

## Introduction

SAVO (Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations) has been developing Practical Toolkits for Voluntary and Community organisations since 2003, initially in paper format covering 'Health and Safety', 'Policies and Procedures', 'Self-Evaluation and 'Staff Management'.

In 2007 a 'Media Toolkit' our first 'on-line' toolkit was produced in association with BBC Radio Suffolk and we launched [www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk](http://www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk) to host existing and future toolkits.

In July 2009, Infrastructure Network Suffolk (of which SAVO is lead member) won Big Lottery funding for a five year project, which included further development of toolkits and supporting training materials, all of which would be available through our online portal.

In July 2010 the Big Lottery agreed to a funding variation to enable the existing Trustee e-Learning programme ([www.trusteelearning.org](http://www.trusteelearning.org)), originally developed by SAVO with Governance Hub funding, to be included in the toolkit portfolio and kept updated.

The Practical Toolkits portfolio currently includes the following:

- TrusteeLearning (2011)
- Starter Pack Toolkit (2010)
- Media Toolkit
- Risk Assessment Toolkit
- Stress Management Toolkit
- Management Toolkit
- Taking and Presenting Minutes Toolkit
- Health and Safety Toolkit
- Policies and Procedures Toolkit
- Self-Evaluation Toolkit
- Staff

## Monitoring and Evaluation

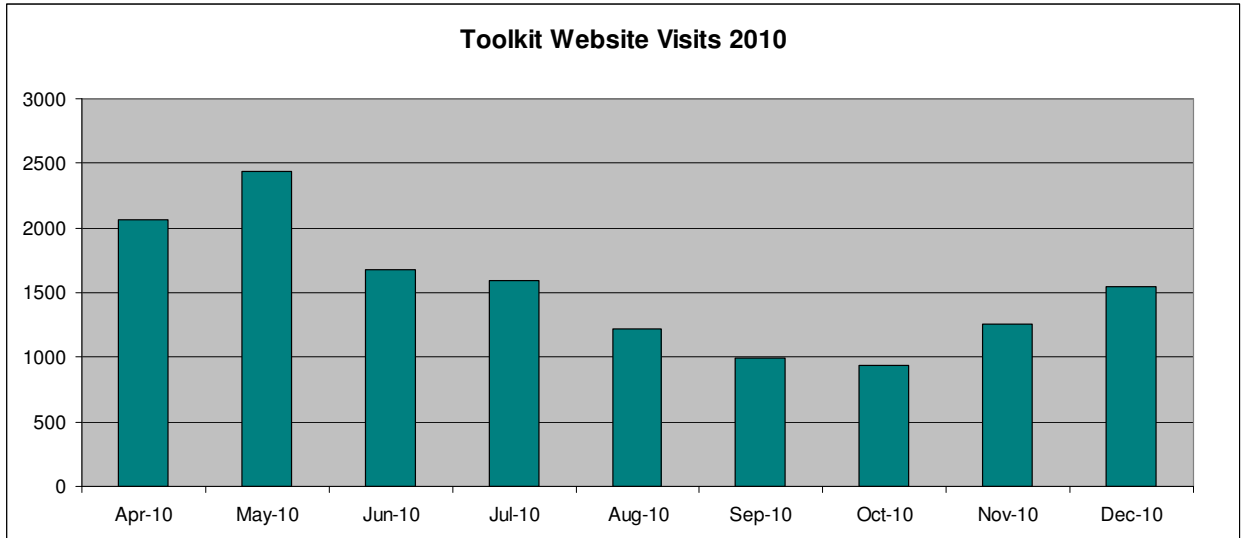
All users who wish to use the toolkits at [www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk](http://www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk) are required to complete a registration form (Name, Organisation, District in Suffolk, email address) so that we can monitor how many people are signing up to the toolkits, and in which Local Infrastructure Partnership area they are based.

It should be noted that on registration there is an option for 'Not in Suffolk', and we have had a considerable number of organisations sign up from organisations around the UK, including CVS's.

Whilst we have not openly advertised the Practical Toolkits outside of Suffolk the website is highly rated on Search Engines and hence attracts a lot of visitors. Unfortunately visitors via Search Engines can gain access to the toolkits without registration.

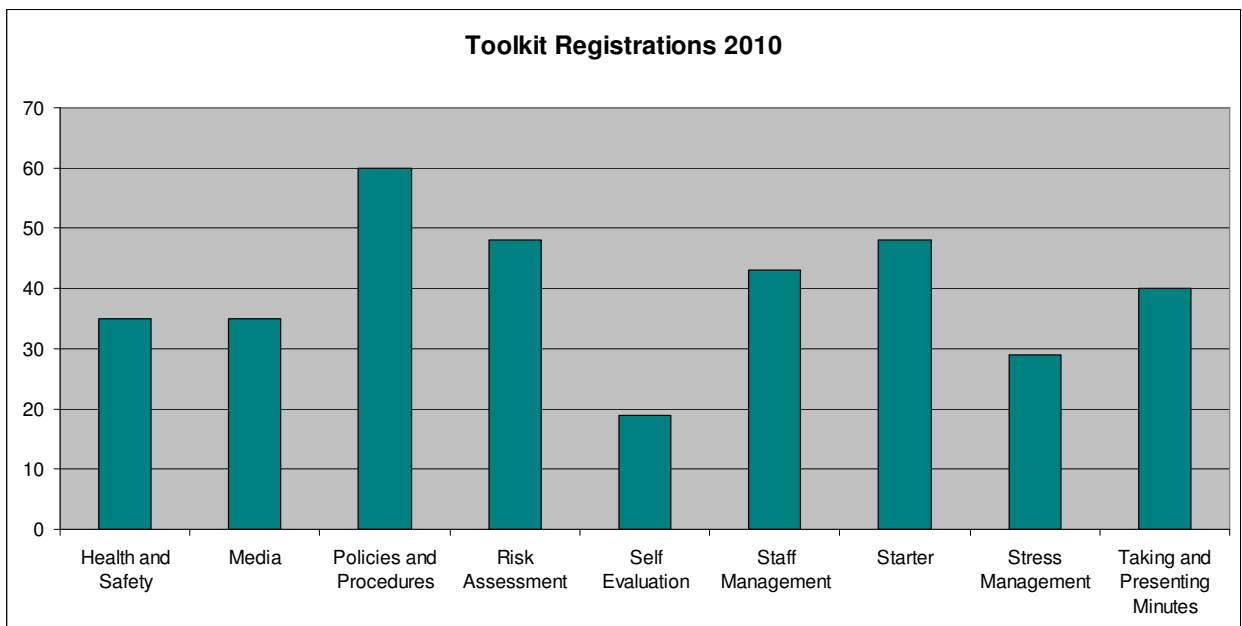
## Website Visits

The table below shows the total number of 'unique visits' to [www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk](http://www.practicaltoolkits.org.uk) (whether they register or not) and reveals that we have had a total of **13,728** unique visitors during 2010.



## Toolkit Registrations

The table below shows the total number of visitors who have registered to use toolkits. This shows a total of **357** registrations.

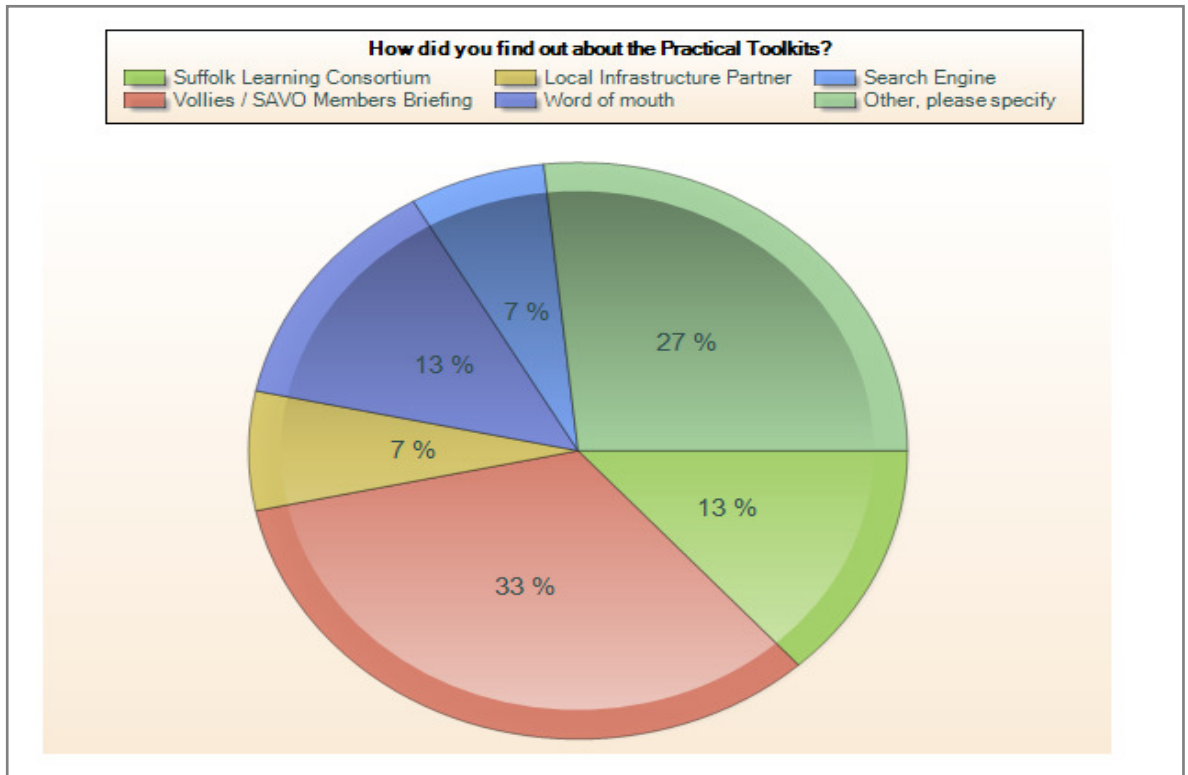


## User Questionnaire

In December 2010 we invited 100 people who had registered to use the toolkits to complete an online questionnaire. Unfortunately only 34 people visited the survey and out of them only 15 replied.

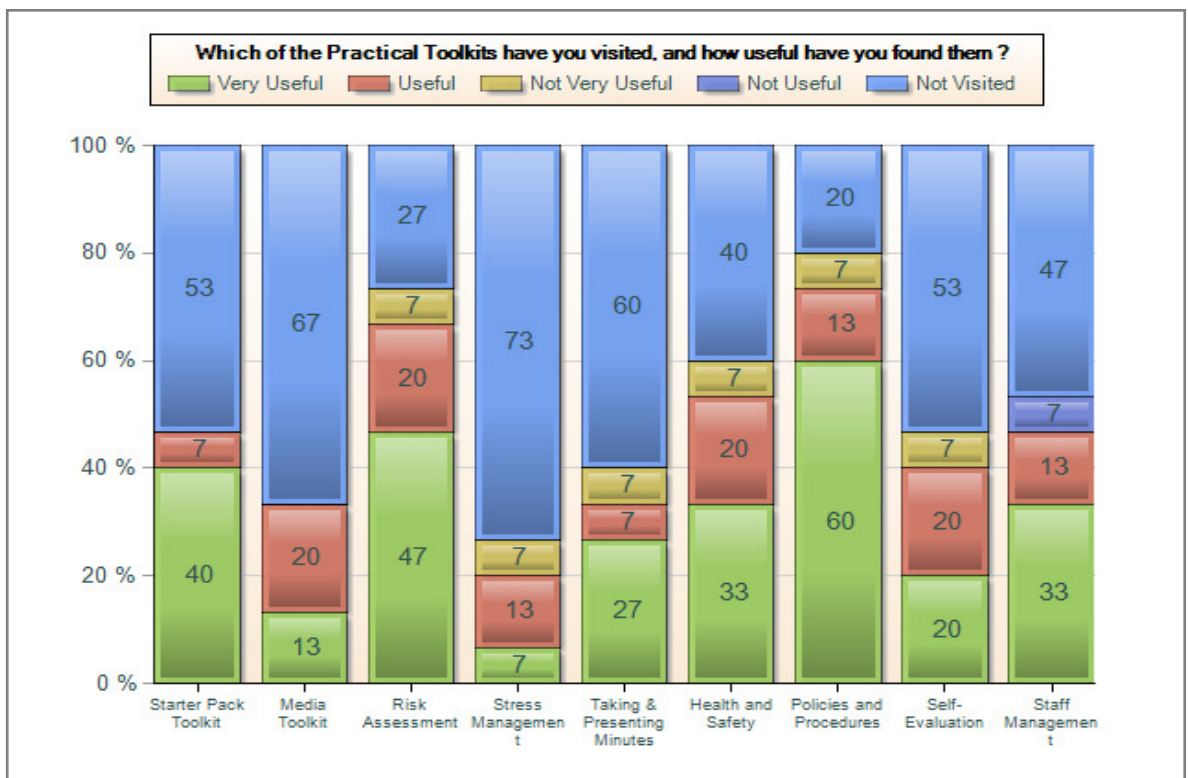
However, we hope that the results (published below) are representative of the many people who are using the Practical Toolkits.

1. How did you find out about the Practical Toolkits?

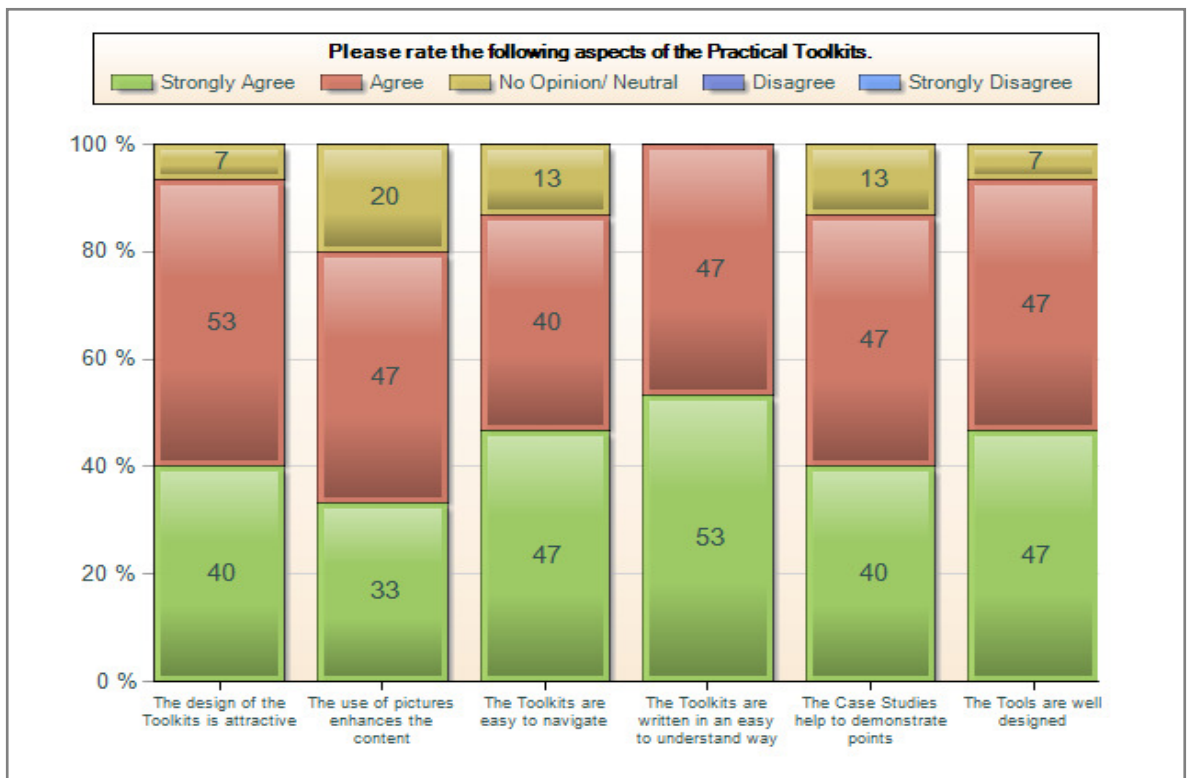


**Other:** Trustee Network, Word of mouth, SAVO Course, Link from SAVO website

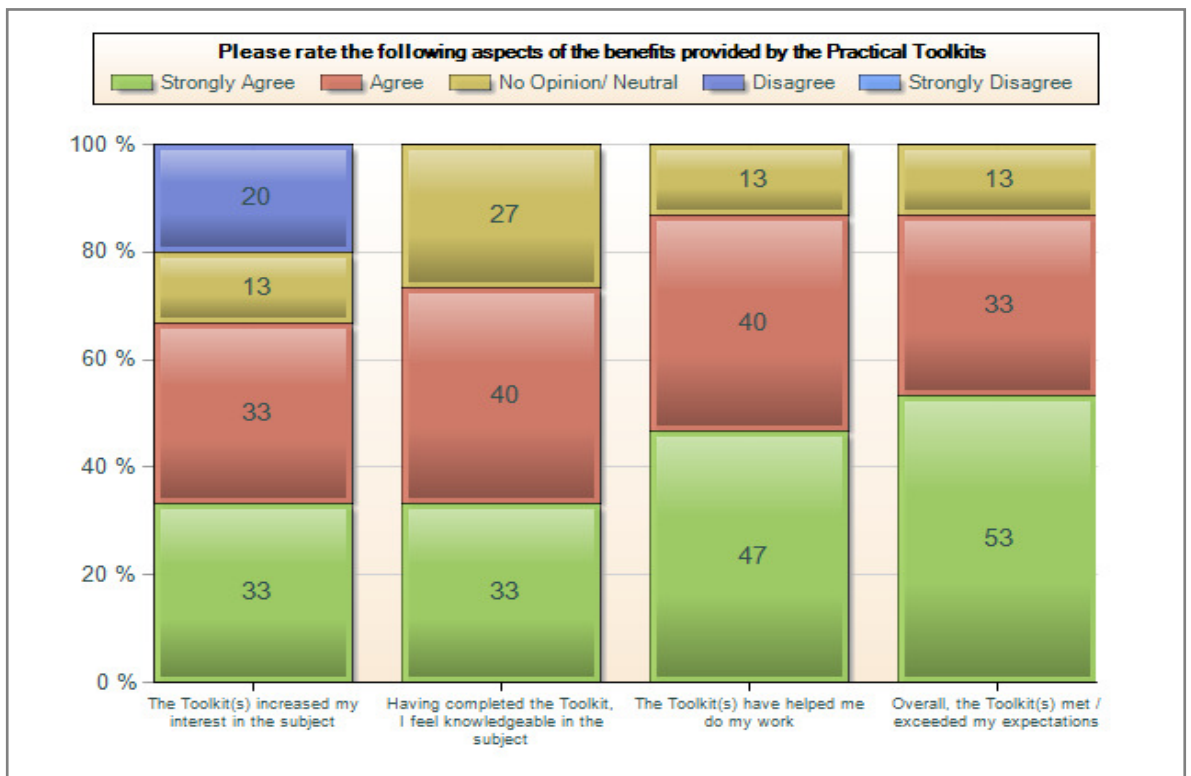
2. Which of the Practical Toolkits have you visited, and how useful have you found them ?



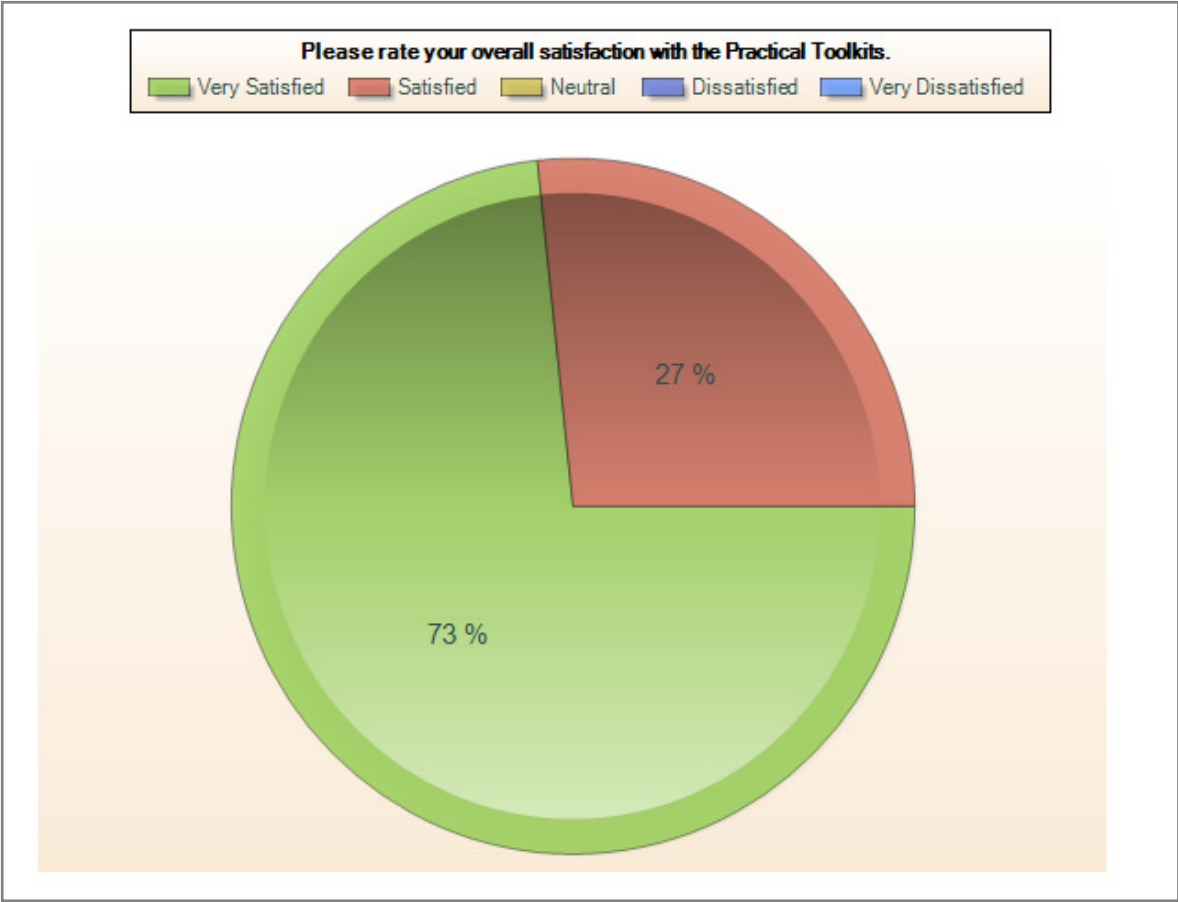
3. Please rate the following aspects of the Practical Toolkits



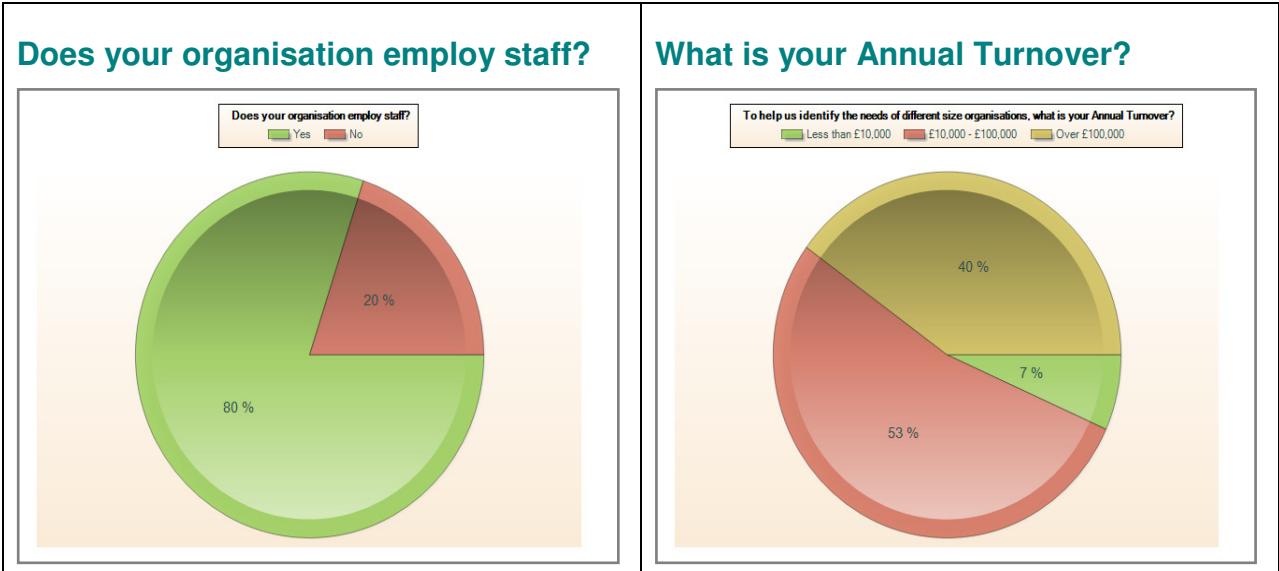
4. Please rate the following aspects of the benefits provided by the Practical Toolkits



5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Practical Toolkits.



8/9. Information about your organisation



**6. Please list then describe any positive and / or negative factors about the Toolkit(s).**

- It is very helpful to find a source of help and information, that can be accessed when ever needed and can be worked through in my own time. If I am for instance writing a report on risk assessment I can access the relevant tool kit as I prepare the report.
- The toolkits were longer than I expected. I found the policies and procedures and other downloadable documents most helpful
- Easy to use and give information / learning at a realistic level for non-professional users. Recognise that many trustees and volunteers start with an interest in the work of the charity and then are 'persuaded' to join the trustees when it becomes apparent that they could have something to offer - but they know little about running a small VCS organisation.
- The info within is very descriptive and helpful
- Very comprehensive
- All positive, no negatives hence my responses elsewhere vis-a-vis this survey
- An excellent resource for management of change. I have used it in working (Honorary) both for my learned association and my choir, both of which are registered charities.
- Reassured me that we were fulfilling our legal obligations
- Great to have models online from a reliable source
- I've used them all except the starter pack because we're well established. However, it highlight where we needed to update, gave us an easy format to follow, useful to know it was from SAVO and if I had any problems (which I didn't) but I could contact someone for support.

**7. What other Toolkit would you like to see?**

- Equality Act
- Possibly an overview on being a trustee
- Communication skills
- Social Media
- These provide a good grounding at a realistic level - expansion could make the whole thing daunting and perhaps put potential users 'off'
- Recruiting Governors
- Fundraising
- Succession Planning esp. re Trustees (e.g. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) and Marketing / Promotion of my Charity's 'Image'.
- Trusteeship
- Self Evaluation
- Something up to date around evaluation / outcomes / monitoring - difficult as every organisation does it differently but some basic principles and guidelines

## Conclusion

**Monitoring and Evaluation** has highlighted a significant difference between the number of people registering to use the toolkits (357) and the number of unique visitors to the website (13,728), which can be due to a number of reasons including:

- Our Local Infrastructure Partners have direct access to the toolkits without registration
- People can access the toolkits via Search Engines without registration

It is therefore probable that we have significantly more people using the toolkits!

**Information Overload** is becoming more of a problem in trying to get people to engage with new services, particularly those which are delivered via the web. We therefore held a trial workshop in the Waveney area of Suffolk where we demonstrated the Practical Toolkits to a group of Voluntary and Community organisations.

Following the success of this workshop we are intending to hold further workshops across the county, wherever possible at existing events, to fully publicise the content and value of the Practical Toolkits.

**Sustainability** - with the Practical Toolkits being accessed by organisations across the whole of the country we are hoping that there may be the opportunity to customise / rebrand the toolkits for other 'umbrella' organisations to offer to their members.

A final quote received via our questionnaire:

*"The value lies precisely in the fact that they are updated and by a reliable organisation, so you can always trust them above point-in-time offerings, however good the source. For me, these toolkits are first port of call. If the funding for maintenance stops, the toolkits will become progressively less useful."*


**Simon Weeks**  
Chairman, Cookpole Energy Action  
Treasurer, Wenhaston Girls' Choir


### **Simon Waldron, Information Officer**

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