



# Who's Doing I.T. Right?

A National Survey incorporating 13 case-studies from across England

ICT Support Organisations who provide high quality, local and affordable digital support to the third sector

Funded by Capacitybuilders

This resource developed by:  
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North East ICT Champions  
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## Background

In January 2010 Capacitybuilders made five recommendations to all of its funded National Support Services and National Priority Programmes about the type and scope of activity that they should be looking at to shape delivery in the final year of their current projects funded until March 2011.

This influenced a significant shift in the existing NAVCA led ICT Champions project to focus on three new key activities;

- Improving Access to Quality Information & Resources
- Building Sustainable ICT Support Providers
- More Effective Communication using Social Media

The North East ICT Champions were tasked with contributing to Building Sustainable ICT Support Providers. More specifically, it was determined that we should produce a report with a remit to identify how, who from and where support is being provided. In addition, to try and learn how support can be provided sustainably, we were to take a look at 10 or more ICT Support Providers from across the country that are doing just that.



## Executive Summary

This report is in two parts and comprises a survey of what ICT support is available to third sector groups and organisations including non-dedicated support providers i.e. Local Support & Development Organisations (LSDO's) such as Council's for Voluntary Services (CVS's). It's followed by a look at a collection of case studies of a varied mix of ICT support providers across England who are making a success of working with and for our sector.

Making the best use of ICT is a key tool in helping voluntary and community sector organisations provide the most effective service they can with the resources available to them. Previous research, anecdotal evidence and author knowledge informs that many voluntary and community organisations are not necessarily staffed by people with a high level of ICT knowledge and that they need ICT support both for themselves and for their clients.

So to understand where ICT support comes from and the nature and extent of the provision of this support within the sector, a survey was undertaken as part of the Regional ICT Champions project funded by Capacitybuilders. The survey aimed to learn how ICT support was made available to the voluntary and community sector in England, to assess the effectiveness of this provision and whether it could be improved, and to consider the risks to the ongoing provision of services. This summary provides a description of the survey results and an assessment of their significance in relation to the aims of the survey.

The main conclusions are as follows:

- The geographical coverage of the response does not cover the whole of England.
- The range of organisations that responded to the survey is representative of the sector.



- Most of the respondents to the survey operated at a local scale, both with clients and suppliers of specialist ICT services.
- Most of the ICT support provided by the respondents was provided informally. The services are largely free of charge to users, but some respondents charged for their services.
- Most organisations did not receive funding to provide ICT support. Several organisations expressed concern over their ability to continue providing their services, although most wished or expected to do so.
- Respondents indicated that a lack of resources, knowledge and time, limited their effectiveness in offering ICT support. Some stated that ICT support was not a core aspect of their work and that it was not a priority. Others identified that there was not a demand for the service from their clients.
- Although some organisations had a specialist member of staff for ICT enquiries, most organisations provided support on an ad hoc basis.
- The majority of ICT support provided was in the form of troubleshooting, technical support and training. This was typically provided by the survey respondents directly. More specialist advice or expertise was typically (but not always) signposted.

And as for the Support Providers who are already doing it successfully;

- Prime Service: amongst the providers interviewed, most of them provide equipment & network technical support as one of their prime services.
- Support Calls per Week: the majority of the providers receive at least 20 support calls per week.
- Some 'Unique Selling Points' identified;
  - Developing partnerships and collaborating with private sector organisations



- Building long term customer relationships
- Providing affordable service and obtaining work through recommendations
- The support providers Social Enterprise credentials.
- Using Other Providers (Signposting);  
In addition to partnerships, most of the organisations recommended other suppliers for services they did not provide themselves which helps to build their reputations as useful contacts.
- ICT Resources;  
Digging a little deeper into what signposting services they offer, it is notable that most of the interviewed organisations have heard of and used the following ICT information or resources;
  - ICT answers in a box
  - The Lasa Suppliers Directory
  - Regional ICT Champions
  - The Lasa Knowledgebase
  - Charity Technology Trust
- The Future
  - Diversification seems to be a choice for most.
  - Cloud computing and Social Media are the most popular areas that they see moving into or expanding further on.
- Recycling and Refurbishing  
Only two organisations provide this service as most considered it to be a much specialised area with licensing issues and high start-up costs involved.
- ICT Training  
All but two of the interviewed organisations provide some form of training.



- Apprenticeships

Two organisations greatly value their apprenticeship schemes. ESP Projects Ltd consider it a vital part of what they do to provide apprenticeship opportunities for local people and Happy Computers are working to provide more fully funded IT Apprenticeships to the sector.

- Volunteering

At least half of the providers use 1 or more volunteers. Their roles generally cover the service ranges provided by their respective organisations but some are given specific remits or pieces of work to cover.

- Income

Most organisations receive income from chargeable work as well as grant funding for certain elements of their service offerings. It is though, very notable that, with the exception of one, their income from chargeable services is significantly greater than their grant income for any funded work they undertake.



## Contents

	Page
<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Who Provides Support to the Sector?</b>	
1. Survey Introduction	
1.1 Aim of the study	<b>8</b>
1.2 Who was surveyed?	<b>8</b>
1.3 Format of the survey	<b>9</b>
2. Survey Results	
2.1 Basic information	<b>10</b>
2.2 Nature of the ICT service provided	<b>11</b>
2.3 The Provision of ICT Support	<b>14</b>
3. Analysis of Results	
3.1 Basic information	<b>18</b>
3.2 Nature of the ICT service provided	<b>18</b>
3.3 The Provision of ICT Support	<b>20</b>
4. Survey Conclusions	<b>22</b>
<b>Who's Doing I.T. Right?</b>	
5. The Purpose of the case-studies	<b>24</b>
6. How the organisations were selected	<b>26</b>
7. Key Findings	<b>26</b>
8. Thirteen case-study snapshots	<b>28</b>
9. Acknowledgements	<b>42</b>



## Who Provides Support to the Sector?

### 1. Survey Introduction

#### 1.1 Aim of the survey

Effective use of ICT is a key tool in helping voluntary and community sector organisations provide the most effective service they can with the resources available to them. ICT knowledge is not necessarily a skill of staff in many voluntary and community organisations and as a result many groups and individuals find that they need ICT support both for themselves and for their clients.

In order to understand the nature and extent of the provision of ICT support within the sector, a survey investigating information and communication technology (ICT) support for voluntary and community groups in England was undertaken as part of a NAVCA project funded by Capacitybuilders. The aims of this survey were to gain an understanding of how ICT support was made available to the sector in England, to assess the effectiveness of this provision, to identify whether this provision could be improved and to assess the biggest risks to the ongoing provision of services.

#### 1.2 Who was surveyed?

The survey particularly targeted organisations that provided ICT support, training and advice to the voluntary and community sector but who were not dedicated support providers as such. We were particularly interested in any general Local Support & Development Organisations who were adding some form of ICT support to their pot of services offered.

The information provided will help to establish the current uptake and availability of ICT support in the sector.



This report provides a description of the survey results in Part 2.1, an assessment of the significance of the results in relation to the aims of the survey in Part 2.2 and some brief conclusions drawn in Part 2.3. These are followed in the second section of the report by the case-study examples of 13 ICT support providers who are well established in the sector at providing successful and sustainable ICT services.

### **1.3 Format of the survey**

The survey was prepared using the online survey management application Survey Monkey and was made available to respondents over the period August to October 2010. It consisted of a total of 26 questions divided into four sections. The first section provided basic information related to the responding organisation such as contact details. The second section covered the nature of the ICT support service provided by the respondents, while the third covered the provision of ICT support. The fourth section covered issues related to social enterprise. The questions in the latter section related to a separate data collection and are not discussed in this report. This data was used to inform a report entitled '*Social Enterprise ICT Support for the Civil Sector*' about which, more is mentioned on Page 25 of this report.



## 2. Survey results

### 2.1 Basic information

A total of 79 respondents started the survey and 60 completed it, equivalent to 75.9% of the respondents. In response to Question 1 (name and address of the organisation), three organisations did not provide a name; four did not provide contact details. Two responses contained no information relating to the organisation at all and limited data in the other sections. At least three organisations filled in the survey more than once. The majority of respondents who provided a postcode were located in the Midlands or North East of England, with postcodes DH (Durham), NE (Newcastle), NG (Nottingham), DE (Derby), S (Sheffield) accounting for 26 of the respondents, the greatest number of which came from the Nottingham postcode area (10). Of the 21 respondents who did not provide a postcode nine could be identified which were located in these areas from the other information provided, making a total of 44% of the response coming from these areas. There was no response from any organisation based in London. Only three respondents failed to provide any information related to a point of contact within the organisation (Questions 2-4).

In response to Question 6 (Which of the following terms best describes your organisation?) the majority of the responding organisations (56.4%) described themselves as CVS groups, while 36.4% described themselves as a social enterprise and 20% described themselves as an interest group. Further description of the organisation (Question 7) was provided by 18 respondents; the most common descriptions were related to education, racial and sexual equality and community and religious organisations.



The majority of the organisations (56%) described the scale of their operation as local (Question 8). A similar percentage of respondents (17.3% and 20% respectively) described their organisation as operating at a sub-regional or regional level. Less than 7% of the response described their organisation as either national or international in scale.

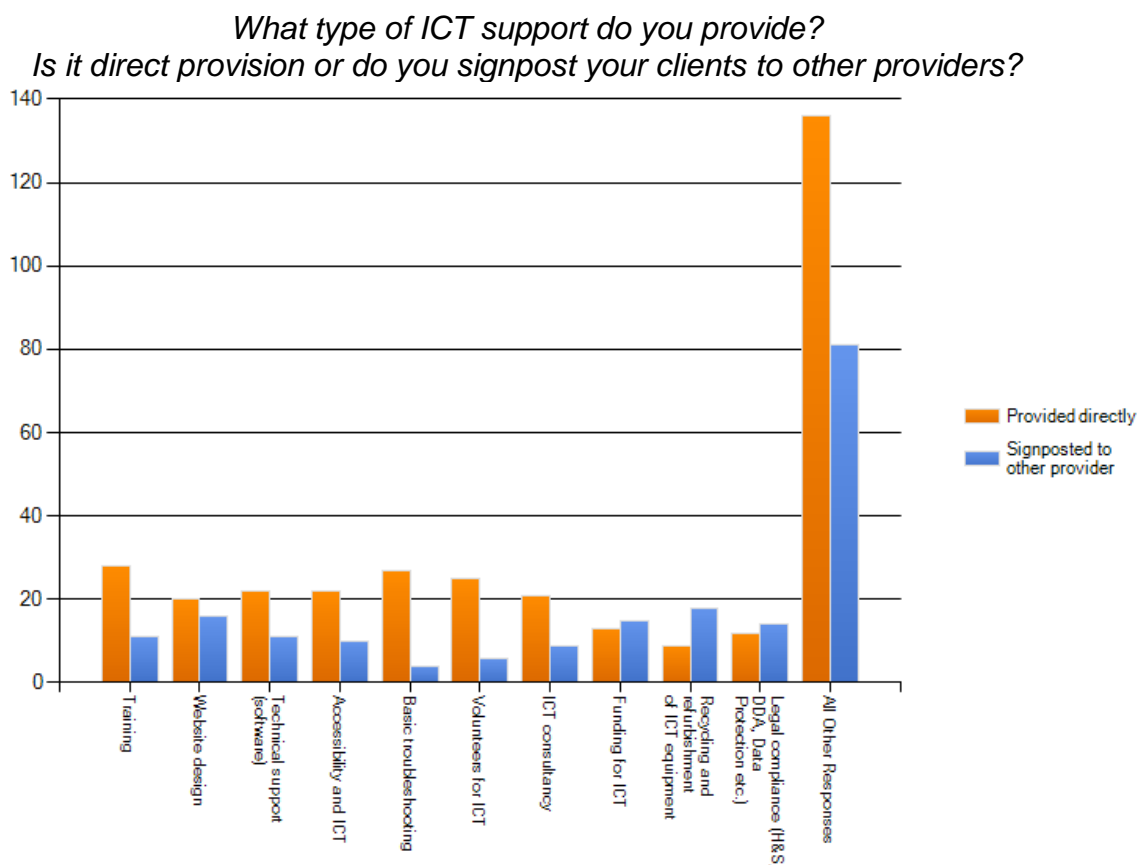
## **2.2 Nature of the ICT service provided**

The majority (70%) of the respondents provided some form of ICT service to their clients (Question 1). The description of this service (Question 2) required one of the most detailed responses from the respondents, who had to identify from a list of possible services whether they provided them directly or signposted enquiries to a provider. A total of 20 different services were listed in the survey, with the option for the respondent to identify others that were not listed if necessary. A total of 47 respondents answered the question, but not all of them provided a response to each service, therefore the responses to this question are expressed in terms of the number of respondents rather than as a percentage, which could be misleading. The response to this question is summarised in Figure 1.

Almost all of the 15 most commonly identified services provided were provided directly, the exceptions being the provision of funding for ICT, recycling of ICT equipment and advice on legal and compliance issues, where it was more common to pass the enquiry on to a specialist service provider (Figure 1). The services that were most widely provided directly by the organisations surveyed were training (28 respondents), technical support related to software (22 respondents), troubleshooting (27 respondents), accessibility (22 respondents) and the provision of ICT volunteers (25 respondents). The services that were most commonly signposted by the organisations surveyed were website design (16 respondents), although a greater number of organisations (20) provided this



service directly, funding (15 respondents) and recycling of ICT equipment (18 respondents). The least common services provided (either directly or signposted) from the list in the survey were licensing compliance (17 respondents in total), policy and procedure (21 respondents in total), distribution of NAVCA ICT guides (20 respondents in total), monitoring of changes in legislation (17 respondents in total) and telephony (19 respondents in total). The combined total for these services are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 Summary of the response to Question 2, Section 2**

Slightly less than half of the organisations (36) indicated that they had a specialist employee dedicated to ICT support (Question 3). Of those that stated they did not have a specialist advisor (27) the majority (76.7%) provided advice on an ad hoc basis, depending on the knowledge and availability of staff (Question 4). A total of 23 respondents provided contact details for an ICT



service provider to whom they forwarded relevant enquiries (Question 5). Three of the respondents indicated the same ICT provider (Purple zebra), based in the Nottinghamshire area; however two responses came from the same organisation. The remainder of the service providers identified (where sufficient contact information was provided by the respondent) were local to the respondent in question.

When asked how many calls, on average, related to ICT enquiries the organisation received per week (Question 6), the greatest number stated 1-5 (46.8%); 15 respondents stated they received no calls and 10 respondents (16.1%) received more than 20 calls per week (see Figure 2).

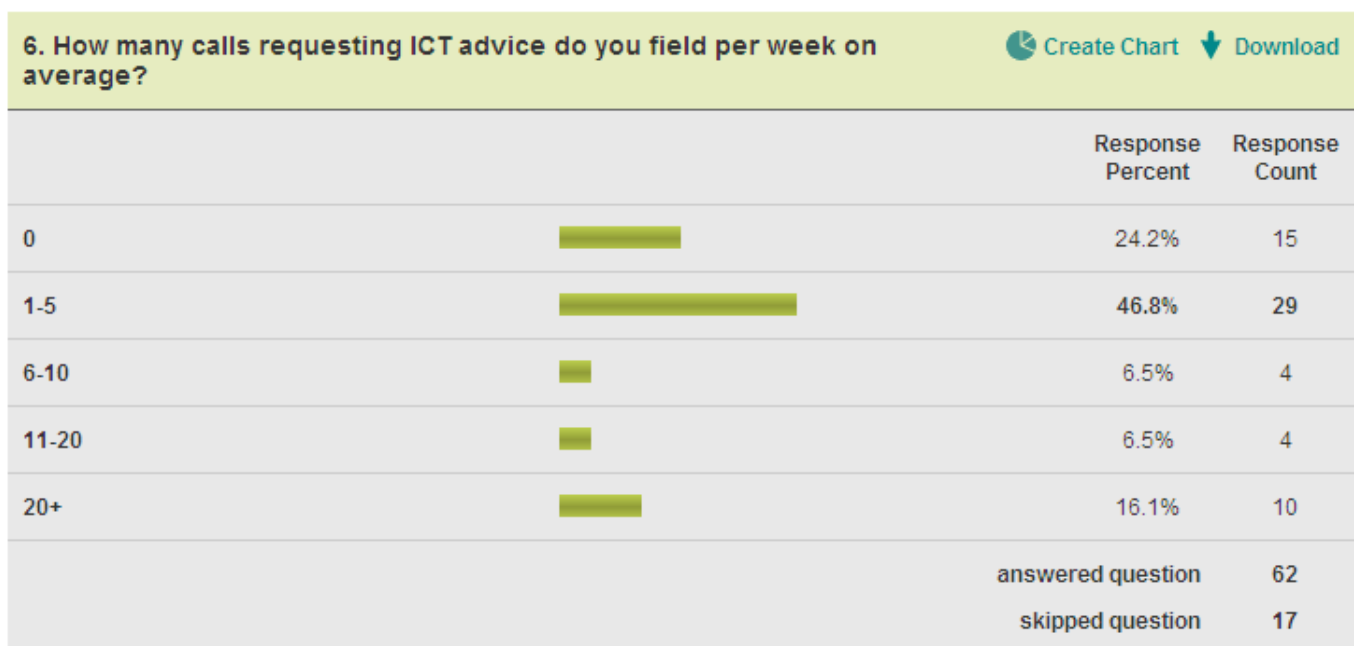


Figure 2 Summary of the response to Question 6, Section 2



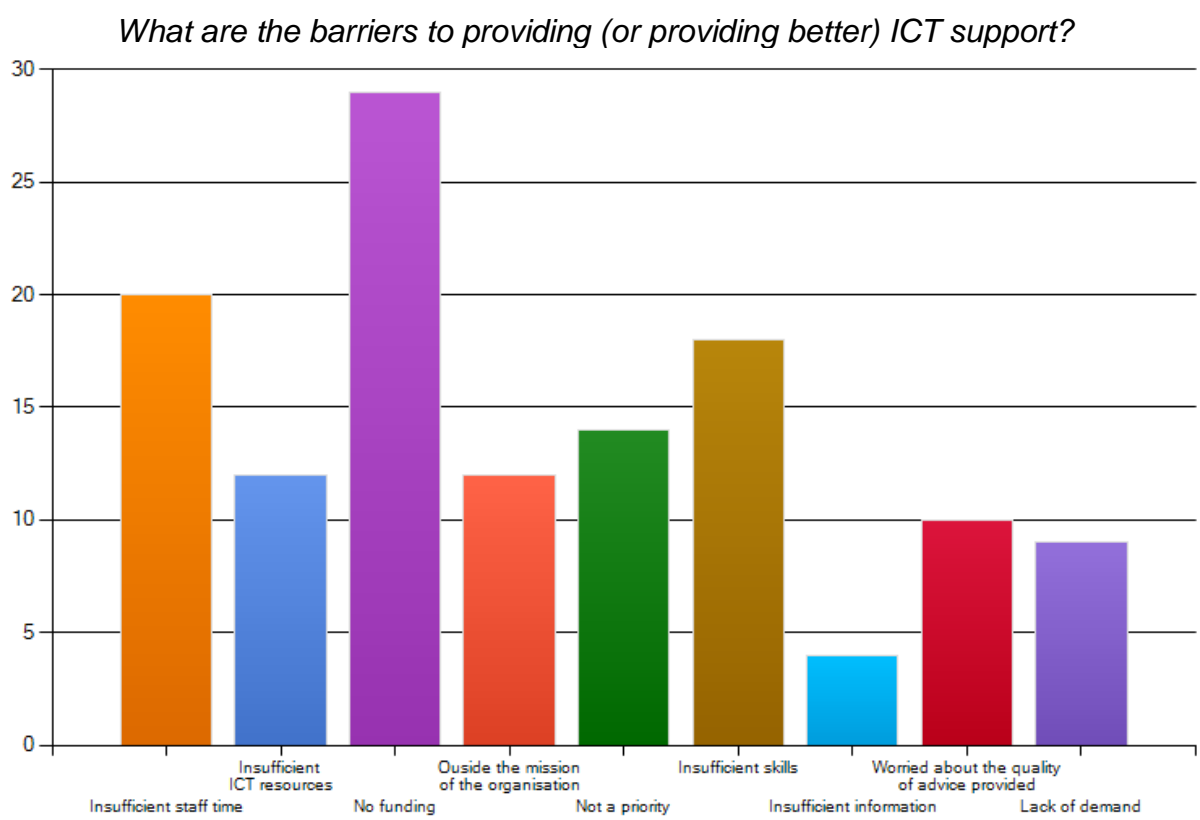
## 2.3 The Provision of ICT Support

Most of the respondents (39) indicated that they did not charge for any ICT support that they provided (Question 1), although 21 respondents indicated that they did charge for their services. The structure of the survey was such that there was no opportunity for respondents to expand on this issue, so there is no indication whether charges were levied for all services, nor is there any information available on how much the relevant organisations charged for these services. However, the response to Question 2 (Are you funded to provide ICT support?) indicated that fewer respondents received funding (11) than those who charged for their services. The majority of those who responded to the question (50) indicated that they provided their services despite receiving no funding to do so. When asked what the main barriers were to providing (or providing better) ICT support (Question 3), no funding was the most popular response (56.9%, 29 respondents).

The other responses to this question, summarised in Figure 3, can be classified into two groups. The first implies a limitation of the responding organisation that they would wish to address if they could, such as a lack of resources, knowledge or time; another concern relates to the quality of the information provided, suggesting that the staff available are not confident in providing ICT support. The second group of responses indicates that ICT support is not a major concern to the responding organisation, as it is not part of their mission, is not a priority for them, or there is not a demand for ICT support from the groups they serve, hence there is no incentive to improve what support they provide. The additional comments provided by some of the respondents support this view; of the seven comments, two indicated that ICT support was not a priority, three indicated that funding was an issue, one indicated that they had a partner organisation that



provided whatever services they could not and one indicated that they had developed an outcomes database resource for clients that they were currently marketing with support provided.



**Figure 3 Summary of the response to Question 3, Section 3**

When asked whether they envisaged continuing to provide ICT support for the foreseeable future (Question 4) 45 respondents said yes, while 13 said no. When asked to expand on this issue there were 11 responses; the majority of these indicated that the service depended on future funding or that the funding available for the service was due to end, after which the quality of the service was expected to decline. Two respondents indicated that they were intending to develop and expand their ICT services and one indicated that they would continue to signpost enquiries as usual, indicating that the service they provided was not dependent on funding for their organisation.



When asked whether they knew of, used or referred groups to ICT suppliers in the area (Question 5), 42 respondents indicated that they did so, while 16 respondents said no (21 respondents skipped the question). When asked what means they used to select suppliers of ICT services (Question 6), almost all of those who answered the question (95% of 40 respondents) indicated that word of mouth or a personal recommendation were the most common methods; internet search engines and regional or national business directories were the next most popular means of identifying suppliers, but these were markedly less popular (10-15% of the respondents) than a personal recommendation.

Following on from the question about sourcing ICT suppliers, respondents were offered a range of directories and information sources for ICT support services and asked whether they had heard of them and whether they used them (Question 7). The response to this question is summarised in Figure 4. The most significant aspect of the response to this question was the disparity between the percentage of the 50 respondents who had heard of the eight sources (61.7% - 92.9%) and the percentage of those who actually used these sources (14.3% - 55.6%). Another point of interest is that the resource that the most respondents had heard of (IT4Communities – 92.9%) was also the one that fewest respondents stated that they used (14.3%).



*Have you heard of or use any of the following?*

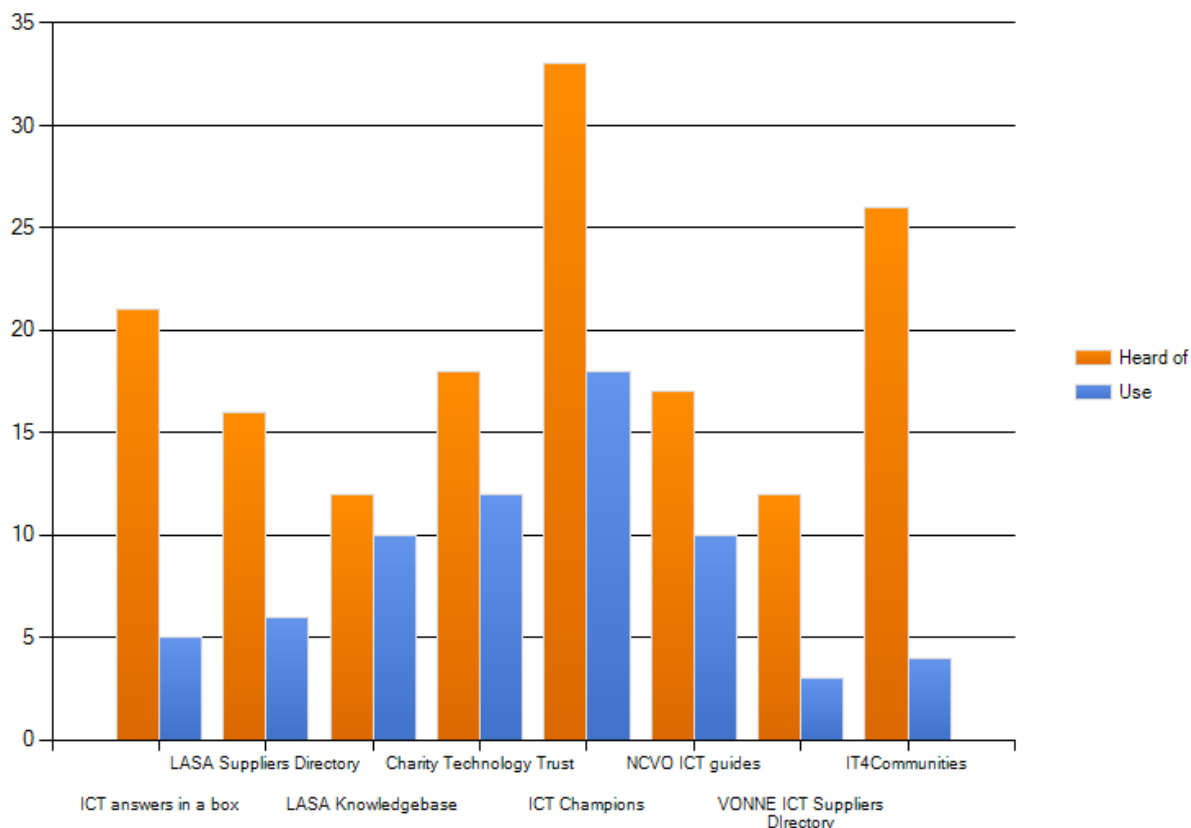


Figure 4 Summary of response to Question 7, Section 3

### 3. Analysis of Results

The aims of this survey were to gain an understanding of how ICT support was made available to the voluntary and community sector in England, to assess the effectiveness of this provision, to identify whether this provision could be improved and to assess the biggest risks to the ongoing provision of services. A subjective assessment of the implications of the survey results is provided herein in relation to the three sections of the survey.



### **3.1 Basic information**

The overall response rate was good, but the response was heavily skewed towards two areas of England, the North East and the Midlands, particularly Nottingham, with almost half of the total response coming from these areas (Questions 1-4). There was also a very limited response from most of the major cities in England, including Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Bristol. Most significantly, there were no respondents from the Greater London area. It is assumed that word of mouth caused a significant response in some areas, while notice of the survey did not reach other parts of the country, or for whatever reason respondents were unable to complete the survey. It is highly unlikely that the lack of a response indicates a lack of service providers in the area, particularly in the major cities. Consequently, although it is possible to draw some conclusions about the provision ICT provision in England and the coverage of organisations includes urban, suburban and rural locations, the survey response cannot be said to be representative of the country as a whole.

The nature of the service providers who responded to the survey (Question 6-7) covers a range of backgrounds and interests, although with a response of 79 it cannot be said that the results of the survey represent the entire community. The scale of operations of the organisations (Question 8) was mostly local, which is a fair reflection of the sphere of influence of most CVS organisations.

### **3.2 The nature of the ICT service provided**

The majority of the respondents provided some form of ICT service to their clients (Question 1), even if this only consisted of signposting them to a suitable supplier of ICT resources or information. The range of services offered was considerable, but the majority of respondents appear to provide training, technical support and troubleshooting services, as well as providing volunteers to assist in maintaining



ICT within the organisation seeking advice. These services are generally provided directly. In some cases the service provider offers both direct provision of services and a signposting service to a more specialist provider; this is particularly true of website design. Although this process is not discussed within the survey, it is assumed that the model is that straightforward jobs requiring relatively little input of resources can be dealt with in-house, while larger projects are signposted to specialist providers.

More specialist advice, such as legal and policy matters, as well as services that require significant resources, such as the recycling of ICT equipment, tends to be provided through signposting. Funding enquiries also tended to be passed on, suggesting that many providers of ICT resources in the voluntary and community sector are small enterprises and not-for-profit bodies themselves rather than sources of financial support.

The implication of the survey response is that the quality of the service provided may be variable, as fewer than half of the respondents had an ICT specialist on hand to provide support, while most of the rest provide support on an ad hoc basis, meaning that the quality of the advice provided depends on who is available at the time the enquiry is made, or the enquirer must wait until a suitably experienced member of staff is available to respond. Another alternative is that the enquiry is passed to a specialist outside the contact organisation; while this may result in the enquirer receiving a better quality response to their needs it also provides an additional step for them to pass through in order to resolve their problem. What the survey is not able to tell is whether an enquirer would return to the first organisation or the specialist ICT service provider for subsequent enquiries and whether the enquirer needs to pay for an enquiry that is passed on. In all cases the service provision is at a local scale.



The response to the question on the number of calls received indicates a split in the nature of the responding organisations, with the majority of the respondents receiving either no or very few calls, or a significantly larger number of calls (>20), while relatively few respondents received a number of calls between these extremes. This suggests that the organisations that responded to the survey were either specialists in ICT support and advice, or provided advice on a casual basis when requested.

### **3.3 The Provision of ICT Support**

Most of the respondents indicated that whatever level of ICT support they provided was offered as a free service. It is not clear whether the cost of a service (where a charge is made) relates to the provision of a specialist ICT advisor, nor whether the free service is typically provided by the ad hoc service described previously. The fact that the majority of respondents indicated that they did not receive any funding specifically for the provision of ICT support suggests that the service provided has evolved in response to local demand from the clients of the responding organisation, possibly as a result of the organisation being better informed in relation to ICT than their clients. There is also an indication in many cases that despite the desire to do so in most cases, the service provided may not be continued due to lack of funding, either for the organisation as a whole or for ICT funding in particular, though this distinction is not made clear in the responses. **In either case the provision of ICT support in the voluntary and community sector appears to be vulnerable.**

Besides funding, the main barriers to providing (or providing better) ICT support (Question 3), were either a result of a limitation of the responding organisation that they would wish to address, or that the responding organisation did not have an interest or desire to expand from their existing level of ICT service. The lack of



funding would be a bigger concern to the first group, in which lack of resources, knowledge or time are all issues. Funding could permit training to improve the knowledge of employees and increase confidence in the quality of the service provided; it could also permit the employment of an ICT specialist. A lack of funding would be less of a concern for those respondents for whom the ICT support they provide is incidental and who neither wish nor aspire to improve what support they provide.

In keeping with the predominantly local scale of ICT support and signposting identified in the survey, most respondents used a local ICT supplier to refer enquiries. The means of selecting these suppliers was also predominantly through local and personal connections. Business directories had limited usefulness. Despite the fact that most of the respondents had heard of several directories suitable for the identification of ICT suppliers specialised in charity sector work, most respondents did not make use of them to find their suppliers.



## 4. Survey Conclusions

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the results of the survey are as follows:

- The geographical coverage of the response is limited in extent and does not cover the whole of England.
- The range of organisations that responded to the survey is a fair reflection of the voluntary and community sector.
- Most of the respondents to the survey operated at a local scale, both with clients and suppliers of specialist ICT services. ICT suppliers were typically sourced through local knowledge and personal connections rather than more formal resources such as business directories, which were used as a secondary source of information.
- Most of the ICT support provided by the respondents was provided informally. The service is normally free of charge to users, but some respondents charged for their services. Most of the organisations did not receive funding to provide ICT support. Several organisations expressed concern over their ability to continue providing their service, although most wished or expected to do so.
- Other than funding, the respondents to the survey indicated that a lack of resources, knowledge and time limited their effectiveness in offering ICT support. Some respondents indicated that ICT support was not a core aspect of their work and that it was not a priority. Others identified that there was not a demand for the service from their clients.
- Although some organisations had a specialist member of staff for ICT enquiries, most organisations provided support on an ad hoc basis, depending on the staff available and the nature of the enquiry.



- The majority of ICT support provided was in the form of troubleshooting, technical support and training. This was typically provided by the respondent directly, although signposting also took place. More specialist advice or expertise on policy, recycling and funding was typically (but not always) signposted.



## Who's Doing I.T. Right?

The previous survey analysis gives us some indication of the landscape of support provision in the sector. Even before we conducted the survey, our experience and knowledge left us in no doubt that, whilst there are good, affordable and trustworthy support providers across the country, they are not exactly plentiful, many try but fail to make delivering ICT support sustainable and the sectors frontline organisations largely do not know how to go about finding the good ones.

## 5. The Purpose of the case-studies

What does a successful, sustainable ICT Support provider look like? How do they manage to stay in business when so many try but fail to offer digital support to third sector organisations? Are you perhaps looking to start providing ICT support or wishing to do so more sustainably?

To answer these questions we looked at ICT service and support providers who were doing it sustainably, who were well respected in the sector, well established, ideally with a social enterprise ethic and in short, adding value to ICT support within the third sector.

The intention is that these case-studies will improve awareness and understanding of existing, models of ICT support that work, that are tried, tested and successful.

Ultimately, by taking note of what works and what doesn't, these case-studies can assist in a replication of support organisations and a growth in high quality support provision across other regions and locations.



This section will be of particular interest to;

- Existing third sector organisations looking to develop social enterprise delivery in ICT support
- Existing social enterprises looking for ways to improve or diversify their support and services in ICT to the third sector
- Social Enterprise support agencies (local, regional and national)

But also of interest to;

- Existing third sector organisations looking for ICT support
- Local Infrastructure Organisations who work in support of third sector delivery of ICT support for themselves and/or for their members

These case-studies complement a deeper study and analysis which has been undertaken in tandem by a Regional ICT Champions team consisting of Carl Haggerty, Paul Jefford, Julie Harris and Paul Ruskin.

Building on a 2008 study "*ICT Support - Is Social Enterprise the Answer?*" they have extended this research in a 2011 update and produced a report entitled '*Social Enterprise ICT Support for the Civil Sector*' which takes a good hard look at the balance between affordable demand and sustainable supply. They ask important questions about the future and possibilities for social enterprises delivering ICT services in the civil sector.

This section then takes a look at thirteen bodies who are doing it right now and have been for a while. A sample if you will, of people who are good at what they do and are delivering successfully to the sector.



## 6. How the organisations were selected

The number of organisations that we could interview was invariably limited by the time and resources available. We did though, want to try and get a view from as far and wide across the country as possible and across a range of support activities.

The selected case-study organisations were identified by the Regional ICT Champions who themselves have been trusted regional advisors to the third sector as a collective for the last three to four years, and individually, for much longer than that in most cases.

The 13 organisations are ones we can personally verify as providing high quality, highly regarded, local and affordable digital support.

## 7. Key Findings

By and large, we'd like the case studies to stand alone and paint their own picture of how to do good business in ICT support. That said, here are a few observations and generalisations where possible;

- Prime Service: amongst the providers interviewed, most of them provide equipment & network technical support as one of their prime services.
- Support Calls per Week: the majority of the providers receive at least 20 support calls per week.
- Some 'Unique Selling Points' identified;
  - Developing partnerships and collaborating with private sector organisations
  - Building long term customer relationships



- Providing affordable service and obtaining work through recommendations
- The support providers Social Enterprise credentials.
- Using Other Providers (Signposting);  
In addition to partnerships, most of the organisations recommended other suppliers for services they did not provide themselves which helps to build their reputations as useful contacts.
- ICT Resources;  
Digging a little deeper into what signposting services they offer, it is notable that most of the interviewed organisations have heard of and used the following ICT information or resources;
  - ICT answers in a box
  - The Lasa Suppliers Directory
  - Regional ICT Champions
  - The Lasa Knowledgebase
  - Charity Technology Trust
- The Future;
  - Diversification seems to be a choice for most.
  - Cloud computing and Social Media are the most popular areas that they see moving into or expanding further on.
- Recycling and Refurbishing;  
Only two organisations provide this service as most considered this to be a much specialised area with licensing issues and high start-up costs involved.
- ICT Training;  
All but two of the interviewed organisations provide this service.



- Apprenticeships;  
Two organisations greatly value their apprenticeship schemes. ESP Projects Ltd consider it a vital part of what they do to provide apprenticeship opportunities for local people and Happy Computers are working to provide more fully funded IT Apprenticeships to the sector.
- Volunteering;  
At least half of the providers use 1 or more volunteers. Their roles generally cover the service ranges provided by their respective organisations but some are given specific remits or pieces of work to cover.
- Income;  
Most organisations receive income from chargeable work as well as grant funding for certain elements of their service offerings. It is though, very notable that, with the exception of one, their income from chargeable services is significantly greater than their grant income for any funded work they undertake.

## 8. Thirteen case-study snapshots

The following pages are designed to help see, in a snapshot, what size and shape the service and support organisations are that provide ICT support sustainably and successfully.



**"i-TRUST aims to be a trusted source of technical support and expertise for charities and not for profit organisations"**



In operation since: 2004

**WHAT WE DO**

Staff: 23



Volunteers: 30



## *i-Trust*

Unit 2c Convent Drive

Denny End, Waterbeach

Cambridgeshire

CB25 9Q

01223 861760

office@i-trust.org.uk

www.i-trust.org.uk

## PRIME SERVICES

Technical Support & Development, Recycling and Refurbishing of PC's.

TURNOVER  
**£250-£500k**



Income Generating Activities



Grant Income

Charged Services

*Technical Support, Telephone Support, Recycling & Refurbishing Sales, Policy & Strategy Healthcheck Audits*

Grant funded to provide to the sector

*Technical Support & Telephone Support*

*A Social Enterprise, Registered Charity & Company Ltd by Guarantee*

### How we succeed in doing this.

Our greatest successes have come about through partnerships with private enterprises.

We've also been prepared to work at diversifying into niche areas wherever possible.

### Support Calls per Week.

**30 - 50**

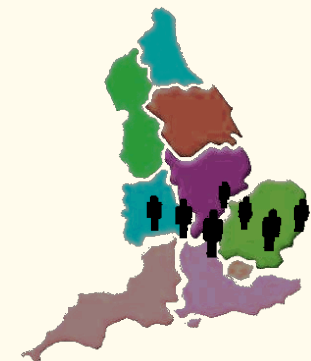


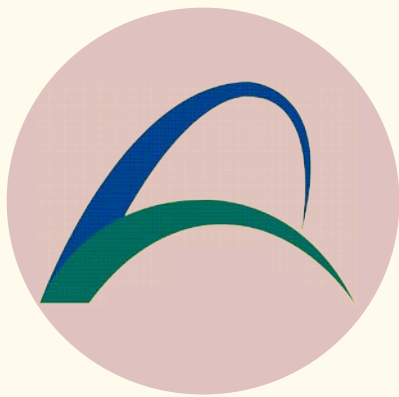
### Future Do's & Don'ts

We found it a hard market to get into the more commonly undertaken support areas for example website design and remote support services.

The future will see us further develop our Recycling operation and also offering support with Social Media tools.

### Where we do it.





**"Our aim is to help people with IT and leave them stronger as a result."**



In operation since: *2003*

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **6**



Volunteers: **1**



## CITA

Lynnwood Business Centre

Lynnwood Terrace

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE4 6UL

0191 256 5015

[admin@communityitacademy.org](mailto:admin@communityitacademy.org)

[www.communityitacademy.org](http://www.communityitacademy.org)

## PRIME SERVICES

Technical Support and Policy & Strategy Consultancies.

TURNOVER  
**£100-£250k**



Income Generating Activities



Grant Income

Charged Services

*Technical Support, Telephone Support, Maintenance (SLA) Contracts, Training, Website Design, Consultancies and a Membership Support Offer*

Grant funded to provide to the sector

*Policy & Strategy Development Work, Purchasing Advice, Licensing Compliance, Accessibility, Social Networking Training and Funding for ICT*

*A Registered Charity and Company Ltd by Guarantee*

### How we succeed in doing this.

We build relationships first which is best illustrated with our Circuit Rider work. We network constantly, have built a solid reputation, we're cost effective, provide a high quality service and have a deep knowledge of the sector. Our Terms & Conditions displayed on the website highlight our transparency and competence.

### Support Calls per Week.

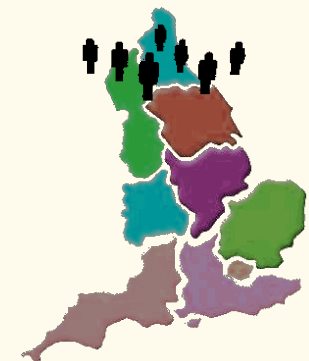
**20 - 30**



### Future Do's & Don'ts

We've had to avoid hardware sales simply due to issues with the VAT threshold. We don't do Recycling or Telephony services as we have not got the specialism required. The future will see us continuing to do more low-cost websites and brokering Cloud services for customers.

### Where we do it.





**"We provide high quality, responsive IT support with the aim of enabling you to deliver your services effectively and continuously."**



In operation since: *2005*

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **4.5**  
(FTE)



Volunteers: **0**

## PurpleZebra

Newstead Centre, Tilford Rd

Newstead Village

Nottingham

NG15 0BS

01623 819160

[support@purplezebra.org.uk](mailto:support@purplezebra.org.uk)

[www.purplezebra.org.uk](http://www.purplezebra.org.uk)

## PRIME SERVICES

Technical Support,  
Sales and Remote &  
Telephone Support.

TURNOVER  
**£250-£500k**



Income  
Generating  
Activities



Grant  
Income

### Charged Services

*Technical Support, Telephone Support, Maintenance (SLA)  
Contracts, Training, Website Design, Consultancies, Sales  
Social Networking, Accessibility and more.*

### Grant funded to provide to the sector

*Policy & Strategy Development Work, ICT Best Practice,  
Accessibility, Funding for ICT & Consultancies.*

*A Ltd Company wholly owned by Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire*

### How we succeed in doing this.

Operating as a commercial IT company but with values and a mission aligned to the Voluntary and Community sector.

### Support Calls per Week.

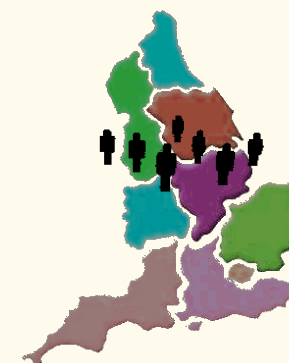
**25 - 30**



### Future Do's & Don'ts

To continue to help the sector we would like to gain funding to subsidise support for small groups and provide them with small grants to ensure back up and a Business Continuity.

### Where we do it.





**"We build long term relationships with our clients and can help grow your organisation with our wide range of experience of IT solutions."**



In operation since: *2002*

**WHAT WE DO**

Staff: **11**



Volunteers: **0**

## ESP Projects

Unit 2,  
Edmund Road Business Centre  
135 Edmund Road  
Sheffield, S2 4ED  
0845 465 7229

[sales@espprojects.co.uk](mailto:sales@espprojects.co.uk)

[www.espprojects.co.uk](http://www.espprojects.co.uk)

**PRIME SERVICES**  
Technical Support,  
Website Design and  
Database Development.

TURNOVER  
**£500-£750k**



Income  
Generating  
Activities

**0**

Grant  
Income

Charged Services

*IT Support, Consultancies Website Design, Network*

*Installation & Maintenance, Software & Hardware Sales,  
Data Cabling, Broadband, VOIP Systems & Cloud Services.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*No grant funding received.*

*A Social Enterprise and Company Ltd by Guarantee*

### How we succeed in doing this.

Whilst remaining a competitive organisation, we maintain a friendly and excellent customer service and our staff are undoubtedly key to our success.

An important USP for us is our social enterprise credentials.

### Support Calls per Week.

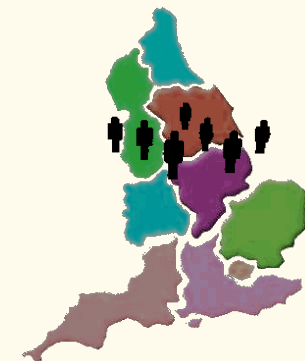
**50 - 100**



### Future Do's & Don'ts

We plan to continue with our current service offers and are considering more telephony services, particularly VOIP Systems, along with developments in helping organisations to embrace broadband Cloud Computing.

### Where we do it.





**"It's not about us, it's about our customers:  
the charities and voluntary and community  
organisations we work with."**



**illuminate**

c/o 2nd Chance Furniture

1a Weddington Terrace

Nuneaton

Warwickshire, CV10 0AG

0121 288 9876

info@illuminateict.org.uk

www.illuminateict.org.uk

In operation since: *2005*

**WHAT WE  
DO**

Staff: **2**



Volunteers: **0**

**PRIME  
SERVICES**

Database Development,  
Website Design &  
Training.

TURNOVER  
**£50-£100k**



Income  
Generating  
Activities

Grant  
Income

Charged Services

*Website Design, Training, ICT Health Checks, Best Practice  
Consultancies, Accessibility Advice, Purchasing Advice &  
Social Networking Consultancies.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*Policy & Strategy Development Work & Training*

*A Constituted Social Enterprise & part of Wicaly Services Limited.*

#### How we succeed in doing this.

Our clients come to us via word of mouth and stay because of the high level of customer support and focus we give to their organisation and people.

We understand the sector and work in a flexible manner that compliments the sector. Illuminate is always the critical friend, we offer honest advice and guidance for the people we work with.

#### Support Calls per Week.

**5**

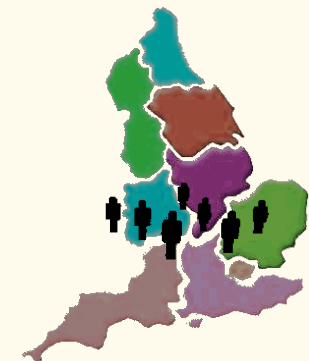


#### Future Do's & Don'ts

Our services in the near future will focus on the development of Websites & Services for communities including small businesses and social enterprises.

We'll do more Social Media and marketing advising, measuring Social Impact, SEO for the sector & CRM training services.

#### Where we do it.





**"We provide low cost, high quality, ethical IT services so whatever you want to do with your IT we can help you do it better."**



In operation since: **1995**

## **WHAT WE DO**

Staff: **6**



Volunteers: **2**



## **PRIME SERVICES**

IT Support, IT Training,  
Website Design &  
Databases.

TURNOVER  
**£250-£500k**



Income  
Generating  
Activities



Grant  
Income

Charged Services

*Technical & Telephone Support, Website Design,  
Training, Consultancies, Sales, Maintenance (SLA)  
Contracts, Social Networking, Accessibility and more.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*Training.*

## **SCIP**

Community Base

113 Queens Road

Brighton

BN1 3XG

01273 234049

admin@scip.org.uk

www.scip.org.uk

*Incorporated not for profit private limited company*

### **How we succeed in doing this.**

We have always made the effort to do more than just traditional ICT support so the training and website work we do is important to us and to the people we work with.

Another important aspect to our resilience has been the offer of support contracts which we introduced a couple of years ago.

### **Support Calls per Week.**

**50**

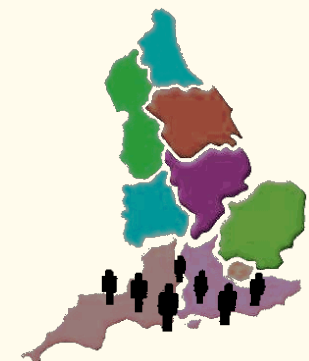


### **Future Do's & Don'ts**

We will be looking to consolidate our services in the future.

We certainly hope to continue and perhaps enhance our website design work and we'll also look more at pay services too.

### **Where we do it.**





**"We work to bring broadband connectivity, computers and the skills to use them to all sectors of society."**



In operation since: *2002*

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **0**

Volunteers: **8**



## Bristol Wireless

The Computer Lab  
Windmill Hill City Farm  
Philip Street, Bedminster  
Bristol, BS3 4EA  
0117 325 0067  
info@bristolwireless.net  
www.bristolwireless.net

## PRIME SERVICES

Broadband & Telephony Packages, Networking, Communications and Connectivity.

TURNOVER  
**£10 -£50k**



Income Generating Activities

**0**

Grant Income

Charged Services

*Technical & Telephone Support, Refurbished PC Sales, Maintenance Contracts, Training, Green ICT Consultancy, Policy & Strategy Advice and more.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*No grant funding received.*

*A Social Enterprise and Community Cooperative.*

### How we succeed in doing this.

We extend the useful life of customers' hardware, minimise cost and power requirements and offer tailor-made, bespoke ICT systems based on reliable, free & open source software.

Also, a far greener option than recycling is reuse and we have nearly a decade's experience in refurbishment.

### Support Calls per Week.

**20 - 40**

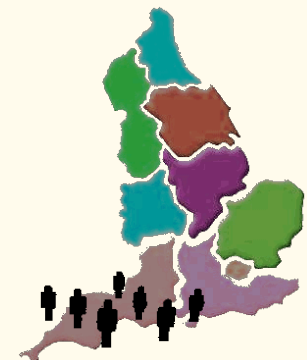


### Future Do's & Don'ts

Our specialisations tend towards networking, comm's & connectivity, but we can refer queries for other services like web development or hosting to helpful partners.

For the future we are looking at the possibilities offered by mobile devices, development in VoIP telephony plus data plans .

### Where we do it.





"We incorporate ethics into the heart of our business, from the people we employ, the products we use and the way we work with our customers."



## COSMIC Ethical I.T.

Pendennis House,  
Gold Street,  
Ottery St Mary,  
Devon, EX11 1DG

01404 813226

admin@cosmic.org.uk

www.cosmic.org.uk

In operation since: 1996

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: 13 (FTE)



Volunteers: 2



## PRIME SERVICES

Website Development,  
Technical Support,  
Training & Consultancies

TURNOVER  
£250-£500k



Income Generating Activities



Grant Income

A Social Enterprise and Company Ltd by Guarantee.

### Charged Services

Technical & Telephone Support, Website Design,  
Training, Consultancies, Sales, Maintenance (SLA)  
Contracts, Social Networking, Accessibility and more.

Grant funded to provide to the sector

Training.

### How we succeed in doing this.

We are great at sharing our expertise in social media, search engine optimisation, graphic design, and hardware and web applications.

We invest our profits into projects that help improve other people's digital lives, we're good at doing this and are very well established.

### Support Calls per Week.

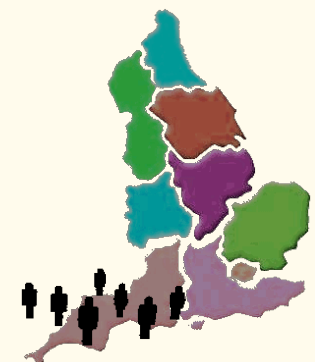
100



### Future Do's & Don'ts

We do a great deal of Social Media work and training and will be looking into setting up a Consultancy Service in response to the ever growing demand.

### Where we do it.





"Our aim is to encourage and develop the use of ICT for the benefit of voluntary & community organisations, individuals, businesses and communities."



In operation since: 2003

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: 3



## Digital Umbrella

hello@digitalumbrella.co.uk

www.digitalumbrella.co.uk

## PRIME SERVICES

Specialist Website Designers for the Voluntary Sector.

£100-£250k



Income Generating Activities

0

Grant Income

Volunteers: 0

### Charged Services

Technical & Telephone Support, Maintenance

Website Design, Database Development, Consultancies, Social Networking, Video Production and Virtual Tours.

Grant funded to provide to the sector

No grant funding

A High Peak CVS Social Enterprise.

### How we succeed in doing this.

It's all down to the quality of our service. We present a 'human' face to our customers – we won't blind you with science and we stay in phone contact with all our customers. We understand how confusing IT can be!

### Support Calls per Week.

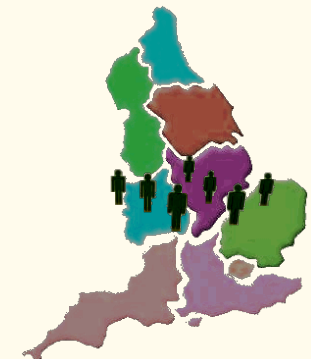
10 - 12



### Future Do's & Don'ts

To offer more services than we do could dilute our core services. The needs of the market are diverse and it can be quite competitive and difficult to generate income. We will however, do more specialist web databases and increase our help to produce video for the web.

### Where we do it.





**"We try to provide dynamic services that respond to the individual needs of our customers and specialise in getting the best value for them, especially the smaller organisations."**



In operation since: *2007*

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **7**



Volunteers: **1**



## Electroville

Bretton St Enterprise Centre  
Bretfield Court  
Dewsbury, West Yorkshire  
WF12 9DB  
01924 488 725  
info@electroville.org.uk  
www.electroville.org.uk

## PRIME SERVICES

Technical Support, Web & Database Services, Training & Consultancies.

TURNOVER  
**£250-£500k**



Income Generating Activities



Grant Income

Charged Services

*Technical & Telephone Support, Maintenance Agreements, Training, Website & Database Design, Policy & Strategy Development, Accessibility, Funding for ICT and more.*

Grant funded to provide to the sector

*Telephone Support, Social Networking, Policy & Strategy Development, Website Design, Accessibility, Training and Best Practice in ICT*

A Social Enterprise & Company Ltd by Guarantee.

### How we succeed in doing this.

It's all about our approach, our customer relationships & our high quality services. We exist to help voluntary organisations achieve their objectives more effectively through the use of ICT but not only via our paid-for services. We continually seek to provide more value in new services.

### Support Calls per Week.

**50**

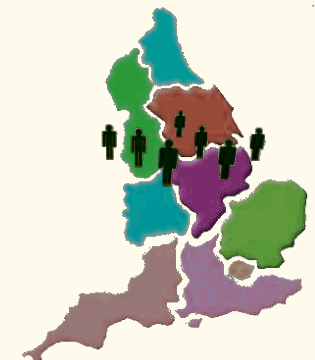


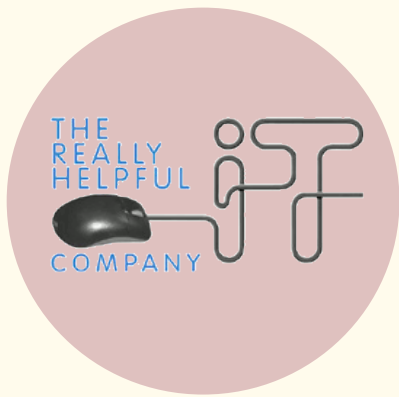
### Future Do's & Don'ts

We've not found sufficient a market for telephony so only help with that if people ask.

We will certainly be growing our social media support programme which helps organisations to do their existing job better whilst increasing their presence

### Where we do it.





**"We explain things in plain English as we understand that not everyone is fully conversant with technical jargon."**



In operation since: *2005*

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **6**  
(FTE)



Volunteers: **0**

## The Really Helpful IT Company

Unit 14

Challenge Enterprise Centre

Sharps Close, Portsmouth,

Hampshire, PO3 5RJ

0800 169 3533

enquiries@trhitc.co.uk

www.trhitc.co.uk

## PRIME SERVICES

Technical Support,  
Consultancies, and  
Installations.

TURNOVER  
**£250-£500k**



Income  
Generating  
Activities

**0**

Grant  
Income

*A Private Limited Company.*

Charged Services

*Technical Support, Installation Services, Maintenance (SLA)*

*Contracts, Consultancies, Project Management and a bit of Web & Database Design.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*No grant funding received.*

### How we succeed in doing this.

First and foremost, we have to live up to our name.

We've never been wholly reliant on funding, we are affordable and we provide the same high quality service to both the private and third sectors.

Most of our work comes as a result of recommendations.

### Support Calls per Week.

**20 - 30**

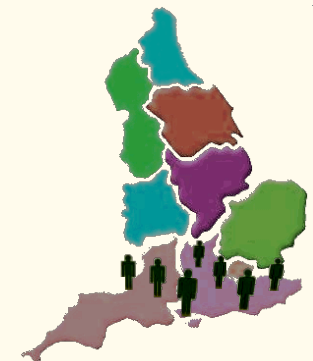


### Future Do's & Don'ts

We mainly focus on what we are good at which is ICT Support.

Development of cloud based computing is the way forward.

### Where we do it.





"Happy Computers is probably the leading provider of training to VCS organisations in London, with over 1,000 VCS clients"



## Happy Computers

Cityside House

40 Adler Street

London

E1 1EE

020 7375 7300

happy@happy.co.uk

www.happycomputers.co.uk

In operation since: 1987

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: 32

(FTE)

Volunteers: 0



<p><b>PRIME SERVICES</b></p> <p>IT Training.</p>	<p>TURNOVER</p> <p><b>£1 million +</b></p>  <p>Income Generating Activities</p> <p><b>0</b></p> <p>Grant Income</p>
--	--

Charged Services

I.T. Training.

Grant funded to provide to the sector

No grant funding received.

A Company Ltd by Guarantee

### How we succeed in doing this.

Our aim is to make learning about IT an enjoyable and involving experience, relevant to how you work.

We have been Gold Standard accredited by the Institute of IT Training for 13 years and shortlisted for IT Training Company of the Year for the last ten years.

### Support Calls per Week.

**30**



### Future Do's & Don'ts

More IT apprenticeships. More work on customising training to our clients needs including short one-to-one sessions.

Don't diversify away from our strength, which is training and understanding how to make learning enjoyable.

### Where we do it.

Predominantly as shown but also across England where asked.





**"3tc is driven by a passion for creating a more inclusive world through the use of ICT"**



# 3tc

3tc House,  
16 Crosby Rd,  
Waterloo,  
Liverpool, L22 0NY  
0151 285 4000  
enquiries@3tc4u.co.uk  
www.3tc4u.co.uk

In operation since: **1990**

## WHAT WE DO

Staff: **10**  
(FTE)  
Volunteers: **1**



<h3>PRIME SERVICES</h3> <p>Technical Support, Web Solutions, Sales and Print &amp; Design Services.</p>	<p>TURNOVER <b>£100-£250k</b></p>  <p>Income Generating Activities      Grant Income</p>
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### Charged Services

*Technical Support, Telephone Support, Maintenance (SLA) Contracts, Training, Website Design, Consultancies, Sales Database Design and more.*

*Grant funded to provide to the sector*

*Policy & Strategy Development Work, Training, Telephone Support and in the past some Accessibility and Legal Compliance work.*

*A Registered Charity and Company Ltd by Guarantee*

### How we succeed in doing this.

We've been around for a number of years and had time to develop and earn a trusted position in the market.

We tailor requirements around our client needs and don't fall back on the easy option of just trying to sell our stuff.

### Support Calls per Week.

# 30

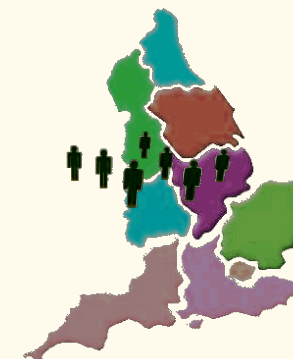


### Future Do's & Don'ts

We will be offering support with tendering and procurement to our clients.

We understand the importance that third sector organisations will need to learn, understand and improve their tendering and procurement skills.

### Where we do it.





## Acknowledgements

This report was overseen and co-written by Andrew Samuel, the Regional ICT Champion for the North East, based at VONNE.

[www.vonne.org.uk](http://www.vonne.org.uk)     [andrew.samuel@vonne.org.uk](mailto:andrew.samuel@vonne.org.uk)

VONNE is the support body for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the North East of England.

Many thanks to the other contributors' to this report;

Carl Chapman     [www.26-01.com](http://www.26-01.com)

Lewis Atkinson     [www.communityitacademy.org](http://www.communityitacademy.org)

Maurice Olum     [www.solumac.com](http://www.solumac.com)

**NAVCA** is the national voice of local support and development organisations in England. They champion voluntary and community action by supporting their members in their work with over 160,000 local charities and community groups. NAVCA believes that voluntary and community action is vital for vibrant and caring communities.

There are nine regionally-based **ICT Champions**. By listening to needs and issues in each region we are developing resources and providing signposting to help organisations use technology more efficiently and effectively. We do not promote technology for its own sake, but believe it must be tailored to reflect people's needs. Nationally we work in an ethical and transparent way to build trust and long-lasting relationships with others to ensure policy and funding developments address the ICT needs of the sector.



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