

ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS' SURVEY 2025 – ANALYSIS

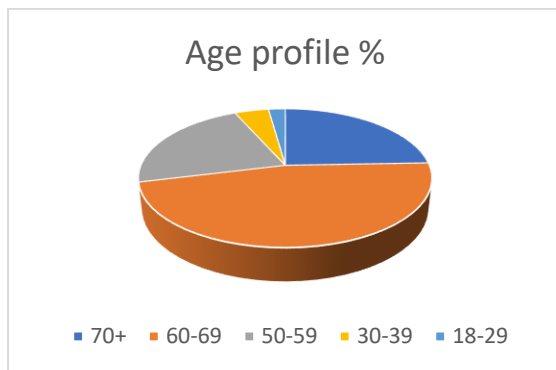
1. BACKGROUND

The survey was offered to 138 volunteers via email on 1.4.25 and responses were requested by 16.5.25 and 45 responses were received (32.6% return rate).

2. VOLUNTEER PROFILE

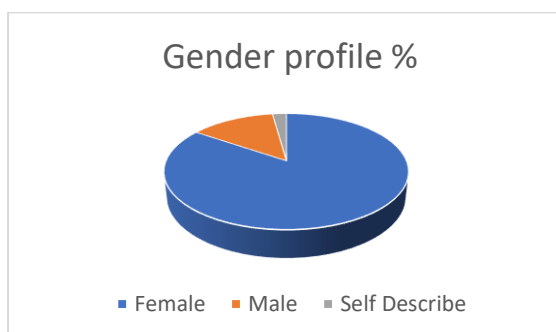
Volunteer Role - We received feedback from 45 volunteers across 50 volunteering roles. Some volunteers have more than one volunteering role, hence why the total is over 45. Of these 50 roles: 20 were Welcomers, 6 were Complementary Therapists, 9 were Counsellors/Coaching, 5 were Wellbeing Class Facilitators, 3 were Community Engagement/Outreach, 2 were Admin and 5 were Trustees.

Age



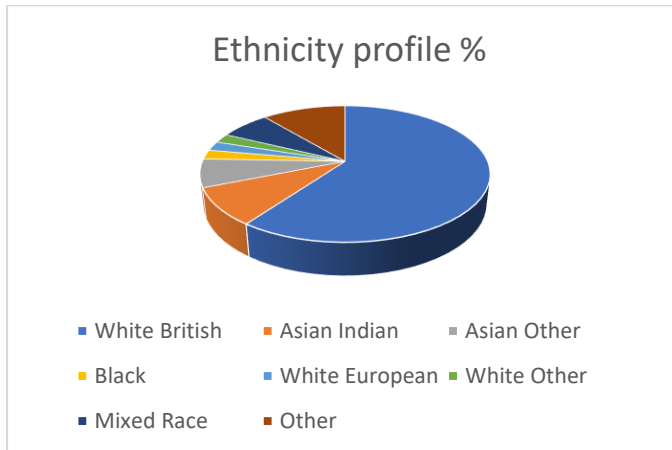
All respondents were age 18+. 2.2% were aged 18-29, 4.45% aged 40-49, 22.2% aged 50-59, 46.7% aged 60-69 and 24.4% aged 70+. 71.15% were age 60+. The weekday commitment required for Centre based roles and the cost-of-living situation are most likely to affect those of working age.

Gender



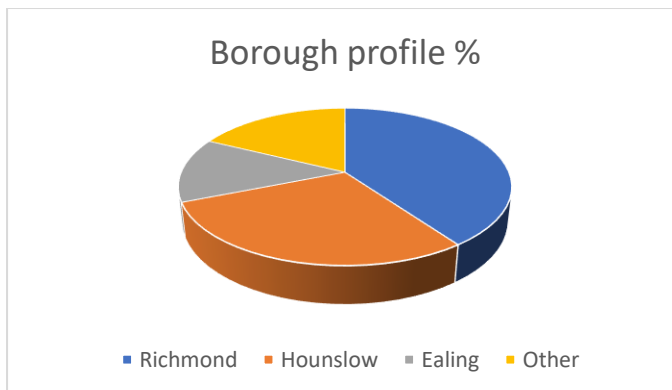
84.5% of respondents identified as female, 13.3% male and 2.2% chose to self-describe.

Ethnicity



60% of respondents identified as White British, 8.9% as Asian-Indian, 6.7% as Asian-Other, 2.2% as Black, 6.7% as Mixed Race, 2.2% as White European and 2.2% as White Other, and 11.1% just described their ethnicity as Other. In total, 40% did not describe themselves as White British.

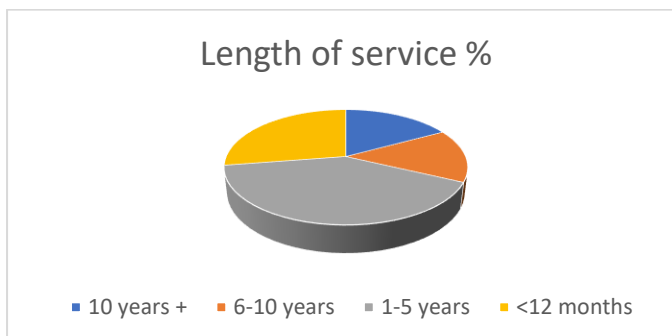
Borough/Postcode



40% of respondent live in Richmond, 28.9% in Hounslow, 13.3% in Ealing, with 17.7% living outside of these boroughs.

Most popular postcode was TW7 (13.3%) followed by TW2 (11.1% each).

Length Of Service



24.46% of respondents had volunteered <12 months, 42.2% for 1-5 years, 15.6% for 6-10 years, and 17.8% for more than 10 years.

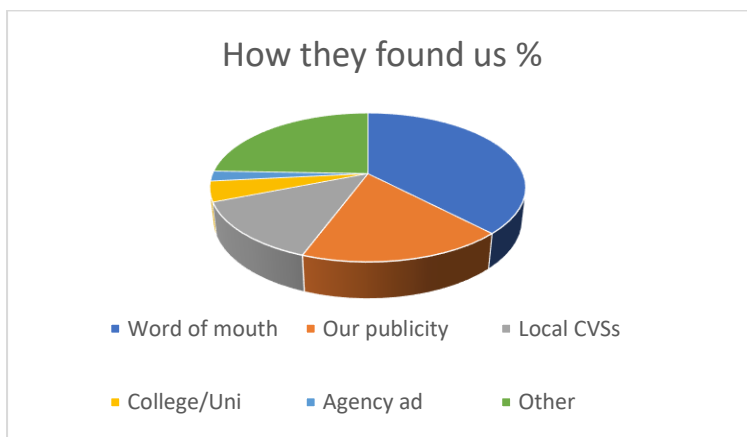
Affected by Cancer

77.8% of respondents had been personally affected by cancer in some way (either themselves or a close family member).

Recommending volunteering with us

100% (97.8% Yes and 2.2% maybe) would recommend our volunteering opportunities to others. This is very encouraging and demonstrates why so many of our volunteers come to us via word of mouth.

How They Found Out About Volunteering With Us



37.8% of respondents came to us via word of mouth or via family/friends, 17.8% via our publicity (website/leaflets/posters), 13.3% via the local CVSs, 4.4% via an agency ad, 2.2% via college/Uni, 24.4% Other which included a mix of methods.

3. VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Safety – 97.8% of respondents agreed that health & safety is given fully sufficient importance, with 2.2% saying this is the case most of the time.

Induction - Of the 17 respondents who said they had received induction over the last year, 100% found it satisfactory or better, with 82.35% saying it was very satisfactory.

Comments made were:

"It was very well explained".

"The induction was very impressive. Thorough and comprehensive. I was not expecting Debbie to be so hands on and take so much time as she did to ensure everything was covered. A huge thank you for doing so".

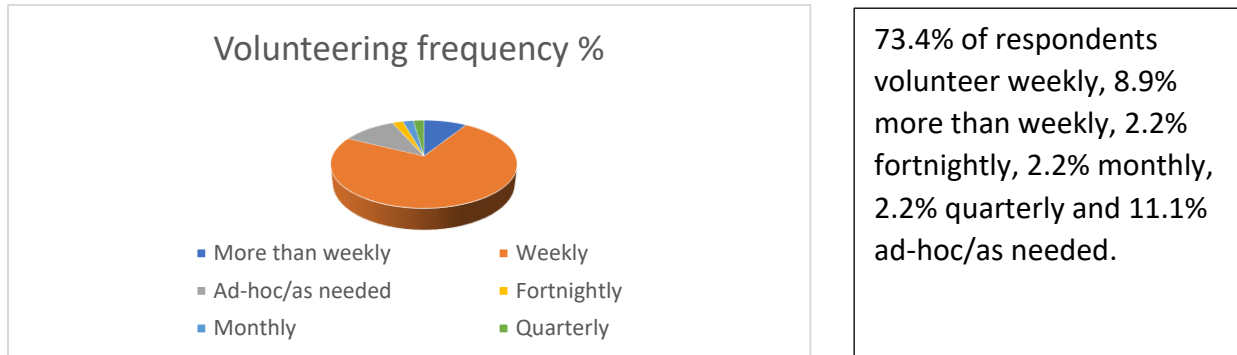
"I am very happy with the process so no comments or suggestions".

"I have worked in 4 other organisations as a volunteer in the last 20 years and this was by far the most thorough and informative induction".

"It was very professional and thorough".

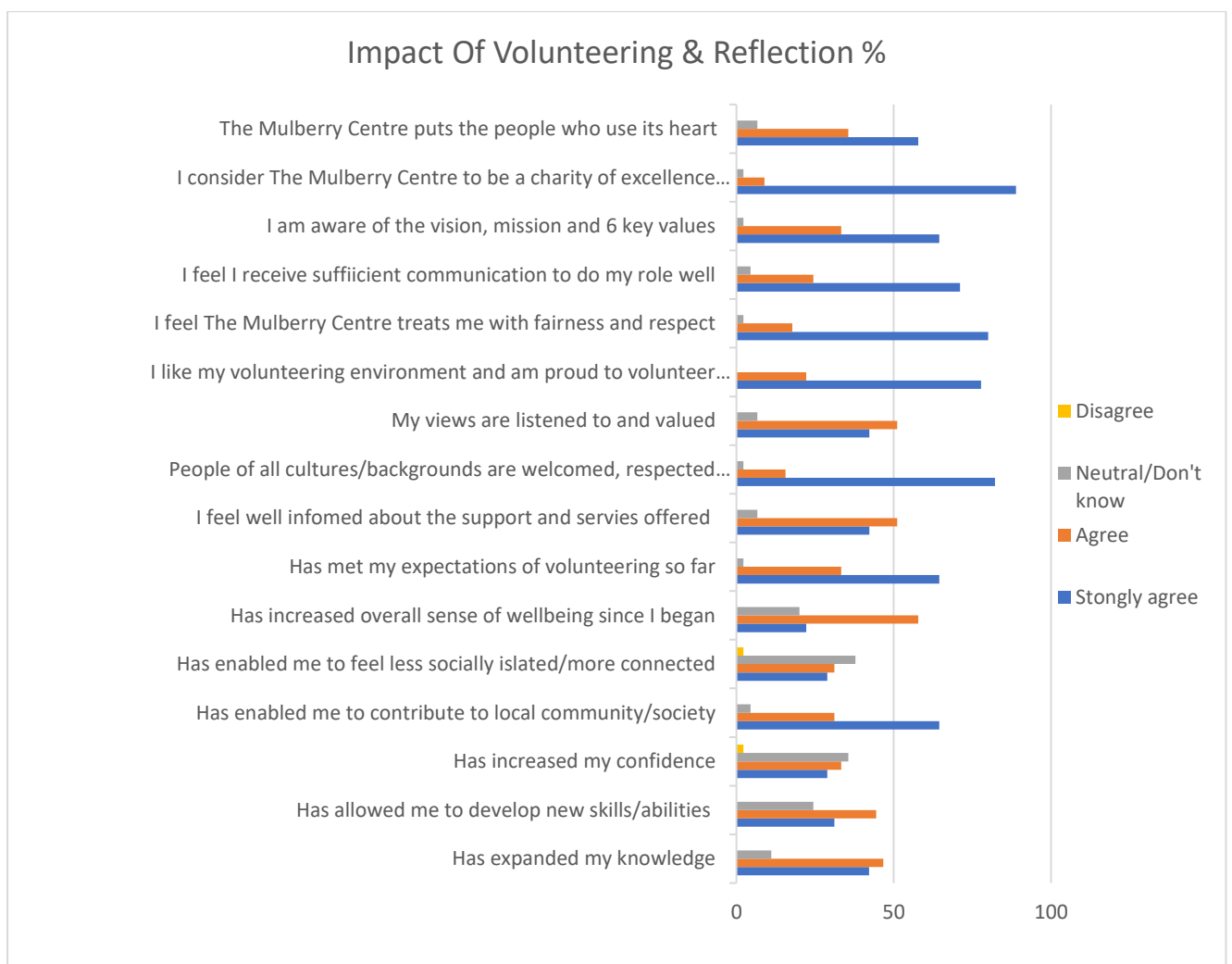
No one suggested any improvements. This feedback is very positive.

Regularity/Availability



4. IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING & REFLECTION

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed in relation to the questions asked about the impact of volunteering and their reflection on being a volunteer with us.



100% agree or strongly agree that:

- they like their volunteering environment and are proud to volunteer for The Mulberry Centre,
- they enjoy and understand the contribution they make to our aims,
- they consider The Mulberry Centre to be a charity of excellence for cancer support.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

Emails/information received – 55.6% always read these, 37.8% read these most of the time, 4.4% read them sometimes and only 2.2% never or rarely. It is encouraging to know that our volunteers like to keep up to date with our communications.

Volunteers were invited to comment on any ways in which we might improve the way we communicate and demonstrate our values. Most comments just reinforced that volunteers were happy with communication generally:

"I feel the staff and volunteers embody them already and written communications seems to reinforce them".

"Happy with all communication"

"Just keep doing what you do"

"Happy with current system"

"I feel well supported and walk into a kind and friendly atmosphere throughout the centre, so would not change the approach taken by all"

"As a trustee I regularly contribute to the review process as to how we can improve"

"Would be helpful to have just one email a week about scheduling. Having said that, Debbie Davey does a fantastic job in keeping us informed and looking after us - organising trips, coffee mornings, volunteer meetings. We always know she is there for us" – Please note that last minute changes in volunteer availability can result in several scheduling changes at short notice.

Improvement/comments

One volunteer suggested that this could be a topic for more discussion with volunteers – This can form a topic for a future coffee morning and/or Lead organised volunteer team meetings.

A couple of volunteers referred to IT issues affecting their receipt of emails or newsletters which we have taken steps to address at our end.



One volunteer suggested more use of WhatsApp and tools such as Event/Poll to reduce emails and admin costs – This could work for small groups of volunteers but would likely be difficult for invitations for all volunteers.

One volunteer suggested a handout to give to clients at point of contact – We do have a service leaflet available, and all new clients have our services explained to them at their initial welcome assessment meeting. We circulate a regular monthly service newsletter by email as well as directing clients to our website.

One volunteer suggested having more public communication notices displayed prominently in all local hospitals, GP surgeries and pharmacies to improve public awareness of the Centre - We are advertised on the visual display board at West Middlesex University Hospital where posters/leaflets are no longer allowed. Chelsea & Westminster Foundation Trust have their own charity, so this limits our advertising potential in local hospitals. We do supply posters and leaflets to GP surgeries and pharmacies and are looking for new and existing volunteers to deliver/pick up collection cans and deliver posters/leaflets at same time.

No volunteers made suggestions of ways in which we could specifically improve the way we demonstrate our values.

6. SUPPORT/TRAINING

Support provided by relevant Lead over last 12 months - 46.7% had experienced team meetings, 46.7% had received in person/telephone/online check-ins and 8.9% other support.

13.3% had taken part in an initial 3-month review, 33.3% in an annual review and 15.6% had only had induction so far.

No volunteer claimed to have had none of the above which demonstrates that all respondents had been supported in some way.

Training experience to date – 68.9% were very satisfied, 31.1% found it satisfactory. It is very encouraging that 100% found the training offered here satisfactory or better.

Training/support suggestions:

"I could do with a refresher on the computer, payment machines etc. - where to find information for staff - about classes, library books, rectifying errors. I'd like to be confident with the whole system"- As this came from a Welcomer, a refresher will be offered for those who need it.

"The role of other team members" and "It would be great to have overviews provided by some of the facilitators of the other services. How they deliver their service, levels of engagement, how the clients respond etc. I am aware that there are plans to have guest speaker(s) at coffee catch ups. An excellent initiative! How do we include or impart this insight to those who cannot attend?" and "A talk on the main therapies offered to clients and maybe a short demo" – We will look into ways we can enhance/share knowledge of what our staff and volunteer groups do through training and in person meetings.

"Maybe a regular guest speaker each month to explain the different types of cancer, the treatments and the effects of the treatment" – Unlikely to be feasible monthly. Given large number of different cancers, individual treatment plans and reactions to treatments this would make this difficult to arrange.

One thing you'd like to see change, or be introduced, to improve your volunteering environment/make you feel more valued as a volunteer.

Some volunteers used this opportunity to express content with volunteering here:

"It's early days, I am super impressed and somewhat humbled by the contribution by all involved, and the response and respect given to the team by the clients. So, no improvements as yet...Will keep thinking and feeding back as I become more familiar with everything!"

"At this time, nothing specific comes to mind regarding changes, improvements, or new introductions to the volunteering environment. I find the current setup to be quite satisfactory. However, I remain committed to the organization's success and will certainly share any thoughts or suggestions should they arise in the future".

Some volunteers made small practical suggestions which have been shared with staff. Some of these have already been introduced since the survey was instigated.

7. EXPENSES & FUNDRAISING

Awareness that volunteers can claim 'out of pocket' expenses and donate back if they wish to – 79.6% of respondents were fully aware. How to claim and how to claim and donate back are covered at volunteer induction together with information in the general volunteer handbook and on the claim form which includes the procedure/policy. A full reminder was sent to all volunteers again on 23.6.25.

Volunteers were asked to comment on these funding-related statements:

I believe The Mulberry Centre makes a consistent and strong case for support and highlights how funding makes a difference – 26 (57.8%) strongly agreed, 12 (26.7%) agreed and 7 (15.5%) were neutral or didn't know. Altogether 84.5% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

I am aware that The Mulberry Centre is a charity and relies on grants and donations as well as volunteer support – 37(82.2%) strongly agreed, 7(15.6%) agreed and 1 (2.2%) didn't know. Altogether 97.8% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Would you be willing to inspire groups/organisations/workplaces that you are affiliated to, and/or friends and family, to fundraise for The Mulberry Centre? – 23 (53.5%) said they would be willing and 20 (46.5%) said they would not. We would like to engage further with those 53.5%.

Would you be willing to fundraise yourself on behalf of The Mulberry Centre? – 24 (57.1%) said they would be willing and 18 (42.9%) said they wouldn't. We would like to engage further with those 57.1%.

Reasons for not wishing to fundraise related mostly to lack of time, capacity, experience, and personal reasons/commitments. Some did not like the idea of approaching people for money or did not feel they had the skills set to do this. Some felt that donating their time as a volunteer should be enough commitment.

Seven volunteers made suggestions about ways we might improve our fundraising and inspire others to fundraise on our behalf. These have been shared with our Fundraising & Engagement Team, and some are already in progress.

Other comments suggested that volunteers appreciate that fundraising is an increasingly competitive area and no easy task, and what is visible to volunteers appears successful.

8. WHAT VOLUNTEERS THINK WE DO WELL AT THE MULBERRY CENTRE

What we do particularly well, or anything which has particularly improved over the last year. Volunteers quoted the following:

Comments about the environment/atmosphere:

"You're very welcoming and inclusive"

"The ethos and calm atmosphere. I haven't been there long enough to see improvements"

"You make everyone feel welcomed and valued"

"I think it is in the personal touch - really seeing each individual and responding to their needs.

Welcoming surroundings, including the lovely garden. Enough events to help people who are isolated have more good things in their lives and make new connections"

"The Centre has continued to be a very calm, safe space for its clients"

"Love the inclusivity and the calmness about the centre"

"The environment is indescribable and is the first thing called out when I tell people outside the

centre I am volunteering there. Especially those who may have visited at some point. It's so welcoming and warm and inviting. And 'calm'. And not at all sterile. The people who are involved in the centre in any manner, make this happen"

"Wellbeing classes are very popular. There is a very happy relaxed vibe at the centre amongst staff and volunteers"

"Rearranging the space for clients. It's more informal, thereby making anyone coming in feel more relaxed and not intimidated"

Comments about the services, events or admin:

"The launch of the Education Centre for complementary therapists is an interesting initiative, which has started well"

"Raising awareness, outreach and most importantly Community Engagement"

"The welcome consultation is very well received by the clients"

"Client based"

"Variety of client classes & workshops"

"The Plant Sale"

"Pabau has improved the admin around scheduling appointments. There is also greater clarity with all communication with clients being through the office"

"Regular email communication from lead members is a practical way to keep volunteers informed and engaged"

9. VOLUNTEER RETENTION & QUOTES

Quotes provided on how volunteering with us has had a positive impact on the individual volunteer

"It's helped me get back into table tennis and develop my coaching skills. I found that I enjoy coaching, and it made me think I might do a course to obtain an official coaching qualification from Table Tennis England. Also, it helps with my own fitness, as well as that of the people in the class"

"It has helped me reassure the clients that their massage session with me is 'their time' & they can relax, enjoy & be in the moment"

"It has enabled me to use my skills for the community and kept my skills up to date"

"I feel like an integrative part of the community at the centre and always look forward to working there. There are always friendly faces to greet me"

"I feel connected to my wider community, and value the support of my colleagues and the team in general. It enables me to work with a much more diverse clientele than I would ordinarily see in my private practice, and I have learned a lot from that"

"Volunteering at the Mulberry Centre has given me a sense of purpose and structure in my week. I have a very good friend going through chemotherapy at the moment. She lives too far away for me to be able to be there to help her much, so helping other people affected by cancer feels very rewarding"

"Dream team for caring and support!"

"Volunteering at The Mulberry Centre has made me feel part of the wellbeing of those in need of support. It's a warm family atmosphere of community and hope"

"I really appreciate how volunteering at the Mulberry Centre keeps me engaged in a wider world and continuing to grow my skills in response to what people bring as they deal with the challenges they are experiencing. I enjoy the connections"

"I feel that volunteering at The Mulberry Centre has provided me with valuable opportunities to develop practical communication skills and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals. This experience has also fostered a greater sense of community contribution"

"Volunteering has given me a new friend in Cas and also a feeling of worth"

"I am aware of my role as a Welcomer I can hopefully give a client a warm welcoming experience which will help and encourage them to seek our support"

"Gives me a sense of wellbeing after a session"

"Volunteering at The Mulberry Centre is rewarding in a way which is difficult to put into words. Just making that small positive difference to clients who quite possibly don't expect it, is rewarding and humbling"

"Volunteering has helped me give back something to the local community especially in the field of cancer of which I have personal experience. I didn't find out about the Mulberry Centre until after my cancer treatment but have first-hand knowledge of the quality of its services, and want to do all I can to make them more accessible to others"

"Volunteering has made me realise how much the Centre is helping our clients. They always tell us how much they appreciate the support and kindness they receive from the staff at the Centre"

"My weekly session with The Mulberry Centre means I meet and get to know a wide range of clients. I feel I am continually learning as well as providing a useful service. It is an important part of the structure of my week and adds to my sense of purpose"

"People who received sessions were very appreciative"

"Whenever I volunteer, I see the benefit to the people who are coming in for support, whether it be just to talk or if they have an appointment. Although I have an ongoing cancer, which I have had since 2018, I am always positive and cheerful, and this apparently comes across to the people who visit the centre. They enjoy chatting to me and I feel wonderful when I leave, as I know that I am giving them inspiration and likewise I feel inspired by them"

"I feel like I am contributing to society"

"Debbie Davey arranges training courses on things I would never have considered thinking about, End of Life is a particularly good example. It's helped me understand why my mother sometimes behaves out of character and has improved my relationship with her immensely"

"It's a privilege to be involved in such a wonderful charity"

How likely are you to continue volunteering with us over the next year?

Very likely – 36 (80%), Likely – 6 (13.4%), Unlikely – 1 (2.2%) Unsure/No reply – 2 (4.4%).
93.4% were likely or very likely to continue over the next year which is very encouraging.

Have you attended any of the volunteer social events?

Yes – 26 (57.8%) had attended one or more social events.

Reasons for not attending were mostly lack of personal time, that they live too far away or timing clashes with other commitments.

Ways in which we could improve volunteer recruitment/retention

A few ideas were shared with us, some of which we already action:

“More public awareness of the Centre and its purpose” – We do have a presence at volunteer fairs organised by the local CVSs and universities as well as a presence on their websites/newsletters. We do promote at local community events. We also do targeted advertising for certain roles.

“Ask volunteers who leave why they are leaving” – We do this already via exit interviews and an exit survey. Most volunteers leave due to personal circumstances – moving, new job, new baby, career development.

“I think that retention doesn't seem to be a problem. All the volunteers seem to gain a great sense of doing something useful, in a lovely environment. As for recruitment, it does appear that it is mostly women who apply. I don't know how you could encourage more men, but it might be useful to look into this” – We do try to encourage more male applicants by targeting certain places, i.e. sports clubs/gyms. The nature of our client group and work traditionally tends to attract more women.

“Sadly, it seems some of the volunteer councillors who are making up their hours to qualify then drift off. Maybe they could be encouraged to offer further support for a specified time as a payback to the Centre” – There are number of volunteer counsellors who can only stay for a year to accrue a certain number of hours of client experience and need to move on to a different client or move away from short term counselling to accrue more experience, however there are a number who continue to volunteer beyond the first year with us.

Some volunteers referred to their own experience:

“As a trustee - it's on my agenda”- Trustee suggestions are always welcome.

“I must say that my own experience as a volunteer has been really positive. The support and engagement have been excellent, which naturally might not make me the best person to identify areas for improvement in recruitment and retention”

“When I tell people there are 140 volunteers they can't quite believe it. The scale is incredible. So this message can be reinforced and used as an opportunity to reinforce the level of effort required to provide this service” – Volunteer numbers and hours are included in our impact report.

“Nothing comes to mind. I feel appreciated and well looked after when I attend”

10. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Generally, the additional comments thanked the staff and other volunteers for their hard work and for making The Mulberry Centre for the wonderful work carried out and support given to the community.

Further general comments not covered by the survey questions

“All the clients have been willing to give feedback following their final massage session. They are grateful for the options to do this”

“I feel the centre has plays an important role in the community”

“The Mulberry Centre is a very special place with a lovely atmosphere. I wish there had been somewhere similar close enough to support the loved ones I've known and who I've lost to cancer in the past”

“Volunteers play an absolutely key role - thank you!”



"You are an amazing team"

"I simply want to reiterate my appreciation for the positive environment and the support provided everyone. It makes volunteering a truly rewarding experience"

"Thanks for the opportunity to allow me to contribute to the service"

"I look forward to continuing to volunteer as long as I am being of value"

Report produced by Debbie Davey, Volunteer Lead 17.7.25