



update briefing paper: november 08

Background

Infobase is a comprehensive new information resource for and about the voluntary sector in North Lanarkshire. Managed by CVS North Lanarkshire and funded by North Lanarkshire Partnership and NHS Lanarkshire, Infobase will include all voluntary groups in the area, not just CVS members.

Infobase will provide a one-stop shop for accurate and up-to-date information on North Lanarkshire's voluntary organisations, enabling them to publicise the work they do and promote better partnership working.

The data is gathered in individual interviews, and we aim for 100% coverage of the sector. General information will be accessible through a website, and it will be possible to generate detailed information reports from the database.

If you'd like to arrange a time for your organisation to be interviewed, or just to find out more about Infobase, contact **Gavin Bell, Infobase Project Coordinator** on **01236 764866**.

Update

The full data collection period for Infobase North Lanarkshire got underway in July this year. To date, over 300 organisations have been interviewed covering all different kinds of voluntary organisations from pre-5 groups to arts organisations to housing associations.

The Infobase team is keen to hear from any groups that have not yet been interviewed, so get in touch at the CVS or go to **www.infobase-northlanarkshire.org** to sign up for an interview.

This interim briefing paper is intended to provide a snapshot of some of the findings from the initial grouping of organisations interviewed, as well as to give a flavour of the breadth of information that will be available after March 2009, when Infobase is officially launched. Results are based on the initial 160 questionnaires input. A further briefing paper will be available soon after, based on the complete dataset.

CVSNL would like to thank all of the staff at community and voluntary organisations throughout North Lanarkshire that have already given their time to be interviewed for Infobase.

www.infobase-northlanarkshire.org

The Questionnaire

The Infobase questionnaire covers a wide range of areas. There are **15** sections and over **100** separate questions. Despite this, interviews usually take around **45 minutes**. Infobase gathers information from each organisation from the following categories, as applicable:

Main details
Legal Status
Governance
Contacting
Activities

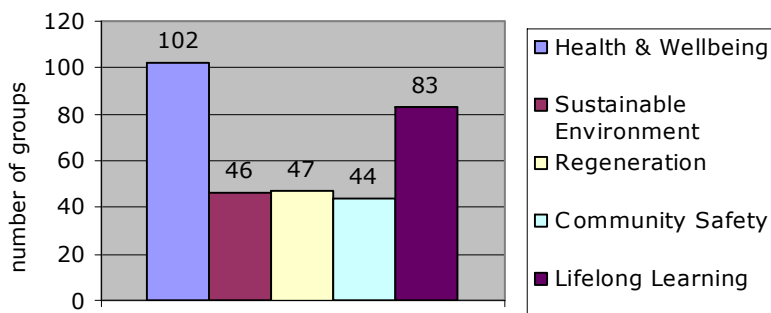
Aims
Service Users
Finance
Staffing
Volunteers

Equal Opportunities
Partnerships
Development & support
CVSNL Membership

The bulk of this information will be used to generate and support research on the community and voluntary sector, while general details on groups will be available on the Infobase website. If you haven't already, call us to schedule an interview to make sure your group's details are recorded.



"Which community planning themes does your group operate within?"



Legal Status & Governance

The Infobase questionnaire gathers information on how North Lanarkshire's voluntary and community organisations are set up and governed. This includes information on charitable status, legal structure, constitutions and staffing of committees/boards.

- i* The average length of time organisations have been established is **20.9** years
- i* **56%** of organisations interviewed are registered charities
- i* **1225** people are involved in boards or management committees (average **8.5** per organisation)

Localities

North Lanarkshire covers 130 square miles and is home to 324,700 people, making it Scotland's 4th most populous local authority. The organisations interviewed to date offer a range of services to specific areas and across a wider area.

- i* **51%** of organisations offered their services to a specific local area (e.g. Shotts, Croy)
- i* **38%** of organisations offer services throughout North Lanarkshire
- i* **23%** of organisations offer services further afield than North Lanarkshire

Service Users

Infobase gathers information on the number and type of service users engaging with each organisation. This allows us to reveal who is using community and voluntary organisations, and crucially how they are being referred.

- i* Last year, **134,508** service users were reported by the organisations interviewed
- i* **47%** of organisations have service users referred by statutory agencies
- i* **34%** of organisations have service users referred by other voluntary groups

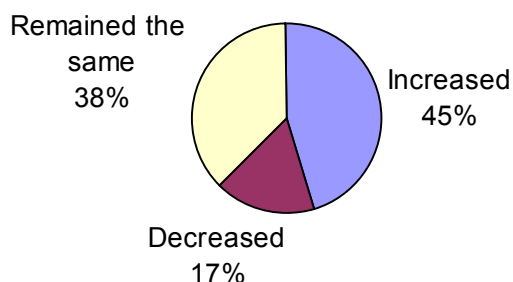
Finance

The questionnaire includes a detailed section gathering data on each organisations finances, providing data on total income, funding sources, self-generated income and a breakdown of expenditure.

- i* The total income for the organisations interviewed was **£24,056,582**
- i* **45%** of organisations report an increase in funding over the last 3 years
- i* **64%** of organisations hold cash reserves that can be deployed if necessary



"How has your organisation's income changed over the last 3 years?"



Staff & Volunteers

The community and voluntary sector relies a great deal on volunteers, but it is also employs a great deal of paid staff. Infobase investigates staffing levels and issues and volunteer needs and numbers.

- i* **46%** of organisations employ at least one member of paid staff
- i* **68%** of organisations engage volunteers over and above their governing body
- i* **41%** reported an increase in paid staff over the previous 2 years, with **11%** reporting a decrease
- i* Volunteer hours contributed to the organisations interviewed totalled **487,592** last year

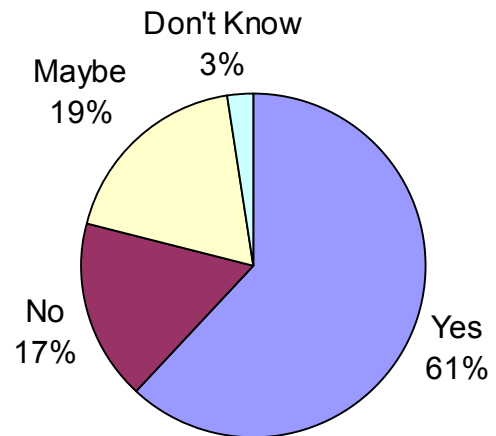
Development & Support

Infobase gathers important data on community and voluntary organisations, but it also records information on support needs, perceived barriers to growth, and ability to plan and develop.

- i* **44%** of organisations interviewed have a business plan
- i* **61%** of organisations plan for growth in the next 3 years
- i* The barrier to growth most cited by respondents was '**difficulty obtaining sufficient funding**'
- i* **36%** of organisations have not carried out an organisational review within the last 2 years



"Do you plan for your organisation to grow over the next 3 years?"



Feedback from Data Collection

Over 1300 organisations have been contacted to date to take part in Infobase North Lanarkshire. Small and large organisations alike have commented that Infobase will be an invaluable resource for the community and voluntary sector in the area.

**sign up
today!**

If your organisation hasn't been interviewed yet, now's the time to sign up to ensure your details are recorded on Infobase. You can:

- i* Call us to book an appointment on **01236 764866**
- i* Complete a **sign-up form** with your details and send it back to us
- i* Sign up for an interview online at **www.infobase-northlanarkshire.org**

***i*information
matters**

12th March 2009

Infobase will be launched on **12th March 2009** at the **North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Conference**, held at **Motherwell Concert Hall**. The theme of this year's conference will be '**Information Matters**', and the information gathered from the full dataset will feed into the day.

To book a place at the conference, contact **Dianne Lawrie** at the CVS on **01236 764866**.