

# Annual Report 2024: Volunteer Co Ordinator

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Last year's report was very much about building a better infrastructure around our volunteers, creating opportunities for upskilling and training, so that they could confidently excel in all aspects of their volunteer engagement with the clients we deliver services to. We continue to reinforce this endeavor: maintaining our Core Training delivery and developing other avenues for specific upskilling, for example, our Active Listening workshops. This year's key endeavor has been to centralise our focus on the wellbeing of our volunteers, appreciating that their lives are busy, and, in many cases, they must deal with difficult life situations and circumstances, as well as helping clients with multiple needs as this report highlights. Growing a culture of connection between our volunteers through regular coffee catch ups in local coffee shops and small events like the nature Forage in Shaldon, as well as having 1-2-1 'wellbeing catch ups' with the Volunteer Coordinator. In the year ahead, we want to further build on the 3 key aims of ViH for our volunteer community to grow and flourish collectively and individually, through 'Supporting, Empowering and Connecting'.

## Supporting

Since March '23 ViH have held three Core Training Sessions covering 'Boundaries, Confidentiality & GDPR' delivered to 98 volunteers, and to complete 2024 training program, we have another session scheduled for delivery in October. By the end of 2024, we are endeavoring that all our retained volunteers and new recruits will have completed this essential training creating a set standard for supportive quality volunteering. Volunteers rate the overall training as 4.72 out of 5 and its benefit to their volunteering as 4.56 out of 5.

*'It was very well presented. I was well informed, and it was very good. It all went really smoothly.'*

*'The aspect of the training that has challenged me most is thinking about boundaries and all the various scenarios and possibly unintended consequences'*

*'I feel more prepared for situations where boundaries might be challenged and how to say things in the right way'*

This year, two volunteers attended Defibrillator Training at The Alice Cross Centre giving positive feedback to its benefits:

*'Excellent! I learnt a lot from the presenter, and I felt very positive and consider it worth doing again. I would encourage other volunteers to attend in the future.'*

At the beginning of 2024 a ViH volunteer facilitator, John Elliot, started to develop a bespoke workshop with the volunteer coordinator to help foster a fresh approach to pathways of engagement between staff, volunteers and clients, via active listening. In its infancy, it has already proved beneficial to those that have attended, with plans to deliver further sessions throughout 2024/25.

*'This gave me a view of how other people perceive me and the value I can bring which sometimes I don't see in myself'*

*'I learnt lots from the proactive listening session. I picked up that if we really listen there are several opportunities to spread the work that ViH does.'*

*'The main revelation I had was I can listen, I just need to slow down, take time to think about what is being said and stop thinking about what I am going to say next'*

In February 2024, we held a Forage Workshop with El Herndlofer from 'Coming Home', this was one of the first conscientious steps this year to prioritize our volunteer's wellbeing as part of our volunteer delivery. As an organisation that is centralised around health, it is intrinsically important to ViH that our volunteers feel supported holistically to maintain their wellbeing. Our volunteer's response reaffirms this ethos:

*This was so enjoyable and unexpected.*

*Reaffirmed what I already know. A kind caring organisation that does its best for clients and volunteers.*

*It underlined your concern for the volunteers.*

*Great to meet other volunteers and discover how many previously ignored plants on our doorstep can be eaten .and are delicious.*

These activities are also complimented by our 'one-2-one' approach to our volunteers: With 45 hours of volunteer 121 telephone catch ups clocked over a 6-month period, this has ensured that all our lone-operating befrienders have received support with their client engagement and received personal support. The Volunteer Coordinator has 'Open Tuesdays' for volunteers to come to the Hub for any support they require, which is availed of on a weekly basis; building on our volunteer wellbeing strategy, since July 2024, the Volunteer Coordinator has instigated face to face wellbeing catch ups specifically for the volunteer. It's early days but volunteers are indicating that their wellbeing has improved since volunteering, with one volunteer encapsulates the catch ups in these terms:

*'Being heard, being valued, sharing suggestions for improvement and a nice coffee outside in the sunshine!'*

Recognition for 3 ViH volunteers through The Majors Award for Volunteering 2024 has also been successful this year, spanning the ViH service delivery: A Hope Group Volunteer, a Befriender and Driver, and a long-standing Telephone Befriender and letter writer. Demonstrating the commitment and quality of the services our volunteers deliver. On receiving the award one volunteer told the audience, "She felt it was a privilege for her to be able to write to people locally". She added that "ViH was an amazing charity with wonderful staff and volunteers, she was delighted to be part of what they did."

For ViH it is important to recognise all our volunteers, and as part of volunteer week all volunteers received an email of appreciation with a certificate of recognition, with one-liner feedback to the volunteer coordinator, such as,

*'oh, lovely idea!'*

*'thank you, much appreciated.'*

## **Empowering**

### **Volunteers**

Throughout the period of March'23- April '24 ViH retained 105 active volunteers and undertook a further 25 volunteer inductions, creating new volunteer opportunities across the spectrum of our services. Alongside these roles, we also facilitated 11 more befriender matches which utilized 9 of our already active volunteers, helping to reduce the client waiting list. During this same period, for numerous life reasons, ViH had 20 volunteers cease volunteering over a range of roles which therefore meant we increased our active volunteer community by 6 volunteers in this timeframe.

To ensure all roles met with our risk mitigation and volunteer approval, 40 DBS applications were processed on behalf of active and new volunteers, ensuring safe standards for all.

Volunteer Role	Number of new Volunteer role Inductions
Trustee	1
Befriender	3
Admin	3
Counsellor	1
Telephone Befriending	1
Fundraising	3
Driver	6
Transport Desk Operator	2

Training Facilitator	1
Hope Group Volunteer	4

Volunteer Role	Number of Volunteers ceasing engagement
Befriending	4
Sitting for Carers	2
Hope Group Volunteer	3
Telephone Befriending	2
Driver	6
Transport Desk Operator	3

From March '23 - April '24, through our volunteer's effort and time, we have collectively added **9598 hours** of community service in supporting health care needs within the Teignbridge locality, this is an increase of **1258 hours** from last year. This equates to **£115,176.00** in monetary terms.

Volunteer Role	Number of Volunteers	Time delivered over the timeframe	Monetary value to other health services
Drivers	16	2,426.5	29118.00
Admin	7	790	9480.00
Transport Desk	5	625	7500.00
Befriending	33	3300	39600.00
Fundraising	6	330	3960.00
Hope group	13	650	7800.00
Sitters for carers	3	226.5	2718.00
Trustees	7	450	5400.00
Telephone Befrienders	12	600	7200.00
End of Life	4	200	2400.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>9598</b>	<b>115.176.00</b>

## **Client Connection**

To demonstrate the complexity that our volunteers support in terms of client health-related categories can be seen in Figure (i) as percentage or Figure (iii) as client numbers. Volunteer role types are pictured in Figure (vi).

Between March 23 – April 24, ViH total client interface across services delivered (not including Driving) was 1 volunteer to 2.5 clients. The transport service's current statistics are based on the number of drives rather than clients; therefore, it cannot be included here, but ViH would conservatively estimate that the overall volunteer service delivery to all client by volunteers to be between 1: 3 - 1:4, which is an amazing Reach into the Teignbridge locality.

In this same timeframe, ViH had 51 volunteers actively connected to 78 clients on a 1-2-2 basis through Face-to-Face Befriending, Telephone Befriending and Sitting. This is a ratio of 1 volunteer to 1.5 clients. These client connections have predominantly run for the duration of the entire year and are set up as 'long-term' volunteer support – with the volunteer undertaking a 'journey' of connection with the client and in some instances even into End of Life; rather than 'short term' 'injections' of connection for a period of 6 - 12 weeks. This is an important factor in understanding the caliber of our volunteers and the service we currently deliver, especially, when considering the continuity and consistency of our volunteer visits weekly - this level of support, when faced with the client health categories, is an unswerving achievement of commitment, integrity, empathy and ability. ViH is acutely aware we do not want to add to client dependence through a long-term approach. This is why we have clear boundaries for our volunteers; implement signposting to other service providers; or paid services we provide i.e. Enabling. We operate with a holistic and intelligent approach with other services providers to ensure that support is balanced in terms of volunteer contact time and functionality. ViH prides itself in operating symbiotically with the principles of the care act and the model of care to 'prevent, reduce and delay'. The challenge for ViH, going forward, is to achieve further dexterity through delivering two types of approaches, long- and short-term client connection, as clear pathways for self-referrals as well as referrals from health organizations; This target will require further consistent funds to support the increase in administration and fast turnaround client-facing appraisals and assessments to ensure volunteer and client safety.

When this is set alongside the further monetary savings to the health care services and the statistics shown in Figure (ii), where each volunteer is on average supporting a client with at least 4 of the named health categories, all of which come with unique challenges, it is clear to see the further scope and value ViH potentially can add if this aim is realized.

Figure (i) shows that 25% of our clients struggle with Isolation and Loneliness. In each client case, this is not a standalone malady but in all cases is linked with at least one other health category, or personal circumstances, which as a side effect has created further displacement and deterioration in the client's wellbeing. 14% are struggling with varying levels of severity and types of Mental Health, in its most severe manifestation it is linked to 1% being supported with concerns around suicide. 13% of clients have mobility issues, and whilst it is outside of our volunteer befrienders remit to function as Enablers, we have responded to this need with a newly employed Enabler staff role, and successful continuation of our Volunteer Drivers Service to increase mobility to medical and wellbeing appointments reaching beyond the Teignbridge locality, to Exeter and Torbay.

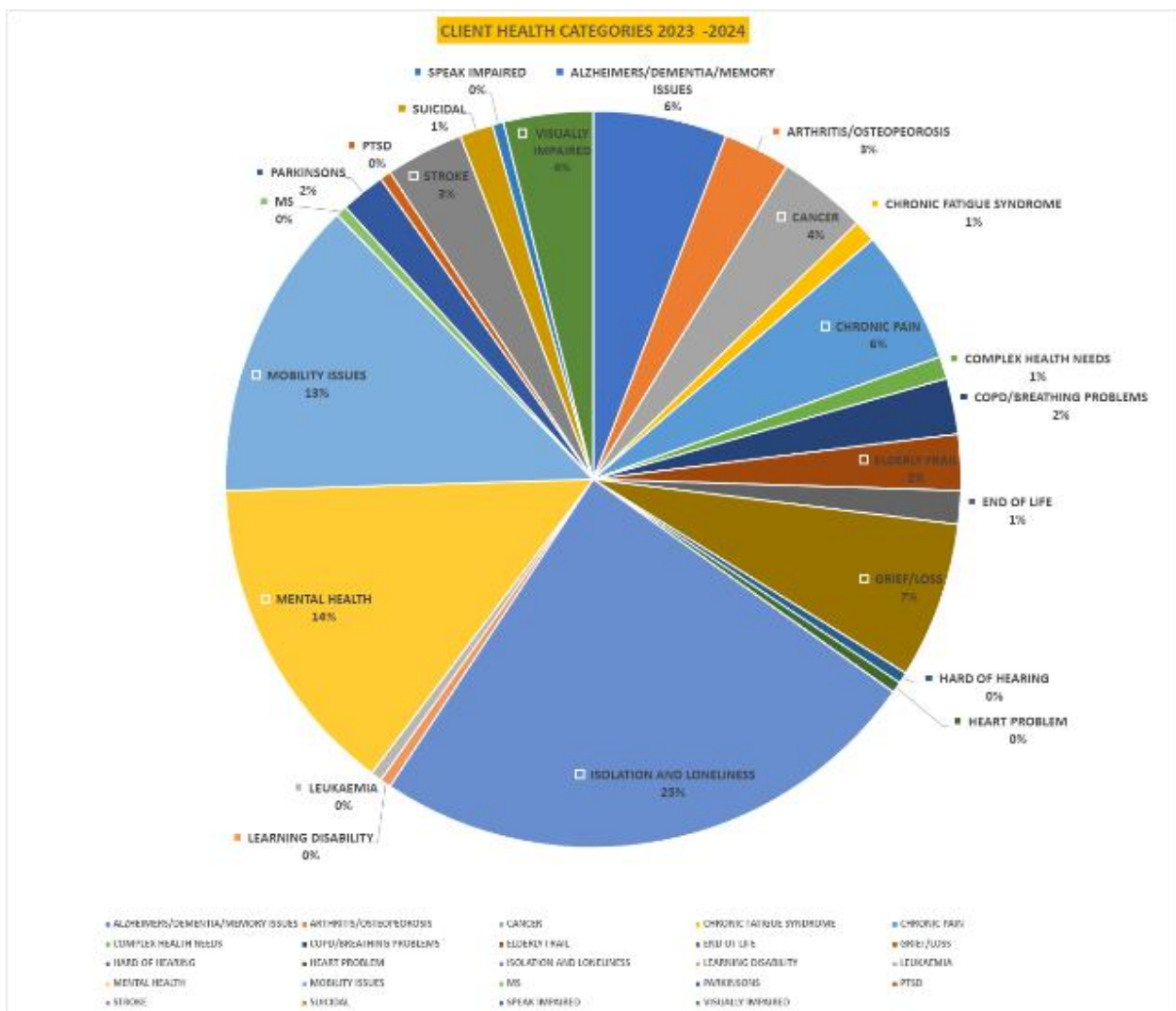


Figure (i) percentage (data from 88 clients linked with befrienders, telephone befrienders and sitters March 23 April 24)

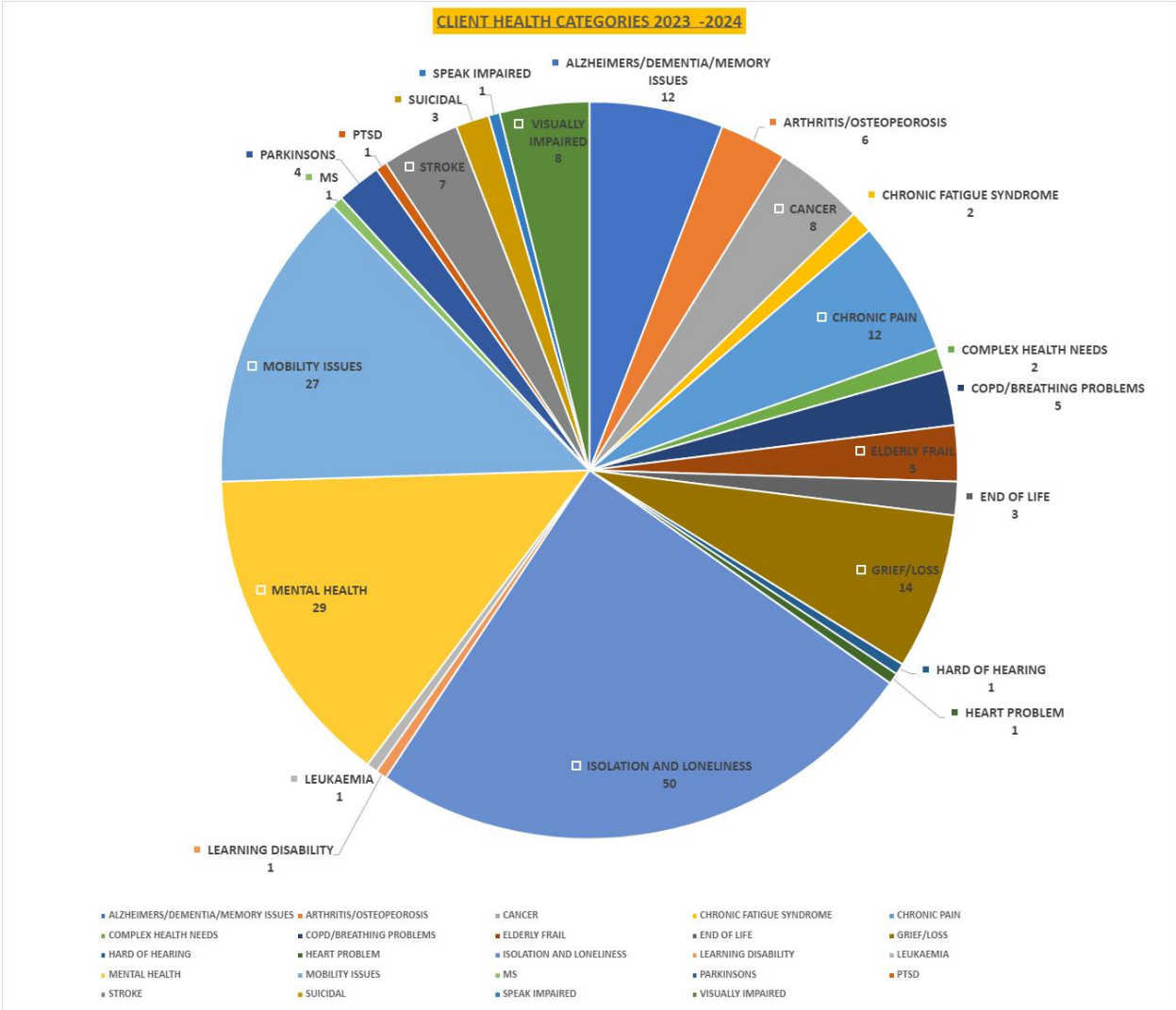
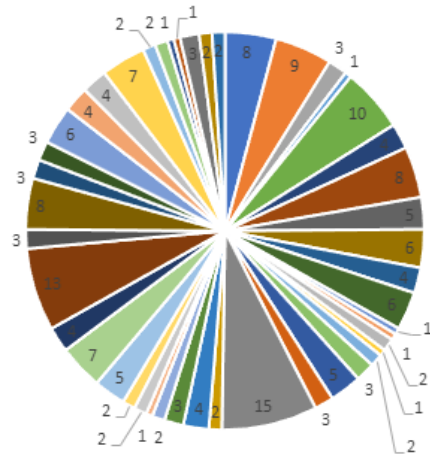


Figure (ii) client numbers (data from 88 clients linked with befrienders, telephone befrienders and sitters March 23 April 24)

Figure (iii) (data taken from 58 client-linked volunteers and their connection with client health categories)

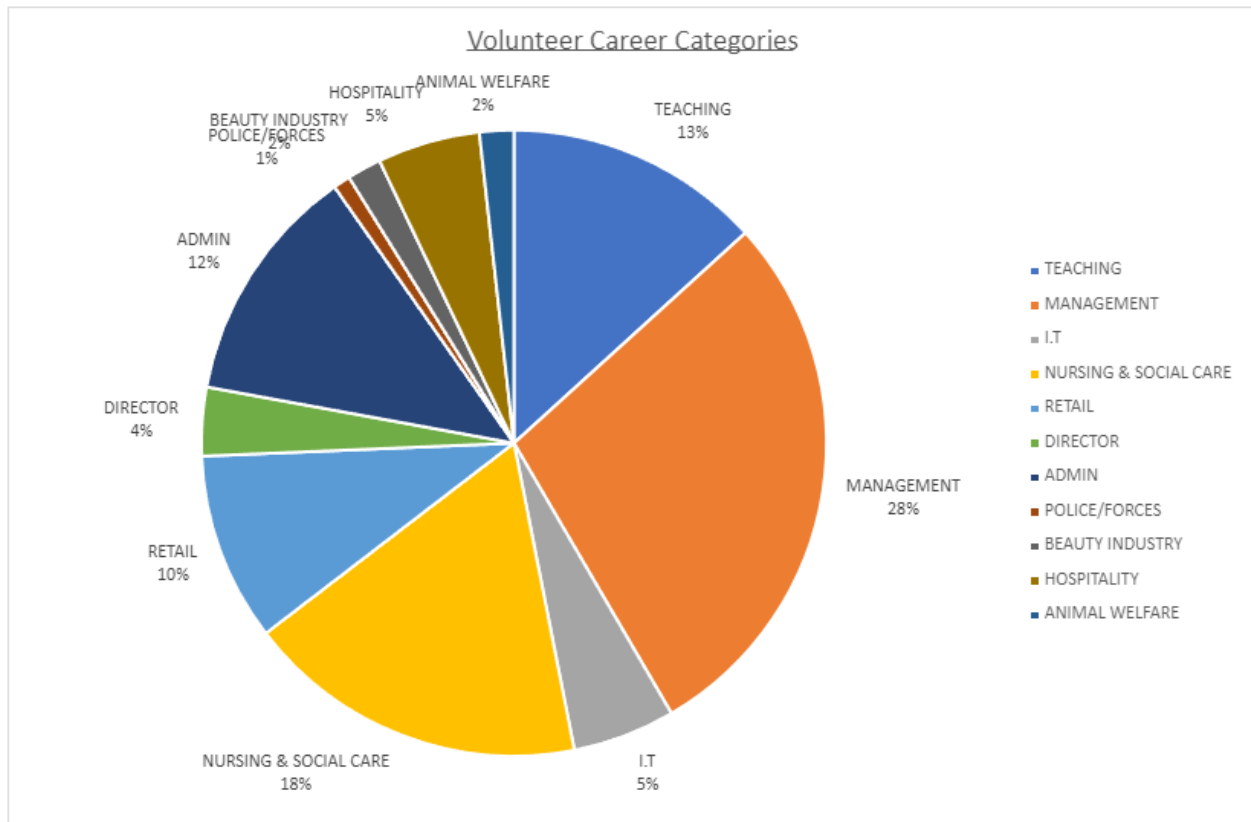
**TOTAL NUMBER OF HEALTH CATEGORIES VIH VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT**  
 (stats based on individual volunteers connection) 2023-2024



**Who ViH Volunteers Are**

**Understanding the ViH Volunteer**

Figure (iv) (data taken from 112 volunteer responses regarding their professions)





When reviewing who ViH attracts to volunteer, it is interesting that the majority of our volunteers have been recruited from predominantly careers in Management, followed by Nursing and Social Care and Teaching. All 18% Nursing and Social Care and 13% Teaching are directly connected to clients either through Face-to-Face Befriending or Telephone Befriending, skilling the volunteer with the life experience to provide the quality of provision needed for our client's health categories. Over this period, ViH has had an increase in volunteers from an administrative background, allowing ViH to start several Volunteers with specific skills to assist with office-based tasks alongside the ViH staff.

Career pathways, whilst giving us a platform to spring-box from, do not tell the whole story. Empathy, the desire to give back to the health sector and having been affected by many of the health categories either directly or indirectly through family and friends is why the majority of our volunteers enroll with ViH. Approximately, 90% of all our volunteers have been affected in some personal way with care responsibilities, the grief and loss of a loved one or battling a health condition of their own, and most are either retired or of mid-life working age.

Figure (vii) volunteer age range percentage

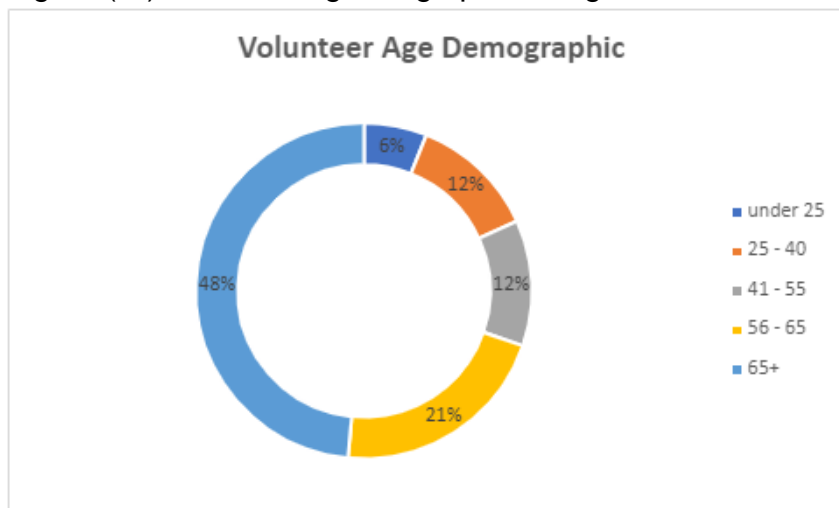


Figure (vi) shows, outside of the 12% of volunteers who assist with group delivery: such as HOPE and Brighter Days Groups, 88% of volunteers work alone or have roles which require a level of independence. This allows our volunteers to shape their volunteering around their lifestyle and for many they enjoy the anonymity it offers because it is not place based, delivered at set times or team- based.

Figure (v) pictures the demographic of the ViH volunteers: our primary demographic is Teignmouth with 49%, 14% are based in Dawlish and a growing Demographic in Chudleigh at 12% since the area's handover from Chudleigh Together in 2023.

Figure (v) (data taken from 112 volunteer responses regarding their location)

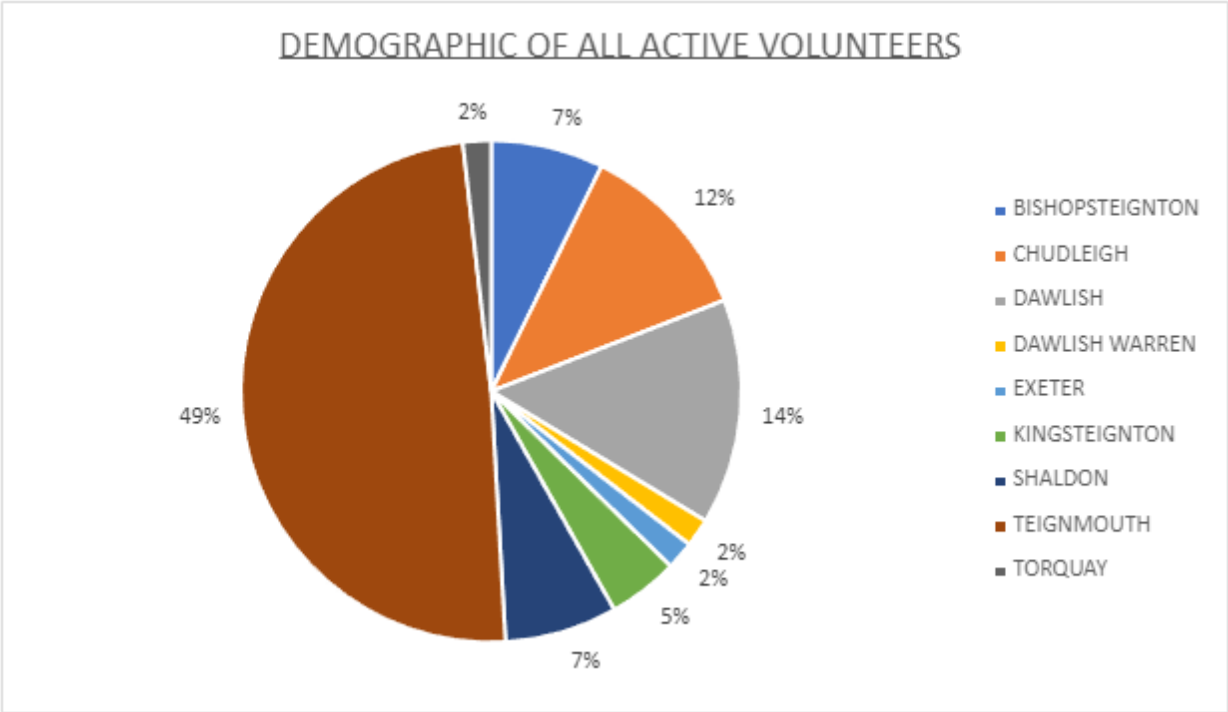
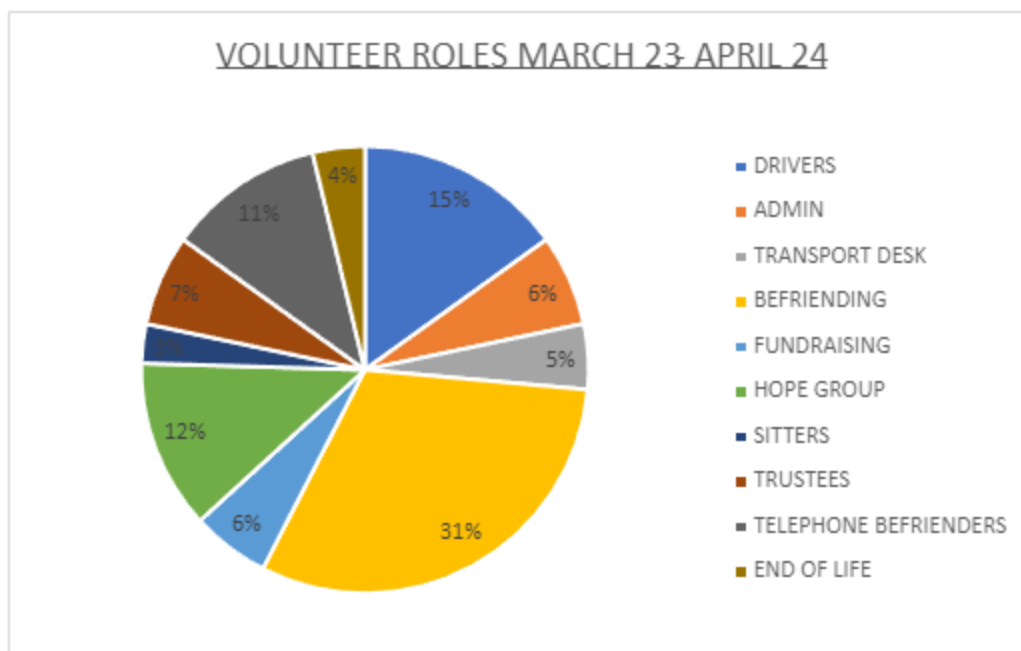


Figure (vi) Volunteer Roles Percentage Distribution



### **A New Cohort Being Attracted to ViH**

During 2023 we also started to have a younger demographic interested in volunteering for ViH in new and exciting ways. Through supporting a school pupil from Torbay Academy to achieve their work experience within the charity sector, they became inspired by the work ViH do and proceeded to undertake a Park Run Fundraiser for ViH; The success of this produced much needed funds to support our service delivery. Inspired by the possibilities to volunteer in this way, a past pupil of Teignmouth Community School, now attending Exeter College, recently approached ViH to run the Bath Half in March 2025 as a fundraiser, this has gathered interest and momentum, and it is likely ViH will have at least 15 participants for this event, bringing welcomed PR and further fundraising efforts for the organisation.

Throughout this period, believing in the value ViH offers the Teignbridge community, has created further independent fundraising initiatives through already engaged and active Hope volunteers running a Quiz Night on the one hand, to several locals, starting the Ashleigh Way ViH Telephone Box second hand 'shop' which brings in regular funds each month.

Through all these volunteer efforts of time, commitment and fundraising, ViH is continuing to be empowered to make an impactful difference to individual lives in communities across the Teignbridge Locality.

### **Volunteer Gaps 2024-2025**

At the bridge between reporting for 2023-24 and 2024-25, ViH has had its critical loss in volunteer drivers and transport desk operators. Whilst client calls for transportation to

appointments are increasing, we are finding ourselves stretched to meet the need. At the time of reporting, the 2 roles made up 20% of our delivery. To meet the growing need ViH need to recruit new volunteers to this area of service delivery immediately and are hopeful that the 2024-25 report will be able to demonstrate this being successfully achieved.

## Connecting

Making connections and keeping connections helps to forge sustainable pathways which can be built on.

Much of our volunteer delivery is done remotely, out in the community through volunteers lone operating. It is not place based or having centralised delivery from a space everyone comes to. On the one hand, this enables us to be very flexible '*charity without walls*' but it can also make it difficult to foster collective identity and cohesion and support between our volunteers. We have cohorts of volunteers, who have a better sense of 'togetherness' either through the service they are part of, like the Drivers who are linked in daily in dialogue through the transport desk and operate as a team; or through location, like the 'Chudleigh Volunteers' that span the breadth of our services but have identity through their already close-knit community. To foster a culture of volunteer community for all to have a sense of connection is trickier, but not impossible.

## Newsletters

In January 2024, ViH launched their online Volunteer 'Sway' Newsletters, sent out to all the active volunteers in person and located in the volunteer section of the ViH website – this includes dates for your dairy, staff contact information, important document links, sign up links and one-off articles around volunteering. Up to April '24, 4 Newsletters have been compiled with a staggering **1900** 'read' views and 45% of that showing 'deep reads'. Going forward, ViH started a Bulletin in July 24, for those that want to access key information briefly. With 105 reads within the first 2 weeks this is proving successful in connecting volunteers with all that is going on for ViH volunteers.

We submit articles to local magazines monthly. When reporting ViH had received one new recruit for volunteering and a self-referral for our Hope group, the editor replied

*'I am so pleased to know that the Chudleigh Campaign has had an impact, however small, for Volunteering in Health!'*

## Coffee Catch Ups

Towards the end of 2023 ViH started the monthly Coffee Catch Ups and due to the fact ViH operate across the whole of Teignbridge we wanted to ensure that volunteers, from all the locations, could access a Catch Up on their doorstep. This has also helped navigate the community space dilemma, instead enabling us to occupy local cafes and connecting us into the heart of each community. We have had 7 catch ups of this sort, achieving a cross section of all volunteer types attending, making for dynamic conversations, celebrations of achievements, demonstrating the scope and impacts of all we do collectively to individual volunteers which is helping in a small way towards the greater identity of being part of something bigger and valuing the collective identity of being a ViH volunteer. For example, the most recent Catch-Up was attended by drivers, befrienders and telephone befrienders, and 2 volunteers and 2 staff members went for an impromptu cold dip in the sea!

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

*'It is my pleasure to continue to build on the work we started to put in place in the last financial year, pushing towards the goal of seamless processes in recruitment, retention and the development of individual volunteer's skills; fostering a collective cohesion for all our active volunteers to be supported through. A big Thank You to all the ViH volunteers without whom, as can be clearly seen in this report, what we do at ViH would not be possible.'*

Annabelle Murray

Volunteer Coordinator.