

# Membership Survey 2017

## Results Report

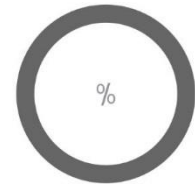
20 September 2017



Received 103 responses



59 named organisations and 44 anonymous



66% response rate

In June 2017 VHS sent out a membership survey to its 156 member organisations.

We received 103 completed surveys, over an 18% increase from the previous membership survey undertaken in 2016. 59 member organisations provided their details whilst 44 provided responses anonymously. Assuming that the 103 responses are from separate organisations the response rate is 66%.

The purpose of the survey was to get feedback on VHS's current work programme, as well as to guide our future work. The survey gathered information regarding:

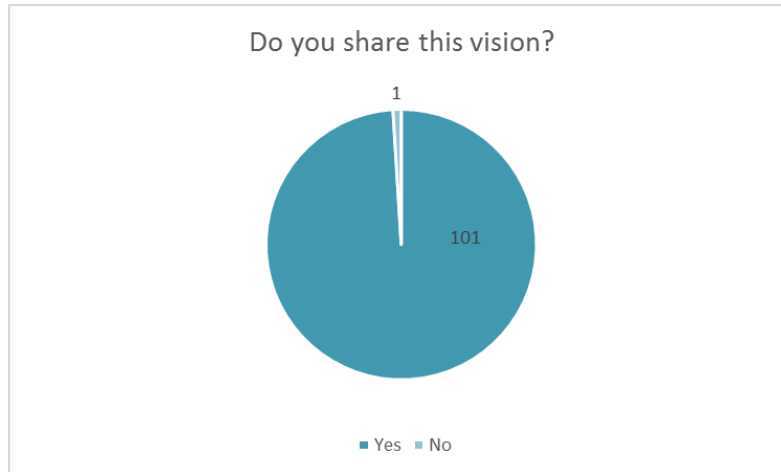
- VHS's new draft Vision and Mission statements
- VHS's key policy areas
- VHS events
- VHS's communications

The survey also sought to help build a profile of our member organisations, their areas of work and interests.

Please note that the comments of respondents have not been altered for content, but spelling errors and typos have been corrected where possible.

### Survey Analysis

**Question 1:** VHS is developing its new three year strategy. Our proposed new vision is: *"The voluntary health sector as an equal partner in helping everyone in Scotland enjoy longer, healthier lives."* Do you share this vision?



101 respondents agreed with our vision statement whilst a single respondent disagreed stating that, *“I think there are problems around “equal” and “longer”. I don’t like vision statements like this. Are you sure people understand or share understanding of the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement?”*

Some other comments included:

*“Fully believe”*

*“I agree with the vision of the voluntary sector as an equal partner but would add to the longer, healthier with something like fulfilled as this plays to the voluntary sector’s strengths.”*

There were some mixed responses regarding the ‘equal’ aspect of the vision statement. Majority of respondents agreed that there was a need for the voluntary health sector to be seen as an equal partner whilst a couple of responses noted that this may already be the case.

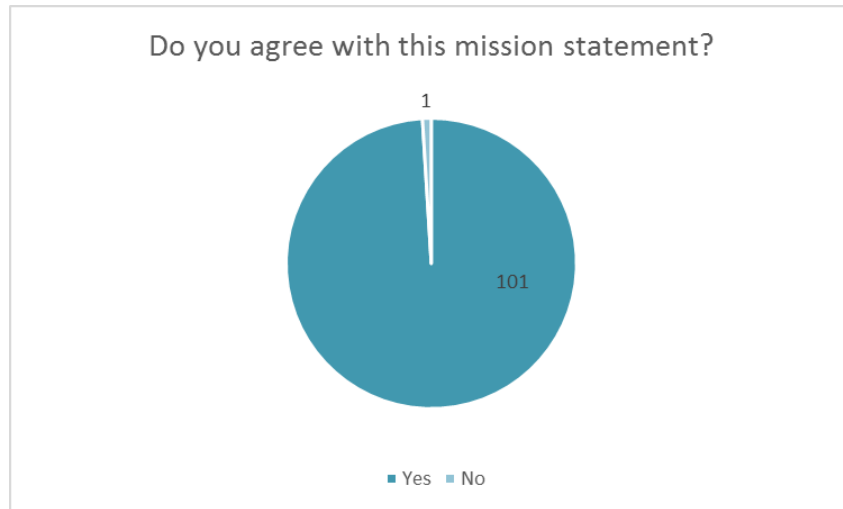
*“Fits well and is particularly important given how crucial the third/voluntary health sector is to health and the success of health and social care integration.”*

*“I think it is about time that the voluntary sector was treated the same as Health and Social Care”*

*“I think the NHS and other key partners now see the voluntary sector as vital”*

*“It doesn’t seem very visionary. Isn’t the voluntary health sector already an equal partner? Maybe greater emphasis on EQUAL partnership if that is the part that is visionary.”*

**Question 2:** Our proposed new mission statement is: *“To promote and support the voluntary health sector to be a valued and influential partner in improving health and wellbeing”* Does our proposed new mission reflect what you think VHS should be working towards?



101 respondents agreed with our mission statement whilst a single respondent disagreed without comment. It is important to note that this was a different respondent to the one who had disagreed with the vision statement, who felt that, *“this is better than the vision statement, but the two don't really hang together.”*

Some other comments included:

*“Definitely.”*

*“This is a more nuanced and realistic mission statement as the voluntary or 3rd sector shall never be an equal partner to that of the NHS.”*

*“I think it is a strong and clear mission statement”*

*“Good points made.”*

*“But valued by whom and whose health and wellbeing?”*

**Question 3:** VHS is currently focused on 4 key health policy areas. Please tell us if our work on these topics is useful to you?

	Very useful	Useful	Don't know	Not useful	Do not work in this area
Health inequalities	76	22	0	0	1
Public health	56	39	2	0	3
Health and social care integration	69	27	3	2	1
Mental health	69	30	1	2	0

This year we included the option of “Do not work in this area” and this has significantly reduced the number of responses under “Not useful” since the previous survey.

Comments included:

*“Grateful over the years for the service of VHS.”*

*“All relevant and highly current as a social care provider.”*

*“We're never quite sure where public health sits or where begins/ends.”*

*“Mental Health is perhaps the greatest inequality in social understanding and statutory resourcing.”*

**Question 4:** Please tell us how important the following new areas of VHS work are to you?

Last year we provided only three options under this question, the results in order of priority were; Impact on health of social isolation and loneliness, Volunteering in NHS settings and Tackling obesity, respectively. This year we have a number of new areas of work and this has significantly altered the feedback we have received from member organisations.

	Very important	Important	Don't know	Not Important	Please Involve me
Health of vulnerable groups	77	20	2	2	5
Loneliness and social isolation	75	22	3	1	10
Volunteering in health	47	37	11	6	6
Community Link Working	43	33	19	3	9
Impact of place and environment on health	42	47	9	2	4
Health literacy	31	47	15	6	3
Tackling obesity	20	39	17	23	2

A number of additional policy interests were highlighted by member organisations and these have been listed under three headings; Groups, Issues and Circumstances.

## Groups

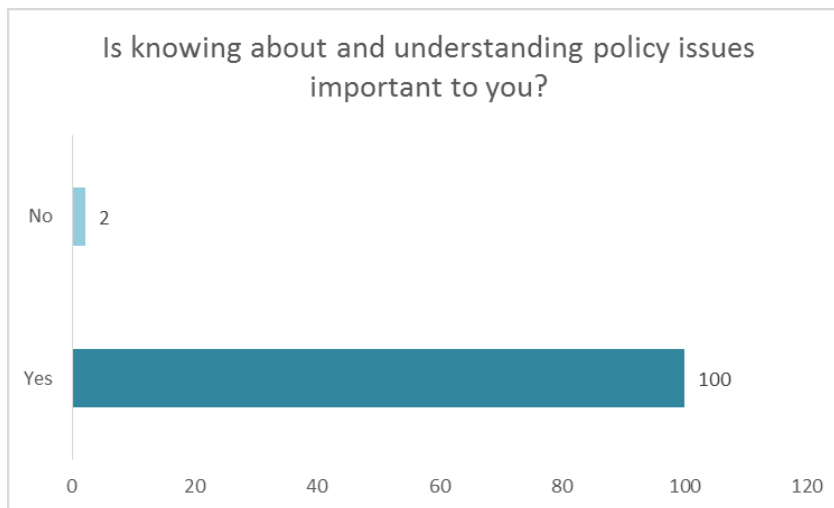
Carers  
 Children and Young People  
 People suffering from Long Term Disabilities  
 People with Addictions

## Issues and Circumstances

Social Security - Social Care - Employment - Preventative Spend  
 Transport - In work support for people with Long Term Conditions  
 Connectedness - Air Pollution - People living with cancer - Palliative Care  
 Hospital discharge - Impact of spirituality on health - Physical activity  
 Access to health care services - behaviour change - service users perspective on what they think supports their health and wellbeing

This provides a great illustration of the diverse areas within which our members operate and the resource VHS have available to us in terms of knowledge and expertise.

**Question 5:** Is knowing about and understanding policy issues important to you?



Over 98% of respondents think that having knowledge and an understanding of policy issues is important to them and provided a number of interesting reasons. The majority of members commented that having an understanding of policy issues meant they were better able to provide services and support their respective client groups. Some members noted that by engaging with policy issues they felt part of the overall third sector, for others they are able to link their work to respective policy areas and understand how they make a difference or can affect change.

**Question 6:** What does our policy work provide you with?

Options	Number
A better understanding of health policy areas and priorities	87
Alerts to new policy you are not aware of	70
An opportunity to collaborate with other organisations	64
An opportunity to engage with policy areas and decision makers	62

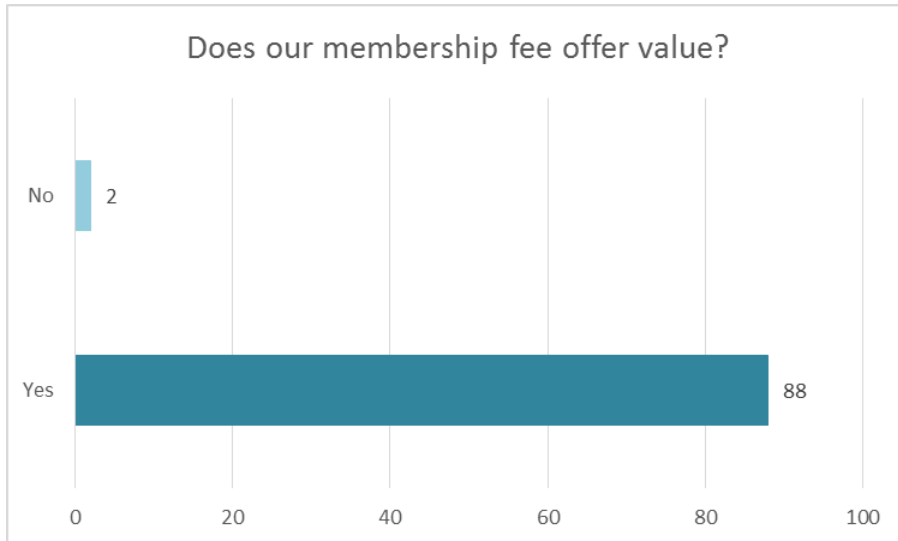
Over 89% of respondents feel that our policy work gives them a better understanding of health policy areas and priorities and alerts them to new policy that they are not aware of. In the comments a member noted we provide, “great collaborative opportunities... allowing organisations to show case good practice that can be shared”. Another member noted that “information and best practice...will be the central area of ensuring organisations and leaders are fully conversant with these central areas of planning and policy delivery”. It was also highlighted that it “would be good to have more links with senior policymakers”. This is a really interesting point and something that VHS is continuously striving towards by providing engagement opportunities through the Health Policy Officers Network and also by hosting a variety of events, conferences and seminars on key policy issues.

**Question 7:** Please tell us why you are a member of VHS?

Over 70% of respondents said they were members because VHS provided opportunities to share intelligence, knowledge and ideas this was closely followed by members’ desire to be part of a distinctive health network and because they received the monthly e-bulletin.



**Question 8:** Our annual membership fee is £10, £30 or £50 depending on the size of your organisation, does this offer value?



Over 97% of respondents agreed that VHS’s membership fee offered value, while 2 respondents disagreed but did not leave a comment. Members felt that the fee was offset by access to all events and information, some comments included:

“I do feel this could go up.”

“We are a very small organisation but regularly punching way above our weight. We are constantly searching for funding over and above our Third Sector early intervention fund grant and therefore membership of VHS at these rates contributes to our budgeting and represents excellent value for money.”

“Useful to recognise sliding scale of organisation sizes - creates more diversity of members.”

“Much cheaper than other networks, recognises the financial constraints on the voluntary sector that others don't always acknowledge”

“It makes it possible for even low-budget organisations such as ours to belong.”

“The cost is reasonable and we think that VHS is an effective organisation.”

**Question 9:** If you have attended a VHS event, how did you find it?

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Unsure
Well organised	70	0	4	0
Informative	68	0	5	0
Inclusive	60	0	5	6
Good use of time	58	0	15	0
Interactive	57	1	14	0
Highly topical	53	0	14	2
Authoritative	47	4	11	8
Inspiring	41	2	23	3
Motivated me to action	36	2	27	5
Unmissable	20	7	32	8

The respondents noted VHS events were, well organised, informative, inclusive, a good use of time and interactive. Over 75% of respondents felt our events were highly topical and over 67% thought that they were authoritative. A member commented that they “still refer to learning acquired at an event last November”. Some other comments include:

“Events have been very informative and worthwhile”

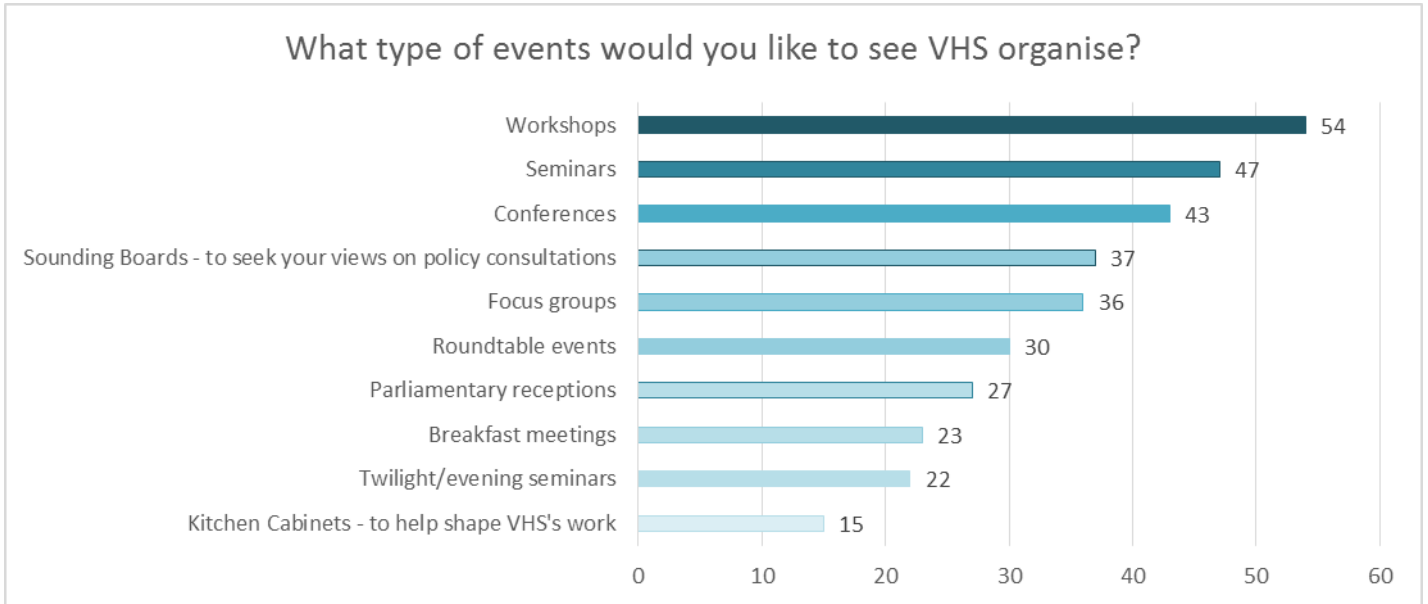
“Love the events and love meeting others and finding out new ways of approach”

**Question 10:** If you have not attended any VHS events please tell us why?

Time constraints, a lack of resources including transportation costs and staff availability, and location have been highlighted by members as barriers to their attendance at VHS events.



**Question 11:** What type of events would you like to see VHS organising more of?



The most popular events were workshops, seminars, and conferences whereas the least popular events were kitchen cabinets, twilight or evening seminars and breakfast meetings. This is interesting to note as breakfast meetings were in the top 3 events members wanted to attend from the membership survey results of 2016. Many comments indicated that people wanted to see more local events in terms of geographical locations as well as local relevance.

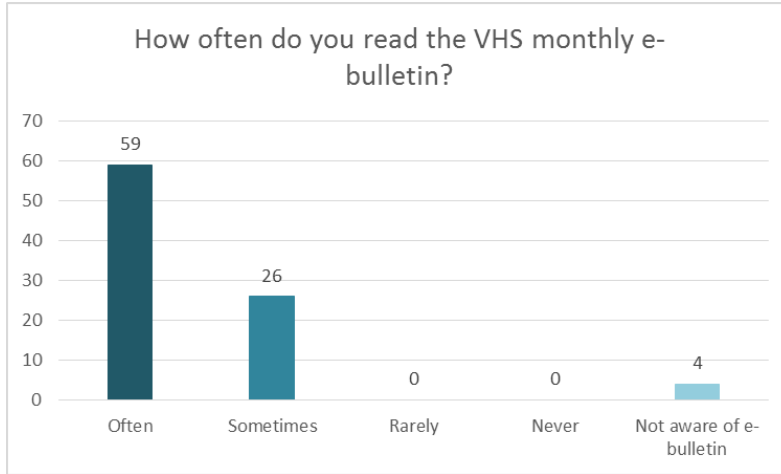
**Question 12:** What is the one thing we could do better at VHS events?

We asked members what would be the one thing that VHS could do better at our events? Majority of respondents commented that VHS “already do a great job” or that they had “nothing to suggest... have found them (events) well organised and a good opportunity for networking”. Some respondents note that they would like more time for discussion with one another as well with speakers others noted that geographic location being more widespread especially into the Highlands and Islands would be useful to them. These views are similar to last year’s membership survey results however, it is worth noting that these views were in the minority this year with the majority of respondents commenting that they have no suggestions.

**Question 13:** How often do you read the VHS monthly e-bulletin?

Over 92% of respondents claimed that they read the e-bulletin often or sometimes. No respondents claimed that they never or rarely read the e-bulletin compared with the 2016 membership survey results where 9% of respondents claimed having never or rarely read the e-

bulletin. There was also a 60% reduction in the number of respondents claiming not to be aware of the e-bulletin, from 9 in 2016 to only 4 respondents in 2017.



**Question 14: What describes your attitude to the e-bulletin?**

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Unsure
I look forward to receiving it	33	5	22	19
I read it as soon as I receive it	13	5	60	0
It contains useful and relevant information	72	0	11	0
The length is appropriate	67	0	6	7
The layout is easy to navigate	66	1	7	6
A monthly e-bulletin is appropriate frequency	68	1	5	6

Over 86% of respondents noted that the e-bulletin contains useful and relevant information, and over 3 quarters of respondents thought that they length, layout and frequency of the e-bulletin was appropriate. Over 40% of survey respondents looked forward to receiving the e-bulletin and more than 75% of respondents sometimes read the e-bulletin as soon as they received it.

**Question 15:** Please rate VHS’s other communications.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	N/A
Policy briefings and reports	33	37	3	0	7
Event key messages	33	35	5	1	9
VHS website	31	44	1	0	6
Emails	30	36	4	0	12
Blogs	10	22	3	0	44
Twitter	8	25	5	0	41

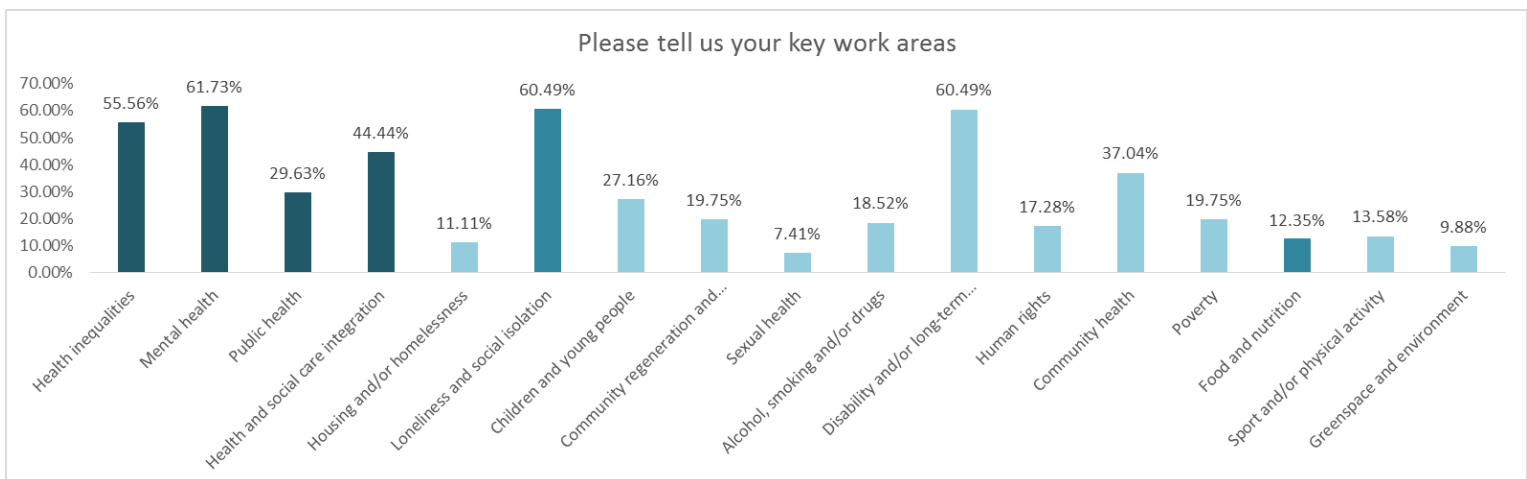
The VHS website, policy briefings and reports and event key messages were the top rated communication sources, this is identical to the results from the 2016 membership survey. It is positive to note the comments that respondents have made:

“Punching way above average with such a small team”.

“Event key messages are really helpful, and something I hadn't come across from other organisations/events before VHS”

**Question 16:** Please tell us your key work areas.

This question contained 17 options as compared to the 12 we provided the year before. This was in response to some of the comments people provided last year regarding their areas of work as well as our increased engagement with members which has highlighted a number of diverse issues our members are involved in.



- VHS 4 key working areas 
  - VHS new working areas (food and nutrition includes obesity) 
  - Other indirect areas that VHS tries to influence

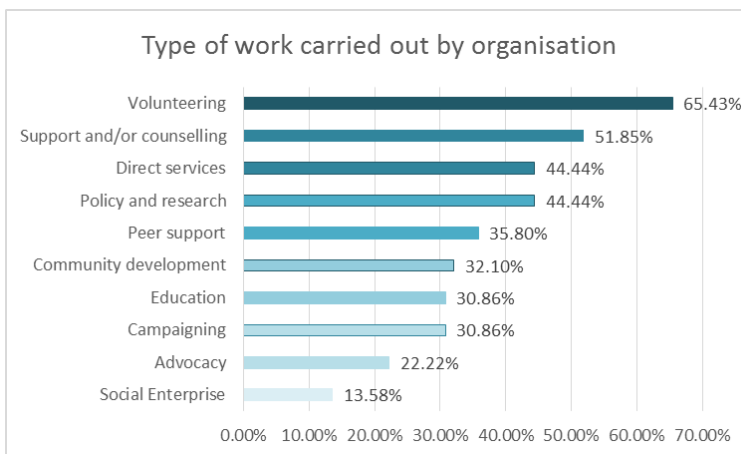
Other areas that respondents noted as their key areas of work included:

- Art for Health
- Social Enterprise
- Third Sector Interface
- Transport
- Cancer
- Volunteering
- Advocacy
- Employment
- Spiritual Care

VHS membership represents a diverse Voluntary Health Sector and as such is a valuable resource in terms of expertise, knowledge and influence. VHS’s holistic understanding of health can be attributed to the various member organisations and the diverse areas within which they work.

**Question 17:** What kind of work does your organisation carry out?

Member organisations were asked to identify the nature of work their organisations conducted.



It is interesting to note that volunteering was not provided as an option last year however, this year’s results show that over 65% of respondent member organisations involve volunteers in their work.

Other types of work that were highlighted in the comments section include:

- Organisational capacity building
- support with partnership and procurement for social enterprise

**Question 18:** How can we work with you better?

VHS asked member organisations how they would like to work with us, the top 5 ways in which respondents wanted to get involved were: providing case studies of their work, inviting VHS to speak at their events, partnering with VHS on events and projects, joining a focus group or kitchen cabinet and speaking at a VHS event. This is almost identical to the results of the 2016 membership survey.

**Question 19:** Please describe VHS in three words.

The word clouds below provide a visual representation of some of the reoccurring words people used to describe VHS. The words in the larger text are the ones respondents used the most frequently.

The first word that members would use to describe VHS:



The second:



The third:



An interesting observation is that the first set of words describe how respondents feel about VHS, words like Valuable, Accessible and Excellence are re-occurring. In the second set of words members describe how we work, words such as Organised, Proactive, Networked and Informative are re-occurring. Finally, in the last set of words is a mixture of both with words such as Broker, Inroad, Support and Positive.

To allow for comparison the following is the word cloud from the 2016 membership survey results.



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