

Volunteers' Satisfaction Survey Results Summary

The volunteers' satisfaction survey generally shows that our volunteers are satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteering experience at ACKuT and believe that it makes a real difference to their lives. Most have been volunteering with ACKuT for 1-5 years and spend on average 3-4 hours a week volunteering. The majority of volunteers are involved in intergenerational work and the Raleigh House Day Centre.

The demographics of ACKuT volunteers shows that the majority are white British females who are over 60 and retired, and that older volunteers are also generally the longest-serving volunteers, with many joining ACKuT over 10 years ago and a handful more than 20-25 years ago (when Age Concern Kingston was Malden and Coombe Older People's Welfare Association). The majority have some kind of degree or professional qualification.

Volunteers' Satisfaction Survey Results – Detailed Analysis

35 out of 140 or 25% of volunteers' satisfaction surveys were returned.

The majority of respondents have been volunteers with ACKuT for 1-5 years, with equal numbers (26%) having volunteered for under 1 year and 6 years or over. 6% have been volunteers for more than 10 years, with several since before Malden and Coombe Older People's Welfare Association became ACKuT.

Most respondents spend between 1 and 5 hours a week volunteering, with the peak number (31%) spending 3-4 hours.

Most respondents are involved with the Age and Youth intergenerational projects (40%), closely followed by Raleigh House Day Centre (31%).

All respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteering experience, with the vast majority (71%) being very satisfied. Almost all are satisfied or very satisfied with the ACKuT staff they work with, with the majority being very satisfied (66%), and only one person (3%) dissatisfied.

The majority of respondents stated that volunteering with ACKuT makes a considerable difference to their lives. Only 6% said that it makes little or no difference. The differences given were wide-ranging but most people gave the main one as feeling like they were making a positive contribution/difference to others (33%) and finding the experience rewarding or fulfilling (30%). Among the other differences given were: giving structure to one's life/time, learning or practising skills, finding the experience interesting, meeting new people and having contact with others, feeling part of a team/community, gaining an insight into and understanding of the lives of older people and keeping active and getting out of the house.

When asked whether they felt they needed any further training to help them carry out their volunteering work effectively, 45% said that they did not and 27% did not respond. Of the 24% that said they did feel they need further training, 6% said they would like training in IT skills. The other areas people would like more training or help in included emotional support, being given greater responsibility, greater flexibility and

update/refresher courses on training they had already undertaken such as safeguarding adults and providing meals service.

Most respondents said that they did not think changes need to be made in the way ACKuT works with volunteers. 30% of volunteers felt that changes could be made, with 12% of those suggesting having more opportunities to get together and talk with staff and other volunteers. Other suggested changes were: being made to feel more a part of the ACKuT team, more feedback/appraisals, shadowing staff, better organisation and management and personal and skills development.

With regards to monitoring information, the vast majority of respondents were female – 71% as against 29% male.

The majority of respondents fall into the over 65 age group, with 41% over 65 and 13% over 75. The next largest group of volunteers is the 50-59 year olds, with 19% of volunteers falling into this age group. 24% of respondents are under 49 years of age.

With regards to ethnic origin, 88% classify themselves as white British. In terms of disability, 65% of respondents stated that they did not have a disability or long term illness, while 71% said that there were not registered disabled. None said that they have refugee status.

In relation to employment status, over half (56%) of respondents are retired while 12% are unemployed. 18% are employed full- or part-time.

35% of respondents have a professional qualification, and almost the same number (36%) have a first or higher degree. 26% have GCSEs or O-Levels, while 9% have no formal qualifications.

There were wide-ranging responses to the question 'how did you hear about ACKuT?'. Many had heard about it through word-of-mouth from ACKuT staff or volunteers (33%), while some had heard about it from the Kingston Volunteer Centre (12%). A few referred to newspaper articles or the internet while 24% stated other sources such as other organisations, flyers, neighbours and friends or through just being aware of ACKuT in the local community.

Comments and feedback from volunteers about their experiences

The difference volunteering makes to volunteers' lives:

General comments

'Excellent opportunity to get a feeling of satisfaction from helping older people'

'I enjoy it and I feel like I'm able to make a tiny difference. It's a good way to ease back into work and with time on my hands it's a worthwhile thing to do.'

'I think it makes life better and enriches it. I have some down time at the moment so I am really glad to use my time well, while learning new skills.'

'It allows me to understand the elderly better and life also – as you realise only good deeds and how nice you are will matter in the end!'

'It gives me a chance to make contact with a number of people who are trying to add to the community and stimulates my interest in the work being done.'

'It helps to structure my retirement. It is good to have the discipline of regular commitments and most importantly it is very rewarding.'

'It keeps me active.'

'I feel like a proper grown up now with a job! I have learnt a lot of new skills which makes me feel more confident.'

'It has enabled me to meet people from other walks of life, to get to know younger people. It's good to be doing something positive for the community.'

'Volunteering with ACKuT gives me the opportunity to be a useful member of society in helping to provide aid to the elderly who are in need. It also gives a focus to my week around which I can carry out other commitments.'

'I feel I can make a contribution'

'It allows me to help out in my local community.'

'It enables me to practise my skills and gets me out of the house!'

'I think volunteering is a new challenge and I am finding it very rewarding.'

'It is good to have a commitment after retiring and a great help at times of bereavement – one has to cut off from one's own problems to help other with theirs!'

'A useful and satisfying experience.'

'I like to help other people and this role allows me to do something practical to benefit both ACKuT and the service users.'

'I have had a pleasant few months here. The staff have been great. Nelson Road has a good atmosphere – a good advertisement for how a charity can be run! I feel at home here and welcome. I like the work ACKuT does, I am impressed by the number of volunteers you have, it must be a full-time job to manage them all!'

'Thank you for giving me the opportunity to volunteer and also gain valuable work experience.'

Raleigh House volunteers

'I feel part of the ACKuT team. I lead a very busy life and could do other things with my time but I choose to volunteer at Raleigh House.'

'I am able to be part of an organisation with a real mission for older people and I enjoy the ordinary encounters and sharings with the fine people who come to Raleigh House. I find it interesting and personally rewarding.'

Intergenerational project volunteers

'I would not otherwise have contact with teachers or schoolchildren – particularly those of other cultures – and I appreciate the opportunity to attempt to be part of the moving world' – Intergenerational volunteer

'My work with children is very important to me. My volunteering has led to me becoming a school governor which I enjoy. It gives me a much more rounded view of the world.'

'Volunteering at a junior school gives me contact with younger people and children of differing ethnic backgrounds which I do not get in my everyday life. It also keeps me abreast of what my own grandchildren are doing at school. They do not live close and contact is intermittent. I also enjoy contact with the working world of teachers and the school.'

Home Buddies

'It has given me an insight into the resilience and dignity and courage that it takes to live away from family in residential care – also visiting really helps many' – Home Buddy

'I have not been volunteering for long but I am delighted to be part of such a worthwhile project'