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## **Loneliness and Social Isolation Among Older People in North Yorkshire**

**Stage 2 of Project Commissioned by  
North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board**

**Sylvia Bernard and Hannah Perry**

**November 2013**

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## **Background**

The first stage of this project brought together current knowledge about the extent and nature of loneliness among older people. It presented current thinking about what a 'good practice' intervention or service would look like and identified sources of demographic information that provided a local context to the issues of loneliness and social isolation in North Yorkshire <sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Section 1: Stage 2 of study of loneliness and social isolation among older people in North Yorkshire,**

#### **1.1 What we wanted to achieve in stage 2**

The second stage of the research aimed to identify the range of statutory and third sector organisations in North Yorkshire that could or should be able to identify older people at risk of loneliness and /or social isolation. Through these organisations, we aimed to identify the sorts of activities that exist across North Yorkshire and some of their characteristics.

### **Section 2: How we carried out stage 2**

In partnership with NYOPPB, drawing on information from stage 1, and via further internet searches, we identified a wide range of statutory and non-statutory organisations that potentially may be providing or know about services and activities that help to alleviate loneliness and /or social isolation in older people in North Yorkshire.

We conducted an on-line survey of these organisations to establish the different ways in which they, or their partners, may intervene to support older people.

For the purpose of this survey, older people were defined as those aged over 50. This is in line with the current target age for Age UK and, for example, known 'Over 50s Forums'. In practice, it was anticipated that many participants would be older. However, the lower age barrier also allowed us potentially to capture the age group who experience later life redundancy, unemployment and retirement, all of which may have an impact on loneliness and social isolation and its health, social and financial consequences.

## 2.1 Databases of organisations and contacts

A database of statutory and non-statutory organisations was established with contact details where available. This drew on information from stage 1, contacts within NYOPPB, and used further internet searches. Information about any telephone, written or email contact made was recorded. A database of 'umbrella' organisations was compiled and used as the sampling frame for the on-line survey. The database was compiled between July and August 2013. This database was used as the basis of a directory of organisations, services and activities across North Yorkshire that addressed the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people. Specific services and activities were added as they were identified through the survey.

## 2.2 Survey

The on-line survey was designed using the software 'Survey Monkey' <sup>(2)</sup>. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with NYOPPB and piloted through one of the local branches of Age UK. Some adjustments were made to the content and wording of the questionnaire following the pilot. A paper version of the final questionnaire appears in appendix A (A1). The survey was then distributed via an email link to organisations and individuals in the database (see appendix A2). A participant information sheet was attached with the email to explain in more detail the purpose of the survey and what taking part would involve (see appendix A3). Recipients of the email were asked to forward the link and information about the survey to any organisations or individuals who they thought may wish to participate in the survey. People were also given the option of completing a paper version of the questionnaire and encouraged to contact the research team with any queries or requests for further information about the project.

The pilot took place in early August 2013 and the main survey was emailed or posted to all contacts on the database at the end of August. The survey was closed at the end of September. Entries were examined for duplicates and three entries were excluded where no information had been provided. The final data set included 150 valid responses. Data were analysed overall by survey question and for some questions more detailed analysis by subgroups was undertaken, for example by local authority district or type of service. Where numbers within subgroups became small, conclusions should be tentative.

## **Section 3: Findings from Stage 2**

### **3.1 Databases of organisations**

There are a number of ‘umbrella’ voluntary organisations active across North Yorkshire, some with a regional or countywide remit, others focusing on local districts. They co-ordinate information about activities, provide support and expertise, for example in accessing grant and lottery funding opportunities to a myriad of groups and activities and in some cases are direct providers of activities. Some of these organisations have a specific focus on older people, such as the Regional Forum on Ageing, Over 50s Forums, Age UK, while others, for example, North Yorkshire and York Forum for Voluntary Organisations, Ryedale Voluntary Action, represent voluntary groups that have a wider age focus, but nonetheless have an important impact on the lives of older people.

North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Adult and Community Services, as well as being a provider of support services for older people, historically have provided funding to support the work of voluntary organisations. Against a backdrop of financial pressures, NYCC set up a £1.6m Innovation Fund to support the transformation of health and adult social care. Over the three years, 2011 to 2014, this provides funding to organisations to enable innovative approaches to be explored. Innovation hubs are represented in each district and responses to ‘loneliness and social isolation’ are a specific funding stream.

Parish councils can be an important source of knowledge about activities locally. A publically available email list of contacts for many (although not all) of the 731 parish and town councils is available on the NYCC website <sup>(3)</sup>.

A list of organisations that might know about (or provide) services and activities for older people and that formed the basis of the sampling frame for the survey appears in Appendix A (A4).

A more extensive directory was compiled as information both from these initial contacts and survey entries became available.

### **3.2 The questionnaire**

A total of 150 unique entries were made to the survey, eight were returned via paper versions.

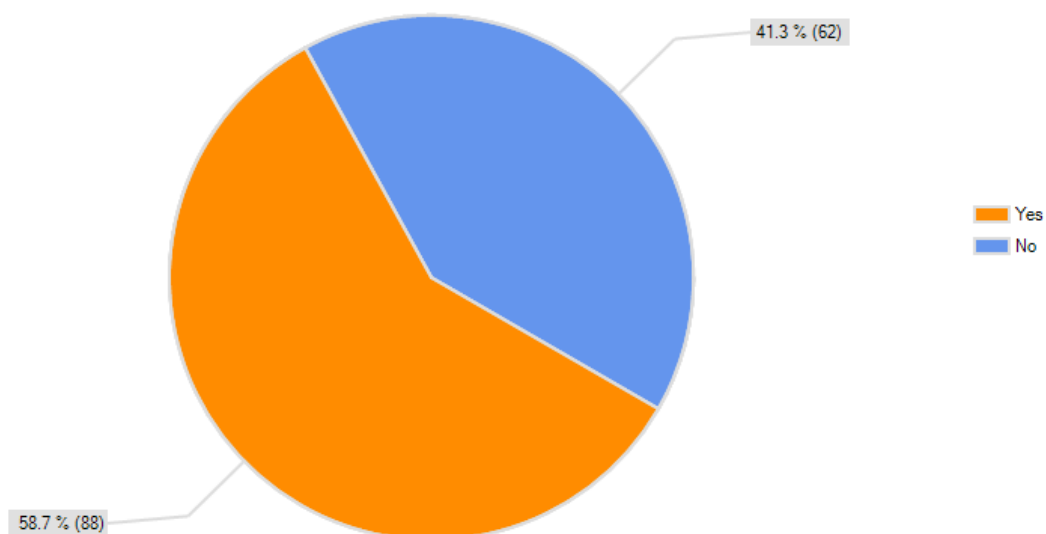


**Question 1: ‘Is the main purpose of the service or activity to help reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?’**

Just over half (88, 59 per cent) of services/activities reported that their main purpose was to help reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Is the main purpose of the service or activity to help reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?**

Is the main purpose of the service or activity to help reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?



**Question 2: ‘Does the service or activity have another main purpose, but also helps to reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?’**

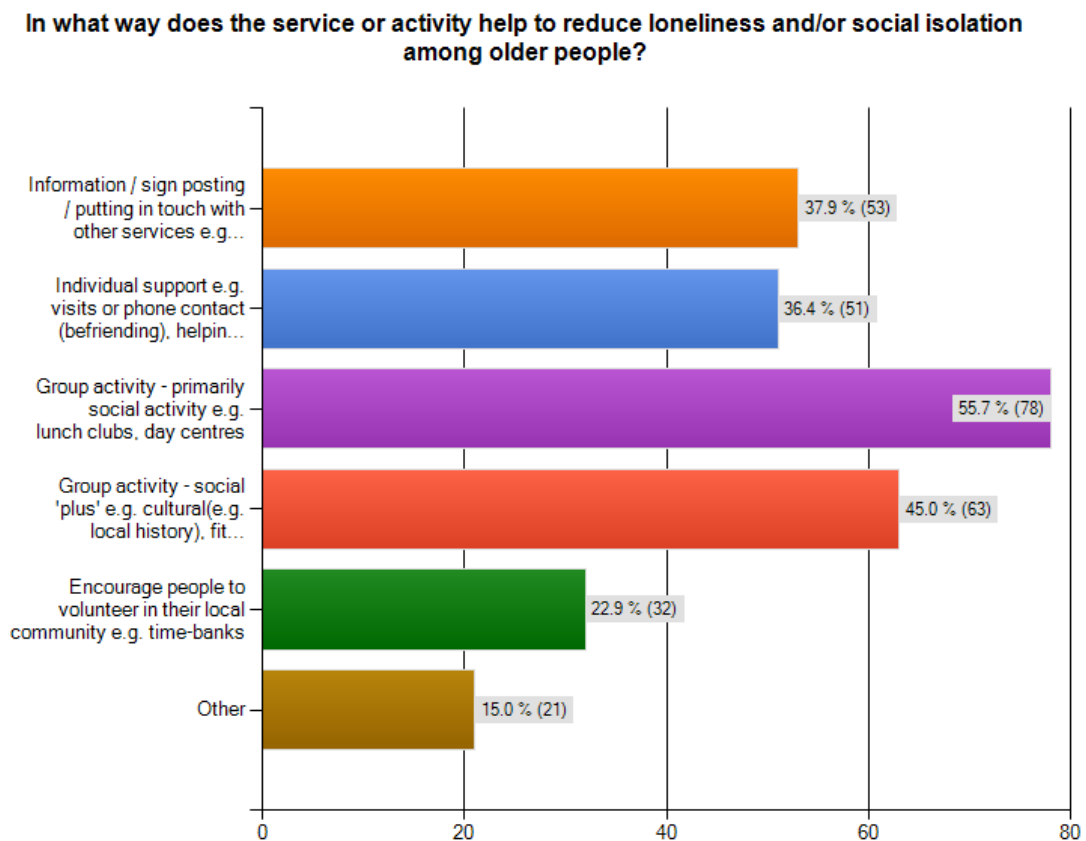
The main activity of the remaining 42% was described by 52 of the 62 services/activities. Activities ranged from socially oriented groups, for example, ‘walking for health’, discussion, learning groups such as university of the third age (U3A), or providing a service such as ‘meals on wheels’, gardening, transport, alarms. Some reported groups and facilities in isolated rural areas that were initially designed to cater for the whole community, but where participants were primarily, or in some cases exclusively, older people who might otherwise be lonely and/or isolated.

**Question 3: ‘In what way does the service or activity help to reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?’**

The report in stage one identified a typology of services from available research that described the main types of services that helped to reduce loneliness and social

isolation among older people <sup>(1)</sup>. Services and activities reported in the current survey were distributed across the full range (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: In what way does the service or activity help to reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?**



Group activities that were primarily social (78, 56 per cent) were most commonly reported. The 'other' category was often used to provide more information about an activity that fell into one of the remaining five main categories. However, it also included a number of transport schemes, especially in rural and remote areas, that could help people access leisure and social activities as well as, for example, medical appointments and whose volunteer drivers often provided additional support and companionship. A number of carers' support services were also reported, providing 'respite' and 'sitting' schemes to alleviate loneliness and isolation among carers, who themselves were often older people.

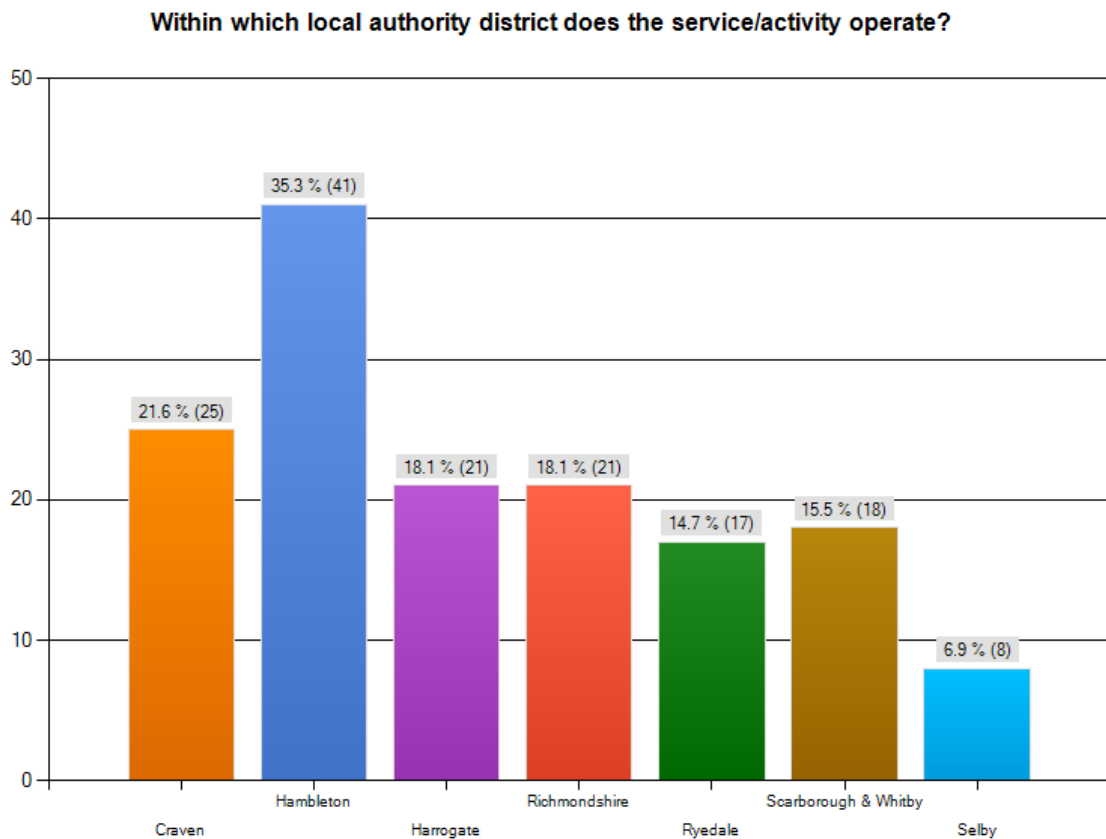
**Question 4: 'Please give the name of the service or activity e.g. Over 50's forum.'**

One hundred and sixteen of the 150 responders provided contact details. These contributed to a directory of services and activities.

**Question 5: ‘Within which local authority district does the service/activity operate?’**

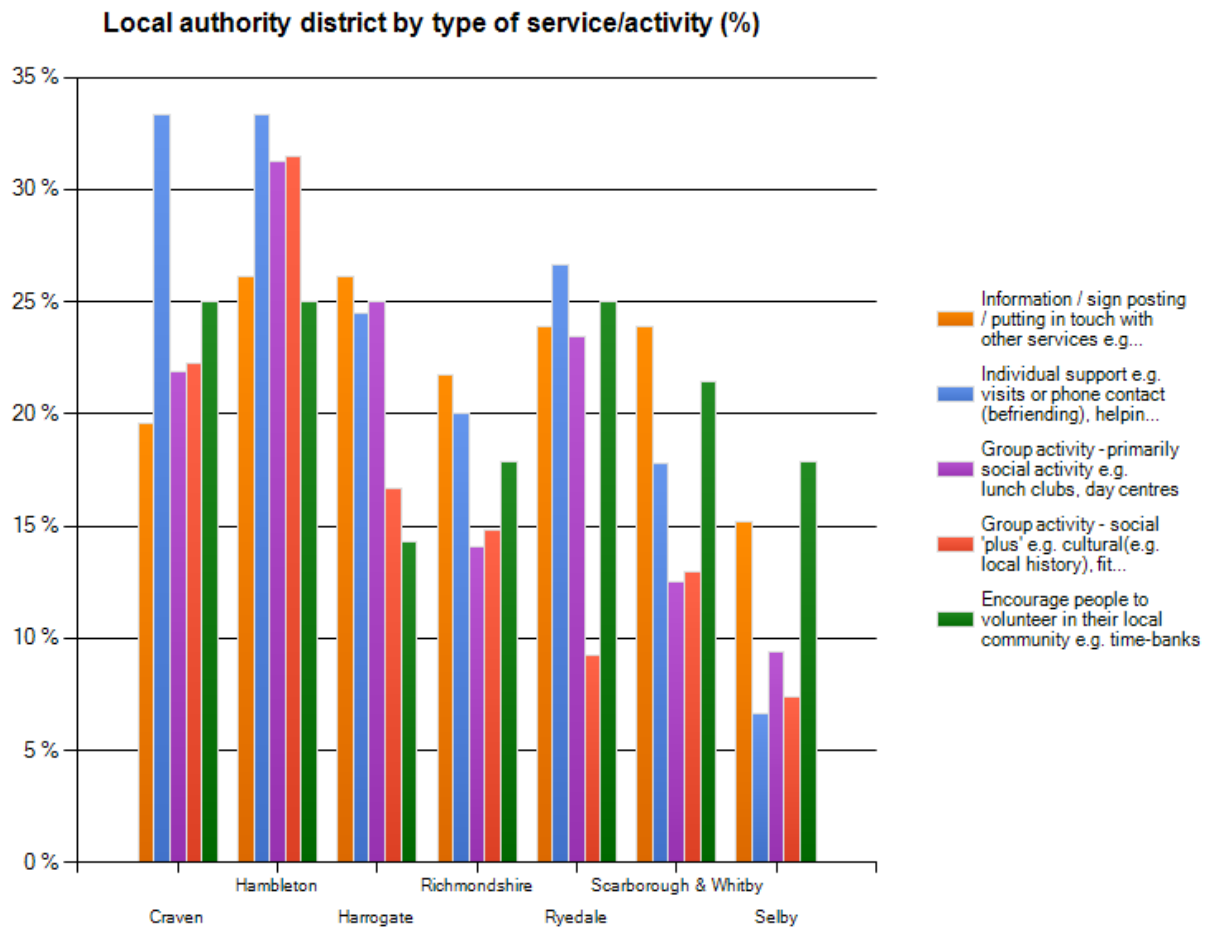
Just over a third of services (41, 35 per cent) were reported as operating in Hambleton district, the remaining two thirds distributed across the county, with Selby reporting the fewest (8,7 per cent) (Figure3).

**Figure 3: Within which local authority district does the service/activity operate?**



Although all types of services were found in all districts of North Yorkshire, Figure 4 shows how the percentage distribution of different types of services reported within different localities, varies across the county. Craven, Hambleton and Ryedale typically reported services offering individual support, such as befriending services. Information and signposting accounted for the highest percentage of services reported in Harrogate, Richmondshire and Scarborough and Whitby, while services that encouraged people to volunteer in their community were most commonly reported in Selby district and those offering individual support the least common.

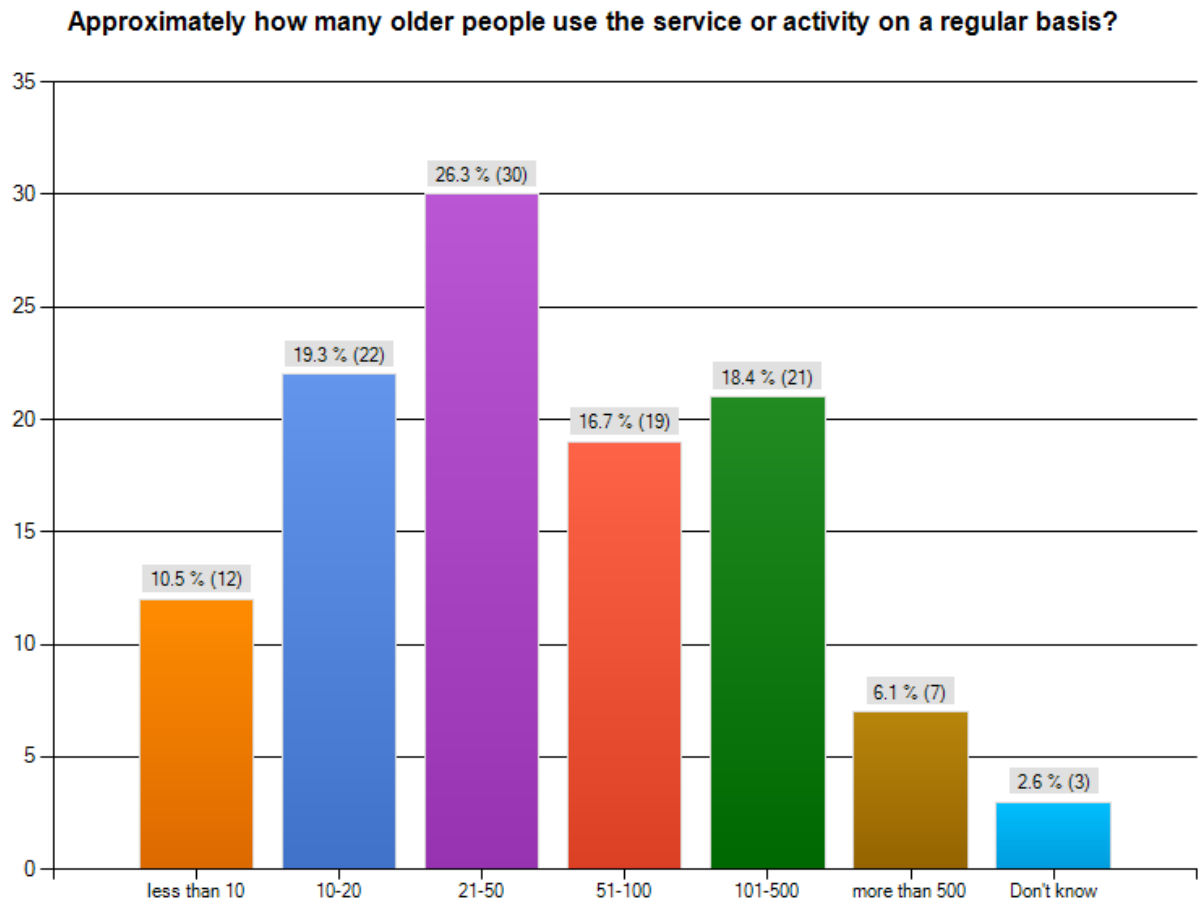
**Figure 4: Local authority district by type of service/activity (%)**



**Question 6: Approximately how many older people use the service or activity on a regular basis?**

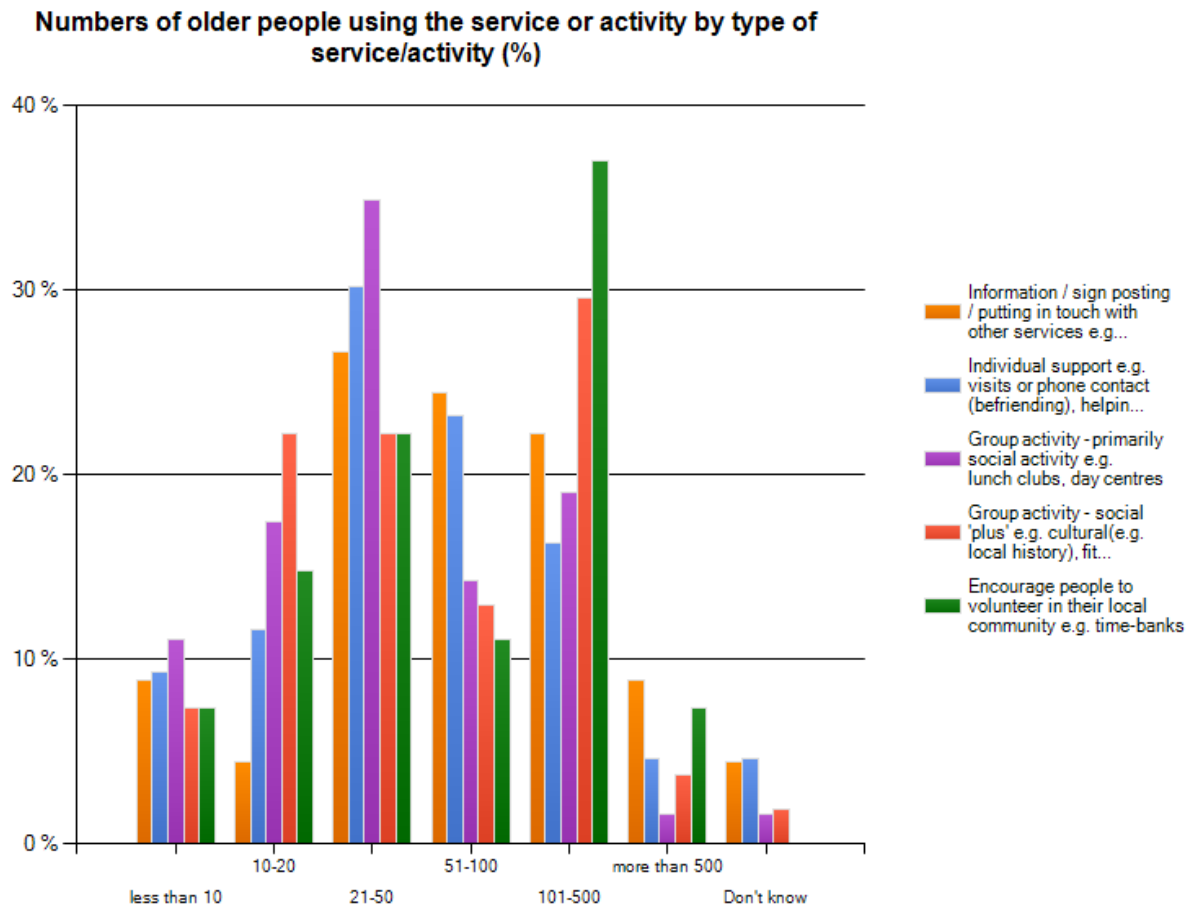
There was a wide range in reported numbers of older people using individual services or activities. The number most commonly reported (the modal category) was 21-50 people (30, 26 per cent of services/activities). Those involving more than 500 participants were rare (7, 6 per cent), but 18 per cent (21) of services/activities reported catering for between 101 and 500 people (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Approximately how many older people use the service or activity on a regular basis?**



Analysis of numbers of older people by type of service suggested that the profile of services differed across the participant categories (Figure 6). The role of the larger services was more likely to be in encouraging people to volunteer or in providing information and signposting. However, even among the 'smallest' services, activities were spread across a range of different types.

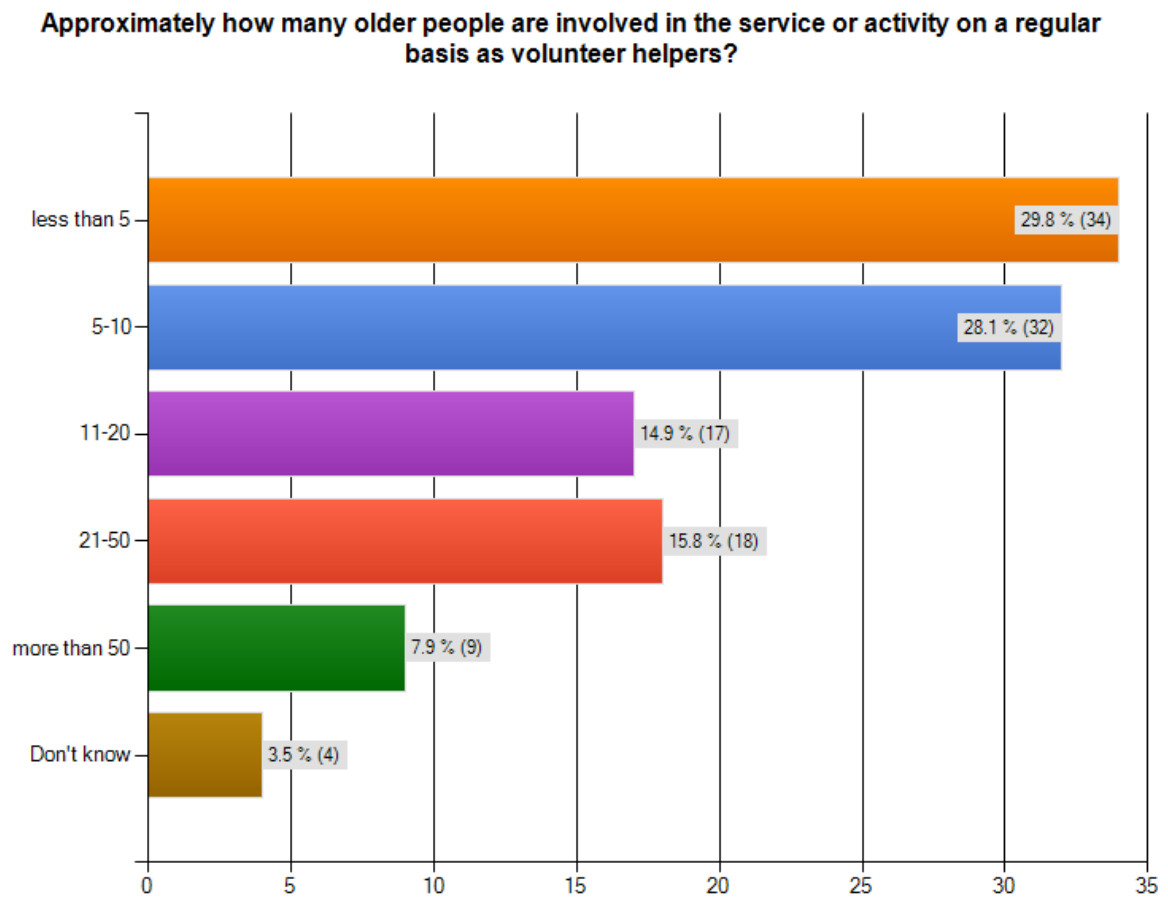
**Figure 6: Numbers of older people using the service or activity by type of service/activity (%)**



**Question 7: ‘Approximately how many older people are involved in the service or activity on a regular basis as volunteer helpers?’**

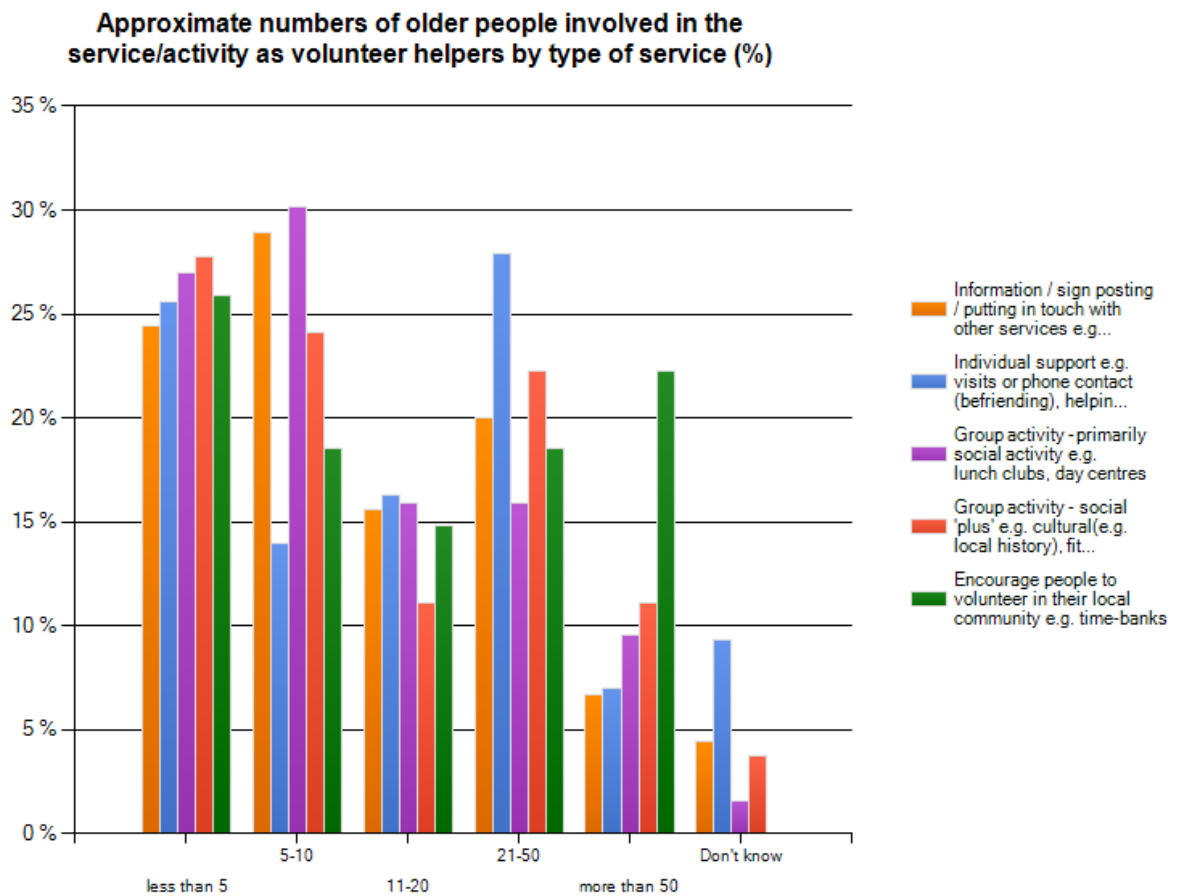
Over half (58 per cent) reported ten or fewer volunteers being involved in the service or activity on a regular basis. The most common number reported was less than five (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Approximately how many older people are involved in the service or activity on a regular basis as volunteer helpers?**



Support from volunteer helpers was reported across the different types of service, with (as might be expected) those specifically encouraging people to volunteer prevalent in the largest grouping (more than 50 volunteer helpers) (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Approximate numbers of older people involved in the service/ activity as volunteer helpers by type of service (%)**

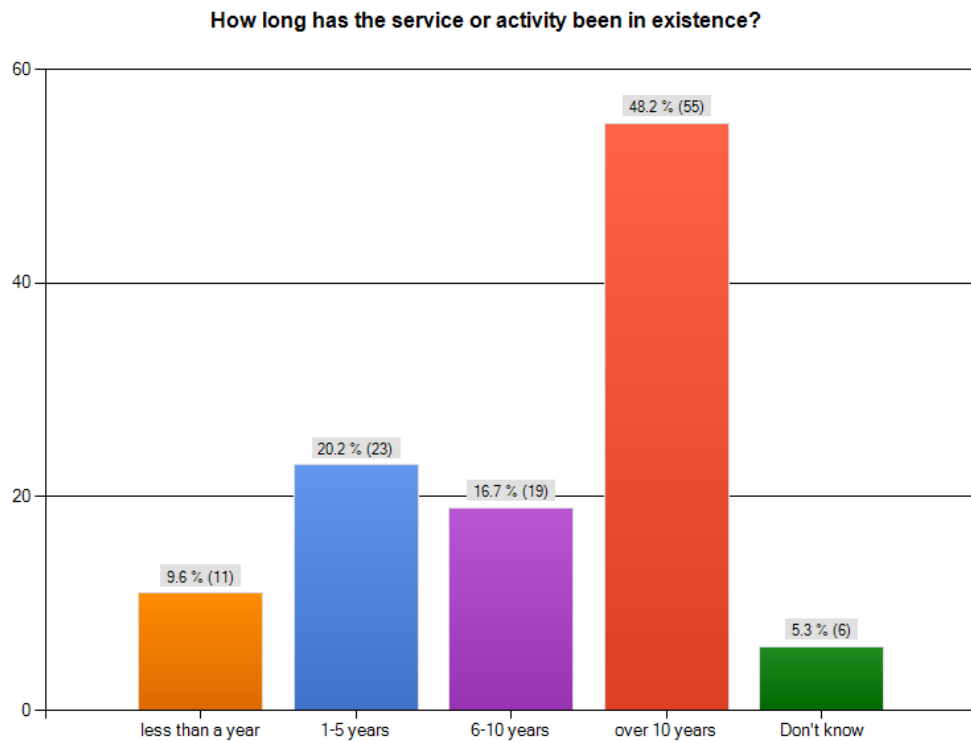


**Question 8: How long has the service or activity been in existence?**

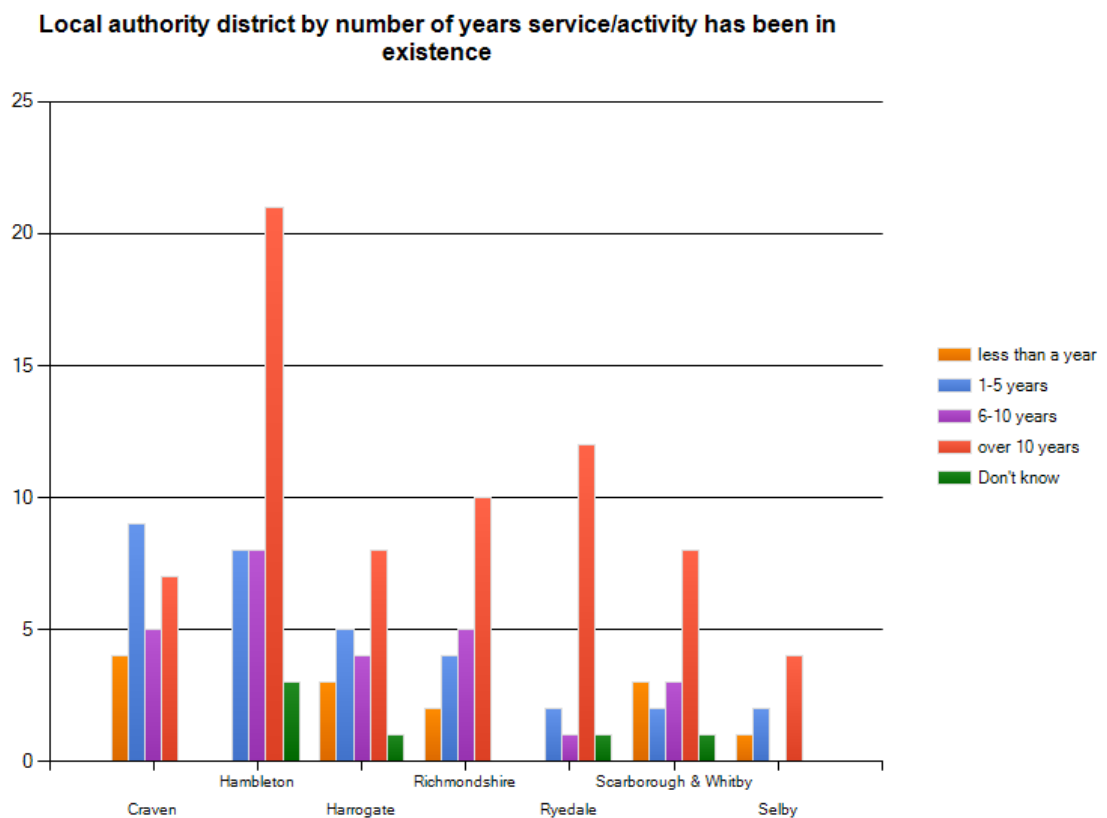
Nearly half of all services reported had existed for over 10 years (55, 48 per cent) (Figure 9). There appeared to be some differences across local authority districts (Figure 10). In Craven district 13 (52 per cent) of the 25 reported services for Craven had been in existence five years or less, and seven (28 per cent) over ten years. This was reversed for Hambleton district where only eight (20 per cent) of the 40 reported services for Hambleton had been operating for five years or less and the greater majority had been in existence for over ten years (21, 53 per cent).



**Figure 9: How long has the service or activity been in existence?**



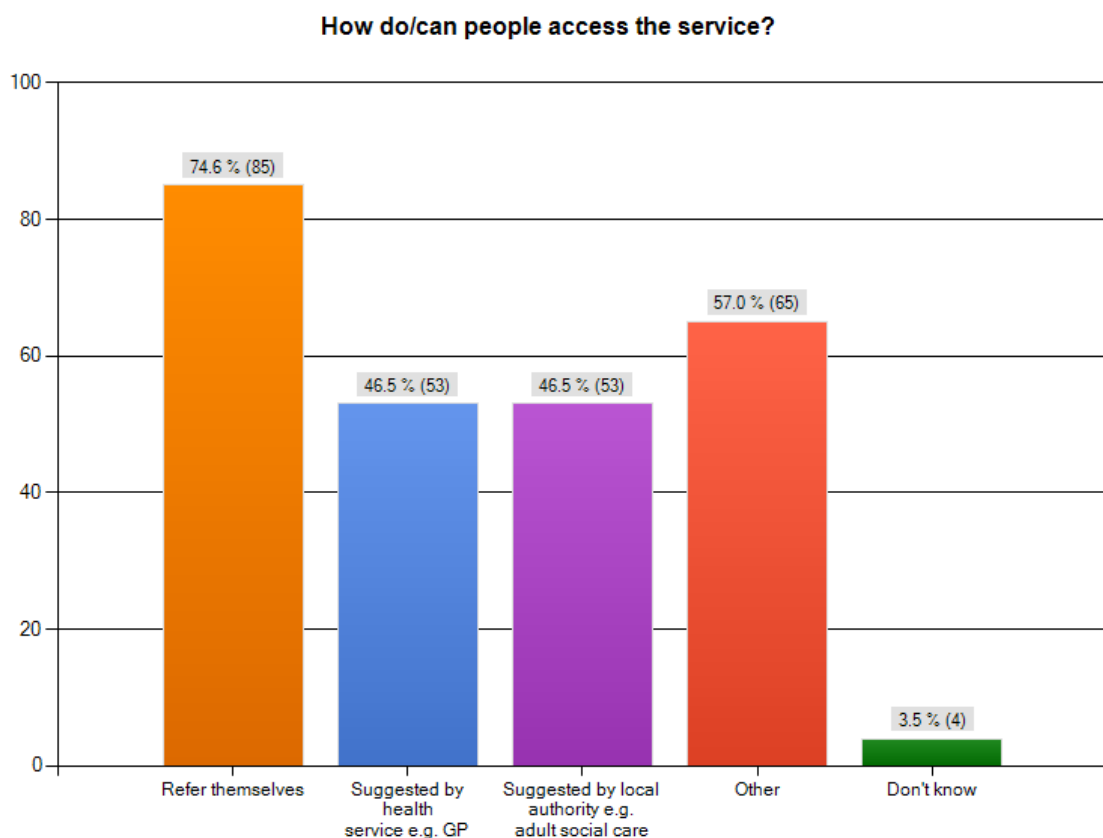
**Figure 10: Local authority district by number of years' service/activity has been in existence**



### Question 9: How do/can people access the service?

Respondents reported that people were able to refer themselves to the majority of services reported (85, 75 per cent). Referral by health and/or local authority services was also an important access route (47 per cent of services) (Figure 11). On examination of information supplied in the 'other' category, 'word of mouth', 'family and friends' or 'just turn up' were frequent replies, such that out of the 110 services or activities with a valid response, none appeared to restrict access, or depend solely on formal referrals. Additional access routes reported were via voluntary organisations, private care providers, churches and other statutory agencies, such as housing or the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Some respondents used the 'other' option to provide more information on how they advertised their service. Local advertising and promotion was through local press, websites, libraries, newsletters including local parish communications, other voluntary organisations and information days.

**Figure 11: How do/can people access the service?**



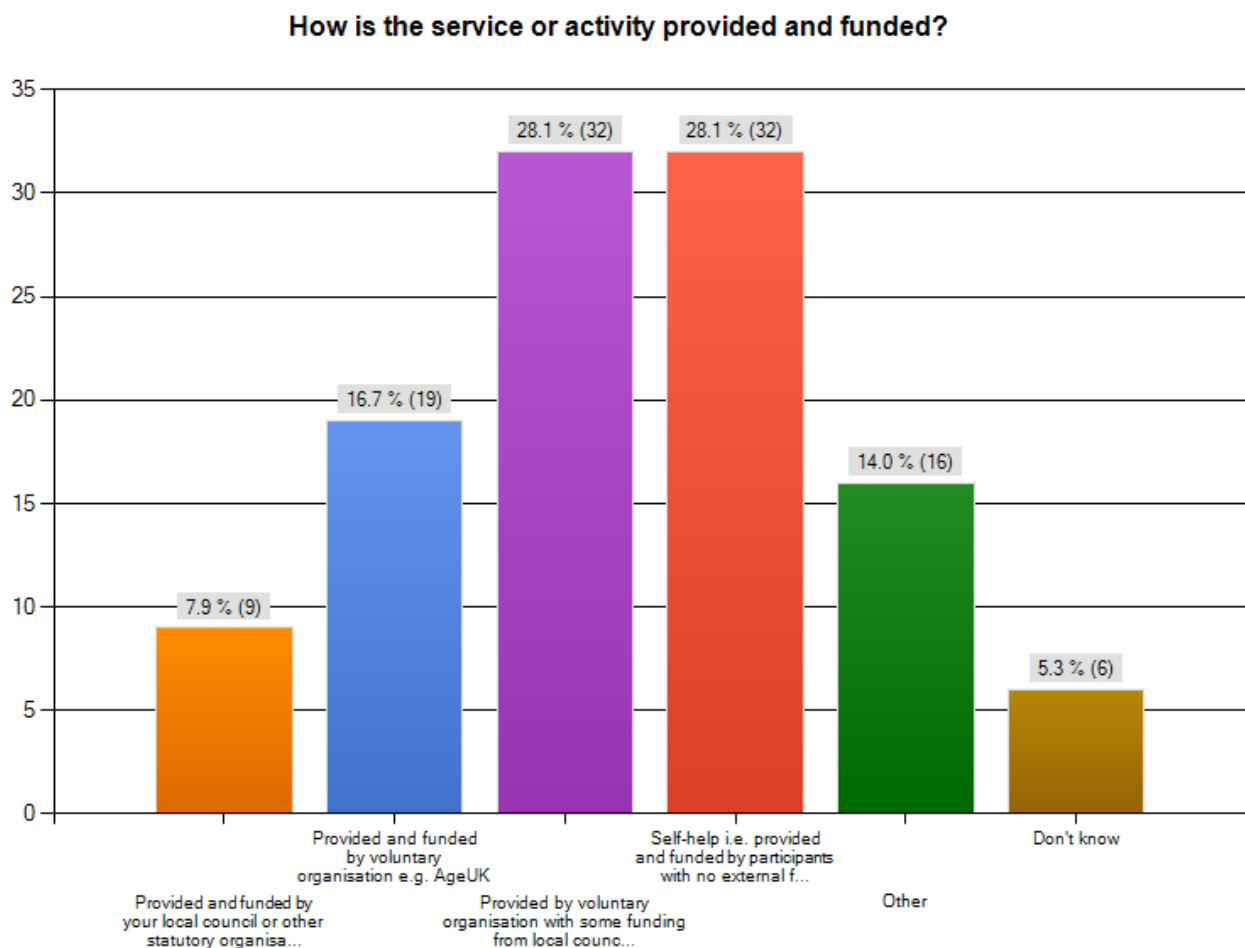
### Question 10: 'How is the service or activity provided and funded?'

'Self-help' i.e. services being self-reliant in providing and funding their activity was most common (32 services, 28 per cent), along with voluntary provision with some statutory funding support (32 services, 28 per cent) (Figure 12). Seventeen per cent of services/activities reported being both provided and funded by voluntary

organisations. Those reported in the 'other' category included services providing additional information about funding arrangements, for example AgeUK raised extra revenue through some fee paid work, for example, insurance sales. North Yorkshire County Council Innovations grant had been used to pump-prime some services that now were described as being funded through individual service contracts or self-funding. Support from lottery or other charitable trust funds were also cited and church organisations were reported, either as direct funders, or in providing premises for activities.

A minority, nine services/activities (8 per cent) were reported as provided and funded by the local council or other statutory organisation. These included older peoples' forums, carers' support (although attendees paid a fee to attend most sessions in the case of at least one such service), and a memory support service.

**Figure 12: How is the service or activity provided and funded?**

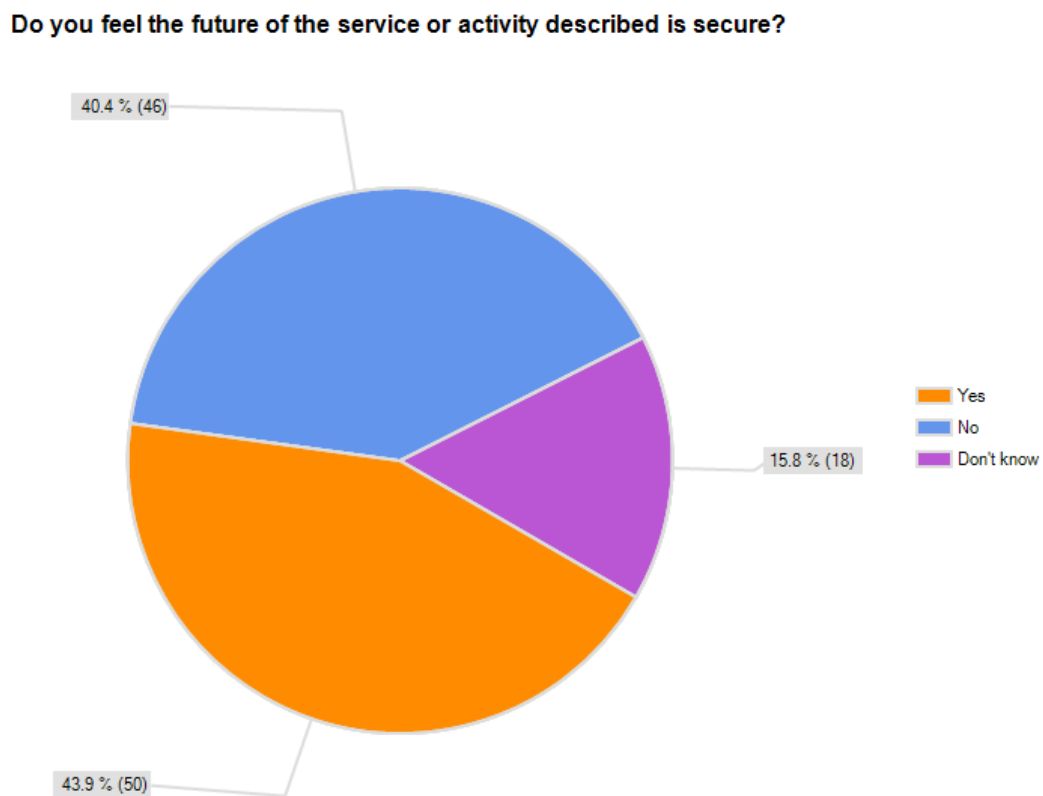


When the type of funding was examined in the context of the different types of service, the services/activities that were primarily social in their focus were more likely to be 'self-help' (21, 33 per cent of this service model). Services/activities providing information and signposting, individual support or encouraging volunteering tended to be receiving statutory and/or voluntary funding support.

**Question 11: 'Do you feel the future of the service or activity described is secure?'**

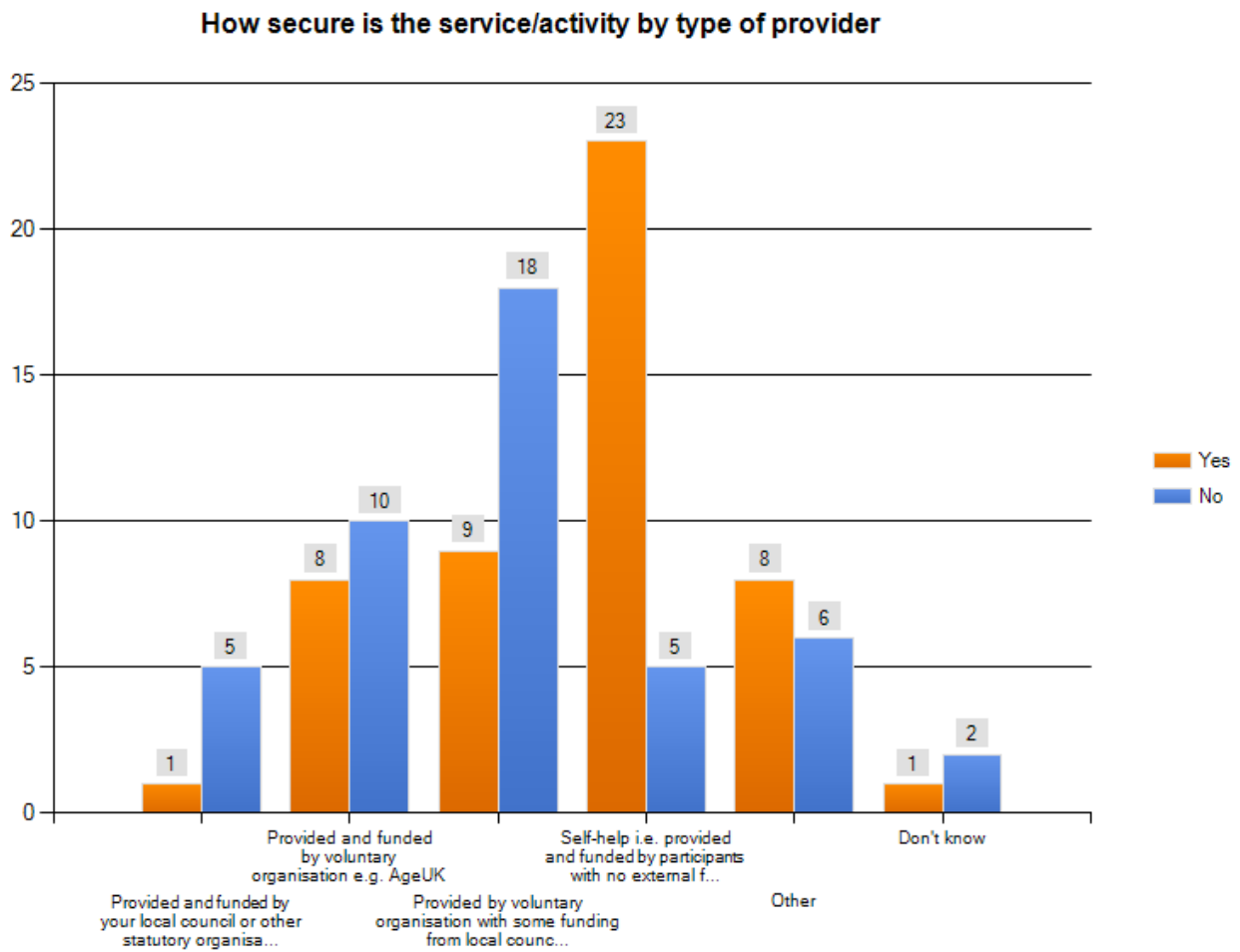
Whether the future of services were reported as secure was almost evenly divided between 44 per cent (50) feeling they were secure and 40 per cent (46) not, the remaining 16 per cent (18) did not know (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Do you feel the future of the service or activity described is secure?**



When the data were analysed further by type of provider, local authority district and type of service, there were some clear differences. Figure 14 suggests that overall, those services/activities reliant on their own resources felt most secure. Within provider categories, although numbers sometimes became small, those wholly or partially dependent on funding from statutory organisations were more likely to feel insecure about the future (five out of six services provided and funded by statutory organisations), and 18 out of 27 services provided by voluntary organisations, but receiving some funding from statutory organisations).

**Figure 14: How secure is the service/activity by type of provider**



The distribution across the county also varied (Figure 15). Sixteen of the 23 services (70 per cent) included in this question for Craven district reported that they were not secure and similarly, 12 out of 19 (63 per cent) responding in Harrogate.

**Figure 15: How secure is the service/activity by local authority district**

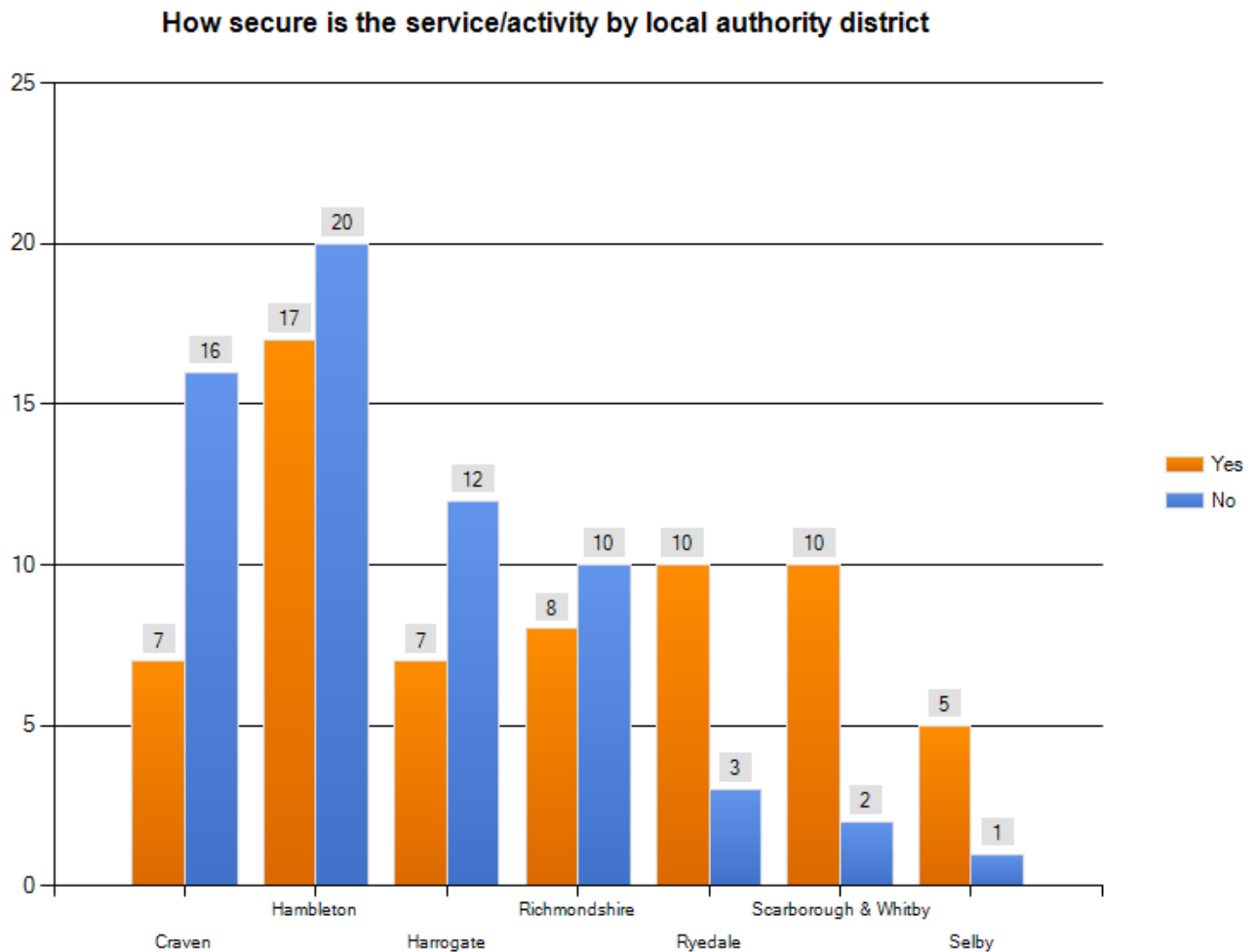
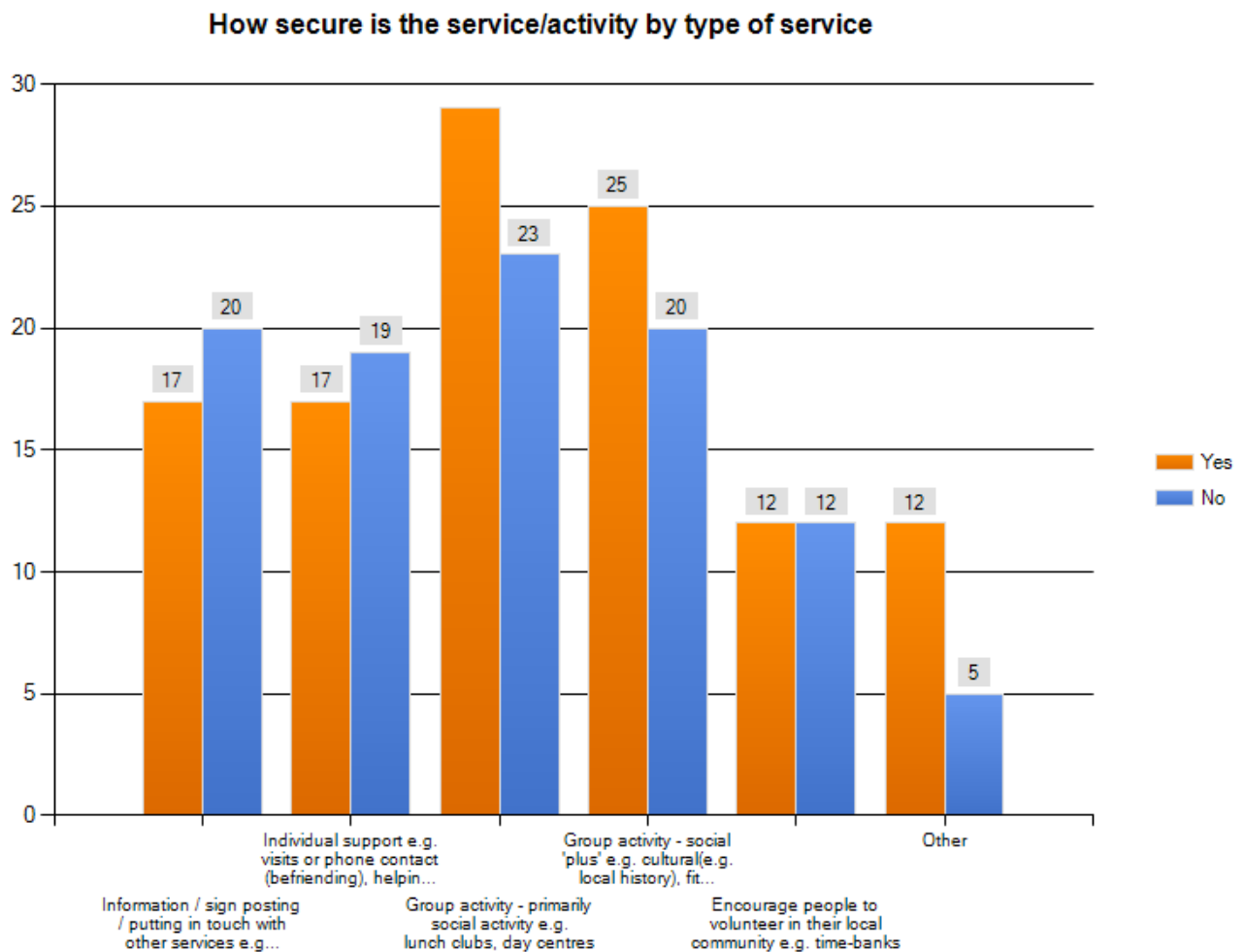


Figure 16 indicates that, proportionately, those services offering information or signposting and individual support were most likely to report that their future felt insecure. They represented 39 services, 41 per cent of services responding to this question overall, but 85 per cent of services that reported feeling insecure about the future. As reported earlier, these were also the type of service more likely to be provided and funded by statutory organisations.

**Figure 16: How secure is the service/activity by type of service**



**Question 12: ‘You answered that the future of your service or activity was not secure, what is the reason for this?’**

Funding problems were most commonly cited as the reason that the future of services or activities was not secure – 42 out of the 63 services responding to this question, 67 per cent (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Reasons that the future of the service/activity is not secure**

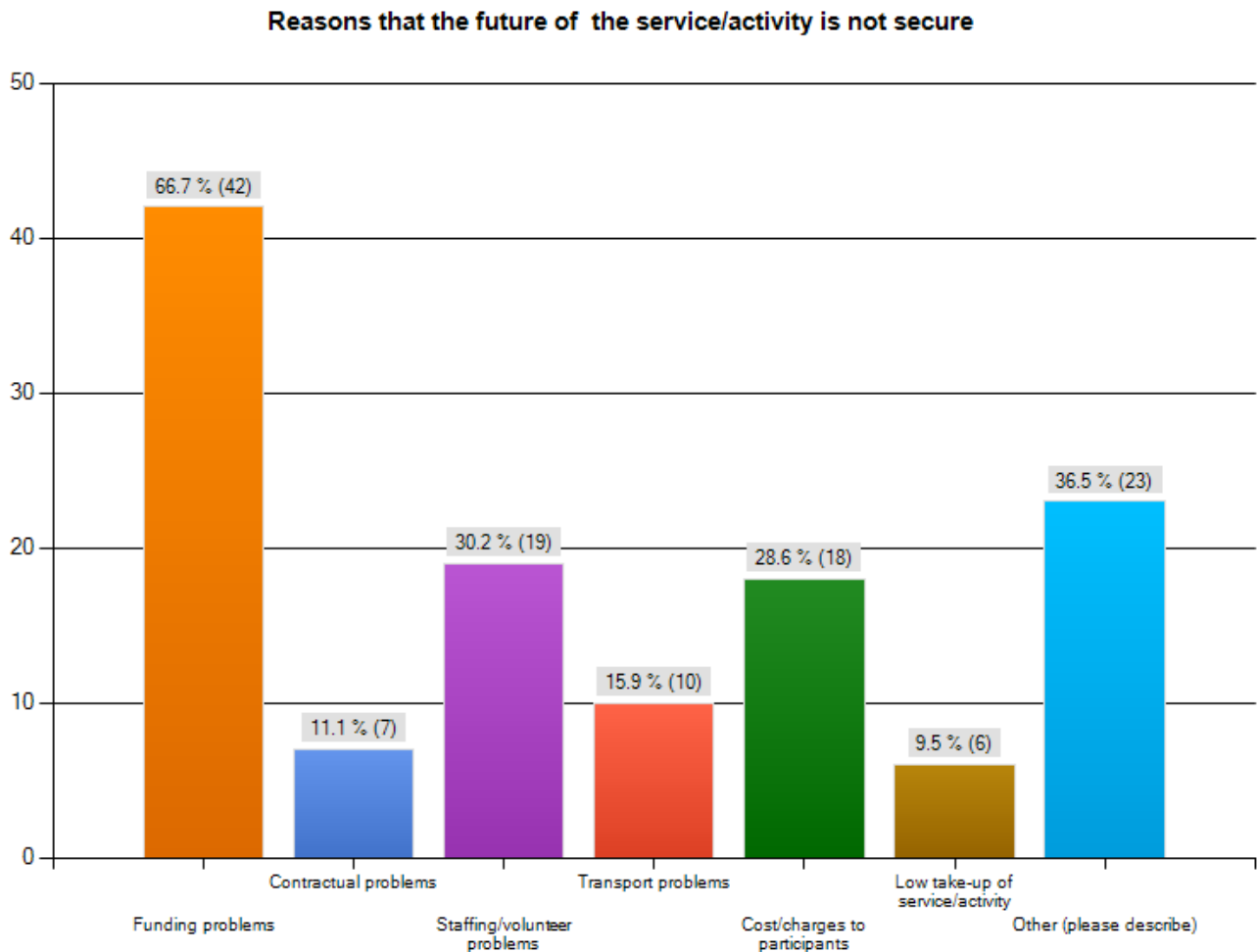
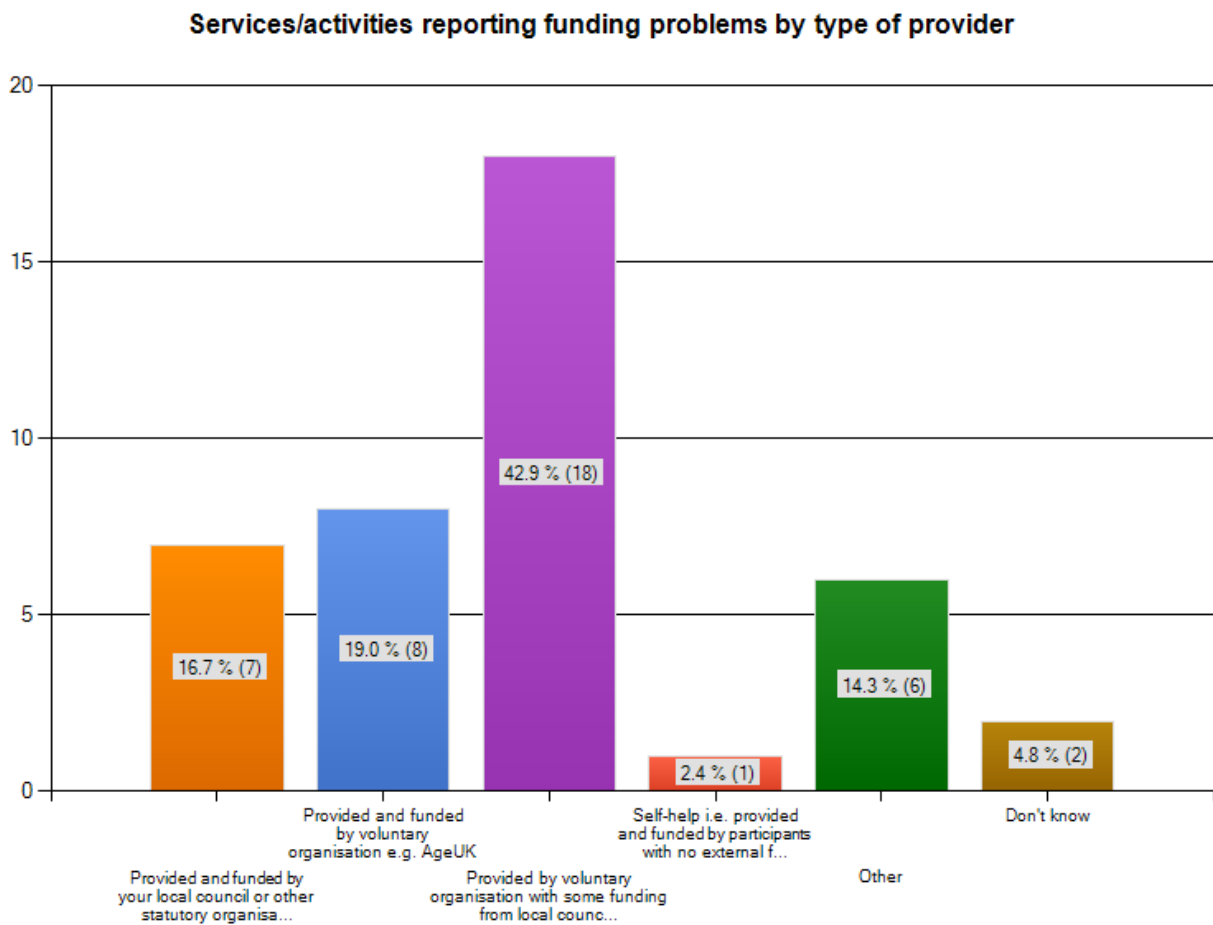


Figure 18 shows how funding problems are distributed across the different types of provider. Those services provided by voluntary organisations with some funding support from statutory organisations, overall comprised the majority of services reporting funding as a problem (18, 43 per cent), and this was disproportionate to their presence among providers overall (32, 28 per cent) (see Figure 11). Seven out of nine services reported as being provided and funded by statutory organisations reported experiencing funding problems, while only one 'self-help' service reported funding problems.



**Figure 18: Services/activities reporting funding problems by type of provider**



‘Other’ reasons for reporting that services were not secure, apart from those listed, typically included a concern that the people running the service or activity were themselves older people with increasing health problems and/or caring responsibilities. Changes in funding arrangements were a concern to some services, for example, caused by changes in legal requirements in providing transport via volunteer drivers, or the shift to funding via personal budgets or individual service contracts, rather than block contracts. Services/activities in remote rural areas, where numbers of participants could already be low, felt particularly vulnerable to declining numbers, or any cost rises for attendees. Low referrals rather than low take-up was seen as a problem for a memory loss service. A need to raise the profile of the service among professionals was highlighted.

## Section 4: Interpretation of findings

The survey should be viewed as a snapshot of services existing in 2013 that were helping to alleviate the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people in North Yorkshire. It was by no means exhaustive in its coverage and although the 'snowballing' methods for collecting information attempted to cast the net as widely as possible, it made an estimate of a response rate problematic. The sample available for analysis was self-selecting. Further limitations were that it was not possible to identify how representative the sample was of existing services or activities and where significant gaps might have arisen, either geographically or in the type of service/activity reported in the survey. Bearing in mind these limitations, a number of observations can be made.

### 4.1 Types of service or activity

The typology developed by the 'Campaign to End Loneliness'<sup>(4)</sup>, and the evidence about the different models of support was discussed in stage one.<sup>(1)</sup> It was emphasised that 'before and after' evaluations on the success of particular service models in combating loneliness was mostly lacking. However, one-to-one interventions, such as befriending and community navigator services appear to be successful in alleviating loneliness, and group activities, particularly those with a creative, therapeutic or discussion-based focus, are effective in improving health and wellbeing.

Examples of all models were found across North Yorkshire, although the distribution differed within local authority districts. This may be an effect of differential response rates to the survey, or indicate real differences that reflect characteristics of the different localities, such as access to funding or community support and resources. The models highlighted by the literature review as potentially most effective in alleviating loneliness and/or promoting wellbeing were the sorts of services that, in the current survey, were most reliant on statutory or voluntary funding support. This has implications for their sustainability and long-term future, given that funding issues were most frequently cited as the reason for respondents feeling that the future of the service/activity reported was insecure.

### 4.2 Participation of older people as users or providers of services/activities

As might be anticipated, those services/activities offering individual support tended to cater for smaller numbers of older people, while group activities and services encouraging people to volunteer were able to engage with more people. With the exception of those services whose remit was specifically to encourage volunteer participation, there was no clear pattern of volunteer support of particular services

from older people. Staffing or volunteer problems did not seem to be an important issue in the sustainability of services.

### 4.3 Accessing services and activities

Services and activities across different types were openly available to older people with many also encouraging participation via other routes. Organisations and agencies likely to come into contact with older people were important in referring people to existing services and/or activities, with health and local authority services being particularly significant. However, there was a view expressed by some respondents that more could be done to encourage awareness and referrals to available services from GPs in particular, but also other health professionals who were likely to come into contact with many older people. The role of the types of services and activities reported in the survey, in supporting health and social care needs, is felt by some to be undervalued currently.

Barriers to access were not explored in the survey, although some respondents raised particular issues via separate emails when responding to the survey. Transport was a particular concern, especially for people living in remote rural areas. Some villages and rural areas were very active in providing services, whereas other parishes reported no knowledge of activities or groups locally that might address loneliness and social isolation. There were concerns about transport in connecting people to the larger towns and facilities, but also for people living in towns, older people's accommodation could be some distance from the town centre. One respondent viewed the town bus service as:

*'a lifeline allowing them [older people] to be independent. If there was one factor that would cause loneliness the removal of the town bus would be it.'*

Residential and nursing homes were not contacted directly in this survey, but the issue of loneliness for residents and the problem of accessing activities that might alleviate this was raised. Increased levels of dementia among this group of older people may add to the problem of loneliness, but it is also compounded by the availability of residential care across a predominantly rural area. The location of homes in or near the larger towns means that many residents originally from outlying areas become separated from friends or family. Visits by friends and family or maintaining links with familiar communities may be more difficult, especially if visitors are dependent on public transport.

## 4.4 Sustainability of services and activities

Over half of the services/activities had existed for more than five years with many for over ten years. The differences observed across the county may be due to a response effect, or the influence of factors such as funding opportunities and variations in local support. The longevity of many services/activities suggests that they are successful in what they provide and are meeting a local need which can include alleviating loneliness and social isolation either directly or indirectly. However, many respondents felt that the future of their service was insecure, especially those that received funding from statutory organisations.

Not only levels of funding, but also how funding was provided or secured was also an issue for many services. Some programmes of services and activities had a range of different sources of funding underpinning them. For voluntary organisations in particular, raising adequate funds was an on-going challenge, requiring continual time and effort and experiences of unsuccessful bids. Furthermore, the move by NYCC to funding via personal budgets and independent service contracts was felt by some to cause greater instability and uncertainty, creating problems for future planning, retaining premises etc.

## Section 5: Implications for the future

The findings presented here are representative of services and activities at a particular point in time. Given the concerns expressed about the sustainability of many services, projections about the likely service landscape in the future are difficult.

Services and activities reported in the survey have an important preventative role, not only in directly addressing loneliness and social isolation, but also as capable of contributing to supporting wider health and social care needs.

The importance of such activity is increasingly recognised in national debates about the health and welfare of individuals and communities.

The precarious nature of many activities, some after years of provision, underlines a need for measures that will ensure their continuation and further development in response to changing local needs.

A commitment of formal support from statutory agencies to such continuity, while encouraging innovation, is essential.

## References

1. Bernard, S. (2013) *Loneliness and Social Isolation Among Older People in North Yorkshire*, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York: York.
2. <https://www.surveymonkey.net>
3. <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23869/Parish-and-town-councils>
4. Campaign to End Loneliness <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk/>

# Appendices

## A1. Questionnaire

### **Loneliness and social isolation among older people in North Yorkshire**

North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board would like to hear about any services, groups or activities for older people (aged over 50), which might tackle the problem of loneliness and social isolation in your area of North Yorkshire. This may be a service or activity specifically aimed at reducing the effects of loneliness and social isolation among older people. Alternatively, it may have another purpose, but you feel that it contributes to tackling the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

The survey is being carried out by North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board with the help of researchers from the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York. The information you provide will help to build a picture of what is currently available in North Yorkshire, and what needs to be considered in future plans for combating loneliness and social isolation among older people.

If you are able to tell us about more than one service or activity, please save your answers for the first service or activity by clicking 'done' when you exit the survey. Then you can use the same email link to re-enter the survey and record your answers for any other services. Please complete your responses as soon as possible, but no later than 30th September 2013.

You can forward the email link to someone else to complete the survey if you wish.

If you have any questions, or would like any help or advice filling in the questionnaire, or would prefer a paper version, please contact Hannah Perry or Sylvia Bernard on 01904 321978 or email [hannah.perry@york.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.perry@york.ac.uk) or [sylvia.bernard@york.ac.uk](mailto:sylvia.bernard@york.ac.uk). Alternatively you can write to:

Loneliness Survey

Social Policy Research Unit

University of York

York

YO10 5DD

Thank you for taking part.

**1. Is the main purpose of the service or activity to help reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?**

Yes

No

**2. Does the service or activity have another main purpose, but also helps to reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?**

Yes

No

It would be helpful if you could describe the main purpose.....

**3. In what way does the service or activity help to reduce loneliness and/or social isolation among older people?**

Information / sign posting / putting in touch with other services e.g. helplines, directories of support

Individual support e.g. visits or phone contact (befriending), helping people find support (community navigator)

Group activity primarily

social activity e.g. lunch clubs, day centres

Group activity social 'plus' e.g. cultural (e.g. local history), fitness (e.g. exercise), skillbased (e.g. art & craft)

Encourage people to volunteer in their local community e.g. timebanks

Other

If you clicked 'Other', please describe.....

**4. Please give the name of the service or activity e.g. 'Over 50s forum'.**

*Please include the contact details, including the email and telephone number of the organisation, if you know them and are able to share them. This will help us to build a directory of services and activities.*

Name of service or activity

Name of organisation (if different):

Address 1:

Address 2:

City/Town:

Post Code:

Email address of organisation:

Phone number of organisation:

**5. Within which local authority does it operate?**

Craven

Hambleton

Harrogate

Richmondshire

Ryedale

Scarborough & Whitby

Selby



**6. Approximately how many older people use the service or activity on a regular basis?**

less than 10

10-20

21-50

51-100

101-500

more than 500

Don't know

**7. Approximately how many older people are involved in the service or activity on a regular basis as volunteer helpers?**

less than 5

5-10

11-20

21-50

more than 50

Don't know

**8. How long has the service or activity been in existence?**

less than a year

1-5 years

6-10 years

over 10 years

Don't know

**9. How do/can people access the service? (please tick all that apply)**

Refer themselves

Suggested by health service e.g. GP

Suggested by local authority e.g. adult social care

Other

Don't know

If you clicked 'Other', please describe.....

**10. How is the service or activity provided and funded?**

Provided and funded by your local council or other statutory organisation e.g. fire service, NHS

Provided and funded by voluntary organisation e.g. AgeUK

Provided by voluntary organisation with some funding from local council or other statutory organisation

Self-help

i.e. provided and funded by participants with no external funding from statutory or voluntary/non-statutory organisation

Other

Don't know

If you clicked 'Other', please describe.....

**11. Do you feel the future of the service or activity described above is secure?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**12. You answered that the future of your service or activity was not secure, what is the reason for this (please tick all that apply)**

Funding problems

Contractual problems

Staffing/volunteer problems

Transport problems

Cost/charges to participants

Low take-up of service/activity

Other (please describe).....

*Many thanks for completing this survey. We appreciate you spending the time to help us gather this information. Findings from the survey will help to inform work to tackle loneliness and social isolation across North Yorkshire.*

## A2. Email to organisations and individuals in database of contacts

Dear colleague

### NYOPPB Loneliness Survey

North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board would like to hear about any services, groups or activities for older people (aged over 50), which might tackle the problem of loneliness and social isolation in your area of North Yorkshire. This may be a service or activity specifically aimed at reducing the effects of loneliness and social isolation among older people. Alternatively, it may have another purpose, but you feel that it contributes to tackling the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people.

The survey is being carried out by North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board with the help of researchers from the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York. The information you provide will help to build a picture of what is currently available in North Yorkshire, and what needs to be considered in future plans for combating loneliness and social isolation among older people.

The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed by clicking the link below: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3C6CFN2>

If you are able to tell us about more than one service or activity, please save your answers for the first service or activity by clicking 'done' when you exit the survey. Then you can use the same email link to re-enter the survey and record your answers for any other services. Please complete your responses as soon as possible, but **no later than 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**.

***Please forward the email link to other organisations or people that you know who may wish to complete this survey.***

***If you have already been asked to complete the survey and recorded all the relevant services that you know about, please do not record them again - apologies for cross-posting.***

Further information is attached with this email. If you have any questions, or would like any help or advice filling in the questionnaire, or would prefer a paper version, please contact Sylvia Bernard or Hannah Perry on 01904 321978 or email [hannah.perry@york.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.perry@york.ac.uk) or [sylvia.bernard@york.ac.uk](mailto:sylvia.bernard@york.ac.uk). Alternatively you can write to:

Loneliness Survey  
Social Policy Research Unit  
University of York  
York YO10 5DD

**Thank you for your time, apologies for any cross-posting.**

## A3. Participant information document

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*



spru | Social Policy  
Research Unit

# Loneliness and Social Isolation Among Older People in North Yorkshire

## Participant Information

### Survey

### Background

Loneliness affects people of all ages, but older people are particularly vulnerable. The Loneliness Task Group of North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board (NYOPPB) is carrying out a survey to identify services in your area that might tackle the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people. This survey is being conducted with the help of researchers from the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York.

### What will taking part involve?

We would be grateful if you would complete a short questionnaire via the email web link (or paper copy). We would like to hear about any services, groups or activities for older people (aged over 50), which might tackle the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people in your area of North Yorkshire. This may be a service or activity specifically aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation among older people. Alternatively, it may have another purpose, but you feel that it contributes to tackling these issues. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

### **What are the benefits of the survey?**

The information you provide will help us to build a picture of what is currently available in North Yorkshire, how and where it is being provided and what needs to be considered in future plans for combating loneliness and social isolation among older people. Findings from the survey will be presented to North Yorkshire's Health and Wellbeing Board to inform its work across the county.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory body for which North Yorkshire County Council has responsibility. It includes local commissioners from the NHS; public health and social care; elected representatives; and representatives of Healthwatch and the voluntary sector. Board members work together to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners to work in a more joined up way. We believe that understanding and tackling the problem of loneliness and social isolation among older people should be an important priority for the board. This survey will help them to make informed decisions that are sensitive to local views and existing service provision.

If you are able to take part, please complete your answers as soon as possible, but **no later than 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**. We very much hope you will wish to contribute, and look forward to your replies.

**If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Sylvia Bernard or Hannah Perry:**

**Telephone: 01904 321978**

**Email: hannah.perry@york.ac.uk  
or, sylvia.bernard@york.ac.uk**

**Thank You**

## A4 Initial contact organisations in North Yorkshire

Contact Organisation (North Yorkshire)	Contact Organisation (Craven)	Contact Organisation (Hambleton)	Contact Organisation (Harrogate)	Contact Organisation (Richmondshire)	Contact Organisation (Ryedale)	Contact Organisation (Scarborough & Whitby)	Contact Organisation (Selby)
North Yorkshire Older Peoples Partnership Board (NYOPPB)	Craven Over 50s Forum	Bedale U3a	Harrogate U3a	Richmond U3a	Ryedale U3a	Whitby U3a	Selby Association of Voluntary Service
North Yorkshire Innovation Initiative 'Growing Communities'	Craven U3a	Cowtons & Countryside U3a	Ripon & District U3a	Richmondshire RCVS	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service - Ryedale	Scarborough U3a	Age UK Selby
Future Years'- Yorkshire and Humber regional forum on ageing	Settle U3a	Easingwold & district U3a	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service -Harrogate district	Upper Wensleydale Community Office	Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Mind	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service - Scarborough & Whitby	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service - Selby
North Yorkshire and York forum for voluntary organisations	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service - Craven district	Stokesley U3a	Age UK Harrogate	Reeth Community Office	Ryedale Older People's Over 50s Forum	Alzheimers Society - Scarborough	Selby Over 50s Forum
North Yorkshire Adult and Community Services (including library services)	Craven Community & Voluntary Services	Thirsk Sowerby and District Community Care Association	Age UK Ripon	Leyburn Community Office	WRVS- North Yorkshire (Ryedale)	Age UK Scarborough and District	Selby and District Mencap
Royal Voluntary Service North Yorkshire	Pioneer Projects (Craven innovation funding)	Stokesley and District Community Care Association	Age UK Knaresborough	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service	Ryedale and District Mencap	Scarborough and District Older Peoples Forum	Salvation Army - Selby
Age UK North Yorkshire	Under 1 Umbrella- (Craven innovation funding)	Easingwold District Community Care Association	Mind - Harrogate District	Richmondshire Senior Forum	Salvation Army - Malton	Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Mind	Selby Innovation Projects

British Red Cross Yorkshire Office	Alzheimers Society-Craven	Northallerton and District Voluntary Service Association	Harrogate and District Mencap		Ryedale Voluntary Action	Salvation Army - Filey	Alzheimers Society - Selby and York
Salvation Army Yorkshire	Age UK North Craven	North Yorkshire Adult Learning and Skills Service -Hambleton district	Alzheimers Society - Ripon and Harrogate			Salvation Army - Scarborough	
Diocese of Ripon & Leeds (C of E)	Mind - Craven	Hambleton Over 50s Forum	Ripon Salvation Army			Scarborough and District Mencap	
Diocese of York (C of E)		Alzheimers Society - Hambleton and Richmondshire					
Roman Catholic Diocese of Middleborough		Age UK Northallerton					
North Yorkshire Quakers		Northallerton and the Dales Mencap Society					
North Yorkshire Methodist Circuits							
North Yorkshire Parish Councils							