

ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS' SURVEY 2026 – ANALYSIS

1. BACKGROUND

The survey was offered to 146 active volunteers as at 1.4.26 and responses were requested by 15.5.26, extended until 31.5.26. Reminders were sent and other Leads were asked to encourage their volunteers to take part.

The survey consisted of questions relating to the individual volunteer, their experience of volunteering/induction with us, benefits gained from volunteering, communication, expenses, funding, and ideas/changes that might be useful.

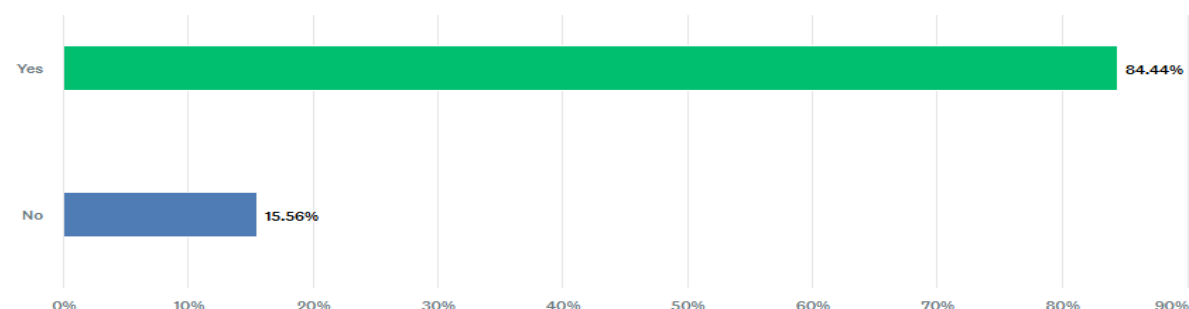
46 responses were received, a 31.5% return rate compared to 32.6% last year, so a similar representative number/percentage.

2. VOLUNTEER PROFILE

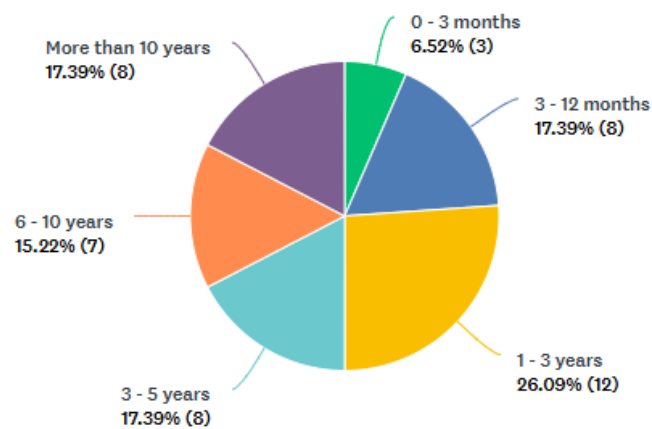
Volunteer Role – 46 responded covering 50 roles as follows:

Administration/Office Support	1	2%
Communications & marketing (including social media and website)	1	2%
Community engagement/helping at events	3	6%
Complementary therapy (acupuncture, aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, Reiki, Shiatsu, EFT etc)	3	6%
Counselling/coaching	12	24%
Fundraising research/applications	1	2%
Maintenance/estate facilities (gardening, DIY, IT support, car park)	1	2%
Social/creative activities facilitator (i.e. watercolour painting, mandala, creative writing, sewing, table tennis etc)	2	4%
Trustee	5	10%
Welcomer	17	34%
Wellbeing class facilitator (Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, Health Walks, Dance, Movement, etc)	4	8%
Workshop facilitator (wigs, scarf tying, nutrition, sound bath, etc)	0	0%
Group Facilitator (Young persons, men's group)	0	0%
Soulmidwife	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Affected by cancer – 45 respondents answered this question of which 38 (84.44%) have been personally affected by cancer (either themselves or a close family member).

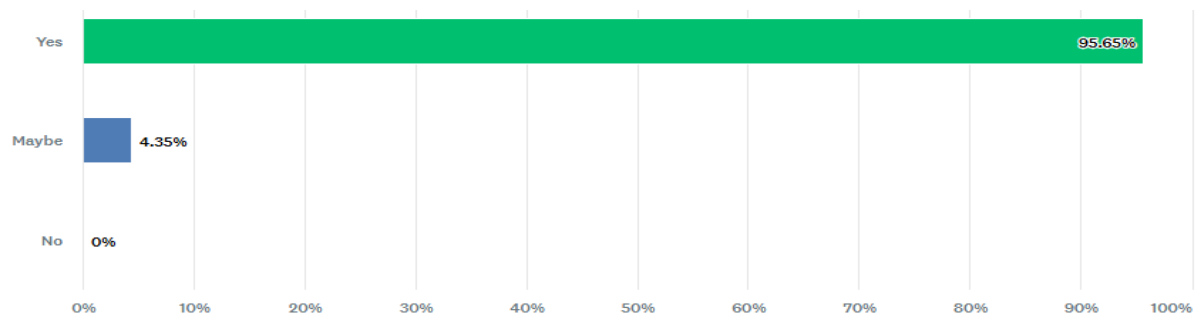


Length of service

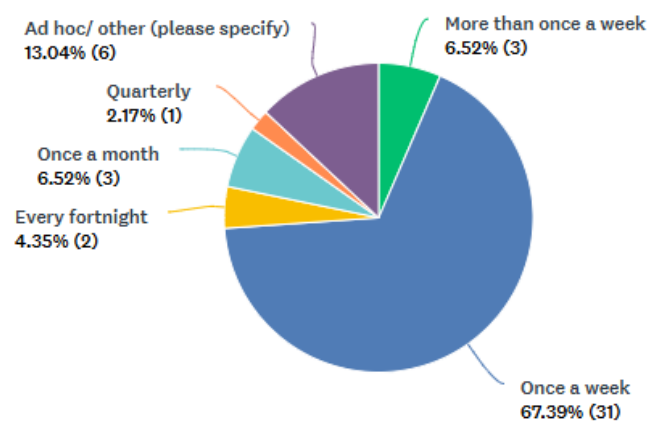


3. VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Would they recommend our volunteering opportunities to others – 44 (95.65%) said Yes and 2 (4.35%) said Maybe, which is very encouraging.



Regularity/Availability



Induction

34 of the respondents experienced our induction process/documentation in 2025/26 with 100% finding it satisfactory (23.53%) or better (76.47%). No one reported any dissatisfaction. This feedback is very positive.

Seven of those inducted offered comments:

"The process was very thorough and informative"

"It was very thorough and gave me confidence in the role"

"Excellent experience, really welcoming, valuable information and really enjoyed looking around, meeting the team members at TMC and having an informal lunch with a few staff. Possibly worth slightly adjusting volunteer agreement requirement for a 6-month volunteer commitment to add-unless there are exceptional circumstances"

"It was very helpful, thank you"

"Very informative and presented well"

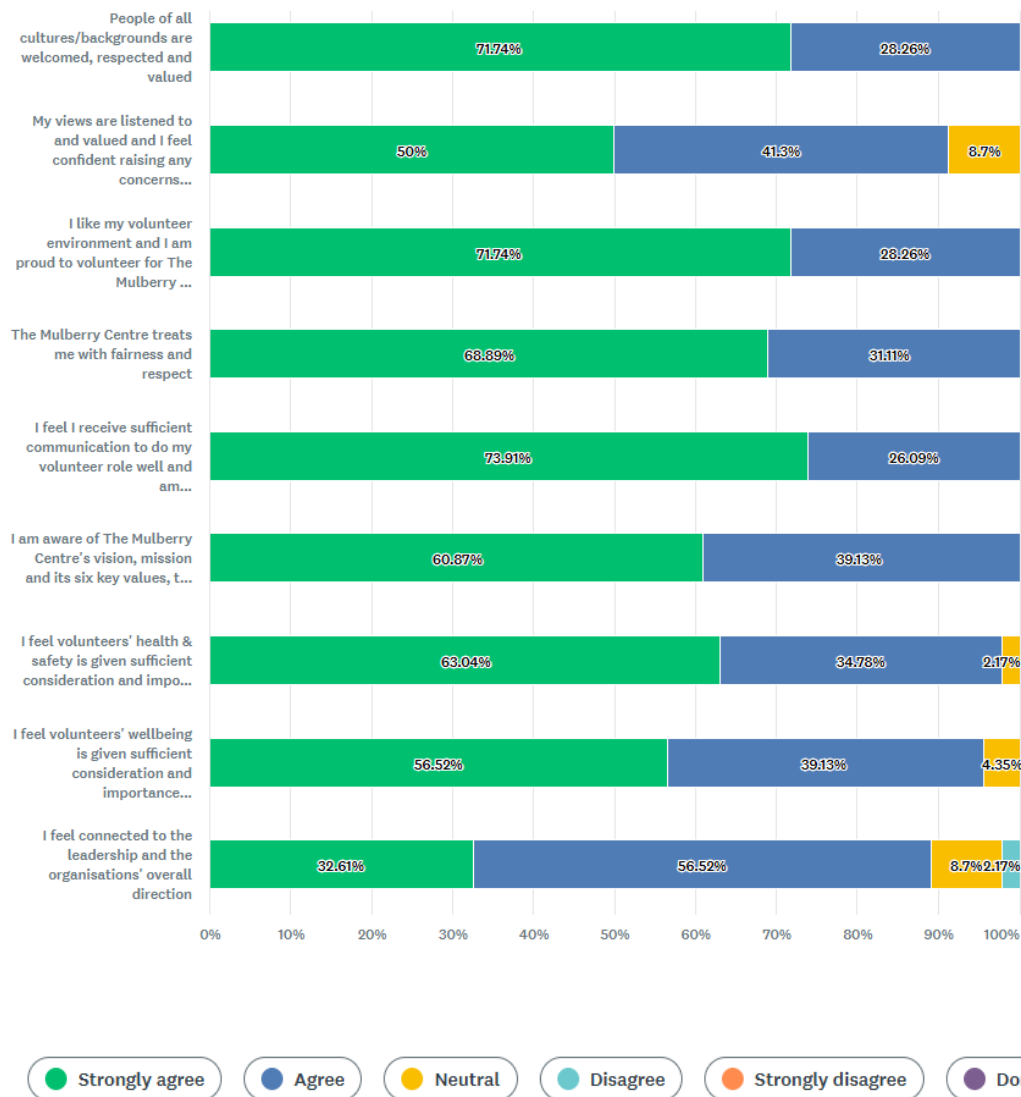
"Induction was well-structured, covered all the key information efficiently and offered plenty of opportunity to ask questions. I appreciated having written materials before meeting in person"

"(The Volunteer Lead) Debbie was very welcoming!"

4. IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING

We asked our volunteers how much they agree with the following statements.





Overall, our volunteers feel most positive about the volunteering environment, inclusivity, fairness and communications. *Across most volunteer roles, there is strong agreement that volunteering has expanded their knowledge. Roles such as Counselling/coaching, Trustee, and Complementary Therapy show the highest levels of 'Strongly agree' responses. Welcomers and Wellbeing class facilitators also report high agreement, though with a mix of 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree'. Very few respondents are neutral, and none disagree, indicating a consistently positive impact on knowledge expansion regardless of role.

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

"I come home feeling that I've done something that really matters to people coping with enormous challenges"

"It's literally the highlight of my week. I feel really rewarded when I'm in the Centre, listening and supporting clients and doing my part to help the charity function"

"TMC provides a valuable resource that users appreciate, and it feels good to be part of that"

"Despite leading a busy life, I find my weekly visit gives my week some structure. I enjoy engaging with the clients and the staff"

"Being able to quickly assess a situation, and as a result, apply the appropriate soft skills to ensure the right balance of empathy, and equally professionalism, to ensure all visitors and clients feel welcome and at ease"

"I love the interaction with the other wellbeing volunteers and of course the clients themselves and seeing the difference that just small gestures can make to the wellbeing of all. It gives me confidence in the training I've had and the faith to keep going"

"Being involved in the Mulberry Centre gives strength to my inner soul"

"Being part of a community"

"Gives me a sense of purpose"

"As I live on my own coming to volunteer at the centre has made me feel less isolated and has boosted my confidence in that I am doing something for other people not just myself"

"It helps me feel part of the working world which is providing a rich and varied service. It broadens the range of people I meet and have the privilege to work with"

"Nice to feel valued and appreciated"

"The benefits I see. In the volunteers and managers"

"Skills I wouldn't say any impact on me, well-being increased"

"I really appreciate the friendliness and kindness of the staff and volunteers"

"I am often humbled by clients who are managing their own difficulties"

"Interaction and communication"

"Positive impact has been the development of my confidence in communicating and whilst utilising and developing the skills I have studied. I find it an honour working with service users and alongside other staff members, I have developed a sense of pride and achievement in serving individuals and making a positive difference in their lives"

"Having been on both sides of the Mulberry Centre, having received grief counselling some years ago, I feel I can understand what some clients may be experiencing in their visits but would never push my own experience onto a client"

"When I initially came into The Mulberry Centre, after being diagnosed with bladder cancer back in 2018, I was made very welcome by everyone there and was extremely impressed with the services that they offered. Although personally, I only used one of the massage therapies on offer, since volunteering I have come to understand how truly wonderful the Centre is for such a lot of people, who have all sorts of emotional and physical needs. I love meeting the clients and they all comment on how welcoming, peaceful and beneficial the Centre is for them. To most who attend, it is a place where they can get advice, have therapeutic sessions and meet other people who are also suffering with cancer"

“Being given the opportunity to work as a trainee counsellor with TMC has been an invaluable experience for me. I feel I have been able to deepen my skills and build confidence. I feel very supported in this role. TMC is a great place to work, the team and the clients are all lovely. Thank you for the opportunity and experience”

“I have to volunteer to gain clinical placement hours, and I am so happy that I am able to do this at The Mulberry Centre. The team are incredibly supportive and proactive as well as friendly and relaxed”

“Volunteering as a counsellor has brought me satisfaction beyond any paid job I have ever done, and has given me the confidence pursue my career change”

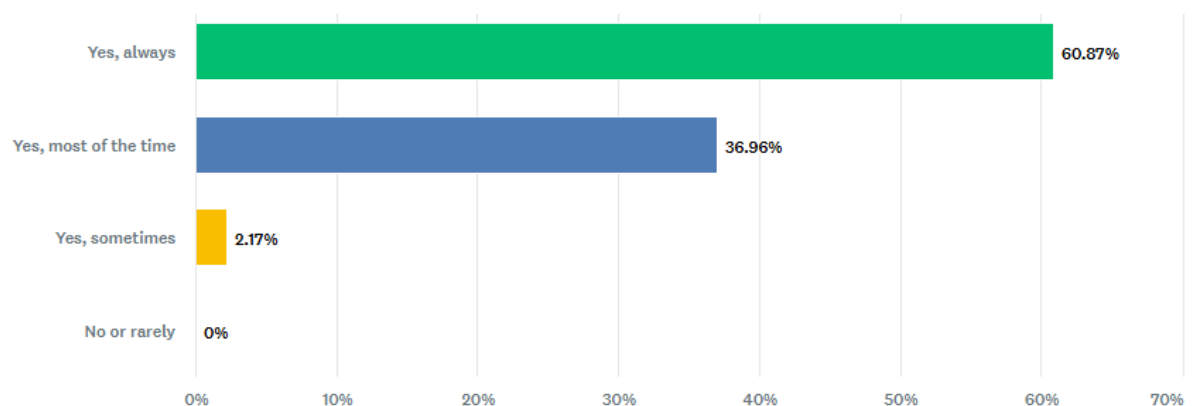
“I am learning every week from the wisdom and courage of the clients I meet. It is a privilege to volunteer alongside such an experienced and thoughtful group of counsellors and coaches, and I hugely value the opportunity to contribute to free-to-access high-quality counselling service”

“I am very grateful to have learned about volunteering with TMC while training with the EFT Centre. It's a fantastic, varied and rewarding experience. TMC has helped to develop my skills and confidence in using EFT training. I see how tapping can make a positive difference, bring insights and a sense of calm to the people who attend sessions”

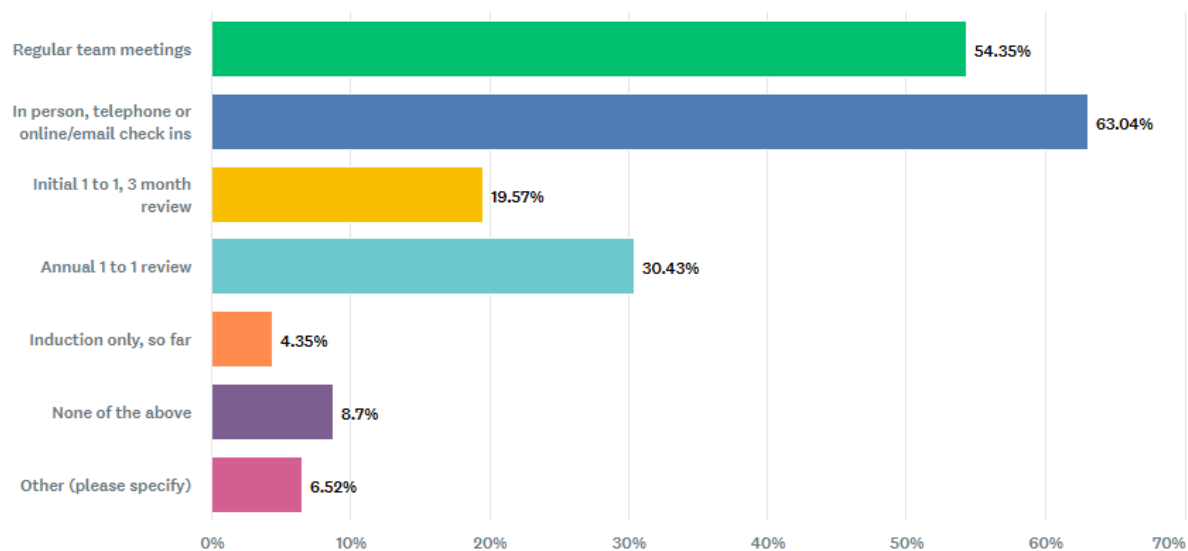
“I absolutely love my volunteering time. The table tennis group are great fun to be around. The group size has grown consistently to be a fun gathering. They are kind and caring to each other and each week I look forward to listening to their stories and lives”

5. COMMUNICATIONS & TRAINING

Emails/information received from us – 28 (60.87%) always read these, 17 (36.96%) read these most of the time, 1 (2.17%) read them sometimes. No one admitted to never reading them.



Support provided by relevant Lead over last 12 months



With 86 responses from 46 people, this suggests that 40 responses came from those who received more than one type of support from their Lead, hence why the percentages add up to more than 100%. With regard to those who responded 'Other', one stated their support was via Board Meetings/Chair and one did not define what they meant by 'Other'.

*The relationship between volunteers' roles and the support they receive from their Lead shows clear patterns. Welcomers receive the broadest range and highest frequency of support, especially through regular team meetings, check-ins, and annual reviews. Counselling/coaching volunteers also report high levels of support, particularly via team meetings, check-ins, and initial reviews. Overall, frontline and client-facing roles tend to receive more structured and regular support from their Lead compared to others.

Training Support Suggestions

13 respondents made specific suggestions or comments. These related to:

Professional training access, bereavement support/training, emotional support, cancer awareness/education, team communications, retirement planning and session preparation.

These have been shared with key staff to see what is appropriate and practical.

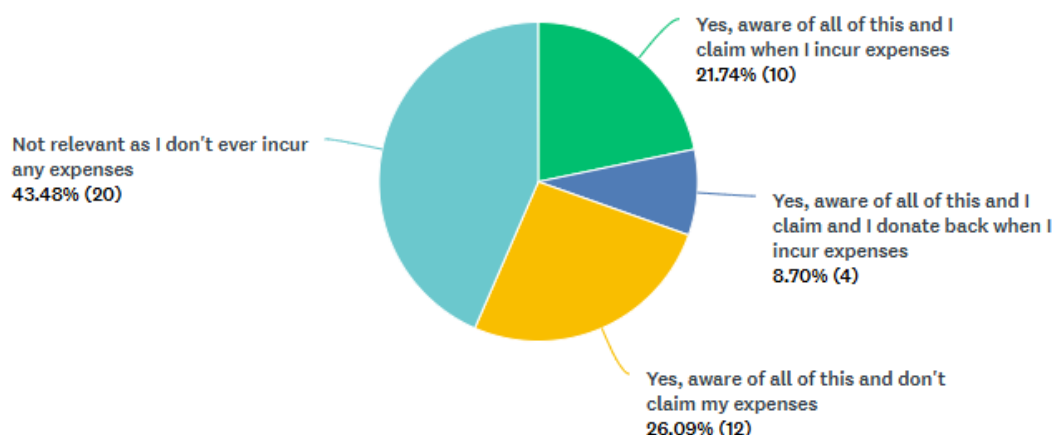
Regarding team communications, staff members and volunteers are invited to write 'spotlight' articles about themselves to share, and staff members are invited to act as guest speakers at volunteer social coffee gatherings to talk about their role.

6. EXPENSES

Awareness that volunteers can claim 'out of pocket' expenses and how to do this, including how to donate back and increase the donation by Gift Aid if they wish to.

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 and

procedure/policy. It is positive to see that all respondents are aware of how to claim and how to claim/donate back if they choose to.



7. BARRIERS, RETENTION & VALUING VOLUNTEERS

Any barriers which make volunteering difficult?

Health – Two of the respondents are directly affected by themselves and/or their spouse having a cancer diagnosis at present.

Parking – Two of the respondents commented that parking is an issue, and they worry about not finding a parking space and being late for sessions.

Disability – One responded that they have a disability but has personal equipment to help fulfil their role.

Location/proximity – One respondent commented that they volunteer remotely which works well for them and they'd like to be involved in local events more but accept this is limited as they live at such a distance.

Organisational culture/structure – One respondent commented that they thrive better in an environment with structures and principles, but not too many rules.

What would make you more likely to continue volunteering for us long term?

Comments were received from 27 respondents, and these have been shared with relevant staff.

*Overall, while many responses did not fit a specific theme, some volunteers highlighted the importance of recognition, supervision, training, practical facilities, and support services as ways to feel more valued or improve their experience.

Many of the responses suggested they already saw themselves a long-term volunteer or wished to volunteer for as long as practically possible.

Many asked us just to continue what we are already doing, to value and appreciate them and provide flexibility, support and a worthwhile experience/client base.

What could make you feel more valued and/or make the volunteering experience even better?

Most respondents offered no specific comments or said they already felt valued.

Have you attended any of the social events for volunteers i.e. coffee get together, picnic, visits to, places of interest, end of year celebrations?

24 respondents (52.17%) had attended one or more volunteer social events in the last year. Several who hadn't attended expressed interest in attending cited time clashes, personal commitments and distance as being the only reasons for not taking part.

Suggestions/comments made:

- *"Visit to Ham House / Syon House / Osterley / theatre trips / pizza evening (offsite) / Kew Gardens - walk and coffee"* (Some of these are already in the pipeline or have since taken place).

- *"I enjoyed hearing (Finance & Operations Coordinator) Kam's piece about her role yesterday. I would be interested in more of that - and same from other volunteers"* (Our Volunteer Lead is inviting staff and/or volunteers to talk about their role at coffee socials and to have spotlight written features).

- *"It's great to have team events outside the centre e.g. coffee catch ups. I find it's easier to encourage people to mix and meet, outside those people they already know. The 'neutral ground' element adds a huge amount of value"*

- *"I prefer social events away from TMC they tend to be more relaxed though I'm not sure why"*

(We have currently shifted from coffee mornings at Hilliers, Syon Park to holding them at the Centre to save on costs).

- *"I enjoy the chance to talk with other coaches and the counsellors"* (Our Counselling Lead arranges some counsellors only events and supervision groups and encourages them to come to other events)

- *"Support my mobility issues"* (Our Volunteer Lead will look into this further. We provide links to the chosen venue's website including accessibility details where shown)

Other Quotes Of Note:

".... I feel very happy and included in my welcomer role at the centre"

"I just really enjoy volunteering at The Mulberry Centre"

"I am fulfilled"

"I really appreciate the option to attend coffee mornings and social events. This makes me feel like part of the organisation"

"I know something of the pressures the voluntary sector is experiencing at the moment - I hope that the Mulberry team take great pride in maintaining and nurturing such a skilled group of volunteers in a very challenging environment. We feel valued and know we are making a difference - and that is down to the positive atmosphere and open communication that you work so hard to create. Thank you"

"Thanks for being such a welcoming community"

"I appreciate the lovely environment and the garden and enjoy the company of the Welcomers in at the same time as me. I feel the lead coach, manager and admin staff are very approachable and helpful"

"A year in I have more of an understanding of the real impact the centre and all the volunteers offer the clients of the Mulberry Centre. It makes a true difference to so many people. Observing people arriving to the centre for the first time, full of anxiety and trepidation, and then looking physically different when they leave like they have had a weight lifted from them, makes everything we are doing worthwhile. It is humbling to be a very small part of their journey....."

Key Insights

*Here are some key insights from the survey that reflect what it is like to be a volunteer at The Mulberry Centre: - A large majority of volunteers feel positively about their experience: 95.65% would recommend volunteering opportunities to others. Volunteers report strong agreement that their work is meaningful: 98% agree or strongly agree that they enjoy and understand their contribution, and 100% feel people of all backgrounds are welcomed and respected.

Many volunteers feel their skills and confidence have grown: 89% agree or strongly agree that volunteering has expanded their knowledge, and 72% say it has increased their confidence. The environment is seen as supportive and inclusive: 100% agree or strongly agree that they are treated with fairness and respect, and 100% feel well informed about support services.

Most volunteers feel connected to the organisation's mission and leadership, and 100% feel they receive sufficient communication and clarity about their roles. Overall, the survey responses suggest that volunteers at The Mulberry Centre feel valued, supported, and proud to contribute.

Report prepared by Debbie Davey, Volunteer Lead 29.6.26

*** Denotes AI analysis through survey monkey**