



BRIGHTLIFE LEGACY REPORT  
19. BRIGHTLIFE  
VOLUNTEER SURVEY  
Executive summary

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## 19. Brightlife Volunteer Report

### Executive Summary

#### Background:

This document reports the findings of a survey regarding experiences of Brightlife volunteers as of April 2019. It is the first report to focus on the role and perceptions of volunteers in Brightlife.

#### Evaluation Methods:

Data was collected using an online survey developed and distributed via the “Online Surveys” (previously Bristol Online Survey) platform between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The survey was divided into four sections: contextual personal details, “About your Brightlife volunteer role”, “Training for your Brightlife volunteer role” and “Your experience as a Brightlife volunteer”.

#### Results:

There were 24 survey respondents, representing 14 distinct Brightlife groups. Results were split into three themes: *Before Brightlife* (demography and volunteering background), *During Brightlife* (details of volunteer role, training, perceptions and challenges) and *After Brightlife* (how expectations had been met, and future volunteering intentions).

*Before Brightlife:* In terms of demography, respondents were weighted toward female (ratio 2.3 to every 1 man), Chester based (70.8%) and aged between 50 and 69 (69.6%). Most had former volunteer experience (83.3%) and had not been Brightlife participants (91.7%). Volunteers learnt about Brightlife via a range of methods, including ‘internal’ means (pre-involvement, word of mouth) and ‘external’ means (internet, print media).

*During Brightlife:* Two thirds of respondents travelled up to 10 miles per month on average to volunteer (70% of respondents volunteered in the same locality they identified as ‘home’), while most volunteered for of up to 20 hours per month on average (87.9%). Volunteering role ‘type’ could be divided into four categories;

leadership, research, facilitating and 'general' (e.g., participating, delegated tasks). All respondents reported having received training of some kind. Suggestions for future training linked back to the role categories (i.e., training targeted to specific roles and tasks). Respondents chose to be involved in Brightlife for a variety of reasons, which generally fell into six categories: prior volunteering in similar roles, enthusiasm for the project itself, to learn new skills, to enhance formal studies, to contribute to the community / help people, and being motivated by emotional factors / life transitions. When asked what they most liked about Brightlife, the majority of respondents (91.7%) gave answers linked to people (both participants being helped and interactions with fellow volunteers). Challenges identified linked to sporadic workloads, time management issues, low confidence / motivation, low participant numbers and activity specific obstacles.

*After Brightlife:* Regarding expectations and intentions, 91.7% of respondents reported that Brightlife had met expectations, 95.8% would continue in their present roles if possible, and 87.5% stated that Brightlife had inspired them to volunteer again, or consider doing so in future.

### **Discussion & Conclusions:**

The principle limitation of this survey was the small overall number of respondents, which must be taken into account when making inferences based on survey results. In terms of volunteer identity, results yielded suggest Brightlife have an experienced, eager and able 'workforce' of volunteers. There is weighting along gender and age lines, but amongst these groups there is relative parity in terms of the exact roles people are undertaking. The weighting toward the 50-69 age group could possibly be explained by the nature of the project itself, and the means by which people discovered it. Motivating factors and challenges illuminated by this study should be taken into account when considering volunteer recruitment and retention in future, as they will impact on the legacy and sustainability of Brightlife. The apparent lack of people transitioning from participant to volunteer is of note, and could result from a number of factors, which could warrant further investigation.