



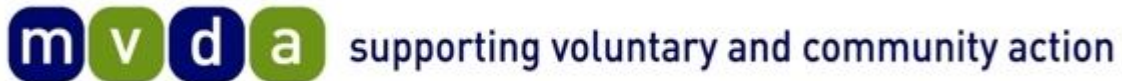
Tees Valley ICT Survey 2009 Feedback

By

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Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association



Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	03
2. Statistics filtered by Borough.....	04
3. Statistics filtered by Organisations working with Rural Communities.....	09
4. Statistics filtered by Question.....	12
5. Feedback	
5.1. Weaknesses and gaps in ICT - training, hardware & support/maintenance.....	26
5.2. Identifying ways of improving ICT services to Third Sector organisations in our region.....	28
6. Conclusion.....	30

1. Executive Summary

This survey was conducted as part of my role as Regional ICT Champion (Commissioned by Voluntary Organisations Network North East – VONNE) to analyse and provide feedback on unmet needs in ICT support service provision, training and information requirements of Third Sector organisations in the Tees Valley area.

Within the context of this project, Infrastructure organisations exist to support frontline organisations. Frontline organisations in turn provide a wide range of services to individuals.

The term “Third Sector” includes:

- Arts organisations
- Charities
- Community interest groups
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Social enterprises
- Sports organisations
- Voluntary and Community groups

This survey in particular:

- 1 Identifies weaknesses, gaps and unmet needs in Information Communications Technology (ICT usage and provision)
- 2 Provides recommendation based on the findings

The total number of organisations that responded was 191; 157 organisations rated 5+ the importance of ICT in their organisations (1 = not important, 10 = very important); 56 organisations rated 10 the importance of ICT in their organisations, which emphasises the fact that respondents are aware of and recognise the importance of ICT for the competent running of their organisations.

- Darlington: 47 responses
- Stockton on Tees: 62 responses
- Middlesbrough: 73 responses
- Hartlepool: 43 responses
- Redcar and Cleveland: 87

Total responses filtered by boroughs: 312

Note: This number is considerably higher because most organisations ticked more than one borough when asked which borough they support.

Conclusion

- Three major ICT challenges: lack of skills, lack of budget and lack of impartial advice/support.
- Many of the organisations are exclusively run by volunteers who require ICT skills and are not therefore themselves in a position to assess their ICT needs. Consequently, these organisations see as a priority getting ICT training rather than investing in updating their existing ICT equipment (hardware). Some consider that their lack of ICT skills does not allow them to maximise usage of their resources.

- With regards to ICT support, most acknowledge they do not get the impartial advice, help, information and general support they need. The feedback shows that 168 out of 191 organisations do not know of any Infrastructure organisation offering ICT support, and 148 of those 191 are not aware of any funding streams for ICT support in the region.

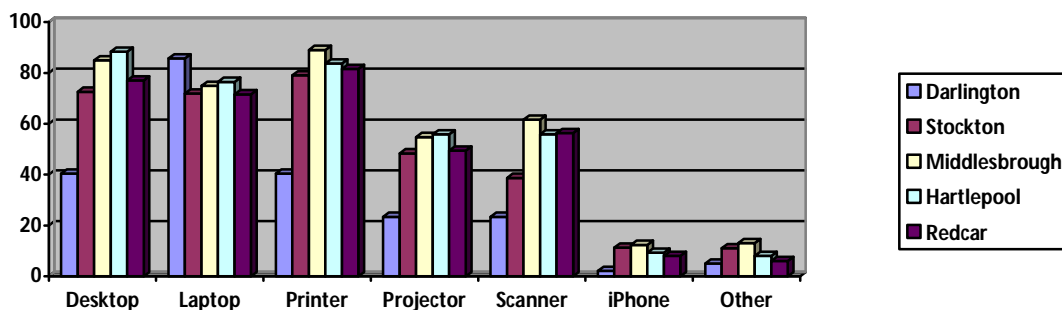
Recommendations

- Infrastructure organisations need to develop a strategic plan to tackle the major weaknesses found in this survey: lack of awareness, lack of skills and lack of budget.
- Infrastructure organisations need to be trained to provide ICT support services that ensure the delivery of an effective and reliable service to frontline organisations.
- Infrastructure organisations should raise awareness of their services to the frontline organisations.

Though the survey findings are not a surprise, it clearly demonstrates that a lot still needs to be done. The conclusions and recommendations have been explained in much more detail in the relevant sections.

2. Statistics filtered by Borough

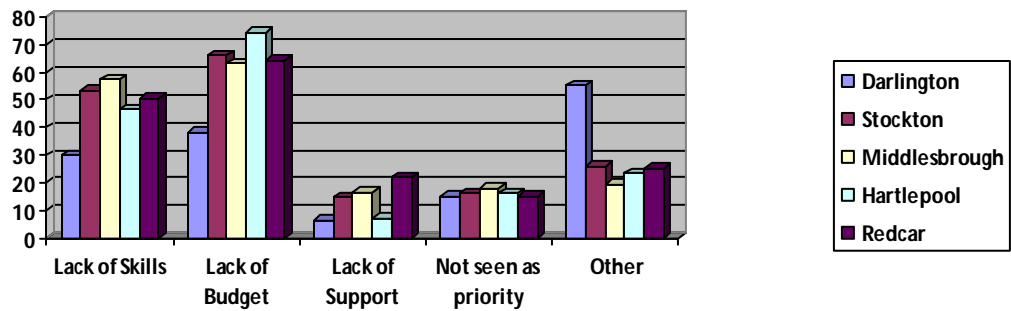
Use of Hardware



As the chart shows, the vast majority of Third Sector organisations across Tees Valley, utilise desktops, laptops and printers to carry out their daily operations. The responses from Darlington Borough were unique in the fact that most organisations use laptops (85.74%) rather than desktops (40.43%).

“Other” hardware (Q1-Q1a) referred to digital cameras, camcorders, whiteboards, photocopiers, statistical data-collection tools, fax machines, digital TV’s, DVD players, music systems, iMac x9 etc.

Major challenges to using ICT



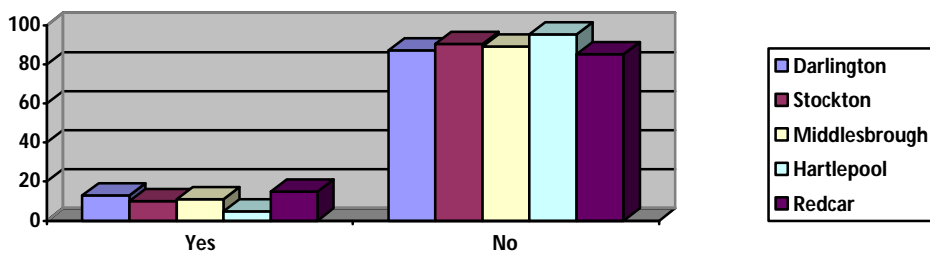
The chart speaks for itself. Lack of budget (58.12% average) is the main challenge to using ICT for four of the five surveyed boroughs. Darlington borough shows “Other” as the main challenge to using ICT because most of its respondents (55.32%) did not answer this question (Q4).

Other major challenges include:

- lack of skills (44.50% average)
 - pace of technology change
 - lack of internet connection
 - lack of an office base
 - lack of impartial advice/support (15.71% average)
- } (35.08% average)

Third Sector organisations in the Tees Valley region feel they do not make best use of ICT resources due to three major challenges: lack of budget (hardware, premises, training), lack of skills and lack of advice/support.

Aware of any Infrastructure organisations offering ICT services in the region



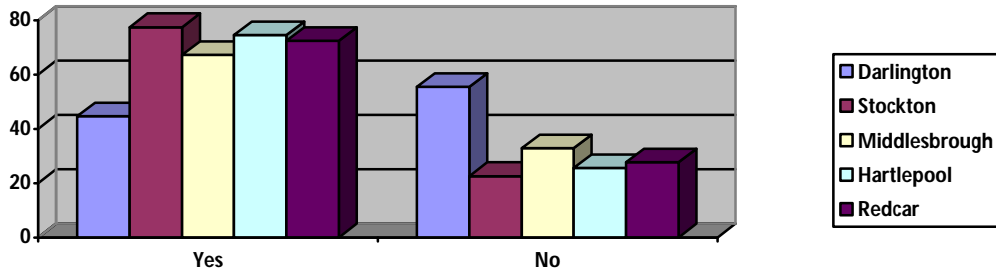
The outcome of this question shows there is very little awareness of any Infrastructure organisation offering ICT services. Out of a total of 191 organisations, an alarming 167 respondents (87.43% average) answered NO to this question (Q6).

The filtered percentages are as follows:

- Darlington: 87.23% answered NO to Q6 (41 responses out of 47)
- Stockton on Tees: 90.32% answered NO to Q6 (56 responses out of 62)
- Middlesbrough: 89.04% answered NO to Q6 (65 responses out of 73)

- Hartlepool: 95.35% answered NO to Q6 (41 responses out of 43)
- Redcar and Cleveland: 85.06% answered NO to Q6 (74 responses out of 87)

Interested in receiving ICT training (new technologies)

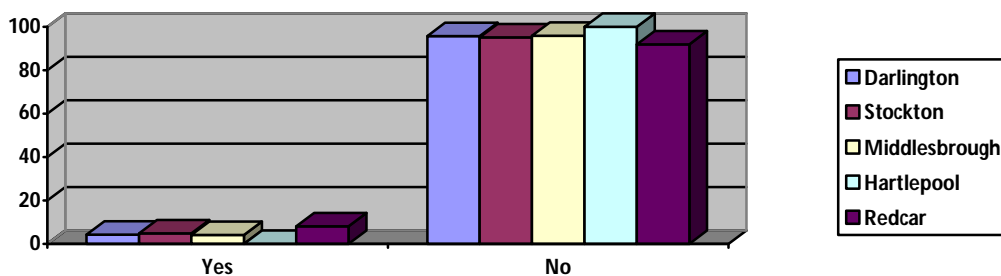


Except Third Sector organisations from Darlington (55.32% answered NO to this question, Q8), most of the organisations from the rest of the boroughs in our region are interested in receiving ICT training on emerging and new technologies. Stockton shows the highest interest (77.42%) followed by Middlesbrough (67.12%).

In relation to the above statistics, it is also important to recognise there is a significant number of Third Sector organisations that do not show interest in ICT training on new technologies. These organisations, however, declare their need for specific ICT training (Q9).

The most common software programmes respondents need training on are: MS Office, Adobe, SAGE and ECDL.

Aware of any funding streams for ICT support and services in the region



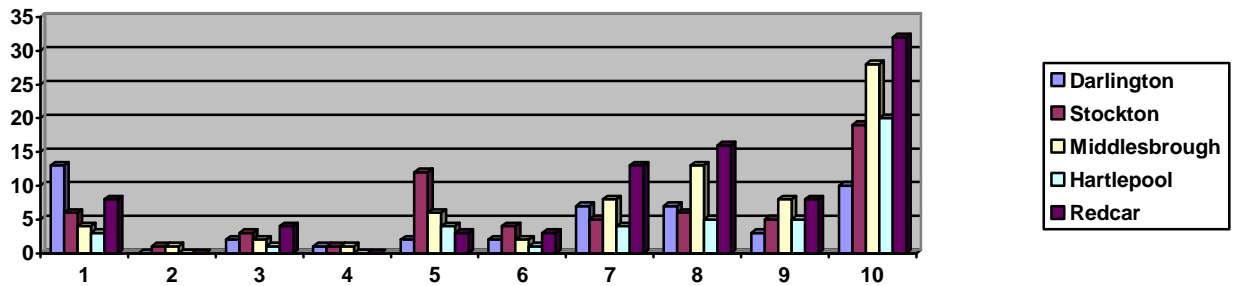
Similar to Q6, the information from this question (Q10) proves there is hardly any awareness by Third Sector organisations of any funding streams for ICT support/services in our region. Out of a total of 191 organisations, 148 answered NO to this question (77.49% average).

The filtered percentages are as follows:

- Darlington: 95.74% organisations answered NO to Q10 (45 responses out of 47)
- Stockton on Tees: 95.16% organisations answered NO to Q10 (59 responses out of 62)
- Middlesbrough: 95.89% organisations answered NO to Q10 (70 responses out of 73)

- Hartlepool: 100% organisations answered NO to Q10 (43 responses out of 43)
- Redcar and Cleveland: 91.95% organisations answered NO to Q10 (80 responses out of 87)

Rate the importance of ICT in your organisation



This question gave a split response between the respondents. The chart shows the actual number of organisations from the different boroughs that rated 1 to 10 how ICT is important in their organisations. (1 = not important, 10 = very important)

Darlington

Answer	No. of Organisations
1 (1)	13
2 (2)	0
3 (3)	2
4 (4)	1
5 (5)	2
6 (6)	2
7 (7)	7
8 (8)	7
9 (9)	3
10 (10)	10

Stockton on Tees

Answer	No. of Organisations
1 (1)	6
2 (2)	1
3 (3)	3
4 (4)	1
5 (5)	12
6 (6)	4
7 (7)	5
8 (8)	6
9 (9)	5
10 (10)	19

Middlesbrough

Answer	No. of Organisations
1 (1)	4
2 (2)	1
3 (3)	2
4 (4)	1
5 (5)	6
6 (6)	2
7 (7)	8
8 (8)	13
9 (9)	8
10 (10)	28

Hartlepool

Answer	No. of Organisations
1 (1)	3
2 (2)	0
3 (3)	1
4 (4)	0
5 (5)	4
6 (6)	1
7 (7)	4
8 (8)	5
9 (9)	5
10 (10)	20

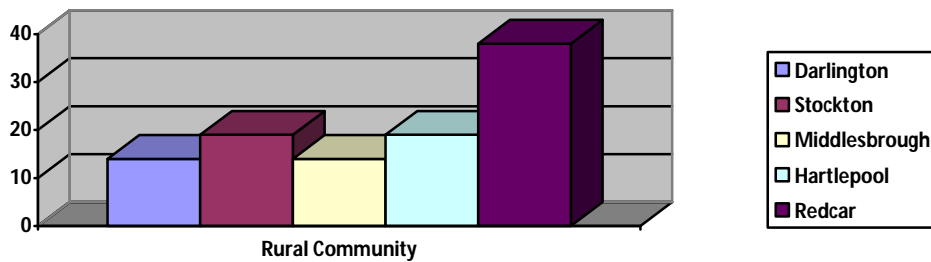
Redcar and Cleveland

Answer	No. of Organisations
1 (1)	8
2 (2)	0
3 (3)	4
4 (4)	0
5 (5)	3
6 (6)	3
7 (7)	13
8 (8)	16
9 (9)	8
10 (10)	32

3. Statistics filtered by Organisations working with Rural Communities

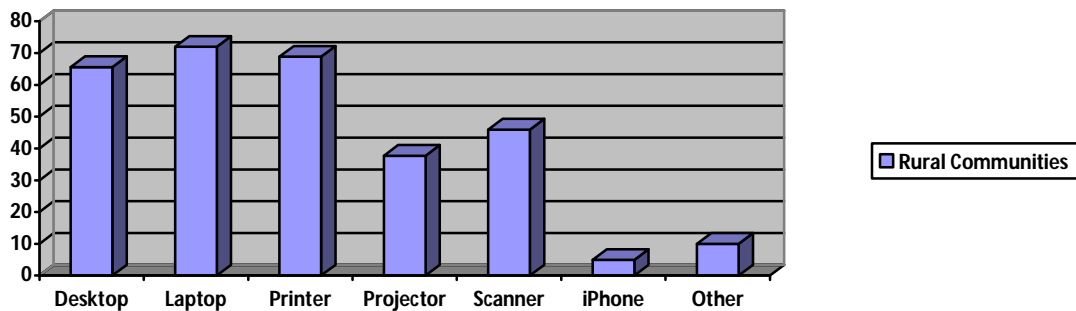
Out of the total records in this survey (191), the number of organisations that work with rural communities is 61, which makes an overall percentage of 31.94%. Respondents ticked more than one answer when asked what borough/s they work in. Darlington and Middlesbrough were ticked 14 times each. Stockton and Hartlepool were ticked 19 times each; and Redcar and Cleveland was ticked 38 times. So the borough that clearly has more organisations working with rural communities is Redcar and Cleveland.

Number of organisations that work with Rural Communities per Borough



Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Use of Hardware

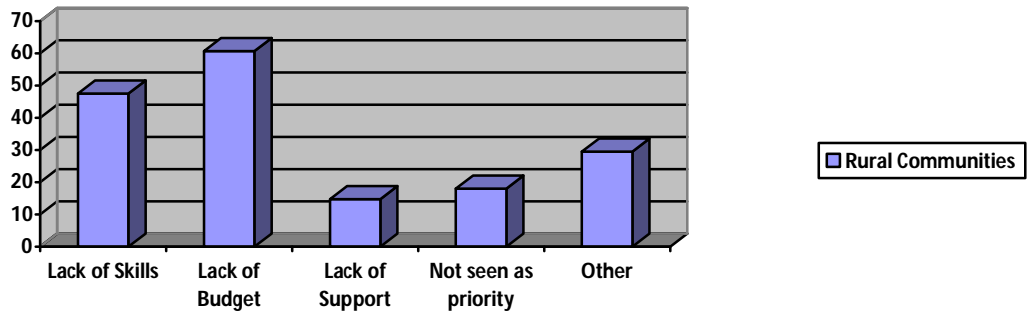


Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Desktop: 65.57% - Laptop: 71.97% - Printer: 68.85% - Projector: 37.70% -

Scanner: 45.90% - iPhone: 4.92% - Other: 10%

Major challenges to using ICT

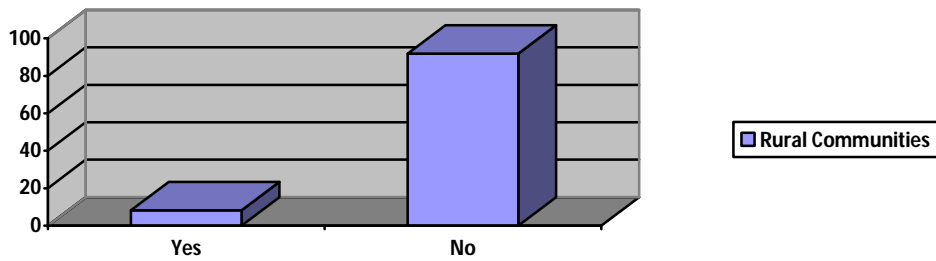


Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Lack of Skills: 47.54% - Lack of Budget: 60.66% - Lack of Support & Impartial

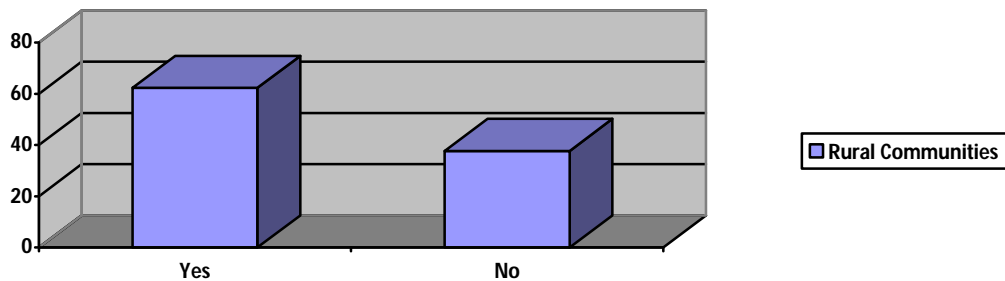
Advice: 14.75% - Not seen as a priority: 18.03% - Other: 29.51%

Aware of any Infrastructure organisations offering ICT services in the region



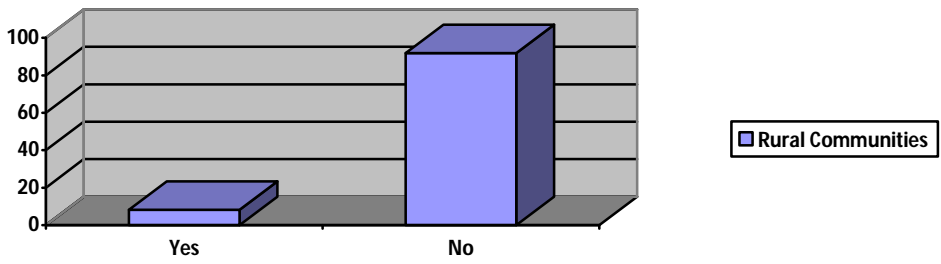
Yes: 8.20% - No: 91.80%

Interested in receiving ICT training (new technologies)



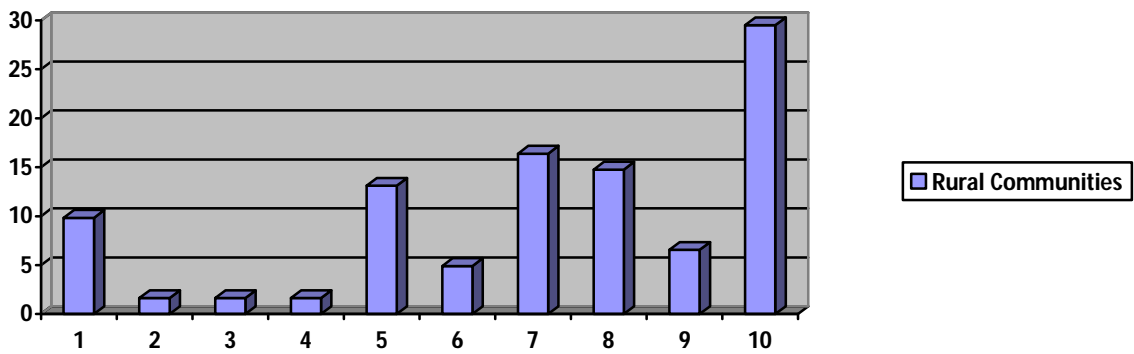
Yes: 62.30% - No: 37.70%

Awareness of any funding streams for ICT support and services in the region



Yes: 8.20% - No: 91.80%

Rate the importance of ICT in your organisation

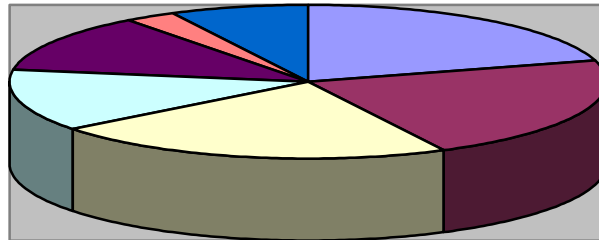
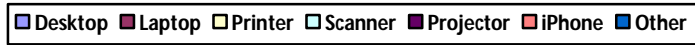


Rural Communities

Answer	No. of Organisations	Percentage
No answer	0	0.00%
1 (1)	6	9.84%
2 (2)	1	1.64%
3 (3)	1	1.64%
4 (4)	1	1.64%
5 (5)	8	13.11%
6 (6)	3	4.92%
7 (7)	10	16.39%
8 (8)	9	14.75%
9 (9)	4	6.56%
10 (10)	18	29.51%

4. Statistics filtered by Question

Q1. Please specify the quantity of the following devices within your organisation



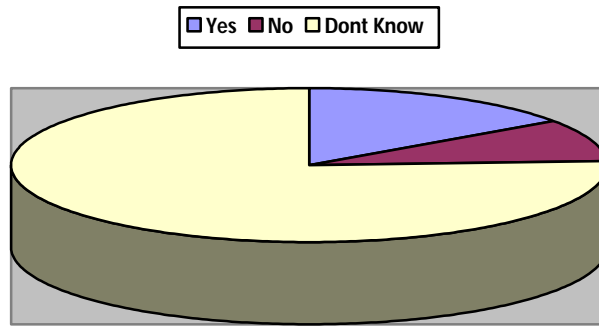
Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Desktop Computers (Q1A1)	129	67.54%
Laptop (Q1A2)	137	71.68%
Blackberry/iPhone/Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) (G1A2)	18	9.42%
Printers (G1A3)	137	71.73%
Projectors (G1A4)	76	39.79%
Scanners (G1A5)	82	42.93%
Other	47	24.60%

Other
5xDigital Cameras, 3xWhiteboards, 1xVideo Camera.
Webcams x2, Interactive Wipe Board x1.
Fax Machine x1.
Committee use their own computers
Duplo Printing Machine
Interactive White Board x1. Interactive OHPx1.
As secretary, I use my own PC and printer
None
I am based within a womens advice centre and access their facilities
None
Digital Camera x1, Video Camera x1, Music Icey Boards x2
a large amount of our committee work is done by email and all the committee have their own computers etc. Our organisation does not own any IT equipment in its own name.

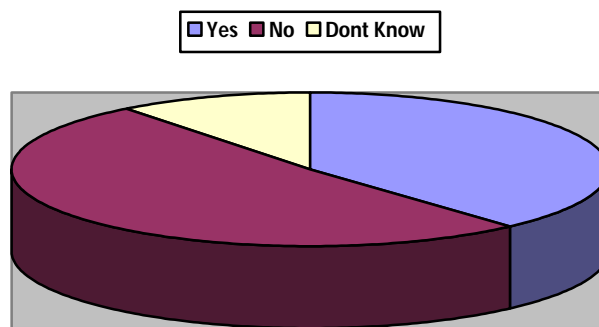
None
We do not have any equipment as when we rent the venue, we use the computers and printers available.
Members use their own equipment
Digital cameras x4.
cleric\'s own
None used within association. only private use of committee members own pc\'s
Digital Camera x1
None
None
Clerk\'s personal desktop/printer is used
None
None
No IT equipment at the hall
None. Some Committee members have and use their own computers for Village Hall matters when required. There is no permanent set up in the hall and committee members change at each AGM.
None
Editing Suite \'Adobe Premier\'
We would like a laptop for our chair person, but can\'t afford it.
Photocopier (in printer)
Due to the nature of our organisation, we do not have an office base, have an elected committee and rely on members using their home computers if we need word processing, etc.
I use my own computer equipment for my work
Private individuals use own equipment
None
own personal Pc\'s
Camera x1.
we go out and do presentations to various groups a projector would be extremely useful. We have just got an email address and a website. We are just in the process of preparing the text for the website. We want to use our website as a means of
none used on the premises
We have none of these for the exclusive use of the Memorial Hall, but individual committee members have them and use them on behalf of the hall
Digital Camera x1.
Have access to plc equipment
Interactive smart board, include a list of courses on offer
Whiteboard x1.
Home use of personal computer, laptop & printer for the FOSL
Digital Camera x2. Camcorder x2.
i-mac x9
Fax x1, Photocopier x1

Q1a. If none, would you find it helpful to have access to them?



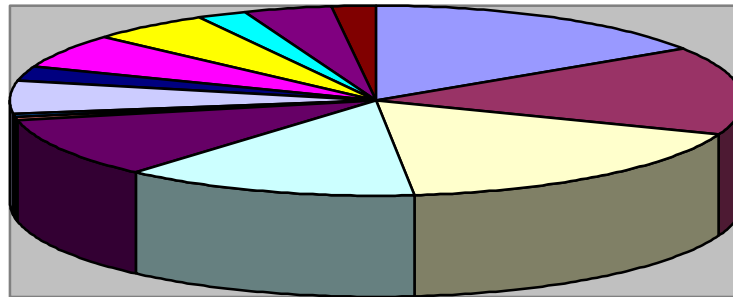
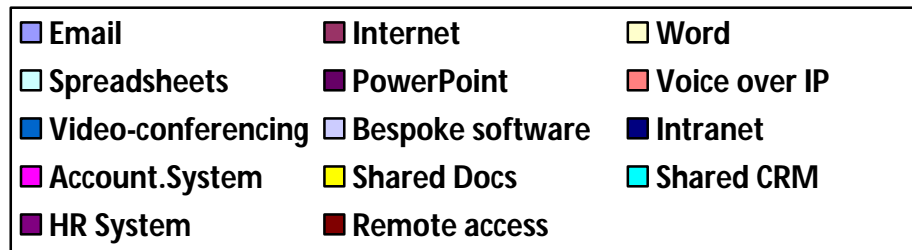
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Q1aA1)	29	15.18%
No (Q1aA2)	17	8.91%
Don't Know (Q1aA3)	145	75.91%

Q2. Do you have a Local Area Network?



Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Q2A1)	73	38.22%
No (Q2A2)	98	51.31%
Don't Know (Q2A3)	20	10.47%

Q3. Which of the following ICT applications does your organisation use?

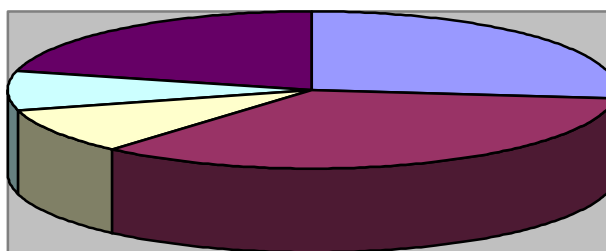


Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Email (Q3A1)	157	82.20%
Internet (Q3A2)	149	78.01%
Word Processing (Q3A3)	175	91.62%
Spreadsheets (Q3A4)	131	68.59%
PowerPoint (Presentation Software) (Q3A5)	101	52.88%
Voice over IP (Internet based telephone calls) (Q3A6)	7	3.66%
Video Conferencing (Q3A7)	5	2.62%
Specialist Software (Such as your own in house database) (Q3A8)	55	28.80%
Intranet (Organisation's internal website) (Q3A9)	26	13.61%
Computerised Accounting System (e.g. SAGE) (Q3A10)	58	30.37%
System for sharing documents (e.g. shared drive) (Q3A11)	52	27.23%
System for sharing customer information (Q3A12)	23	12.04%
Human resources management systems (e.g. in house payroll) (Q3A13)	37	19.37%
Remote access to internal system (e.g. access from home) (Q3A14)	20	10.47%

Q4. What are the major challenges to using ICT to administer your organisation?

Lack of skills & knowledge
 Lack of budget
 Lack of impartial advice
 Not seen as priority
 Other



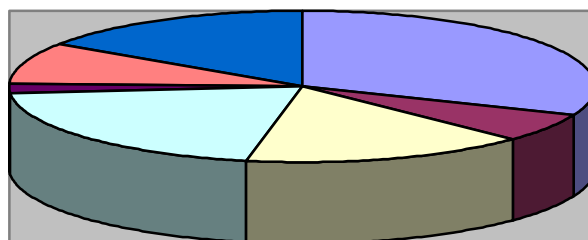
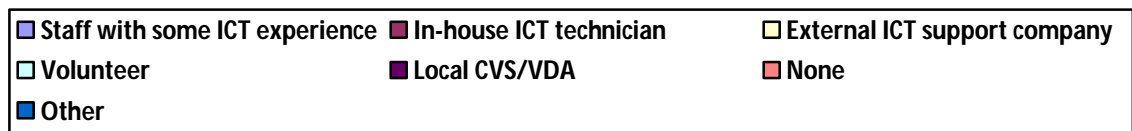
Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Lack of skills & knowledge (Q4A1)	85	44.50%
Lack of budget (Q4A2)	111	58.12%
Lack of impartial advice (Q4A3)	30	15.71%
Not seen as priority (Q4A4)	26	13.61%
Other	67	35.08%

Other
On-site support
Resource time. The Vicar is also technical support.
Training of Placements to use PC\'s in Business Administration to enhance their projects of gaining paid employment
Keeping up with changes taking place
No real reason
unnecessary for a small committee
Getting some staff to accept changes and updating system
Time to develop and organise it
n/a
lack of organised training
Lack of trust by manager about decisions made by IT responsible staff member.
Reliant on a volunteer trustee to solve/fix problems as and when he has time. Have had unsuccessful attempts at accessing funding for improved IT facilities.
None really... it\'s a one horse town!!
We do not have a base. The trustees are spread over a wide geographical area.
A major challenge is to finance and install ICT provision in refurbished centre opening

autumn 2009
Lack of volunteers with necessary skills
Cost and access to assistance when something goes wrong
Not entirely applicable as we have no centrally managed office, but ICT provision for community use would be potentially desirable
Should be provided with high speed computer
Not having a fixed office based. and not having anyone employed on a permanent basis to need to use IT.
There are no major challenges
Poor Equipment
We do not have a telephone line into the village hall. Broadband speed currently 2 MG
Pace of change to technology
No Internet Connection. ICT would be very helpful especially with the young youth who use our adjoining youth centre
Lack of specialist worker/knowledge when things go wrong sue to lack of budget
Older group members lack skills and do not have a computer at home to access all info e mails etc
All it work is done at home by the secretary and treasurer
Community development must run hand in hand with education. Libraries need to be there to support that. This means developing software/hardware provision. Money is always an issue
None - already using
None
Frustration at lack of help when things go wrong
None
no major challenges
Having someone to maintain website
Time

Q5. Who is responsible for the day to day ICT support and its maintenance?



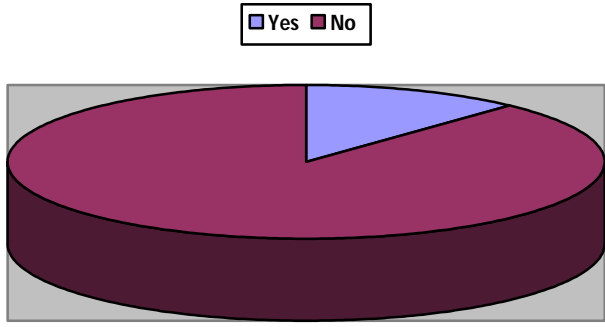
Respondents ticked more than one answer.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Staff with some ICT experience (Q5A1)	84	43.98%
In-house ICT technician (Q5A2)	16	8.38%
External ICT Support Company (Q5A3)	43	22.51%
Volunteer (Q5A4)	55	28.80%
Local CVS / VDA (Infrastructure organisation) (Q5A5)	5	2.62%
None (Q5A6)	24	12.57%
Other	42	21.99%

Other
TREAS./SEC. USING OWN IT EQUIP
Stall who are self-taught!
my husband
WRVS is the sponsor organisation of our project and therefore we have use of their IT dept.
9 trustees all use their own PC's and printers
n/a
board/trustees
We dont have anyone who is directly responsible - just a couple of people who step up when needed if within their skills
n/a
Touchbase ICT, Bellevue
Clerk, I suppose..
Borough Council
All ICT equipment used at present is secretary's private property in home.
some sessional - occasional days
Clerk
n/a. We have no such facility.
n/a
Buy in some support/SAGE package has a support element
Sometimes via relative's computer department at their work if we are really stuck
Network supported by contract
private individuals
Dep Chair maintains website
Guest on SBC web outlook. Support from SBC ICT Helpdesk
Buy people in occasionally
Do not have any knowledge of ICT myself. Need help please
PLC
Tapping into work IT Dept of a relative!!
I find it amazing that I and many other volunteers have to pay for internet, paper and

ink when MPs can claim expenses
some machines do have maintenance via Hartlepool borough council

Q6. Are you aware of any Infrastructure organisations offering ICT support and services in your region?



Out of 191 responses, only 23 organisations answered YES to this question.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	23	12.05%
No (N)	168	87.95%

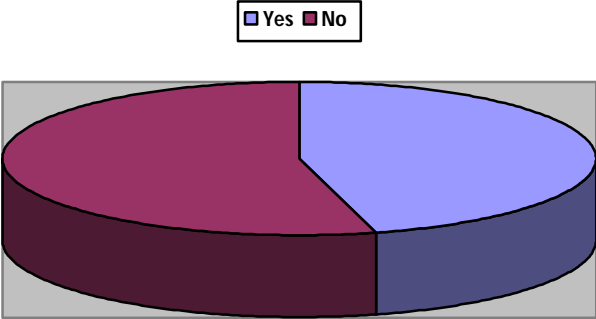
Q6a. If yes, please specify below

Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	23	12.05%
No answer	168	87.95%

Answer
ICT Champion VONNE. Andrew Samuel. Local Infrastructure new ICT Tees Valley.
Rotary District H.Q. Newcastle on Tyne.
TTS Ltd. CCT Ltd.
Charity Commission
TSG
MUDA
VONNE University of Teesside
Hyder Business Services
We have just received a grant to purchase new computers and a camera.
Advice from SCRGA
ICT training for Secretary
SRCGA
Saltburn terminus

RCVDA
Iteachu, Moorsholm
Neil Harland
RCVDA
Netgain
Community computer technicians
Darlington College ECDL
Evolution
Evolution
Evolution

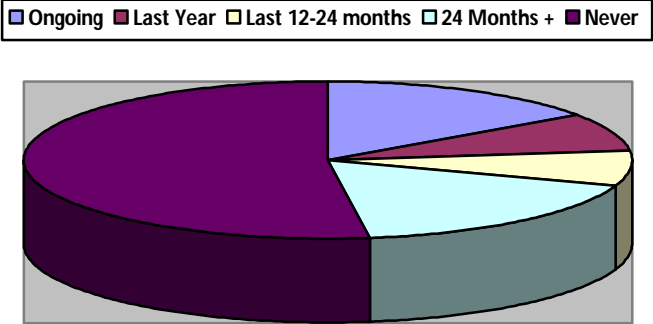
Q6b. Are you currently receiving support from them?



Out of 23 organisations, 11 answered YES to this question; and 12 answered NO.

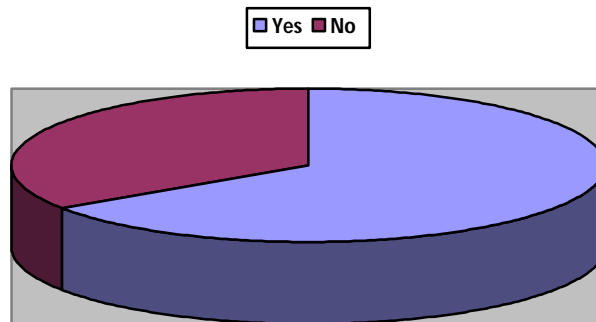
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	11	47.83%
No (N)	12	52.17%

Q7. When did your employees last undertake any ICT course / qualifications?



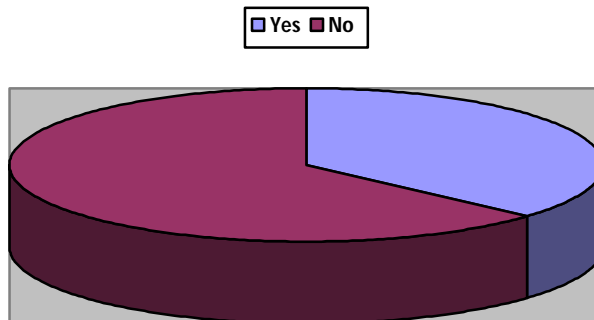
Answer	Count	Percentage
Ongoing (Q7A1)	29	15.18%
Last Year (Q7A2)	15	7.85%
Last 12 - 24 Months (Q7A3)	14	7.33%
24 Months + (Q7A4)	33	17.28%
Never (Q7A5)	100	52.36%

Q8. Would you be interested in receiving training on new / emerging technologies?



Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	125	65.45%
No (N)	66	34.55%

Q9. Do you require any training with specific software?



Out of 191 responses, 70 organisations answered YES to this question.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	70	36.65%
No (N)	121	63.35%

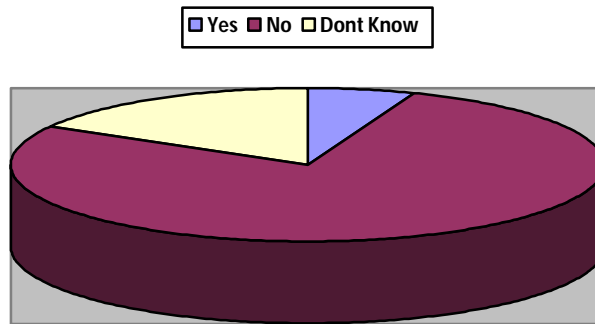
Q9a. Please specify below

Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	70	36.65%
No answer	121	63.35%

Answer
Adobe Contribute
Website design and management
not answered
Some staff need training in basic office software. Training to input information to website. Training on how to develop a networked computer system.
email server set up and software. purchased new cyber-cafe software.
Spreadsheets (excel). Power Point. Word Processing.
Creating a network server based system
Pay Role Sage
Web Maintenance / Design
We would like to be able to sell concert tickets online
Memory Map PHP Development Tools
MS Word MS Excel MS PowerPoint MS Publisher ..to improve basic skills.
(blank)
Excel Software
(blank)
(blank)
SAGE and accounting – spreadsheets
Design a webpage in different languages
Adobe in Design Photoshop
MS Access and Excel
GIS
PDF – spreadsheets
SAGE
Anything
MS Office Applications
Desk to Publicity
Creating and Managing Village Hall website
Website updating - virus software. firewalls - basic skills in identifying and fixing simple faults.
Sage and spreadsheets
new office systems

We have a very specific requirement for inputting to excel for our village show entries. So far no-one has been able to solve it!
Adobe Premier Magic Bullet Adobe after Effects
MS Office 2007. Word, Excel, PowerPoint
Email/spreadsheets. Introductory levels for residents for word processing/use of computer
Sage
Secretary may benefit from MS Word
Web development
Graphics to improve images
Graphics to improve images
MySQL
Specialised to credit unions
As above
Digital photography
(blank)
General word docs short cuts etc
Email - outlook - how to use Microsoft office help with using mobile phones for volunteers
Learn to do accounts for the carer how to pay her
Website development
Have been trying for years to find someone who is a whizz with input forms for MS Excel/Access for the village show entries. Not found anyone yet - usually I know more than they do!!!
(blank)
Accounts
email Internet
PowerPoint
All aspects relevant to running and publicising our vol org
Sage, PowerPoint
Web design
Office etc Microsoft
Any new developments
all of it
Sage. Databases.
possibly around producing professionally finished articles
Sage
MS Office
Level 3, CLAIT, ECDL
CLAIT
Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, Level 5, ECDL
Level 3, ECDL
Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, Level 5, Level 6, MICROSOFT Professional ECDL
Level 1, Level 2, CLAIT, EDCL

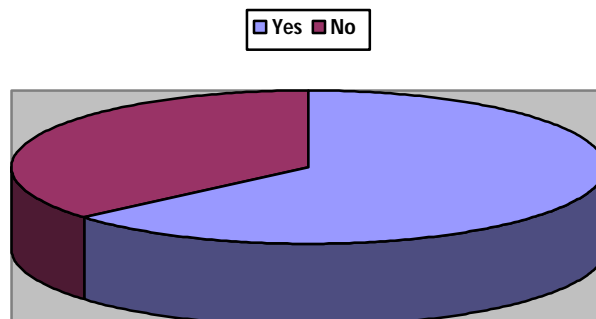
Q10. Are you aware of any funding streams for ICT support and services in the region?



Out of 191 responses, 11 organisations answered YES to this question.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Q10A1)	11	5.76%
No (Q10A2)	148	77.49%
Don't Know (Q10A3)	32	16.75%

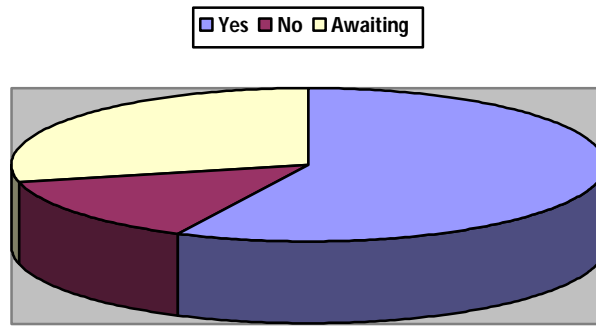
Q10a. Have you applied to them for funding?



Out of those 11 organisations, 7 answered YES to this question; and 4 answered NO.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	7	63.63%
No (N)	4	36.37%

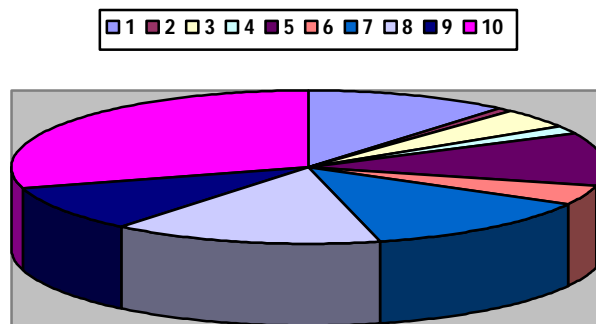
Q10b. Were you successful?



Out of the 7 organisations, 4 answered YES, 1 answered NO and 2 answered AWAITING.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	4	57.15%
No (N)	1	14.28%
Awaiting	2	28.57%

Q11. Overall, how do you rate the importance of ICT in your organisation?
(1 = not important, 10 = very important)



Answer	Count	Percentage
1	21	10.99%
2	2	1.05%
3	8	4.19%
4	3	1.57%
5	21	10.99%
6	8	4.19%
7	25	13.09%
8	28	14.66%
9	19	9.95%
10	56	29.32%

5. Feedback

Analysing Third Sector organisations' weaknesses, gaps and unmet needs in ICT support service provision is a task that must be performed by taking in consideration the nature of those organisations.

Most of the Third Sector organisations in this survey are run exclusively by volunteers; many of them have other jobs and professional commitments to attend to on a daily basis, which makes it very difficult to run efficiently the Third Sector organisation they belong to. In that connection, they did not show much reassurance and skills when assessing their current ICT needs. In fact, most of the organisations taking part in this survey, expressed a call for help in assessing their current ICT needs.

Some respondents found certain questions confusing or not applicable to their organisations. They made notes clarifying why none of the answer-options were relevant to their organisations (for example: organisations run by volunteers could not accurately answer questions related to employees; organisations with no operational premises or hardware equipment could not accurately answer questions related to hardware support and maintenance). All those notes are included and considered in this report's feedback and conclusion.

5.1. Weaknesses and gaps in ICT - training, hardware & support/maintenance

The most important outcome from this survey is undoubtedly the lack of ICT skills and knowledge that respondents presented. This lack of ICT skills shaped the accuracy of their responses and the reliability of the overall statistical figures.

44.50% of the surveyed organisations see as a priority to get ICT training rather than investing in updating their ICT equipment (hardware). This is because their lack or little knowledge does not allow them to assess their ICT needs competently, hence preventing them from maximising the usage of their current resources.

The respondents express concern that they cannot always get the ICT training they need (lack of budget, lack of time, lack of impartial advice on ICT training courses), so they are stuck with their lack of ICT skills as well as their old hardware equipment, all of which have a direct impact on efficiency, productivity and the way they run their organisations on a day-to-day basis.

52.36% of responding organisations have NEVER had their employees undertaking any ICT courses. This corroborates the urgent need for ICT training as step 1 towards increasing and improving ICT usage by Third Sector organisations within the Tees Valley area.

65.45% of the surveyed organisations are willing to receive training on new/emerging technologies. This figure works as an indicator of the real challenges for these organisations to improve their ICT knowledge: it is not about lack of interest, but lack of financial resources. Lack of time also plays a direct role, especially for volunteers, who have other daily jobs elsewhere and may find it difficult to attend an ICT training course on behalf of the charity they belong to.

36.65% (70 out of 191 organisations) affirm they require training with specific software. Many of the rest of organisations did not answer YES to Q9 NOT because they do not need training on specific software, but because they cannot assess their own ICT needs due to lack of ICT knowledge.

The most common software programmes respondents need training on are: MS Office, Adobe, SAGE and ECDL.

In relation to hardware usage and ownership, the most relevant finding is the lack of budget. More than 150 organisations out of 191 responses claim to have insufficient financial resources to improve their hardware facilities. Due to this reason, these organisations cannot operate as competent and efficiently as they should in order to develop their organisational objectives and core activities successfully.

Printers (71.73%) and laptops (71.68%) are the most popular hardware equipment used, followed by desktops (67.54%) and scanners (42.93%). The least used hardware are Blackberry, iPhones and PDA (9.42%).

38.22% (73 organisations out of 191) claim to have a Local Area Network installed at their premises.

Lack of premises is the one reason why many small Third Sector organisations do not own any equipment. As they do not have a physical address (because it is not realistically affordable), the committee members and volunteers decide to operate from their own homes using their personal desktops, laptops, printers, etc. These organisations do not have a structured way to run their operations. The outcome of this scenario is poor operational communication, high levels of duplicate work and low levels of productivity. The organisations struggle to meet targeted goals and accomplish any task competently.

With regards to ICT support, Third Sector organisations in our region feel they do not get as much impartial advice, help, information and general support as they should giving the importance of ICT in today's world.

15.71% of all the respondents find lack of impartial advice as the major challenge to using ICT to administer their organisations.

Developing ICT resources should be a priority to any organisation, however lack of skills and support makes the task an impossible one.

168 organisations out of 191 surveyed do not know of any Infrastructure organisations offering ICT support; and 148 of those 191 organisations are not aware of any funding streams for ICT support in the region.

With this kind of scenario it is not surprising that many Third Sector organisations in the Tees Valley area are very poor in ICT skills and resources.

The responsibility for the daily ICT support/maintenance, for 43.98% of the respondents is with staff with some ICT experience, followed by 28.80% of organisations which use volunteers for their ICT support/maintenance.

22.51% of the surveyed organisations use external ICT Support Company and 21.99% of the respondents ticked OTHER because most of them do not have anyone directly responsible for ICT support/maintenance or their organisations simply do not own any hardware.

5.2. Identifying ways of improving ICT services to Third Sector organisations in our region

Third Sector organisations have a positive input into our society as well as playing an important role in the national, regional and local economy.

Within the scope of this project, Infrastructure organisations are meant to help the frontline organisations on improving their ICT services by offering support, training and resources.

In order to achieve this overall goal effectively, Infrastructure organisations should develop a strategic plan which includes the main challenges & weaknesses found in this survey:

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of skills
- Lack of budget

Below are some suggestions for short-term and long-term objectives.

Short-term objectives:

a) To produce an introductory marketing campaign to raise awareness of the regional Infrastructure organisations to the frontline organisations. This introductory campaign may be designed to be printed on leaflets, e-leaflets (online), specific magazines and broadcasted in local t.v. and radio stations. It should contain:

- Introduction of the aims and objectives of this programme/project
- Introductory background of the regional Infrastructure organisations
- Highlight the importance of ICT within an organisation in today's world
- Highlight the benefits of ICT as a managerial/operational tool
- Highlight the benefits of ICT as a marketing tool

b) To produce a calendar of **free / low cost** ICT training courses aimed exclusively to Third Sector organisations. It should contain:

- Basic ICT skills - introduction to hardware usage/maintenance
introduction to MS Word
introduction to internet (search engines, email)
- Emerging/new technologies
- Specific software - MS Office, Adobe, SAGE , ECDL
- Flexible timetable: calendar should include courses run evenings and weekends to allow volunteers (with other job commitments) to attend the training courses.
- Various venues: courses should be held in different locations (within the 5 boroughs) to help attendees.

c) To encourage frontline organisations to make the most out of emerging technologies such as social media tools (Twitter, Facebook, Ning etc). The Infrastructure organisations should provide support and training where possible, on how frontline organisations can benefit from such tools. This is both a short and long term objective.

Long-term objectives:

a) To provide periodical contact to the local frontline organisations: regular leaflets, e-newsletters, magazines and general meetings, etc - aiming to offer long-term advice and support. The materials produced should include:

- Info on local ICT training courses
- ICT News and related information
- ICT updates and advice
- More Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
- Info on ICT Grants, Funding Streams, etc

b) To design / join a website / portal for all Third Sector organisations in the Tees Valley area, in order to raise awareness and share knowledge.

It would especially help those organisations with no website or budget for it. Membership should be free / low cost. It should provide:

- Frontline organisations contact details (including link to their website, if applicable)
- Frontline organisation dedicated page: background, core activity etc
- Online donations (optional)
- Info on regional/local ICT training courses
- ICT News and related information
- ICT updates and advice
- More Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
- Info on ICT Grants, Funding Streams, etc

Any boroughs with already these premises should look into ways to improve ICT services provision and support offered to Third Sector organisations.

c) To provide local premises available to Third Sector organisations, offering free/low cost hardware equipment (usage and hire facilities), ICT training courses and meeting rooms. This would be a real and practical help for those small organisations that do not have premises/hardware resources.

6. Conclusion

In our sample of 191 organisations, it is no coincidence the high demand for ICT services provision. Businesses and organisations realise the importance of ICT resources and the impact that lack of them can have in their daily operations.

Third Sector organisations are well-aware of the relevance of ICT applications for efficient systems and they are willing to learn ICT technology. Unfortunately, they have neither the resources nor the skills to assess their ICT needs properly, leaving them within an isolated and/or inadequate ICT scenario.

It is important to appreciate information, advice and support they need to improve their ICT resources and how that will help them run their organisations more effectively.

82.20% of the respondents understand the overall importance of ICT but cannot recognise nor assess their own ICT needs. This suggests a major call for ICT assessment support by providing them with financial resources to outsource the ICT assessment service - or by offering ICT training courses (hardware, software, maintenance) in order to help the frontline organisations to become knowledgeable, confident and independent when identifying their own ICT needs.

In the current economic climate it is vital to be realistic and efficient (saving time and money) when structuring an action plan to develop ICT support to Third Sector organisations. It would also be worth assessing and analysing ICT needs and skills of the Infrastructure organisations in order to provide them with the resources and knowledge they need to help the frontline organisations.

In the near future it may be useful to assess ICT issues for Infrastructure organisations. It would be interesting to evaluate what can be done to improve the services Infrastructure organisations provide to frontline organisations within our region, when it comes to ICT support and training.

All taken into account, it is fair to say that providing ICT support to Third Sector organisations is a socially worthwhile cause and it is advisable to plan it effectively as this will not only benefit the frontline organisations but also the people they support. Efficient planning will avoid resource wasting, save time and money, which are coincidentally the two major causes for concern by the surveyed organisations for not getting enough ICT support.

Organisations also need to consider social media tools as additional tool to meet their objectives e.g. raising awareness or market research. These tools are free or available at low cost. However great emphasis has to be placed on time needed to create and manage these sites.

In general it is important that frontline organisations receive high standards of service (ICT support) from the Infrastructure organisations. This point is key to assuring funders about the credibility of this project. It will also help frontline organisations to build confidence about the services and support Infrastructure organisations offer them both in the short and long run. The outcome should be that Infrastructure, frontline organisations and all the people they support greatly benefit from this relationship.