



“I started street fundraising in my early 20s and I am now 39 and I can honestly say that street fundraising was my training ground in terms of becoming a human being with empathy, morality, inspiration and an intense desire to do good in this world.”



Streets ahead

Mapping the career transition from street fundraising into charity fundraising departments

Findings of a research project by Flow Caritas

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About Flow Caritas

Flow Caritas is one of the UK's leading dedicated charity and not-for-profit recruitment consultancies, celebrating 10 successful years. We are driven by our company mission 'to be the most innovative and exciting recruitment experience'.

Our three specialist teams recruit for permanent, temporary and face-to-face roles for some of the UK's largest charities. With our expert knowledge of the sector we have helped to launch successful F2F operations for Shelter and the British Red Cross, and because we believe that in-house F2F should be supported and nurtured to ensure its sustainability, we recently appointed a F2F Development Manager to assist our charity clients with growing their own in-house operations.

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1 Introduction

In the 10 years since I set up Flow Caritas, I have come across increasing numbers of charity fundraisers who began their third sector career working as street fundraisers.

This has brought new blood into the sector and I think it will help to dispel that pernicious myth that 'chuggers' don't have real jobs or care about the charities they work for.

But it's one thing to have a gut feeling about how fundraising might be changing based on your own observations and another to have firm evidence for that based on researching the career histories of a large number of fundraisers who have entered the profession through the street fundraising route.

This was our motivation for undertaking the Streets Ahead research project, with two objectives:

Firstly, we wanted to map the transition from street to fundraising department to provide clear advice and guidance to anyone considering street fundraising as an entry-level job to a career in the charity sector. Many young people consider a career in the charity sector but aren't sure whether replying to an online advert for street fundraisers is the best way to go about it. This report aims to provide the advice and guidance they need.

Secondly, we wanted to raise the professional profile of street fundraisers and contribute to their recognition as fully-fledged members of the fundraising profession alongside the likes of individual giving, trusts, community and so forth.

There is a continuous line between working on the street and working in a charity fundraising department. It's not a sudden jump across a great divide between a 'proper' or 'real' charity job and the supposedly transitory position of being a street fundraiser.

This is particularly so now that most street



fundraising is done by in-house teams rather than agencies.

The findings of this project demonstrate that street fundraising has been responsible for developing a new generation of passionate and committed fundraisers, people who were unlikely to have established careers as charity fundraisers if they had not started out on the street.

Our Streets Ahead report proves that street fundraising is a bona fide entry point for a career in charity fundraising and, for those fundraisers who want to treat it as such, an unofficial 'apprenticeship'. This project has told us that street fundraising is not the equivalent of a bar job – for those people who are using it to learn about the sector and develop their careers, it is something that helps them to discover and match their values to their career and learn about the culture of the industry from the ground up.

Once the fundraising sector recognises this it will bring enormous benefits. We will be able to provide careers advice and guidance for new entrants to the profession arriving via street fundraising. We can then provide bespoke professional development for those street fundraisers who want to move in to office-based fundraising, perhaps even fast-tracking their careers. And at those times when street fundraisers do come under public criticism, I think we might see more readiness to come to their aid since fundraisers will be defending 'one of their own'.

As street fundraising becomes a recognised entry point for a career in charity fundraising, it can no longer be dismissed as an adjunct to the fundraising profession. It's actually the source of some of the best and brightest young fundraisers in the sector.

It would be a terrible missed opportunity not to welcome them with open arms into the fundraising profession and give them every assistance in developing their careers.

Rory White
Founder and Director
Flow Caritas

Street fundraising has been responsible for developing a new generation of passionate and committed fundraisers

2 Executive Summary

The Streets Ahead project researched the career histories of former street fundraisers who had moved into working in charity fundraising departments.

Our aim was twofold:

1. To provide careers advice for people considering a job in the charity sector and wondering whether street fundraising is a good entry point for them.
2. To provide evidence that street fundraising is a genuine arm of the fundraising profession and a bona fide entry point for a career in fundraising.

Eighty-two former street fundraisers completed the survey.

Key findings (see section 4, p7, and section 5, p14)

Overall, respondents rated their street career very highly, scoring the following statements on a scale of 1-7 (where seven is most highly rated):

How useful were the skills you learnt on the street to your subsequent career? **5.3**

How useful overall was the time you spent as a street fundraiser to your subsequent career? **5.6**

How easy was it to move from street fundraising into a fundraising department? **4.6**

How passionate are you about being a fundraiser? **5.7**

How passionate are you about the cause you work for? **6.3**

Respondents rated the usefulness of the following aspects of their street career to getting a job in a charity fundraising department (rated on a scale of 1-7):

Give examples of work at interview **5.4**

Because of the skills acquired **5.3**

People management skills **4.9**

Understanding of professional standards and regulation **4.5**

Grounding in the 'culture' of charities **4.0**

Made some useful contacts **3.5**

It didn't help **2.0**

It made it harder **1.8**

They also rated the skills they learnt on the street as very useful (on a scale of 1-7) to their subsequent charity fundraising careers:

Confident about asking for donations **6.0**

Get used to rejection **5.8**

Making the elevator pitch **5.4**

Intuitive feel for most likely donors **5.3**

Intuitive feel for timing of an ask **5.2**

Didn't learn any subsequently useful skills as a street fundraiser **1.7**

Obtaining managerial and leadership experience is extremely important to developing a subsequent successful charity fundraising career:

74 per cent of survey respondents had been promoted to team leader roles.

45.5 per cent of survey respondents had been promoted to office-based roles.

Other findings of note:

- Of all respondents, the former creatives and performing artistes (musicians, actors and so forth) are the highest performing segment. They rated the skills and experience they obtained on the street more highly, progressed further in their careers and are more 'passionate' about their jobs.
- Street fundraisers have been moving into fundraising departments more quickly since 2010, with the majority doing so after less than a year's service on the streets (compared to a third of all respondents). They are moving on having spent less time acquiring management skills either through team leading on the street or in an office environment.
- Most former street fundraisers have gone on to work in direct marketing and individual giving. Those respondents who did not rate their street career very highly are more likely to have gone into community fundraising, trusts, events and corporate.

Careers advice (see section 6, p19)

- Ensure this is the right entry point for you: do you have a direct marketing bent or do you think you are more likely to be inspired by organising community events or talking to big gift philanthropists?
- Look to spend at least a year as a street fundraiser, learning and honing your skills.
- Get managerial (i.e team leader) and office experience.
- Make contacts and learn about the 'culture' of charities.
- Consider supplementing your skills through training, interning or volunteering.
- Be prepared to work hard.
- Enjoy it.

Conclusions and recommendations (see section 7, p23)

- Street fundraising is a bona fide entry point to a career in charity fundraising.
- Street fundraising should be promoted as an entry point to a career in charity fundraising to university graduates and other job seekers.
- Street fundraising is and should be recognised as a valid part of the fundraising profession and training and continuous professional development resources should be developed to support street fundraisers as they progress into charity fundraising departments.

3 Methodology

The research took the form of a self-selecting 33-question survey on SurveyMonkey, followed by five in-depth questionnaires to, or interviews with, selected participants.

By searching LinkedIn and our database of candidates, we identified just over 60 potential participants to this survey. We promoted the survey through emails to target participants, a PR campaign, social media and via the PFRA, who kindly agreed to notify their members that the survey was taking place.

As a result, 185 people opened the survey. However, as the survey was only open to former street fundraisers who had then got jobs in charities outside of street fundraising, we had two control questions at the start aimed at eliminating anyone who didn't meet these two criteria. Ninety-five potential participants were eliminated this way meaning 90 started the survey, with 82 completing it (though some people skipped questions, so percentages in this report relate to the percentage who answered that particular question¹).

The survey contained a mix of yes/no questions and seven-point Likert scales. Having run a full report of all responses, we then segmented the data and compared these segments against the baseline averages in order to identify any trends.

Limitations to the methodology

There are of course limitations to this methodology: principally that it is self-selecting, with the potential to lead to biased, non-representative results. That most of the fundraisers who responded to the survey were positive about their street experience could be viewed as evidence of this self-selecting bias. However, there was by no means any

guarantee that respondents would have been so positive. It might have been the case that large numbers of disgruntled former street fundraisers would take this opportunity to tell us exactly how much they hated their time on the street.

They did not. And although when we started this survey, we hoped they would not, we had no way of knowing this would be the case.

Another possible limitation is the small sample size, which inevitably leads to smaller sample sizes when segmented. However, we believe that what the data reveals is strongly indicative of actual trends, even if with a larger sample, the percentages might have varied.

We have not run significance testing on the results but we may do so in future iterations of this survey.

Follow up questionnaire

We would like to thank the following for completing an in-depth follow-up questionnaire:

Paul Butland, Early Retention and Training Manager, Shelter

Sam Butler, Communications and Acquisitions Manager, St John Ambulance

Christian Dapp, Direct Marketing Manager, Brain Research Trust

Robbie McIntyre, Humanitarian Information and Communications Officer, Save the Children Fund

Katherine Payne, Campaigns Officer, Royal London Society for the Blind

Quotes from our interviewees (and a few from the survey itself where comment boxes were provided) are included throughout this report.

By searching LinkedIn and our database of candidates, we identified just over 60 potential participants to this survey

¹The number of people who answered each question is indicated by n= throughout the report, e.g. n=82).

4 Baseline findings

This section contains the average, baseline findings for all respondents, against which we compared the segmented data (s5).

Fig 4.1
When did respondents first enter the charity sector as street fundraisers? (n=90)

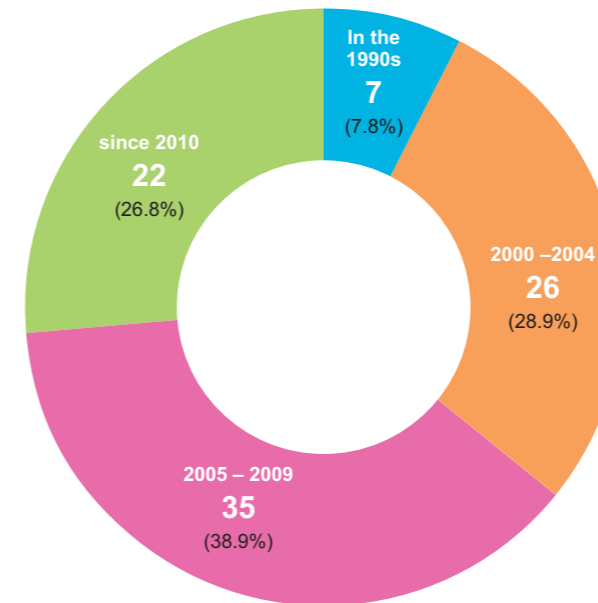
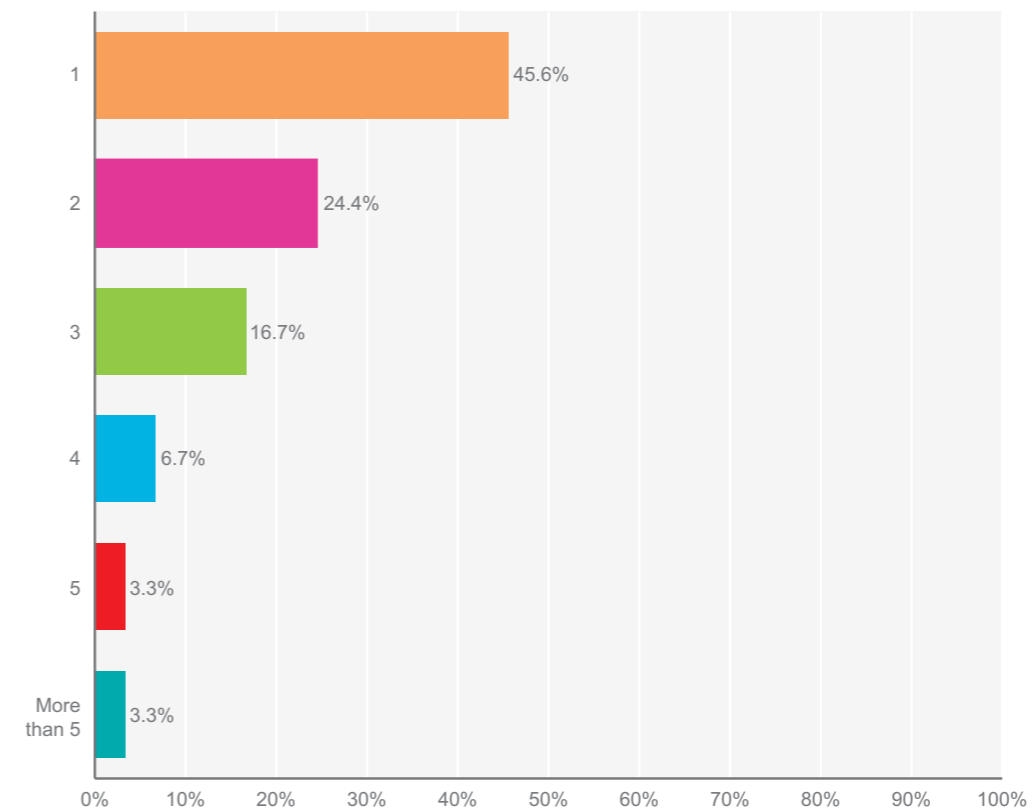


Fig 4.2
How many street fundraising agencies or in-house teams have respondents worked for before getting an office-based job at a charity? (n=90)



Time spent working in street fundraising before moving on (n=90)

Time spent (in months) working in street fundraising was fairly evenly spread across the categories.

Fig 4.3



The average amount of time someone spent working for agencies or in-house teams before moving on to an office-based fundraising job at a charity was three years and four months.

Team leader and office-based roles (n=89)

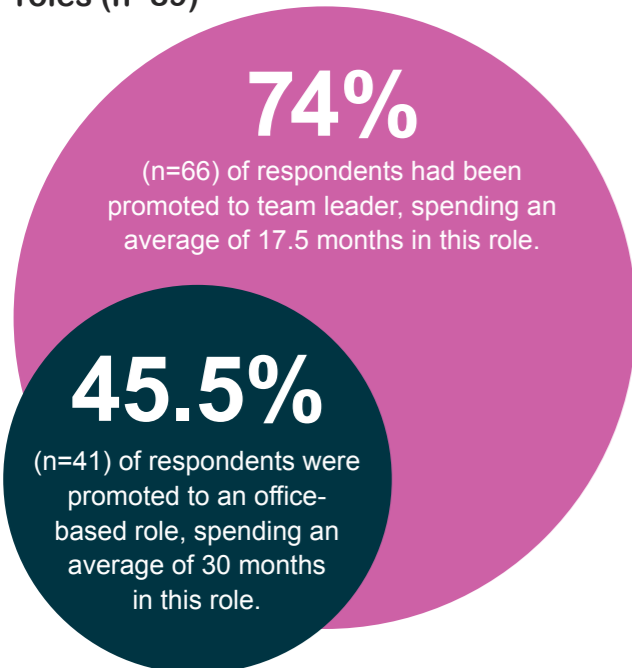


Fig 4.4 Proportion of respondents with managerial roles in street fundraising

Subsequent charity roles (n=88)

Former street fundraisers have worked in all areas of fundraising but are concentrated in direct marketing, individual giving and donor acquisition and retention.

Fig 4.5 Breakdown of subsequent charity roles by type of fundraising

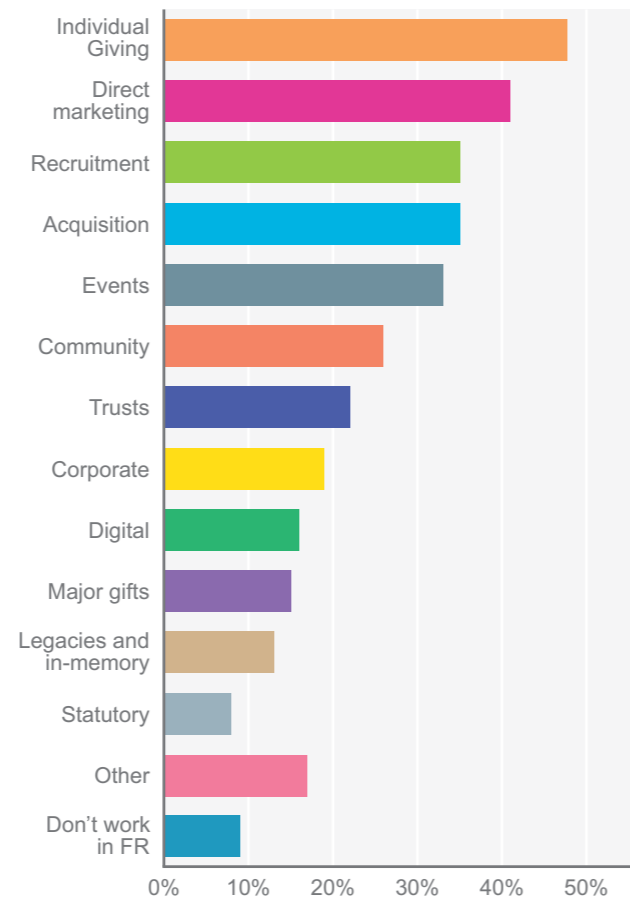
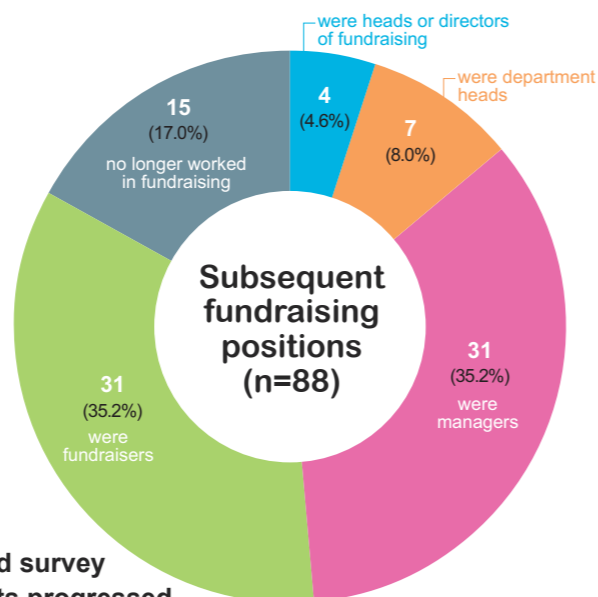


Fig 4.5 How far had survey respondents progressed in their subsequent charity careers?



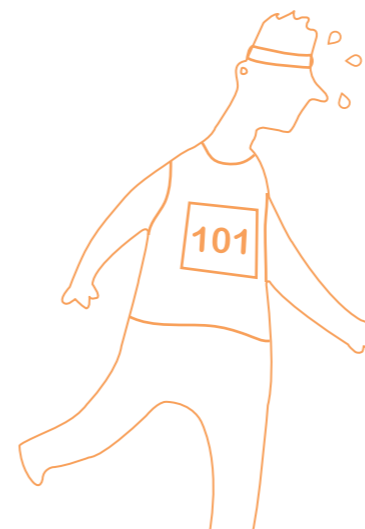
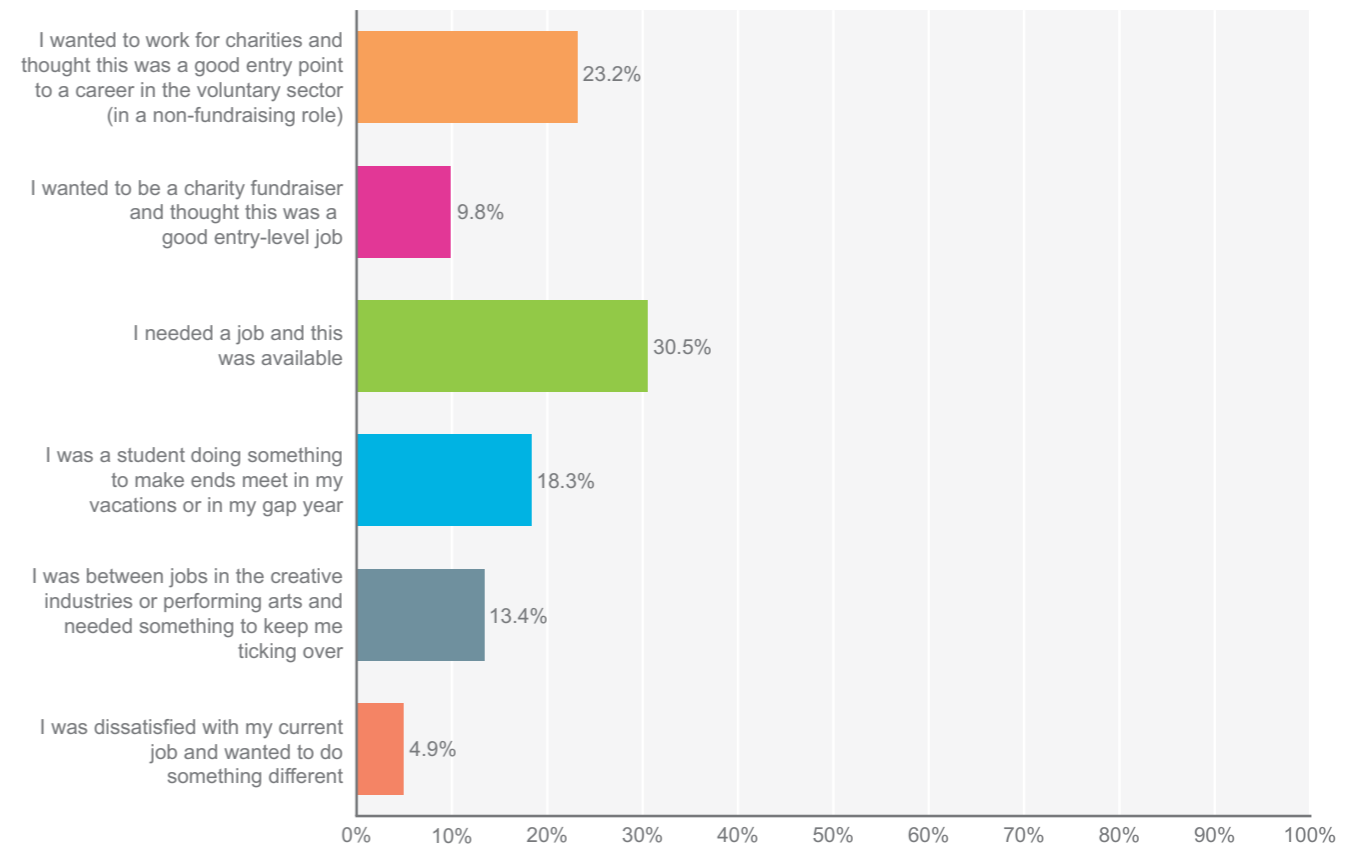
Motivations for becoming a street fundraiser (n=82)

The most common reason why people became street fundraisers was that they needed a job and street fundraising was available (n=25, 30.5 per cent). Twenty-three per cent (n=19) thought that becoming a street fundraiser would help them to work in the charity sector *per se* but only 9.8 per

cent (n=8) became street fundraisers specifically because they thought this was a good entry-level job for a career in charity fundraising.

Eleven people (13.4 per cent) took the job because they were between positions in the creative industries or performing arts; while 15 respondents (18.3 per cent) were students who needed a job during their holidays or gap year.

Fig 4.7 What prompted participants to become a street fundraiser?



The most common reason why people became street fundraisers was that they needed a job and street fundraising was available

How long it took respondents to realise they wanted a fundraising career

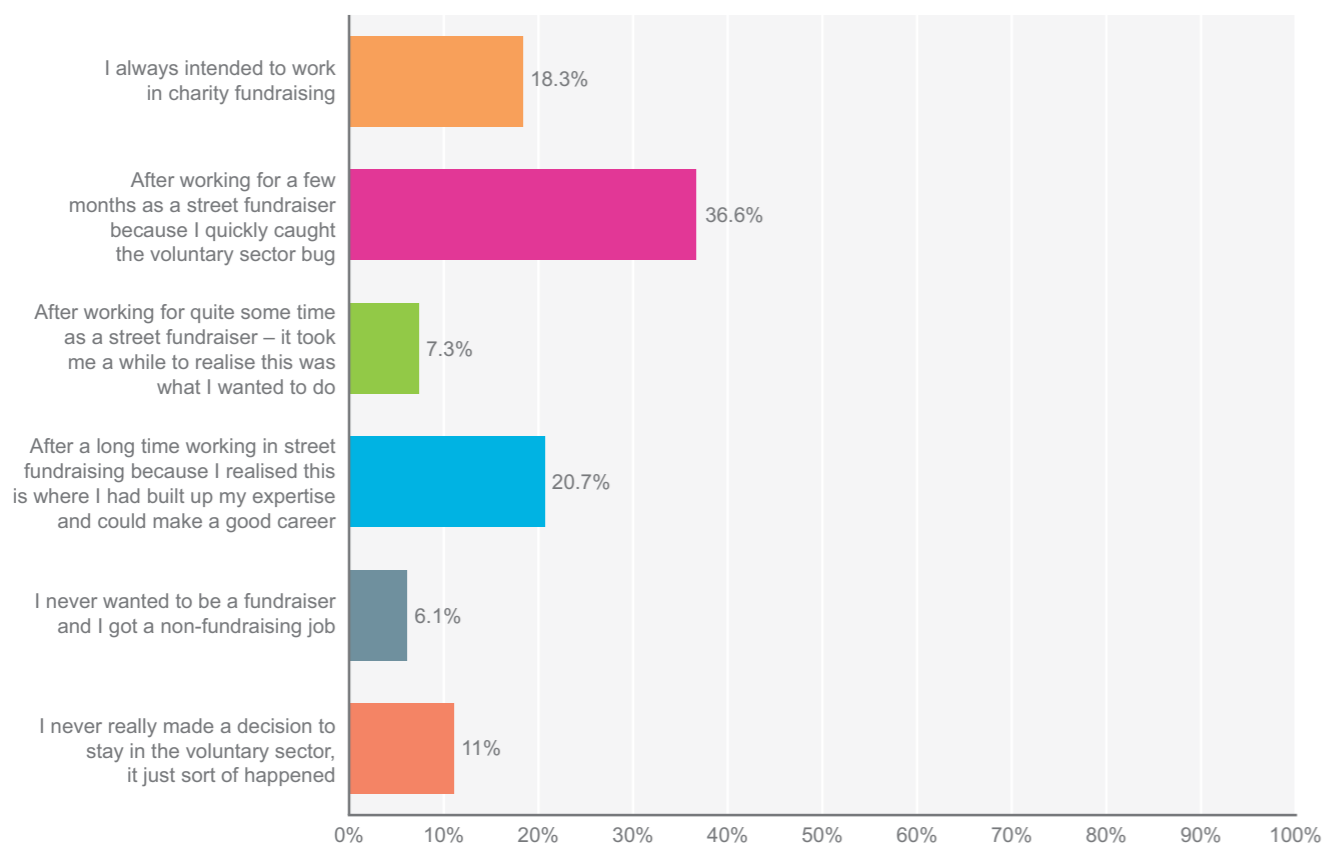
Most people (n=30, 36.6 per cent) decided they wanted to pursue a career in fundraising after working for only a “few months” as a street fundraiser, followed by 17 (20.7 per cent) who didn’t realise this was their vocation until having worked as a street fundraiser for a “long time”.²

It seems that, unless you ‘always intended’ to have a career in charity fundraising (15 people – 18.3 per cent – said that they did in response to this question, which is actually at odds with the 9.8 per

cent who said they thought street fundraising was a good entry level job – see Fig 4.7), you are either immediately grabbed by a career in fundraising, or it takes a long time for a career to take shape and to realise that this is what you want to do.

Only 14 of the 82 people (17 per cent) completing this part of the survey thought they would have gone on to work in the charity sector even if they had not started in street fundraising. Had they never been fundraisers, the main occupations would have been commercial sales, marketing or advertising, and the creative industries and media.

Fig 4.8
How long did it take people to realise they wanted a fundraising career?



I learnt that rejection was never personal unless you made it personal. As an actor I think I already had a strong capacity for rejection, so learning that a ‘no’ meant no was not difficult”

²Respondents were given the options of a ‘few months’, ‘quite some time’ and a ‘long time’, as well as ‘always intended to work in fundraising’. We decided to keep these time intervals quite vague so that respondents could interpret this for themselves. This was better than giving options of, say, six months, six months to a year, as we felt it better to gauge a sense of what people considered to be a short or long time: 12 months might have been a long time to someone who didn’t like the experience but a short time to someone who did.

The usefulness of a street fundraising career (n=82)

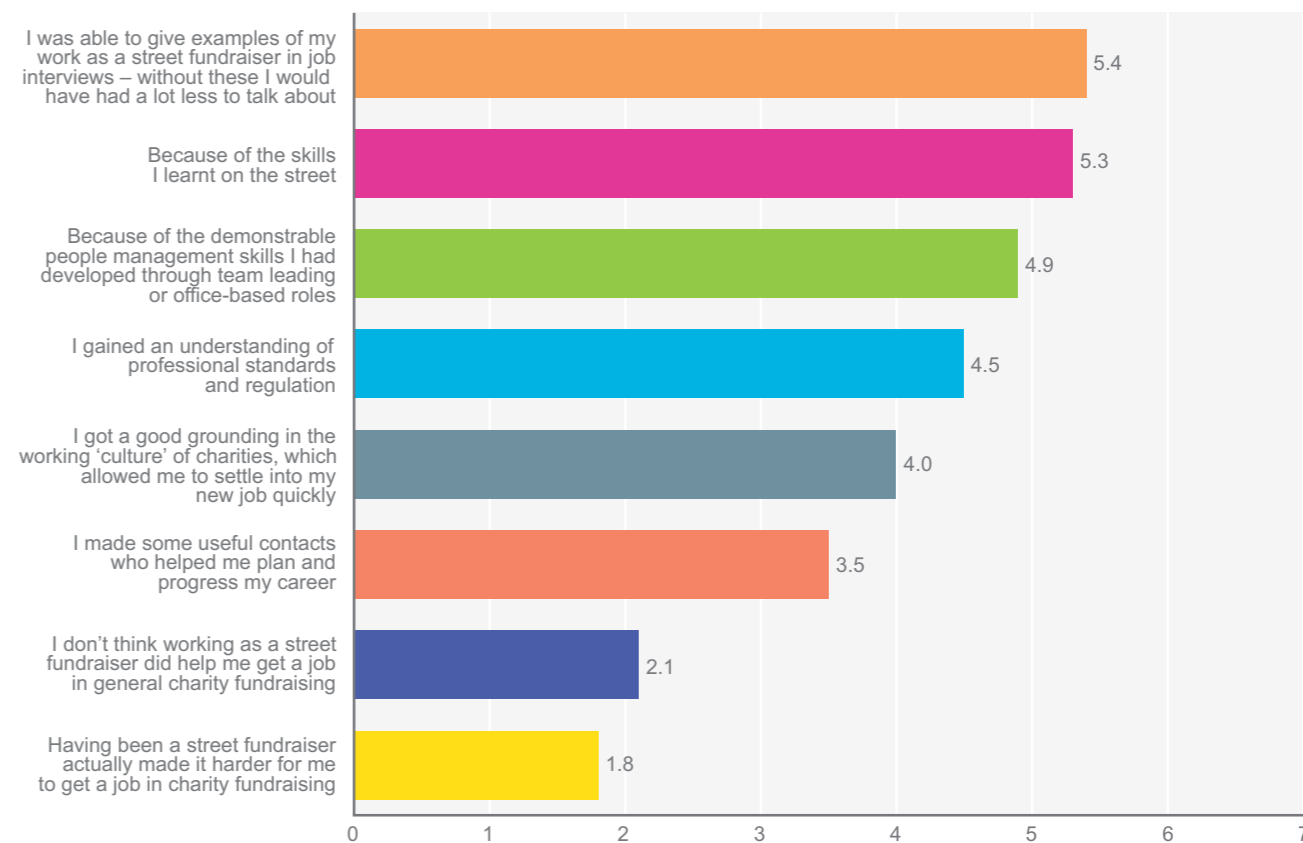
There is no doubt that, averaged across all respondents, time spent as a street fundraiser served as a good training ground for, and helped people forge and then develop careers in, wider charity fundraising.

Respondents say that being a street fundraiser allowed them to present examples of their work at job interviews (rated 5.4 on a Likert scale from 1-7), with 64.5 per cent giving this a rating of 6 or 7.

People management skills learnt on the job also scored highly at 4.9 (remember, 74 per cent of respondents had gone on to become team leaders); while gaining an understanding of professional standards (4.5) and of the ‘culture’ of the charity sector (4.0) also score above the midpoint.

Not many people agreed with the proposition that working as a street fundraiser did not help them to get a wider charity fundraising job in any way. This scores an average of 2.1 with 55 people (67 per cent) giving it the lowest rating of 1.

Fig 4.9
What was it about being a street fundraiser that helped respondents to get a job in a fundraising department (rated from 1 to 7)

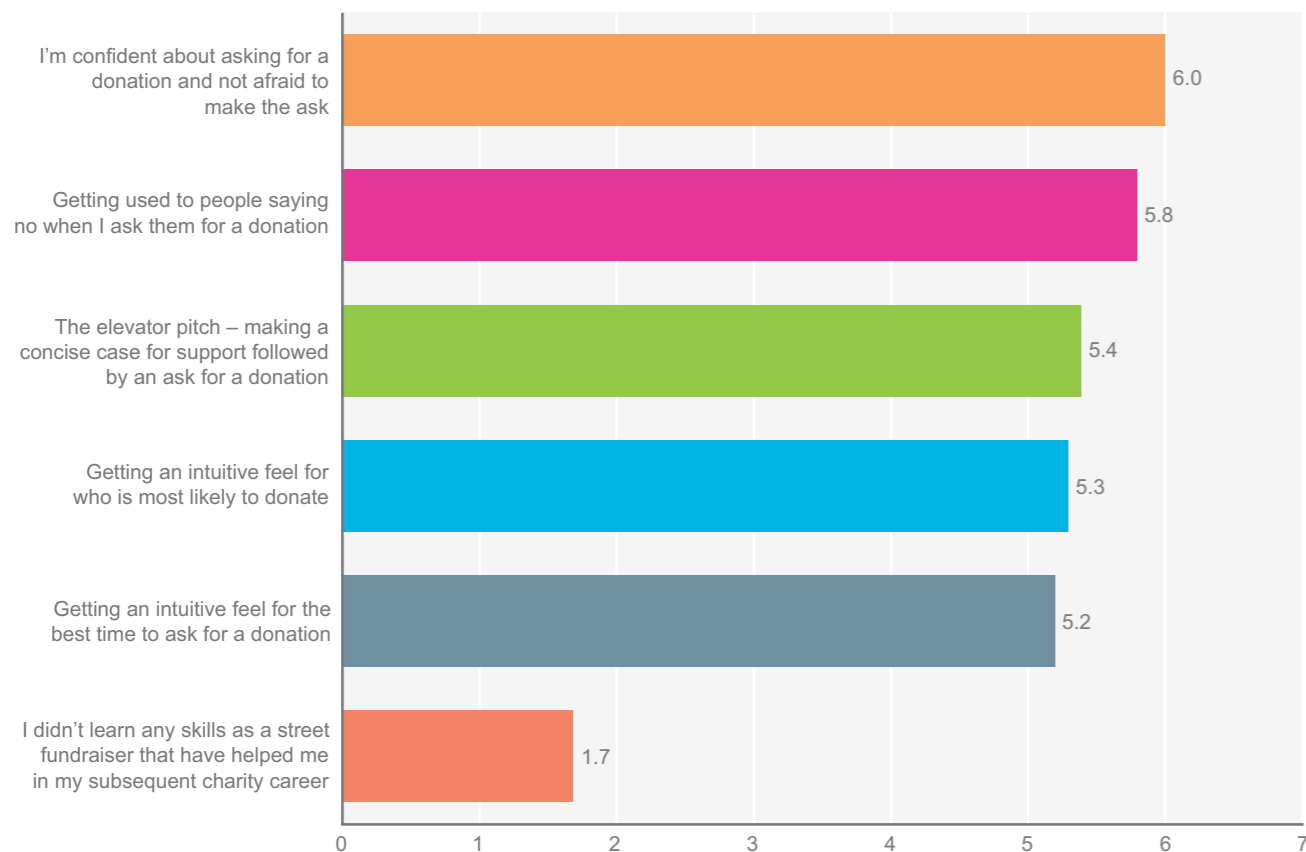


“I was a rubbish public speaker before becoming a street fundraiser. I hated standing up in front of people. But this gave me the opportunity to practise what I was saying to a ‘throwaway’ audience. Those skills definitely helped me to convince people to come on board [to the international development charity this interviewee has set up]. They gave me the confidence to tell my story.”

Passion – for the cause and profession

We asked respondents how ‘passionate’ they were about the causes they worked for and how passionate they felt about actually being a fundraiser. We embarked on this project before the Institute of Fundraising began its Proud to be a Fundraiser campaign. But even so, we could tell there was ‘something in the air’ this year about fundraisers’ attitudes to their profession, so we wanted to include a question that could explore this idea. Asking how ‘passionate’ people felt about the job they do has given a good insight into this subject, as the detailed findings in section 5 show.

Fig 4.10
How useful were the skills learnt on the street to a subsequent fundraising career (rated from 1 to 7)?



“Being a street fundraiser gives a wealth of material to deal with the types of questions you get asked at standard job interviews – you know, those ‘give us an example of when you...’ type questions. As a street fundraiser, you’d have to have very little imagination if you couldn’t think of any situations you’d encountered that would fit the bill.”

“Working on the street forces you to quickly gain an understanding of how to pitch, and what people will respond to. In your future career you will be able to bring to the table much needed personal experience about who gives, and to what, and add value to the huge amounts of data that exists on the subject.”



The skills learnt as a street fundraiser were also regarded as being very useful in subsequent fundraising careers.

All of the skills listed in Fig 4.10 score a baseline average of more than 5, with confidence in asking for donations scoring just over 6. For all of these skills, more than 50 per cent of respondents awarded a rating of 6 or 7.

The overall usefulness of time spent as a street fundraiser to their subsequent careers is rated as 5.6 (out of 7), with respondents scoring how easy it was (identifying positions, job interviews etc) to get to a general fundraising job as 4.6.

Finally, the generation of fundraisers who entered the profession through street fundraising are passionate about both the causes they work for (6.3) and about being a fundraiser (5.7).

However, despite these high scores, not all

respondents see their street fundraising careers as having been worthwhile. Six respondents said they didn't learn any skills as a street fundraiser that helped them in their subsequent careers, and that being a street fundraiser actually made it harder to get on in their careers (they rated this as 6 or 7). Various aspects of their street careers were rated poorly by large minorities of respondents. For example, 20.7 per cent (n=17) rated the usefulness of people management skills as 1 or 2.

We explore some possible explanations for this in the next section.

These caveats notwithstanding, we have no hesitation in stating that street fundraising has brought in and developed a new generation of passionate, committed and skillful fundraisers, many of whom might have been lost to the charity sector if they had never become street fundraisers.

Fig 4.11
Ratings for fundraisers' attitudes to their street fundraising career

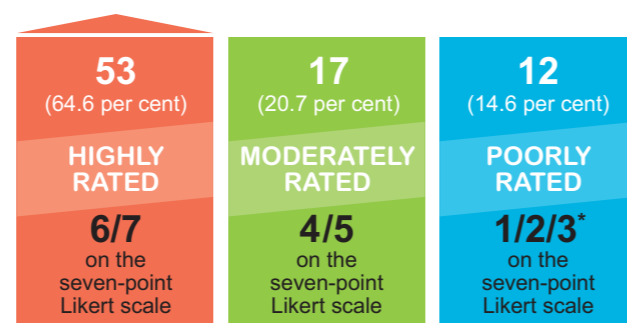


5 Detailed findings

We identified several factors that correlate with how useful people rated their street fundraising experiences and how their subsequent departmental fundraising career has developed.

- There is a correlation between rating the usefulness of street fundraising highly (see Fig 5.1) and having taken on a management role as a team leader (83 per cent compared to the baseline of 74 per cent), or office role (60 per cent compared to 46 per cent baseline average).
- A high rating also correlates with a successful career progression, with three of the four fundraising directors and six of the seven department heads falling into this category.
- And those who rated their street fundraising career highly are slightly more passionate about their cause and being a fundraiser than the average response for all respondents – the baseline findings outlined in section 4.
- Those who rated their careers highly had also stayed in street fundraising longer with 47 per cent having a street career extending past three years (compared to the baseline of 33.5 per cent).

Fig 5.1
How useful was time spent in street fundraising to a subsequent fundraising career? (n=82)



* (i.e. anyone who scored their experience below the mid-point of the scale)

Around half of these (23 per cent) stayed for longer than five years (the baseline average is 17.9 per cent).

Skills acquired in a street fundraising career

Across the board, people who rate their street career highly also rate the individual skills they acquired highly too. They rate their people

management skills (5.6 compared to 4.9) and are more confident at making the ask (6.4 compared to 6.0) and the elevator pitch (5.9 compared to 5.4) in particular. They also received a better grounding in the culture of the charity sector and have a better understanding of standards.

Fundraisers who rate their career highly are more likely to have worked in direct marketing and individual giving.

No correlations

There are no apparent correlations between rating your street career highly and the reason why you became a street fundraiser, nor when you decided you were going to make fundraising your career. When we segmented the data to explore these avenues, we found that the results didn't differ greatly from the average responses for the entire dataset (the baseline findings).

Other findings

Earlier transition into fundraising departments since 2010

It has been much easier for people who started as a street fundraiser since 2010 to transition into fundraising departments. More than 50 per cent got charity jobs after less than a year working in F2F,

and a third in less than six months – this compares to the baseline average of 32.2 per cent of people moving into wider fundraising after a year on the streets (and the 16.7 per cent who managed that after just six months). During the current decade, fundraisers have been moving out of street fundraising into charity departments much sooner than they had done previously (only 28.6 per cent of fundraisers who began their careers in the period 2005-09 moved on in under a year).

The class of 2010 onwards are less likely to have taken on a team leader (59 per cent compared to 74 per cent) or office-based role, but that's probably because they weren't around long enough.

Of course, they are now in more junior roles at their charities – two-thirds listed their role as 'fundraiser' (as opposed to the other options of manager, department head or fundraising director) compared to around one third for the entire surveybase – but that is likely to be because they haven't had time to get promoted.

Former creatives and artistes make great fundraisers

Our star performers are those fundraisers who began their charity sector career as a street fundraiser while between jobs in the creative industries or performing arts.

They have progressed further in their careers –

Discussion – why do some street fundraisers gravitate to DM and others to trusts and community?

Perhaps not surprisingly, the better you are as a street fundraiser, the more likely you are to succeed in wider fundraising. Although that does seem quite obvious, it need not have been the case.

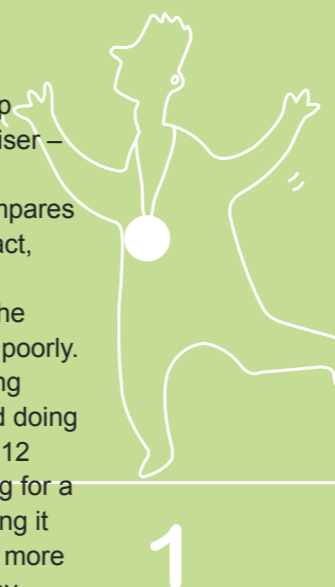
Perhaps we can glean a better understanding of how street fundraising helps prepare people for a career in wider charity fundraising by looking at people who rated their experience on the street poorly (people who gave it a score of 1, 2 or 3 – i.e. below the midpoint on the seven-point Likert scale).

Twelve respondents (14.6 per cent) rated their street experience poorly. It is important to remember that these are not people who haven't succeeded in fundraising – they include one of the seven heads of department in the survey – but simply that they did not think their time as a street fundraiser made a meaningful contribution to their

success – or actually hindered it.

Nine (75 per cent) of the poorly-rated group spent less than six months as a street fundraiser – although one of the them stayed in street fundraising for more than five years. This compares to the baseline average of 16.7 per cent. In fact, only 15 respondents to the survey left street fundraising before completing six months in the field and nine of these rated their experience poorly.

This is not surprising – if you don't like doing something, you're hardly likely to stick around doing it. In fact they liked it so little that six of these 12 fundraisers (50 per cent) left street fundraising for a job outside of the charity sector before rejoining it as a charity fundraiser. They were also much more likely than other respondents to have said they would still have gone into the charity sector had



they not started as street fundraisers.

Probably because they spent less time in the job, they were less likely to be promoted to team leader (33 per cent against 74 per cent).

But what is most instructive is the type of fundraising those people who disliked their time on the street have ended up working in.

While successful street fundraisers have forged their careers largely (though by no means exclusively) in direct marketing and individual giving, the poorly-rated group have gone on to work in events (50 per cent compared to a baseline of 32 per cent), trusts (41 per cent compared to 20 per cent), corporate (33 per cent compared to 20 per cent) and community (25 per cent compared to 18 per cent).

Only two of the 12 have worked in direct

marketing since leaving street fundraising, and only one of these two still does.

As a group they are distinctly less passionate about being part of the profession of fundraising, scoring their passion for being a fundraiser at 4.7 compared to the average of 5.7. Although three of the 12 gave their passion for fundraising a score of seven, another three rated it three or less. The rating for passion for the cause was 6.3 – bang on the baseline average.

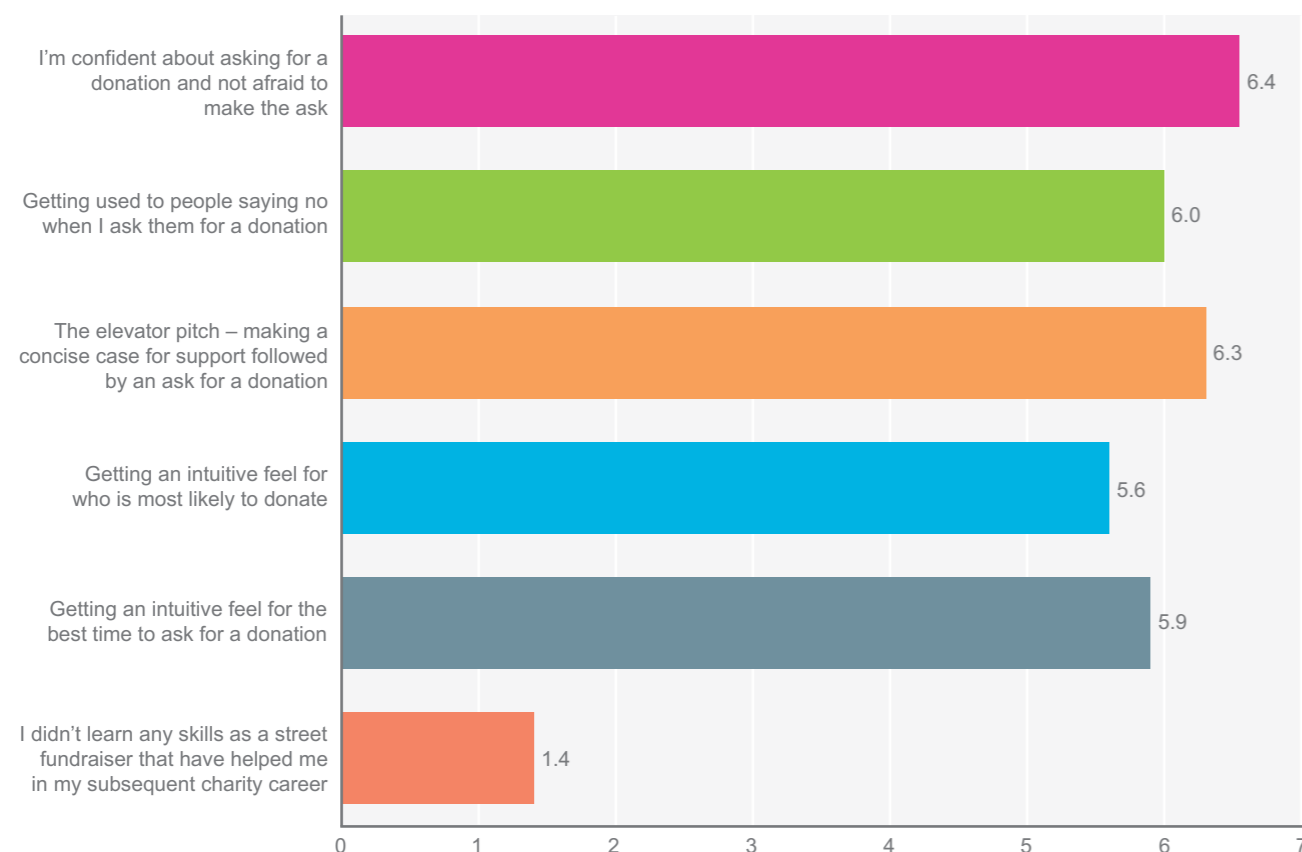
While we have to bear in mind that this is a very small sample size, it suggests a clear distinction in the outlook and aspirations of those who highly rated their experience in street fundraising and went on to forge successful fundraising careers, and those who did not rate their days on the street and still went on to forge successful fundraising careers.

they number among their cohort two of the four people who have risen to become directors of fundraising, and two of the seven department heads, despite comprising only 13.4 per cent of the sample. They rate the skills they learnt a lot more highly than average and think their time on the street was more useful than the bulk of respondents, particularly their people management skills, which the ex-creatives rate at 6.0 rather the 4.9 average.

They spent a lot more time working in street fundraising before moving on to wider fundraising – on average four years and five months compared to the overall average of three years and four months – and were more likely to have worked in an office-based role (63.4 per cent compared to 45.5 per cent for the whole surveybase). But they also took longer to realise this was a long-term career option for them. They are nearly twice as likely to work in direct marketing and individual giving than the average.

They are also unique in this survey in being the only segment of fundraisers that is actually more passionate about being a fundraiser (6.3 compared to 5.7 for the entire sample) than the cause they work for (6.2 compared to 6.3).

Fig 5.2
Street skills rated by former creatives (compare to the baseline scores in Fig 4.10)



Discussion – why are ex-creatives so good at fundraising?

Former creatives appear to have started as street fundraisers as a stopgap while they were working towards alternative careers. This might have been why they stayed longer working in street fundraising, either because they were still working on developing their creative careers or because street fundraising fitted well with the unpredictable nature of a career in the performing arts.

Because they stayed at an agency or in-house team for so long, they naturally became very good at what they did, got promoted and, after four or five years (or longer), when they made the

decision to make fundraising their main career, entered charity fundraising departments with a highly developed fundraising and managerial skillset.

While we can't make too much of this, we probably should keep in mind that there is a synergy between performing arts and having to 'act' a role on the street everyday; fundraising is after all a very creative profession.

One of our interviewees, a former actor, said:

"I think that there is a very strong connection between acting and fundraising. As an actor, you have to take on a character, empathise with them,

and engage an audience who believe you are that character; bring them to life for the good of the story. I think fundraising requires that ability, for you to take the public out of whatever they are doing, and for that moment, whether it is a TV advert, a piece of mail, a chat with a face-to-face fundraiser, you have to fully engage them with the cause, and get them to believe that their decision matters: if they give, they will change someone or something's life for the better."

The performing arts' loss has definitely been fundraising's gain.

Motivation to become a street fundraiser (n=87)

People who started as students during university holidays or gap years (n=15, 17.2 per cent) score averagely in just about everything and there is nothing to set their responses apart – except they are considerably less likely to have been promoted

to team leader (53.3 per cent compared to 74 per cent). They also haven't progressed as far in their careers – 60 per cent are junior fundraisers compared to the overall average of 35.7 per cent and only 20 per cent have made it to manager level, compared to 35.7 for the entire survey, although former students do provide a department head and one of the four directors of fundraising.

The scores and responses of people who took a job in street fundraising because they needed a job (n=25, 28.7 per cent) don't differ greatly from the average baseline findings for the whole survey, though, like the students, they are slightly down in some of the categories. For example, their overall rating for the usefulness of their street careers was 5.3 compared to the average of 5.6.

People who became street fundraisers because they were considering a career in the charity sector – either as fundraisers or in a different role (n=27, 31.0 per cent) – have progressed further than students or people needing a job; only 18.5 per cent of them are junior fundraisers.

But they supply only one of the fundraising directors and two of the seven department heads, perhaps fewer than might have been predicted for people who entered street fundraising with charity career-driven goals.

But how they rated their street skills and other factors (such as gaining an understanding of standards) don't differ markedly from the baseline findings, nor from students or people who needed a job. However, people who wanted to work in the charity sector in non-fundraising roles are noticeably less passionate about their profession (5.4) than

both the survey average and the segments of students, would-be fundraisers and even people who needed a job.

Of course, there are differences:

- People who wanted to work for a charity (non-fundraising) thought the process of transitioning from street to fundraising department was least easy of all, rating this process 3.4 on the seven-point scale compared to the average of 4.9.
- People who needed a job were more likely to think being a street fundraiser didn't help them progress into charity fundraising (2.5 compared to 2.0 average).
- Ex-creatives, as previously noted, rated people management skills much more highly (though this is a function of their having stayed in the job longer than everyone else, rather than related to their initial motivation to be a street fundraiser).
- Former creatives also rated their understanding of professional standards higher than other groups, probably because they also spent such a long time in management.

But without testing for significance we can't say how important these variations are.

However, looking at the stats with the 'naked eye', we can see nothing about the original motivation to become a fundraiser that would raise a red flag regarding the success or otherwise of a subsequent charity career. People who wanted to work in the charity sector have been a bit more successful and rated the skills they learnt slightly more highly (apart from the former creatives and

artistes we discussed earlier) but not in a way that particularly stands out.

Having a desire to work in the charity sector is neither necessary nor sufficient for forging a

successful fundraising career via the entry point of street fundraising. It is an entry route to a career in fundraising that is open to anyone, and that anyone can successfully follow.

Fig 5.3
How useful to your subsequent charity career was the time you spent as a street fundraiser (rated 1-7), segmented by initial motivation to become a street fundraiser. The baseline average is 5.6.

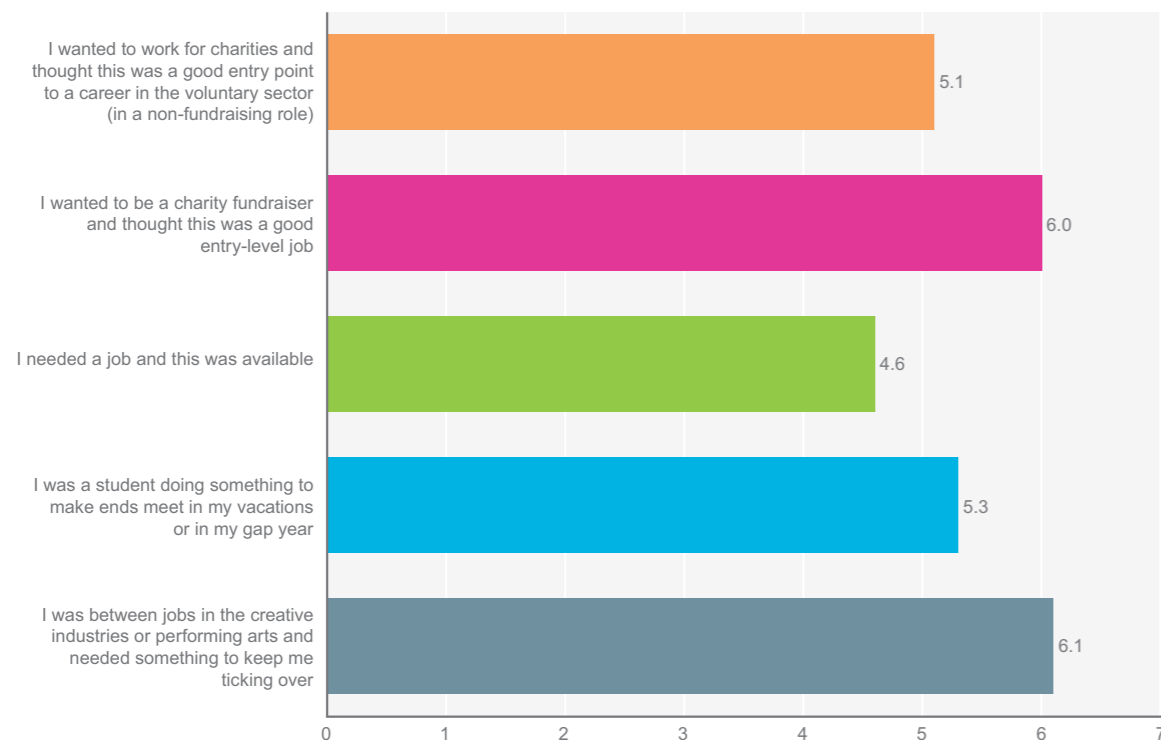
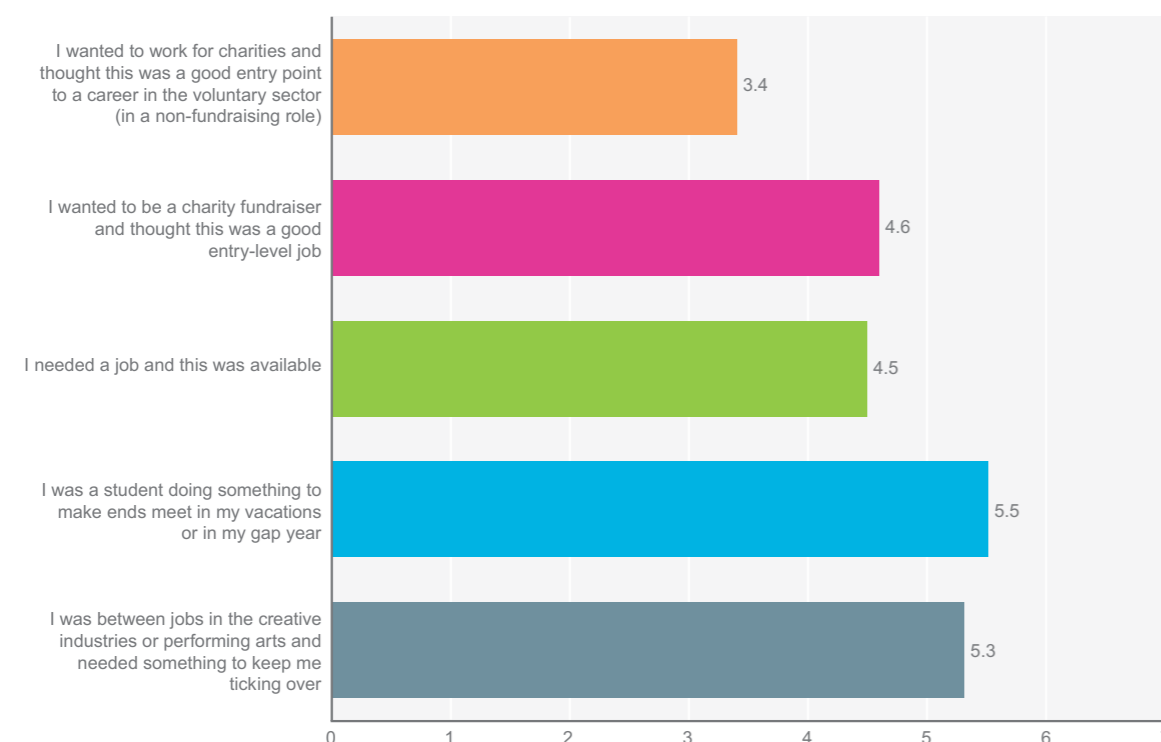


Fig 5.4
How easy did you find the process of transitioning from the street to a charity fundraising department (rated 1-7), segmented by initial motivation to become a street fundraiser? The baseline average is 4.7.



6 Careers advice

One of the core purposes of conducting this research was to map the career progression from street fundraising into charity fundraising departments, in order to provide careers advice for anyone considering street fundraising as their entry point to a fundraising career.

We expected that we would be able to examine the data and identify the key characteristics and markers that new entrants should emulate.

What we have found is that street fundraising has been a successful entry point for all types of people and that there is no one particular path – or indeed, a series of paths – from street to fundraising department that we could say to aspirant fundraisers: “If you follow this path and do these things, a career in charity fundraising awaits you.”

Some people worked in street fundraising for more than five years before moving in to charity departments; others have made that journey in a handful of months.

Some people took a street fundraising job because they wanted to start a charity career, others because they needed a job fairly quickly. All have forged careers as fundraisers.

So while there may not be a set of key indicators that we can point to, we can offer advice on how best to make your street career work for you and whether this is your best entry route for a career in charity fundraising.

Is this the right entry point for you?

We don't think our data tells us that you have to want to be a fundraiser or work in the charity sector to successfully enter the profession as a street fundraiser. What this project has told us is that street fundraising has brought in a highly successful generation of fundraisers who would probably never have been fundraisers had they not got what they thought was going to be a temporary job as a ‘chugger’.

This project has confirmed that, for those who want to treat it as such, street fundraising is an excellent ‘apprenticeship’ for a subsequent fundraising career³.

But just because you want to work in the charity sector doesn't mean that street fundraising is the best entry point for you and our survey responses show that some successful charity fundraisers did

not rate their experiences on the street highly.

We think the key finding from our survey relates to the types of fundraising jobs that this segment has ended up doing: trusts, events, corporate and community. This is very much on the one-to-one relationship building side of the fundraising continuum, with more direct contact with donors and more opportunity to directly communicate about the impact their donation will have.

Successful street fundraisers on the other hand have gravitated towards direct marketing and mass individual giving roles.

It seems that those people who did not rate their street experiences highly were probably not cut out for street fundraising in the first place.

This is not a question of self-confidence as many respondents told us that street fundraising taught them to be confident at public speaking and making the ‘elevator pitch’.

Rather, we think it relates to their notion of charity fundraising, which is not about mass, anonymous direct marketing techniques, but is much more focused on relationship building over the long-term, something that being a street fundraiser provides little opportunity for.

One of our interviewees who went down the DM/individuals route, said:

“I was applying for a lot of community fundraising roles to begin with – I soon realised that these roles just wouldn't have fit my skillset and didn't match the things I really enjoyed.”

A better entry point for aspirant fundraisers with a relationship fundraising mindset might perhaps be as a volunteer or an intern – although of course they will still need a job.

“Volunteering for local charities is probably the best thing you can do to pick up these missing skills (though not in a shop!). I would say if you can afford to only work four days a week and volunteer for a day, this would be your best option. By all means, do some weekend fundraising events with your local charity – but you are best off getting that office experience.”

³ We call it an ‘apprenticeship’ for “those who want to treat it as such” with quotation marks around apprenticeship because it isn't really an apprenticeship in the formal sense, and many street fundraisers do this as a full time job (and have been doing it for many years) without any desire to move on to anything else. Calling their full time job an apprenticeship would be to imply they have never qualified from that ‘apprenticeship’ and that is something we absolutely do not want to do. It's great that street fundraising is producing so many excellent charity fundraisers, but we also need our excellent career street fundraisers.

Are you cut out to be a street fundraiser?

Although this slightly caricatures the issues, we think it represents a good rule of thumb to identify whether street fundraising is a good entry route if you are already considering a career in charity fundraising.

Look at the following two sets of statements and tick all that you agree with.

Group A

- Charity adverts on trains always catch your eye; sometimes you even send a text in response to them.
- The band you play in is doing really well, but there are five of you and you're not going to make a living at it just yet.
- You didn't particularly like the summer job selling mobile phones on the high street but it didn't kill you either.
- You're not afraid to ask for what you want.
- Your idea of charity fundraising is a bustling marketing office designing adverts on Macs that will introduce your cause to tens of thousands of people who will give as a result of your work.
- You'd feel real professional pride at personally securing a £10,000 donation.

Group B

- Your colleagues on the student rag committee really inspired you about how they were going to change the world.
- That guy collecting for the Rotary at the supermarket is there every other Saturday – you wonder how many people realise it's the same bloke.
- All your spare clothes are taken directly to the charity shop so those dodgy doorstep collection companies don't take most of the profits leaving the charity with very little.
- Your idea of charity fundraising is being able to introduce a donor to one of the people you're trying to help.
- You wouldn't be able to wait to personally thank the donor who gave you a £10,000 gift.

If you agree with more in Group A, we think you would benefit from an 'apprenticeship' as a street fundraiser.

If you agree with more in Group B, we think you might be better off volunteering for a charity or working as an intern (though by no means should you rule out street fundraising).

"I think two days volunteering as an intern is a very solid way of gaining skills, and I would recommend that agencies start up some kind of process for this, where they help to subsidise their staff so they can do this."

It's also worth bearing in mind the words of one of our interviewees, who began as a street fundraiser because of an interest in international development, began an internship and then returned to street fundraising before getting a job with a charity (and has also since set up their own charity). This interviewee warns against coming into the job with expectations that are too high:

"If you are too excited about being a fundraiser, you will be disappointed. If you really, really want a career in fundraising; if you are desperate to be good, you won't be. This [street fundraising] is not your way into it."

How to plan your street career to maximise your chances of getting a fundraising job at a charity

While there is no one true path to becoming a charity fundraiser by serving a street 'apprenticeship', from the data, the comments made in the survey and our follow-up interviews with selected participants, we have drawn up several recommendations for those fundraisers looking to make the most of this 'apprenticeship'.

1. Devote time, at least a year, to developing your skills and experience on the street

Plan to spend at least a year, and preferably two, working in street fundraising. While some people have moved on after just a few months, those who have gone furthest are those who spent a couple of years or more learning their craft in street fundraising. However, as more people move on sooner, this may change, especially if professional development is introduced to fast-track fundraisers from the street into office roles.

"If you can work within an agency environment for a minimum of 1-3 years, and gain a middle management position, I would say that you are ready to take your skills and apply them in a DM/acquisition role within a charity fundraising team, especially if you also have a high interest in the arts, or a creative background in your further education."

2. Get managerial and office experience

Get promoted to team leader – several respondents and interviewees highlighted the managerial experience they took from team leading (and office-based roles as well) and how they were able to use this experience at job interviews.

"The main problem we encounter for people who come into admin and logistical roles from the street is a lack of office experience."

3. Learn about charity culture

Take advantage of any office-based account handling role you undertake to speak to people at charities to learn as much about charity 'culture' as you can. Even though in the baseline averages these two (contacts and culture) scored relatively low, they are still rated highly by a number of individuals, including our interviewees.

"When I was tasked with setting up an in-house team, I was able to call up my former colleagues who now work at the British Red Cross about how they'd done it. Having those contacts really helped me."

"Many of the people you will be working with on the street will be in the sector throughout your career (interviewing you, working with you, providing references and giving you contracts). Take every opportunity to learn and develop."

"If you are the person who deals with the account manager [at a charity] it gives you more experience of how charities run and the way they work."

4. Consider supplementing your skills through training, interning or volunteering

"If I could do it all again, I would have sacrificed more pay by dropping down to three or four days a week in order to get the experience I needed in community and events, major gifts, trusts and grants, corporate and DM."

"It is a good entry-level position but you need to develop additional skills to progress. However, the skills you learn from street F2F would be an asset to take to any career moving forward."

5. You might not hear your vocation calling immediately

If you are not sure at first that you want to be a fundraiser, there's a good chance you'll 'catch the charity sector' bug after just a short time spent working as a street fundraiser. However, if the bug hasn't grabbed you by then, it doesn't mean fundraising isn't for you. There's a good chance you won't find your true vocation until you have worked in street fundraising for a long time. This was the route our high performing former creatives/performing artistes took. Hang in there.

6. Don't give up on your dream

If you have gone into street fundraising as a stopgap while you try to pursue other career options (not necessarily in the performing arts or creative industries – one of our interviewees was a former journalist), coming round to the realisation that charity fundraising is going to be your full time career does not mean giving up on your 'dream'.

One of our interviewees pointed out that it is often

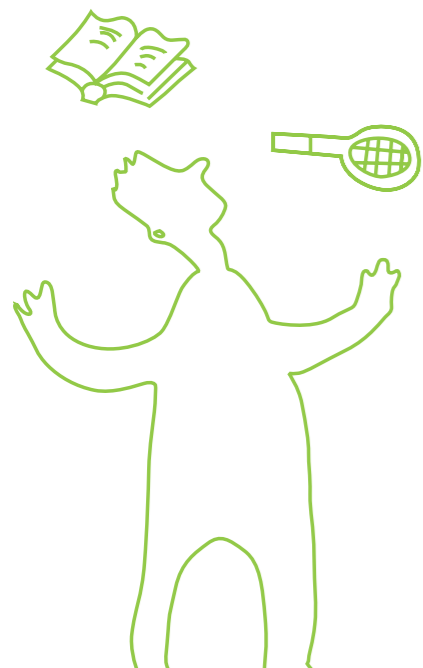
possible to combine elements of your 'dream' career in a role at the charity (producing DRTV adverts or editing the supporter newsletter, for example). In any case, fundraising seems to attract more than its fair share of creatives who carry on playing in bands, acting, painting and designing, and doing stand-up comedy. Nothing will stop you pursuing your dream in your spare time.

7. Be prepared to work hard

Street fundraising is not a cakewalk. It's a graft in a target-driven model – that the target for most street fundraisers is only two to three sign-ups in a six- or seven-hour working day shows how difficult this job is. But if you put the work in, you will reap the benefits.

“Most importantly, I learnt to work really hard. And that work ethic will stand you in good stead wherever you go. This is something that is valued massively in charities, where everyone has to muck-in in order to save money on all the work we do.”

“If you get good at street fundraising, you can be good at any other kind of fundraising because street fundraising is many times more difficult.”



8. And finally...Enjoy it!

This is best summed up by our survey respondents:

“Do it!!!! You will make lots of friends, learn amazing skills, develop confidence and have lots and lots of fun. If you want a job that is a challenge and gives you an enormous sense of achievement then face-to-face fundraising is for you.”

“I would say definitely go for it! It can be tough at times but it's so worth it! You learn so much and you work with and meet some amazing people. It's really taught me so much and made me in to who I am now really...and I still have all the friends that I worked with when I was a fundraiser. Also it's allowed me to have the job I have at the moment, so if you work hard then there is so much room for progression.”

*“Don't forget – that moment of euphoria when someone looks into your eye with a ‘f**k it, go on then’ and signs up to give a few quid a month – very few people sitting in offices could ever achieve that.”*

“I started street fundraising in my early 20s and I am now 39 and I can honestly say that street fundraising was my training ground in terms of becoming a human being with empathy, morality, inspiration and an intense desire to do good in this world.”

7 Conclusion and recommendations

All of the 82 people who completed our survey are successful, passionate and committed fundraisers, and all began their fundraising careers on the street.

Our conclusions and recommendations from this project are therefore that street fundraising:

- is a bona fide entry point to a career in charity fundraising
- should be promoted as an entry point to a career in charity fundraising to college and university leavers and other job seekers
- is and should be recognised as a full part of the fundraising profession and training and continuous professional development resources should be developed to help street fundraisers progress into charity fundraising departments, especially to supplement the managerial skills they may be missing out on now that many make the transition in less than a year without having done team leader roles.

“I would suggest again, that agencies take it upon themselves to train and encourage staff to volunteer for a day, or take up an internship. This would really help with their attrition rates within their teams, as staff would then come back in to the agency environment stressing the importance of what the charity is looking for in donors, and keep a standard up that will help keep the street fundraising industry alive.”



“There is still absolutely nothing I've found as satisfying in my working life as talking to a random person on the street, and taking them from ambivalence to action, from apathy to awe, from simply not caring that much to 'getting it'. The power to effect positive change can be intoxicating.”

