



**Southend Association of Voluntary
Services**

Review of Services

April 2014

Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Background to the Review	Page 3
3. Method	Page 3
4. Response	Page 3
5. Conclusion	Page 3
6. Results	Page 4-10

1. Introduction

SAVS is an independent charity known as a council for voluntary service or CVS. That 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 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 340 groups (May 2014) 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 service in April each year. These comments will inform the work of SAVS officers in 2014/2015.

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 and Supported Volunteering Project.

4. Response

63 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 are included.

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 used 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. The majority of members used the fundraising service followed by Legal/ Charitable status and governance.

95.7% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied

Comments:

- Very informative & help is always ongoing
- SAVS Staff are always helpful, well informed and supportive
- Always great and prompt help

We went on to ask whether our members had received funds as a result of information or advice from SAVS. Twenty one responded to say they had and the total amount raised was £298,946 from a variety of sources and funders.

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. HIV Event

484 people had attended these groups and this represented 101 groups.

We went on to ask, how members rated the service. 95.1% of those attending said they found it valuable.

Comments:

- Thanks for continually hosting these meetings and getting relevant speakers
- Given new ideas, contacts and info
- Every time I come I gain something new and helpful. Thanks
- Very interesting! Thank you very much
- Lively, interactive meeting where everyone had the opportunity to participate
- Very very helpful and informative
- Really good, as are all the thematic groups

We asked whether the groups should continue in their current format and 95.3% 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:

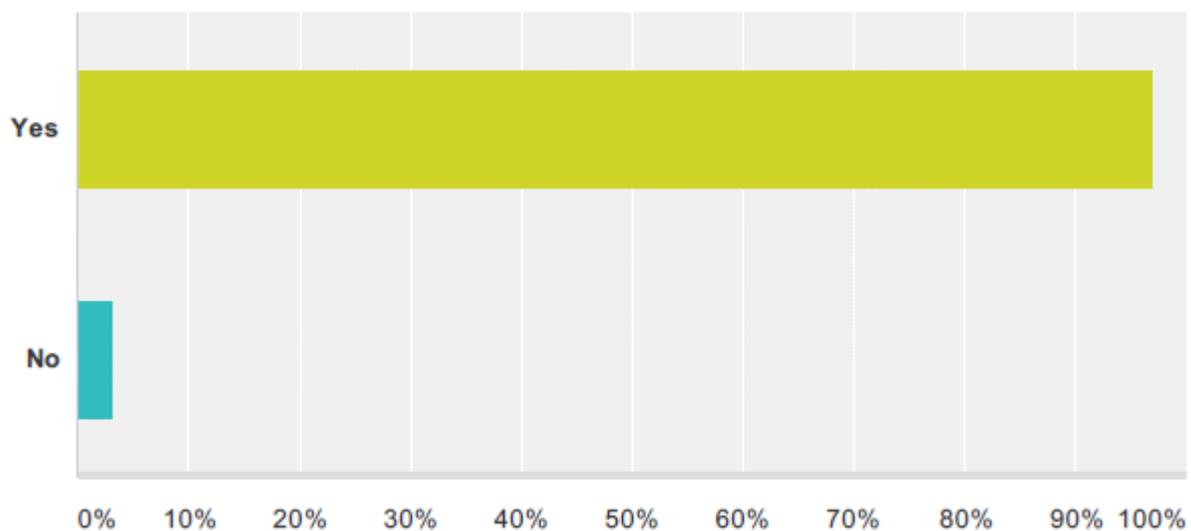
- 'Thematic' means nothing to most, a change of name would be positive
- Just timings, perhaps try meetings over lunchtimes
- More time of networking, shorter presentations

We have already made some changes after receiving feedback; we are holding groups on different days of the week and also holding a couple of lunchtime sessions. The other change is the removal of the strategic update from the groups as feedback told us this was not required.

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:

- Good to have representation
- Really important to have SAVS doing this work on behalf of the Vol Sector
- SAVS are a great link to the partnerships

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 172 learners attended training at SAVS, representing 62 organisations. We asked members how they found the training; 96.6% had found the training valuable.

Comments:

- The course was a good introduction to fundraising, and the trainer displayed a large amount of knowledge
- A most informative and enjoyable course delivered in a clear and professional way, thank you
- Good and friendly presentation
- Refreshed my first aid skills and kept me updated
- Certainly a good use of my time

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 305 organisations last year and placed 304 volunteers.

We asked our members to rate the service of the volunteer centre; 97.8% were either very satisfied or satisfied.

Supported Volunteering Project

The Supported Volunteering Project provides support for people who have experienced mental ill health into volunteering roles. The project also supports the organisations who take on the supported volunteers.

The Supported Volunteering project worked with 75 organisations and placed 46 volunteers into opportunities.

100% of the organisations that had worked with Supported Volunteering project had found it valuable.

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	Friday Email	Strategic e bulletin	Community Support Directory
Valuable	94.7% (54)	100.0% (54)	96.7% (59)	90.9% (40)	96.2% (51)

SAVS Overall

This year we asked our members overall how satisfied they are with the service provided by SAVS? 98.3% said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service SAVS provides.

Comments:

- SAVS provides an excellent service with current and durable information
- Extremely useful and helpful service staff always friendly
- It would be hard to maintain the standard of service without them
- Excellent and professional networking, advice and support
- A joy and a blessing to work with and vital for our community, thank you
- Good relationships and a very responsive service

Conferencing Facilities

We asked our members whether they have used SAVS Function Rooms in the last year. 32.2% had used our conferencing facilities. We went on to ask members to rate this service.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average
Booking Process	61.90%	33.33%	4.76%	0.00%
Catering	33.33%	38.10%	28.57%	0.00%
Equipment	33.33%	42.86%	23.81%	0.00%
Payment Process	47.37%	42.11%	10.53%	0.00%
Overall Satisfaction	45.45%	45.45%	9.09%	0.00%

SAVS comment: we are in the process of raising funds to improve/replace our equipment and our catering is now outsourced to a local reputable company.

Healthline

SAVS has developed a Healthline for patients in partnership with NHS Southend's Clinical Commissioning Group. The Healthline is a service which promotes Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to callers with a particular health condition or social care need.

We asked our members whether they thought the Healthline was a good resource for the sector; 90.3% felt that it was. Some of the comments from callers to the Healthline can be seen below:

Comments:

- You are the only people who seem concerned and the only ones to ring back
- Thank you for all you are doing there
- Everything worked out very well, we got the services we needed
- You've been absolutely great. Would not be where I am without your help

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	80.65%	4.84%	14.52%
Training	88.71%	0.00%	11.29%
Development Advice	64.52%	8.06%	27.42%
Opportunities for groups to network	96.77%	1.61%	1.61%
Representation of the sector	83.67%	6.45%	9.68%
Strategic Partnerships	79.03%	3.23%	17.74%
Volunteer Centre Services	82.26%	1.61%	16.13%
Newsletter	95.16%	3.23%	1.61%
Weekly Email	96.77%	3.23%	0.00%
Strategic e bulletin	82.76%	11.29%	6.45%
Community Support Directory	95.16%	0.00%	4.84%
Website	95.16%	0.00%	4.84%
Support to enable Third Sector organisations to work in partnerships	82.26%	1.61%	16.13%
Research of the sector	72.58%	4.84%	22.58%
Support with fundraising events	72.58%	6.45%	20.97%

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:

- A thematic group with primary concerns around disability issues and equality concerns - **We are happy to put this to attendees of current thematic groups, groups can always be created if there is a need.**
- Partnerships between voluntary sector and local authority to bid for national funds - **We agree this is an excellent idea. This does happen already, for example, SAVS and other representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector were part of the group that worked on the successful £40 million lottery bid, Fulfilling Lives. We will continue to work with the Local Authority and other partners to bid for national (and other) funds...**
- More about funding/grant information and assistance with the same - **Our funding officer sends out information as soon as she receives it via our weekly email and the monthly funding update. Please keep an eye out for these communications.**

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 ideas.