

VeteransAgency

An Executive Agency of the Ministry of Defence



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

WAR PENSIONERS WELFARE SERVICE

KEY PARTNER SURVEY

2006

Produced by the Business Improvement Team



WAR PENSIONERS WELFARE SERVICE KEY PARTNER SURVEY 2006

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1. Introduction

The mission of the Veterans Agency (VA) is to “deliver modern, high-quality, customer-focused services to war disablement pensioners, war widow(er)s, their dependants and carers, and other veterans and in-Service beneficiaries of AFCS; and to deliver them consistently, efficiently and effectively in recognition of the many extraordinary and unique personal sacrifices made in defence of the nation”.

To help the War Pensioners Welfare Service (WPWS) achieve this, they work in partnership with others (known as Key Partners). These include:

- War Pension Committee Chairmen (WPCC)
- War Pension Committee Members (WPCM)
- War Pensioners Welfare Service Support Visitors (WSVs)
- Ex-Service Organisations (ESO)

To maximise the value of these partnerships and enhance services to the ‘end’ customer, it is important that the WPWS in turn provides Key Partners with appropriate help, support, information and advice etc.

In 2004, VA introduced an annual survey that questions Key Partners about their experiences when dealing with the WPWS. It also gives Key Partners the opportunity to inform us what the WPWS does well and areas where it can improve. This enables VA WPWS continually to improve its service to others. This report details results from the 2006 survey and provides comparisons with the 2004 and 2005 survey results.

2. Objective

The objective of this survey is to assist VA in establishing the needs of current and future Key Partners with particular emphasis on determining:

- The level of satisfaction with VA/WPWS services and support
- The cause(s) of any dissatisfaction
- Key Partner ideas

3. Approach

In August 2006 questionnaires were issued to 195 customers. The response rate to the questionnaires issued was 67% (130) compared to a response rate of 69% in 2005.

4. Management Summary – Key Findings

Access and Contact

- 99% of Key Partners stated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the information they received.
- 98% of Key Partners were either very satisfied or satisfied with the presentation and content of written communication from the WPWS.
- 97% of Key Partners were either very satisfied or satisfied with the speed of the resolution of queries and referrals.
- 86% of Key Partners were aware of key personnel within the WPWS and their roles – an increase of 6% from 2005.
- 96% of Key Partners were aware of whom to contact regarding any questions or referrals they may have.

The Internet

- 47% of Key Partners have accessed the Veterans Agency website – a decrease of 4% from last year.
- Of those who have accessed the VA website, 25% have used the WPWS link.
- 100% of Key Partners who accessed the website were able to find the information they required.

Training

- 87% of the WSVs, WPC Chairmen or WPC Members felt they received sufficient training to undertake their role - an increase of 6% from last year.

Service Quality

- Of the WSVs, WPC Chairmen or WPC Members who claim expenses 95% stated they were satisfied with the time taken to pay the claims.
- 98% of Key Partners would recommend the WPWS to others.
- 94% described the overall service from the WPWS as excellent or good – a 4% increase from 2005. 5% described the service as adequate.

5. Recommended Areas for Improvement

Identified areas for improvement	Recommendations
“A card with the local Welfare Office/Helpline telephone number would be useful in a large size so it could be pinned up or put in a prominent place”.	Consider placing cards/posters with contact numbers in receptions or relevant areas at Local Offices.
“With the constant changes within the benefits as a WSV I would appreciate up to date information on these current and constant changes. The disability rights handbook 2006/7 is my current bible which I constantly refer to”.	Reiterate the remit of the WSVs to ensure clarity of their roles.
“90% of the time our local office is unmanned and no one answers the telephone. Even an answerphone would be an improvement”.	When local offices are unmanned the use of answer phones providing details of alternative contact points, i.e. another Welfare Office or the Helpline number should be utilised.

6. Next Steps

Hard copies of this report will be issued to VA Directors. It will also be placed on the VA Internet and VA Intranet websites. Recommended areas for improvement will be considered and taken forward where appropriate.

7. Comments/Enquiries

Any comments/enquiries about this report should be made to:

Chris Pinder
VA Customer Research Manager
Room 6421
Tomlinson House
Norcross
Blackpool
FY5 3WP
Tel: 01253 338537
Email: chris.pinder@veteransagency.gsi.gov.uk

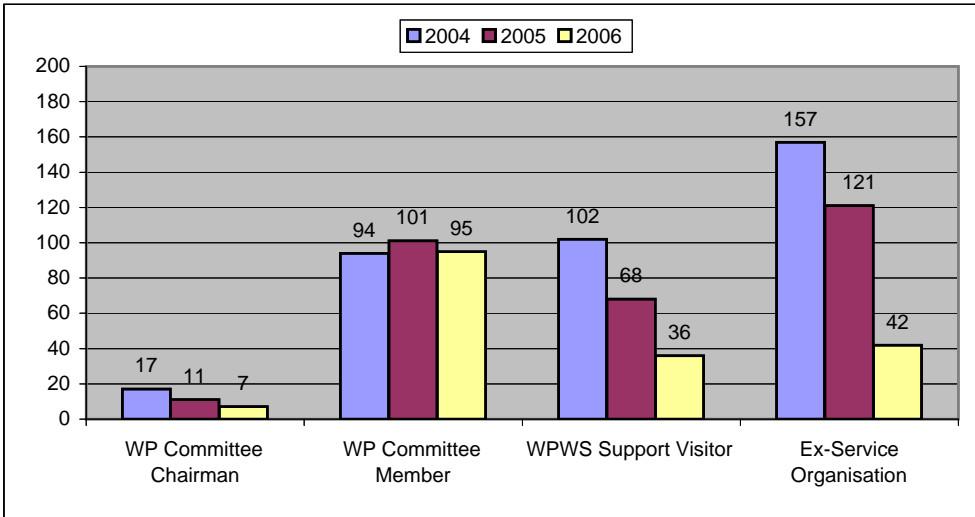
DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your current role?

	2004	2005	2006
WP Committee Chairman	17	11	7
WP Committee Member	94	101	95
WPWS Support Visitor	102	68	36
Ex-Service Organisation	157	121	42

N.B. Some individuals have selected more than one answering option for this question, as they may be WPC member and also work for an Ex-service organisation. Therefore responses are higher than total.

Total Respondents	248	225	130
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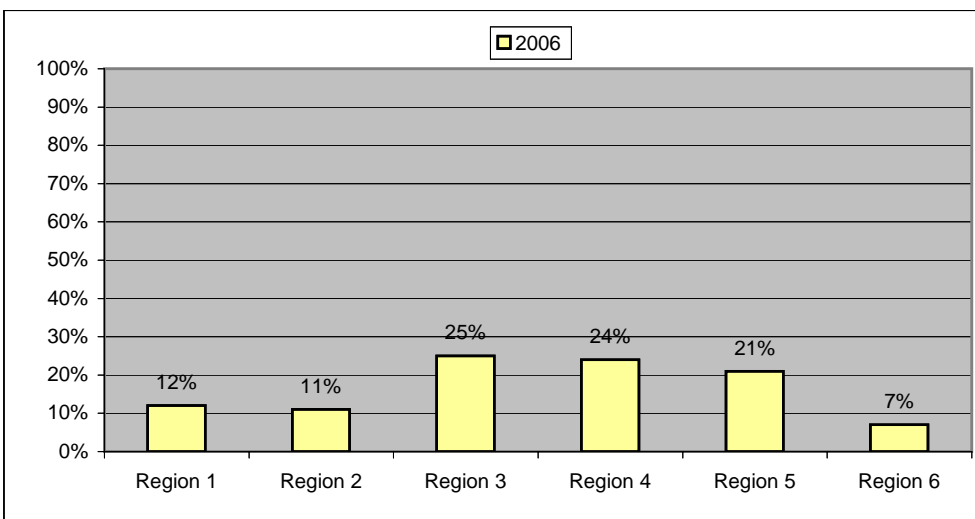
Ex-service organisations included:

BLESMA	SSAFA
Combat Stress	St Dunstons
RAFA	Ulster Defence Regiment
War Widows Association of Great Britain	Royal Navy Association

2. Which region of the Welfare service do you have most contact with?

	2004	2005	2006
Region 1	NA	NA	12%
Region 2	NA	NA	11%
Region 3	NA	NA	25%
Region 4	NA	NA	24%
Region 5	NA	NA	21%
Region 6	NA	NA	7%

Total Respondents	NA	NA	130
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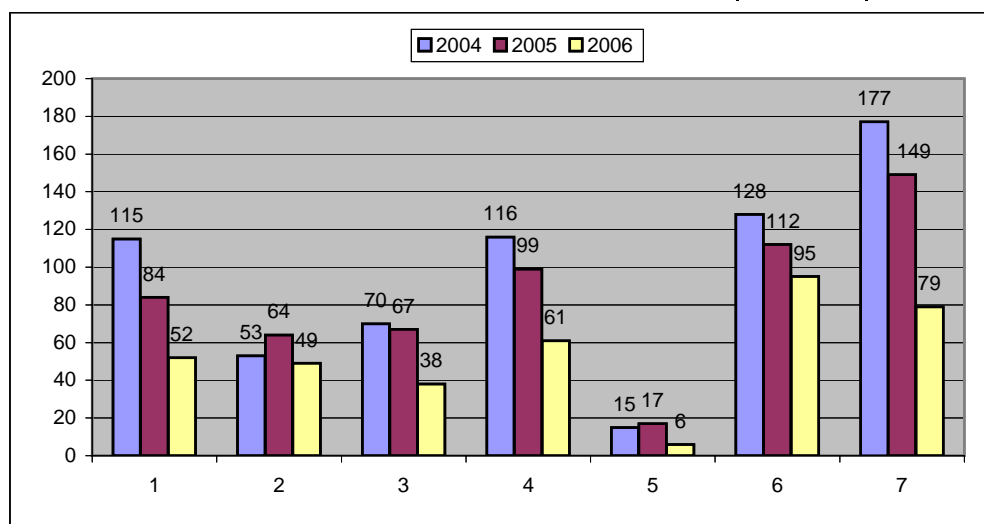


ACCESS AND CONTACT

3. How have you worked with the Welfare Service?

	2004	2005	2006
1 Visited our customers as one of our Welfare Support Visitors	115	84	52
2 Undertaken joint visits, with a Welfare Manager to our customers	53	64	49
3 Undertaken joint advice days or surgeries with the Welfare Service	70	67	38
4 Received training from the Welfare Service	116	99	61
5 Utilised the administration support available to you as a WPC Chairman	15	17	6
6 Had contact with members of the Welfare Service in your capacity as a WPC member	128	112	95
7 Assisted one of our customers with a claim or enquiry following a referral to or from the WPWS	177	149	79

Total Respondents	242	215	130
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ACCESS AND CONTACT

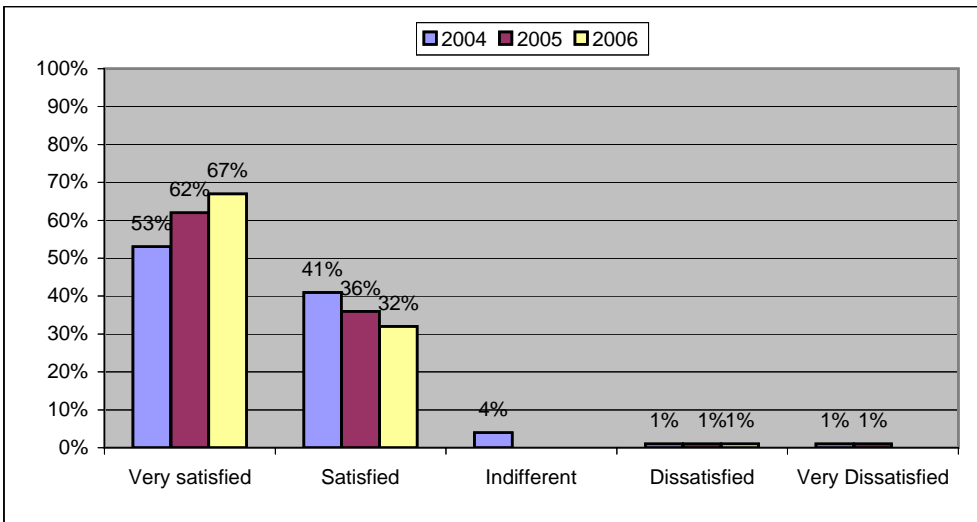
4. How satisfied are you with the help, information or advice you receive from the Welfare Service?

	2004	2005	2006
Very satisfied	53%	62%	67%
Satisfied	41%	36%	32%
Indifferent	4%	NA	NA
Dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%
Very Dissatisfied	1%	1%	NA

Further comments from dissatisfied were:

When needed there is never help available.

Total Respondents	245	224	130
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5. How satisfied are you with the presentation and content of written communication from the Welfare Service?

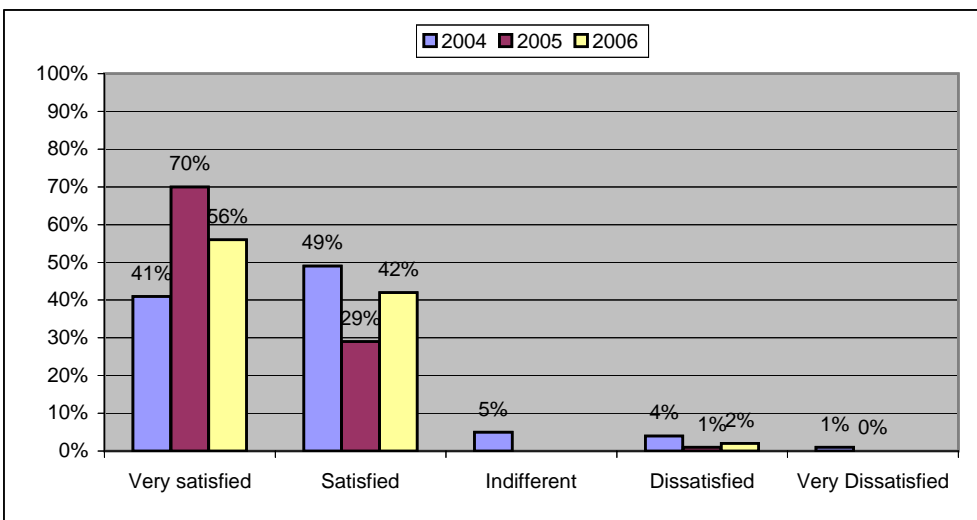
	2004	2005	2006
Very satisfied	41%	70%	56%
Satisfied	49%	29%	42%
Indifferent	5%	NA	NA
Dissatisfied	4%	1%	2%
Very Dissatisfied	1%	0%	NA

Further comments from dissatisfied were:

Nothing is explained properly.

Tick boxes can be very off-putting and clients go to one which is near, there might not be a good enough description.

Total Respondents	241	224	130
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ACCESS AND CONTACT

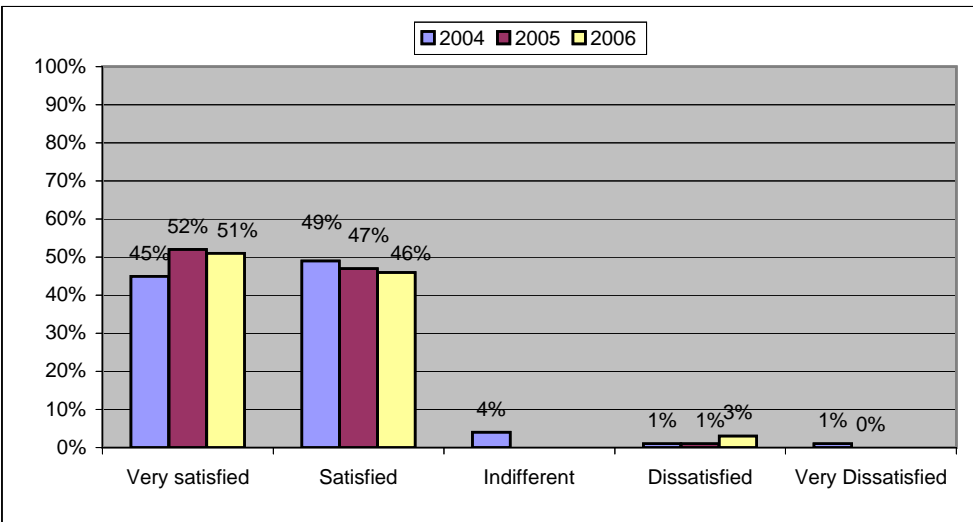
6. How satisfied are you with the speed with which we deal with your queries and referrals?

	2004	2005	2006
Very satisfied	45%	52%	51%
Satisfied	49%	47%	46%
Indifferent	4%	NA	NA
Dissatisfied	1%	1%	3%
Very Dissatisfied	1%	0%	NA

Further comments from dissatisfied were:

Letters are sent and not even acknowledged.

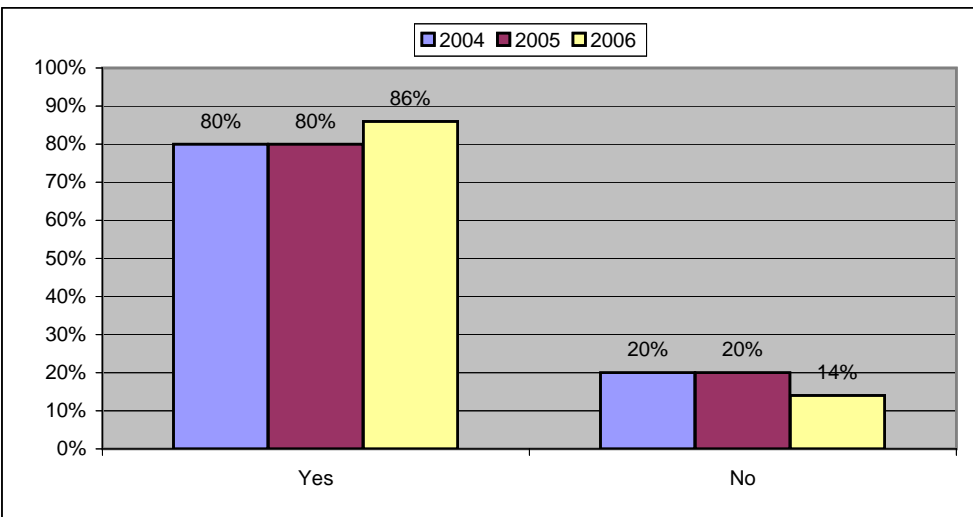
Total Respondents	244	218	130
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7. Are you aware of the Key Personnel, within the Welfare Service and their roles, i.e. Head of Welfare, Welfare Operations Manager, Regional Welfare Managers?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	80%	80%	86%
No	20%	20%	14%

Total Respondents	248	221	130
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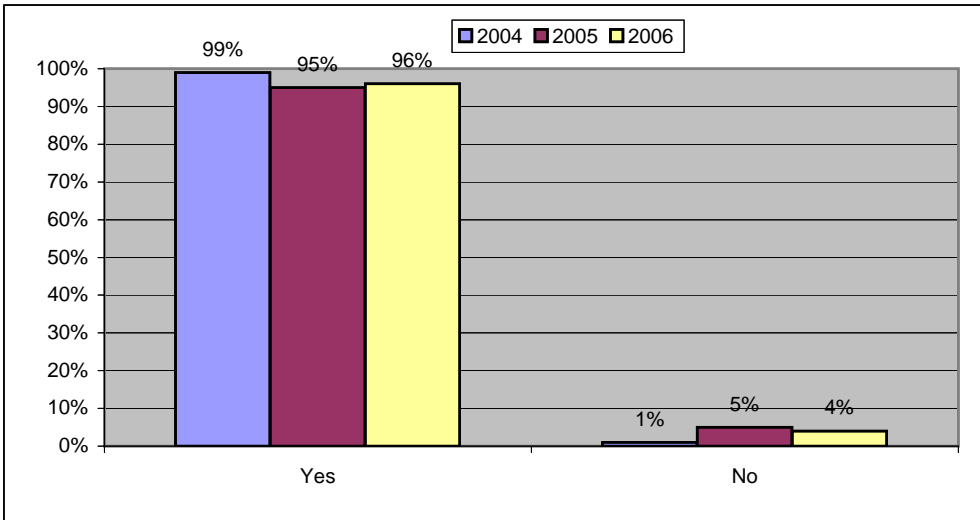


ACCESS AND CONTACT

8. Do you know who to contact regarding any questions, or referrals you may have?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	99%	95%	96%
No	1%	5%	4%

Total Respondents	243	223	129
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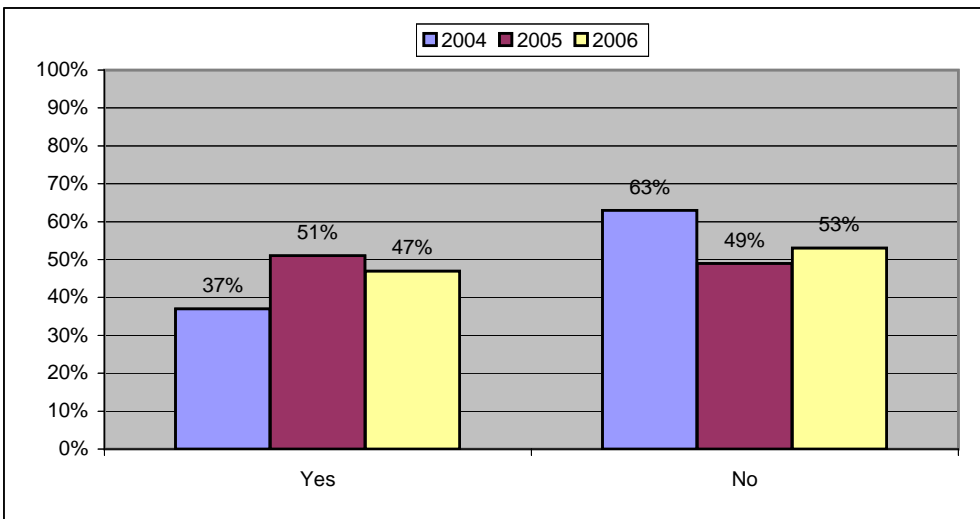


THE INTERNET

9. Have you accessed the Veterans Agency website on the Internet?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	37%	51%	47%
No	63%	49%	53%

Total Respondents	197	160	129
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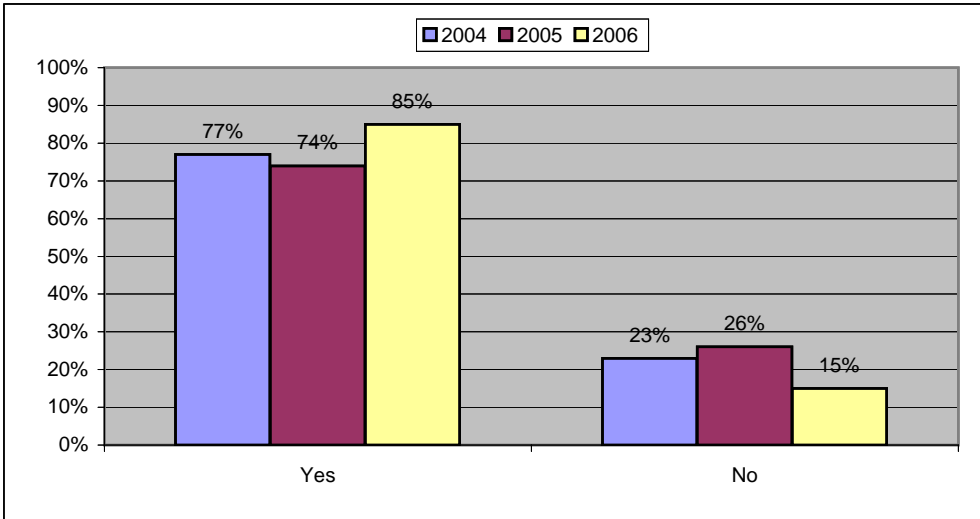


THE INTERNET

10. Are you aware the Welfare Service has a link on the Veterans Agency Internet website?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	77%	74%	85%
No	23%	26%	15%

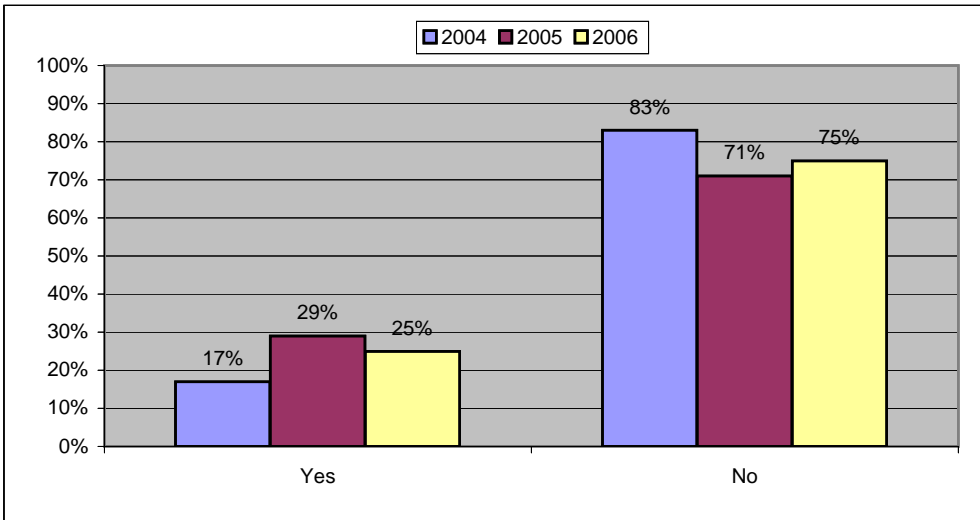
Total Respondents	244	224	127
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11. Have you used the Welfare Service link on the Veterans Agency website?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	17%	29%	25%
No	83%	71%	75%

Total Respondents	159	136	108
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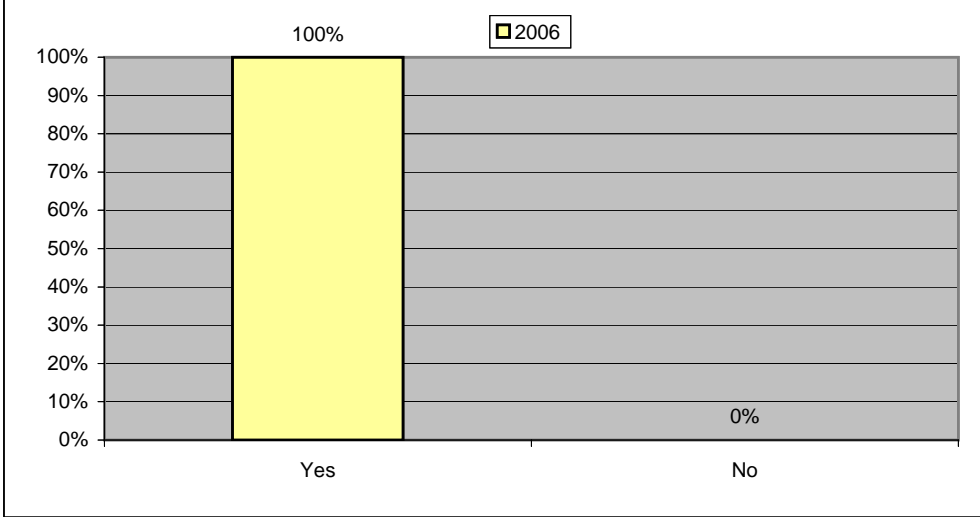


THE INTERNET

12. Were you able to find the information you required?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	NA	NA	100%
No	NA	NA	0%

Total Respondents	NA	NA	25
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13. Was the level of information displayed sufficient, or is there any further information which you feel should be displayed?

Comments were:

Ample information

I found too much information in places and not enough in others. Balance needs tweaking

Sufficient

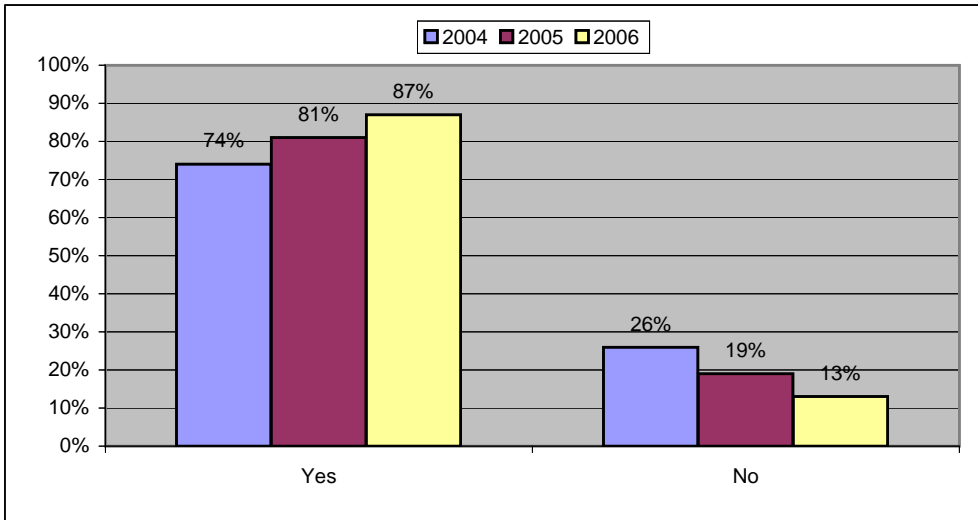
There is plenty of room for improvement as the site evolves.

TRAINING

14. If you are a WSV, WPC Chairman or WPC Member do you feel that you have received sufficient training to undertake your role?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	74%	81%	87%
No	26%	19%	13%

Total Respondents	176	159	128
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15. People who answered no to Q14 stated which topics they require more training on:

All aspects that allow me to make a useful contribution in particular the detailed workings of the existing scheme.

All to do with VA and War Pensions. The training at Norcross is inadequate for those in SE England.

I attended a one day course at Norcross in October last year. The course was a little rushed.

I have never visited Norcross. The Committees had staff from Norcross for half days to our meeting.

I have only undertaken a one and half day visit to Norcross. My employment makes me able to undertake the role.

It would help to avoid duplicating enquiries if we were made aware of all changes.

More information on appeals.

More training regarding the full scope of allowances available to Veterans according to their disabilities.

New system of payments for forces disabilities as they are changing all the time.

So far limited to quick presentations. Need more hands on practice with tutors and revision.

The real role the Minister wants us to play and not to be lip service to show concern to Veterans.

Update on data protection etc had this from RBL.

Updating on new regulations. E.g AFCS 2005 rules/regulations concerning War Widows Pensions.

Visit and seminar day at Norcross is essential to understand and relate to the VA procedures.

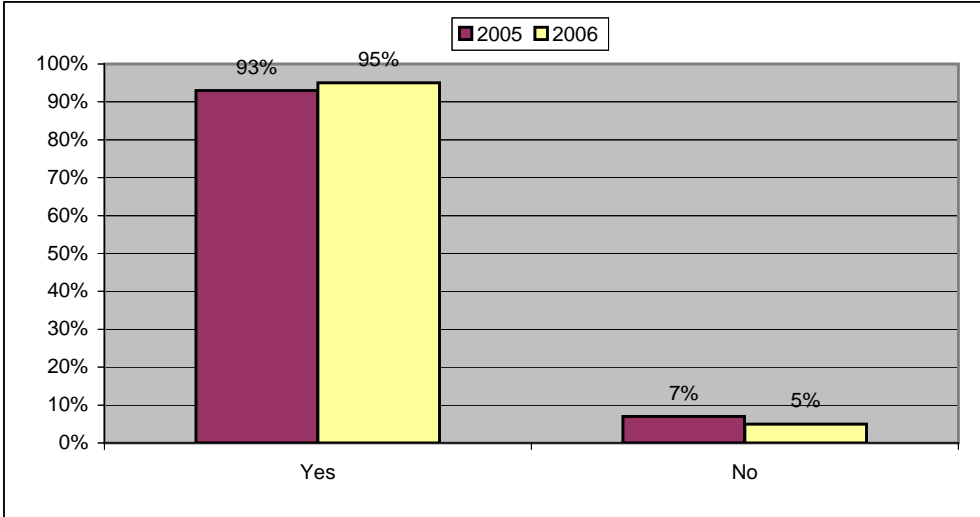
Would benefit from a visit to Norcross.

SERVICE QUALITY

16. If you are a WSV, WPC Chairman or WPC Member how satisfied are you with the time taken to pay your expenses?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	NA	93%	95%
No	NA	7%	5%

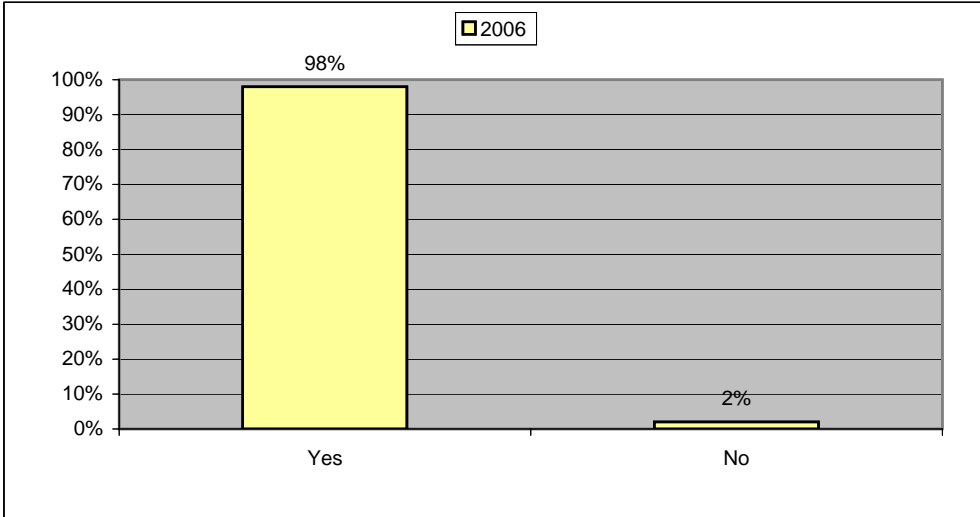
Total Respondents	NA	159	128
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17. Would you recommend the Welfare Service to others?

	2004	2005	2006
Yes	NA	NA	98%
No	NA	NA	2%

Total Respondents	NA	NA	130
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Further comments from 'No' were:

When required they do not fulfil the role that is needed.

SERVICE QUALITY

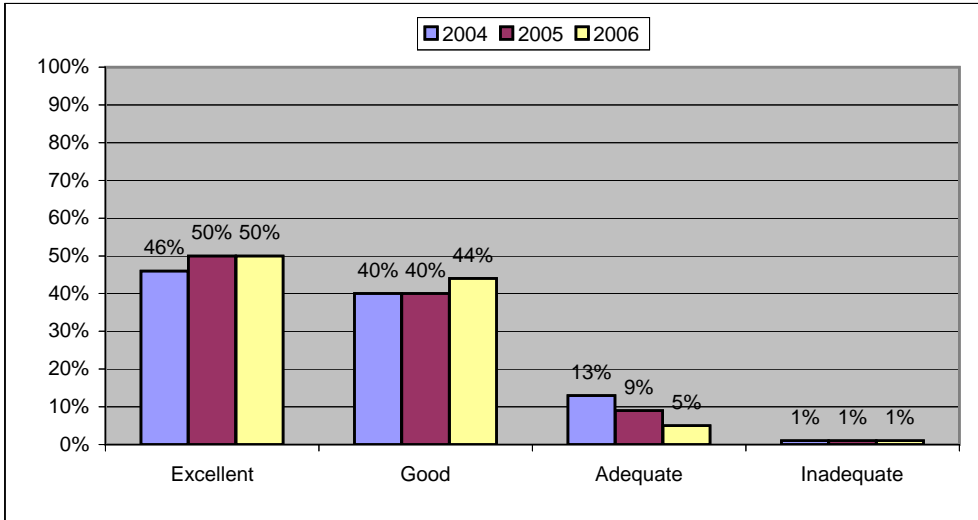
18. Which of these words best describes the overall service you received from the Welfare Service?

	2004	2005	2006
Excellent	46%	50%	50%
Good	40%	40%	44%
Adequate	13%	9%	5%
Inadequate	1%	1%	1%

Further comments from 'Inadequate' were:

More help is needed to find out the requirements of the people you serve.

Total Respondents	243	218	128
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19. Please tell us any further thoughts or ideas regarding the service provided.

90%+ of the time our local office is unmanned and no one answers the telephone. Even an answerphone would be an improvement

I feel we need to improve our point of contact to those with problems leaving the services they should also be encouraged to contact their local RBL branch to maintain their service contacts. Provide up to date presentations to those on terminal leave.

Important that WS visitors are kept up to date with leaflets outlining benefits, allowances and percentages of annual awards.

It is an excellent service which deserves the recognition it gets. But it is not well known to the general public. Ex service personal who left some time ago seem to be ignorant of the services

Not happy with War Pension Committees information on Veterans Agency website. Says what WPC did but not what they do now. What is our role?

The service given by the welfare service is excellent. We committee members must ensure that service is not diminished with any amalgamation with policy. The dedication of the staff is almost unique. It is something that ought to be promoted and extended to other areas.

The service is on the whole excellent and all War Disabled Pensioners and War Widows are very lucky to have this service to help them through the maze of the benefit system

There is a need to separate "tea and sympathy" visit from in depth support visit. Ideally WSV should do the former - in so doing alert the professionals to the need for a formal visit.

To be more integrated with the services resettlement organisation hereby ensuring that there is a more joined up service for those being medically discharged from Iraq and Afghanistan. The service should not have to wait until the service person is discharged before contact can be made.

While posters which are distributed on a regular basis do help I feel newspaper articles on occasions would help enormously to highlight the subject of War Pensions and War Widows and other benefits. Not everyone has access to the website

With the constant changes within the Benefits as a WPSV I would appreciate up to date information on these current and constant changes. The disability rights handbook 2006/7 is my current bible which I constantly refer to.