



Heart Support Group Reaffiliation 2016

Report

In 2016 Heart Support Groups (HSG) were once again invited to reaffiliate to the British Heart Foundation (BHF). Groups are asked to reaffiliate once a year as not only does this ensure that we have the most up to date contact information for each group, but it is also a chance for groups to tell us a bit more about themselves and any successes, changes or issues that they have had throughout the year.

This was the second year that Grant Tracker was used and whilst there were still some small issues, many have found it much easier to use second time round. The form was also shorter this year, asking just seven one word answer or multiple choice questions. Groups were also given the space to provide a brief summary of their group and their top achievements this year if they wished to do so.

Overview

- At the time of writing (Nov. 2016) the total number of HSGs affiliated to the BHF is **240** (including 5 new groups).
- 255 HSGs were invited to reaffiliate this year, out of the 235 that did;
 - 212 reaffiliated using Grant Tracker
 - 23 reaffiliated via a paper form
- 14 groups did not reaffiliate. Of these 14
 - Three did not reaffiliate in 2014 or 2015. Therefore, we will now presume that these groups have closed and will remove them from the online map and directory (we will still keep group details on file)
 - Five did not reaffiliate in 2015, the details of these groups will be kept on the online map and directory.
 - Six groups have not reaffiliated for the first time this year, they may still be intending to do so.
- 6 groups have also informed us that they have closed down this year.
- 5 new HSGs have affiliated to the BHF this year
 - East Rural Heart Support Group
 - Bromley Heart Support Group
 - Livewires NI ICD
 - New Life Heart Support Group
 - Surrey Frimley Park Hospital ICD support group

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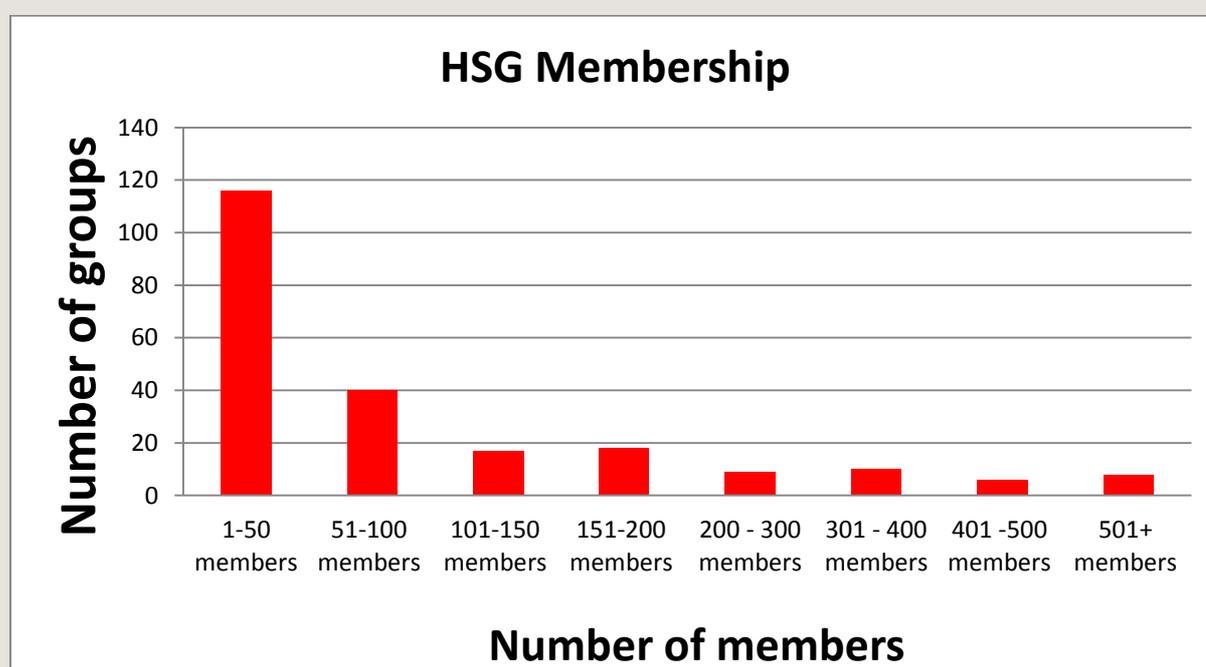
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This report outlines information provided to us through the 2016 reaffiliation process.

Membership

16 groups did not provide us with this information, but from the 224 groups that did respond to this question we can calculate there is an estimated combined total of **29,481** HSG members.

The numbers that were given in response to this question varied significantly, with numbers ranging from 5 to 2000 members. It must be remembered that groups define their membership in different ways. For some it may include everyone that is on their mailing list, whilst to others a member will be someone who regularly attends group meetings or activities.



It is clear to see that most groups have a membership of between 1 – 50 people. It is also worth noting that there are differences between groups as to who can be a member. Some groups are quite clear that you must be a heart patient to join the group, whilst others also welcome partners, careers, healthcare professionals and those that are at high risk of heart disease.

If your group is struggling to keep membership numbers up or are looking for new ways to attract people to your group, please take a look at our [hints and tips sheet](#). The ideas on this list has been used and suggested by fellow HSGs.

Activities Offered

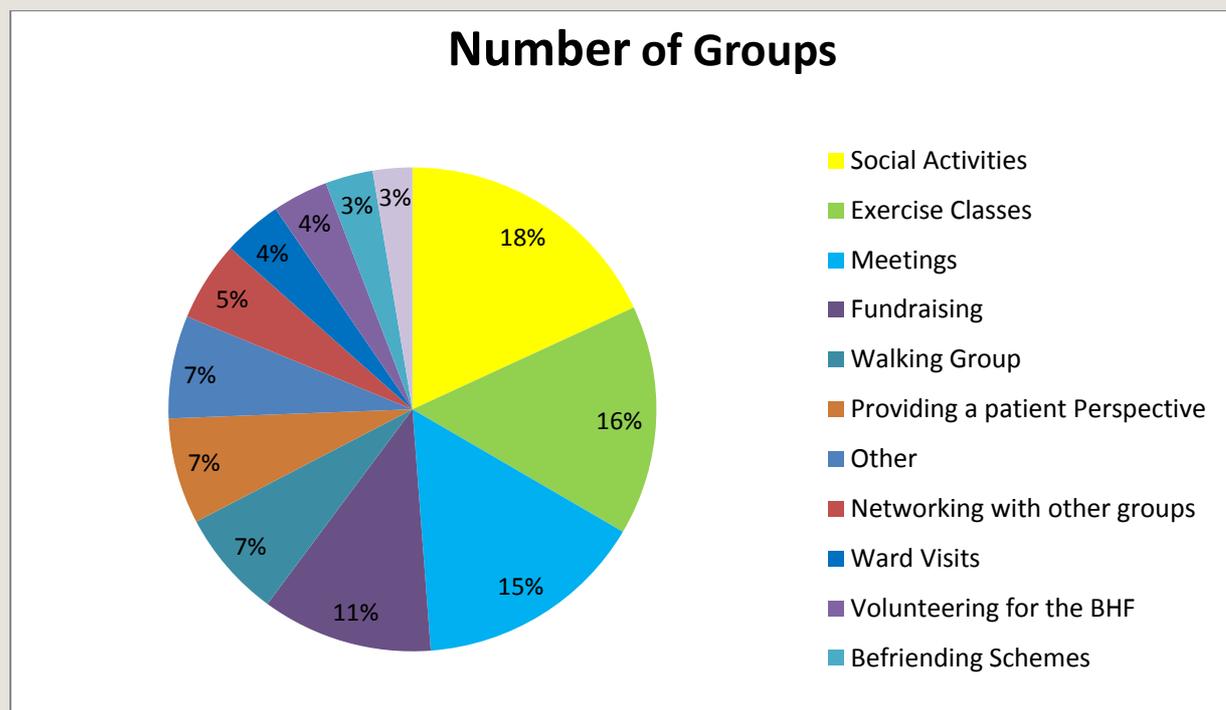
This question received the greatest feedback with only 14 groups choosing not to answer. Groups were able to choose from a list of multiple choice activities; answers were not limited to one as many groups offer a wide variety of activities

Reaffiliation showed that the most common activity offered by HSG's is social activities, with 166 groups selecting this. It is not surprising that this was the most popular answer as it incorporates many different activities such as coffee mornings, dinners, trips away and social evenings.

Exercise classes are the second most common activity offered by HSG's, with 141 providing them. 91 of these groups also stated that they offer Phase Four exercise classes, however, out of this number 9 said they were not run by a BACPR qualified instructor (please note, that as per BHF affiliation terms, all phase four classes must be run but a BACPR qualified instructions).

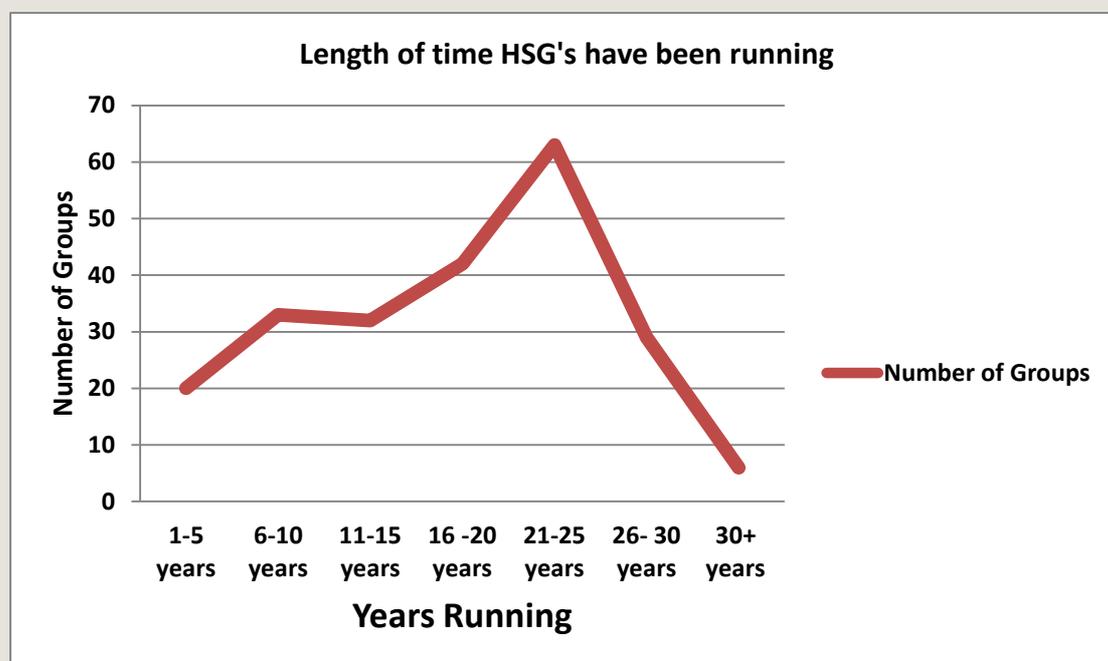
63 Groups said they offered 'Other' activities than the ones listed, although many of these could still come under the category of exercise classes, such as swimming and cycling groups. Other activities offered included art classes and CPR training.

The graph below depicts the range of activities offered by HSGs



Length of time HSGs have been running

The table below details the length of time HSGs have been running. (15 groups did not respond to this question.) Four groups are celebrating their first year, whilst Heartbeat NWCC is currently the longest running group at 37 years. The average number of years a group has been running is just under 18 years.



From both reading the reaffiliation reports and listening to what groups had to say at the regional events, the most common reasons why groups are closing or feel that they may need close in the future is due to the lack of new members to take over the running of the group and lack of funds to support the group.

For new ideas of ways to promote your group or to raise funds, please take a look at the suggestions given [here](#).

Venues

All groups were asked if they had a regular venue where they meet. From the 240 groups currently affiliated to the BHF 211 of them have a regular venue where Meetings and classes are held. Out of this 211, 22 of them have multiple venues that they use regularly; these are often different spaces for exercise and meetings.

29 groups stated that they had no set venue. There may be many reasons for this but the most common being that they are a walking group and such will take a different route each time they meet.

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Charity Status

We also asked groups if they were a registered charity. 56 groups currently affiliated to the BHF are also registered charities in their own right.

Becoming a charity does not affect your affiliation to the BHF and we can neither encourage nor discourage this as it must be solely a group decision. However, if you would like to find out more about becoming a charity we will do our best to put you in touch with a group that have made this transition.

Website

This was a new question for 2016. 80 groups told us that they do have a website. It may be useful to ask this question again next year to see if there has been an increase, as it is a something many groups have told us they have an interest in.

Group Achievements

The final question on this year's reaffiliation form gave groups the chance to tell us about their greatest achievement this year. 156 groups responded to this question. Here a few examples of the diverse achievements of HSGs this year;

- *"We have provided 4 defibrillators to a deserving cause"*
- *"Maintaining a friendly environment for a period of exercises and social activity, many of our group live alone. Gaining new members"*
- *"A number of members have learnt ballroom dancing at beginners levels going on to bronze medals"*
- *"Spoke in the Welsh assembly on need for more basic life support training and defibs in school"*
- *"Two pairs of members achieving 60 years of marriage, and 70 years of marriage, quite a success"*
- *"Achieved "Registered Charity" status"*

The overarching themes seem to be keeping the group running despite a declining membership and raising funds, not just for their group but also for local hospitals and the BHF.

Once again we would like to say thank you for taking the time to complete your reaffiliation for another year. As always, if you have any suggestions on how we can improve the reaffiliation process please do get in touch.

Contact us

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