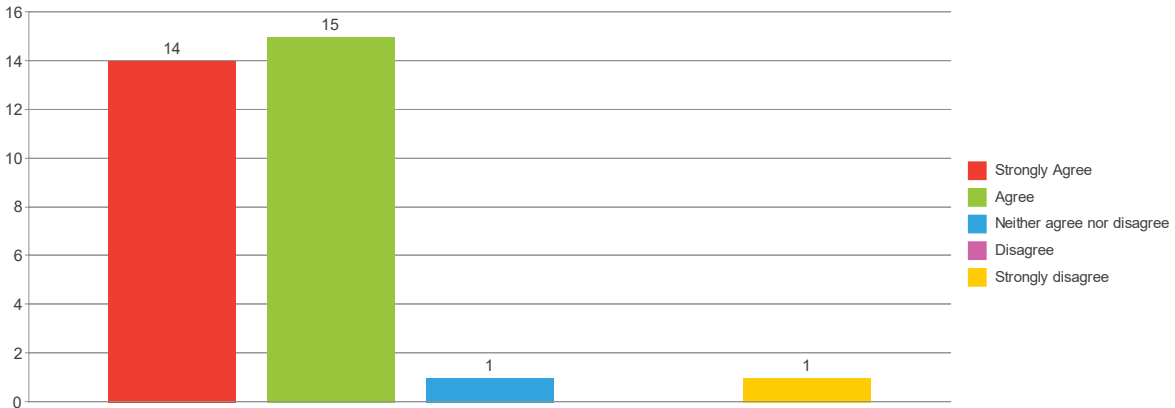
Most people who volunteer with Healthwatch said that they enjoyed it with 29 saying that they either strongly agreed or agreed. One volunteer gave a neutral answer.

I know what to do in my role



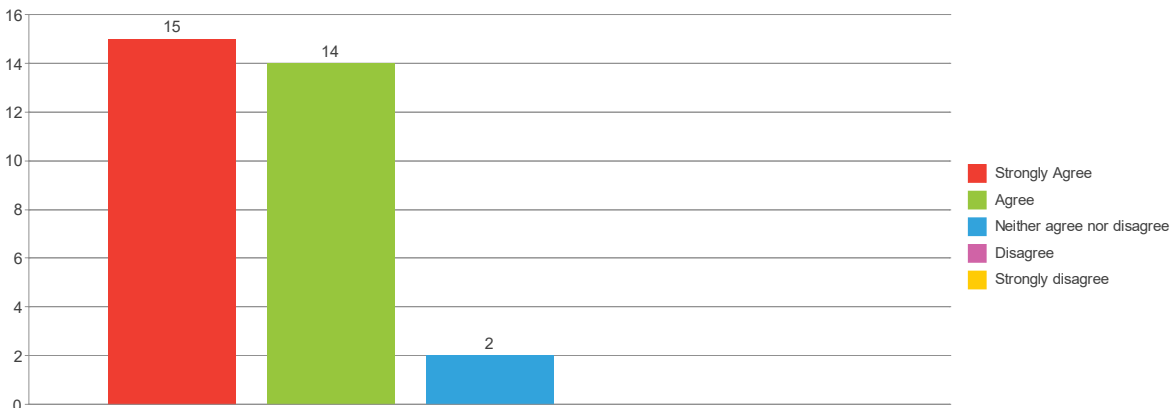
Most volunteers said that they knew what to do in their role with 28 saying that they either strongly agreed or agreed. One person gave a neutral answer.

I feel appreciated for my volunteering efforts



29 People said that they felt appreciated for their volunteering efforts. One person strongly disagreed that they were appreciated for their volunteering. One person gave a neutral answer.

I find my volunteering fulfilling



29 people said that they found their volunteering role fulfilling. Two people gave a neutral answer.

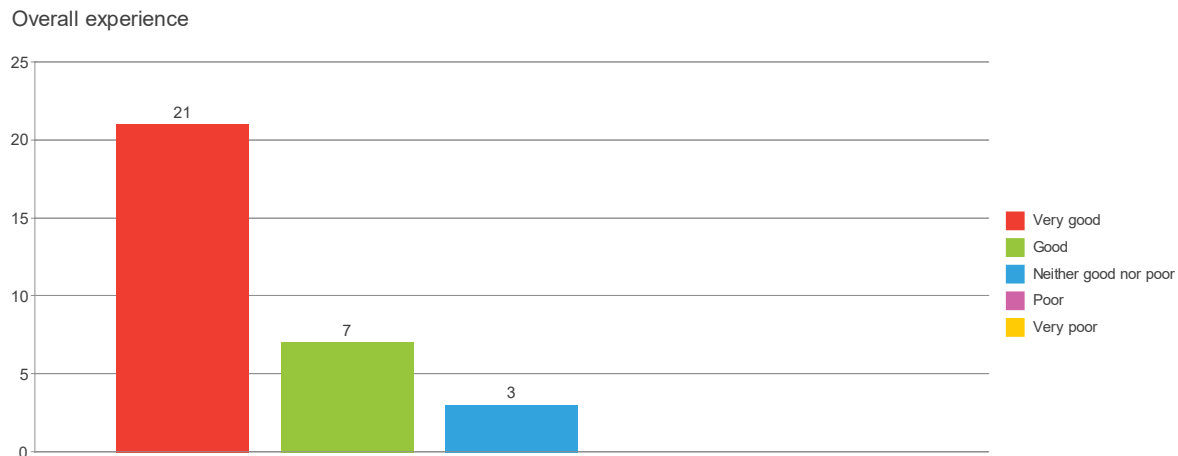
People were asked if they had any additional comments to make about how they feel about their role.

There were no clear themes from the comments. There was mention of the need to start Enter and View visits again that had been suspended due to the Pandemic. The pandemic was also mentioned in relation to a learning experience particularly in terms of the communities that we engage with.

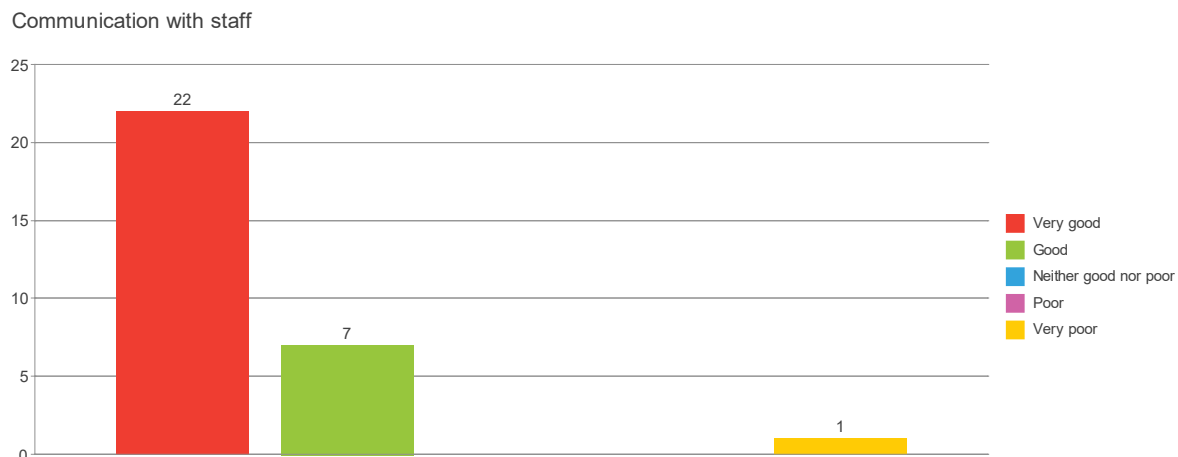
One person raised concerns about travel as they were reliant on a family member to accompany them when they travel, and this restricts what they are able to do.

Another commented that they had been 'given very little chance' - presumably to be involved in activities.

There was a comment about being unsure of their role at times and that they would welcome more support from ECS. Although it was recognised that when support was asked for it was provided.

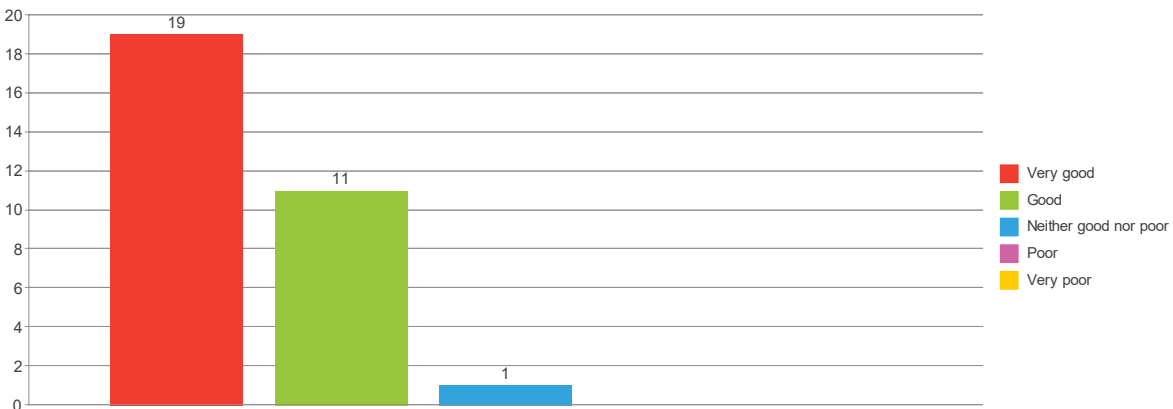


28 people felt that their overall experience of volunteering for Healthwatch was positive. Three people gave a neutral response.



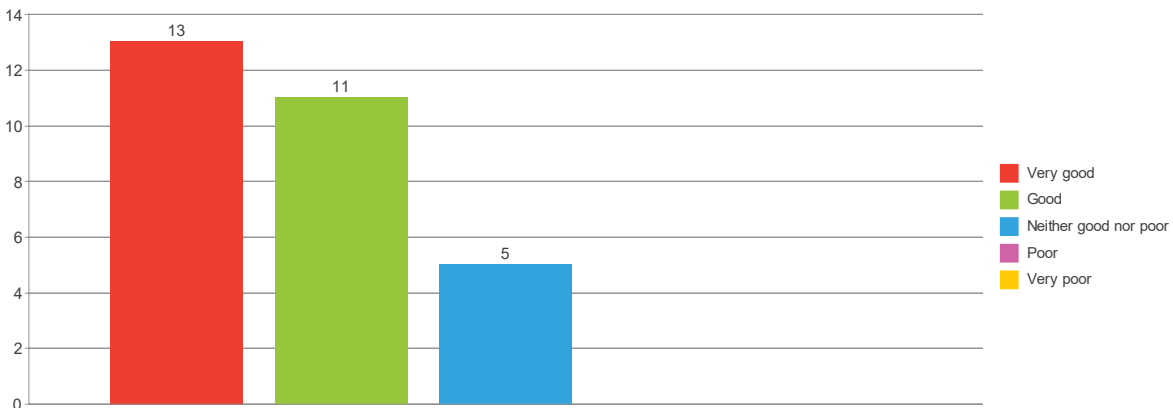
Whilst 29 people rated communication with staff positively, one person said that it was very poor.

Communication with Healthwatch volunteers



30 people rated communication with Healthwatch volunteers positively and one person gave a neutral answer.

Training provided



24 people were positive about the training provided and five people gave a neutral answer.

When asked to comment two people said that they were relatively new and so had not yet had their training. A further person said that they felt they could benefit from more training.

Another person commented on how it had been more difficult to work with other HAB members during the pandemic but hoped it was improving. They commented that they were 'always surprised by how engaged and willing Board members are to help if they can.'

When asked specifically to think about training and whether there was any other training that would help in their role.

There were some comments about needing updated enter and view training and the need for visits to start again in order to put what was learnt into practice.

There were two comments about the time required for training and how this can be difficult for volunteers to fit around their other commitments.

Being able to access Healthwatch England training was cited as being worthwhile and one person said that they felt that they were missing out on HWE training because they were unable to access the Healthwatch systems.

There were two comments in relation to HAB training with mentoring with another Healthwatch Chair being suggested and meeting HABs from other locations being potentially beneficial.

Online training was commented on as being available, but one person said that they 'don't like doing on-line training' and other than when they first joined, they had not done any further training.

When asked what is good about volunteering there were a small number of themes.

Being good for their own wellbeing was mentioned by some people with one person saying that it 'gives you a sense of wellbeing' and another saying that it gives them a 'sense of purpose and satisfaction.' It was commented that being a volunteer made them feel 'valued and heard. Feeling that I am making a difference and representing my local community.'

Another also said that 'it allows me to do something for the benefit of our communities' and contributing to their local communities or doing something for the good of others was a theme from the comments. 'I'm helping the people of Warrington obtain the best services available... and feel I'm giving back to the area in the best way I can.'

Learning new skills including soft skills and improving their employability was also a theme from the feedback with one person saying that it 'helps my employment' and another that it gave them 'an ability to gain new skills particularly soft skills.'

Two people mentioned it was an opportunity to meet new people.

When asked how their volunteering experience could be improved there were several comments. The impact of covid was mentioned in relation to some of the activities that volunteers wanted to do. One said that it would be improved by 'restarting E&V' whilst another said that they thought 'the pandemic has stopped the full volunteering experience.' Another commented that 'right now we are in a bit of a slump with the effects of post Covid issues and also the economic downturn [means] the vibrancy and sense of purpose which we lost could be restored.'

The provision of tailored and supported outreach events was given as an example by one person who said, 'support me with outreach events and tailor these events to what I am best suited for.'

As was previously mentioned in relation to training one participant would like access to the Healthwatch system as they say it is 'frustrating when reading HW bulletin and then cannot access the information.' They would also like a Healthwatch email address as it 'would look more consistent and professional.'

There were comments about needing more training, but these were covered earlier in comments on training needs.

It was also suggested that there should be a volunteer opportunities calendar available 'as it would be helpful for volunteers to plan their time ahead to be able to take advantage of volunteering opportunities.'

There was one specific comment in relation to wanting to know about other volunteering roles in the community from a member of the Warrington Peoples Panel, but this may be out of the remit of ECS and Healthwatch.

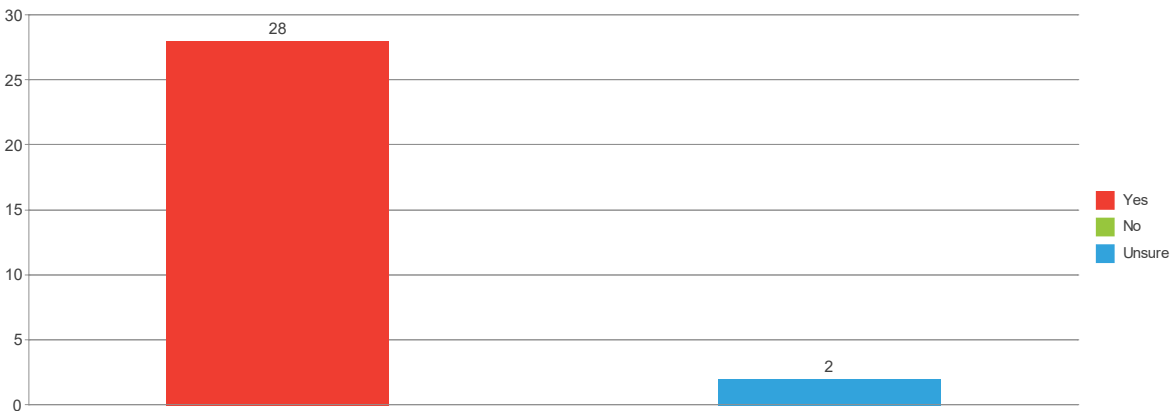
One person commented that they would like to have more feedback on how reports have been received and their impact.

Others said that they had no suggestions to make with one person saying that they 'don't think it needs improving!'

There were few comments about changes that people would like to see to improve their volunteering experience. However, there were suggestions that there needed to be 'a concerted effort to motivate existing volunteers and to attract new volunteers.'

There also need to be 'more regular structured support from ECS' and 'more acknowledgement by staff.'

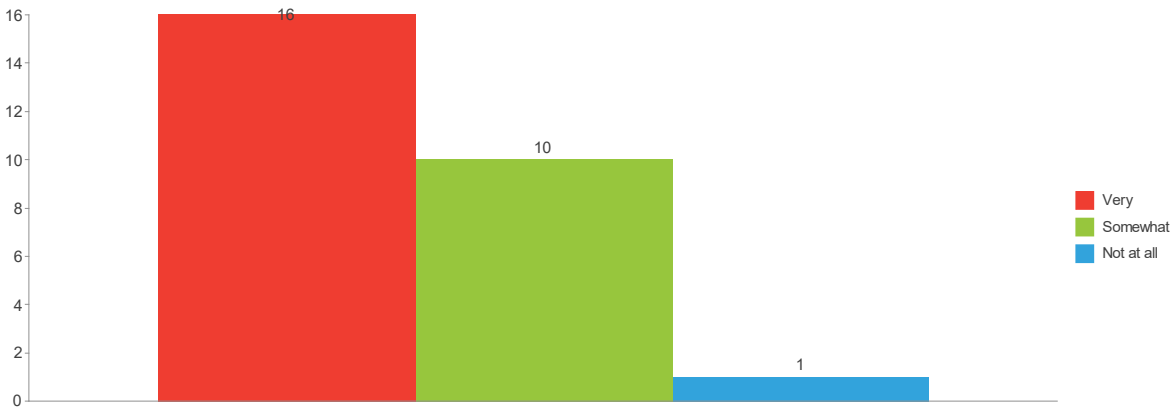
Do you feel you are valued as a volunteer?



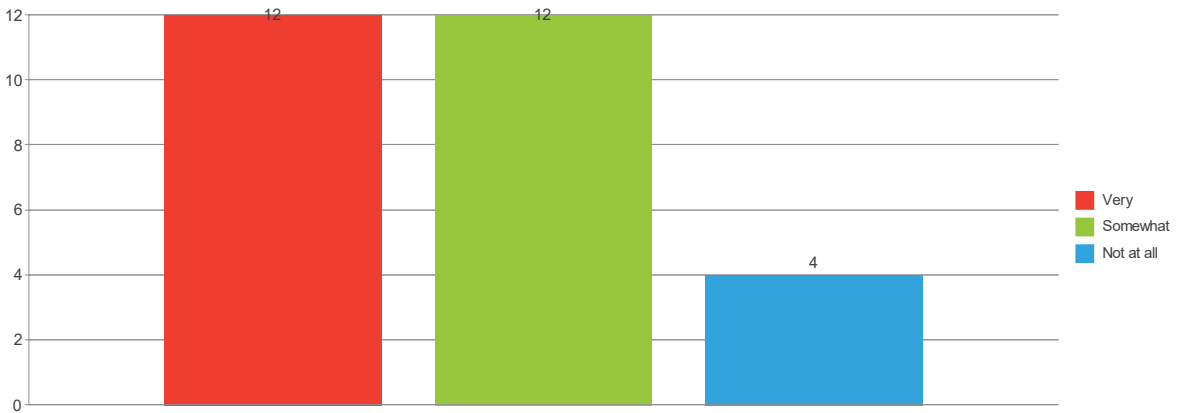
28 people said that they feel valued as a volunteer and two people said that they were unsure.

People were asked how meaningful they would find different forms of recognition for their volunteering.

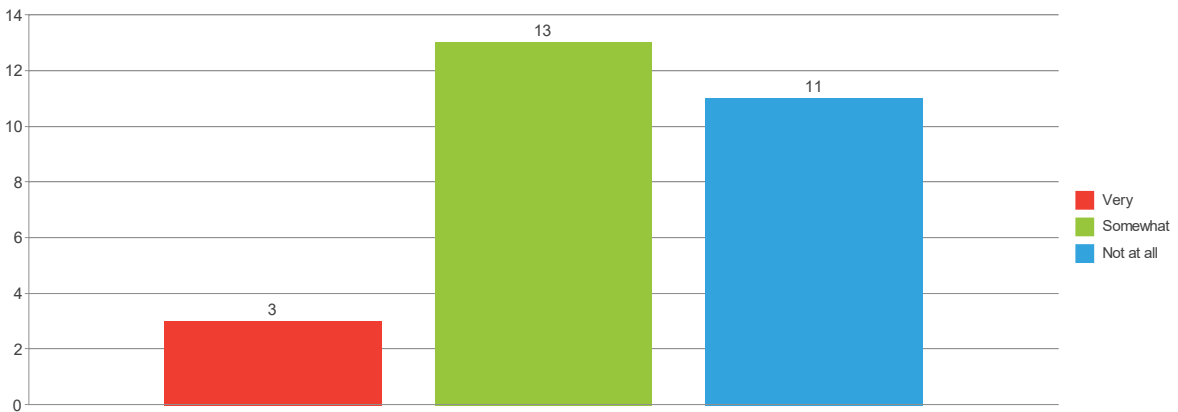
Sincere thank you from the staff or volunteer coordinator with whom I volunteer.



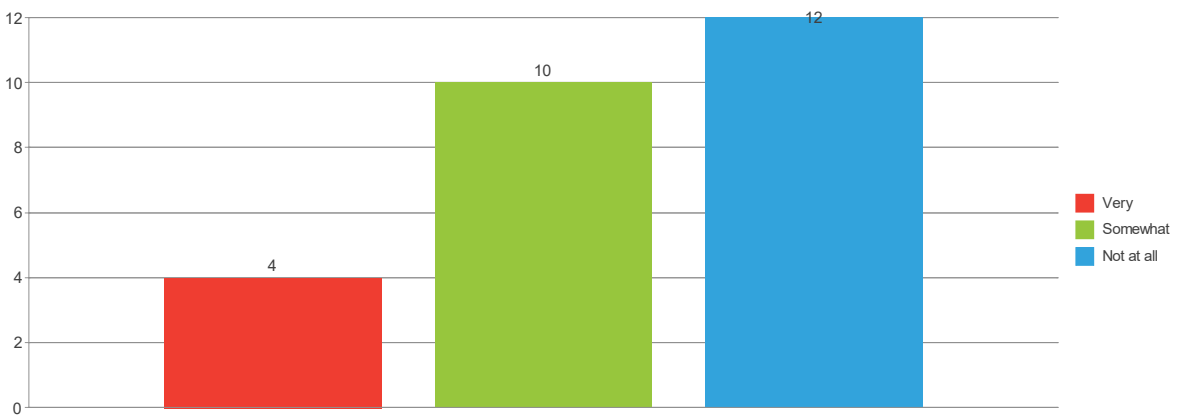
Invitation to a volunteer lunch or dinner



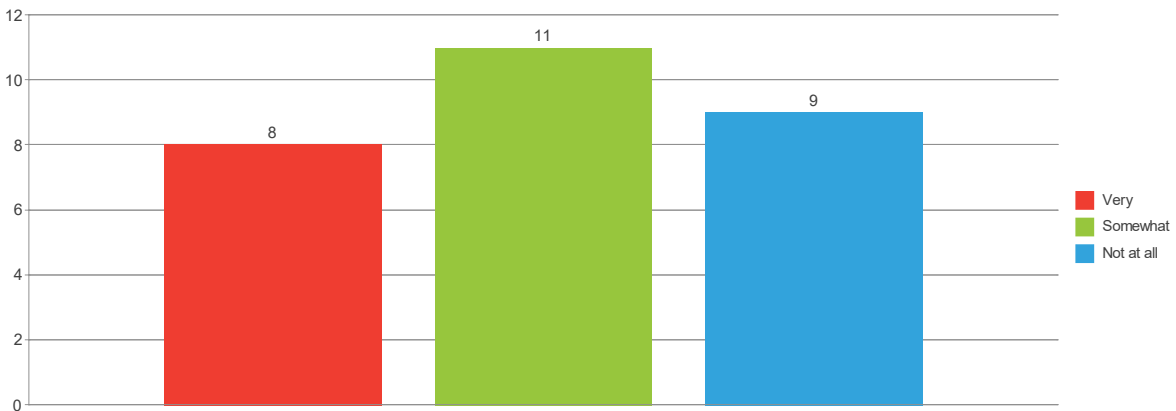
Nomination for a volunteer award



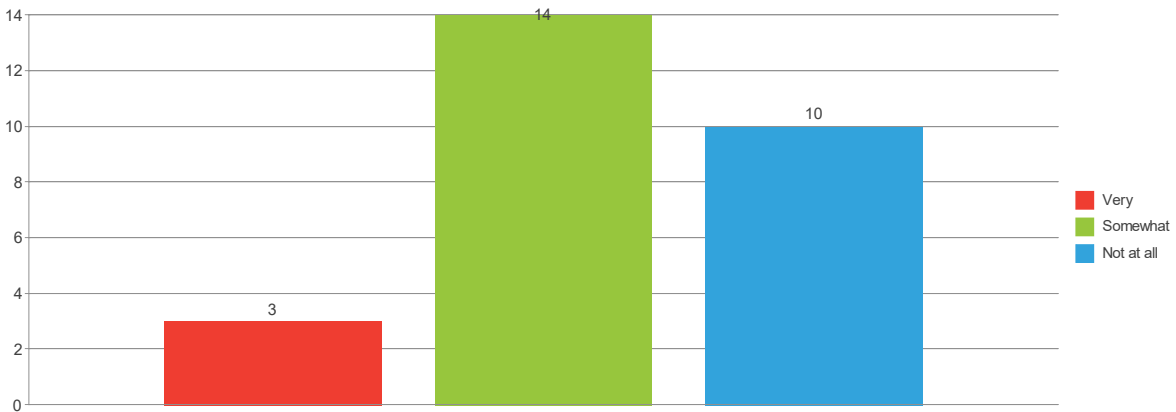
Profile on our website



Receiving a certificate or pin for hours or years of volunteering



Receipt of a small token such as a mug, tote bag or t-shirt



When asked for additional comments there were a mix of views on being rewarded or recognised for their volunteering.

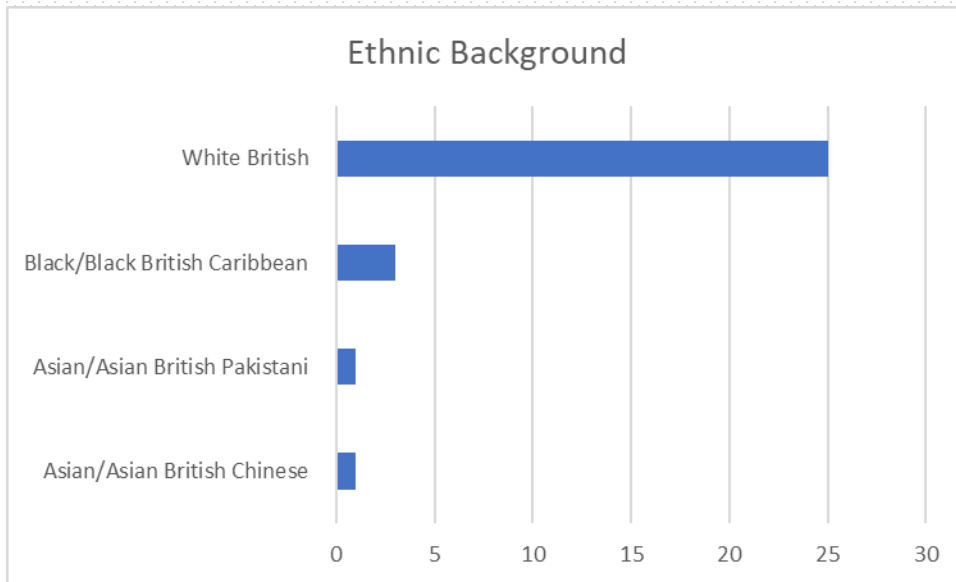
One said that they had been ‘thanked by the HWW team’ and another that they ‘already feel valued.’ They went on to say that ‘Anita supports us, and she has been very supportive in our roles. The new chair took the time to meet with us on a one to one which means a lot. I do not need anything fancy, and I would not want to be a cost to the organisation.’

Another said that they ‘do not expect to receive gifts’ and another that they ‘don’t volunteer for specific recognition so although these things would be nice, they are not vital to improve my volunteering experience.’

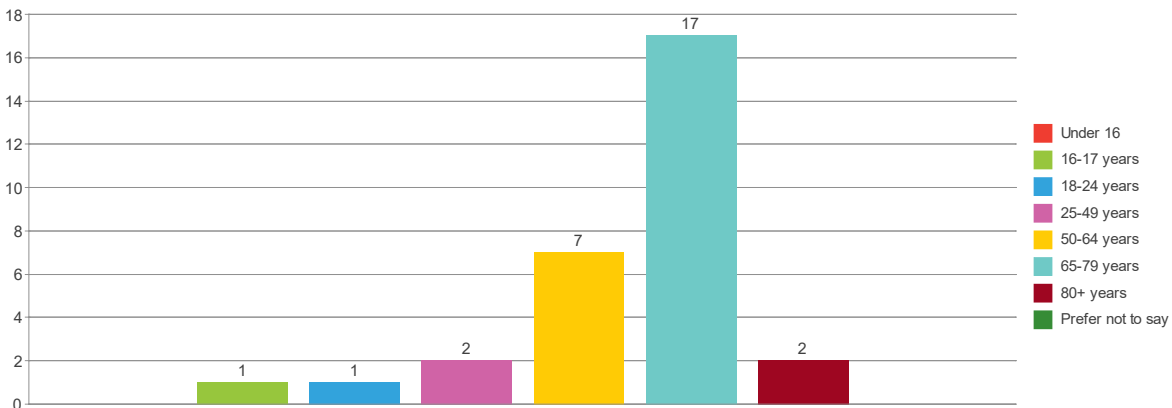
'I'm a volunteer because I want to help the community. Whilst a 'thank you' is lovely it's not why I joined but I do feel that the profile on the website is a good idea. Folks will know who you are, what you do and why you do it and may encourage them to contact Healthwatch Warrington if they have an issue.'

Another said that they already get invited for lunch or dinner and had previously been nominated for and received an award.

One person said that 'I like the idea of having a reward as a young person- it is meaningful and a sentiment that I would enjoy. In addition, providing something I would like such as a book or stationery would be a wonderful sentiment.'



What is your age band?



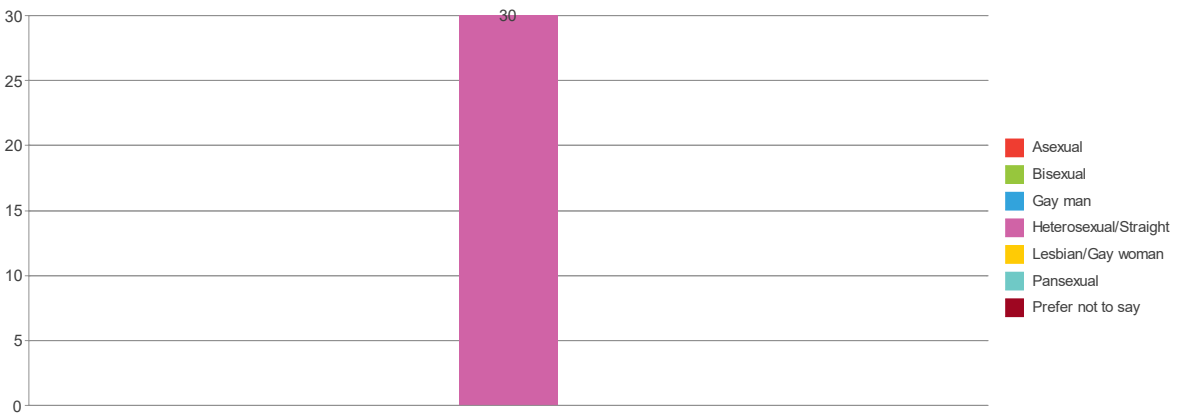
What is your gender or sex?



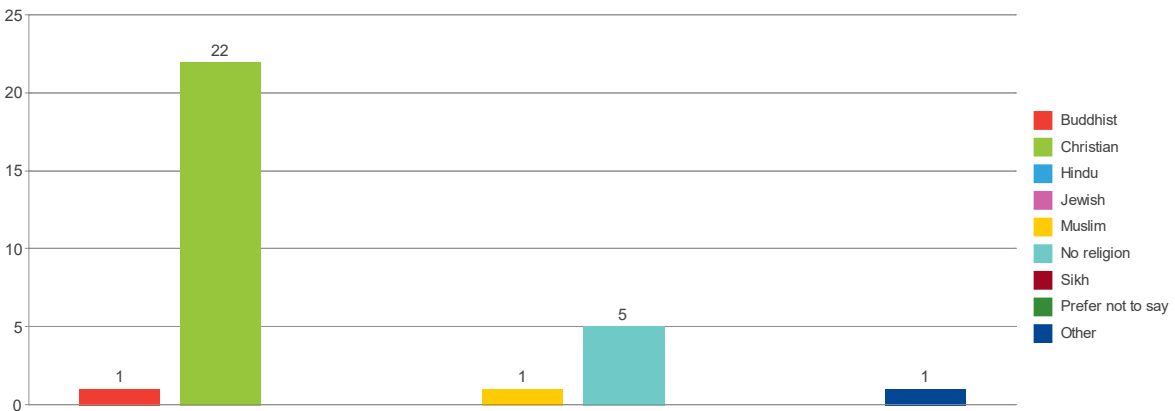
Is your gender identity the same as you were assigned at birth? ...



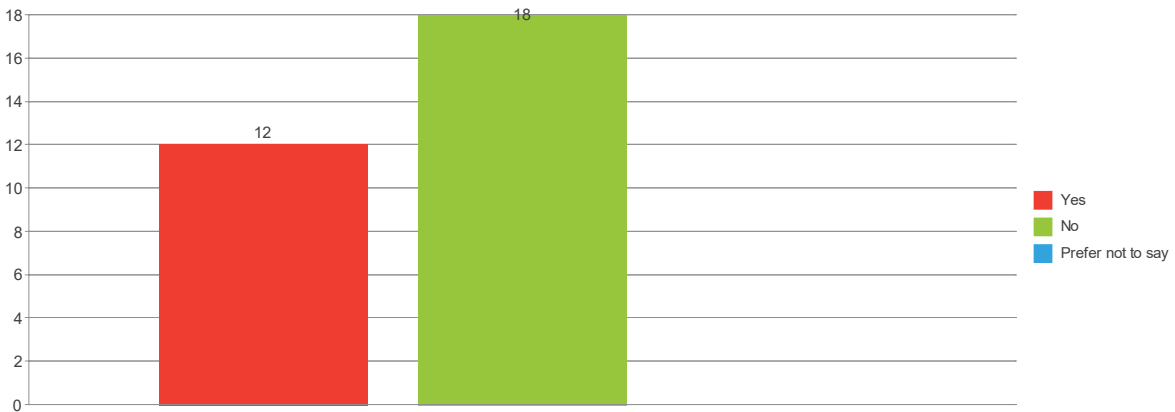
What is your sexual orientation?



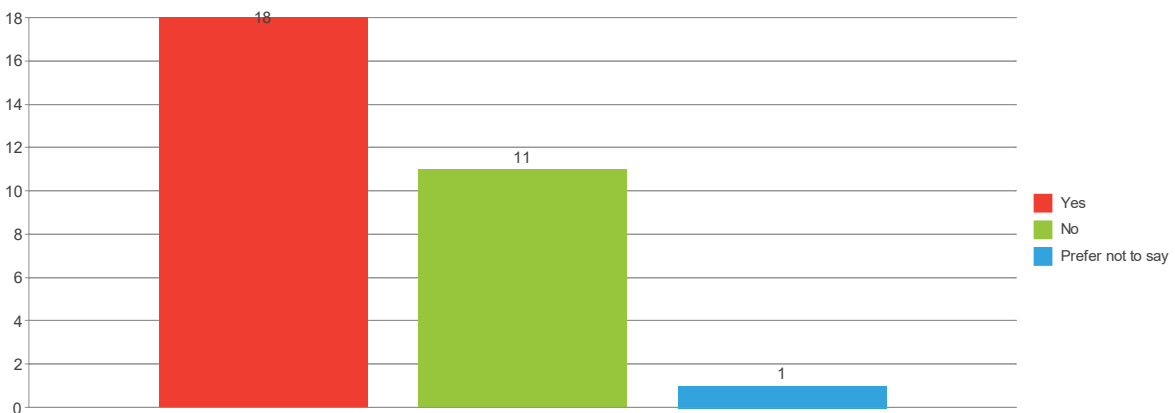
What is your religion or belief?



Do you have a disability?



Do you have a long term condition?



Recommendations

1. Several of the volunteers were keen for Enter and View visits to comment, Healthwatch teams to consider starting Enter and View visits, as all relevant staff have received Refresher training.
2. Each Healthwatch volunteer lead to ensure that that they have a plan to carryout supervision / support sessions, to include any issues that volunteers may have around travelling to venues etc.
3. ECS / Healthwatch leads to look at the training schedules for volunteers taking into account the days / times offered.
4. Healthwatch England training to be shared with all volunteers.
5. As part of volunteering week Healthwatch leads to consider hosting a annual lunch / dinner event as a thank you.
6. As part of Annual Public Meetings Healthwatch leads / managers to consider nominations for volunteer awards to be presented.
7. Authorised Representatives names are posted on the website, consider putting all your volunteers on the website against their roles, consider having a separate section on the website.
8. Each Healthwatch to look at the demographics of their volunteers and use the action plan that has been devised to recruit more from the gaps identified.

THANK YOU

ECS would like to thank you for participating in this survey and for your continued volunteering.



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