Volunteer Survey Drop-In Q&A Summary

From the recording at 2pm UK time on 21 September 2022

Diversity in member networks committees

Attendees asked how the response to the survey would directly address a need for more volunteers and an increase in diversity of volunteers.

Recently the process for network committee nominations and ballots have been updated to allow committees to actively highlight gaps in the diversity of the current committee. After the ballot process, if any gaps have not been fulfilled the committee can appoint up to two members (after consultation with the Member Networks Team). The information requested from candidates for network committees has also been made more specific to avoid in-group bias against writing/application styles expected in different cultures.

Diversity in membership could benefit from more innovation on how people are brought in and through promoting the benefits of volunteering

RSC website and Volunteer Hub

Attendees expressed support for the hub as an "excellent idea" to help members find answers to frequently asked questions and to share their experiences.

It would only be open to current volunteers which should help people feel more comfortable to ask questions.

The Volunteer Hub aims to support our volunteers, although since staff are still looking for a platform that will do everything required, it is too early to tell when the Volunteer Hub will be available. There are many networks who use MyRSC for communicating with their members and sharing files so the new platform will need to allow them to continue this.

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook can be used for member engagement. A pair of webinars was run by the RSC a few years ago are still available to view online; a beginners' introduction to social media and a more advanced workshop on how to create a comms plan and schedule posts.

Attendees were concerned that information on the RSC website was difficult to find, leading to further queries from volunteers directly to the Member Networks Team. Almost all of the documents needed for our member networks' activities can be found on our Useful Forms and Documents web page.

Committee meetings and hybrid meetings

Some committee members have expressed reluctance to travel to London for meetings given the lingering pandemic. Anyone experiencing problems in bringing their committee together should contact the team, networks@rsc.org for support.

The limitations of hybrid meetings were discussed. For example, there was evidence of clinically vulnerable people who were also reluctant to travel to London but were not comfortable accessing

virtual events either (for example, due to internet speed or equipment issues). One suggestion was to have two simultaneous physical meetings in different places.

Communication of events

Effective communication of upcoming events to provide network committees enough time to meet and discuss their approach and logistics was discussed.

Dates for upcoming events are found in the Member Networks Newsletter, however it was suggested that some volunteers do not read it. The Newsletter is the Networks Team's main route of communication with all volunteers to avoid sending many individual emails out to volunteers.

The team are currently looking into methods to increase volunteer engagement with the newsletter, for example by encouraging at least one committee member to read the newsletter every month and highlight pertinent items to the other ordinary committee members as needed. Not all members receive the same information in the newsletter as content is included based on their committee, role and location. All officers are requested to scan through the newsletter each month.

A new system for e-alerts is being tested which will go through the RSC membership system and therefore will be sent to all members of the specific network regardless of their marketing email preference. This aims to alleviate the issue of some members not receiving e-alerts and is aiming to be in place by the end of 2022. Further information on the GDPR around this new system will be distributed then.

Overall RSC service

The RSC was praised for its evident ability to work together well. Enquiries sent to the RSC are responded to by the relevant department with helpful advice.