



An

Impact Analysis

for

Voluntary Sector Training

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1. Introduction

Voluntary Sector Training (VST) is an independent charity working to support the development of a strong, effective and diverse voluntary and community sector in Essex through the provision of training.

In order to ensure that they are providing high quality services that meet the needs of the people and organisations they work with, VST asked Action Planning to undertake an impact analysis to measure the effects that VST training has on both individuals and organisations. This impact analysis focuses on the year September 2008 – August 2009, and is the latest in a series of annual impact assessments commissioned by VST.

2. Methodology

Data was gathered for the impact analysis from three sources:

- VST records
- Feedback forms completed immediately after training sessions
- A bespoke online survey conducted at the end of the year, designed to capture the medium-long term impact of the training courses that VST have run.

Data supplied by VST from their records has been used to establish the main deliverables achieved by VST during the academic year September 2008 – August 2009.

The feedback forms were distributed at the end of every VST training session for participants to complete immediately after their training courses. XXX response forms were received during the year, a response rate of XX%.

The online survey was developed by Action Planning in conjunction with VST. The survey was posted online from 10th August 2009 to 14th September 2009. Individual submissions were treated anonymously though people were asked to supply contact details to enter a prize draw to win a free VST training session.

VST invited c.1,100 people from a database of people who had attended a VST training in the past. 209 people responded, representing a 19% response rate.

This impact assessment brings together the main findings from VST records, feedback forms and the bespoke survey.

3. VST Outputs

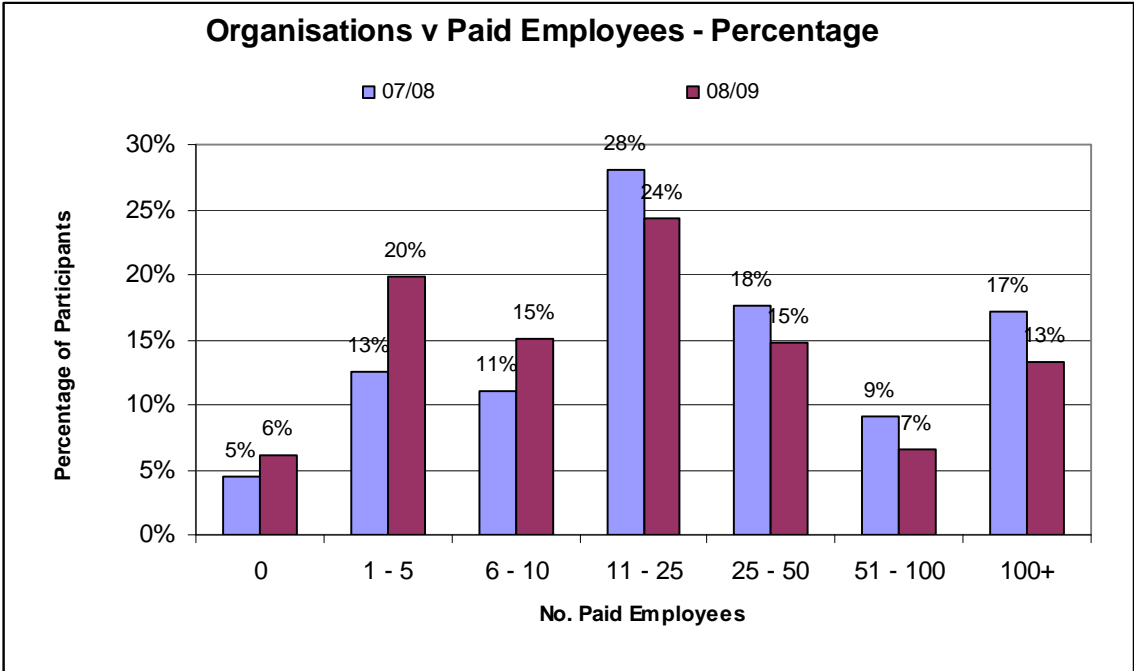
In the period from September 2008 to August 2009, VST delivered 113 training sessions covering 65 different topics. The training sessions were held at 45 different venues across the 12 districts covered by VST.

In the previous year (September 2007 to August 2008), equivalent figures were 95 training sessions covering 62 topics at 44 different venues across the 11 districts then covered by VST.

In 2008/09, 1156 participants from 294 different organisations attended training events. In 2007/08 the equivalent figure was 1173 participants from 264 organisations. The number of participants for whom this was their first VST training course rose from 42% in 2007/08 to 50% in 2008/09.

For a majority of participants, VST record the size of the organisation that has sent them, based on the number of employees, as Figure 1 illustrates:

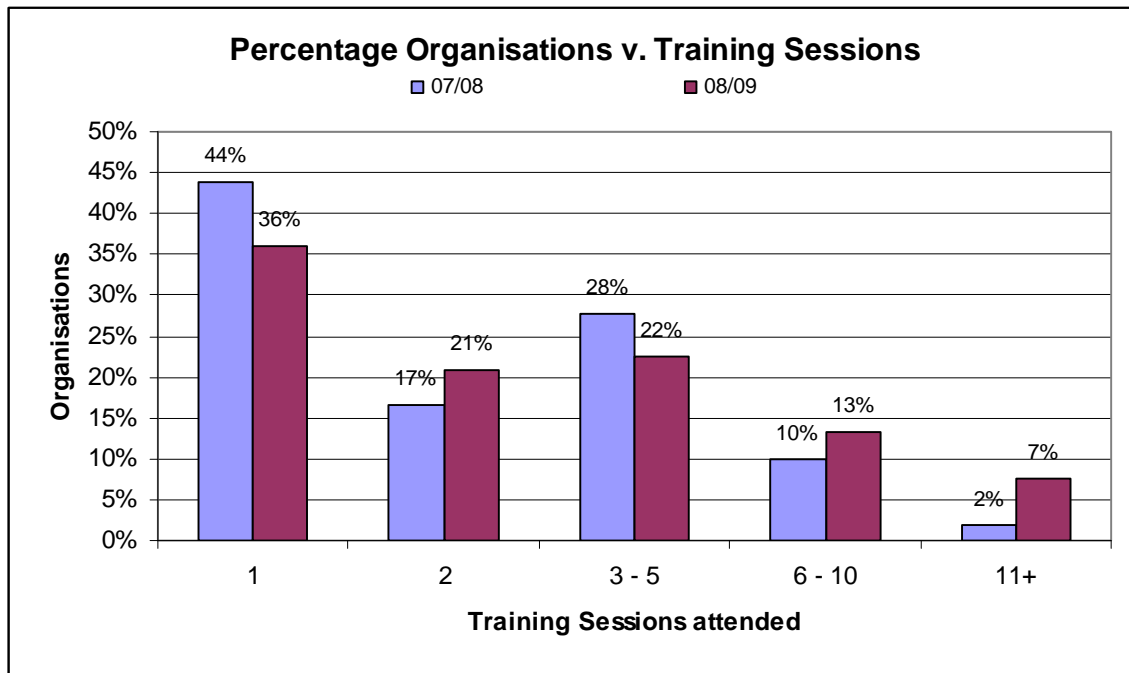
Figure 1



This shows that the largest group of trainees who use VST come from organisations that have between 11 and 25 paid employees. It also shows that, based on size, the fastest growing client group are organisations who have between 1-5 employees. Small organisations with 10 or less employees sent 29% of VST's trainees in 2007/08, and this rose to 41% in 2008/09. This suggests that VST is increasingly working with smaller community groups.

VST records also track the number of individual participants sent by each organisation during the year, as detailed below:

Figure 2



38% of organisations, the largest group, sent one participant during the year. However, the proportion of organisations making more than one booking in any one year has increased from 56% to 64%, demonstrating that having used VST once, organisations often use VST again. 20% of organisations have used VST on 6 or more occasions during the year. In our survey, we asked individuals whether they planned to use VST in the future:

Table 1: Are you planning to attend any further VST training?

Yes	80%
No	16%
No reply	4%

The majority of people (80%) are planning to attend another VST training event.

In our survey, we asked people about the main areas in which their organisations worked, in order to understand the type of organisations that VST primarily helps. The classifications of types of charity work are taken from the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, which measured the baseline performance for National Indicator 7, one of the Indicators against which Local Authorities are assessed.

Table 2: Which are the main areas in which your organisation works? (Multiple responses accepted)

Health and well-being (e.g. medical, health, sickness, disability, mental health)	45%
Community development and mutual aid	24%
Training	24%
Education and lifelong learning	22%
Equalities / civil rights (e.g. gender, race, disabilities)	18%
Culture and leisure (including arts, music, sport and recreation)	13%
Accommodation/housing	13%
Environment / sustainability	11%
Economic well-being (including economic development, employment and relief of poverty)	10%
Capacity-building and other support for third sector organisations	10%
Cohesion / civic participation	9%
Religious / faith-based activity	6%
Criminal justice	5%
Heritage	4%
International development (e.g. overseas aid, famine relief)	2%
Animal welfare	-
Other charitable, social or community purposes	44%
No reply	0.4%

The most common area of work was health and well being (45%). Also common were community development and mutual aid (24%), training (24%) and education and lifelong learning (22%). A large number of people also said that they were involved in another charitable, social or community purpose (respondents could select more than one category).

4. Impact Assessment

4.1 Quality

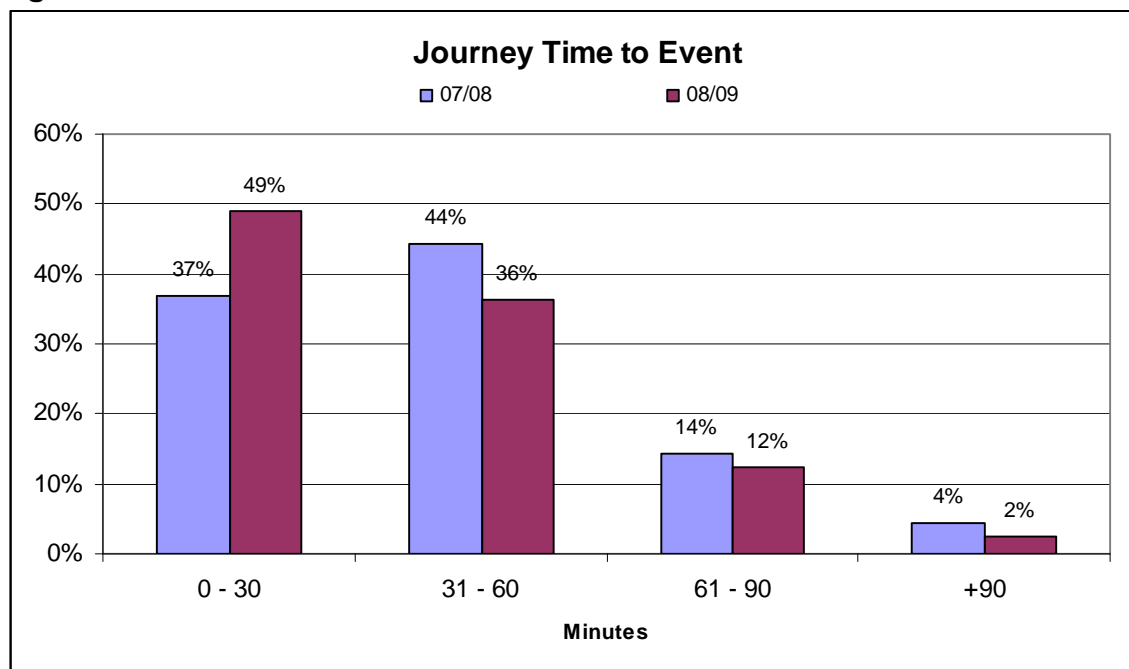
In our survey of training participants, we asked people why they chose to use VST training.

Table 3: Why did you choose to use VST Training? (Multiple responses accepted)

Relevance of course	77%	
Cost	64%	
Location	51%	
Convenient date and time	25%	
Reputation	25%	
Recommendation from someone else	21%	
Lack of alternatives	5%	
Other	1%	• "Preferred supplier"
No reply	0.5%	

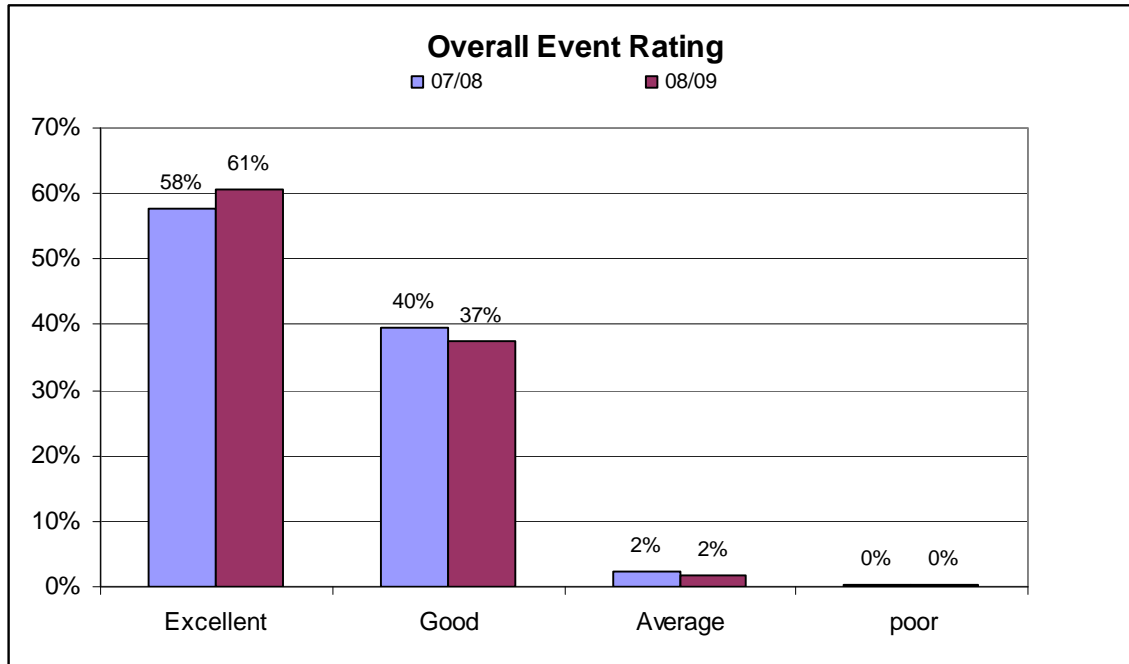
The most common reasons for choosing the course were its relevance (77%) and its cost (64%). Very few people (5%) chose VST training due to a lack of alternatives. This may indicate that people are aware of alternative providers of training, but choose to use VST rather than other providers based primarily on relevance of training, cost and location. For instance, based on feedback forms from events, nearly half (49%) of participants only travelled for 30 minutes or less to access their training event (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3



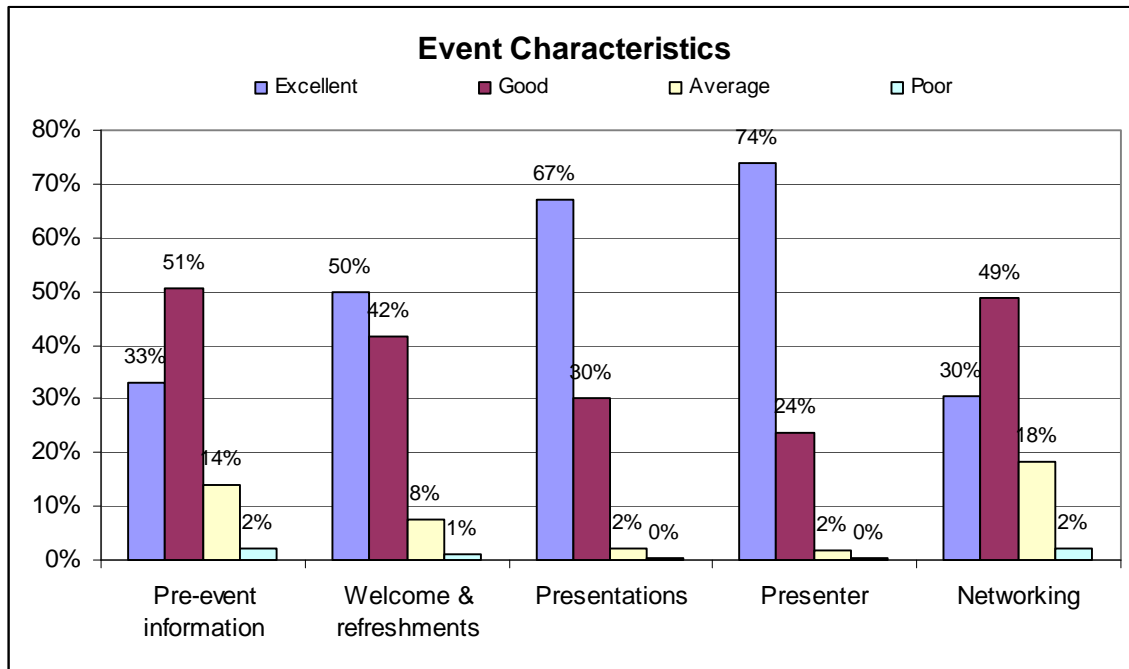
When participants have chosen VST, feedback demonstrates that they are happy with this choice. Responses to feedback forms completed on the day by participants, which show that participants are in general satisfied by their overall experience of VST training:

Figure 4



98% of participants who responded rated the training event they had attended as good or excellent. When this response is investigated further, the areas that participants rate highest are the presenter and the presentation of training, as can be seen from Figure 5:

Figure 5



Providing opportunities for networking is the area that VST has the most potential to improve. However, the general picture is of an organisation that is providing very high quality training in a way that is accessible to local organisations.

In our survey, we asked people whether they would recommend VST to others and why.

Table 4: Would you recommend VST to others?

Yes	99%
No	1%

All most all respondents said they would recommend VST to others. The reasons they gave were included the following (in approximate order of frequency of occurrence):

- "Good value for money"
- "Worthwhile, professional training"
- "Very good trainer who had a wealth of knowledge and experience"
- "Local"/"convenient locations"
- "Enjoyable as well as informative"
- "Good networking opportunities"
- "High quality"
- "Very good content"
- "Relevant"

People were also asked what they would have done had training from VST not been available.

Table 5: What would you/your organisation have done were this training from VST not available at all?

We wouldn't have had the training	44%
We would have gone with a similar provider at a similar cost	20%
We would have gone with a more expensive provider.	11%
We would have gone with an option that was less suitable/well matched	6%
We would have gone with an option that was less expensive but of inferior quality	1%
Other	3%
Don't know	16%

If VST training wasn't available, the most common response was that people would not have had the training (44%). 20% would have gone with a similar provider with a similar cost. This suggests that VST provides quality training for a number of organisations who would not have access to training if VST did not exist.

4.2 Cost

In our survey, we asked people about the cost of VST's trainings, firstly whether it represented good value for money.

Table 6: Thinking back to your last VST course you attended, how would you rate the value for money of that course?

Not at all good value for money	2%
Not good value for money	4%
Good value for money	22%
Very good value for money	72%
No reply	2%

A large majority (72%) of people thought that their last VST course was very good value for money, with only 2% saying it was not at all good value.

Next we asked people about whether they could have acquired cheaper training elsewhere (Table 7). Those who said 'No' were asked how much they thought they had saved per day (Table 8) (there was insufficient data for those who said that they could have acquired this training cheaper to provide a meaningful comparison).

Table 7: Could you have acquired this training cheaper elsewhere?

Yes	3%
No	54%
Don't know	42%
No reply	2%

Table 8: How much do you think you saved per day?

Under £25	2%
£26 - £50	15%
£51 - £100	24%
£101 - £200	17%
More than £200	3%
Not sure - I don't know what other courses cost	36%
No reply	3%

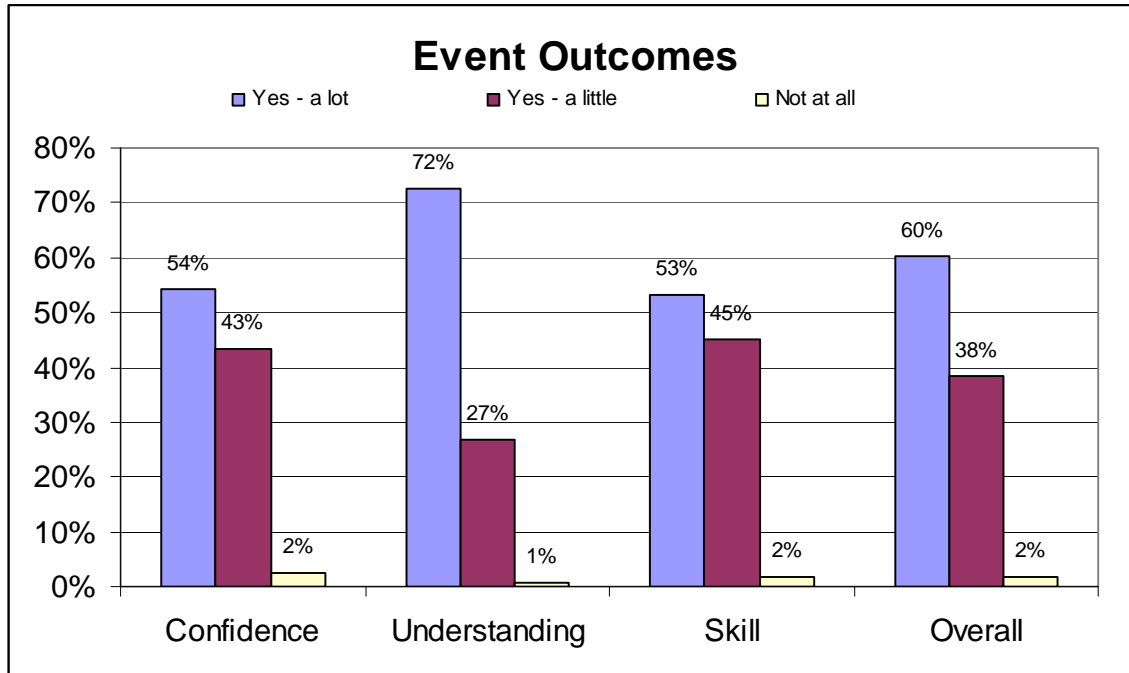
The majority of people (54%) could not have acquired training cheaper elsewhere, although 42% said they didn't know. Of those who felt that VST was the cheapest available, 24% thought they had saved between £51 and £100, 17% between £101

and £200 and 15% between £26 and £50. However, the largest group were unsure how much they had saved.

4.3 Personal Outcomes

Feedback forms from events run by VST demonstrate that, at the end of their training, participants feel that they have developed during the training.

Figure 6



60% feel that overall they have gained "a lot" and 72% feel that they have gained "a lot" in understanding of the topic. The immediate self assessed outcomes of VST training are therefore very positive.

In our survey, we asked people how long it had been since they attended a VST training course. As expected, the vast majority had attended a course more than two months ago, and 45% reported that they attended a course more than 6 months ago. This indicates that the survey can capture some of the medium-long term impacts of VST training.

We asked people in our survey how they felt about various possible effects of VST training on them.

Table 10: How strongly do you agree with the following statements about the effect of VST's training on you?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	No reply
It has lead to an increase in my understanding/knowledge	28%	63%	4%	1%	5%
It has enabled me to do my job to a higher standard.	21%	70%	4%	1%	5%
It has enabled me to do my job more efficiently.	18%	71%	5%	1%	6%
It has equipped me with new skills.	29%	60%	5%	1%	6%
It has improved my level of professionalism.	17%	67%	9%	1%	7%
It has allowed me to demonstrate that I have certain skills.	17%	64%	11%	1%	7%
It has enabled me to have a greater impact in my job.	13%	65%	12%	1%	9%
It has increased my confidence.	19%	59%	14%	1%	7%
It has given me a better understanding of the wider context in which I work	14%	54%	23%	1%	8%
It has helped me network and share experiences with people in other organisations	18%	50%	23%	2%	9%

The effects that most people thought that VST training had had on them were an increase in knowledge/understanding (91% either said 'strongly agree' or 'agree') and the ability to do their job to a higher standard (91% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). Other effects that people agreed the training had had on them were equipping them with new skills (89% 'strongly agree' or 'agree') and the ability to do their job more efficiently (89% 'strongly agree' or 'agree').

The effects people were less sure that training had had on them were that it had helped them network and share experiences with people in other organizations (25% answered either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree') and giving a better understanding of the wider context of their work (24% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'). However, even in these categories, a substantial majority still agree or strongly with the statement, suggesting that VST training is delivering sustained outcomes for participants in the medium-long term.

4.4 The effect of VST training on your organisation

We also asked people to rate the various effects VST training had had on their organisation.

Table 11: How strongly do you agree with the following statements about the effect of VST's training on your organisation?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	No reply
It has filled a 'gap' in our capacity by giving us new skills	12%	64%	17%	1%	6%
It has made my organisation more professional.	11%	63%	19%	1%	6%
It has enabled my organisation to provide better services to the people it works with.	13%	59%	19%	1%	8%
It has made my organisation more efficient.	10%	61%	23%	1%	6%
It has saved my organisation money	22%	44%	27%	3%	4%
It has allowed my organisation to meet certain standards, e.g. Health and Safety	18%	48%	25%	2%	7%
It has allowed my organisation to undertake new activities	6%	40%	44%	2%	8%
It has helped my organisation attract additional funding	5%	33%	51%	4%	8%
It has allowed my organisation to diversify its services.	5%	28%	56%	2%	9%

The possible effects that were most highly rated were that VST training had filled a 'gap' in the organisation's capacity (76% said either 'strongly agree' or 'agree'), had made their organisation more professional (74% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'), had enabled the organisation provide better services (72% 'strongly agree' or 'agree') and had made the organisation more efficient (71% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). This suggests that VST training is having sustained medium-long term effects on the work that local third sector organisations are able to undertake.

Only 33% of people agreed or strongly agreed that VST training had allowed their organisation to diversify its services and only 38% that it had helped them attract additional funding. This suggests that it may be possible to improve the support that VST offers organisations in these areas. It may also suggest that these are areas where training alone cannot create lasting change.

We then asked people a series of questions about some specific impacts of VST training courses. People were asked at the start of each section whether or not they had done relevant courses and answered the specific questions accordingly.

4.4.1 Funding your organisation

We firstly asked people whether VST training had improved the efficiency of fundraising in their organisation.

Table 12: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "As a result of attending VST training, we have improved the efficiency of fundraising in my organisation." (Base: n=57)

strongly agree	7%
agree	63%
disagree	28%
strongly disagree	-
No reply	2%

A substantial majority of people (70%) agreed or strongly agreed that VST training had improved the efficiency of fundraising, suggesting that VST training is able to improve this area of an organisation's performance.

We then asked people whether training has enabled them to improve the long term financial security of their organisation.

Table 13: Has this training enabled you to improve the long term financial security of your organisation? (Base: n=57)

Yes	14%
No	46%
Not sure	37%
No reply	4%

Only 14% felt that VST training had enabled them to improve the long term financial security of their organisation.

People were then asked whether training had enabled them to diversify their funding streams.

Table 14: Has this training enabled you to diversify your funding streams? (Base: n=57)

Yes	39%
No	58%
No reply	4%

This was more positive, however the majority (58%) did not think that training had enabled them to diversify their funding streams. Again, this suggests that it may be possible to improve the support that VST offers organisations in these areas. It may also suggest that these are areas where training alone cannot create lasting change.

4.4.2 Winning statutory tenders

We asked people whether VST training had assisted them in bidding for public contracts (Table 15) and then whether they thought their organisation was well equipped to compete for public contracts (Table 16).

Table 15: Has VST training assisted you in bidding for any public contracts? (Base: n=15)

Yes	1%
No	99%

Table 16: Do you feel your organisation is well equipped to compete for public contracts? (Base: n=15)

Yes	80%
No	20%

Only one person had been assisted by VST training in bidding for public contracts and when asked, they had not been successful. However, the majority of respondents (80%) feel that their organisation is well equipped to compete for public contracts.

3.4.3 Networking and skill sharing

People were asked whether attending VST training has enabled them to create any new partnerships.

Table 17: Has attending VST training allowed you to create any new partnerships?

Yes	16%
No	81%
No reply	4%

For the majority (81%) attending VST training had not allowed them to create any new partnerships.

We then asked people whether they had conducted any skill sharing activities as a result of VST training.

Table 18: Have you conducted any skill sharing activities as a result of VST training, e.g. organising secondments?

Yes	5%
No	92%

No reply	3%
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Only 5% had conducted any skill sharing activities. These included the following activities:

- “Based our own training courses on what we have learnt.”
- “Sharing feedback and skills with specific staff and at a more general level with management team at regular follow up meetings. Also skilling staff to work up to next level and effective delegation.”
- “More open communication within the group, a reshuffle of the board and an attitude that is more equal within the board”
- “I have helped young people to understand application forms, and aided them in their attempts to complete these forms. I have also been with them when they accepted a very large cheque for their efforts.”
- “Training Volunteers”
- “IT skills”

We then asked people whether training had expanded their professional networks.

Table 19: Has the training expanded your professional networks?

Yes	21%
No	77%
No reply	2%

We asked the 21% people who said that it had to explain further. Some people said that they had met other organisations (particularly local organisations) and discussed or shared ideas/“good working practice” (e.g. “understanding how they work with volunteers has helped as a benchmark for us”), developed new partnerships (e.g. “referral sources for our charity”) or provided other forms of support (e.g. “helped to broaden our scope on where and who to approach for funding”). Training sessions have allowed people to find out about organisations that they did not know existed (particularly ones with similar aims). They have put people in touch with support agencies and the services that they offer, or provided contacts for other people from whom participants can seek advice.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This impact assessment has demonstrated the impact of VST in the following areas:

Outputs:

- VST has continued to attract large numbers of participants to training courses, both from organisations which have used its services previously and from new organisations
- VST is attracting more participants from smaller organisations, which was one of its stated aims for this year.

Quality:

- VST provides high quality training and achieves very high overall ratings from participants.
- Most people would do another VST course and almost all would recommend it to others.
- People felt courses were professional, with good relevant content and friendly approachable trainers in a convenient location.

Cost:

- People chose VST courses because they felt it represented good value for money. Most people didn't think they could find cheaper training elsewhere and, of those who could put a value on it, most commonly felt that VST had saved them between £51 and £100 per day.
- Almost half of people thought they would not have had the training if it hadn't been available from VST.

Personal Outcomes:

- People generally felt that the main effect of the training was an increase of knowledge and that VST training had helped them to do their job to a higher standard. These outcomes were sustained over the medium-long term.

Organisational Outcomes:

- People felt that VST had helped fill a gap in their organisational capacity and made their organisation more professional. These outcomes were sustained over the medium-long term.
- People were less sure about the impact VST training had had on their fundraising, e.g. for instance improving their organisation's long term financial security or ability to diversify funding streams
- Most people (who did the relevant course) had not actually used VST training to bid for statutory tenders but most felt the training would have equipped them to do so.
- Only a few people had forged new partnerships or expanded their networks as a result of VST training.

Areas for improvement:

- VST can do more to help organisations network with each other during training
- VST should consider whether it is able to provide training around fundraising and winning statutory tenders (for instance, more intensive/longer training sessions) to improve the medium-long term impacts of these courses.

6. Appendices

Further detail from the Action Planning survey of previous training participants

6.1 Why did you chose VST training? Other, please state.

- preferred supplier
- We are on your mailing list and, looking through your booklet, the course seemed relevant and useful to our organisation.

6.2 What would you/your organisation have done were this training from VST not available at all?

Other, please state.

- Re: First Aid - my organisation would have looked at other courses over a period of time as my certificate had not expired. Re: IT courses - I would have looked at getting help from colleagues, friends, family - anyone who would be able to teach me what I needed to know, as my organisation could not afford more expensive courses for me.
- Took longer to achieve a project aim if ever completed resulting in less efficient work output to umbrella organisation and funding partners; with the latter possibly showing lack of demonstration of an efficient and cutting edge knowledge of our own charity and risk of not securing as much funding as could do.
- We would have worked with our local contacts to provide a tailored session
- Fewer of us would have had more expensive training.

6.3 Would you recommend VST to others? Yes, why?

- We look after volunteers and we can only provide so much training ourselves in a year. VST gives us an opportunity to send our volunteers on courses throughout the year and they don't have to wait for our annual training programme to be qualified. We mainly use you for first aid training.
- Excellent value for money
- Value for money, good content and choice of courses, local venues and experienced trainers that make learning interesting as opposed to being preached to and participants getting bored.
- Quality of training is excellent. Good value for money, appropriate and easily accessible.
- worthwhile
- Good value for money
- Worthwhile, professional training
- Good value for money, high quality training in accessible formats from trainers familiar with the sector. Training relevant to application and flexible content to allow for variations in need/knowledge/experience on the day. Convenient spread of geographical locations. Excellent networking opportunities

- Many of the volunteers I work with (School Governors) do not have any background on the legal responsibilities of employment, they are dependant on the services that the LA provide. The knowledge I gained has helped me to direct them to the appropriate service provider.
- Because it is a worthwhile organisation, nice people and providing a good service
- The content and delivery of the courses are relevant, up-to-date, without frills, aimed at the participants. The location quite adequate for the purpose and smoothly organised. A very good service all round!
- The staff who attended this programme came back highly enthusiastic about the programme they undertook and felt the trainer was excellent.
- the training is excellent and is delivered at a reasonable cost. It is important for charities and voluntary organisations to be able to access training without costing the organisation too much.
- The courses are very good, the tutors are well informed and mainly we do not have to chase for funding for training. This means that staff get some training which is free to our organisation because in the voluntary sector where money is scare for such things, we would not get any training.
- The courses I have attended have always been useful and the last course I attended was packed full of information I may not have been able to obtain elsewhere. I find them to be well structured and organised, and good value for money.
- Good value and good trainers
- Because the training is good, relevant, local, and excellent value for money.
- Voluntary Sector groups do not have the funds to pay for training and VST means that they are more professional in their approach, are more aware of H&S issues and feel able to deal with situations that may arise. It has also helped to anticipate possible issues and prevent them occurring.
- The training is always relevant to the voluntary sector, and the specific problems that can arise. The cost is affordable.
- For the reasons given in my earlier answer when asked why I attended. I was the first in my organisation to learn of VST and its courses and after going on one course, recommended colleagues to view the training programmes when they were circulated. The courses are well run, excellent value for money and in relatively easy to get to venues. When charities look carefully at funds available for training, the VST courses are invaluable.
- Local, knowledgeable trainers - venues good, price good, networking good. VST very approachable, good variety of courses, and able to tailor courses to my needs.
- VST courses are not only affordable but they are local and relevant. VST courses are welcoming to the smaller organsiation and attending one course can lead to someone gaining confidence to do other courses. At the same time the courses are also relevant to larger organsiations and often being just one day courses can be attractive to those who are overstretched
- Good training courses, good venues, small groups and chance to network with other charities
- it consolidate your knowledge allows better professionalism and gives you the confidence to tackle more issues.

- Well priced training from well qualified trainers who understand the specific needs and requirements of voluntary sector organisations. Lots of good advice offered and a chance to network with other voluntary organisations.
- I feel with the VST training we learn alot, if you don't know the answer you find it out for us, able to network learning other experiences and professional team to work with.
- The courses have all excellent - great value for money
- The trainer, Sangita Two (LINDA) are most friendly and helpful. Specially Sangita is a Fantastic person.
- The courses we have attended were relevant and numbers were small enough to make for 'intimate' learning.
- Relevant courses at reasonable price
- local, good value courses, usually good trainers
- I found the courses I attended were well presented. The people running the courses were all extremely approachable, and no questions were ever regarded as derisive.
- Good value for money
- Valuable information
- The professionalism and knowledge available is invaluable to those working within their chosen sectors and the workshops enable participants to evaluate their understanding of the information being given
- Because you are a very professional organisation providing a much need service in the voluntary sector and keep costs down.
- Because the courses and the trainers have specific relevance to the community and voluntary sector. Also the courses are sometimes free or at a very reasonable cost. This is vitally important for small organisations with little or no training budgets
- Because they have top of the range training for a minimal cost which is important when working for a charitable organisation
- The trainers were professional and added an element of humour to the training which gets the message across well. The locations were easy to access apart from the YMCA in Colchester which I don't think you are going to use again in any case.
- Important we all work together
- Well organized course both in content and presentation
- I have been a manager at other Crossroads schemes in the area and have always found voluntary sector training courses very informative and all trainers have provided the courses at a steady pace for all attendees. I have no hesitation in using voluntary sector training in the future for our staff training needs.
- VSTs courses are excellent value for money all the trainers are knowledgeable and professional and the courses are relevant to the sector
- Well planned and thought-out course content. Professional and highly competent course delivery from engaging tutor. Extremely affordable and accessible.
- An extremely professional and knowledgeable tutor.
- I think that they provide a good range of courses.
- Provides useful and relevant trainings

- You always know that you are going to get high quality training from tried and tested trainers. Training is tailored to the voluntary sector and prices are very reasonable.
- First class, professional training provider Local provision Training appropriate to need VST staff are approachable, friendly professionals
- It is a good source of relevant training at a good price.
- Quality training, latest and best practice. It is especially recommended for voluntary groups without access to a wider pool of expertise and advice.
- It was enjoyable as well as informative.
- Value for money
- Due to the fact that costs are kept low, venues are local and training is relevant to the sector in which I work
- superior training and trainers at a reasonable cost
- the practical training is excellent and the trainers are first class. Training can be booked locally with notice. Can not comment on some of the other categories as not experienced them all, this is because our trustees have an organisation behind them they can call on.
- A good local resource that enables staff and volunteers to learn new skills and obtain formal qualifications.
- VST has a good range of training opportunities locally at very competitive prices. It`s easy to book, convenient local venues, it`s the first place I turn to for training for myself and staff. Long may it continue!
- Good courses and relative to the voluntary sector.
- Good local training. Trainers are very knowledgeable in their respective fields.
- Good value for money for low cost training
- following 2 of our members completing the food hygiene course offered by your selves free of charge both ladies were very impressed with the course and on there say so when we are able to raise the money we are going to send another 2 ladies on this course when possible . As we are a very small branch of the woman's section of the British legion obtaining free places on the course has made it possible for us to devote more of our funds to the clubs pensioners party this year of which we are very grateful to you for
- The courses are well presented on the whole and very good value for money. Also it helps local businesses as well as the VST. It is also a good way to meet other local communities with similar situations.
- Good value training, when covering topics, subjects required.
- The working partnership with VST and Volunteer Centres enables a more consistent level of training provision in Volunteer Management and other areas of interest across the county. It is also more cost effective and efficient. We are able to input, as appropriate, during Volunteer Management training courses and signpost both individuals and organisations to VST.
- The range of courses are very good and appropriate for third sector organisations, the course I attended was well administered and geared at the right level for the people attending.
- Good quality relevant training at local venues
- Good value for money training courses. There appears to be a shortage of training in the Essex area, VST offer local training at a competitive price.

- Value for money, friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable.
- Good value for money, good tutors, well run events
- Local inexpensive and efficiently organised training. Good selection of courses available.
- A wide range of training at competitive prices
- Very effective and targeted courses and very inexpensive
- Some of the trainers are good at what they do
- Good value for money courses
- I have found the tutors very professional and knowledgeable in the areas they are training. It is a chance to meet similar groups in the area and gain some new ideas.
- things are explained well by friendly instructors
- Good quality, inexpensive and relevant
- It offers professional training which is not available elsewhere at a similar cost.
- Staff are helpful and friendly
- Relevant training for voluntary organisations
- Good value for money
- Efficient - value for money.
- Small groups, usually fairly local and good organisation
- Professionally run courses at exceptional value for money
- Courses offered are relevant to the work of the sector including localities and cost. Although I am still to attend my course I have sent staff on training and my answers are based on their experience
- VST courses are delivered in an extremely professional way, by highly trained tutors and therefore rival any of the much more expensive - and therefore for us, unaffordable - commercial options. They are also delivered within a relatively local area whereas most of the commercial options require a long (sometimes expensive) journey e.g. to London or Cambridge. The real X factor though is the networking that you do with people from other local voluntary sector organisations, which has been invaluable to us. They definitely fit well into the 'Voluntary not Amateur' descriptor.
- Excellent training at a very reasonable price. for instance I'm attending the new vetting and barring scheme in October, free. Fundamentally to our organisation I attended a Quickbooks Training course run by Jane Seymour which set in motion, our organisation now using Quickbooks for all our finance and indeed our contacts database. I've attended Jane's full cost recovery course. Your identification of Jane Seymour as the right person to run these courses is excellent, Jane now audits our books saving us hundreds of pounds, it is much easier to run accurate financial reports, than fiddling with Excel. Our new employee will be attending your food hygiene course, and there are quite a few courses I would like to attend but sometimes the dates don't match up to my diary, eg data protection.
- Because the courses are relevant to our organisation, save much needed funds and are well run and very informative.
- Courses are diverse and are of a particular relevance to Voluntary organisations. I do refer representatives of such organisations to the VSO for training.

- The training is of a high quality and a very reasonable price.
- Because the courses are informal but full of useful information. All the tutors were great fun and made everyone feel welcome
- friendly, helpful, good quality and value
- Excellent tutors and relevant content to title of course. Just enough information.
- Relevant training which is provided at local venues. Good networking opportunities.
- For many of the reasons mentioned in the previous questions.
- Courses are always well run and concise.
- High quality, affordable courses!
- Because it provides a variety of professional well-delivered courses which are relevant to many organisations in the voluntary sector
- Good introduction to people new to the job.
- Local Company Professional Excellent Trainers (Excel Training Course attended where trainer was outstanding)
- very good content, high standard and value for money
- Quality & standards of delivery of course information and on day well very good. Professional, structured and informative
- the courses on the whole are very useful, priced competitively and accessible to third sector groups
- The courses are very good value for money, it is handy that they are so local, and they tend to attract people from a vast array of voluntary backgrounds and give a good grounds for interaction with these people, meaning it's easier to understand things from different people's viewpoints within the sector.
- Cost effective way of training plus opportunity to network with other voluntary organisations and learn ideas from them.
- Quality and value for money courses presented in a very helpful, supportive and professional way.
- professional helpful and approachable
- The training I received was of extremely high quality and enjoyable. It was relevant to the situation in which we work and the mix of attendees allowed a wider range of views and ideas to be raised and discussed, providing new perspectives on situations.
- good value for money and convenient
- Courses are well focused, short and affordable.
- professionalism and quality of training
- Great courses, they are local and in expensive.
- Good quality/value
- VST gives people opportunities to learn and improve their skills at a reasonable cost
- Good value for money good quality training Positive response to negative feedback
- The courses are comprehensively 'put together' and pitched at a practical level with very little superfluous information. The course instructor was friendly, helpful and approachable whilst enabling the course to stay on track contents wise and run to time.

- Value for money, excellent training
- Very good value for money training, excellent trainers, venues local with a good range of courses offered.
- Both courses I attended, I found the tutors very professional, informative, made the subject interesting and were supportive and knowledgeable to questions
- VST people are friendly and the courses are easy to book. During the course there is the opportunity to network and the course itself is very user friendly. Also, the courses are never too far away.
- Excellent training courses at reasonable cost.
- Such a valuable and accessible service throughout the District. Friendly, approachable, helpful, high quality, enjoyable, interesting, informative, clear content, relevant, lives up to expectation, confidence and knowledge boost, pathway to future learning
- Cheap but good quality, good structured training
- Quality & cost
- Because it understands the voluntary sector
- Good training for a good cost
- Good, value for money
- I found the facilitators to be very informative and approachable.
- The trainers are good and the cost is excellent
- Very good trainer who had a wealth of knowledge and experience and dealt with some tricky situations which arose with some other delegates very well. I have only attended one of your courses but I will use that as a benchmark for others I may attend in the future.
- We have been impressed with the standard of training
- relevance of courses
- I think that it is always good to try and improve on what you are doing in any organisation and although sometimes a particular course can be a disappointment, I am sure there must be many times when the opposite is true.
- Quality, Value and relevance of training to community organisations like ours.
- Informational
- Good quality
- high standard of course facilitators, very comprehensive portfolio of courses of offer. Often free courses available which is great for the charity sector.
- Very high standard of trainers and at a very affordable price
- The courses are usually well conducted and it is always invigorating to meet others but VST is not really more special than other training organisations in the voluntary sector
- It gives up to date training in a way that most people can understand. The training can usually be accessed close to home. There is always the chance to meet and talk to like minded people.
- The way the courses are presented and the quality of the courses. They are always friendly and not too big so that you have a good chance to network.
- For the best of intentions, volunteers take up roles, for a number of reasons, sometimes finding they are in a position that they are not equipped to

perform but, with the correct training can be steered into a successful partnership. Voluntary Sector Training is a vital source for that training without the feeling of incapability and for that reason they should be recommended.

- Value for money. All trainers are very pleasant and helpful and put their courses across in easy to understand format
- You offer, good value, low cost relevant training.
- Quality training, suitable for our organisation Reasonable cost
- Although we only attended one course this year, we have always been impressed by the quality of VCS courses in the past.
- Practical training is provided at the right level at a very reasonable cost and within easy travelling distances.
- In theory the courses are tailored to this sector requirements.
- Excellent training Friendly helpful admin Value for Money Local venues Networking opportunities
- good value, especially if you want a taster to see whether to invest more in continuing further training in a certain area.
- practical, relevant to the volunteer sector and pleasant to attend
- The tutor for the First Aid course was excellent - explained things clearly, explained why certain things were important, good pace and content, very personable and good confidence builder
- Charities are very often restricted by the cost of training personnel to the standard required. VST allows these people to undertake the training at a very effective cost basis.
- Very professional trainers and excellent cost
- Professional tutor - local - relevant to our training needs.
- It can help them to acquire new skills or polish on there existing skills with professional help.
- Relevance Cost
- Good value for money no nonsense training that gives the 3rd sector the training and information relevant to its needs.
- It offers training on relevant topics at a reasonable price at convenient locations around Essex.
- very good value for money. the training has always been of a high standard. convenient locations.
- It allows voluntary organisations to undertake training that would otherwise be prohibited by cost. This is very important when the voluntary sector deals with a large number of volunteers that come and go and each new volunteer requiring the same training. It also helps smaller poorer organisations to aspire to the standards of other wealthier organisations including private or public sector organisations, thereby improving their services and professionalism.
- Training courses I have attended have been of a high quality not only in the selection of the person running the course but in the venue and facilities available i.e. car parking, refreshments etc.
- I found the courses very interesting and the people friendly.
- The quality and content of the course has been extremely high and the costs incurred have been realistic.

- Good Quality Courses at an affordable cost.
- good course, excellent trainer, value for money,
- Excellent quality of training provided for an affordable cost. For courses such as manual handling and first aid has been invaluable for an organisation with very little training budget.
- Cost effective, well presented, decent time limits, good locations, helpful staff, good topics.

6.4 Would you recommend VST to others? No, why?

- The courses I have attended have generally been of a low standard and of dubious value

6.5 Have you conducted any skill sharing activities as a result of VST training, e.g. organising secondments? What format has this skill sharing taken?

- Based our own training courses on what we have learnt.
- sharing feedback and skills with specific staff and at a more general level with management team at regular follow up meetings. Also skilling staff to work up to next level and effective delegation
- more open communication within the group a reshuffle of the board and a attitude that is more equal within the board
- I have helped young people to understand application forms, and aided them in their attempts to complete these forms. I have also been with them when they accepted a very large cheque for their efforts.
- I have been able to impart knowledge acquired to other members of the team.
- Training Volunteers
- IT skills
- Transferring what I learnt on the volunteering courses to my colleague
- I have passed on my new knowledge and skills to colleagues
- shared the feedback and learning with the rest of the fundraising team

6.6 Has the training expanded your professional networks? How?

- I attended a presentations skill course. I met a number of support agencies that could and did become a referral sources for our charity.
- The training gave me the confidence to extend my professional network. e.g. I have been elected as Assistant Chair East Region
- Met other organisations at the training sessions and we could discuss issues and ways to solve them.
- by meeting new people, working for organisations I did not know existed ad exploring the communities needs and ways to deal with them.
- Have forged links with other local organisations who we may not have come across otherwise.
- It has brought me into contact with V-iNSPIRE, The Essex Youth Bank/Youth Services, and has enabled me to become a member of RRAVS and become more involved in what they have to offer
- Meeting other people from external agencies and discussing the work we do.
- Creating awareness of who else is out there

- Links with some of the participants on the course; understanding how they work with volunteers has helped as a benchmark for us, and helped us work with them better.
- I have met with our providers working within the Essex area.
- Opportunities to network with other agencies.
- Increasing the use of our services by other organisations
- By suggesting organisations that may take an interest in the project.
- Through making contact with others who have navigated the social enterprise route and being able to go to them for advice and support.
- I have attended more media events
- Contact details swapped which has lead to referral to the service.
- to have met other people on courses from different organisations
- Enabled us to meet people we may not have otherwise met.
- Through networking with other participants, long term partnerships have been made.
- Making new contacts with people from similar groups.
- I met colleagues from other institutions with which I would not otherwise have easily made contact. Since the training course, we have remained in touch to discuss other professional issues as well as those directly related to the course we attended.
- Good working contacts Shared good working practice
- The training courses enabled us to meet representatives from other organisations trying to achieve similar aims.
- Cascading to team members throughout Essex
- Through meeting other organisations that we can be involved with that can be beneficial to both organisations. Supporting and attending each others events.
- Can't put it into words - I just know more people who I could contact
- I have met new people as a result of the training. It has shown us new avenues to go down so introducing us to new groups of people.
- Made contacts with others who may need to refer our customers on to in the future, and have professional contacts if needed in the future for advice etc
- With other Community Transport Organisations
- Helped to broaden our scoop on where and who to approach for funding when it is required.
- Enabled me to be more involved in discussions relevant to training courses attended.
- Getting to know other organisations in similar circumstances to ourselves.
- We have been in touch with a few other users of VST as they can offer help with meeting our objectives.

NEED TO ADD ADDITIONAL VST APPENDICES