



# Council for Ethnic Minority Communities



## Making ICT Work for Northamptonshire VCS

ICT Strategy Report: Findings of the ICT Capital Improvement Programme  
and the Bringing ICT for LIO's into the 21 century

October 2006

Report by Rachel McGrath  
Commissioned by Council for Ethnic Minority Communities-Northamptonshire



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	Page 3
<b>Section One:</b> Executive Summary	Page 4
<b>Section Two:</b> Introduction	Page 8
Aims and Objectives	Page 8
Background and Literature Review	Page 9
Methodology	Page 15
<b>Section Three:</b> <i>Findings One:</i> Field Notes from an ICT Engineer	Page 16
<i>Findings Two:</i> Telephone Survey and Interviews	Page 20
<b>Section Four:</b> ICT Strategy for Northamptonshire VCS: A Way Forward	Page 36
Proposed Model of Delivery:	
Strategic: Formation of Northamptonshire ICT Working Hub	Page 37
Action: Voluntary and Community Sector Support	Page 37
Table Summary of Strategic Support	Page 39
Outcomes and Outputs for VCS and Wider Community	Page 42
Investment Plan to Deliver ICT Strategy	Page 44
Overview of ICT Strategy	Page 46
Bibliography and References	Page 47
Appendix A: Full Cost Recovery	Page 48
Appendix B: ICT Strategy for a Group	Page 49
Appendix C: Outline Proposal for Voluntary and Community Sector Website Group Information Database	Page 50
Appendix D: Questionnaire Template	Page 51
Website Development Report	Page 54
Appendix E: Books, Articles, Reports & Websites	Page 61
Conclusion	Page 62

# Acknowledgements

***“It would help us all to have training on the software we have got. The cost stops us from accessing training we need. Our limited budget means that ICT training is a low priority.”***

*Kathy Mason, Corby Women’s Centre*

This project was funded by ChangeUp through Northamptonshire Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Consortium in 2006. Special thanks are due to staff at Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC) for their support especially Roy Brownbill, the ICT Field Engineer and Nick Mahailiuc the Software Engineer.

A special word of thanks is due to the participating organisations. Their honesty and openness has provided a helpful snapshot of the way ICT is currently being used by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Northamptonshire. This will hopefully enable a better way forward for the sector as a whole:

Food for Thought Programme	Daylight Centre
Wellingborough Sport and Social Club	Alliance for Black Children
Wellingborough Freecycle	Northampton Bangladeshi Association
Corby Mind	Fruit and Veg Plot
Fermynwoods Art Gallery	Mind Rushden
Anti-Drugs Awareness Team	Kettering Youth Information and Counselling
Somali Forum	Corby Volunteering Centre
Time 2 Talk	Serve Rushden
Northamptonshire Community Foundation	Willow Arts Centre
Doddridge Centre	Kettering Voluntary Network
East Northamptonshire Voluntary Action	Disabled People’s Alliance Northamptonshire
Northampton Volunteering Centre	User Support Service
Citizen Advice Bureau Northamptonshire	Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation
Thorplands Community Co-operative	Northamptonshire Black History Project
Workbridge Centre	Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre
Northampton Women’s Aid	Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council
Daventry Volunteer Centre	Council for Ethnic Minority Communities
Victim Support Northamptonshire	Sikh Community Centre
Zindgani	Dostiyo
Victoria Centre	CVS Northamptonshire
Patel Samaj of Northampton	Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs
Kettering Mind	Wellingborough Volunteer Bureau
Voluntary Action Northamptonshire	Deaf Connect
Synergy Forum	NCompass
Northampton Afro Caribbean Organisation	
African Heritage Cultural and Arts International Network	
Hartwell Events Committee	Corby Women’s Centre
Playtime Play Therapy	
Threshold Studios	
Ability Northants	

## Section One:

### Executive Summary

*"I use my house as an office and I pay for the internet from my own pocket."  
Jayantilal Patel, Zindgani*

The findings are based on technical support provided to 35 groups, interviews and questionnaire conducted to 53 groups and 'follow up' visits to 10 groups which had received ICT Technical Support through an ICT Engineer commissioned by CEMC.

From interviews carried out with respondents for the purpose of this research, some key issues include:

- Issues with finding reliable and trustworthy advice
- Difficulty in securing internal support or affordable external ICT Support
- Lack of understanding around ICT issues
- Lack of affordable training in ICT not available
- People are valued over and above ICT; therefore time and financial resources are not invested in ICT as face to face contact with people is seen as of primary importance not client database records. Therefore ICT processing is perceived as secondary and not 'real' work.

#### Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page

Murphy,

Many thanks for sorting everything out so quickly. I have budget for a wireless network. Talking to Roy, he tells me that he could do this for us. Would that be okay as I am keen to use someone recommended for this.

Regards

Jan

(Kettering Volunteer Network)

A key finding to point out is that most ICT support is external paid than unpaid, perhaps a reflection of the difficulties of finding a volunteer with the appropriate skills or a support provider willing to carry out pro-bono work.

The majority of organisations had a reasonable level of computer equipment and software packages with broadband Internet access. Most individuals had some level of formal training in software packages and use of email and websites. It was generally indicated that there was a need for greater access to low-cost training but many organisations were reticent to recognise ICT training as a priority due to budget priorities being focused on delivery of project activity to clients. For many organisations the link between providing services to people and building on their ability to provide effective services to people through ICT development was not made.

Furthermore, it was consistently clear from interviews that ICT training in an external learning venue was neither appealing nor perceived as effective to the majority of respondents. Whilst many respondents acknowledged that their staff and volunteers were not at a level of desired understanding in relation to ICT that further enabled them to carry out their work, the point was also made that courses outside of the workplace at a cost often meant that groups were unable to fund workers and volunteers given limited resources. Many respondents stated that flexible and tailored ICT training that could be delivered at the workstation would be preferable to time taken out of the workplace.

A key pattern with regards to use of software is that Microsoft dominates; this is not surprising given the monopoly of the computer market by this brand in the home and small business sector.

The standard of ICT technical support available to the sector was shown to be highly variable ranging from excellent to extremely poor. There were many comments made about what was perceived to be the high expense of external paid ICT support services. Other organisation proved to be resourceful or fortunate in having unpaid support through a knowledgeable volunteer or other individual; however it was acknowledged that this was not necessarily a sustainable method of providing ICT support.

There was a key issue that rural groups often operate without access to key services such as ICT infrastructure as compared to urban areas. There is a particular need for community groups in rural areas to access ICT specialist skills.

## **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Hi Murphy

Thanks very much for sending us the new computer-it's for me so I am particularly grateful!!! – no more windows 98 crashing all the while – it's like being at home!!

Best regards

Richard Tomalin  
South Northamptonshire Volunteer Bureau

There is potential for sharing common, shared services and practices. This includes ICT equipment purchasing deals. There was a sense from groups interviewed and visited that an 'approved' common list of providers (e.g. Trainers, Consultants and ICT Specialists) could be of use. It would help provide a more common approach to similar ICT issues and help ensure that 'quality' was being adhered to.

Key findings included the following:

- There is a lack of ICT Infrastructure for Groups
- There is no set standard of ICT practice; this means the level of knowledge, training and equipment is highly variable from organisation to organisation
- Getting the Maximum Benefit from ICT is as essential to the Voluntary and Community Sector as it is to the Private and Public Sector
- Funding in the VCS is based around Project Activity Delivery and not Core Costs such as ICT
- ICT Systems are not sufficient without the necessary technical support that goes with using ICT Equipment
- Groups are unaware of what Support and Information is out there
- There is a need to promote tailored ICT for people with disabilities

There are three clear divisions of organisational understanding and use of ICT in the Sector:

- Organisations that recognise the need and value of ICT systems and training but work in a climate of uncertainty in terms of funding to cover these core costs.
- Organisations that see a certain value in the use of ICT but do see it as a low budget priority in relation to delivering frontline services
- Smaller groups that have minimal access to ICT through home PC use or 'laptop loan' services and are yet to establish a more formalised use of ICT systems

Key respondents also had a strong sense that they could somehow be making better use of ICT or accessing training but were not sure of access to training or lacked the time and resources to do so.

There was an awareness from some respondents that ICT could revolutionise the way they worked but felt mystified by the intractability of technical language and therefore less inclined to follow through.

This has an impact on the lack of formalised standards and procedures around ICT use and organisations from developing an ICT-specific Business Plan to implementing an Internet Policy. The balancing act of budget priorities often means that ICT has to take a back seat.

## **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Dear Murphy,

I write to thank you on behalf of Victoria Centre for the IT support Roy provided for us recently.

Yours sincerely

Edeltraud Freund  
Victoria Centre

## Section Two

***“I need to work ICT smarter as I don’t work as smart as I could!”***

*Susan Walmsley, Fruit and Veg Plot*

### Introduction

This report was undertaken on behalf of the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC) as part of a Change Up funded Project dedicated to building the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure of the Northamptonshire Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

The report will recommend an ICT Strategy for the Northamptonshire VCS based on the impact assessment of the work carried out by an ICT field engineer for a selection of local Voluntary and Community Organisations on behalf of CEMC, a ‘snapshot’ of a range of groups ICT status and needs and the wider benefits of the ICT revolution to the Sector as identified through local, regional and national research.

### Aims and Objectives

***“It would be good to have economies of scale; if we all go to the same provider we could get cheaper rates.”***

*Sylvia Tilak, Voluntary Action Northamptonshire*

For all intents and purposes, the over-riding aim of the ICT Strategy will be to better enable Northamptonshire VCS to:

- Reduce the inequality of access to ICT compared to the Private and Public Sector
- Increase the Capacity of Northamptonshire VCS to use ICT effectively and therefore have a positive impact on services delivered to a range of thematic and geographic communities
- Encourage the development of Standard Policies and Procedures in relation to the use of ICT in the workplace based on good practice

- Enable access to 'value for money' ICT Technical Support and recognise the value of ongoing care of ICT equipment and systems
- Enable personal and professional development of staff, volunteers and communities of interest in relation to ICT
- Improve social inclusion through the encouragement of the e-community and online communications
- Connect Northamptonshire VCS to ICT networks, hubs and other relevant source of information
- Influence Funders and policy makers in the development of ICT in relation to Northamptonshire VCS

## Background and Literature Review

***“In terms of ICT, we have a year to year sense of uncertainty.”***

*Steve, Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre*

ICT is increasingly becoming recognised as a vital component of operating a voluntary and community organisation. Increased reliance on email, use of the internet for research or increasing customer base, general administration e.g. word processing for letters, reports and documents, spreadsheets for accounts and statistical reporting make ICT essential to even the smallest of community groups.

Traditionally Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are perceived as being people-focused and due to working on limited budgets in a competitive funding environment, this often renders budgeting for ICT equipment, maintenance and training a low priority.

This is further compounded by the nature in which a community group develops; firstly identifying a need in a community which an interested and dedicated set of individuals come together to alleviate that need. The focus is the community of interest and as a result ICT and the investment into it often comes along as a gradual need as the group develops, often in a non-systematic fashion, due to prioritising other needs e.g. volunteer and management committee training, and the fact that most funders fail to recognise the validity of building ICT costs into budgets.

The focus on delivering frontline services to people means that many groups often fail to see the link between providing services to people and building on their ability to provide effective services to people by building their own skills through ICT training and systems which will help create efficient delivery of services.

Given the choice, on a limited budget, to provide costs towards direct services and to improve and upgrade ICT systems, smaller organisations will understandably choose the former and not the latter.

For larger and more established organisations which understand the need for effective ICT systems in place, there is a limitation placed on them due to the funding climate. There is often a lack of willingness or ability for funders to contribute to core costs. This presents a challenge for organisations to maintain efficient ICT systems and therefore impacts on the sustainable development of ICT infrastructure within the VCS sector at large. The standards of equipment and systems are wildly variable.

From a wider perspective there needs to be a revolution in the perspective of funders in terms of supporting core costs versus specific project activity costs. Momentum is building in terms of the recognition of ICT as an essential element of delivering effective project activity that has an impact to communities and there is a range of research nationally and regionally which now supports this viewpoint.

### **Summary of Key Recent Research Findings relating to ICT in the Voluntary and Community Sector**

#### **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Dear Murphy

I am writing to thank you very much for your quick response to our request for computers. We are delighted with our new computers. This has given the staff and members the encouragement to enjoy using the computers with an approach that is more efficient and satisfying.

The PCs have taken away the burden of having to find funding to replace the old ones, and that is a brief respite for me. I am most grateful to you.

With renewed thanks.

Yours sincerely  
Olive Robinson  
Centre Manager  
(African Caribbean Elders Service)

- Many organisations did not have a budget for IT equipment, maintenance or training.
- Although resourcing is a critical issue, many of the barriers to effective use of ICT are internal
- Organisations predominantly had older equipment and outdated operating systems. (Windows 98 or earlier)
- Where groups had more than one PC, the machines frequently had different operating systems and software on them, which makes file-sharing and networking more difficult.
- There was often a lack of understanding of viruses and the need to update protection regularly.
- Many smaller organisations have no 'owned' equipment at all, relying instead on personal computers belonging to staff or volunteers operated wholly from individual homes.
- ICT is a weakness in much of the sector and that infrastructure support is largely lacking.

These findings evidence the problematic use of ICT within the Voluntary and Community Sector. It seems that the key principal barrier as touched on is the lack of strategic understanding of how ICT can actually benefit the sector. Some of these barriers are either external e.g. lack of funding or internal e.g. lack of training.

Below are some key findings teased out from a wide range of research available locally, regionally and nationally.

### **Local Research**

#### **Northamptonshire ACRE: Rural ICT Project 2006**

Moving forward from a previous study in 2004 entitled "*Northamptonshire: Evaluation Report of ICT Support Service for Voluntary Groups in Rural areas*", Northamptonshire ACRE identify some key concerns for rural groups and use of ICT which include:

- Additional support needed in ICT training including evening training sessions
- High use of old computer equipment

- The need to raise awareness of Health and Safety issues pertaining to the use of computer equipment

## **Regional Research**

### **East Midlands Development Agency 2002**

In 2002 the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) had developed a Strategic Framework for Developing ICT in the East Midlands which recognised the need to increase access and training to ICT as a '*critical element of regional competitiveness*'<sup>1</sup>. This includes the need to up skill support agencies that provide services to a range of communities in order to raise the social and economic capital of the Region in line with the Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands.

### **Derbyshire CVS: Is Derbyshire Doing IT? 2004**

As a comparative sub-region within the East Midlands, this report evidences the need for Voluntary and Community Organisations within Derbyshire to make better use of ICT and that in order to achieve this there has to be a driving force or catalyst to champions the cause of ICT within the VCS (Page 41).

## **National Research**

### **Change Up**

The National Change Up Agenda for the Voluntary and Community Sector, which is part of the Home Office Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework, recognises the need to secure a high quality and funded infrastructure which includes ICT, in order to help front-line organisations to achieve their aims in delivering services to local people.

### **National ICT Hub**

This is an online community which has developed as a result of the Change Up agenda, dedicated to providing a network and range of information, good practice and resources related to ICT for the VCS. As a national 'hub', it is intended to provide necessary strategic leadership in this thematic area of development.

### **ICT Consortium: Baseline Research and Evaluation Framework 2004**

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<sup>1</sup> Page 2, East Midlands Development Agency, 'A Strategic Framework for Developing ICT in the East Midlands' February 2002.

This key piece of Research outlined some key indicators of the success of future funding of ICT services for the VCS at large. This included:

- **Cost and Sustainability:** Cost is a real barrier, especially for smaller organisations, and some level of subsidisation is desirable
- **Realistic Expectations:** Organisations will prioritise specific technical problems over wider strategic ICT development therefore there needs to be an allowance that awareness of policy and practice will take time
- **Targeted, High Value Services:** Most successful users of ICT have properly assessed and tailored their use of ICT according to client need and not try to be 'all things to all people'.

The reports that accessibility of ICT is no longer a primary issue of the VCS nationally but rather the effective planning and management of ICT resources for small to medium sized organisations.

### **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**

In 2004, NCVO, as a key member of a national ICT Consortium, prior to its evolution into what would become the National ICT Hub, identified through baseline ICT research on the sector that *'Although 85% of voluntary organisations say that computers are vital to their work, only 20% have funders who accept ICT capital or running costs.'*<sup>2</sup>

### **Department for Trade and Industry: Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy**

This recent report acknowledges that ICT has become all pervasive in people's professional and personal lives and acknowledges that there is a digital divide whereby certain groups and communities are 'digitally excluded' and thereby not gaining the benefits of ICT.

More often than not, the very communities which are 'digitally excluded' are arguably thematic and geographic communities which Voluntary and Community frontline services are engaged with supporting. It is therefore vital that these frontline services are able to set a precedent in terms of accessibility to ICT.

The Government has committed itself to increasing access to the use of ICT and the Internet to the wider Community to make the UK more digitally inclusive and will review its strategy in 2008 to monitor progress of reducing the digital divide in Civil Society:

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/press/releases.asp?id=973&fID=38](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/press/releases.asp?id=973&fID=38)

*“We must harness the power of ICT to modernise public services so they are as personalised, efficient and responsive as the most successful companies.”<sup>3</sup>*

### **National ICT Hub: IT Funding for Charities Survey 2006**

Key findings from this survey recently carried out in March 2006 evidenced that lack of funding for ICT is a key factor for VCS organisations not making better use of available technology. Furthermore only a third of organisations interviewed had been successful in acquiring funding specifically for ICT.

Ironically it was far or easier to gain funding for client users in terms of ICT training and equipment use than it was for ‘back office infrastructure and running costs’.

This well-rounded piece of research gives a clear indication of the ongoing funding issues related to ICT, the training versus time and resources dilemma and the need for organisations to better present their cases to funders aswell as the need for funders to acknowledge that ICT is a vital component of community project delivery.

### **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

To whom it may concern

CEMC were recommended to me by NCompass to assist our organisation in bringing our IT equipment up to date. From the first telephone call to CEMC and subsequent signposting to Roy Brownbill, the manner in which we have been dealt with has been extremely professional and helpful. Roy arranged visits to our building to needs assess our equipment; he helped us to make sensible decisions regarding purchases and negotiated on our behalf with providers etc. He is always available and approachable and I look forward to his continued input and support.

Yours sincerely

Mags McGuire  
Corby Volunteer Centre

There is an ever increasing body of literature and research which evidences how ICT has evolved in the Voluntary and Community Sector and how the Sector can further put ICT to use. It seems that the current use of ICT within the sector is growing and there is a wider acknowledgement and recognition that ICT can be of equal benefit to the VCS as it is to the Private and Public Sector.

<sup>3</sup> Page 5, ‘Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy’, the Department of Trade and Industry, April 2005

However there seem to be ongoing issues with the consistency of how ICT systems are adopted within the VCS especially for small to medium sized organisations. There is evidently a need for tailored specialist help.

As a result of the National Government Change Up Agenda to modernise the VCS, there have been opportunities to change the tides of existing practice towards more efficient methods of using ICT that will build the capacity and sophistication of organisations to better deliver services to the communities they serve geographically and thematically.

## Methodology

***“We don’t have time to access ICT training; due to funding cutbacks, ICT is not a priority training area.”***

*Lesley Knight, Deaf Connect*

Between January and August 2006, an ICT Field Engineer visited 35 Voluntary and Community organisations onsite to provide technical support which included ‘in kind’ equipment donations, upgrading of hardware and software, setting up network environments and basic support such as changing of email passwords.

During July 2006, 53 Voluntary and Community Groups, including a range of groups which had been provided with ICT field support, took part in a questionnaire, assessing their current ICT equipment and systems, levels of support, training and gaps. This was intended to provide a ‘snapshot’ of the varying range of needs and issues occurring in the sector in relation to ICT.

The Researcher also ‘shadowed’ the ICT Engineer in follow-up visits to a selection of 10 organisations that had previously received dedicated ICT Technical support in order for an update on the impact analysis on the support provided and the benefits this had provided in terms of day to day work duties and project delivery.

Desk research on regional and national ICT Research and developments has been reported on in order to provide a wider picture of general trends and policy development that will have an impact locally.

## Section Three

***“We ought to be able to access ICT training that is value for money.”***

*Ron Johnson, User Support Services*

### Findings 1:

#### Field Notes from an ICT Engineer

An ICT Engineer was employed through CEMC for the express purpose of providing equipment upgrades and technical support to approximately 35 VCS organisations through an eight month period in order to test out the need for dedicated ICT Support in the Sector.

The following information presents the findings of the ICT Engineer through onsite work, face to face and telephone support and interviews.

A key issue that the Engineer out in the field discovered is that most groups were operating with ICT systems that were less than satisfactory. This included reliance on old hardware and software, lack of computers, reliance on free or limited technical support and lack of access to the Internet. This also included variable levels and types of technical support when ICT systems broke down.

**Alert: There is no set standard of ICT practice; this means the level of knowledge, training and equipment is highly variable from organisation to organisation**

Nearly all groups visited onsite had no standard policies or procedures on use of ICT, training for staff and volunteers, Internet use or an ICT strategy in place to plan for future ICT needs, training and support.

**Alert: Getting the Maximum Benefit from ICT is as essential to the Voluntary and Community Sector as it is to the Private Sector**

Most organisations, whilst having standard procedures and good practice for user involvement, Health and Safety, Volunteers and Equal Opportunities, do not seem to prioritise good practice and use of ICT equipment. There seems to exist a common

misperception that use of ICT is something that the Commercial Sector does. Historically and traditionally, the focus on people or client-centred services means that in relation to budget management, ICT is often a low priority in delivery of project activity for the benefit of the communities which they are serving.

This misperception, especially for smaller groups, has a directly negative impact on use of ICT, the need for it and therefore the investment in ICT.

**Alert: Funding in the VCS Sector is based around Project Activity Delivery and not Core Costs such as ICT**

The lack of recognition by funders in terms of full cost recovery and being traditionally focused on costs related to delivery of project activity means that many organisations and groups have suffered from the use of old and out-dated computer equipment, a reliance on hard copy storage of data and client information and a lack of compatibility of software and hardware where ICT equipment has been financed through different funders.

Furthermore, the challenge to continue to fund ICT systems and equipment and provide the necessary upgrades and maintenance proves constantly trying. There is a need for funders to be educated on addressing the needs of an organisation and not just the needs of a project being delivered.

This is particularly pertinent if ICT development in the sector is to become sustainable.

The ICT Engineer particularly commented on the fact that Funders need to look into upgrades required for equipment they may have supplied as it was also clear that Internet connectivity was not covered by any of the funding streams. Often groups feel grateful for success in acquiring the funded ICT equipment that there is often a short term view around the viability of that equipment in terms of future use and upgrades.

**Alert: ICT Systems are not sufficient without the necessary technical support that goes with using ICT Equipment**

In order for ICT development in the VSC sector to be sustainable it needs to address the issues of system administration and specialist staffing, hardware and software support, repairs, upgrading and replacement, training, security and the special needs

of potential users.

The ICT Engineer identified that wholly Volunteer-based groups were particularly at risk of sub-standard services.

**Alert: Groups are unaware of what Support and Information is out there**

The ICT Engineer further identified that groups were unaware of VCS Support sites such as the National ICT Hub Website for the National Voluntary and Community Sector and the opportunities to go on exchange visits to groups, find out good practice and share information.

**Alert: There is a need to promote tailored ICT for people with disabilities**

As evidenced through research carried out by the National ICT Hub ( ICT Hub Accessibility Research 2005), there is a lack of awareness of accessibility solutions in relation to Disability.

Two Disability groups which were interviewed made key points in relation to ICT Technical Support and tailored equipment and access to training for Disabled Staff, volunteers and clients.

For example, in relation to the Hard of Hearing Community, one respondent from a group supporting this community emphasized the reliance in email as a key form of communication and slow response time to technical 'glitches' in relation to email could seriously impede communications between service users and staff.

Another respondent from a Voluntary Disability Network highlighted the limited access to training courses within the County that were accessible to clients with Disabilities in terms of tailored equipment and access to the building where training could take place.

**Example Case Study 1: Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls Organisation, Northampton**

The ICT Engineer offered the following advice and support to the Organisation:

1. Technical Support on Equipment
2. Changing passwords on Email Accounts

3. Sign-posting to potential IT Volunteers
4. Review quotes for ICT Technical Support from other agencies
5. Health and Safety Advice on BT Patch Cabinet which was supported by the local Fire Brigade and resulted in BT Engineers coming onsite to move and adapt to a safer height level

Dostiyo identified that it was in need of the following:

1. Upgrade Computer equipment including the need for 'hot desking and laptops'
2. Refresher IT course for Staff and Volunteers

### **Example Case Study 2: Corby Volunteer Centre**

Only one representative had Internet access in the building and the key worker having to email mostly from home. The ICT engineer had set up a broadband system which now means all groups within the building base now have access to the Internet.

### **Example Case Study 3: Daylight Centre**

The ICT Field Engineer supported a volunteer at the Centre to build on their knowledge and confidence in providing internal technical support to the organisation which included a workshop room to test new and re-usable equipment, repair and refurbish machines

## **Summary of Key Support Issues**

***“It is easier for organisations like ourselves to get funding for ICT but with youth organisations we support we communicate mostly by phone or post as ICT is not seen as a priority for small youth clubs.”***

*Phil Euston, Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs*

<b>Technical Support</b>	<b>Type of Support</b>
Email	Logging in, one to one training
Networking and Network Environment Set up	Printers and Printing, Shared Folder Systems set up
General ICT Training	Use of Software and Hardware and access to low cost training and need for

	regular upskilling
Anti-Virus Software Management	Loading onto Computer
Policy Development	ICT and Internet Policy , back up procedures and data protection
ICT Support	Value for Money and access to free support
Funding	Covering ICT Costs, educating funders on core cost recovery of ICT Systems
ICT Systems	Good Practice on developing phases of installing equipment and maintaining it
ICT Business Plan	Developing a plan for the future to monitor use of ICT and ensure ICT supports project delivery

## Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page

Dear Murphy,

Previously I requested £2,500 from ChangeUp ICT Budget to enable us to update our file server. With the changes in software programme, more electronic submissions etc. our current service is running at capacity, plus is NT based. Our service for payroll, accounting and Independent Examination are greatly in demand and this new server will enable us to reach/provide services to a number of small VCS groups now on our waiting list.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Peers-Ross

Finance & Payroll

CVS Northamptonshire

## Findings 2:

***“ICT use has greater potential.”***

*Martin Lords, Citizen Advice Bureau Northamptonshire*

## Telephone Survey and Interviews

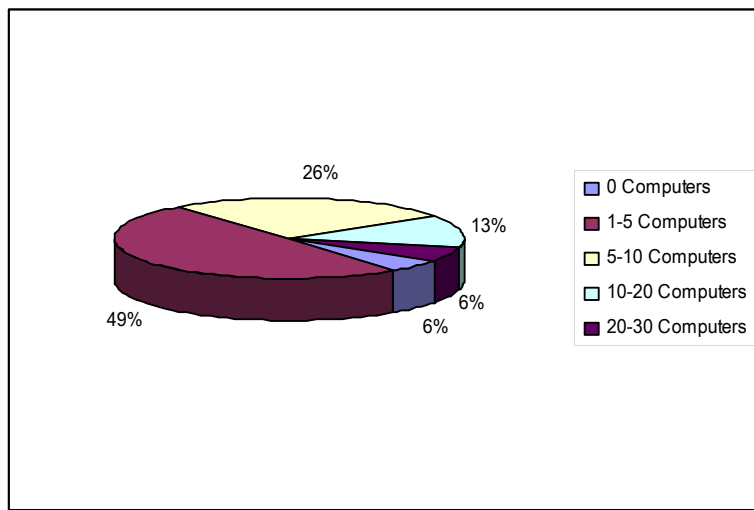
The subsequent findings are intended to provide a ‘snapshot’ of the current status and needs of VCS organisations in relation to ICT. This includes a selection of groups that were visited by the ICT Engineer commissioned by CEMC. The groups range from Local Infrastructure Groups or Second Tier Organisations, established

Countywide Charities to Small to Medium Sized organisations and local grassroots Community Groups.

### **Number of Computers owned by Group**

Nearly half the organisation interviewed (49%) had at least 1-5 computers in use for staff and volunteers, with just over a quarter (26%) having 5-10 computers in use. A small number (6%) had no ownership of a computer but qualified their response by indicating that they had access to a laptop loan service through a Local Infrastructure organisation or the use of a home computer.

Over a tenth of organisations interviewed had 10 -30 computers, these tended to be more well-established and larger charitable organisations, some of which managed an IT Suite for potential service users.



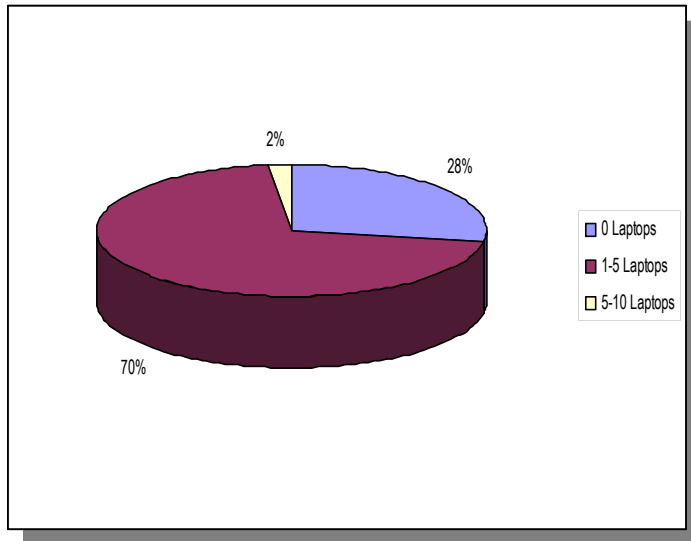
### **Number of Laptops owned by Group**

Most organisations had access to a laptop (70%), recognising the need for performing work outside the office, at home or 'out in the sector'. Whilst some organisations also provided this as a facility to smaller organisations, others commented on the lack of ICT technical support to regularly update laptops and ensure they were in prime condition for effective use.

Over a quarter of organisations lacked access to this facility of equipment (28%) but a key number identified the need for the use of a laptop computer for Staff.

A low level of organisations interviewed had 5-10 laptops in use; these tended to be large organisations or organisations where travel and flexible working environments were a key element of the post they held.

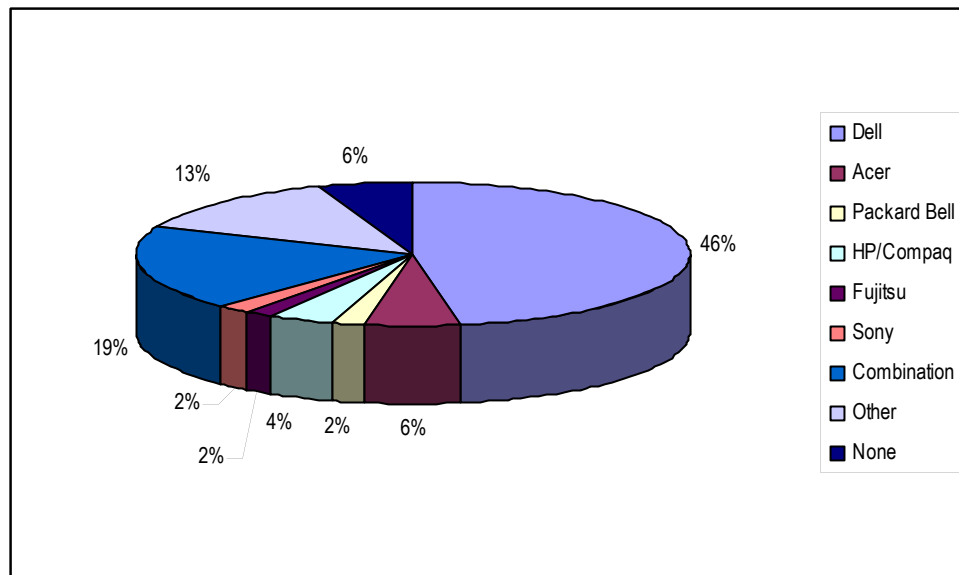
One organisation which provides a 'laptop loan service' to smaller organisations commented that the service was heavily used.



### Type of Computer

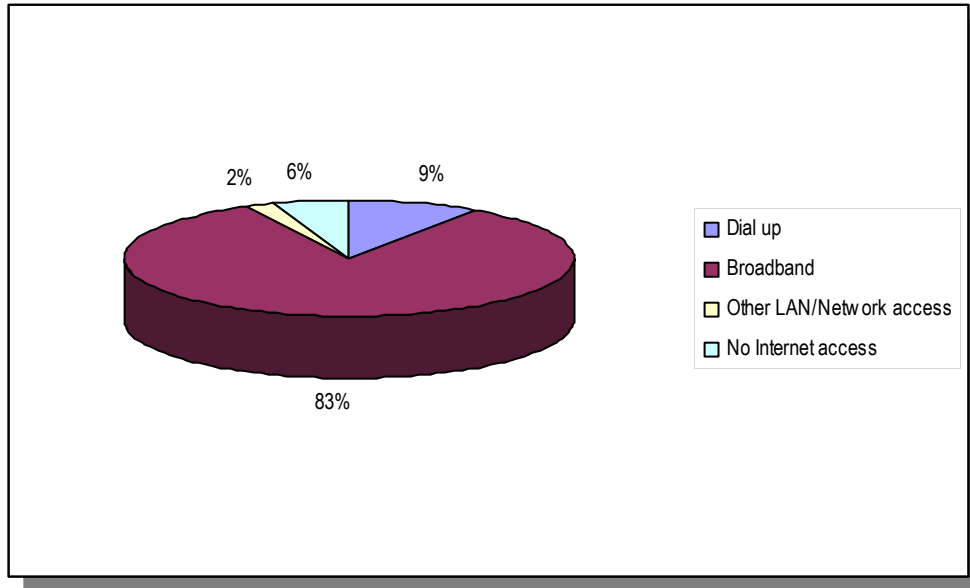
Nearly half of the organisations interviewed (46%) owned Dell Computer packages and commented on 'value for money' and 'cost effectiveness' as being the prime reason for choice.

Nearly a fifth or organizations (19%) had a combination of computers in the workplace and this was indicative of computers donated 'in-kind' and different funders financing different computer packages.



## Internet Access

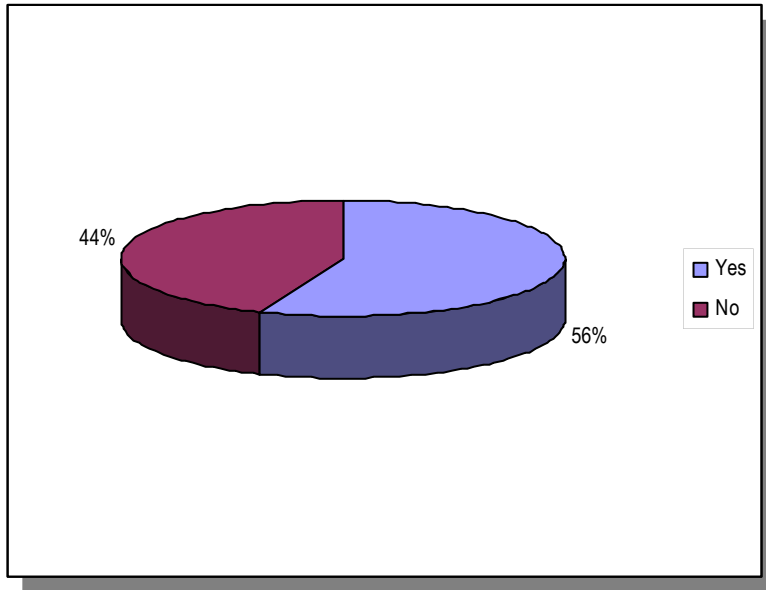
Most organisations had broadband access (83%); however those organisations that lacked Internet access tended to be small grassroots groups that relied on a home computer, the local library or another organisation.



## Network Environment Set up

Of the 50 groups with computer and internet access, nearly half lacked a shared network environment set up (44%). There were variable reasons for this including: no coherent ICT policy, reliance on external hard files of data, a lack of knowledge of the positive benefits of shared files, lack of funding to provide ICT Support to enable a Network Environment Set Up.

Those organisations that had a Network Environment Set Up tended to be more well established and larger organisations that had finances to enable more sophisticated ICT Systems, a need for a computerised client database and sharing of information between staff and a greater utilisation of the benefits of ICT in order to deliver project activity.

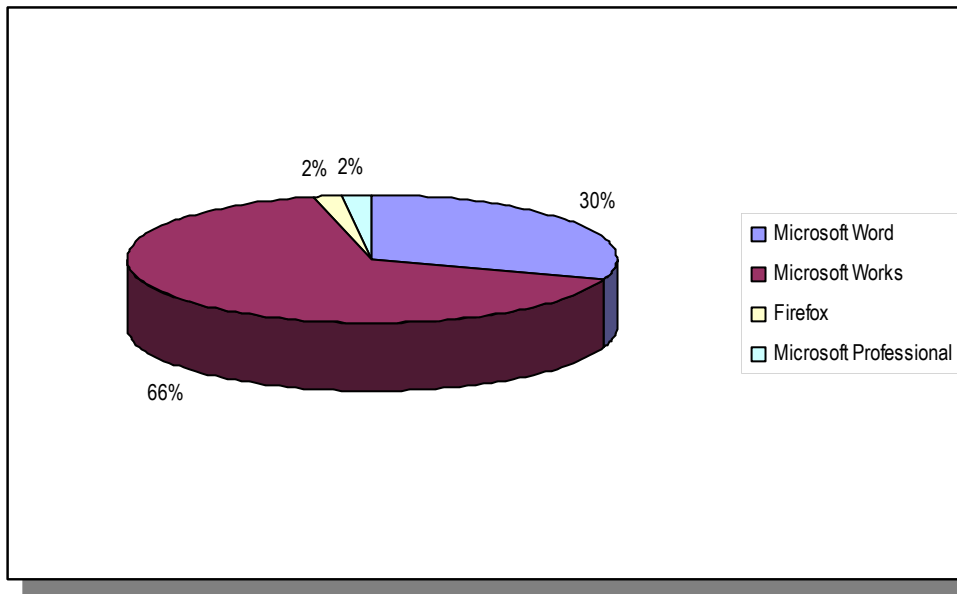


### Software Applications

Nearly seven-tenths of organisations (66%) used Microsoft Office indicating a well-rounded use of software applications.

Nearly a third of organisations however only used Microsoft Word (30%) indicating a basic level of use and basic reporting and recording of information; often for tasks such as letter writing and basic report writing.

Three organisations also used tailored databases and one used a special graphic design package.

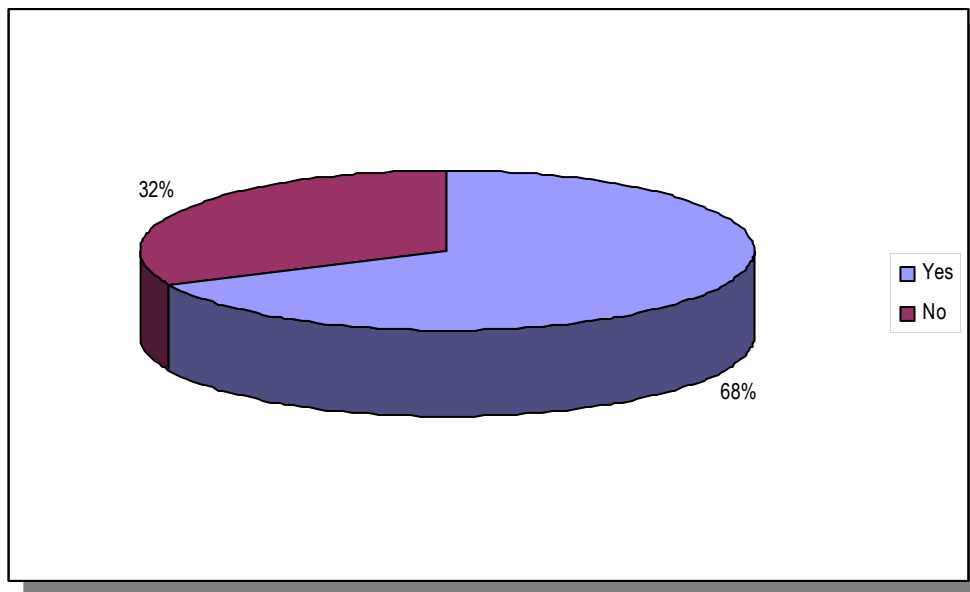


## Knowledge of Computer Hardware and how they work

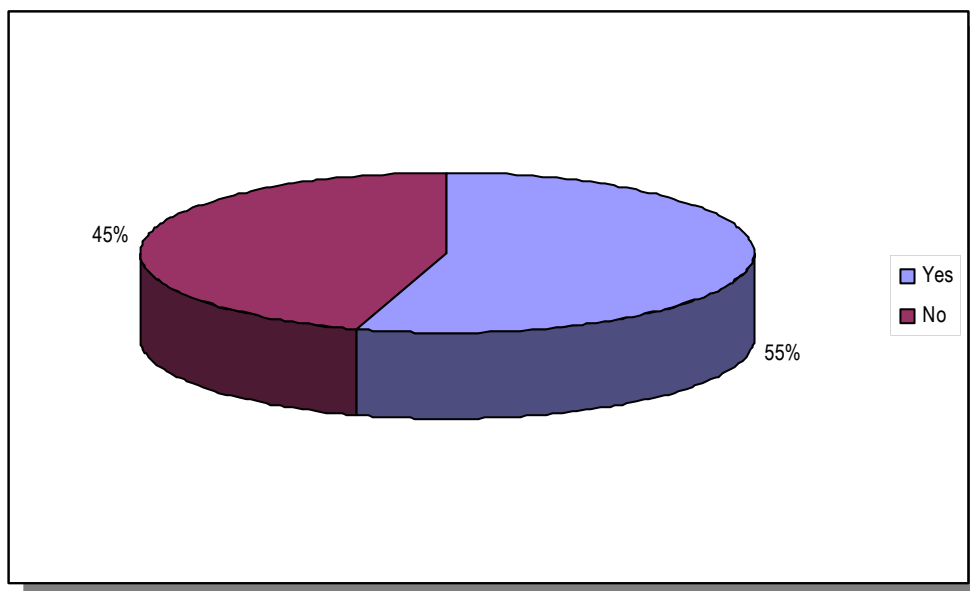
Nearly all organisation surveyed had a basic working knowledge of the hardware use of printers, mouse, keyboard, Monitor and Scanner (98%).

In terms of hard drives and Random Access Memory there was a good level of knowledge. However in terms of Motherboards and basic repair knowledge of hardware over half had no experience.

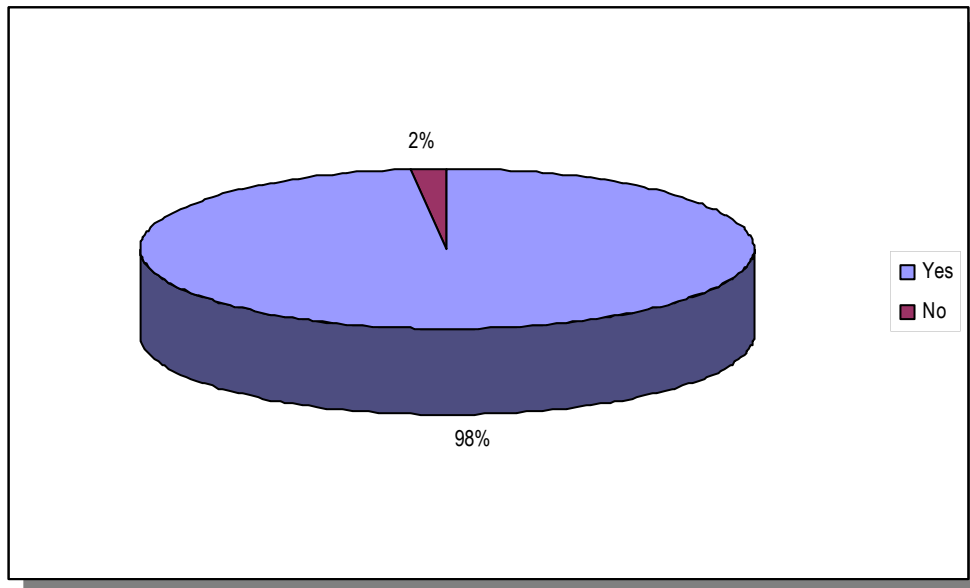
### Hard Drives



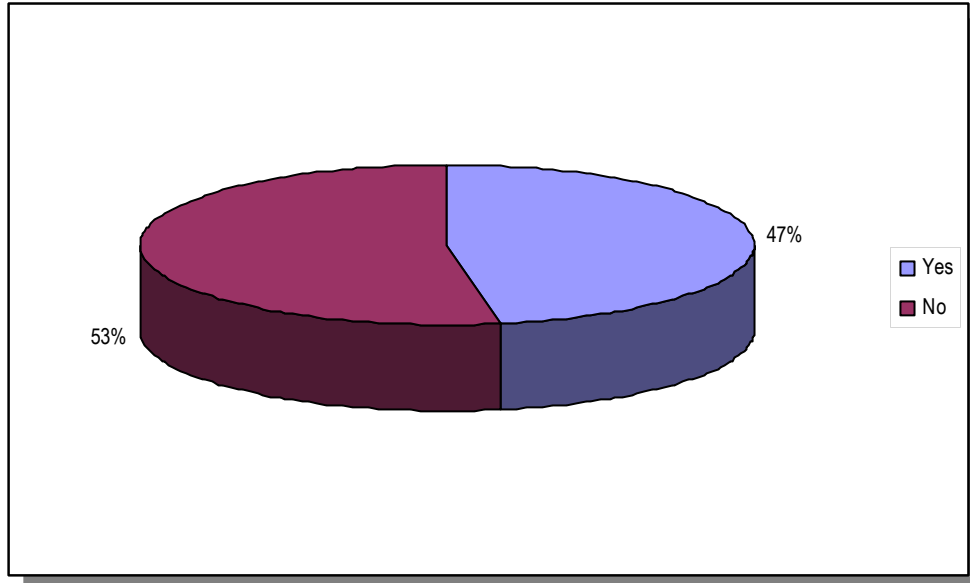
### RAM (Random Access Memory)



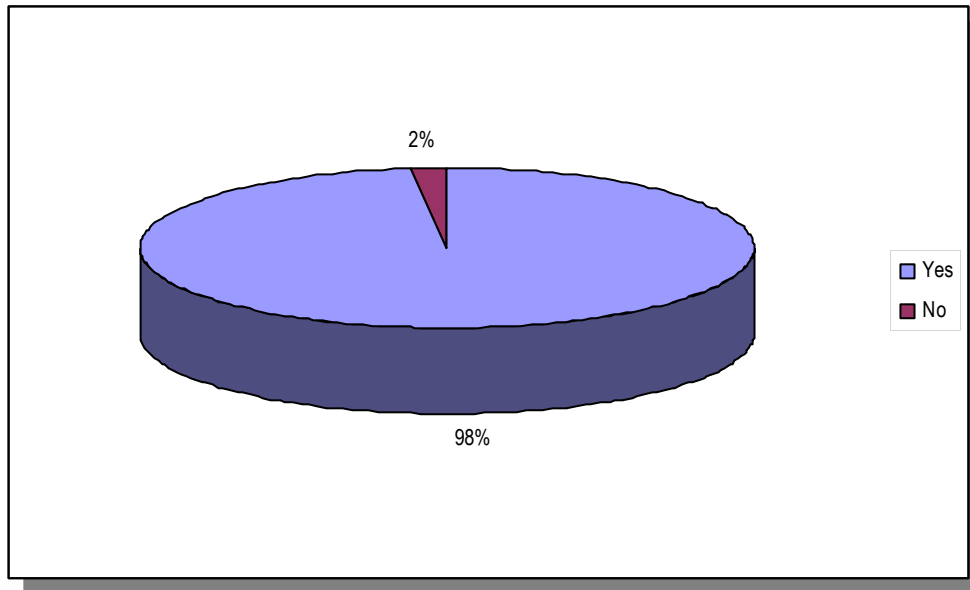
## Printers



## Motherboards



## Mouse, Keyboard, Monitor, Scanner



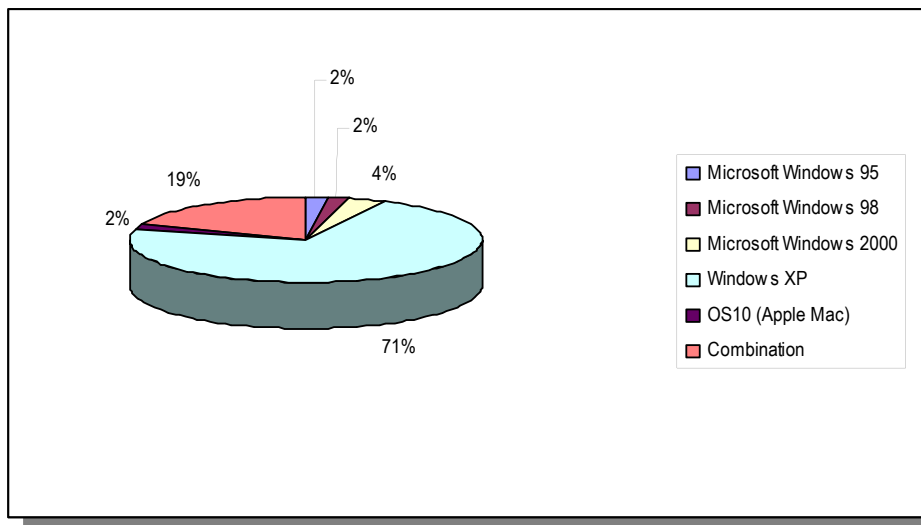
## Average Specification of Computers (Processor Speed)

Most respondents were unaware of the average processor speed of the computers in their use. This is seen as an indication in the lack of knowledge of the impact on processing speed in terms of efficiency of work.

## Operating Systems

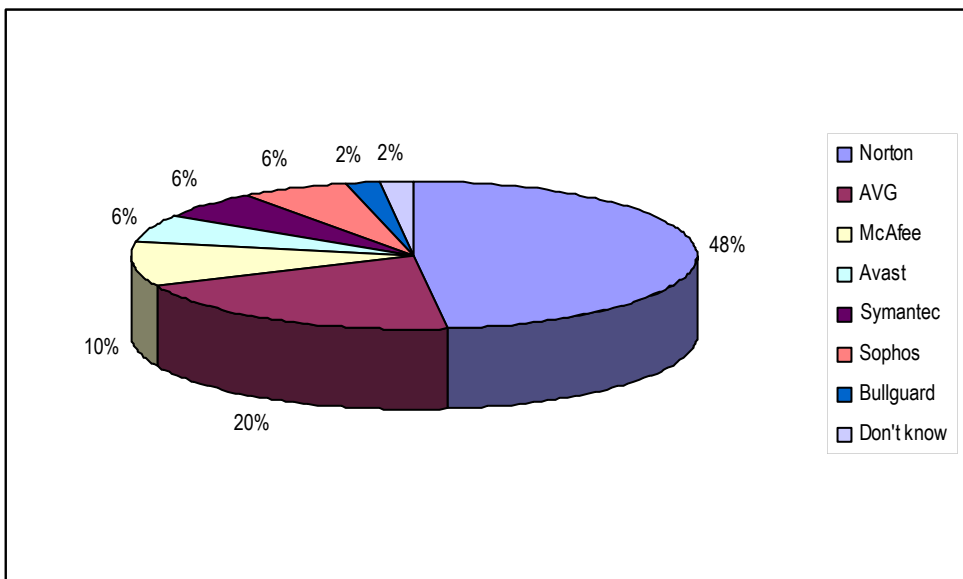
Most organisations interviewed were in use of Windows XP (71%) and is a positive indication of using operating systems consistently across all PC's within an office environment or shared Network Environment.

However a key issue stemmed from nearly a fifth of organisations (19%) having compatibility issues where different machines were using different versions of Office applications.



### Virus Management

All organisations interviewed had some form of anti-virus software and nearly all were aware of the brand name of the package of Anti-Virus software their organisation used.



Norton is the most commonly used desk top anti-virus software.

### ICT Support

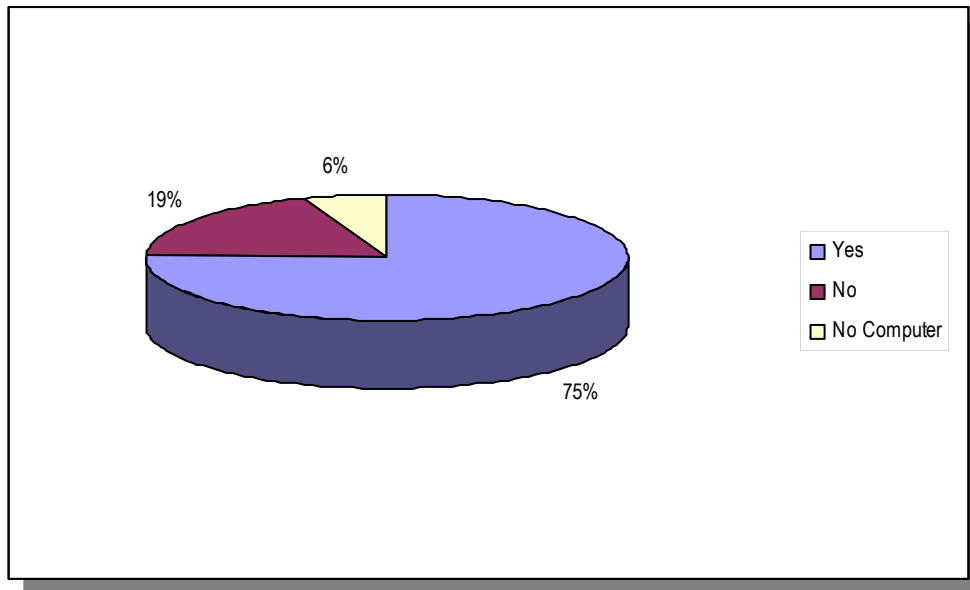
***“The support we receive at the moment under Changeup is good but in the future we need more established ICT support as we don’t want to go back to no support.”***

*Pindy Chahal, Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club*

## Access to Support

A large proportion of organisation had some form of access to ICT Technical Support.

However there was still a significant number (19%) that had no ICT technical Support. One example respondent commented that if a computer broke down, due to the age of the machine, they would simply throw it away rather than pay the cost of Repairs and Service.



## Type of Support

The level of satisfaction by Organisations in terms of ICT technical support was highly variable ranging from excellent to extremely poor.

Organisations that were very satisfied with their ICT Support had often gone through a range of providers until finding a service provider they were satisfied with.

Other organisations 'put up with' mediocre standard of service provision often enduring non-speedy responses, variable levels of service and unsatisfactory management of ongoing ICT technical issues.

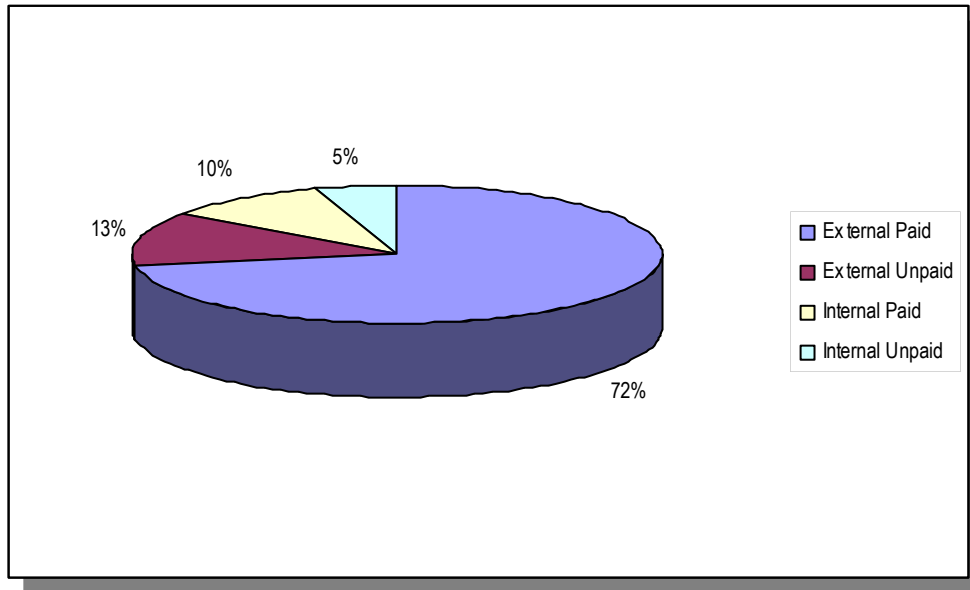
A small number of organisations indicated that they received no technical support and that if computers failed, due to the age and outdated mode of the software that it would be more cost effective to 'throw away' the equipment rather than 'buy in' support they were unable to afford.

A small number of organisations commented on the fact that they were very lucky to have unpaid voluntary support that they were able to rely on, often in the form of a

personal family member or friend or local individual but acknowledged that this wasn't sustainable in the long term.

Identified ICT Support needs included:

- More availability of support including better awareness of support available
- More funding for support
- More training for staff



## ICT Training

***“Most groups prioritise services to people and not ICT.”***

*Denise Barnett, Wellingborough Sports and Social Club*

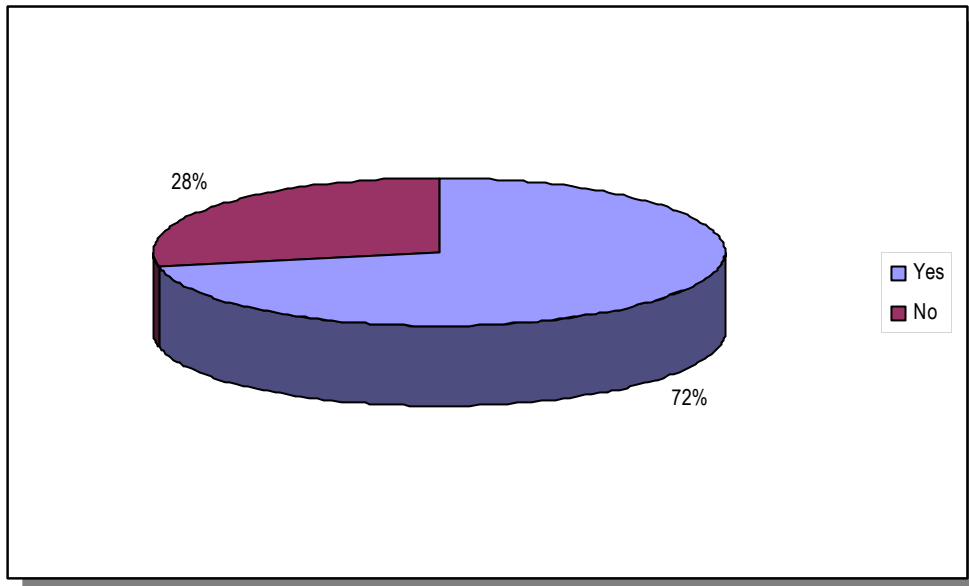
A high proportion of respondents had received some formal training in use of Software and email and Internet use.

However in terms of formal training in Hardware and low level technical repair, there was a lack of this level of technical knowledge. Interestingly many respondents did know of a member of staff or volunteer who had some level of expertise in these areas.

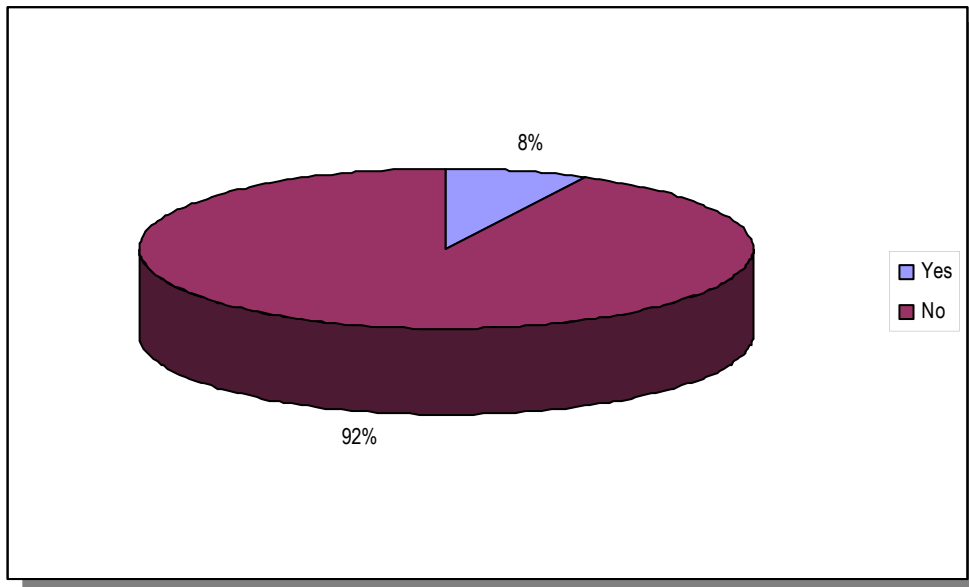
Hardware reliability goes hand in hand with software reliability. (ChangeUp Intervention Ref No. 6050 SDA Exemplar Report 2006). It has been evidenced widely outside this report that an ongoing issue with VCS groups is the lack of organisational knowledge for dealing with and differentiating between hardware and software faults.

Email training was increasingly viewed as important as a tool to communications internally and externally with an increasing acknowledgement that Internet use enabled ease of access to information from a range of sources. One respondent mentioned video conferencing as a future tool that could improve efficient communications without leaving the office.

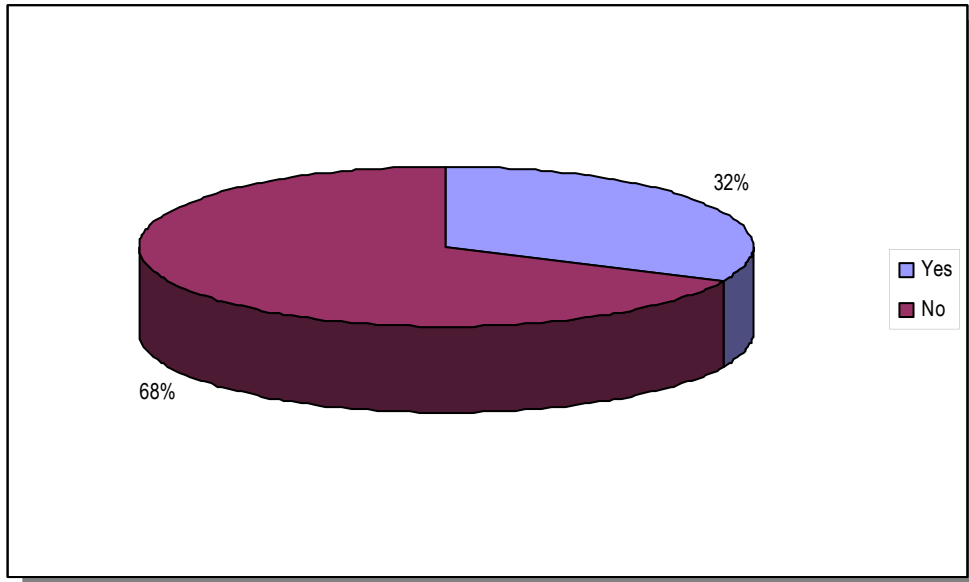
### Software Training



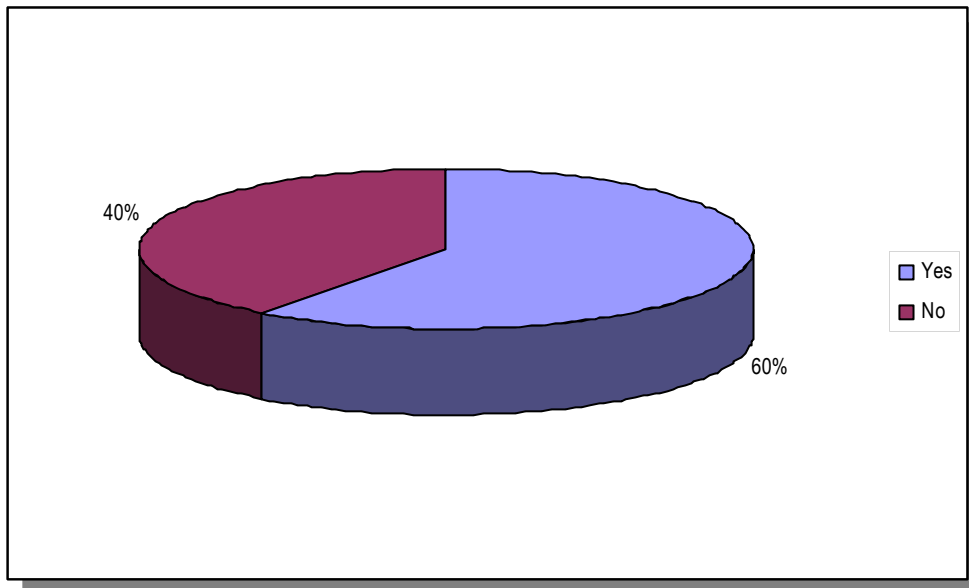
### Hardware Training



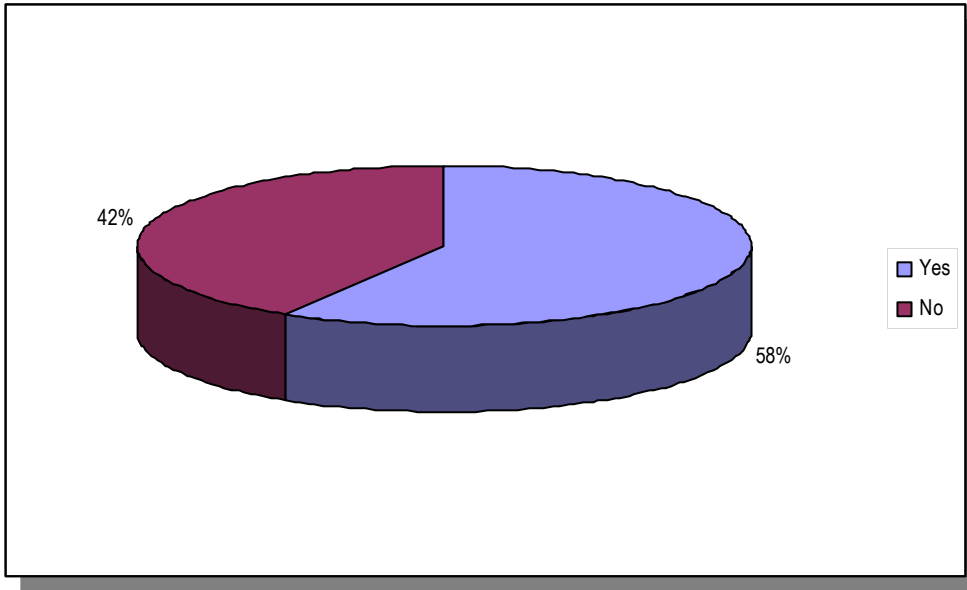
## Training in Resolving Basic Everyday Problems



## Email Training



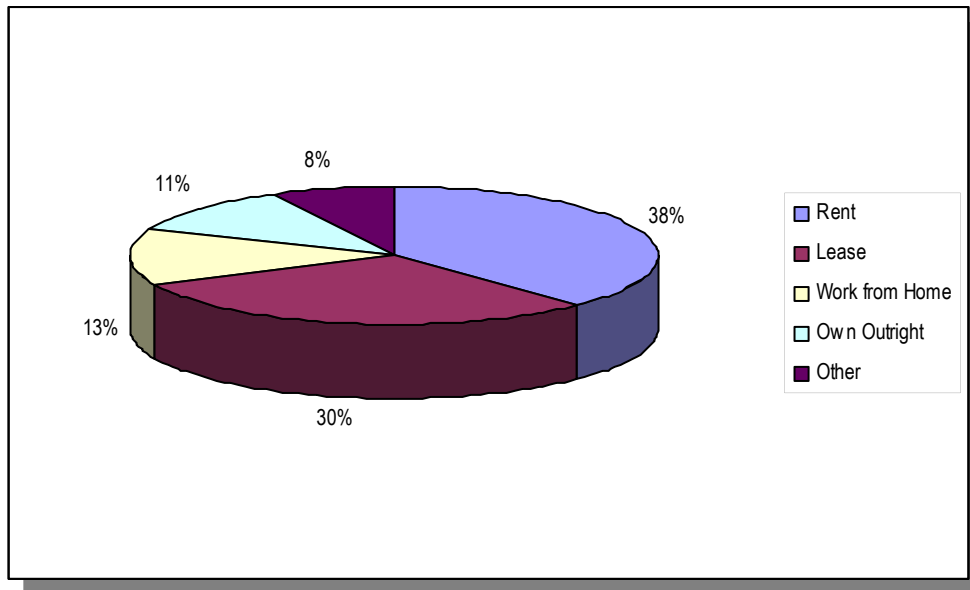
## Website Training



## Work Environment

Most organisations interviewed were either renting or leasing Office Space. A small proportion of more well established organisations owned their own building.

Over a tenth of organisations (13%) worked from home; the respondents interviewed often relied on their own PC or partners.



## Other issues identified by Respondents

***“There needs to be more training on an official basis. You usually have to pay and travel expenses limit some people e.g. if you are a volunteer on the dole”.***

*James O'Rourke, Thorplands Community Co-Operative*

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Solution / Recommendation</b>
Funding is an issue	Educate funders, more information on Full Cost Recovery*, Free support and training
Users with a disability – lagging behind in tailored IT suites for people with sensory impairments	Co-ordinated information from local Disability Services
Difficult to access courses e.g. Tresham institute and transport can be an issue, lots of organisations lack ICT Training	Directory of local IT training in the Sub-region
Lack of Information on ICT Services and	Need for a VCS Roadmap for ICT

Training	and suggestion of developing a social enterprise to provide tailored services to VCS
Varying levels of service from ICT providers; can cause problems e.g. hard of hearing people reliant on email or Local and speedy service and value for money but have gone through 4 different ICT companies to find service we are satisfied with	Development of Network to provide feedback on services and Directory of Recommended Service Providers
Expensive but no other option	Development of Social Enterprise for VCS or collective agreement to access set providers in order to reduce cost
Lack of Partnership support	Information on ICT Networks and Hubs to be widely disseminated
Lack of Vision of the Full Use of ICT e.g. video conferencing and database development	Creation of VCS ICT Champion
Can't afford Equipment or would prefer alternative to paid services	ICT Champion
ICT not main part of our service	Education on the benefits of ICT

\* See Appendix: for full explanation of Full Cost Recovery

## Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page

Dear Murphy

Northamptonshire Black History Ass (NBHA) is asked to conduct a number of talks and presentations about our work and our discoveries. These are to community and young people groups, to elderly groups, local history groups and to other organisations such as museums, schools and students at the University. We are currently conducting on average of two per week.

We currently use OHP slides for this but would welcome the opportunity to give a more professional presentation by having use of a laptop computer and a data projector. We are also in need of a new printer to print handouts etc. for these presentations.

Any help you will be able to give the Association will be greatly appreciated.

Nikki Taylor  
Northamptonshire Black History Association

## Section Four

### ICT Strategy for Northamptonshire VCS: A Way Forward

***“ICT is an issue that is hard to get passionate about but it is important to get a handle on it.”***

*Mary Clarke,  
Director  
Doddridge Centre*

The following Strategy has been devised based on the finding of this report and the technical and field expertise of the ICT Engineer commissioned through CEMC. Furthermore wider good practice has been taken into account through national, regional and local good practice in other areas.

The Strategy will outline a way forward for the development of the Northamptonshire VCS's ICT Infrastructure, the mechanism for services that the Sector could provide internally, how it could formalise those mechanisms and how it could monitor the effectiveness of the ongoing development of ICT use within the Sector.

#### **Proposed Model of Delivery**

#### **Strategic: Formation of Northamptonshire ICT Working Hub**

#### **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Dear Mr. Murphy Brown

I would like to thank you for the 3 computers provided to us and also the Computer Engineers time allocated to us. The equipment will help in the provision of an Access Centre for use by the community. The equipment will also help with ICT classes and ESOL classes that we wish to host at the Centre in the near future.

Your help is greatly appreciated

Yours sincerely  
Ajitpal Singh (Sikh Community Centre)  
President

Local Infrastructure Organisations and other interested organisations which have a stake in wider good practice e.g. organisations that deliver training course through ICT Suites

- To locally co-ordinate and oversee recommended actions as outlined and monitor and address ongoing concerns in relation to ICT within the Sector
- To link with the National ICT Hub
- To co-ordinate and disseminate good practice in terms of ICT Policy and Procedures
- To influence external partners to the sector e.g. Funders and lobby for positive change
- To provide information to VCS on ICT
- To look at development of options such as dedicated organisation/social enterprise delivering ICT Support locally

### **Action: Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

#### **The Circuit Rider Model**

A Circuit rider is a mobile technology support worker supporting a caseload of organisations. This is also known as roving support. The range of advice would include help and support which enabled an individual or organisation to use ICT more effectively and resolve technical problems. The support could be physical activity onsite fixing equipment, face to face or over the telephone. The Circuit Riders would also provide ICT 'Health Checks' for organisations in order to better understand how they need to improve their systems in order to effectively deliver services to clients.

The network could take the form of a tailored service developed in the form of a social enterprise or dedicated ICT VCS service. It could also be recruitment of an ICT worker through Local Infrastructure organisations.

## IT Champion

### **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Hello Murphy,

On behalf of AHCAI-NETWORK members, I thank you for the hp laptop given to our organisation (AHCAI). We appreciate it; it's of great help to us. Please let me know when to come and collect the used printer you promised us as we will manage as long as it works.

Again, thank you.

Gbemisola Mack.

African Heritage Cultural Arts International Network

An IT Champion or network of IT Champions would have a key remit to promote the benefits and good practice of ICT to the general VCS. This could include the following:

- Development of ICT Forums at the local level inviting speakers and co-ordinating training workshops
- Co-ordination of a quarterly newsletter updating organisations on latest ICT developments, research, funding and training opportunities
- Representative on the Northamptonshire ICT Hub to feedback developments and concerns at the grassroots level
- Provide a link between organisations and commercial suppliers; opportunities to broker services at reduced rates

### **Directory: Mapping of ICT Training and Support**

Research needs to be undertaken in order to develop a clearer picture of the needs and training available. This would include:

- Directory of ICT Training and Services in the County
- Generic Baseline Survey of Wider VCS ICT Needs

## **Development of ICT Information Packs and Toolkits**

Local Infrastructure Organisations to develop generic information packs and toolkits for ICT Policy and Procedures including:

- Developing an ICT Business Plan and Strategy
- Developing an Internet Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information on Full Cost Recovery when writing funding bids for project activity

## **Northamptonshire VCS ICT Website**

This would provide a centralised database of information, updates and training opportunities locally. It would also include links to national and regional resources e.g. National ICT Hub and could have a facility for an online website design service for smaller organisations without the financial resource to develop their own site.

## **Table Summary of Strategic Support**

<b>Strategic Support</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Targets Achieved</b>
Northamptonshire ICT Working Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To locally co-ordinate and oversee recommended actions as outlined and monitor and address ongoing concerns in relation to ICT within the Sector</li><li>• To link with the National ICT Hub</li><li>• To co-ordinate and disseminate good practice in terms of ICT Policy and Procedures</li><li>• To influence external partners to the sector e.g. Funders and lobby for</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide a co-ordinated and strategic response to building the capacity of VCS</li><li>• To give VCS a voice in policy, strategy and funding decisions</li></ul>

	<p>positive change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide information to VCS on ICT</li> <li>• To look at development of options such as dedicated organisation/social enterprise delivering ICT Support locally</li> </ul>	
Circuit Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help and support which enabled an individual or organisation to use ICT more effectively and resolve technical problems.</li> <li>• Provide ICT 'Health Checks' for</li> <li>• Tailored service developed in the form of a social enterprise or dedicated ICT VCS service or recruitment of an ICT worker through Local Infrastructure organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide dedicated practical support to VCS</li> <li>• To enable wide technical support to a range of organisations</li> </ul>
IT Champion Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of ICT Forums at the local level inviting speakers and co-ordinating training workshops</li> <li>• Co-ordination of a quarterly newsletter updating organisations on latest ICT developments, research, funding and training opportunities</li> <li>• Representative on the Northamptonshire ICT Hub to feedback developments and concerns at the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage the development of ICT Skills in the sector</li> <li>• Develop a local knowledge base within the sector</li> </ul>

	<p>grassroots level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link between organisations and commercial suppliers; opportunities to broker services at reduced rates</li> </ul>	
Directory: Mapping of ICT Training and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directory of ICT Training and Services in the County</li> <li>• Generic Baseline Survey of Wider VCS ICT Needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase access and awareness of to ICT Training and support</li> </ul>
Development of ICT Information Packs and Toolkits*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an ICT Business Plan and Strategy</li> <li>• Developing an Internet Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Information on Full Cost Recovery when writing funding bids for project activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage the take up of good practice through the implementation of policy and procedure</li> <li>• To encourage groups to be pro-active by providing working tools</li> </ul>
Northamptonshire VCS ICT Website *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralised database of information, updates and training opportunities locally.</li> <li>• Links to national and regional resources e.g. National ICT Hub</li> <li>• Facility for an online website design service for smaller organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase access to information and resources on ICT</li> </ul>

\* Please see appendix for example of an ICT strategy for a group

\* Please see appendix for outline proposal for database developed by ICT Field Engineer

## Outputs and Outcomes for VCS and Wider Community

Strengthen Infrastructure of Northamptonshire VCS	Raise level of effective service delivery, sector expertise and knowledge and influence policy and funders
Widen VCS Communications and Service Delivery	Wider access to potential service users, transform services to communities
Personal and Professional Development	Promote confidence in learning
Wider availability of ICT Services	Tailor to local need and be community driven, ownership of appropriate technical skills within the sector
Greater awareness and acknowledgement of groups with ICT needs below the baseline e.g. those in rural areas	Focused delivery of ICT capacity building efforts for groups at a greater disadvantage via geographical location
Sharing of Pooled Policies and Procedures	Creation of a central information point for ICT policies and procedures for Northamptonshire VCS

### **Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page**

Dear Murphy,

Synergy Forum Northampton would like to thank you for the computer that we have received from CEMC. This is going to assist our group as we develop and strengthen our management, policies and procedures. Since we are a new group the computer will help us in communicating , apply for funding as well as accessing information on developing and working within the voluntary sector. SFN will be able to access information on strategies, guidelines and policy change within the voluntary sector.

This is going to strengthen our resolve to grow from where we are and to provide the best possible service to our community.

Thank you,  
Edgeworth Taderera  
Synergy Forum

### **Additional Outcomes and Actions**

As part of the overall ICT project, there was a need to pilot some resource tools and information models that would support the information side of the project.

Therefore **Part one** was to commission, an ICT engineer (Wireless Broadband Access & Communications) with design capabilities to develop the interactive CD

(Version 1) this has been developed and will contain information and resource tools that includes:-

- ICT Software and Hardware support information
- Advice and Tips
- Budgeting spreadsheets
- Spreadsheets for calculating Volunteer hours
- Jargon Busters
- Organisational development Models
- Systems and Procedures Models
- Northamptonshire IIP Report
- Information about the Changeup/Capacity Builders Website
- Links to the Hubs of expertise

This CD will be instrumental in kick starting key areas of the strategy and should organisations understand the wider uses of ICT in enabling them to deliver services effectively.

**Part two** was to pilot and test placing 3 plasma screens in strategic areas in the county that would be linked to a central sector information provider, that will provide in on:-

- Sector news
- Local, Regional and National News
- Funding Updates
- Events
- Training
- Seminars/workshops etc

This information will scroll across the screens of the plasma screens, pretty much like what you would see in a doctor's surgery or a bank. It is hoped that this will be a very generic and practical way of sharing sector information at Local Infrastructure level.

The organisations participating in this pilot are;

- NCompass
- Northampton Volunteering Centre
- Wellingborough Volunteering Centre

### **Added Value/Value for money**

Number of computers & ICT Equipment to be placed into the VCS = 36. Actual achievement, 140. This was and possible by having robust negotiations with the providers Dell and Misco Supplies.

37 individual organisations supported with ICT Hardware of Software.

## **Investment Plan to Deliver ICT Strategy**

The proposed costings to implement an example one year of the delivery of the ICT strategy to Northamptonshire VCS.

### **Pilot Year One: ICT VCS Tailored Support**

#### **Staff Team**

<b>Staff Structure and Salary</b>	
<b>Staff Team</b>	<b>Salary</b>
Circuit Rider: ICT Support	£25,000
IT Champion: Strategic and Training	£30,000
Administration Officer	£ 7, 500 (£15, 000 pro rata)
	<b>£ 62, 500</b>

**Circuit Rider: Salary: £25,000 per annum**

#### **Aims of Post:**

- To provide ICT technical support and advice through site visits to resolve physical problems through hardware and software
- To provide advice through email and telephone on general IT troubleshooting
- To provide ICT 'Health Checks' to Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Maintain record on ICT problems and resolutions on clients
- Signpost to other sources of ICT help and support
- Development of Northamptonshire VCS Website
- To support ICT Volunteers Network

**ICT Champion: Salary: £30,000 per annum**

#### **Aims of Post:**

- To facilitate and liaise with Northamptonshire ICT working Hub
- To facilitate ICT training events and speakers
- To produce an ICT Newsletter for the Sector providing information on latest updates, funding and training opportunities
- Develop ICT policy and procedure toolkits to promote good practice
- To liaise with external ICT Support providers and broker co-ordinated approach to ICT purchasing
- Engage Regional and National Hubs of expertise

**Administration Officer: £7,500 ( £15, 000 pro rata)**

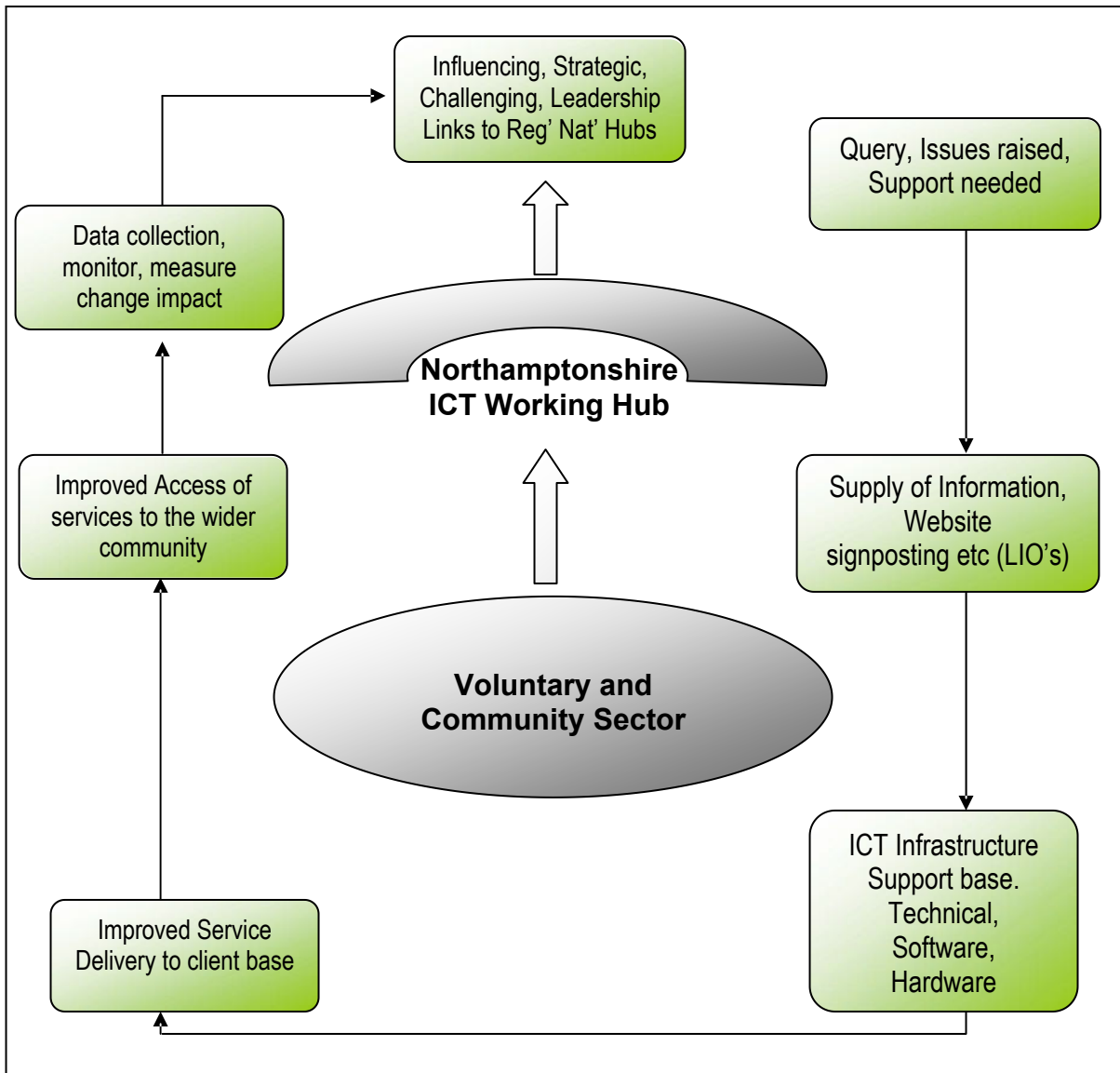
**Aims of Post:**

- To provide administrative support to the Circuit Rider and IT Champion
- To provide first line of contact for potential clients
- To assist in preparing documents, answering telephone and email, dealing with post
- To maintain an administrative database

**Core and Running Costs**

<b>Core and Running Costs</b>	
Office Rental and Overheads: rental, electricity and office set up	£10,000
Computer Office set up for workers: 3 computers and printer/photocopier, broadband access, software and network environment set up	£7,500
VCS Website Development	£4,500
Stationary and Publicity including newsletter	£5,000
Training Budget: venue hire, refreshments, speakers and trainer fees	£15,000
ICT Hub Budget; venue hire, refreshments, administration, travel expenses	£3,000
Travel Budget for Staff especially roving technical support	£ 1,500
Further Capital Investment (optional): further software and hardware purchase for groups based on needs analysis as phase 2 of initial capital investment by CEMC	£50,000
	<b>£96,500</b>

# Overview of ICT Strategy Schematic



1. Query, Issues raised
2. Supply of Information, Sign posting
3. ICT Infrastructure Support
4. Improvements to services
5. Improved access of services to wider VCS
6. Data collection, monitor performance, measure change impact
7. Engagement at a strategic level, share good practice, network
8. Full engagement from Northamptonshire VCS & development of a Hub

## Dear Murphy: ICT Problem Page

Hi Murphy,

Further to our telephone conversation this morning, I confirm that we are in desperate need of a laptop computer. We have done a series of presentations and seminars lately called 'Know your rights – getting to grips with Discrimination' specifically for disabled people. However we have had to either borrow or hire a laptop to enable us to do this which is proving to be expensive as well as not looking very efficient. I would be extremely grateful if a laptop could be made available to us.

Sandra Bell  
Director  
Ability Northants

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*ICT Hub, Accessibility Research: Final Report 2005*

*Is Derby Doing It? High Peaks CVS, July 2004*

*ITSNY – An IT Support Service for North Yorkshire, North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations (NYFVO), September 2004*

*National Council for Voluntary Organisations:*  
[www.ncvovol.org.uk/press/releases.asp?id=973&fID=38](http://www.ncvovol.org.uk/press/releases.asp?id=973&fID=38)

*Northamptonshire Evaluation Report of ICT Support Services for Voluntary Groups in Rural Areas, CVS Northamptonshire/ACRE, March 2004*

*Northamptonshire ACRE ICT Report, 2006*

*Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy April 2005*

*Progress Report into the Development of ICT Systems, Roy Brownbill, 2006*

## **Appendix A: Full Cost Recovery**

**“Voluntary organisations need to analyse and understand the true costs of their activities, and funders need to recognise them.”** *New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)*

**(A new website, [www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk](http://www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk) gives further details about the benefits of full cost recovery, case studies, and other sources of information).**

### **1. What is Full Cost Recovery?**

It's simple really - recovering or funding the total costs of your project or service including a relevant proportion of all organisational costs. Whereas it's clear that any project or service has costs directly associated with it, such as staff and equipment, it's less obvious that it also draws on the rest of your organisation. For example, it can occupy some of your Director's time, some of your Trustees' time, and some of your central support functions' time (such as finance and IT). Therefore the total cost of each project includes part of the costs of your Director, your IT team, your finance person etc. All of these costs are necessary in order for any project or service to run effectively and efficiently.

The full cost of your organisation is calculated from the direct costs of *all* your projects and services plus *all* your overhead costs. Therefore, the full cost of *each* of your projects should be calculated from the direct costs of your project plus a relevant portion of overheads. Calculating the full costs of your projects is the first step towards recovering, or funding, the full costs of your organisation.

**To help charities achieve this, there is a published *Full Cost Recovery: A guide and toolkit on cost allocation*, by Caroline Fiennes, Cathy Langerman & Jeni Vlahov**

**The guide is available in hard-copy or interactive CD Rom format and can be purchased from [acevo](http://acevo.org) (0845 345 8481) [www.acevo.org.uk](http://www.acevo.org.uk)**

## **Appendix B: Example ICT Strategy for a group**

### **Example IT Strategy for a Charity**

#### **Major investments**

A network will be installed during the current financial year, costing....., so that all staff can have e-mail and web access at their desks. Two digital cameras will be bought, costing ..... each, to record the work of the development workers.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Chief Officer will buy in one day of consultancy time each year to review the ICT strategy, and will report back to the management committee. Staff will be asked for their suggestions to feed into this process.

#### **Support arrangements**

The office manager post will have one day a week reserved for ICT support, and specific tasks will be included in the job description. The organisation will also buy into the local circuit rider scheme for additional support and advice.

#### **Hardware purchase and replacement**

Hardware will be written off over four years. Each year a minimum and preferred specification for workstations will be decided. Every effort will be made to replace machines that fall below the minimum, as soon as possible, and new purchases will use the preferred specification. Donated machines will only be accepted if above the minimum specification.

#### **Software policy**

The organisation will not use illegal copies of software. Software for the major office tasks will be standard on every workstation.

#### **Budgeting**

Support salaries, consultancy, hardware and software maintenance and repairs will come from the core central budget. New equipment will be purchased by projects as and when required. Major developments will go ahead only when funds have been identified.

#### **Training**

All new recruits to the staff will be expected to have a minimum standard of ICT competence, which will be tested during recruitment, in addition to any skills required by their specific post. All staff will be encouraged to review their ICT training needs once a year, and the training budget will be sufficient to allow for ICT training.

## **Data Protection, confidentiality, security and internet use**

All staff are expected to follow the organisation's policies in these areas, which the management committee will review at least every three years.

### **Appendix C: Outline Proposal for Voluntary and Community Sector Website Group Information Database**

#### **Basic Version**

Below are all of the features that make up the basic version of the system. This stage produces all the groundwork which can be built upon in the future.

- Login using username/password combination
- Ability to add/edit/remove records through simple forms
- Search form to find records matching given criteria e.g. organization name
- Browse through the groups manually e.g. by town
- When viewing a record see all the information about the organization and link to a map website
- Modern interface through web browser which is easy to use, fast and reliable, supports multiple users modifying data, allows public to view data and allows easy staged expansion in the future

#### **Future Features**

Here are some possible features which could be implemented at a later date:

- Interactive Map – see where organizations are located and click on map to view all groups in that area
- Reports – printable reports with details about organizations and what work has been done for them
- Allow groups to create accounts and logins which allows them to update information and add more, post news about their group, get in contact with other organizations, use their page essentially as a free website, they can give links to other people and clients
- More detailed database – support for adding multiple logins for each organisation

## Appendix D: Questionnaire Template

### **Northamptonshire IIP Best Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Organisation Specification Questionnaire

**Purpose of this questionnaire: To capture as much information about the currently infrastructure of ICT Countywide, which help to develop a strategy for the VCS Sector.**

#### **1. Computers**

- How many computers do you have: 1-5  5-10  10-20   
20-30
- How many laptops do you have? 1-5  5-10  10-15
- Are they any of the following: Dell  Acer  Fujitsu   
Sony  HP/Compaq  Packard Bell  Samsung  Apple   
Other

#### **2. Internet Access**

- Do you use?: dial-up  Broadband  Other LAN/Network Access   
Mobile Phone/Blue Tooth:  PCIM Card

#### **3. Networks**

- Do you have a network environment setup? Yes  No
- Is your network connected to an ADSL Router/Broadband? Yes  No

#### **4. Software Applications**

- What software applications do you use?: Microsoft Word  Lotus Pro   
Microsoft Works

#### **5. Are you familiar with the hardware used in your organisation and how they work?-**

- Hard Drives Yes  No
- RAM (Random Access Memory) Yes  No
- Printers Yes  No
- Motherboards Yes  No

- Mouse, Keyboard, Monitor, Scanner Yes  No

**6. Average Specification of Computers (Processor Speed)**

- 1.3 MHz
- 1.0 GHz
- 1.5 GHz
- 1.8 GHz

Or

- Pentium 1
- Pentium 2
- Pentium 3
- Pentium 4

**7. Which Operating System/s are used? (OS)**

- Microsoft Windows 95
- Microsoft Windows 98 (ME)
- Microsoft Windows 2000
- Windows XP
- Linus Windows

**8. Virus Management**

- Do you have Virus management installed on all computers?: Yes  No
- Which one is used?: Norton  Dr Solomon  AVG

**9. ICT Support**

- Do you have any kind of ICT support?: Yes  No
- Is the support internal?: Yes  No
- External? Yes  No
- Paid for Yes  No
- Unpaid Yes  No
- Other, please comment:

**10. ICT Training, Please answer as appropriate**

- We have had software training (i.e. word, excel) Yes  No  • We have had hardware training (i.e. changing a hard drive) Yes  No  • Training in resolving basic every day problems Yes  No  • Email training Yes  No  • Website training Yes  No

**11. Your Building/Office Space**

- Do you?: Rent  Lease  Own outright  Work from home  Other

**Name of person completing this questionnaire:**

**Organisation Name:**

**Contact Details:**

**Other information that might be useful.**

# Website Development Report

By Alison Hudson - Northampton Volunteering Centre

## **Background**

In February 2006 Northampton Volunteering Centre (NVC) received money via government ChangeUp funding to develop a website. It is a sub-project of a Countywide project on ICT which was led by Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC).

This idea behind this project was that it would be a pilot project in terms of exploring:

- delivering different aspects of our services electronically in a way which is cost effective and “usable” by the users of our services.
- making ICT more accessible to all – to raise the profile of this topic through providing a model of best practice in terms of a website and raising awareness in the voluntary sector in Northampton of the issues/solutions.

NVC aspires to deliver the best service it can within its resources to as wide an audience as it can. These two areas above underpin the achievement of that aspiration.

## **Benefits of electronic service delivery**

NVC exists in an environment of change, competition and increasing expectations. Efficient use of ICT will allow the organisation to operate more effectively and will help underpin its long-term sustainability. The provision of information resources via the website will reduce the enquiries received via other means e.g. visitors to the centre, therefore saving time, money and resources.

However this is not our only reason for wanting to develop a website. A good website will enhance current service delivery and complement or feed the more traditional face-to-face activities. Recent research produced by ESRC states:- “A VCO that ignores the Internet is at risk of having its work overshadowed by those who do make the commitment to involve people online and subsequently benefit from this new source of social capital” (ESRC 2006)

The new website will help NVC to operate better as a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) and therefore bring benefits to the VCO’s that we support. Benefits include:

- being able to communicate with people more quickly and easily.
- managing information better
- reaching people for whom the Internet is their main communication link e.g. people with profound physical disabilities
- increasing our “opening hours”

## **Accessibility/Usability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) is legislation that protects the rights of over 8.9 million disabled people in employment and in provision of services and goods. The

requirement to have an accessible website under this legislation has been in force since 1999, but not legally tested – as yet. The RNIB will support any individual or group who have a complaint about the accessibility of a website (ICT Hub 2006)

However web accessibility is not just about meeting legal requirements or even just about social responsibility and reputation. It can also bring numerous benefits in terms of the effectiveness of service delivery, which include:

- Reaching a wider audience
- Making the site more useable for everyone – there is a strong relationship between usability and accessibility. This will mean that it will help more people make full use of the sites facilities.
- Reduces site maintenance therefore cut costs.
- Helps with search engine rankings, because they are easier to “read” for search engines like Google, thereby increasing visibility on the web.
- Browser independence – the site will work with a wide range of browsers and be compatible with older versions. This is crucial where many voluntary and community organisations are using fairly old hardware and software.

### ***Situation at start of project.***

NVC has had a web presence for over 5 years. However, even though this site underwent several facelifts it has remained basically a “brochure” site, doing little more than reproducing NVC’s main promotional leaflets. The content changed infrequently partly because only one member of staff has the ability to alter the content. Its main worth was in introducing the services the organisation offered. Rarely would a person feel the need to visit a second time.

The site is not very accessible because it is based on “frames” which cause many problems for adaptive technologies e.g. screen readers. The frames also mean it is not possible to bookmark a page effectively and reduces its search engine’s ranking.

A decision was made at the beginning to use the in house ICT expertise to produce the design brief and handle the tender process as this produced a saving in consultancy fees and also enhanced the expertise on offer within NVC to support VCO’s in the area of website planning and commissioning. However it did create a capacity issue for the organisation.

### ***Research/networking***

#### **Networking**

Networking included:

- Attending the first ICT Hub conference in London
- Contacting the ICT Hub and talking to the Regional ICT Support Officer
- Inclusion on the ChangeUp ICT and the Ukdirers mailing list enabling ongoing discussion and support from other people involved in ICT projects or in delivering ICT support to VCO’s.
- Applying for and getting an Exchange Visit funded by the ICT Hub. This allowed a visit to High Peaks CVS to be made.

**Outputs:**

- Made aware of a new publication by the BSI – *Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites*. (British Standards Institute 2006). A decision was made to use this to inform the tender process. This is now on offer from NVCs library for other VCO's to look at.
- Was able to obtain several sample *requirement specifications documents* for organisations in the Voluntary sector
- The Information and Communications Manager was asked to attend East Midlands ICT Hub meetings and contribute to the planning for the East Midlands regional ICT conference held in Chesterfield in October. This included NVC promoting this event in the County through mailings and email. Several Northamptonshire organisations attended the conference as a result of those mailings.
- Made several key contacts including people within the ICT Hub, AbilityNet, and within other LIOs in the East Midlands.
- Advice and support was received as a result of this networking that supported the project. The networking also provided the means to keep up to date with new ICT developments in the Voluntary Sector and to contribute to national discussion.

**Investigation of other websites across the country**

By using the list of members on both Volunteering England and NAVCA websites, we were able to look at over 50 websites across the country.

**Outputs:**

- This process helps to identify services that could be delivered electronically. The websites that offered good functionality were used in the website brief as examples.

**Investigation of website technologies**

This was carried out by Internet research and by contacting some website owners.

**Outputs:**

- Decisions made to use a Content Management System (CMS) as the foundation of the site. This will mean NVC can develop a responsive website with content that is changing regularly without relying on a website programmer. So at a low cost NVC will be able to deliver a better information service to local VCO's.

***Development of Requirement Specification Document***

The requirements specification was based on analysing why our users might look on the site. We tried to answer three main questions:

- Who are our key audiences?
- What do we know about these audiences that might affect the design and technologies used on the site?
- What content could we provide for the identified audiences and what would be the best way to group this content on the website?

**Outputs:**

- The final Requirement Specification Document (Appendix 5.2), which highlights the functionality required and states the accessibility requirements which need to be met by supplier.
- Northampton Volunteering Centre has increased its skill set through direct experience of project management and specification writing for a website.

### ***Tender process***

We went to national tender. The invitation to tender was publicised via the ChangeUp website and by emailing the Invitation to Tender document (Appendix 5.1) to preferred suppliers found in the research phase of the project.

Tenders were received from web designers across the country. Short listing took place and 4 suppliers were invited to interview.

### **Outputs:**

NVisage was awarded the contract (URL 5), a company based in Brighton. They use an internationally known CMS - Ektron CMS 400.Net (URL 4) Their most notable work in the Voluntary sector was the design and creation of National Council for Voluntary Organisation's (NCVO) website (URL 3). Going to tender nationally enabled us to have a CMS that is very stable and has many features which initially we will not use. This will mean we can develop our services based on this system over the next few years and respond to changes/ development in the local voluntary sector.

### ***Website Creation***

#### **Outputs in terms of improved service delivery to local VCO's:**

- 24-hour access to good practice information.
- Increased ways the VCO's can receive support.
- A central point for listing events that might be of interest to a local VCO.
- Making it easier to contact us and ask a question by the piloting of an *Ask a Question* online form.
- Increased awareness of the resources available to support them through a categorised catalogue of resources available including items held at NVC and links to websites.
- Volunteers are offered an electronic way of accessing some of our information resources offering electronic resource guides to particular areas of volunteering e.g. overseas, youth etc.
- An electronic forum for VCO's in Northampton to encourage discussion. This will complement the existing communication structures in place for the Northampton's voluntary and community sector forum.
- A new means for VCO's to get their voices heard on consultation issues via the provision of online forms which form part of the consultation section of the website
- Easier to join the Forum and NVC by the provision of online forms.
- Improved accessibility of our site through:
  - compliance to WAI AA standard (URL 6)
  - use of skip navigation and access keys based on the government standard (Cabinet office 2006).
  - use of Browsealoud software, which allows the screen to be read out to the user.

## **Outputs related to enhancing the support we can offer to organisations:**

- Increased the skill set within NVC in terms of website design and technical issues which could be exploited by the groups within Northampton. NVC has already signposted 2 organisations help on what to consider when looking to develop a website
- Knowledge of accessibility in relation to ICT in general.

## ***Usability Testing***

PAS 78 (British Standards Institute 2006) stresses the importance of having usability testing throughout the project, however, within the timescales available, this was not possible. The project at bid stage had originally an 11-month length. However, it was reduced to 7.5 months.

## **Outputs:**

AbilityNet have been commissioned to produce a usability and accessibility report confirming our WAI standard compliance and recommending any changes we may need to make in the future. This report will be available towards the end of November 2006.

## ***ICT Accessibility Awareness training***

NVC delivered two training days to raise awareness of ICT accessibility:

- Web Accessibility
- Low Cost ICT accessibility.

The courses posters can be seen at Appendix 5.3

The training was delivered by AbilityNet – the largest provider of independent advice and information on all aspects of making ICT accessible for people with disabilities or limiting conditions.

The ICT Hub supplied a CD and Booklet for each person that attended (ICT Hub 2006)

## **Outputs:**

- Representatives from 20 organisations benefited from this training. From the evaluation forms people felt it would improve their own work performance and also help them carry out their jobs.
- Course evaluation found that all people who responded found the course useful.
- Seemed to be very little knowledge of the issues around website accessibility. Quotes from evaluation forms included:
  - “Quite an eye-opener – especially about website standards”
  - “Excellent help and advice”
- NVC’s has been able to offer follow up ICT advice including on website planning to some of the organisations who attended
- Raised awareness of ICT and accessibility issues within Northampton Volunteering Centre. A half day session on accessibility has been built into our staff training programme.
- One person attended because they had heard that NVC provided good training in relation to ICT. Raised Northampton Volunteering Centre’s profile as a provider of training was raised.

- The two ICT Hub guides (ICT Hub 2006) on website accessibility and Low cost ICT accessibility are now available for loan from NVC's library to local VCO's.

The website will be launched in November after staff at NVC have finished entering content. Several months after launch an evaluation of the success of the site will be carried out and will inform the development of a plan for the continued development of the website.

Wider recommendations include:

- Exploring the possibility of a small cluster group forming based on the people who attended the training and the ICT regional conference. Several of these are "accidental techies".
- Continued attendance at the regional ICT meeting of a person/s from Northamptonshire thereby enabling the county to benefit from regional information sharing.
- A need to build on the profile raising achieved by the courses in terms of placing LIOs in the loop in regard to ICT support.
- Considering a programme of training sessions on ICT for Northampton or ideally the County. NVC is already planning a session led by IT4 communities about using volunteers for some ICT activities. Further development of a programme of courses would bring a capacity issue.
- Ensuring that the training delivered is built on by linking into the work of the Accessibility Champions for the region i.e. seeing if some follow up visits can happen to individual organisations in Northamptonshire.
- The training highlighted the need within VCO's for support when they start the process of planning a website. Many organisations want websites but have little money to spend and are unsure where to start.
- Explore working with Directory of Social Change (DSC) on their community libraries project to develop NVC's library further.
- Evaluate the success of the Forum micro site and, if required, feed into any plans for a countywide Forum.
- Plan the development of an e-Bulletin – the CMS will have the capabilities to manage the subscription and sending out of e-bulletins.

## **Appendix E: Books/Articles/Reports and websites**

British Standards Institute (2006), PAS 78 - Guide to good practice in commissioning websites

[http://www.drc.org.uk/library/website\\_accessibility\\_guidance/pas\\_78.aspx](http://www.drc.org.uk/library/website_accessibility_guidance/pas_78.aspx) (accessed September 2006)

Cabinet Office (2003), Illustrated Handbook for Web management teams

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/resources/handbook/html/htmlindex.asp> (accessed September 2006)

Disability Rights Commission (2004), The Web – Access and inclusion for disabled people

<http://www.drc-gb.org/PDF/2.pdf> (accessed September 2006)

Economic & social research council (2006), ICT, Social capital and voluntary action

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre> (accessed October 2006)

Great Britain. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995. London: the Stationery Office  
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/1995050.htm> (accessed September 2006)

ICT Hub (2006), How to commission and design accessible websites for voluntary and community organisations (including CD). London: Abilitynet

ICT Hub (2006), Easy, free and Quick ICT accessibility for voluntary and Community Organisations (including CD). London: Abilitynet

Kopke, T (2000), What is good Web site design?  
<http://www.tkopke.com/essays/design.html> (accessed September 2006)

National Statistics (2006), Internet Access: households and individuals.  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=8&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=374>  
(accessed September 2006)

#### **Website Addresses (URLs)**

1. **Abilitynet**  
<http://www.abilitynet.org.uk>
  2. **ICT Hub**  
<http://www.ICTHub.org.uk>
  3. **NCVO**  
<http://www.ncvo.org.uk>
  4. **Ektron**  
<http://www.ektron.com/>
  5. **NVisage**  
<http://www.nvisage.co.uk/>
  6. **Web Accessibility Initiative**  
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>
-

## Conclusion

There is a clear need for further tailored ICT Capacity Building Support to Northamptonshire VCS through a dedicated staff team, wider information and accessibility to resources.

This approach needs to have a strategic overview through a local ICT Hub to monitor and evaluate ongoing issues especially with a view to influencing funding and policy making bodies.

Further investment is needed to actualise the findings and recommendations of local research and to promote the positive impact of investment and commitment to making the best use of ICT within the sector.

This is especially pertinent given the evidence that many Voluntary and Community Groups still view ICT as a relatively low priority compared to delivery of frontline services to people and the gap in ICT training for Staff and Volunteers.

The way forward is to build on the momentum of recent research on ICT funded Capacity Building research project activity through Change Up monies and provide a tailored service to the Sector to influence, train and inform groups to make the best use of ICT possible.

The ranging impact will include improved service delivery to communities, efficient working systems and best practice around ICT use and embracing the ongoing ICT revolution with future technology updates.



Council For Ethnic Minority Communities  
Northampton College  
Lower Mounts  
Northampton  
NN1 3LY

Tel: 01604 736206

Fax: 01604 736216

E: [enquiries@cemcnorthants.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cemcnorthants.org.uk)

W: [www.cemcnorthants.org.uk](http://www.cemcnorthants.org.uk)