

Loaves N Fishes
Independent Project Evaluation Report
May 2019

What next...?
Money Saved. Quality Assured.



Loaves N Fishes



Independent Evaluation

May 2019

Commissioned by

Loaves N Fishes

Funded by

The Big Lottery

Delivered by

Wider Impact Consultancy

widerimpact



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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy has been commissioned by Loaves n Fishes to carry out an independent evaluation of the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund funded **Loaves n Fishes Project (The Project)**.

1.2 Project Outcomes

Project outcomes agreed with the funder, the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund are:

1. Families and individuals will report an improved quality of life through the provision of household necessities, supporting and promoting self-sufficiency, safety and stability, leading to a greater capacity.
2. Volunteers will demonstrate improved social skills, confidence and motivation through their involvement in the supported volunteering programme, moving them closer to the labour market.
3. Loaves n Fishes will have greater skills and capacity to meet increasing local need, both in its Furniture Project and the Volunteer Support / Training Programme.

1.3 Our Approach to the Commission

A methodical approach has been adopted, which has included:

- **Desk / Quantitative research** – to gain an understanding of internal data and information that relates to the Project's performance and future, such as the achievement of outcomes and related performance indicators
- **Field / Qualitative research** – which has been intensive, and has included one to one meetings, interviews with the CEO, partner agency members, Project staff and other key stakeholders. Opportunities have also been taken to utilise bespoke questionnaires aimed at service users, Project volunteers, partner agency members and in-depth case studies

1.4 Findings

Based on quantitative and qualitative research findings there can be no doubts that, overall the Project has been a success in terms of outcomes and performance indicators agreed with the Big Lottery.

Funding provided by the Big Lottery has been extremely well-spent and has certainly made positive social and economic differences to hundreds of vulnerable local people.

As a direct of Big Lottery funding, the hard work and commitment of all those concerned and the organisation's innovative move to new premises, Loaves n Fishes is clearly establishing itself as a respected and highly valued multi-agency lead partner in its areas of operation, which is worthy of continued funding and support from external organisations.

1.5 Social Returns on Investments (SROI)

Whilst such research has not been a part of this brief, previous research carried out by Wider Impact Consultancy has estimated an annual social care cost of **£57,799.00** with regard to one family similar to a case study highlighted in this report.

Taking this further, linked to the current Project having already supported **155** similar families with multiple and complex needs, it could be reasonable to estimate SROI savings of **£8.9m** delivered by this Project as a result of Big Lottery funding.

1.6 Recommendations

Based on research findings, the following recommendations are tendered:

1. Those involved with the delivery of such a successful the Big Lottery funded Project should be congratulated for their hard work, expertise and commitment.
2. A key priority must be the ongoing development of the *Provision House* building, which has the potential to enable financial independence for the organisation and positively influence the front-line delivery of much needed multi-agency support systems in its areas of operation.
3. The CEO should continue to work strategically with the Local Authority and partner agency members, with aims that include enhance 'joined up' multi-agency working and consortia based initiatives.

4. Building on the successful achievement of around 80% financial independence, an aim should be as close to 100% financial independence with 3 years.
5. The organisation should continue to enhance and develop the levels and quality of 'wrap around' support offered and provided to vulnerable community members.
6. The organisation should likewise continue to enhance and develop the levels and quality of support offered and provided to those attending volunteer placements / work experience; with clear and measurable outcomes that include employment, training and entry into further education.
7. Approaches should be made to the Big Lottery and other key funders to support recommendations **2, 5 & 6**.
8. Linked to the successful delivery of the Project opportunity should be taken to host a high [media] profile multi-agency celebration event at the end of the Project, when opportunity can be taken to celebrate successes, enhance local partnership working, 'showcase' the Provision House building and thank all those who have played their parts in making the Project such a success.

1.7 Conclusion

It is always a pleasure to deliver such a positive report, which hopefully does credit to all those involved in the development and delivery of this Project. Opportunity is taken to thank the CEO, partner agency members, Project staff, service users, volunteers and all those involved in the delivery of this report for their valuable time.

2.0 Terms of Reference

2.1 Introduction

The key aims of this independent evaluation of this Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund funded Project are to:

1. Report on the likelihood of the below outcomes and Project performance indicators outlined at **Section 4.4** being achieved.
2. As appropriate, make recommendations that may impact the long-term and sustainable future of the organisation.

2.2 Project Outcomes

Table 1 highlights outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund.

Table 1 Outcomes

Outcome	Description
1	Families and individuals will report an improved quality of life through the provision of household necessities, supporting and promoting self-sufficiency, safety and stability, leading to a greater capacity
2	Volunteers will demonstrate improved social skills, confidence and motivation through their involvement in the supported volunteering programme, moving them closer to the labour market
3	Loaves N Fishes will have greater skills and capacity to meet increasing local need, both in its Furniture Project and the Volunteer Support / Training Programme

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Opportunity has been taken to utilise a number of research techniques to carry out this evaluation of the Project, which includes quantitative (desk) and qualitative (field) research.

3.2 Quantitative (Desk) Research

Opportunity has been taken to access, analyse and take due note of reports and documents, which have included:

- The original Big Lottery Fund application form
- Big Lottery Fund Project funding offer letter
- Project data, information and available internal evaluation kindly provided by Project staff

3.3 Qualitative (Field) Research

Field research has been detailed and varied and has included:

- One to one meetings / interviews with:
 - The CEO
 - Project staff
 - Service Users
 - Volunteers
 - Partner agency members
- 4 case studies – 2 Service Users / 2 Volunteers
- Bespoke questionnaire aimed at service users (see [Appendix D](#))
- Bespoke questionnaire aimed at volunteers (see [Appendix E](#))
- Bespoke questionnaire aimed at partner agency members ([Appendix F](#))
- Observational studies / site visits

3.4 Questionnaires

As highlighted above, Wider Impact has designed three bespoke questionnaires, which were distributed to as many services users and volunteers as feasible by Project staff for individual completion.

Completed questionnaires were handed directly to Wider Impact for independent analysis and presentation of findings.

Partner agency questionnaires were distributed, collated and independently analysed by Wider Impact.

4.0 About the Project

4.1 Introduction

Originally based in Blackheath, West Midlands, **Loaves N Fishes** started some 12 years ago, supporting women and children in a refuge, who were in housing crisis and often found themselves being re-housed having no household items. The organisation, now based in Dudley, has now grown into a recognised organisation, offering unique services to those most in most need.

Service users include those leaving hostels, fleeing domestic violence and others in housing crisis through the provision of re-cycled furniture, household items and clothing, helping them build a home for themselves, whilst also delivering informal skills and employability training through supported volunteering opportunities at the organisation's warehouse, furniture recycling centre or charity shop.

The majority of those supported often have nothing themselves to make a home as well as no way of getting the finances needed, often having had everything cruelly taken from them (e.g. having had a house fire being and being unable to afford insurance), or being in circumstances where they are being housed or re-housed at short notice, often with no recourse to public funds.

4.2 Purpose of the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Funding

The following is an extract from the organisation's funding application to the Big Lottery Fund:

We need to extend the reach of our work and serve a much wider area. Because we do not sell anything to people in need we are in high demand from services across Sandwell, Dudley, some parts of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Kidderminster. With an increase in the number of sanctions, a reduction in welfare benefits and a greater pull on our services we need to:

- Employ a Volunteer co-ordinator (full time) to manage and support all of our volunteers, offering and identifying appropriate training, peer mentor training and supporting the individual development needs of the volunteers. The co-ordinator will also identify, develop or deliver workshops to encourage the positive progression of volunteers to further training, education or employment outcomes.

A key role of this post will be to work with partners and other stakeholders to ensure appropriate support packages are in place to support learning, participation and positive progression routes. This post would directly manage the existing (and new) shop.

- Employ a Warehouse Manager to work with the Volunteer Co-ordinator to co-develop and deliver a range of needs led training opportunities and programmes. This post would also be responsible for managing the furniture warehouse including all goods in & out, resourcing stock as well as delivering stock to the charity shop(s). The post would be responsible for (or management of) loading, unloading, preparing, cleaning, and operating a vehicle for delivery duties, supervising & supporting volunteers. The Manager would support volunteers (driver mates) involved in the preparation and making of deliveries as well as volunteers working in the warehouse alongside the Volunteer Co-ordinator. This post would directly manage the re-cycling (up-cycling) workshop to ensure people have the right skills, (in co-ordination with the Volunteer Co-ordinator) to ensure stock is available to go to the shops and to ensure that deliveries of (free) furniture are delivered in a timely and safe fashion.
- Deliver a range of supported volunteering opportunities where people (normally ex-service users) can gain a range of new skills whilst improving confidence that will support them closer to or into the labour market or another positive outcome, be that further training or education. We will identify long term goals and develop an individualised learning plan (using partners or external training bodies where appropriate) to support the skills and personal development goals of the volunteer.
- Become at least **80%** self sufficient without the need of major funding in the long term allowing us to pay the charities costs, mainly wages whilst delivering free furniture etc to the most in need. We will build up our marketing strategy and social media presence which we believe will be the main source of bringing in funds and resources for the future along with increasing the marketing for our shop(s) to build a greater client base and developing an 'on-line' market to further extend sales (and training opportunities for volunteers).
- Set up a new shop and re-cycling (re-purposing) / workshop, this will not only give us a greater range of 'real world' training opportunities, but will also allow us to increase the range of stock and associated income to support the work of the organisation. The new workshop will enable us to cut down on landfill recognising that some donated items are in too bad a condition to give out but can be 'upcycled'. This helps volunteers learn a range of new skills and produces an income when the items are sold. The new shop will extend the range of training opportunities and placements available whilst also delivering an additional income stream to support long term sustainability.

- Deliver our core mission of providing furniture (and all other household goods) free at the point of need to the most needy and vulnerable residents of Sandwell, Dudley and increasingly the wider sub Black Country area. Supporting people to set up home, such as those fleeing domestic violence, those without recourse to public funds, those fleeing conflict from overseas. Our volunteer base deliver this element of our work, and this is primary objective of the organisation, around which all other activities support in the delivery of.

4.3 Outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund

Table 1 highlights outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund.

Table 1 Outcomes

Outcome	Description
1	Families and individuals will report an improved quality of life through the provision of household necessities, supporting and promoting self-sufficiency, safety and stability, leading to a greater capacity.
2	Volunteers will demonstrate improved social skills, confidence and motivation through their involvement in the supported volunteering programme, moving them closer to the labour market.
3	Loaves N Fishes will have greater skills and capacity to meet increasing local need, both in its Furniture Project and the Volunteer Support / Training Programme.

4.4 Project Indicators

Table 2 highlights project indicators (of success) agreed with the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund.

Table 1 Project Indicators

Outcome	Indicators	Level	Timescales
1	The number of individuals or families who have received support who are now reporting feeling 'safe and secure in their own homes, in particular those feeling domestic violence	30 Individuals 40 Families	Each year
	The number of individuals or families who can demonstrate and detail their own abilities to meet theirs and their family's needs independently with minimal or no additional support	20 Individual 30 Families	Each year

	The number of individuals or families who report being in better personal circumstances with overall improvement to their quality of life	70 Individuals 100 Families	End of Project
2	The number of volunteers having completed and agreed a Learning Plan prior to undertaking volunteering	30 40 50	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3
	The number of volunteers who report and demonstrate new or enhanced skills relevant to the workplace	90	End of Project
	The number of volunteers reporting that their levels of self-confidence to enquire about, then apply for jobs and / or training has improved	80	End of Project
	The number of former volunteers reporting who have moved from volunteering to other positive outcomes such as employment, further education or training	75	End of Project
	The number of former volunteers who demonstrate or report attaining economic stability within 12 months of completing a volunteering placement	60	End of Project
	The number of former volunteers who can demonstrate being able to search for employment with a liveable (and / or sustainable) wage	110	End of Project
3	The number of (new) appropriate training places in place and being followed	40 training places followed	Year 1
	The number of new training places available and the number of volunteers reporting they are more confident about future life choices	30 opportunities filled 40 opportunities filled 50 opportunities filled	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3
	The number of people using the service and taking part in training in confidence and skills as a result of support received	130	End of Project
	The Project will demonstrate it's able to be generating some 80% of required income through its own trading activities	60% increase in trading activity	End of Project
	The Project will be able to report an increase in confidence and ability to address and meet the needs of those requiring support when referred	Survey of stakeholders / service users reports and 95% satisfaction rate with support received	End of Project

5.0 Findings

5.1 Introduction

The following is a summary of quantitative (desk) research findings, which have been summarised up to the **31 April 2019**.

5.2 CEO Report

Since its inception in 2004, Loaves n Fishes has enjoyed rapid growth and considerable success whilst weathering some significant storms along the way. It has emerged from these challenges in a much stronger position and is now ready for its largest and most ambitious project to date.

I was appointed in October 2017, a short time after the unexpected departure of the previous CEO. This was a time of considerable challenge for the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and myself as we grappled with issues surrounding a root and branch review of governance, policy and structure.

Over the next 9 months we were able to make significant improvements and efficiencies in staffing and procedures. Indeed these efficiencies were one of the factors in us winning a high value contract from a local authority in August 2018, beating eight other organisations in the process. This four year contract was a huge step towards our goal of becoming a self-sufficient organisation.

The end of 2018 heralded the start of a new chapter in the story of Loaves n Fishes as we signed the lease on a new building. Our four premises in Blackheath were no longer fit for purpose in terms of size, usability or expansion, and the search for a new home had led us to the most amazing and iconic local building imaginable.

The four story, 80 year old art deco style former Co-op Emporium in Dudley was available, and at a rental cost that was significantly less than our old properties (another step towards self-sufficiency). The owners were extremely pleased to be able to offer their building to a charity and so negotiations were concluded quickly with a 12 month rent free period included.

*This change of location has been an unqualified success. We opened '**Provision House**' on 1st February 2019 after a month long moving and renovation period throughout January; and we immediately saw a 2-3 fold increase in shop takings and a doubling of enquiries to the charity for support. With the local authority contract, the increase in shop takings and the reduced rental we were well on the way to self-sufficiency.*

Provision House has also provided us with the next stage of our expansion plans. We are currently using approximately half of the building and our ambition is to refurbish the upper two floors to create office space for charities and other similar organisations, community spaces, rooms for hire, a kitchen for cookery courses and a coffee shop to train those who cannot find work.

In addition, we are looking to transform our foodbank into a Social Supermarket. (Provision Food). We are working in partnership with other local foodbanks to make this happen by the autumn of 2019.

We currently have a list of organisations who wish to have space in our building, from charities to churches to the local council and college.

The rental income from the new spaces along with shop income, local authority trading income and reduced running costs will result in a self-sufficient charity, a hub of help for the local and wider community.

In summary it is certainly an exciting and challenging goal but I firmly believe that Loaves n Fishes now has the solid foundations of governance, fiscal controls, vision and local backing to be able to deliver this unique project for our community.

5.3 Project Indicators

Table 3 provides a summary of project indicators achieved to date.

Table 3 Current Achievement of Project Indicators

Outcome	Indicators	Level	Timescales	Totals Achieved 31 April 2019
1	The number of individuals or families who have received support who are now reporting feeling 'safe and secure in their own homes, in particular those feeling domestic violence'	30 Individuals 40 Families	Each year	291 156
	The number of individuals or families who can demonstrate and detail their own abilities to meet theirs and their family's needs independently with minimal or no additional support	20 Individual 30 Families	Each year	289 155
	The number of individuals or families who report being in better personal circumstances with overall improvement to their quality of life	70 Individuals 100 Families	End of Project	274 147
2	The number of volunteers having completed and agreed a Learning Plan prior to undertaking volunteering	30 40 50	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3	123
	The number of volunteers who report and demonstrate new or enhanced skills relevant to the workplace	90	End of Project	100
	The number of volunteers reporting that their levels of self-confidence to enquire about, then apply for jobs and / or training has improved	80	End of Project	109

	The number of former volunteers reporting who have moved from volunteering to other positive outcomes such as employment, further education or training	75	End of Project	28 (See notes)
	The number of former volunteers who demonstrate or report attaining economic stability within 12 months of completing a volunteering placement	60	End of Project	91
	The number of former volunteers who can demonstrate being able to search for employment with a liveable (and / or sustainable) wage	110	End of Project	105
3	The number of (new) appropriate training places in place and being followed	40 training places followed	Year 1	453
	The number of new training places available and the number of volunteers reporting they are more confident about future life choices	30 opportunities filled 40 opportunities filled 50 opportunities filled	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3	218
	The number of people using the service and taking part in training in confidence and skills as a result of support received	130	End of Project	125
	The Project will demonstrate it's able to be generating some 80% of required income through its own trading activities	60% increase in trading activity	End of Project	See Section 5.4
	The Project will be able to report an increase in confidence and ability to address and meet the needs of those requiring support when referred	Survey of stakeholders / service users reports and 95% satisfaction rate with support received	End of Project	See notes

Source: Loaves N Fishes, 31 April 2019

Notes (CEO, Loaves n Fishes)

1. Although a highly ambitious target, we have made significant steps toward it despite a local reduction of jobs and training places available. The figure would have been higher were it not for the new GDPR rules which came into force May 2018. This meant that a number of potential respondents were not willing or simply misunderstood the permissions needed for us to remain in contact with them. The last data was collected on 30th April 2019 which is 4 months early to allow time for this report to be written. This means that the actual figure for the whole of 2019 will be higher.

5.4 Trading Activities

Table 4 highlights achieved and projected income generation / trading activities.

Table4 Income Generation (Trading Activities)

Trading Year	2017	2018	2019 (Jan-May 2019)	2020 (Projected)
% - Self-Generated Income	37% See note 1	37% See note 1	81% See note 2	79% See note 3

Source: Loaves n Fishes April 2019

Notes

1. Taken from audited accounts.
2. Increase due to new Local Authority contract and increase in shop takings due to move to Dudley town. Taken from internally kept records.
3. Fall in % due to end of rent free period 31st December 2019. This does not take into consideration future plans to refurbish the building to create rental income opportunities.
4. Projection taken from internally kept records.

6.0 Service User / Volunteer Feedback

6.1 Introduction

The following is a summary of feedback received from Project service users / volunteers utilising:

- Questionnaire analysis
- Case studies

6.2 Service User Questionnaire Feedback

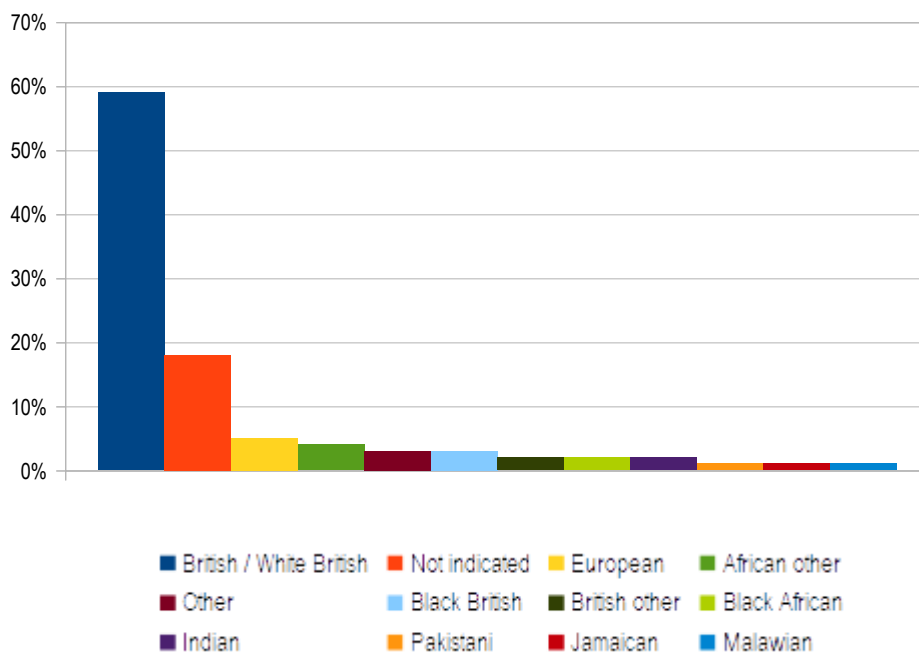
315 service user questionnaires have been received for analysis. Of these:

- 42% are from males
- 57% are from females
- 1% gender not specified

6.3 Ethnicity

Graph 1 highlights the ethnicity of respondents.

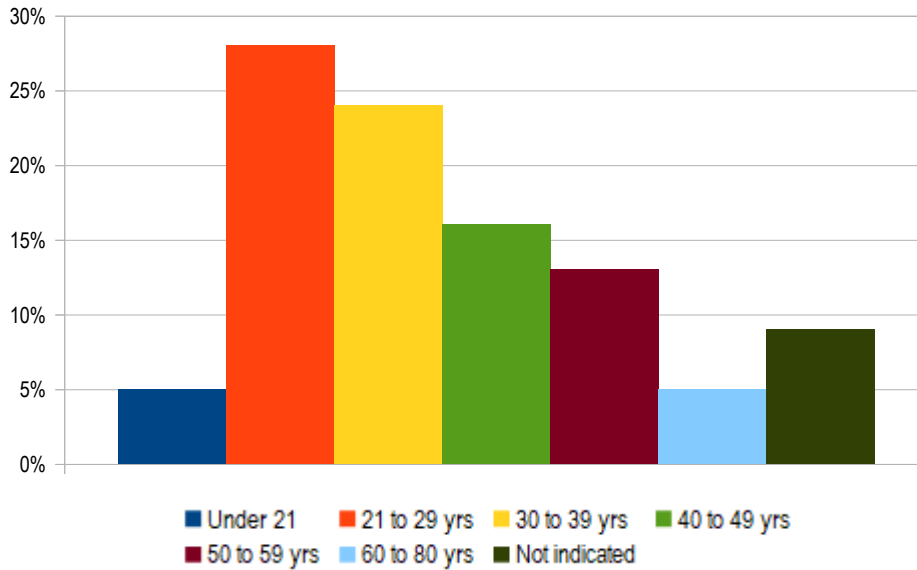
Graph 1 Respondents' ethnicity



6.4 Age of Respondents

Graph 2 highlights the age of respondents.

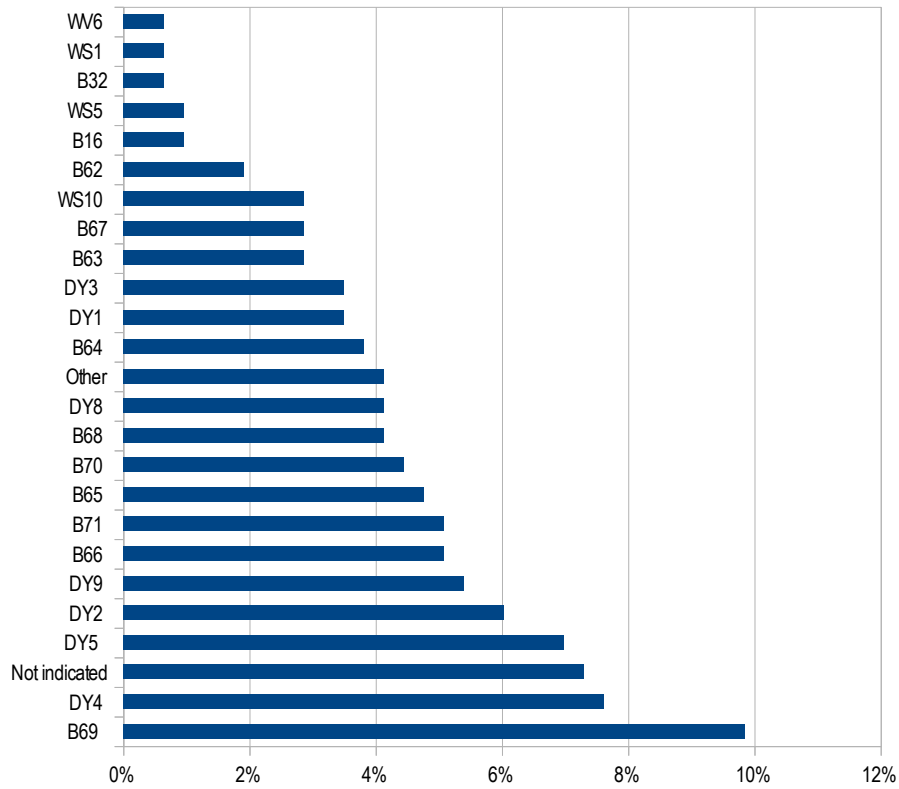
Graph 2 Respondents' ages



6.5 Postal Addresses

Graph 3 highlights the postal addresses / post codes of respondents.

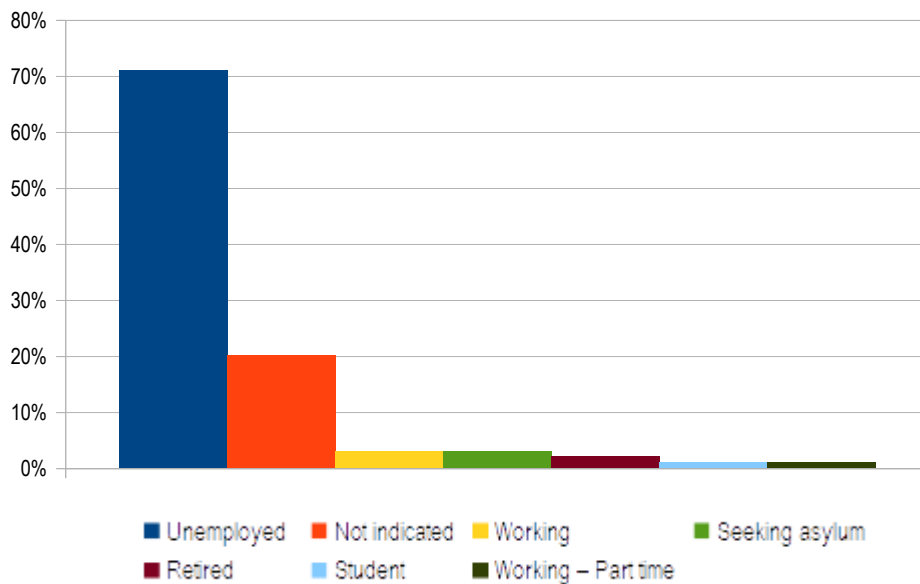
Graph 3 Respondents' postal / post code addresses



6.6 Employment

Graph 4 highlights the employment status of respondents.

Graph 4 Respondents' employment status

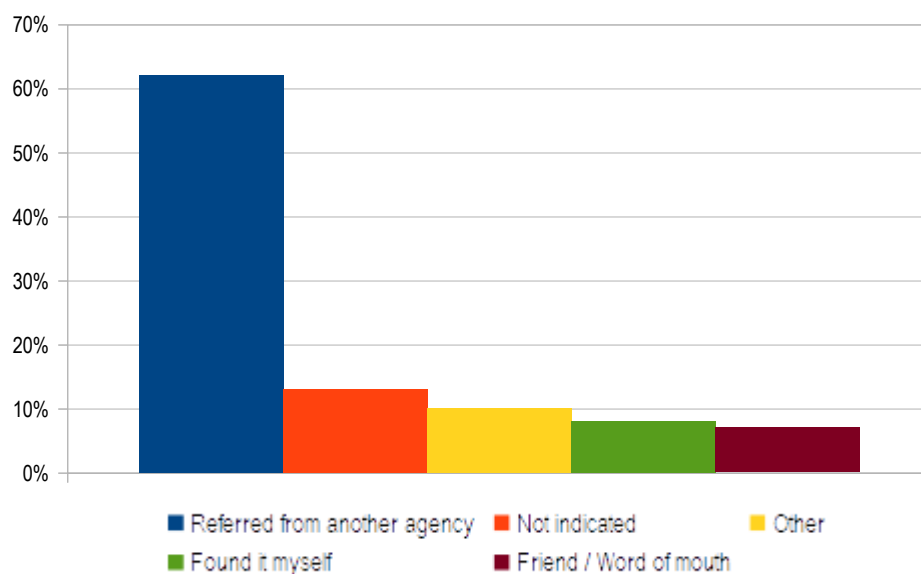


6.7 Where Respondents Heard about Loaves n Fishes

Graph 5 highlights where respondents heard about Loaves n Fishes.

Graph 5 Where respondents' heard about Loaves n Fishes

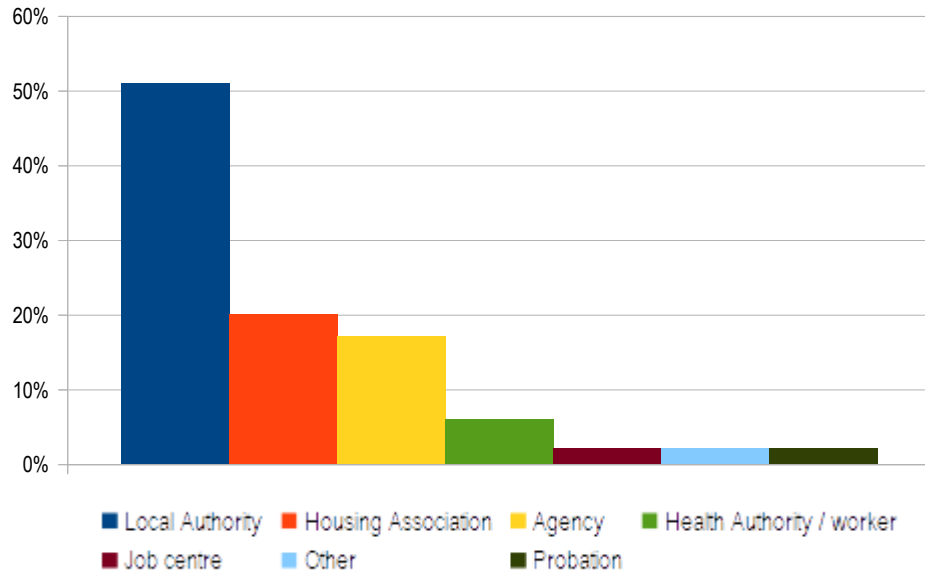
Graph * *Where did you hear about Loaves n Fishes? (Please tick all that apply)*



6.8 Sources of Referrals

Graph 6 highlights referral sources.

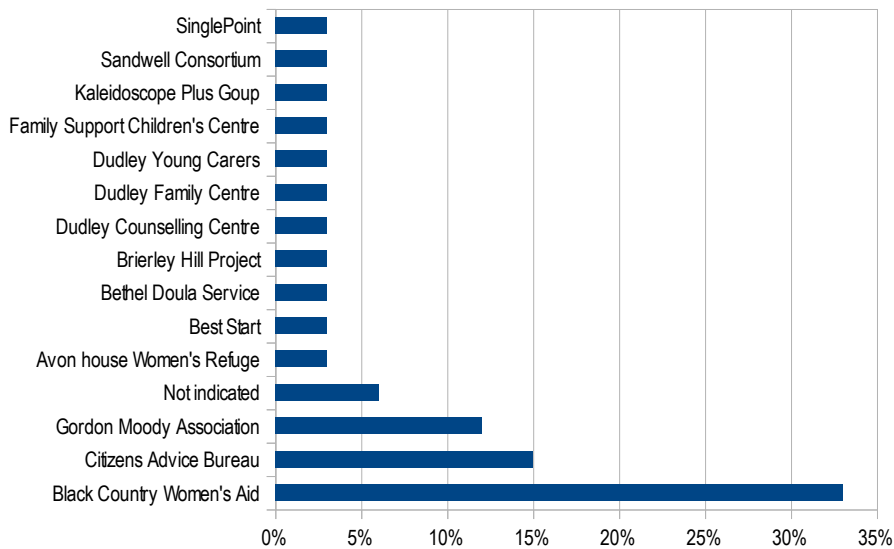
Graph 6 Referral sources



6.9 Agency Referrals

Graph 7 highlights [multi] agency referrals.

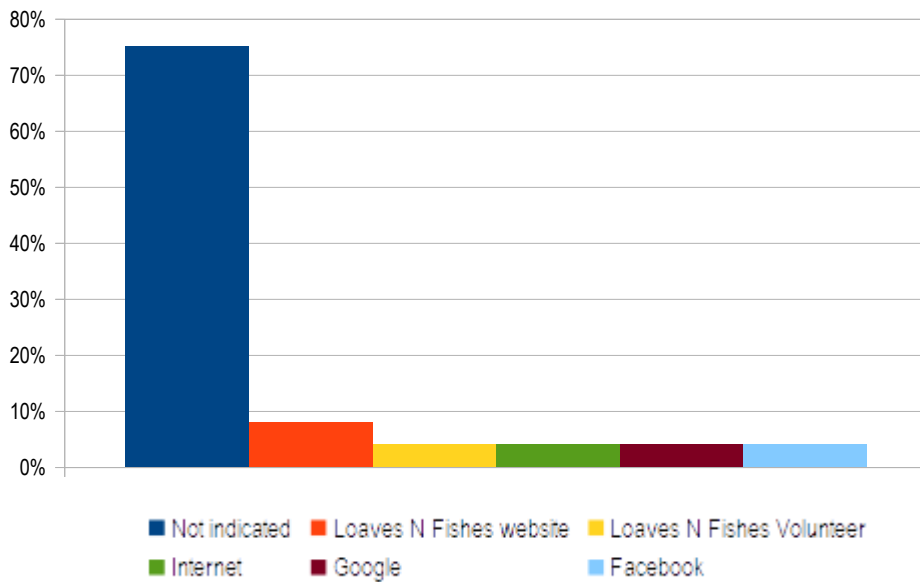
Graph 7 Multi-agency referrals



6.10 Self-referrals

Graph 8 highlights details of self-referrals.

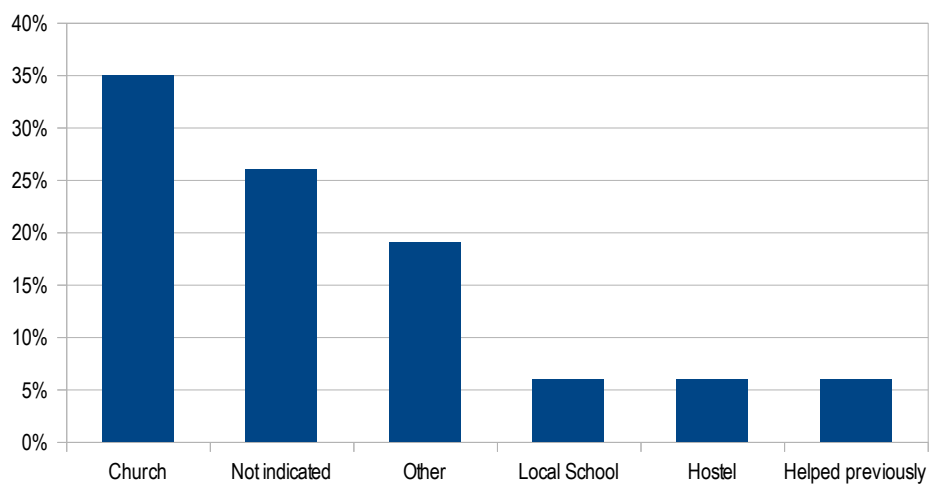
Graph 8 If you found Loaves n Fishes yourself, please state how?



6.11 Self-referrals Sources

Graph 9 highlights sources where respondents heard about Loaves n Fishes.

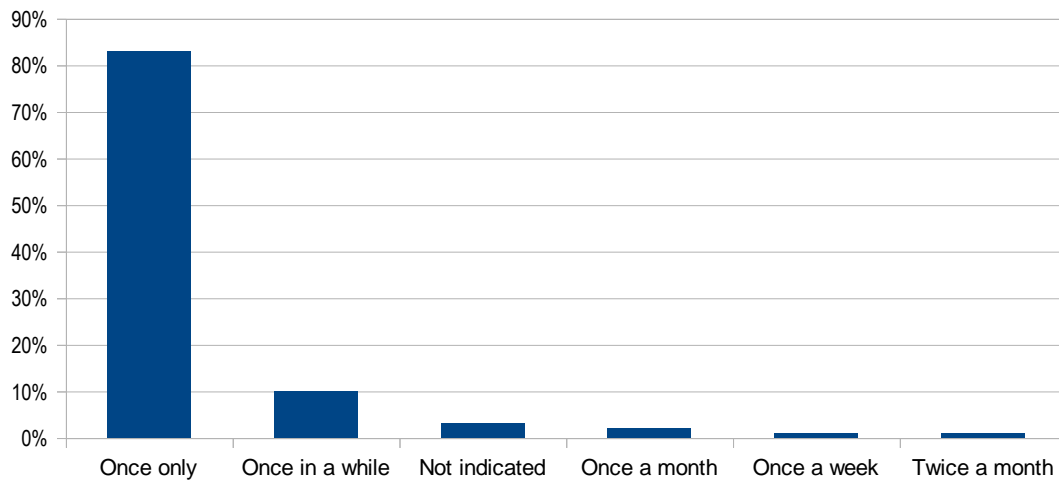
Graph 9 Information sources



6.12 Frequency of Support

Graph 10 highlights how often respondents have sought / received support from the Loaves n Fishes Project.

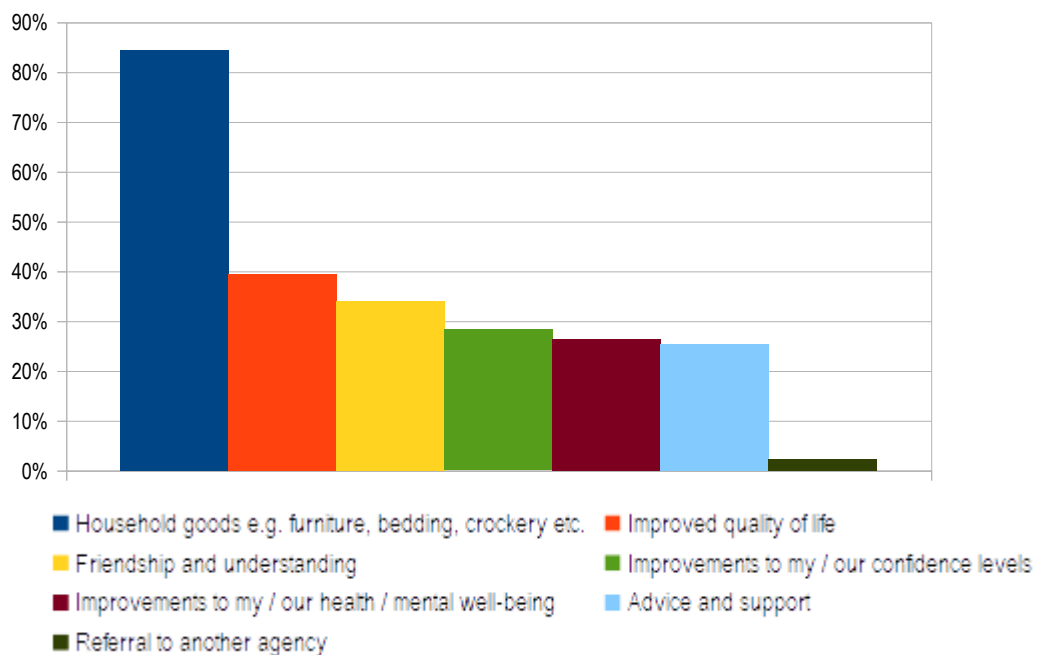
Graph 10 *How often do you seek / receive support from the Loaves n Fishes Project?*



6.13 Type of Support

Graph 11 highlights details of the support received support from the Loaves n Fishes Project.

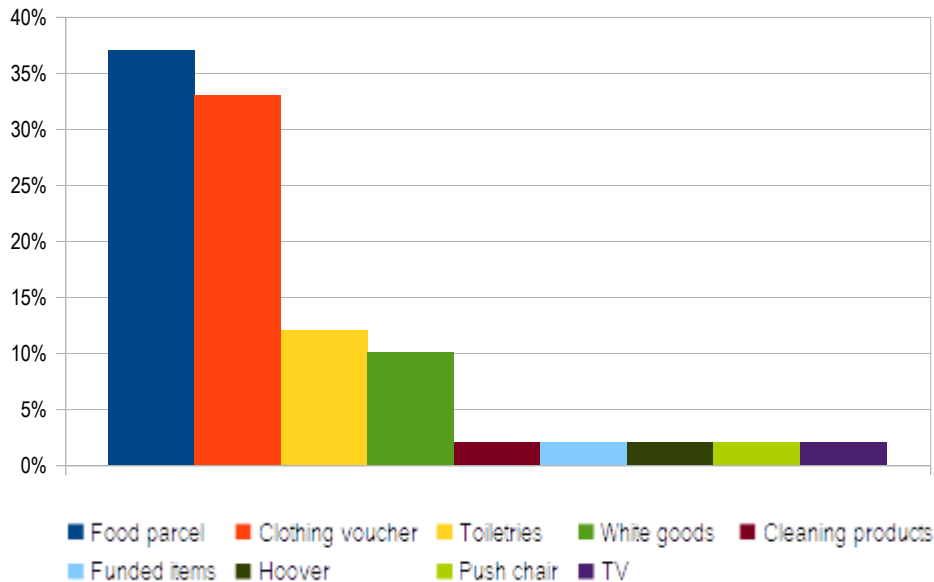
Graph 11 *What sort of support have you / your family received from the Loaves N Fishes Project? (Please tick all that apply)*



6.14 Further Support Received

Graph 12 highlights 'other support' received from 52 respondents.

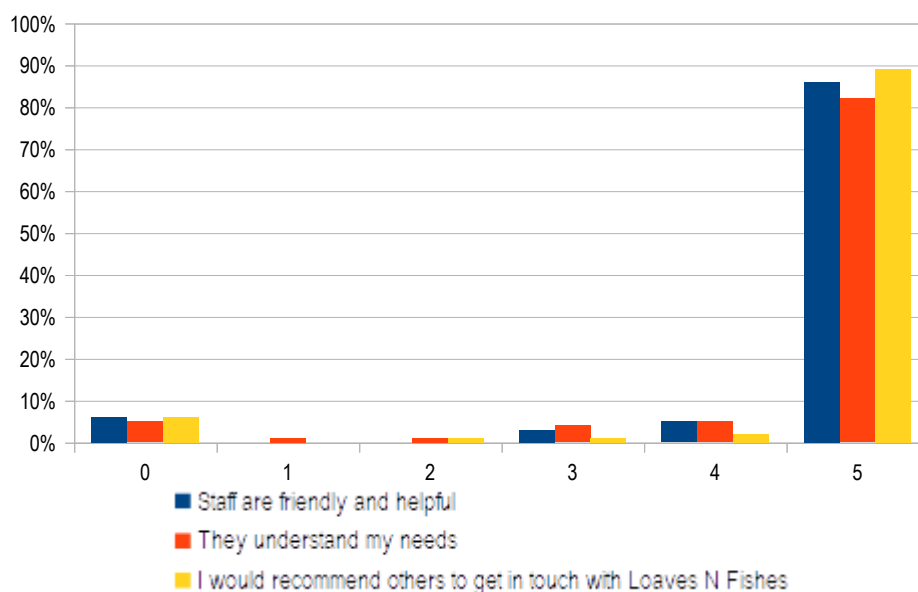
Graph 12 Other support received from the Loaves n Fishes Project



6.15 Views about the Loaves n Fishes Project

Graph 13 highlights respondent's views about the Loaves n Fishes Project.

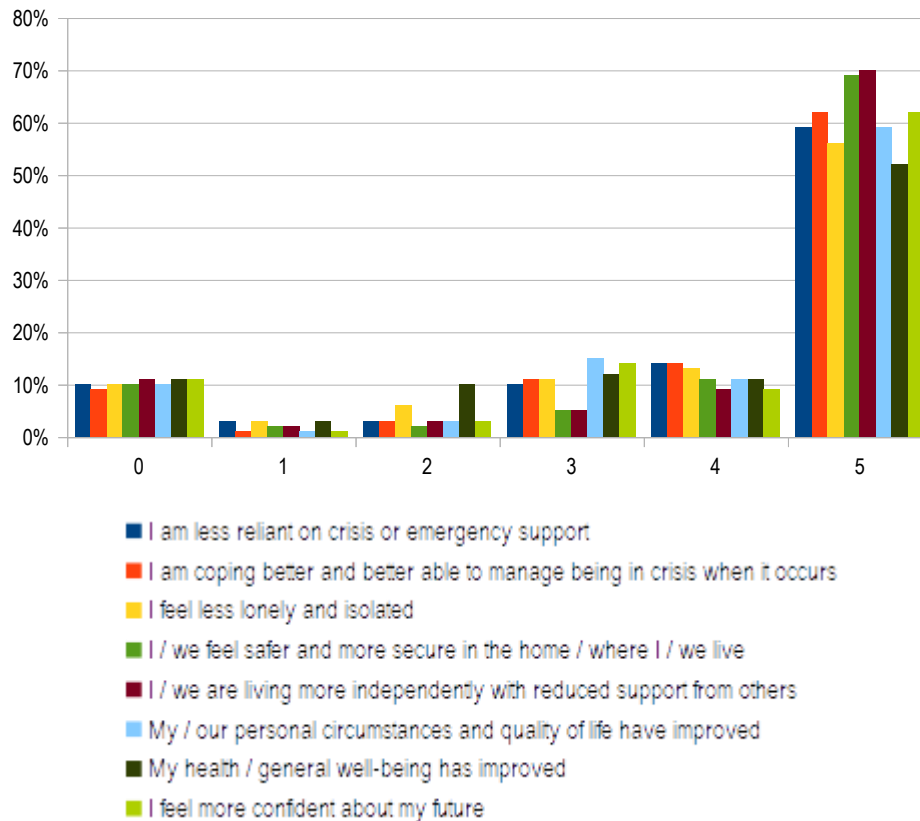
Graph 13 What do you think about the following regarding the Loaves n Fishes Project? (1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – not applicable)



6.16 Outcomes

Graph 14 highlights outcomes following support received from the Loaves n Fishes Project.

Graph 14 Outcomes achieved by the Loaves n Fishes Project



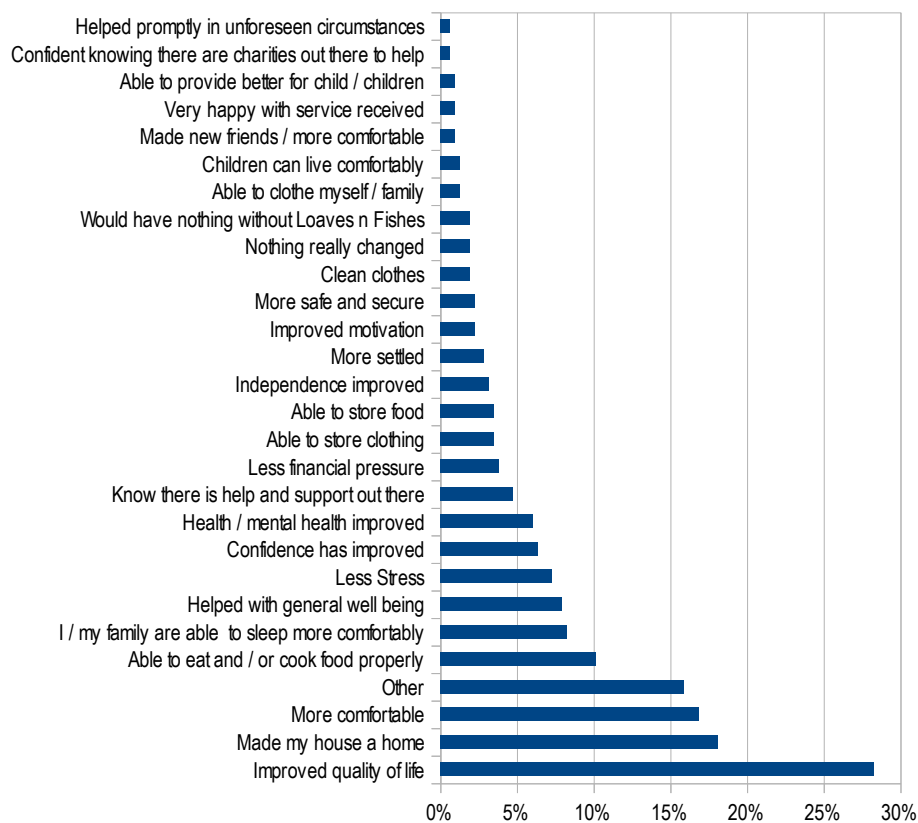
The following are examples of statements received from respondents:

- *I have heating in my bedroom now so will sleep better in a warm cosy bedroom as it is too expensive to put my central heating on*
- *I have received fresh / clean clothes which has made me feel better about myself*
- *My life is more comfortable and their help has given me more than I could have hoped for*
- *The cooker was amazing as I had nothing to cook on. So glad it was fitted for me as I don't know how to do it*
- *The person that helped me listened to me, didn't just treat me like a nobody*
- *Would have nothing without Loaves n Fishes*
- *Without their help I would have really struggled*
- *Restored my faith in human nature*

- *I was really depressed until they helped*
- *Brilliant service, they provided for my needs*
- *Didn't have anywhere to turn*
- *Everyone was overly helpful, can't thank you enough*
- *Kept me alive*

Graph 15 provides a summary of the many statements received from respondents.

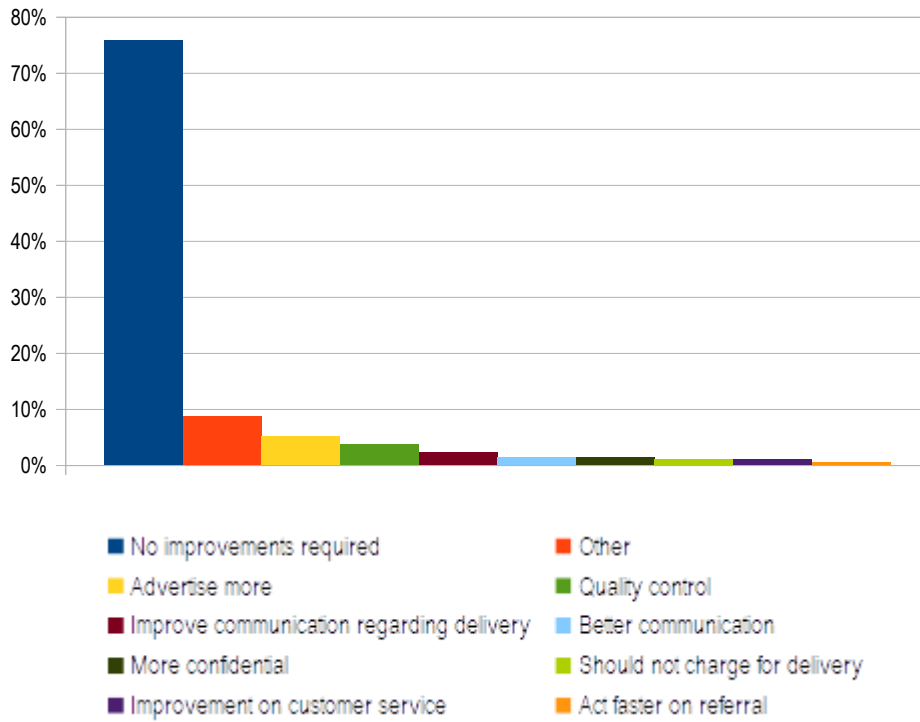
Graph 15 Summary of statements



6.17 Opportunities for Improvements

Graph 16 respondents' views about how the Loaves n Fishes Project could be improved.

Graph 16 (If appropriate) *how could the Loaves n Fishes be improved?*



6.18 Case Studies

The following are summaries of case study interviews with Loaves n Fishes clients. Names and some details have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Case study 1 Joan

Joan is 55 years old, single, local to the area and lives in a rented bed-sit. She is in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and has not worked for around 3 years. Her last job was a cleaner in an office for around 10 years. She left school without any meaningful qualifications such as GCSEs etc. She says, 'I had to leave my job for a while because I needed an operation on my foot. Around the same time lots of things went wrong in my life. My mom died suddenly and shortly after that my brother died. I suffered a breakdown and lost my job, which meant I couldn't go back to work. Money became extremely tight and as a result we were evicted from our home. Nothing was my doing – horrid things just happened to me and it seemed there was nothing I could do about it. I am a proud woman, but all the self-confidence I had before just seeped away from me. It seemed that no-one seemed to care, or were in a position to provide the care and support we needed. At that time I could never imagine that I would ever get a job again. And all I have ever wanted to do was to pay my own way and look after my children and myself.'

Around two years ago the Jobcentre sent me to Loaves n Fishes for some work experience as a volunteer. It was agreed that I would be there for 8 weeks, 3 days a week between 9am and 4.30pm; helping to sort clothes and things for other people.

They were so nice to me as soon as I arrived and it was clear they were there to help me. To be honest I just cried when I was on my own. It was so over-whelming. Someone cared about me as a human-being and genuinely wanted to help and support me. I am naturally a quiet, shy woman and at the time I had little or no self-confidence. It was a challenge for me to re-enter a workplace and interact with other people.

Looking back it was clear they understood this and treated me as a person. They were patient with me and gave me time to settle in. Lots of time was taken to understand my needs – rather than for example just checking how much I was sorting.

One of the team at Loaves n Fishes took time to assess my needs and I attended training in areas such as Health & Safety, First Aid and Job Searching. It was all carefully tailored to my needs and nothing was rushed, or forced on me. They kept encouraging me and took a real interest in me as a person, which I really appreciated and warmed to.

After a while it became clear that I lacked basic English and Maths skills, so my link worker at Loaves n Fishes liaised with my Job Coach at the Jobcentre and they arranged for me to attend a basic course at a local college. I really enjoyed that and benefited from it.

Why did working at Loaves n Fishes work for me? Looking back I was being supported by a 'team' – myself, Loaves n Fishes and the Jobcentre. With me at the centre. Most importantly they gave confidence and belief in myself. This was on top of practical skills, working as a volunteer carrying out meaningful work. They were all so friendly and understood my needs. They were, and still are all so kind and caring towards me. This is so precious to me. I was never rushed and felt safe and secure.

What is happening now? – Well I still enjoy volunteering here at Loaves n Fishes, long after I completed the 8 weeks the Jobcentre arranged. They are working with me on my CV and helping me build my confidence levels and interview skills ready for interviews. I smile lots more now and all of us at home are happier and more relaxed about life. We all feel safer and secure, knowing that I am becoming more employable and a more confident person. Whilst I am still on medication for anxiety, this is far less than what I was taking when I had a breakdown.

What are my future plans? - Number one is getting a proper job and becoming self-sufficient, with relying on benefits or medication. I would like to get out of the bed-sit and into better accommodation for my family. Just to be 'normal' and enjoy life with my children please'

Case Worker comments: *'With continued support and advice where appropriate, Joan's social, emotional and financial situation and improved noticeably. She certainly feels confident that in the near future she will reach her goal of meaningful employment'*.

Case study 2 Pete

Pete is 56 years old, single and has 6 children from a previous marriage. He currently lives alone in a 3 bedroom house locally. He did not enjoy school and left without any meaningful qualifications such as GCSEs etc.

He says, *'I was what you would call a 'bad lad' at school and quickly became involved with violence. I truanted a lot and it wasn't long before I ended up in Borstal and later prison. I have been to prison quite a lot during my life and am certainly not proud now of some of the horrible things I did in my past. I was basically an angry person and always lashed out. For example once on bus I thought someone was laughing at me and ended up really hurting one of them – even though I learned later that they weren't laughing at me.'*

The problem was I just couldn't mix with other people as I was so insecure and volatile. So attending courses arranged by the Jobcentre and others was a no-no. I would have ended up striking out and hurting someone there if someone said something out of place.

When did things change? – I remember the exact second. *It was the last time they closed a cell door on me when I went to prison the last time. I knew I was just too old for it all and couldn't take another spell in prison after that. I did my time and decided to begin to cooperate with people trying to help me.*

*I was still worried about attending training courses and the like and then **Seetec** (<https://www.seetec.co.uk/>) arranged for me to go to Loaves n Fishes a volunteer. To be honest I was dreading it as it was all out of my comfort zone.*

I couldn't have been more wrong. It was arranged that I would 'work 4 days a week, between the hours of 9am to 4pm. The first thing I remember was the welcome and how professional and genuinely friendly they all were. I was fully assessed so we understood by abilities and needs and a 'pathway' was agreed with me. I became part of the collections and delivery team and also did some warehouse work. I enjoyed the manual side of things as an outlet for my energy and enjoyed being part of a hard working team of decent people.

And then something so unexpected and life changing occurred. I thought my life was tough and difficult and I suppose I was wrapped up in myself. That all changed when I witnessed the hardship of the lives of the people we were delivering stuff to. For example it still upsets me to remember a young mother sleeping in the bath, with her children sleeping on a bedroom floor wrapped in blankets with no beds or cots to sleep on. They had nothing. And I have a 3 bedroom house with things like that taken for granted.

And this is just one reason why I so enjoy supporting Loaves n Fishes and got so much out of my volunteer placement. They and me as a volunteer can make a real difference to real peoples' lives. That is so powerful, important and humbling to me – then and now.

What did I get from my volunteer placement? – *Well positive 'work' experience of course and real and useful skills and experience. After a while I attended and passed a Forklift course, Health & Safety course, First Aid course and Fire Marshalling course. Me – attending and passing courses. I am so pleased and proud of myself!*

How have I changed? - *As a result of my time with Loaves n Fishes I have gained so much confidence and positive thoughts about myself. My general health has improved. I have lost lots of weight and whilst I am still prescribed anti-depressants, I never need to take them now. I feel so good about myself and my life. Most importantly I am more settled person now and all of those anger issues are a thing of my past.*

What is happening to me now? – Well a while ago the boss her called me in and offered me a part-time cleaning job, which included general maintenance work. 2 days a week, with a possibility of more hours in the future. I bit his hand off of course and I really enjoy what I do. It's a real job and I am so proud of myself and grateful to Loaves n Fishes and everyone else who has stuck with me and supported me! **This is my first 'real job' in 27 years.**

I am also continuing my volunteer work here at Loaves n Fishes and am acting as Team Leader, supporting the special needs youngsters who also volunteer here. They seem to look up to me and know that I know what I am talking about when I say I understand what they have been through in their lives.

On the personal front I have met someone and we will be moving into an apartment – releasing my 3 bedroom house to a family. A new and fresh start for me and her!

What do I want to say to Loaves n Fishes? – Thank you of course. Being here as a volunteer and now as an employee has changed my life for the better. I now feel safe, secure and confident about my future. **And thanks also to the Big Lottery** and others who support Loaves n Fishes. This is a great place that really changes people's lives!

Case Worker comments: 'I believe Pete is a perfect example of the benefits of giving someone a 'second chance'. Investing time in the lives of our volunteers does actually make significant and measurable differences to overall positive outcomes'.

Case study 3 Ragbir

Ragbir is 33 years old, a Sikh, single and lives with her 3 children locally in private rented accommodation. Previously a Support Worker, she hasn't worked for around 4 years. She left school aged 15 / 16 years achieving average level GCSEs.

She says, 'My last relationship broke down whilst we were all living in atrocious conditions. There were rats running about the kitchen, with other vermin about. It was always cold due to broken windows and not a nice place at all for young children to live in.

Whilst my ex helped me to find our current place, he was not involved at all in providing furniture and the like and we arrived on our own in an empty shell of a building.

Money has always been tight for me and whilst benefits cover food and rent somewhat, they don't cover furniture. I was in debt of around £6,000, so borrowing more money for furniture was out of the question. As a result we lived off floors, with nothing to sit on, eat off, sleep on, or store things like the kids' toys in. Although we did adapt empty crisp boxes from the corner shop as toy storage boxes. The nights were the worst. All of us on the floor with folded blankets to sleep on. Not cosy at all.

What changed? - Someone told me about Loaves n Fishes, so I rang them. They were great! They took some time to listen about what I needed and after a short while a big van turned up with lots of things I needed. Most significantly a big bed, a settee and a table and chairs. And some cupboards for storage. Also importantly the guys that delivered the stuff took some time to talk to me and tell me about Loaves n Fishes and what it was all about. They were in no rush and it was so refreshing to talk and communicate with such interesting people. I found myself smiling for the first time in ages.

What difference did the furniture make? - Everything! The biggest thing was the bed to sleep in with the kids. At night we could curl up and snuggle together. Talk about our days and make plans for the next ones. We could tell stories and enjoy make believe. We became a 'family' and I could sense the children relaxing and not being so anxious and worried about me and themselves. It was life changing to us, and along with the other furniture we had our lives back, with more comforts and perceptions of security than we had not enjoyed for such a long time. We all began to smile and laugh again!

What is your life like now? – We now have lots of structure to our lives. The furniture arriving was a positive catalyst for change. Instead of surviving, we are now 'living'. I have the energy and confidence to re-organise our lives and sort out things such as my debts. Because I didn't need to borrow more for furniture it didn't increase and I have now reduced it to £5,000, with every indication that it will reduce further.

What do I want to say to Loaves n Fishes? – A big **'thank you'** of course, but most importantly what they do is not just about furniture. It's about being there when people like me most need them. It's about not being judgemental, or needing to justify why I needed their support. It's about their friendliness, which was demonstrated by the delivery drivers. They will never know how important their friendly words were to me on that day.

What does the future bring? – I am looking to get back into the workplace soon. I now have a 'home', where we are safe and a good base to work and plan from. Most importantly, we are going to be a happy and confident 'family', planning our future when we snuggle up at night in our big warm bed!

Case Worker comments: 'It has been an honour to be able to help Ragbir; to hear where she has come from to where she is now is truly amazing. She still has a way to go but we will continue to support her in any way we can'.

Case study 4 John

John is 40 years of age, local to area, single and lives with his 2 young sons in privately rented accommodation. Leaving school with good GCSEs, he was previously a skilled worker, and is currently unemployed as he 'Re-groups' his life as he looks after his 2 young children.

He says, 'Unfortunately I have not have lots of luck with my relationships and some 2 years ago my last partner simply walked out on me, leaving me with babies to look after on my own. The breakup didn't go well at all and for one reason and another we (the babies and myself) were made homeless and more or less overnight faced being on the streets.

Fortunately a friend found us our current accommodation and we had a roof over our heads. The trouble was it was a shell, with no furniture at all; and I didn't have the means to pay for any of what we needed. It was of course better than a hostel, or a temporary bed and breakfast room. On the positive side we had a house, but not a 'home' to live in.

I am a practical person and after some enquiries I heard about Loaves n Fishes. I just rang them and after a short conversation and agreement to pay a [small] £35.00 donation they arrived with all the basic furniture I needed. This included beds, a settee and lots of other essentials for day to day living.

What was the immediate impact of this? – Essential! Without it we would have been living off floors, with no other organisation being there to provide this essential support. And the support was instant once I got in touch and we agreed my family's needs. No forms to fill in or 'red tape' to get in the way. At the worst, we could have been separated, with my children taken into care as I couldn't cope and support them in a safe and secure home.

What has been the wider impacts of the support provided by Loaves n Fishes? – Firstly my self-esteem, as I was able to provide for my children. I have given myself a 'pat on the back' as we continue to thrive as a family unit. Sometimes I feel as though my youngest son looks at me with more pride than other daddies have – I have provided for them during a difficult and trying time in our lives.

What will the future bring? – All good news I am sure. Plans are in place for me to go back to work by September and I will be on ever reducing benefits. We have a sound and solid base to plan our lives and we are all happy and contented.

Case Worker comments: 'It has been a very difficult time for John. It is rewarding to know that with the support we have been able to provide he has been able to move forward without the worry of finding furniture is brilliant. If support is ever needed in the future we will be more than happy to help in any way we can'.

6.19 Volunteer Feedback

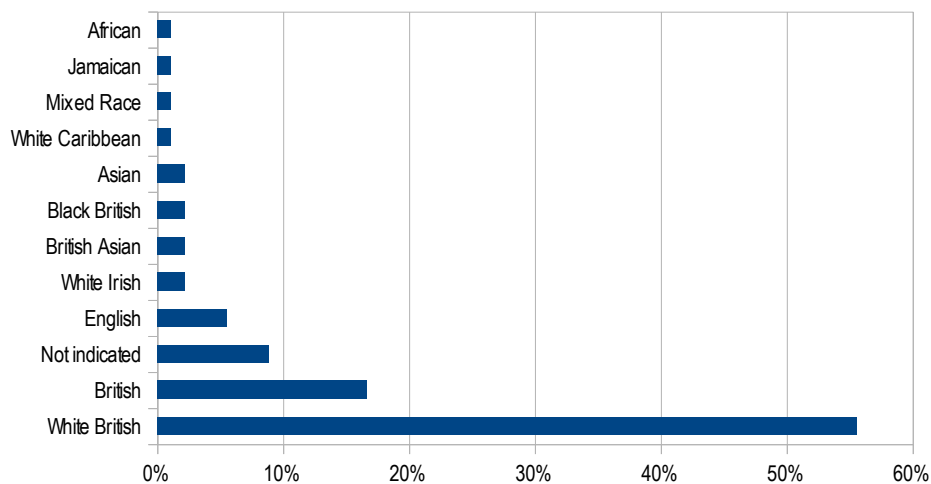
A total of **90** questionnaires have been received for analysis. Of these:

- **60%** are from males
- **38%** are from females
- **2%** - gender not specified

6.20 Ethnicity

Graph 17 highlights the ethnicity of respondents.

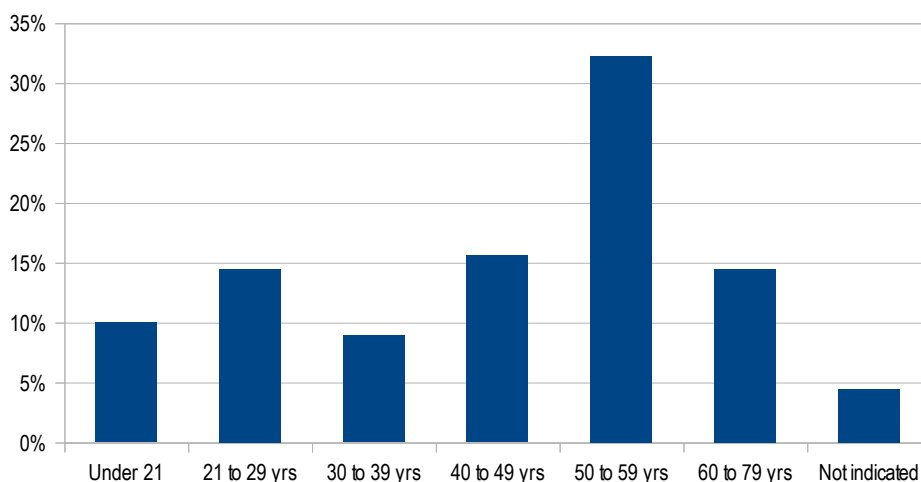
Graph 17 Respondents' ethnicity



6.21 Ages of Respondents

Graph 18 highlights the ages of respondents.

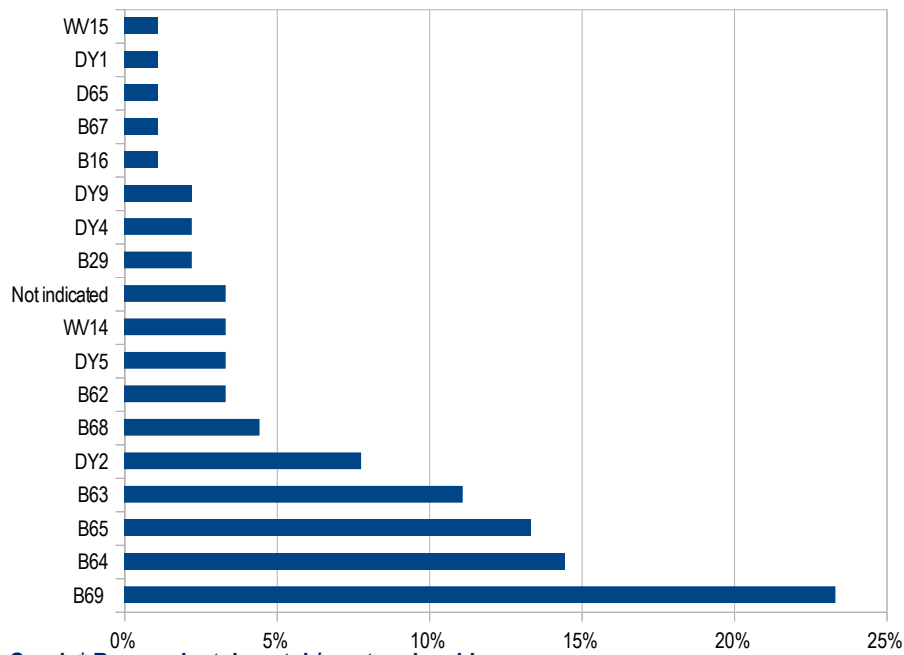
Graph 18 Respondents' ages



6.22 Postal Addresses

Graph 19 highlights the postal addresses / post codes of respondents.

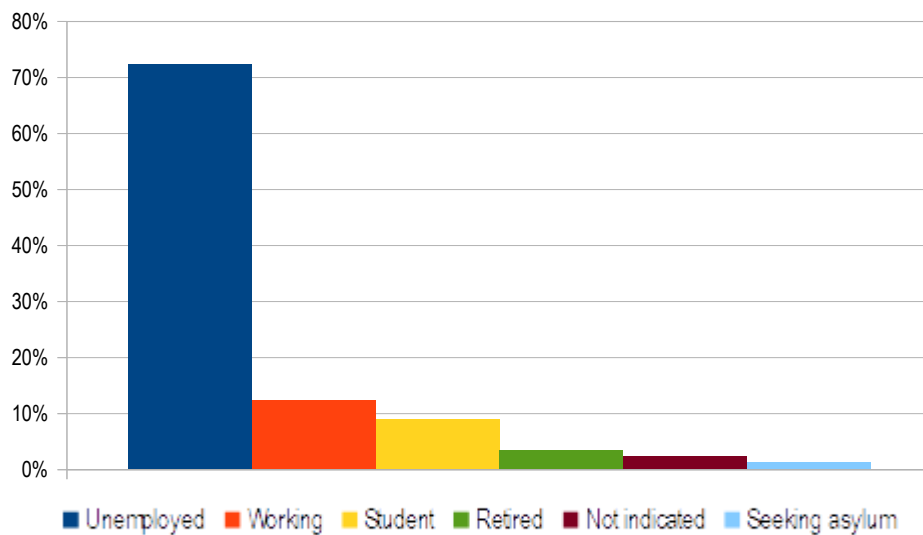
Graph 19 Respondents' postal addresses



6.23 Employment Status

Graph 20 highlights the employment status of respondents.

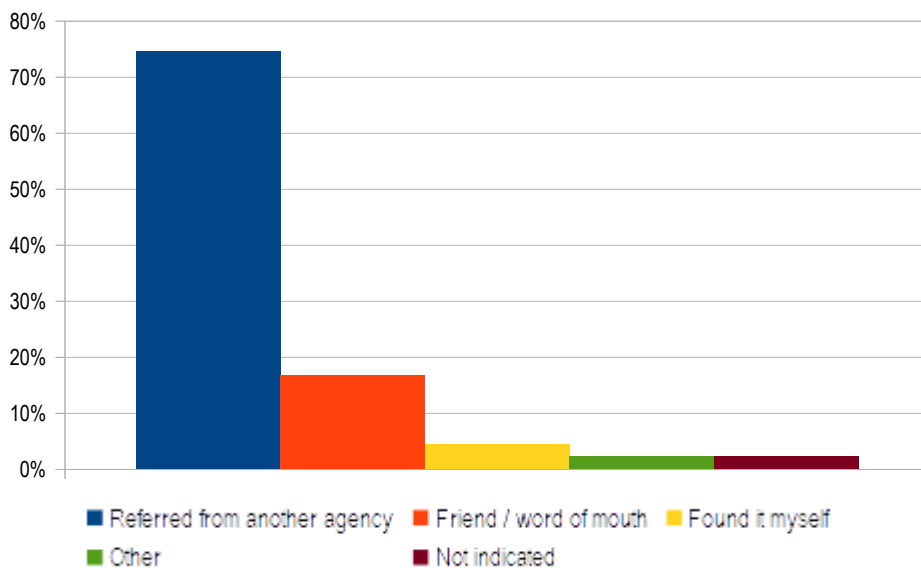
Graph 20 Respondents employment status



6.24 Where Respondents Heard about Loaves n Fishes

Graph 21 highlights where respondents heard about Loaves n Fishes.

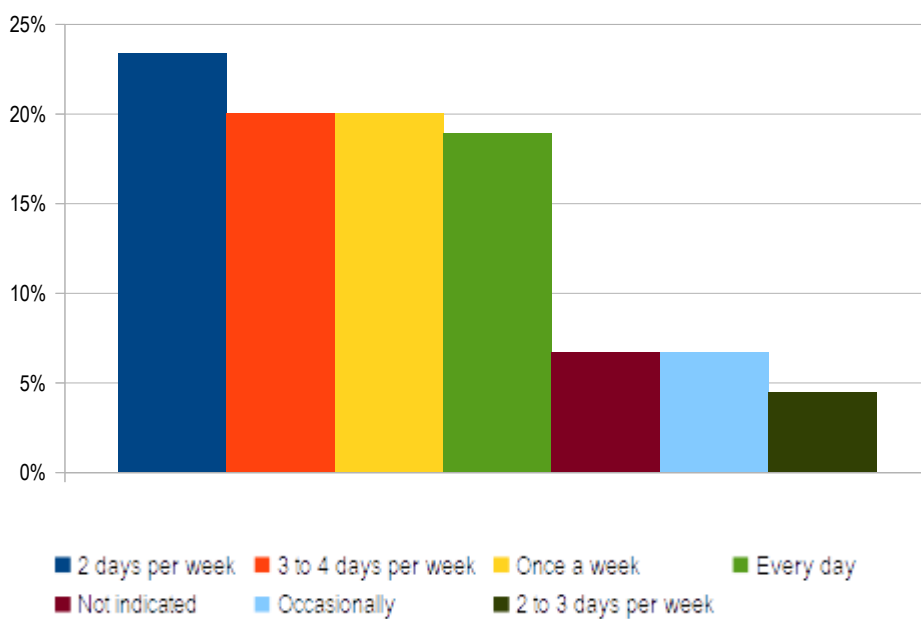
Graph 21 *Where did you hear about Loaves n Fishes? (Please tick all that apply)*



6.25 Frequency of Volunteering

Graph 25 highlights how often respondents volunteer with Loaves n Fishes.

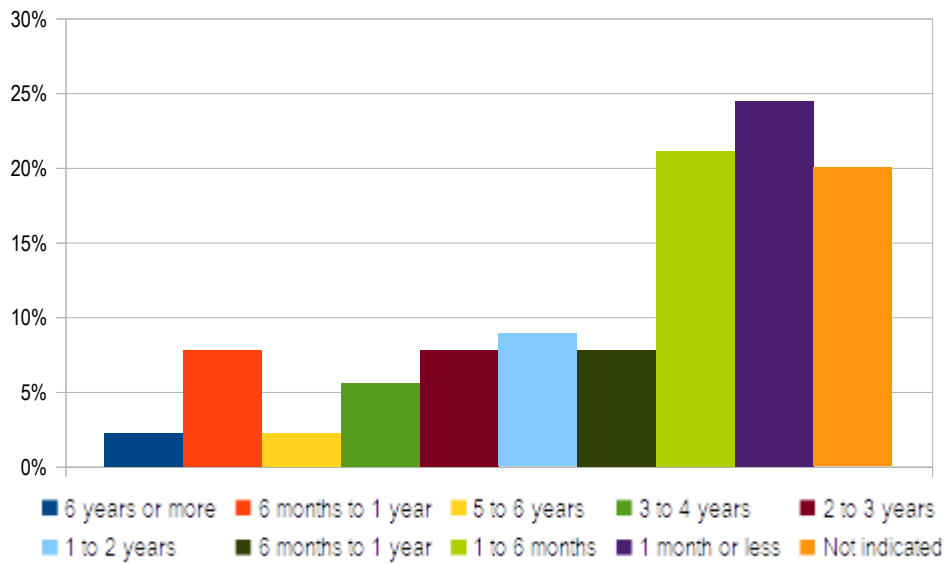
Graph 25 *On average, how often do you volunteer with Loaves n Fishes?*



6.26 Length of Service

Graph 26 highlights how long respondents have been volunteers at Loaves n Fishes.

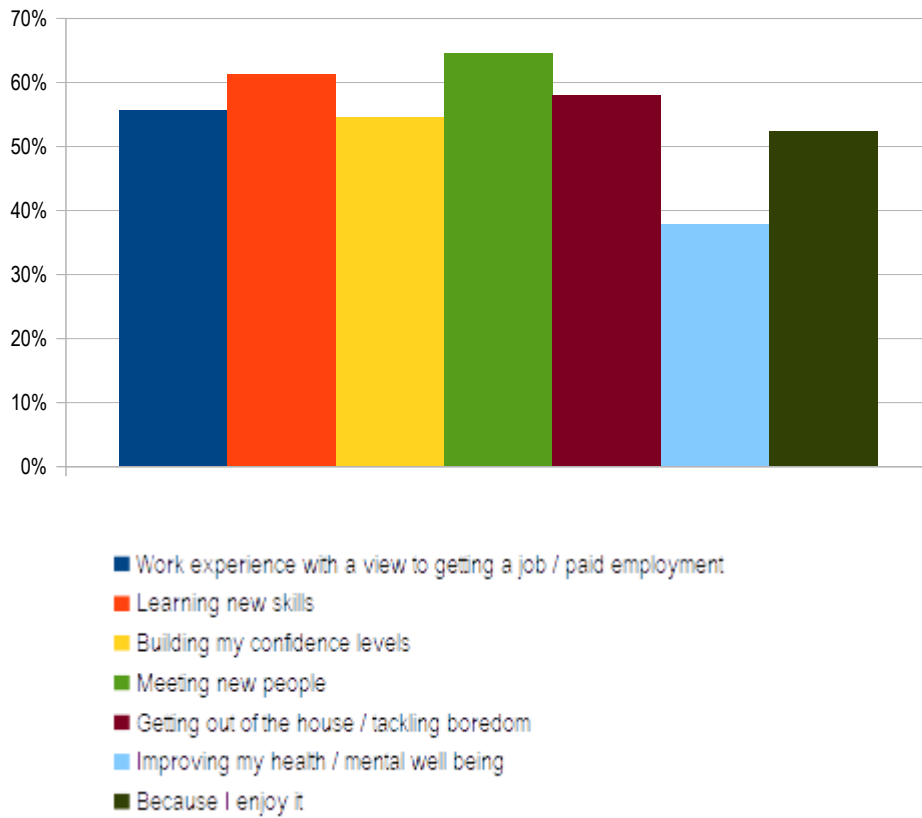
Graph 26 How long have you been a volunteer at Loaves n Fishes?



6.27 Reasons for Volunteering

Graph 27 highlights why respondents carry out voluntary work.

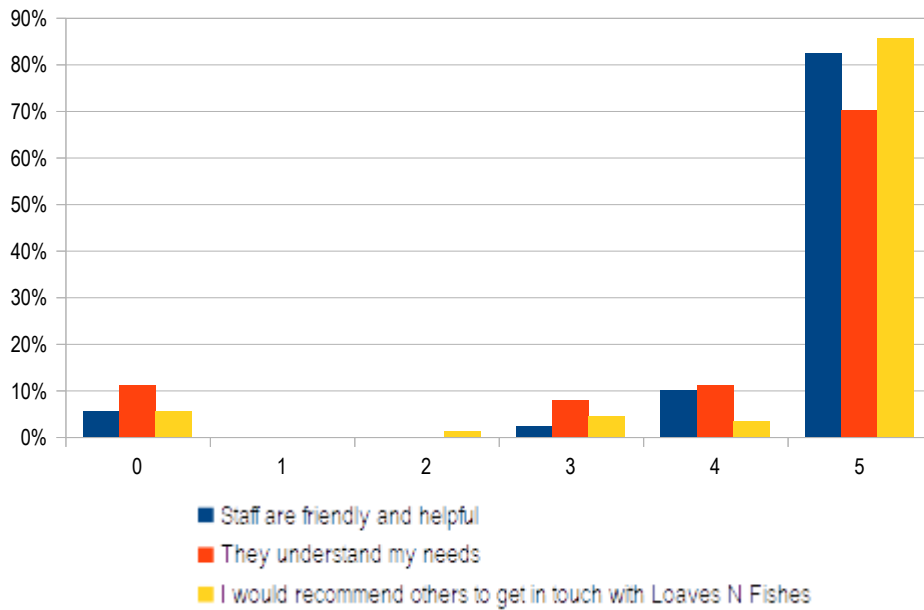
Graph 27 *Why do you volunteer at Loaves n Fishes?*



6.28 Views about the Project

Graph 28 highlights respondents' views about the Project / Loaves n Fishes.

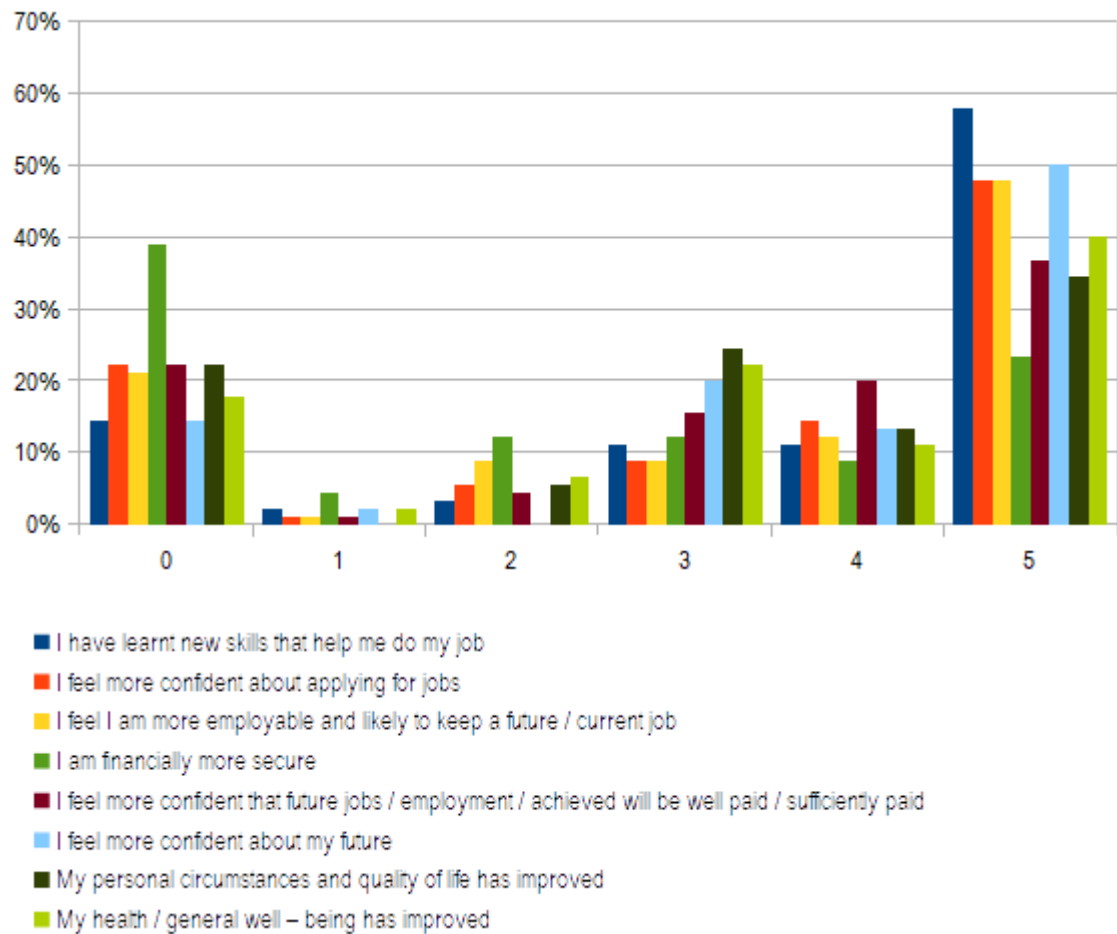
Graph 28 What do you think about the following regarding Loaves n Fishes?



6.29 Outcomes

Graph 29 highlights reported outcomes achieved as a result of volunteering at Loaves n Fishes.

Graph 29 Outcomes as a result of volunteering at Loaves n Fishes



6.30 Wider Impacts

The following are examples of how respondents' lives have changed as a result of support received from the Project / Loaves n Fishes:

- *Improved my confidence (x24)*
- *Receiving training and learning new skills (x24)*
- *Meeting new people and making friends (x19)*
- *Helped with C.V and references (x18)*
- *Getting out of the house and meeting new people (x13)*

- *Gained valuable work experience in a new area of work (x6)*
- *Gained employment (x6)*
- *More understanding and tolerant of other people and their needs (x6)*
- *I'm more confident about my future (x3)*
- *I am more confident about the future and having a job (x2)*
- *Less bored, get out of the house more (x2)*
- *Better able to communicate and relate to others (x2)*
- *Loaves n Fishes has given me a lot of help and support during my recent illness*

6.31 Potential Improvements

The following are examples of how respondents think the Project / Loaves n Fishes could be improved:

- *Advertise more as not a lot of people know what you do (x2)*
- *Needs more funding (x2)*
- *I feel they need more volunteers*
- *I don't think they need to improve*
- *I think they are doing well what they are doing and it's working*

7.0 Partner Agency Feedback

7.1 Introduction

A total of 17 questionnaire responses have been received from the following partner agency members:

Name	Organisation	Job Title / Job role
Anna Walsh	CHADD	CEO
Adam Benson	Floating Support Service	Support Worker
Claudette Edwards	National Probation Service	PSO Keyworker
Colin White	Nacro	Painting and Decorating Tutor
Dave Williams	Bearwood Chapel	Pastor
Denise Heginbotham	Riverside	Community Engagement Officer
Hayley Rowley	Dudley MBC	Homeless Team manager
Helen Pryor-Andrews	Safe Families for Children	Family Support Manager
Jane Hale	Accord	Community Coach
Keiron Casey	Ian Austin MP	Case worker
Len Brown	Sandwell Council	Customer Service
Mandy Bhath	Sandwell MBC	LWP Supervisor
Nicky Dickinson	Juniper Training	Progression Coordinator
Tim Powell	Department for Work and Pensions	Work Coach
Natalie Forbes	Dudley Council Plus	Housing support officer
Carole Hubball	Champions Church	Administrator
Ian Austin	Parliament	MP

7.2 Links with the Project

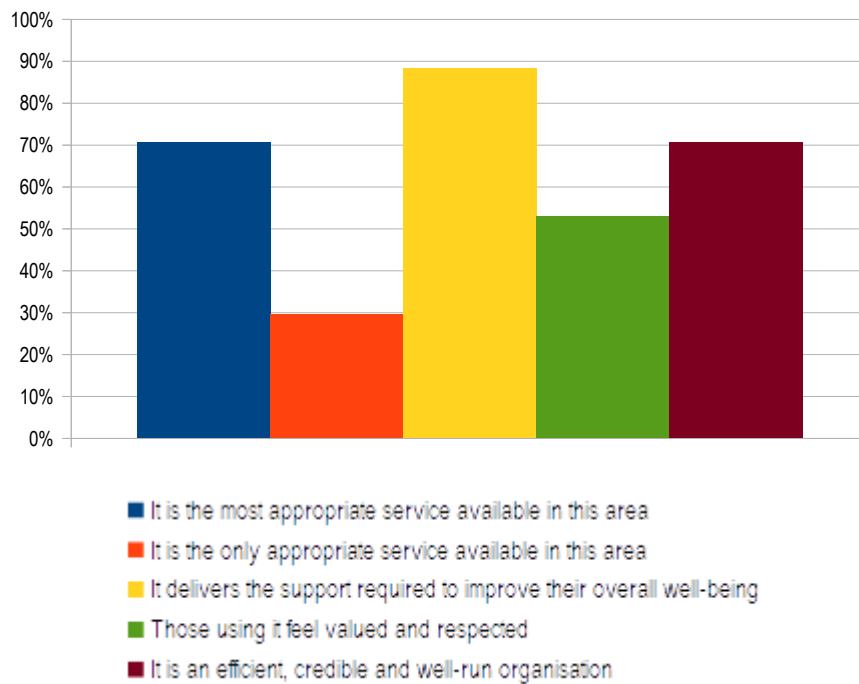
- All respondents have referred people to the Project
- **24%** have received referrals from the Project

7.3 Views about the Project

Graph 30 highlights responses to the question: '*Why do you / would you encourage people to seek support from Loaves n Fishes' (L&F)*'. It will be noted that:

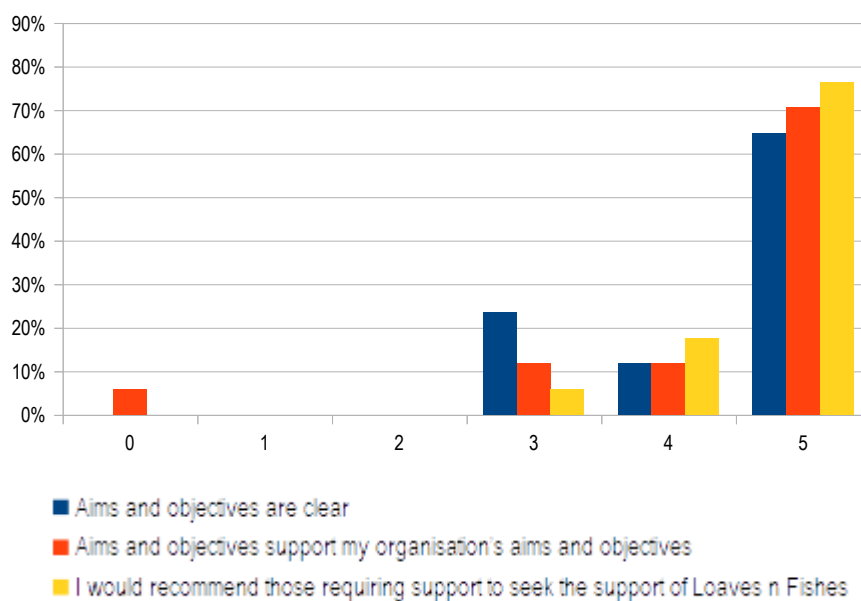
- **88% (15)** state the L&F delivers the support required to improve well-being
- **71% (12)** state that L&F is the most appropriate service available in the area
- **71% (12)** state that L&F is an efficient, credible and well-run organisation
- **53% (9)** are aware that clients supported by L&F feel valued and respected
- **29% (5)** state that L&F is the only appropriate service available in the area

Graph 30 Why do you / would you encourage people to seek support from Loaves n Fishes



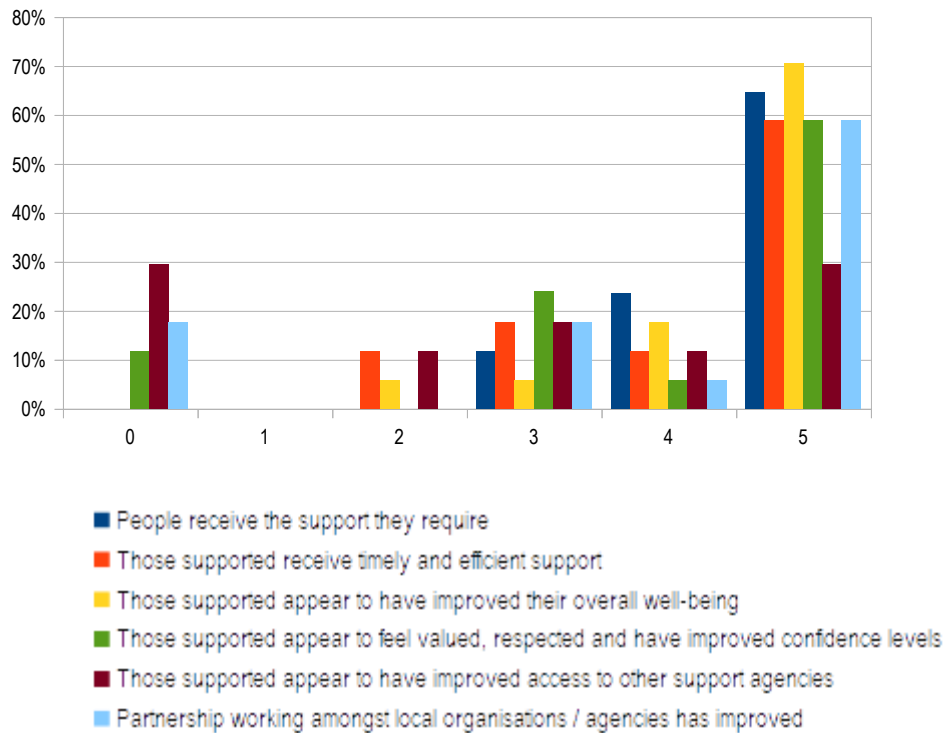
Graph 31 highlights respondents' further positive views about the Project.

Graph 31 What are your views about the following regarding the Loaves n Fishes Project? (1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)



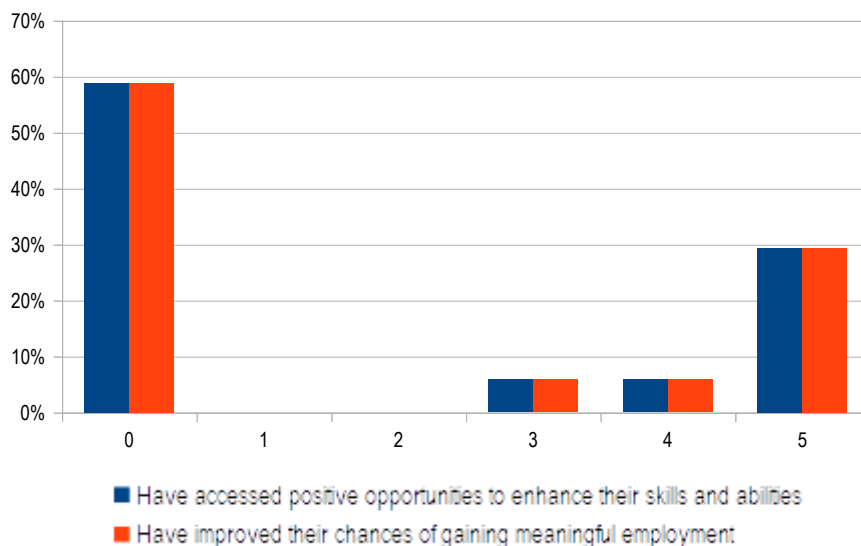
Graph 32 provides feedback regarding respondents' views about the effectiveness of the Project.

Graph 32 As a result of the Loaves n Fishes Project: (1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)



Graph 33 highlights respondents' views about the effectiveness of the Project to support volunteers.

Graph 33 Those who volunteer to support the Loaves n Fishes Project: (1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)



7.4 Additional Comments

Appendix A highlights the many additional comments received from respondents, which include:

- *Helpful, professional staff*
- *Company ethos of respect and equality for all individuals involved with the Project*
- *Volunteering with Loaves always enhances a customer's chance of finding a job*
- *Customers that I have referred ONLY EVER say positive things about the company and how much they enjoy and get out of volunteering*
- *Offer fantastic service / always willing to help*
- *Well run organisation*
- *Customers referred to service are treated with respect*
- *Range of services available*
- *Good expert advice for vulnerable local people*
- *Loaves n Fishes has been an inspiration to myself and my learners, as a training organisation we always struggle to find our learners work experience, especially within the painting and decorating sector as other companies won't accept some of our students who have various problems which might just be attending on time and don't or are unable to give them the support they need that Loaves n Fishes does*
- *The students also feel a sense of worthiness knowing they have helped and created something that will help other*
- *Fantastic service always given to customers I have referred*
- *I hope to continue the excellent working relationship we have with Loaves n Fishes*

8.0 Volunteering Leading to Employment

8.1 Introduction

As highlighted at **Section 5.3 / Table 3**, it has become clear during research that those who have had the opportunity to volunteer at Loaves n Fishes are either moving into employment, or are more likely to become employed as a result of skills / experiences gained during their placement.



8.2 Real Jobs for Real People

Table 5 highlights examples of previous Loaves n Fishes volunteers who have successfully gained employment.

Appendix C provides an example of a typical reference the organisation is able to forward to potential employers.

Table 5 Volunteers who have gained employment

Gender	Loaves n Fishes Volunteer Position	New Position	Date Appointed
Female	Administration Assistant	Customer Services Advisor, Birmingham City Council	April 2018
Male	Warehouse Operative / Drivers Mate	Parcel Delivery, D.P.D	June 2018
Female	Retail Assistant	Assistant Retail Manager, Loaves n Fishes	June 2018
Female	Retail Assistant	Customer Services Advisor, Citizens Advice Bureau	July 2018
Male	Warehouse Operative	Warehouse Operative	December 2018
Female	Picker / Packer	Lunchtime Supervisor, local Primary School	February 2019
Male	Warehouse Operative / Drivers Mate	General Maintenance, Cleaner, Loaves n Fishes	February 2019
Female	Administration Assistant	Retail Manager, Loaves n Fishes	April 2019
Female	Cleaning Operative	Self-employed, On-line business	September 2019

8.3 Partner Agency Endorsement

All of the below students have really enjoyed their time volunteering at Loaves n Fishes. The work placement has helped all of the students to increase in confidence and improve their employability skills. There has been a visible change in all three students since starting with



Loaves n Fishes: Nicola Dickinson, Progression Co-Ordinator, Juniper Ltd

- **Jacob Jones*** – *Jacob is currently in week two of a two week work trial for a warehousing apprenticeship. At the end of this week we should know whether he has been successful in securing the apprenticeship, which hopefully he will.*
- **Mark Phillips*** – *Mark is currently in the process of deciding which progression route he is going to take but after some discussions with Hugh and Mum it is looking likely that he will go to college to do a course which will enable him to gain an apprenticeship in pharmacy.*

* Names changed

9.0 Summary of Findings

9.1 Introduction

Linked to **Section 2.0 (Terms of Reference)** – *the likelihood of the outcomes and Project performance indicators outlined at **Section 4.4** being achieved*, the following is a summary of research findings.

9.2 Summary

There can be no doubts that, overall the Project has been a success in terms of outcomes and performance indicators agreed with the Big Lottery.

As outlined at **Section 5.3 / Table 3**, in a significant number of cases project indicators have been surpassed, and / or are likely to be surpassed further as the Project comes to its end later in the year.

The only significant 'shortfall' relates to the number of former volunteers *reporting who have moved from volunteering to other positive outcomes such as employment, further education or training*. Such has been explained / justified in detail by the CEO (see **Notes** at the end of **Table 3 / Section 5.3**).

It is also noted that on the whole that indicators relating to trading activities (see **Table 3**) have on the whole been impressively achieved – see also **Section 5.4 / Table 4**.

9.3 Outcome 1

Families and individuals will report an improved quality of life through the provision of household necessities, supporting and promoting self-sufficiency, safety and stability, leading to a greater capacity.

Evidence of achievement includes:

- **Section 5.3 / Table 3 Achievement of Project Indicators** – targets surpassed / likely to be surpassed further
- **Section 6.0 Questionnaire Analysis** – see **Graphs 11 & 12**, statements received from service users e.g. *My life is more comfortable and their help has given me more than I could have hoped for*

- **Section 6.18 Case Studies** e.g. *The biggest thing was the bed to sleep in with the kids. At night we could curl up and snuggle together. Talk about our days and make plans for the next ones. We could tell stories and enjoy make believe. We became a 'family' and I could sense the children relaxing and not being so anxious and worried about me and themselves. It was life changing to us, and along with the other furniture we had our lives back, with more comforts and perceptions of security than we had not enjoyed for such a long time. We all began to smile and laugh again! (Case Study 3); Essential! Without it we would have been living off floors, with no other organisation being there to provide this essential support. And the support was instant once I got in touch and we agreed my family's needs. No forms to fill in or 'red tape' to get in the way. At the worst, we could have been separated, with my children taken into care as I couldn't cope and support them in a safe and secure home (Case Study 4)*
- **Section 7.0 Partner Agency Feedback - 88% (15)** state the L&F delivers the support required to improve well-being; **Graph 32; Appendix A** - *They have been around to help the most vulnerable with furniture, enable them to have a resource they need*

9.4 Outcome 2

Volunteers will demonstrate improved social skills, confidence and motivation through their involvement in the supported volunteering programme, moving them closer to the labour market.

Evidence of achievement includes:

- **Section 5.3 / Table 3 Achievement of Project Indicators** – targets surpassed / likely to be surpassed further e.g. **100** volunteers who report and demonstrate new or enhanced skills relevant to the workplace; **91** former volunteers who demonstrate or report attaining economic stability within 12 months of completing a volunteering placement
- **Section 6.18 Case Studies** e.g. *Well I still enjoy volunteering here at Loaves n Fishes, long after I completed the 8 weeks the Jobcentre arranged. They are working with me on my CV and helping me build my confidence levels and interview skills ready for interviews. I smile lots more now and all of us at home are happier and more relaxed about life (Case Study 1); Well positive 'work' experience of course and real and useful skills and experience. After a while I attended and passed a Forklift course,*

Health & Safety course, First Aid course and Fire Marshalling course. Me – attending and passing courses. I am so pleased and proud of myself! (Case Study 2)

- **Section 6.29 / Graph 29 Outcomes**
- **Section 30 Wider Impacts** - *Improved my confidence (x24); Receiving training and learning new skills (x24)*
- **Section 7.0 Partner Agency Feedback / Graph 32** – e.g. **71% (12)** state that L&F is the most appropriate service available in the area
- **Section 8.3 Partner Agency Endorsement** - *All of the below students have really enjoyed their time volunteering at Loaves n Fishes. The work placement has helped all of the students to increase in confidence and improve their employability skills. There has been a visible change in all three students since starting with Loaves n Fishes: Nicola Dickinson, Progression Co-Ordinator, Juniper Ltd; Appendix A - Volunteering with Loaves always enhances a customer's chance of finding a job*

9.5 Outcome 3

Loaves N Fishes will have greater skills and capacity to meet increasing local need, both in its Furniture Project and the Volunteer Support / Training Programme.

Evidence of achievement includes:

- **Section 5.3 / Table 3 Achievement of Project Indicators** –**453** new appropriate training places in place and being followed; **109** volunteers reporting that their levels of self-confidence to enquire about, then apply for jobs and / or training has improved; **125** people using the service and taking part in training in confidence and skills as a result of support received
- **Section 5.4 / Table 4**– increases in trading activities / income generation – **81%** up to May 2019
- **Section 6.18 Case Studies** – e.g. *one of the team at Loaves n Fishes took time to access my needs and I attended training in areas such as Health & Safety, First Aid and Job Searching. (Case Study 1); Well positive ‘work’ experience of course and real and useful skills and experience. After a while I attended and passed a Forklift course, Health & Safety course, First Aid course and Fire Marshalling course. Me – attending and passing courses. I am so pleased and proud of myself! (Case Study 2)*
- **Sections 6.27 / Graph 27 / 6.28 / Graph 28**

- **Section 6.30 Wider Impacts** - *Receiving training and learning new skills (x24); Gained valuable work experience in a new area of work (x6)*
- **Section 7.3 Partner Agency Feedback** - 71% (12) state that L&F is the most appropriate service available in the area; **Graphs 32 & 33; Appendix A – Range of service & opportunities available for people**
- **Section 8.2 Real Jobs for Real People**
- **Section 9.6** - increasing training and capacity building opportunities for volunteers and new employees
- **Observations** - Furniture Project / organisational base / further expanded along with other services and moved to exciting new venue – ‘**Provision**’, based in the heart of Dudley town centre (see **Section 9.6**)

9.6 Social Returns on Investments (SROI)

Whilst such research has not been a part of this brief, attention is directed at previous research carried out by Wider Impact Consultancy (***An Independent Evaluation of Groundwork’s Youth Provision, Wider Impact Consultancy, 2012***) estimated an annual social care cost of **£57,799.00** with regard to a family similar to **Case Study 1 (Ragbir)**.

Taking this further, linked to the current Project having already supported **155** similar families with multiple and complex needs (i.e. *The number of individuals or families who can demonstrate and detail their own abilities to meet theirs and their family’s needs independently with minimal or no additional support – **Section 5.3 / Table 3***), it could well be reasonable to estimate SROI savings of **£8.9m** delivered by this Project.

9.7 Good Practice

In no particular order, the following good practice is noted:

- The organisation – i.e. Board / CEO having the confidence, vision and foresight to recently re-locate the whole of the organisation (Administration, Furniture Project, shop, sales, training facilities etc. to a new premises – ‘**Provision House**’ situated in Dudley town centre (see photo)



- Innovation and vision demonstrated by the Board / CEO regarding the on-going and future development of *Provision House*, which in addition to consolidating local multi-agency services within one building, including plans such as establishing a multi-agency 'hub', shared multi-agency services / stock ordering etc., training initiatives and meeting / conference facilities etc. Such, which will include rental income and fees will enable the organisation to grow, develop, innovate and ensure its long-term future and sustainable [financial] future
- Steps taken to enable financial independence and long-term sustainability, with reducing dependence on ever scarce grant funding
- Professional assessment, monitoring and support systems provided to those attending volunteer placements, which includes an innovative 'traffic light' assessment tool - see **Appendix B**
- High quality training and capacity building opportunities for volunteers and new employees
- Increases in a wide variety of vocational training placements
- The internal employment of current and previous volunteers and service users – providing them with opportunities to enter the labour market and support the achievement of **Outcome 2**
- Continued 'wrap around' support offered and provided to often vulnerable service users, which in addition to the provision of furniture etc. includes practical support and advise linked to issues such as housing support, debt advise, health / well-being, counselling / mentoring, training, skills development and employment opportunities
- Continued and ever developing multi-agency partnership working, with the CEO being invited to attend increasing numbers of senior level strategic partnerships / working groups etc.

9.8 Conclusions

As outlined at **Section 9.2** there can be no doubts that, overall the Project has been a success in terms of outcomes and performance indicators agreed with the Big Lottery. There are also no doubts that Loaves n Fishes is a professional organisation and charity, which is supported by a highly experienced Board of Trustees, motivated and committed CEO and caring and committed staff and of course, amazing volunteers.

Funding provided by the Big Lottery has been extremely well-spent and has certainly made positive social and economic differences to hundreds of vulnerable local people.

Most significantly, the organisation is developing from its origins of providing [much needed] furniture and bedding etc. to the delivery of impressive and professionally delivered 'wrap around' support systems, with outcomes that include healthier, happier and confident service users, volunteer placements, training and 'real' jobs for previously long-term unemployed local people.

As outlined at **Section 9.6**, such has of course the potential to make significant positive long-term and sustainable differences to individuals, families and of course the wider community in terms of positive Social Returns of Investments (SROI).

As a direct of Big Lottery funding, the hard work and commitment of all those concerned and the organisation's innovative move to new premises, Loaves n Fishes is clearly establishing itself as a respected and highly valued multi-agency lead partner in its areas of operation, which is worthy of continued funding and support from external organisations.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

Based on research findings, the following recommendations are tendered:

1. Those involved with the delivery of such a successful the Big Lottery funded Project should be congratulated for their hard work, expertise and commitment.
2. A key priority must be the ongoing development of the *Provision House* building, which has the potential to enable financial independence for the organisation and positively influence the front-line delivery of much needed multi-agency support systems in its areas of operation.
3. The CEO should continue to works strategically with the Local Authority and partner agency members, with aims that include enhance 'joined up' multi-agency working and consortia based initiatives.
4. Building on the successful achievement of around 80% financial independence, an aim should be as close to 100% financial independence with 3 years.
5. The organisation should continue to enhance and develop the levels and quality of 'wrap around' support offered and provided to vulnerable community members.
6. The organisation should likewise continue to enhance and develop the levels and quality of support offered and provided to those attending volunteer placements / work experience; with clear and measurable outcomes that include employment, training and entry into further education.
7. Approaches should be made to the Big Lottery and other key funders to support recommendations **2, 5 & 6**.
8. Linked to the successful delivery of the Project opportunity should be taken to host a high [media] profile multi-agency celebration event at the end of the Project, when opportunity can be taken to celebrate successes, enhance local partnership working, 'showcase' the Provision House building and thank all those who have played their parts in making the Project such a success.

Appendix A

What 3 things are really GOOD about the Loaves n Fishes Project?

- *Open access approach and scale of operations*
- *People are always friendly*
- *New location is fantastic*
- *They have been around to help the most vulnerable with furniture, enable them to have a resource they need*
- *They have responded quickly to urgent requests*
- *They are kind and understanding*
- *The fresh start they give to their service users*
- *The range of their service, including clothes and furniture*
- *The welcome they give to their service users, ensuring they do not feel like failures in their time of need*
- *Staff are very welcoming.*
- *They understand the types of learners we work with*
- *It gives my learners the opportunity to help others*
- *They offer practical help*
- *They are loving*
- *They are a local community initiative*
- *Unique organisation who help when and where needed*
- *Very helpful staff*
- *Local with good stock*
- *Non-Judgemental approach*
- *Good quality items donated*
- *Opportunity to volunteer and, this, give back*
- *Offer fantastic service / always willing to help*
- *Well run organisation*
- *Customers referred to service are treated with respect*
- *Range of services available*
- *Good expert advice for vulnerable local people*
- *Partnership working has improved help for local people*
- *This is a local service which mainly support the tenant and residence within Sandwell*
- *I have had support with their timely service supporting the council*
- *I have in the past personally built up a good rapport*
- *They are available at all levels.*
- *They provide support to all types from the community.*
- *They are friendly and efficient.*
- *Very supportive of Juniper students*
- *Wide range of volunteering opportunities*
- *Helpful, professional staff*
- *Company ethos of respect and equality for all individuals involved with the project*
- *Volunteering with Loaves always enhances a customer's chance of finding a job*
- *Customers that I have referred ONLY EVER say positive things about the company and how much they enjoy and get out of volunteering*
- *Affordable furniture for homeless people*
- *Good customer service*
- *Important advice for vulnerable people*
- *Range of service & opportunities available for people*
- *Highlighting important issues and working with a range of organisations for support*
- *New premise – great possibilities for growth*
- *Run with compassion and care as well as practical application*
- *Very approachable*

(If appropriate) How do you feel the Loaves n Fishes Project could be improved?

- *There is still **some** work to do around management and governance, and operational oversight. This has improved, but more work to do.*
- *I have only used them for furniture donations.*
- *Need to be clear what other support they can provide.*
- *Overall, I am very satisfied with the project*
- *The phone service could improve, the access times are not clear. You will leave a message, but the phone calls are not returned, or returned promptly.*
- *With the addition of its new premises I can see its projects going from strength to strength in the future and opening up bigger and better opportunities for all its users.*
- *Contact residents when referral is made as they often think they have been forgotten.*
- *To be honest, the organisation is fantastic*
- *Could possibly improve with more donations / funding*
- *I haven't fortunately been in that situation*
- *I feel they can have a bit more digital interactiveness to improve contact etc.*
- *The quality of some of the items is not good, I know that some of the items are donated but some is in bad condition*

Anything else you wish to add?

- *Loaves n Fishes has been an inspiration to myself and my learners, as a training organisation we always struggle to find our learners work experience, especially within the painting and decorating sector as other companies won't accept some of our students who have various problems which might just be attending on time and don't or are unable to give them the support they need that Loaves n Fishes does*
- *The students also feel a sense of worthiness knowing they have helped and created something that will help other*
- *Fantastic service always given to customers I have referred*
- *I hope to continue the excellent working relationship we have with Loaves n Fishes*
- *Only that I wish there were branches of Loaves n Fishes across the county – I would be advising all of my colleagues across the district to send their customers there*

Appendix B

Administration Assistant

Volunteer Age	
ID	
Start Date / Duration	
Referring Agency	
Staff Comments	

Initial Assessment Details

Reviewing skills & knowledge using: **Prior / Good**, **Average**, or **Poor** indicators

Functional skills: literacy / numeracy	
Soft skills (Communication, teamwork, problem solving)	
I.T Skills: CV, Job search / applications	
Health & Safety Awareness	
Fire Procedures	

Job Specification

Take calls, record messages with relevant information	
Advise clients of services available or signpost to other services	
Good standard of word processing skills	
Able to produce a spread sheet & input data	
Able to photocopy in different formats	
Use search engines effectively	

Any other information

What are your expectations from placement?

- Learn new skills
- Gain experience in a workplace
- Attend training courses
- Update CV (Recent experience)
- Not sure

Targets

Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete induction • Health & Safety Procedures • Accident / Fire Procedures • Complete Admin skills test • Complete internal functional skills test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem solving) • Basic understanding organisation's goals & services • Answer calls, record information / offer advice • Photocopy, file paperwork, undertake tasks as directed by staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book collections / deliveries • Liaise with drivers & warehouse regarding orders / collections • Make evaluation calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain experience of previous tasks • Mentor a new volunteer (if applicable) • Provide feedback to relevant agency

Aims and Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create / update CV • Attend relevant training / courses • Gain customer service focus • Gain good communication & interpersonal skills • To gain knowledge & understanding of policy & procedures in the workplace • To gain relevant experience, enhance employment prospects • Assess / develop soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem solving)
--

Volunteer's Personal Goals

Is there anything else you would like to achieve whilst volunteering at Loaves n Fishes?

End of / Extended Placement

Reviewing skills & knowledge using: **Prior / Good**, **Average**, or **Poor** indicators

Functional skills: literacy / numeracy	
Soft skills (Communication, teamwork, problem solving)	
I.T Skills: CV, Job search / applications	
Health & Safety Awareness	
Fire Procedures	

Take calls, record messages with relevant information	
Advise clients of services available or signpost to other services	
Good standard of word processing skills	
Able to produce a spread sheet & input data	
Able to photocopy in different formats	
Use search engines effectively	

Appendix C



03/12/17

To whom it may concern,

John Smith currently attends our organisation on work placement. He has been attending since November 2017. The following personal attributes are in reference to his performance. A team leader, the warehouse manager and myself have monitored his progress.

- Warehouse operative picker/packer
- Drivers mate delivering & collecting items from customers
- Aware and compliant with Health & Safety procedures
- Adheres to regulations, wears P.P.E when required
- Excellent attendance
- Excellent time keeping
- Pleasant, well mannered & cooperative
- Able to follow instructions and work on his own initiative
- Works well as part of a team
- Good communication skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good customer service skills

John has proved himself to be a capable member of our warehouse team. He is very polite, well mannered & cooperative. He is well liked and has integrated himself into a well-established team & routine. I believe John has an excellent work ethic and would to an asset to any company.

Kim Skinner

Volunteer Coordinator



Thank you for taking the time to complete this short questionnaire, which will be used to independently evaluate the Big Lottery funded **Loaves N Fishes Project**.

Personal Information (Service Users)

Gender Male Female Ref No. (For completion by Project staff)

Ethnicity

Age..... **Postcode**

Are you: Student Working Unemployed Retired Seeking asylum

Where did you hear about Loaves N Fishes? (please tick *all* that apply)

Friend / Word of Mouth Referred from another agency: Which?

Found it myself: How? E.g. newspaper.....

Other (Please state)

Section 1 – Use of Loaves N Fishes

On average, how often do you seek / receive support from Loaves N Fishes Project?

Once a week Twice a month Once a month Once in a while Once only

In addition to yourself, how many other family members have benefitted from the Project?

What sort of support have you / your family received from Loaves N Fishes (please tick *all* that apply)

Household goods e.g. furniture, bedding, crockery etc.

Advice and support

Referral to another agency

Friendship and understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved quality of life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvements to my / our health / mental well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvements to my / our confidence levels	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	

Section 2 – What do you think about the following regarding Loaves N Fishes?

(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)

Staff are friendly and helpful	0 1 2 3 4 5
They understand my needs	0 1 2 3 4 5
I would recommend others to get in touch with Loaves N Fishes	0 1 2 3 4 5

What are your views about the following? As a result of support from Loaves N Fishes:

(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – not applicable)

I am less reliant on crisis or emergency support	0 1 2 3 4 5
I am coping better and better able to manage being in crisis when it occurs	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel less lonely and isolated	0 1 2 3 4 5
I / we feel safer and more secure in the home / where I / we live	0 1 2 3 4 5
I / we are living more independently with reduced support from others	0 1 2 3 4 5
My/ our personal circumstances and quality of life has improved	0 1 2 3 4 5
My health / general well-being has improved	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel more confident about my future	0 1 2 3 4 5

Section 3 – What 3 things have really changed in your life as a result of the support you have received from Loaves N Fishes?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 4 (If appropriate) How do you feel Loaves N Fishes could improve what they do?

Anything else you wish to add? (Please continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary)

Appendix E



Thank you for taking the time to complete this short questionnaire, which will be used to independently evaluate the Big Lottery funded **Loaves N Fishes Project**.

Personal Information (Volunteers)

Gender Male Female Ref No. (For completion by Project staff)

Ethnicity

Age..... **Postcode**

Are you: Student Working Unemployed Retired Seeking asylum

Where did you hear about Loaves N Fishes? (please tick *all* that apply)

Friend / Word of Mouth Referred from another agency Found it myself

Other (Please state)

Section 1 – Use of Loaves N Fishes

On average, how often volunteer with Loaves N Fishes?

Once a week Every day Once a month Once in a while

How many weeks / months / years have you been a volunteer with Loaves N Fishes?

What do you volunteer at Loaves N Fishes (please tick *all* that apply)

Work experience with a view to getting a job / paid employment

Learning new skills

Building my confidence levels

Meeting new people

Getting out of the house / tackling boredom

Improving my health / mental well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because I enjoy it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>please state</i>)	
Section 2 – What do you think about the following regarding Loaves N Fishes?	
(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)	
Staff are friendly and helpful	0 1 2 3 4 5
They understand my needs	0 1 2 3 4 5
I would recommend others to get in touch with Loaves N Fishes	0 1 2 3 4 5
What are your views about the following? As a result of being a volunteer at Loaves N Fishes:	
(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – not applicable)	
I have learnt new skills that help me to do my job	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel more confident about applying for jobs	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel I am more employable and likely to keep a future / current job	0 1 2 3 4 5
I am financially more secure	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel more confident that future jobs / employment I achieve will be well-paid / sufficiently paid	0 1 2 3 4 5
I feel more confident about my future	0 1 2 3 4 5
My personal circumstances and quality of life has improved	0 1 2 3 4 5
My health / general well-being has improved	0 1 2 3 4 5

Section 3 – What 3 things have really changed in your life as a result of the support you have received from Loaves N Fishes?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 4 (If appropriate) How do you feel Loaves N Fishes could improve what they do?

Anything else you wish to add? (*Please continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary*)

Appendix F



Thank you for taking the time to complete this short questionnaire, which will be used to independently evaluate the Big Lottery funded **Loaves n Fishes Project**.

Personal Information

Name:

Organisation:

Job Title / Job Role:

Email:

Phone:

Where did you initially hear about the Loaves n Fishes Project? (please tick **all** that apply)

Loaves n Fishes Within your organisation Word of mouth / networking event etc.

Local media / Social media (please state which here):

Other (please state here):

NB. Personal information will **only** be utilised and retained for the purposes of this evaluation, and will **not** be shared with external bodies / organisations.

Section 1 – Links with the Loaves n Fishes Project:

Do you:

Refer people to the Loaves n Fishes? Yes No

Receive referrals from Loaves n Fishes Yes No

Why do you / would you encourage people to seek the support from Loaves n Fishes? (please tick **all** that apply)

It is the most appropriate service available in this area

It is the only appropriate service available in this area

It delivers the support required to improve their overall well-being

Those using it feel valued and respected

It is an efficient, credible and well run organisation

Other (please state here):

Please turn over

Section 2 – What are your views about the following regarding the Loaves n Fishes Project?

(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)

Aims and objectives are clear	0 1 2 3 4 5
Aims and objectives support my organisation's aims and objectives	0 1 2 3 4 5
I would recommend those requiring support to seek the support of Loaves n Fishes	0 1 2 3 4 5

What are your views about the following? As a result of the Loaves n Fishes Project:

(1 – low; 5 – high; 0 – no views)

People receive the support they require	0 1 2 3 4 5
Those supported receive timely and efficient support	0 1 2 3 4 5
Those supported appear to have improved their overall well-being	0 1 2 3 4 5
Those supported appear to feel valued, respected and have improved confidence levels	0 1 2 3 4 5
Those supported appear to have improved access to other support agencies	0 1 2 3 4 5
Partnership working amongst local organisations / agencies has improved	0 1 2 3 4 5

Volunteers (Where appropriate) Those who volunteer to support the Loaves n Fishes Project:

Have accessed positive opportunities to enhance their skills and abilities	0 1 2 3 4 5
Have improved their chances of gaining meaningful employment	0 1 2 3 4 5

Other (please state here):

Section 3 – What 3 things are really GOOD about the Loaves n Fishes Project?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 4 (If appropriate) How do you feel the Loaves n Fishes Project could be improved?

Anything else you wish to add? (Please continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary)

widerimpact

Independent Analysis. Strategic Reviews

Wider Impact Consultancy Limited
Newport House
Newport Road, Stafford
ST16 1DA

Phone: 0845 165 0491
Mobile: 07871 179 780
Email: enquiries@widerimpact.com



Scan QR Code to visit website