

What do people in my local community think about charities in the local area?



I interviewed Jane Howard-White who is a representative of Bedford and District Cerebral Palsy Society and she spoke to me about her charity. She said her charity intend to provide safeguarding and support to families whose lives are affected by cerebral palsy. She also commented that they get their funding from grant makers in the local area and also larger charities like the Harpur Trust and appeal to the local community as well as filing for funds from the council.

My research question is **What do people in my community think about charities in the local area?** I chose this as I volunteer and I wanted to see others' perceptions of my work.

Method:

I interviewed the leader of Bedford and District Cerebral Palsy Society about their activities.

I gave 27 questionnaires to adults in the local community.

I ensured that my questions were not too personal and didn't upset them or worry the respondents. I made sure that each respondent gave informed consent and understood how their answers would be used in the research. I gave the respondents the option of confidentiality.

Findings:

Interview with Charity worker:

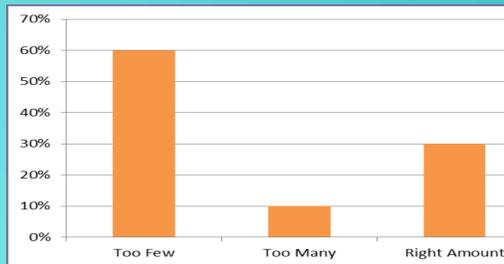
She commented that they deliver their services for the children with the help of volunteers who are recruited via the centre for voluntary services. Some volunteers will also work in the administration. Some volunteers are one-to-ones but these require people to understand further medical knowledge.

Jane Howard-White said that her charity are losing around 37% of their funding due to times of austerity. They try to regain these large losses by running varying levels of fundraising events per year and they have an investment from a building so they use this as safeguard if the funding was "cut to the bone." She is optimistic though that they won't lose any time soon and should continue to be successful in safeguarding children.

She also said that they run fundraising to raise awareness of the valuable work that they undertake and also to incorporate the community. They run quizzes and a ball every two years but because it takes a lot of time, effort and money not unlike their annual fetes and skydiving events and also body boarding hence not being able to run it any more regularly. They also run weekly coffee mornings at a paid volunteer's property and she commented that this particular occasion has one of the highest hit rates because with the others it is only advertised to the volunteers who then have to spread the word and this is not always successful. She said that the average profits for the quizzes range from £700 - £900 and they don't purchase their own prizes but are gifted them prior to the running of the event. She also commented that they reach higher profits when they have young volunteers helping and also people with cerebral palsy attending the occasion.

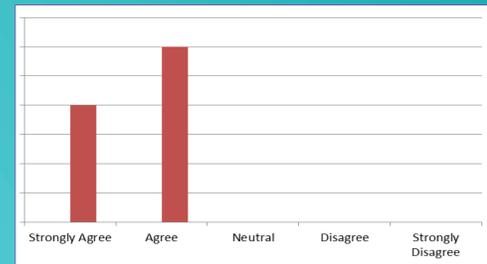
Questionnaire responses:

Column chart to show the public's reaction to the question: "What do you think about the number of local charities?"



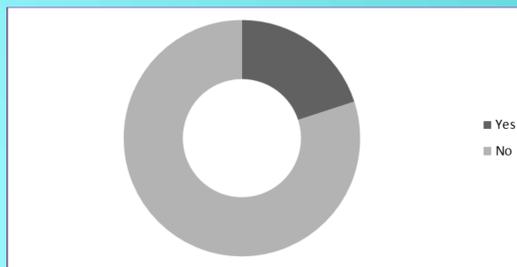
As you can see, my community believe that the amount of local charities is too few. One person, who indicated that there are too many charities, commented on a lack of diversity and too much replication.

Column chart to show the public's reaction to the statement: "Charities in the local area are beneficial"



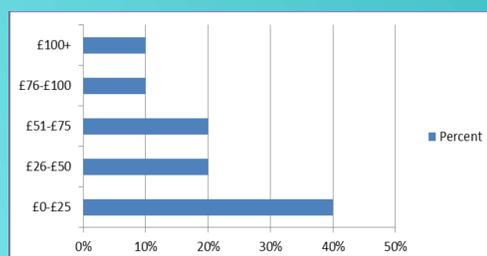
The majority of the local public said that they strongly agree or agree that the local charities are beneficial.

Doughnut chart to show the public's reaction to the question: "Do you volunteer for a local charity?"



Only 1 in 5 people volunteer for local charities. This means that volunteers may be in short supply and charities should look at making volunteering more appealing.

Bar graph to show the public's reaction to the question: "How much money do you donate to charity in a calendar year?"



The reaction to the question shows that people usually donate between £0-£25 and this is a relatively small amount of money. This reflects the views of Jane Howard-White that people do not donate as much money due to the times of modern austerity. She said, though, that they gain enough money to survive on and therefore any amount is a generous amount.

"Local charities do not get as much publicity as the bigger ones."

"My charity is close to my heart."

"I can see the difference charities make."

Conclusion:

In conclusion, people in my local community are generally impressed by the charity quality but feel that there needs to be more local charities covering a range of different topics .i.e. **Cancer, Foreign Aid, Cerebral Palsy, Animals, Homelessness, Social Issues, Mental Health, Nature, Preservation, Anxiety, Depression, Confidence, Addiction** etc.

In the future, I would like to undertake an investigation into people's varying views on the NHS (National Health Service) and whether people agree with privatisation. As part of this, I would like to find out what people think about the fact that that some people are offered a faster, more efficient service because they are wealthier.

By Joe Leonard