



**Southend Association of Voluntary
Services**

Review of Services

April 2016

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1. Introduction

SAVS is an independent charity known as a council for voluntary service or CVS which means we work behind the scenes to help local charities and community groups achieve their full potential.

We do this by:

- supporting them with training, advice and practical help
- helping them raise money and spend it wisely
- keeping them informed about changes in the charity sector
- bringing them together to exchange ideas
- representing their views to local government, funding bodies and others.

SAVS has a membership of 352 groups (April 2016) representing a cross-section of the diverse community in Southend-on-Sea.

2. Background to the Review

As a membership organisation it is vital that members' views are taken into account. SAVS always asks its member organisations for comments on services in April each year. These comments will inform the work of SAVS officers in 2016/2017.

3. Method

This year SAVS used an online questionnaire to collect the required information and comments.

The questionnaire was based around four of the core services of a Council for Voluntary Service: development work; representation; liaison and strategic activities. The questionnaire also asked for opinions on the practical services which SAVS provides, such as funding advice and backroom/office services, as well as the Volunteer Centre.

4. Response

30 groups responded to the questionnaire, and respondents represented a good cross-section of member groups and service areas of children & young people, older people, disability, ethnic minorities and carers.

5. Conclusion

Responses were received from a good cross section of the membership and ratings for services were predominantly Satisfied or Very Satisfied.

The results show that each department continues to carry out work which is utilised and valued by the membership. Comments and suggestions will be taken on board and implemented where possible.

6. Results

The first three sections of the survey asked about the core functions carried out by SAVS (Development Work, Liaison, Representation & Partnership and Strategic Activities).

Development Work

SAVS provides services to assist groups with their development e.g. advice on charitable status, governance and funding.

We asked if our members had used this Service. 50% used the fundraising service, 23.8% had sought advice on governance and 14.2% used Legal/ Charitable status advice service.

95% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied

Comments:

- All staff and Volunteers helpful and friendly
- Very knowledgeable and delivered very professionally
- Gemma was really helpful reviewing and assisting me to write our fundraising strategy.

The service supported 143 groups in total with a range of assistance, including assisting with policies and procedures, funding searches and checking application forms.

We went on to ask whether our members had received funds as a result of information or advice from SAVS 45.5% responded to say they had and the total amount raised was £14,250 from a variety of sources and funders. This is in comparison to the total we know we helped raise for the sector in Southend which was £815,000. £500,000

Liaison

SAVS provides opportunities to network with other groups and statutory bodies e.g. Thematic Groups, Third Sector Assemblies and one off events e.g. Procurement Workshop

311 people had attended representing 95 member organisations.

We went on to ask how members rated the service. 94% of those attending rated it as valuable.

Comments:

- Good to network with other organisations
- Always very good information provided
- Always informative and really helpful networking opportunity working with different organisations.

We asked whether the groups should continue in their current format and 86% said they should.

We then went on to ask whether our members had any suggestions or improvements relating to the groups, the comments can be seen below:

Comments:

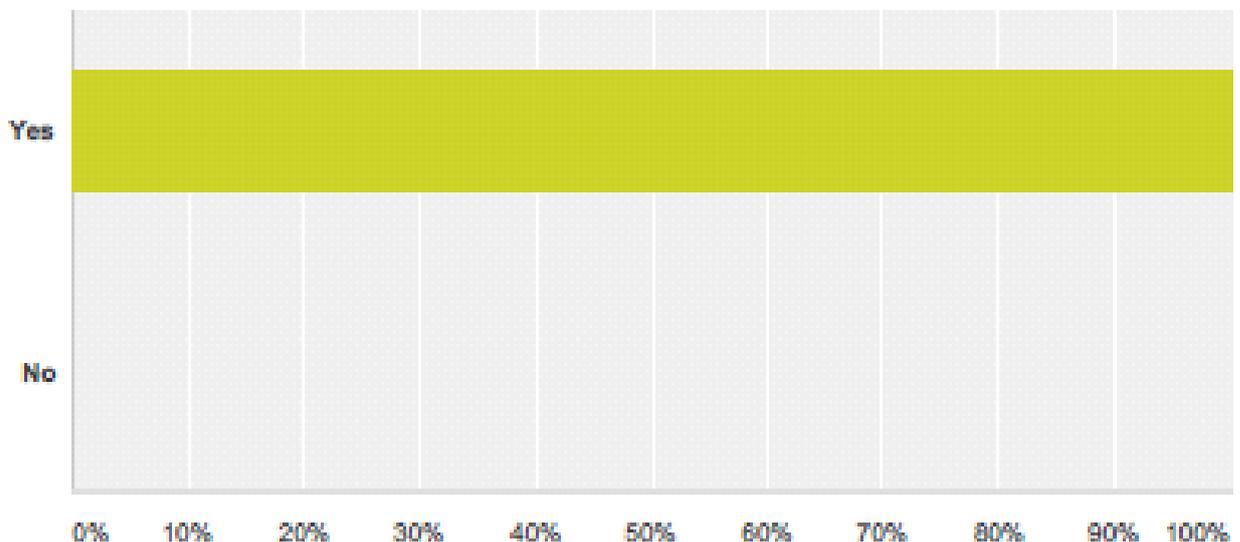
- Review membership of groups from time to time

SAVS response - SAVS allows any voluntary or community organisation to attend Thematic Groups/ Networking events.

Representation, Partnership and Strategic Activities

SAVS is involved in a range of strategic partnerships to represent the Voluntary and Community Sector e.g. Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board, Community Safety Partnership, Success for All and Southend Business Partnership, etc. to ensure the Third Sector in Southend is involved in developing future strategies and new areas of work.

We asked our members if they found this Service valuable. Below is a graph of the responses received and comments from members:



Comments:

- Vital to have the local Voluntary Sector at the forefront
- Need to keep up to date with services and SAVS is a good point of contact

Training

SAVS has run various training courses this year including Health and Safety, Recruiting Volunteers, Raising Money from Grant Making Trusts and Safeguarding Children.

Last year 265 learners attended training at SAVS, representing 52 organisations. We asked members how they found the training; 100% had found the training valuable.

Comments:

- The course gave a great interaction of different experience which produced good ideas for use in our circumstance
- Thank you for a great workshop. The course was perfect for my need to learn and be introduced to crowd funding.
- An invaluable few hours.
- A very thorough course in topics covered to get you started in the right direction

Volunteer Centre

The Volunteer Centre provides a brokerage service to help Third Sector organisations find volunteers and helps in all areas of good practice.

Our Volunteer Centre worked with 102 organisations last year and met with and placed 402 volunteers.

We asked our members to rate the service of the volunteer centre; 100% were either very satisfied or satisfied.

Information, Communication/Media Services

SAVS provides a Weekly information email (Friday Email), a quarterly newsletter, strategic e-bulletin, SAVS Website and Community Support Directory.

Members were asked whether these were valuable to them

	SAVS Website	SAVS Newsletter	Weekly Email	Strategic e bulletin	Community Support Directory
Valuable	91.7%	96.0%	100%	85.0%	95.7%

SAVS Overall

This year we asked our members how satisfied they are overall with the service provided by SAVS. 100% said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service SAVS provides.

Conferencing Facilities

We asked our members whether they have used SAVS Function Rooms in the last year. 22% had used our conferencing facilities. We went on to ask members to rate this service.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average
Booking Process	33.4%	66.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Catering	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%

Equipment	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Payment Process	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall Satisfaction	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Future Services

Like all our members, SAVS is facing financially challenging times and we want to ensure we continue to deliver services that are important to our members. We asked our members to rate how valuable the following services would be in the future.

	Valuable	Not Valuable	N/A
Funding Advice	85.2%	7.4%	7.4%
Training	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%
Development Advice	69.6%	4.4%	26%
Opportunities for groups to network	83.4%	8.3%	8.3%
Representation of the sector	80%	4%	16%
Strategic Partnerships	87%	8.3%	4.7%
Volunteer Centre Services	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%
Newsletter	95.8%	0%	4.2%
Weekly Email	100%	0%	0%
Strategic e bulletin	82.6%	13%	4.4%
Community Support Directory	96.2%	0%	3.9%
Website	85%	10%	5%

Social Prescribing	52.4%	14.3%	33.3%
Timebanking	42.9%	23.8%	33.3%
Support to enable Third Sector organisations to work in partnerships	76%	8%	16%
Research of the sector	82.6%	13%	4.4%
Support with fundraising events	73.9%	17.4%	8.7%

Finally we asked all our members whether they had any ideas/suggestions of services they would like us to develop in the future; some of the ideas are shown below. Our responses are in bold.

Comments:

- Timebanking - Checking of volunteers not tight enough. Idea good - not reliable and consistent enough

SAVS response - Timebanking is a community / neighbourhood project and there has to be an element of trust involved. All potential members provide 2 character references exactly the same as formal volunteering. By law we cannot blanket DBS check, and the nature of timebanking exchanges do not normally warrant a DBS check. There are ways round the hurdle, meeting in a public place first. Or if you are meeting at home having someone with you are the suggestions we use. Unfortunately, due to issues with funding, it has not been possible to offer a consistent service. However any registered Time Bank members can continue to post any requests or offer their time via the Time Bank website even when there is no funding for the project. The national guidance can be found [here](#).

SAVS members are mainly based in the Borough of Southend but they cover a wide geographical area in their work.

Our members are pleased with the services SAVS offers to them and membership continues to grow steadily.

Thank you to all those that completed the Annual Review. Comments and suggestions on how we can improve our services are always welcome so please do let us know about your idea.