

Volunteer Survey and Feedback – April 2018

Feedback from Volunteers

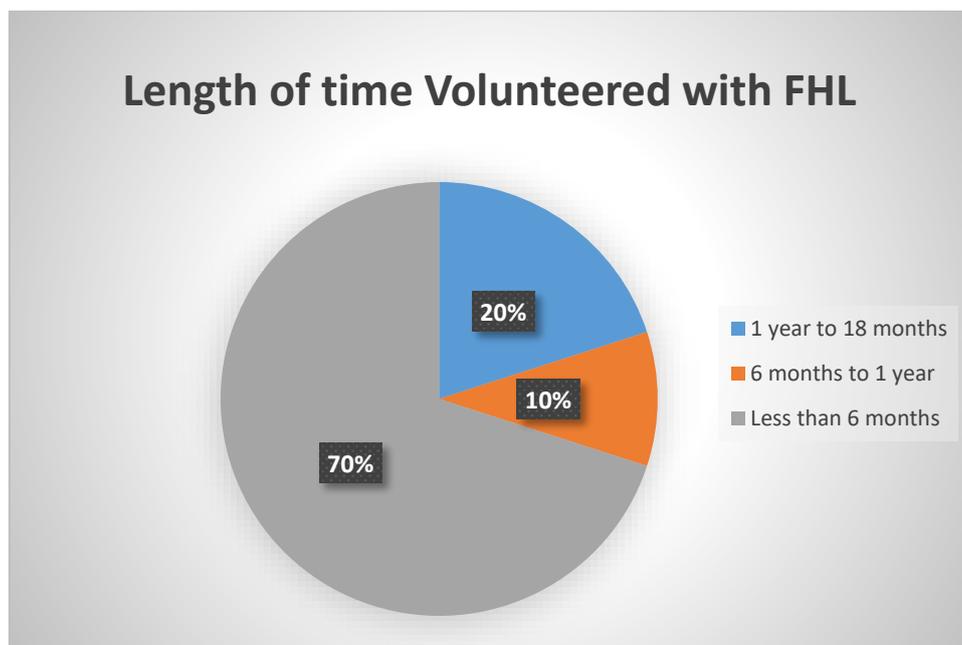
Volunteers are an integral aspect of the service delivered by Firsthand Lothian and we value and appreciate their input. We strive to make Firsthand Lothian a welcoming and supportive volunteering experience for all – creating opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence whilst spending quality time with children and having fun in the process.

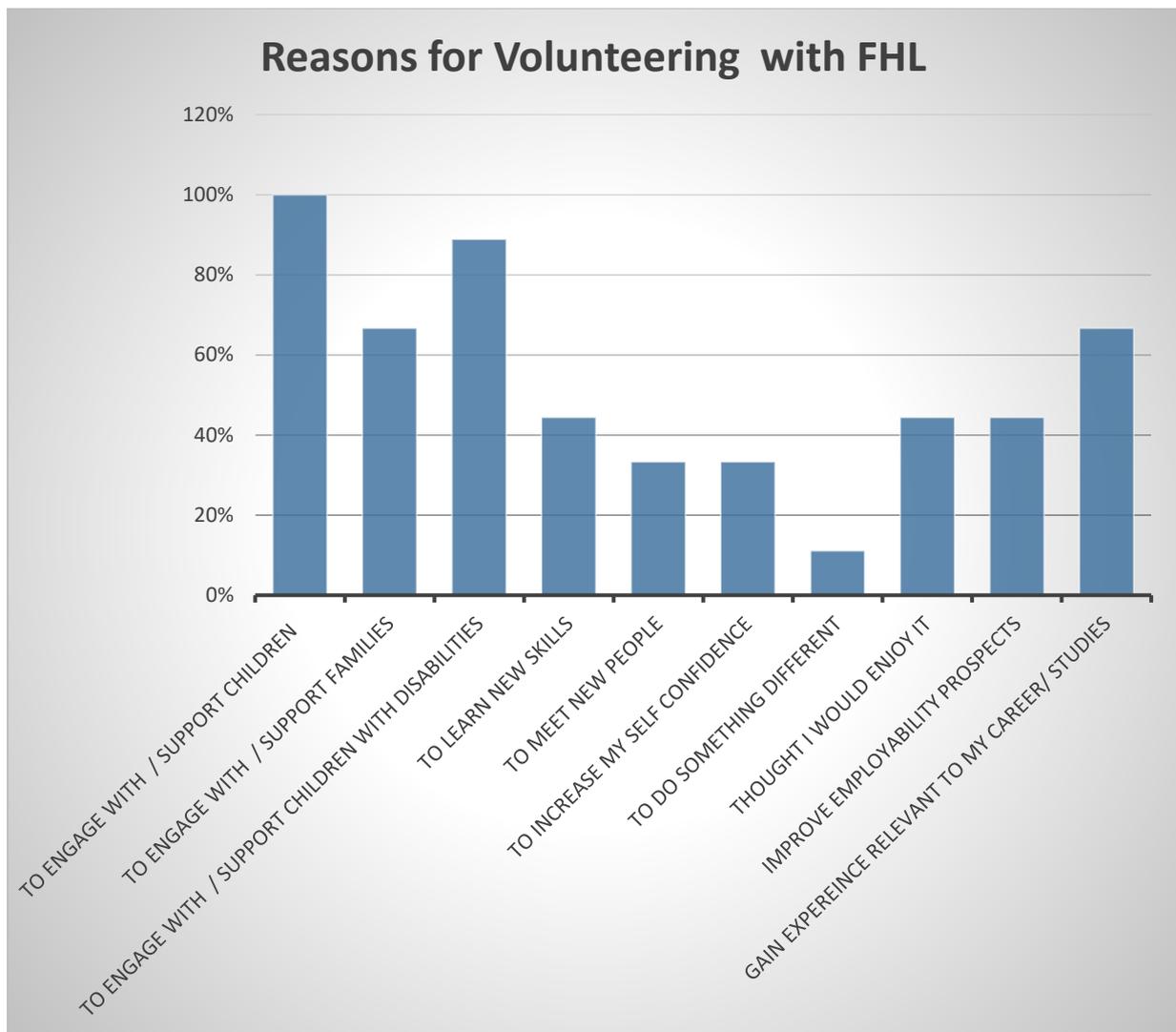
We value direct feedback from volunteers and use this to look at ways of improving and adapting the support and opportunities we can offer to better meet current and evolving needs.

Survey Monkey was used to gather this feedback in April 2018. It was sent out to all volunteers who were engaged in direct delivery of support to families and children. Due to the difference in the volunteer roles, we did not include volunteer Management Committee members in this survey. We received completed surveys from **84%** of current family support volunteers and their feedback and comments gathered are summarised below.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete and submit their feedback, it really has been helpful.

Bev Read
Director





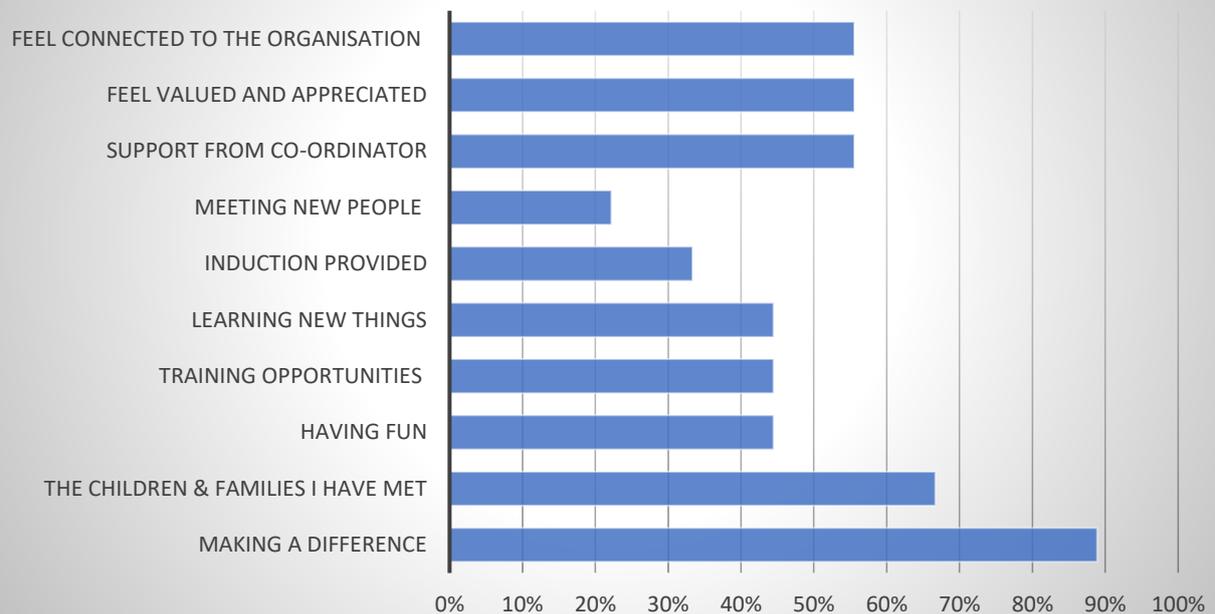
Feedback from Volunteers strongly indicates that they are attracted to the role because they primarily want to **engage and support children and children with disabilities**.

However it is notable that over 60% of respondents volunteer with Firsthand Lothian because the role will give them experience of direct contact with children, children with disabilities and families which will **help them with their studies, improve their employability prospects and help them with their future career**.

Firsthand Lothian has, in recent years, been proactive about offering paid work to Volunteers once they have successfully worked with a family / completed a minimum of 50 hours of direct contact with children.

We offer paid work based on parent / family and child feedback along with our own assessment of the individual volunteer in the role. In addition to observing a Volunteer's interaction with children, parents and the families they support, we look to see how well individuals have developed their confidence in the role and integrate this with their learning and understanding of the issues into their relationship and day to day interaction with children and their families.

What Volunteers have enjoyed most about their experience with FHL



Feedback from Volunteers when asked what they found the **most challenging** about their role was as follows: -

- *“I think developing the relationship with the family every week and thinking what went well and what can be improved to make the best sessions for the children I am working with. I think it is difficult because you have to work it out yourself by trial and error, but it also has been a great skill to develop.”*
- *“Personally, to learn to keep boundaries with families”*
- *“Dealing with children with disabilities is definitely challenging and not always easy but it’s helping me to be more confident and gain skills”*
- *“Volunteering around University deadlines has been a bit challenging but something I am learning to work through”*

Suggestions and ideas as to **how Firsthand Lothian could improve the Volunteer experience** and our response is noted below:-

- **Perhaps more help with what activities available by local area**

We have been developing an area by area list of what is around and on in local areas however we are very conscious that the challenge is keeping it up to date and being able to add new things and take off things that are no longer available.

We are going to put our “activities directory” on line through SharePoint so that all volunteers will have access to it. However we are mindful that the success of this approach is very dependent on our ability to keep it a current and useful document so we will depend on Volunteers, staff and families keeping us informed of new things and changes so that we can edit it on an ongoing basis and keep it up to date.

Ideally we will also be able to use this approach to keep Volunteers and families abreast of what is on for a short period of time – local initiatives, activities only on over the school holidays etc.

- **Networking for volunteers to share experience**

We are aware that volunteers live city wide, have busy lives and spend time with children and their families at varying days /times so when we are thinking about creating opportunities for Volunteers to come together we have found it difficult to agree on a venue and a day or the week and time that suits everyone. Also we are aware we need a focus if people are to come together – which has usually been a training activity.

Over the coming months we are planning to issue all volunteers with a Firsthand Lothian email address and access to Sharepoint where all documents and information will be available to access on line. This approach will, in turn, enable Volunteers to communicate with each other and have on line discussions through Yammer. If this is successful we would hope that this might evolve into opportunities for volunteers to meet face to face at times and venues that work for them

- **Provide a wider range of training opportunities. Have events e.g. BBQ to get volunteers and families together**

The idea of creating an opportunity for an event that brings volunteers and families together is something that we will consider for the future. Initially we will gather feedback from families so as to gauge their level of interest and willingness to participate before developing further. It may be that smaller local area events would be more practical in the first instance as we are aware that many families do not live centrally so it would be key that we identified a venue that is accessible for all.

Feedback from Volunteers about their overall experience with Firsthand Lothian.

"I felt the induction training was thorough and I felt prepared to do my volunteering".

"I think it is good that on the first visit the Co-ordinator comes with you as I found it very supportive ..."

"I feel supported and trusted as a volunteer"

"So far I have had a very good experience with FHL - - received a lot of support and training to be prepared for the volunteering experience"

"I have enjoyed my experience her at FHL. I've learnt so much and I am continuing to learn!"

"The experience of volunteering with the organisation has been greatly rewarding"

"I think it is really well thought through as training is provided and overall support too"

If you are interested in Volunteering with Firsthand Lothian then please visit our web page

<http://www.firsthand-lothian.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>



Or contact us on 0131 523 1322 for a chat and to find out more.

Bev Read - April 18