

1. Training and volunteering in general: The Institute of Volunteering has noted that the importance of training including accreditation in attracting and retaining volunteers.

Offering training progression and accreditation options plays a vital role in attracting volunteers who are motivated by the desire to improve or learn skills, particularly young people and those wanting to increase their employability.

The most recent National Volunteering Survey found that although most volunteers did not feel that they needed advice, support or training regular volunteers were more likely to need advice and support than occasional volunteers, with those involved in representing others or visiting (34% in each case) were among those more likely to need advice and support.

2. Training for people involved in monitoring visits: In 2002, Health Link undertook a survey of ex Community Health Council and Patients Forum volunteers on monitoring visits. We received 237 responses to the survey; the majority of which had received training on how to visit NHS services.

3. Training for LINKs members: To assess the readiness of LINKs members to participate in e-learning and to find out which training topics would be of most use to them, we undertook a consultation survey with 42 Health Link lay reps. 33 of these lay reps were LINKs members. The survey asked whether respondents had been trained and sought their views on the value of training and appropriate topics:

3.1 Findings were as follows:

a) Views and experience of training

- 59% (25/42) had not undertaken any training
- 73% (31/42) said training was very or quite important

b) Useful training topics: Training topics in order of popularity:

- 59% (25/42) Understanding social care
- 48% (20/42) Understanding the NHS
- 45% (19/42) Enter and View
- 36% (15/42) Equal Opportunities
- 43% (18/42) Handling Meetings

c) Further comments on training for LINKs

- *“As well as individual training it would be useful for some training for the whole LINK core group”*
- *“Must be available locally and adapted to the local needs”*
- *“Some training is essential, some less so. Much depends on previous experience. To attract a good response, training needs to be local and easy to access”*
- *“Training in theory is good. Is it value for money, I mean for the NHS? However, I am an optimist. Keep up with your good work”*
- *“As I remain to be convinced that LINKs will perform any useful function, I am answering on the assumption that I am and would consider becoming a LINK (both false).”*
- *“I was a member of the CHC and Patient Forum. I do not know if being a LINK Member would help the local community issue.”*