

Review of Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) in Gateshead (GVOC & GCN)

Feeding back to you

Why we consulted

Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC) and Gateshead Community Network (GCN) is the Council for the Voluntary Service (CVS) in Gateshead. The Council supports GVOC and GCN to ensure there is an effective infrastructure service for voluntary and community groups in Gateshead. The Council is reviewing the role of the CVS to define the core functions and to make sure it is resourced accordingly. We consulted Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Gateshead to ask them for their views.

When we consulted

19th August 2013 to 9th September 2013

How we consulted and who responded

The survey was available for VCS organisations to complete on Gateshead Council's website, and paper copies were also available. An email with a web link to the survey was emailed to a contact list of 820 email addresses, and paper copies were made available through community centres, libraries, and through distribution by GVOC and GCN

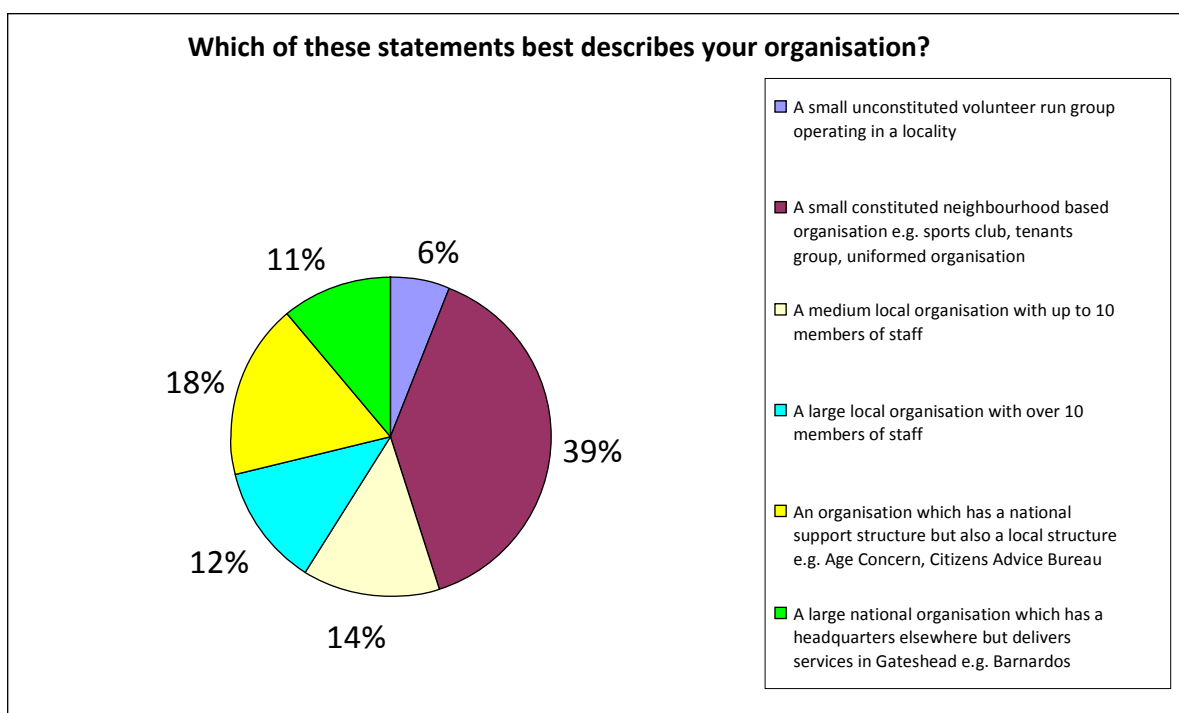
Feedback

A total of 152 correctly completed surveys (a 19% response rate) were returned by the deadline. The following table shows the method of completion:

Source	Number of completed surveys
Online survey	132
Paper Returns	20
TOTAL	152

Which of these statements best describes your organisation?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
A small unconstituted volunteer run group operating in a locality	8	6%
A small constituted neighbourhood based organisation e.g. sports club, tenants group, uniformed organisation	55	39%
A medium local organisation with up to 10 members of staff	20	14%
A large local organisation with over 10 members of staff	17	12%
An organisation which has a national support structure but also a local structure e.g. Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau	25	18%
A large national organisation which has a headquarters elsewhere but delivers services in Gateshead e.g. Barnardos	16	11%



Is your organisation a formal member of GVOC?

Of those organisations who completed the survey, 55% (78) were formal members of GVOC, the remaining 45% (74) were not. Of those organisations who were not formal members of GVOC, more than half still used GVOC services. A total of 86% of organisations who responded to the survey had used GVOC services.

Are you clear about what GVOC does?

75% of respondents answered yes when asked whether they were clear about what GVOC does. However, of those who were not formal GVOC members, almost three quarters answered no.

Which of the following GVOC services are you aware of?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Funding advice	125	87%
Training	115	80%
Volunteering support	115	80%
'Our Gateshead' website	100	69%
Signposting to other services	90	62%
Community engagement	85	59%
Constitutions	84	58%
Advice on charitable status	82	57%
Forums/Network development	78	54%
Governance advice	76	53%
Organisational management and structures	74	51%
Start up support for groups	74	51%
Community accountancy	72	50%
Payroll	65	45%
Business planning	61	42%
Building management	37	26%
Other	6	4%

There was generally a good awareness of the range of services provided by GVOC, with a particularly strong awareness of funding advice, training and volunteering support. Only one in four respondents were aware of GVOC's building management function, and only around half were aware of a number of other functions, including organisational management and structures, governance advice and start up support for groups. There was a reasonably low awareness of payroll and community accountancy.

Some respondents indicated awareness of other services not listed, such as advocacy, DBS checking and renting office space.

In the past 3 years, how often have you used each of the following services provided by GVOC, Gateshead Council or another service provider?

Service	GVOC		Gateshead Council		Other	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Funding Advice	70	58	36	30	15	12
Our Gateshead Website	60	54	17	21	8	2
Volunteering Support	55	51	12	11	15	5
Training	50	45	31	28	16	14
Signposting to other services	35	38	16	18	8	9
Community Engagement	31	33	17	18	8	8
Constitutions	29	31	5	5	7	7
Advice on Charitable Status	31	30	4	4	7	7
Governance Advice	25	28	9	10	5	5
Organisational Management and Structures	16	26	15	15	7	7
Start Up Support for Groups	18	21	7	8	4	4
Business Planning	15	16	11	12	4	4
Community Accountancy	12	15	2	10	5	5
Payroll	12	15	2	2	4	4

In the past 3 years GVOC has been used more often than either Gateshead Council or Other providers for the above services. Reflecting the awareness of services offered by GVOC, funding advice, training, volunteering support and the 'Our Gateshead' website are the most used GVOC services. Funding advice and Training are also the most used services provided by Gateshead Council and Other service providers.

Whilst 58% of respondents have accessed funding advice through GVOC, 30% of those surveyed accessed this through the Council. Around 1 in 5 or more of those surveyed accessed support from the Our Gateshead Website, training, signposting to other services and community engagement.

a) In the last 3 years, have you used joint services provided by GVOC together with the Council and/or another service provider?

The majority (94 or 73%) of respondents have not used joint services in the past 3 years.

b) If you indicated above that you have used another service provider or Gateshead Council instead of GVOC, please write in which organisation or part of the Council provided the service(s) and why you chose to use them instead of GVOC

5 respondents indicated that they have used an alternative Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS and VODA) for support. Other external sources of support included:

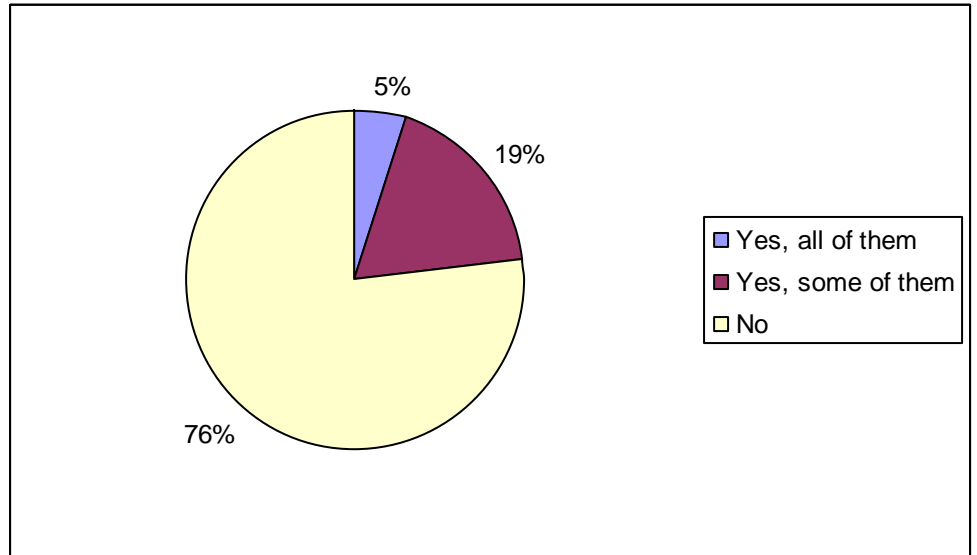
- Aquila Way
- Community Foundation
- Gateshead Advice Centre
- Gateshead Housing Company
- Tyne and Wear Care Alliance
- Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE)
- Locality
- St John's Ambulance (First Aid training)
- Supporters Direct

The parts the Council from which organisations have accessed support included:

- Economic Development
- Library Service
- Neighbourhood Management
- Policy and Communications
- Property Services
- Public Health

c) Did you pay for the services?

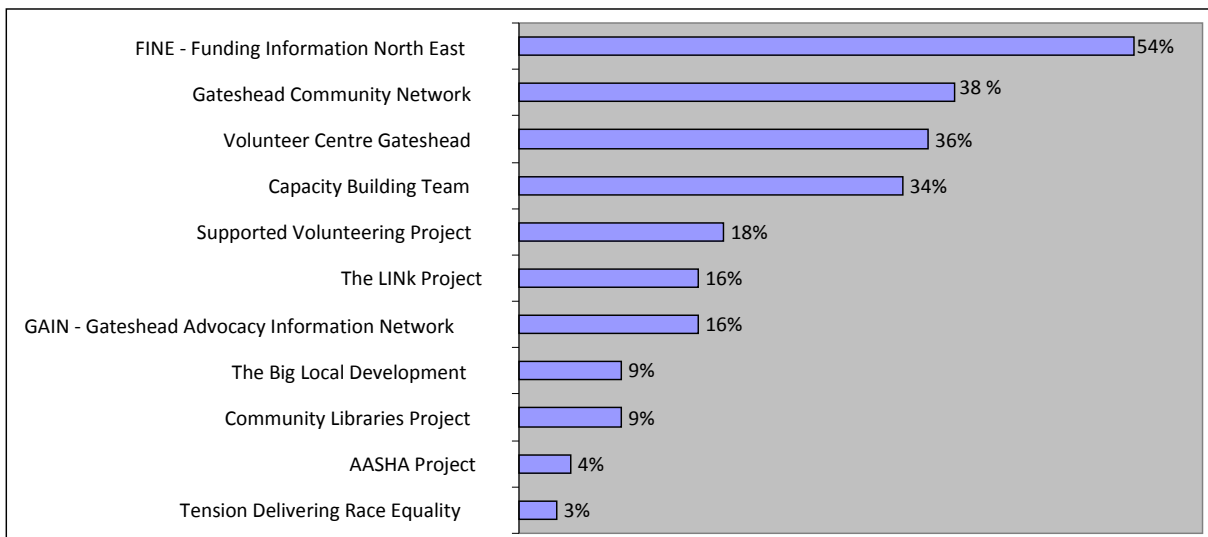
23% of the organisations who responded said that GVOC had helped them to secure funding in the last three years. Those that provided further details revealed that this had come from a range of funders, with 26 organisations leveraging in £875,865 of funding.



A significant amount of this funding can be attributed to £500,000 awarded to Gateshead Crossroads from the Big Lottery Fund. An officer from GVOC gave advice during the bid writing process.

£200,000 of the funding was for Sedgefield Community Association, which operates outside of Gateshead. It is unknown how GVOC supported them to gain this funding or where it is from.

Have you been in contact with or accessed services from any of the following GVOC services in the past 3 years?



Over half of all respondents had been in contact or accessed the FINE service, and over a third in relation to Gateshead Community Network; Volunteer Centre Gateshead and the Capacity Building Team. Very few organisations had contacted AASHA Project or aTension.

GVOC's Needs Survey of Voluntary Sector Organisations revealed the same top three projects, in the same order as the above.

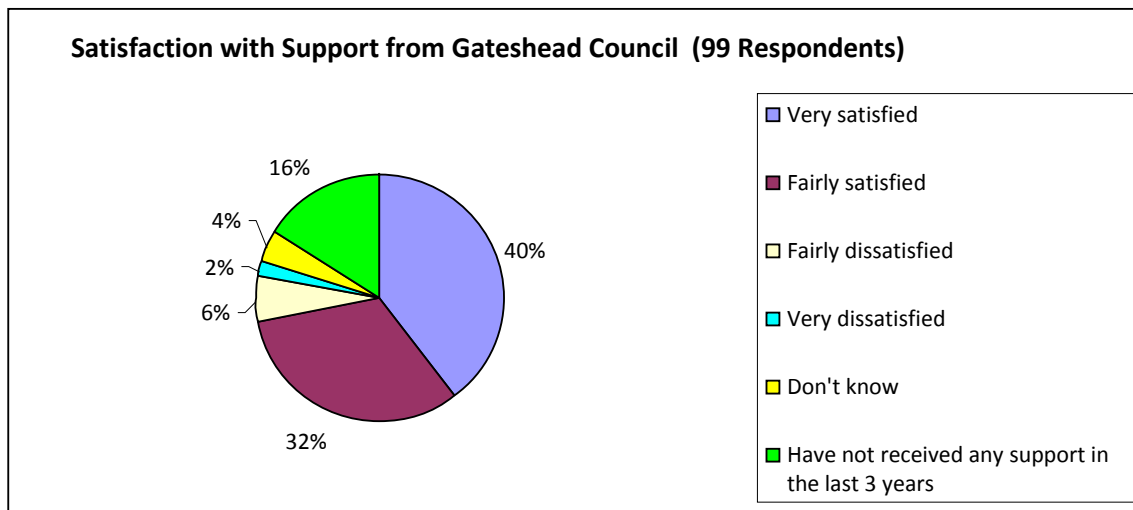
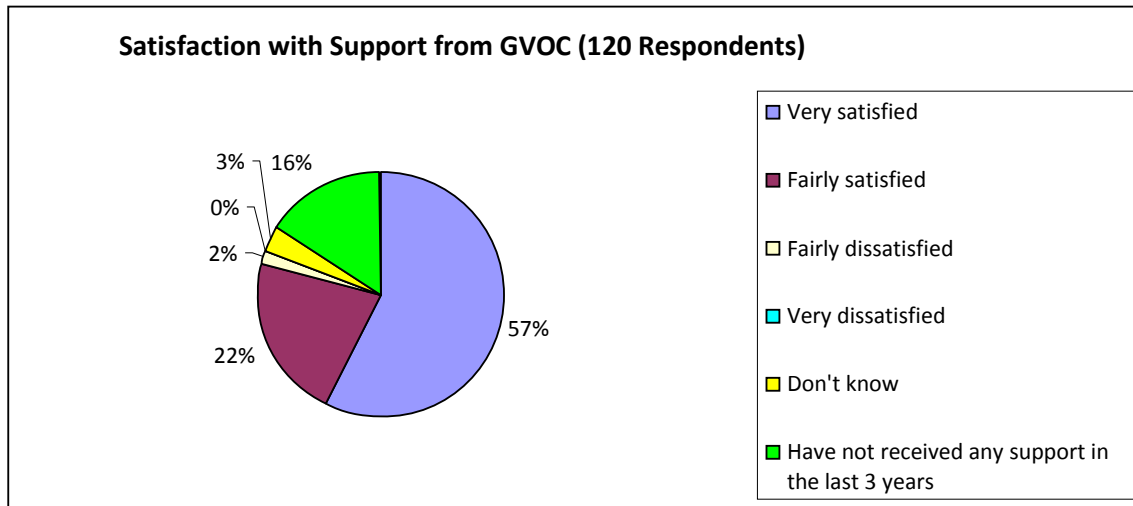
What was the most valuable / useful support that you received from GVOC in the past 3 years and why?

There were 79 responses to the above question. Of these, 28 (35%) referenced funding. The common reference to funding suggests that many Voluntary and Community Sector organisations place funding advice and guidance at the top of their priorities for a Council for Voluntary Service. Training and volunteer support were also common responses, re-enforcing the data from the previous question. 7 respondents (9%) identified assistance with starting up or constitutions as the most valuable support they have received.

A representative selection of responses is given below, based on frequency of the common themes mentioned:

Brokerage service for volunteer recruitment, advertising volunteer vacancies and putting them on Do It website for us.
Came to an event where funders were available to talk and meet with organisations seeking funding. Made useful contacts - but no money obtained yet!
Funding and Advice about applications and other small administration problems. Without the support of GVOC in gaining grant funding we as an organisation would find difficulty to sustain our facilities and role as a sporting club.
Recruitment of volunteers.- Through GVOC we have been able to recruit many of our volunteers and have received excellent support and advice on recruitment.
Training - getting apprenticeship NVQ qualifications for our volunteers
Help in setting up our group – without the support from GVOC we might never have been established.

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you have received from GVOC, Gateshead Council, or another service provider in the past 3 years?



Satisfaction with support provided by GVOC and the Council is generally good. 79% of respondents answered that they were fairly or very satisfied with the support they had received from GVOC, and 72% for the Council. As 16% of respondents had not accessed support in both cases, the rates of satisfaction for those who have actually accessed services are in reality even higher.

GVOC's Needs Survey of the Voluntary Sector asked the same question, and the results were almost identical, with an overall 83% satisfied or higher for GVOC.

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support that you have received from each of the following GVOC services in the last 3 years?

The following table ranks the services listed by satisfaction (combining fairly satisfied and very satisfied):

Service	% of respondents fairly satisfied or very satisfied with service
Funding Advice	64%
Our Gateshead Website	54%
Training	52%
Volunteering Support	47%
Signposting to Other Services	39%
Advice on Charitable Status	34%
Community Engagement	28%
Forums/Network Development	28%
Organisational Management and Structures	27%
Governance Advice	26%
Start Up Support for Groups	22%
Community Accountancy	18%
Payroll	16%
Building Management	9%

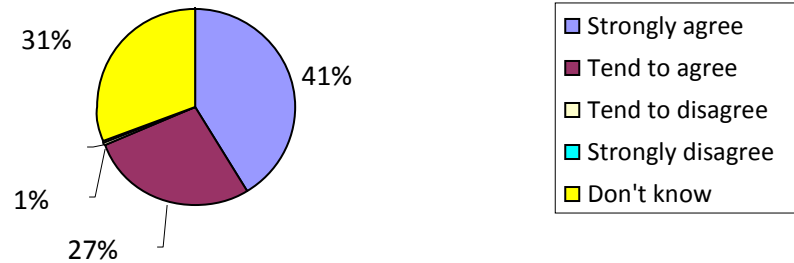
Dissatisfaction with GVOC services is notably very low, with each service achieving 3% or less of respondents claiming that they were fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the service.

The Our Gateshead website achieved a notably high rate of satisfaction, considering 40% of respondents had not used the service in the last 3 years.

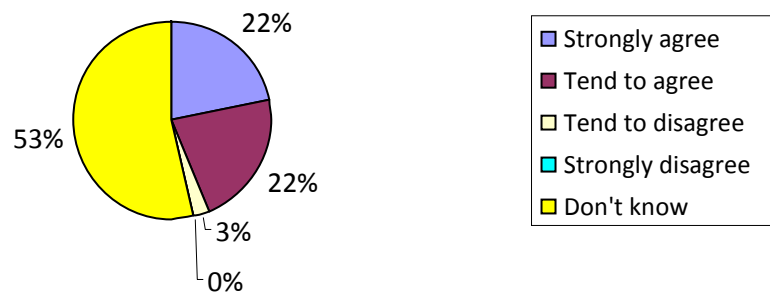
Funding advice, training and volunteering support are all in the top four for satisfaction with services; this reflects not only satisfaction but high usage of these services in comparison to others.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that GVOC have achieved the following objectives?

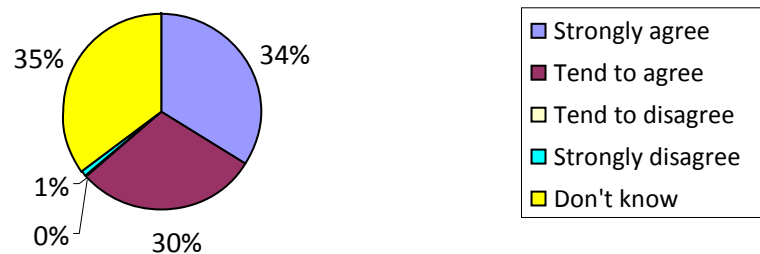
**Development and support, capacity building
advice and training for voluntary and community
groups**



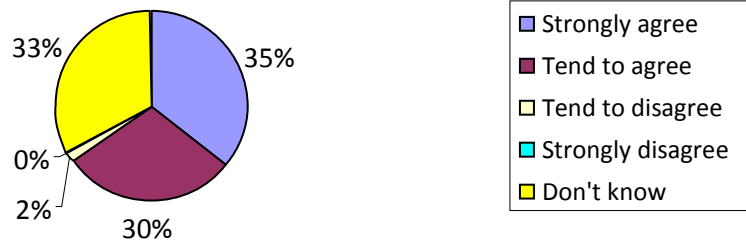
**Identification of unmet need in the community
with support for the development of services
which can meet it**



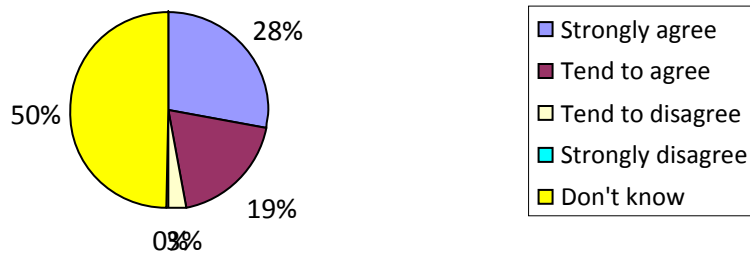
**Strategic partnership development, enablement
and support to voluntary and community
organisations**



Networking opportunities and dissemination of information to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and act as a channel of communication within and between the sector and the public sector



Representation and help to develop structures supporting better representation of the VCS in setting policy and in delivery



In assessing whether GVOC had met the above objectives, many respondents (around a third or more in all five objectives) answered “Don’t know.” This may reflect that the sector do not feel adequately informed. There were very few who felt that GVOC had not achieved their objectives.

Thinking about GVOC services below, which do you consider the most important for your organisation in the future?

Reflecting the feedback regarding usage and satisfaction, funding advice is identified as the most important service provided by GVOC. It is no surprise that training and volunteering support are also in the top three identified, considering that these are also ranked top of usage and satisfaction. The Our Gateshead website appears to be valued by the Voluntary and Community Sector, appearing as the fourth most important service offered.

Service	% of respondents who considered most important
Funding advice	71%
Training	55%
Volunteering support	46%
'Our Gateshead' website	31%
Community engagement	28%
Signposting to other services	26%
Forums/Network development	17%
Business planning	14%
Start up support for groups	13%
Governance advice	11%
Advice on charitable status	10%
Organisational management and structures	9%
Community accountancy	9%
Payroll	7%
Constitutions	7%
Building management	2%
Other	2%

Few organisations selected start up support for groups and constitutions; though this is to be expected as groups are unlikely to be accessing this support as they look to the future. It should also be considered that these services were identified by some as the most important support they have received in an earlier question.

Looking at future services, GVOC's Needs Survey also identified funding advice as the most important to keep, along with training and volunteering support.

Thinking about GVOC services below, which would you be willing to pay for?

Service	% of respondents willing to pay for service
Training	71%
Funding advice	29%
Volunteering support	14%
Community accountancy	14%
Payroll	14%
Business planning	12%
'Our Gateshead' website	9%
Governance advice	7%
Community engagement	5%
Forums/Network development	5%
Advice on charitable status	5%
Organisational management and structures	3%
Building management	3%
Start up support for groups	2%
Constitutions	2%
Signposting to other services	2%
Other	2%

There was little willingness to pay for GVOC's services, with notable the exception of training; some of which is currently offered for a charge. Almost a third of respondents suggested that they would pay for funding advice, highlighting once again the sector's reliance on this service, but few indicated they were willing to pay for other services.

Are there any other services not listed above that you would like GVOC to provide?

Of the responses to this question, many were not relevant or already offered. There was some interest in GVOC providing HR and legal advice, and helping to provide short term volunteering opportunities or work placements for young people.

Do you have any further comments about GVOC or support for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Gateshead?

There were 60 responses to this question. Responses were mainly positive comments about GVOC and their work. Some examples are given below:

GVOC is a valuable organisation within Gateshead for charitable and voluntary organisations. To know that there is somewhere to go that can offer help, support and advice when needed or even just to confirm that you are on the right lines is really comforting.
GVOC is a very useful resource to have in Gateshead and stands separate to the Council in terms of advice to the voluntary sector. It is important to have this as an independent voice to help grow and support the voluntary sector.
Needed as an independent body for advice and support. Found this service very helpful so far. I think GVOC provides a great service and their services should be advertised more.
We are a very a very small local group. The advice and support we get from GVOC we would not be able to pay for but is invaluable to us.
We feel that the role of GVOC underpins the existence and development of local community groups who, without the support and advice from GVOC, would find it difficult to access relevant information and advice.

In addition, there were a handful of comments that were suggestions for how GVOC could improve their offer. These comments are shown below:

I think GVOC provides a great service and their services should be advertised more.
I think one of the difficulties GVOC has in attracting new sources of funding for its core activities is that it has too many projects which need to go to the same funder e.g. training, FINE, Volunteer Centre, Community Network. So e.g. if FINE was a separate organisation, it could apply on its own. By doing this sort of thing more outside funding for voluntary sector support could come to Gateshead.
If it was possible I would love the likes of GVOC to help and support CIC when starting out.

Finally, there were three comments that suggested that GVOC could not help:

It could and should be better
Not sure how GVOC is able to help our type of organisation
We have made little use of GVOC in the last 5 years

Next steps

One to one interviews will be carried out with VCS organisations and an Outcomes Report will be produced incorporating this consultation, research into other areas and inform the Council's review of the Council for Voluntary Service.