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# Village Agents

## Quarter 2 Year 3

### October to December 2008

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Providing older  
people with easier  
access to services  
and information

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Report produced by  
Gloucestershire Rural  
Community Council

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## GLOUCESTERSHIRE VILLAGE AGENTS

In June 2008 Gloucestershire Village Agents were mainstreamed as a service, with funding from Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust and Gloucestershire County Council.



The successful partnership between Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) continues with the Village Agents being employed and managed by GRCC.

A steering group made up of key stakeholders has been put in place and the scheme managers will report directly on a quarterly basis to the group. Processes that were used to report to the Department for Work and Pensions will continue, collating demographic and numerical data using the existing gateway forms, with case studies and diaries providing anecdotal evidence.

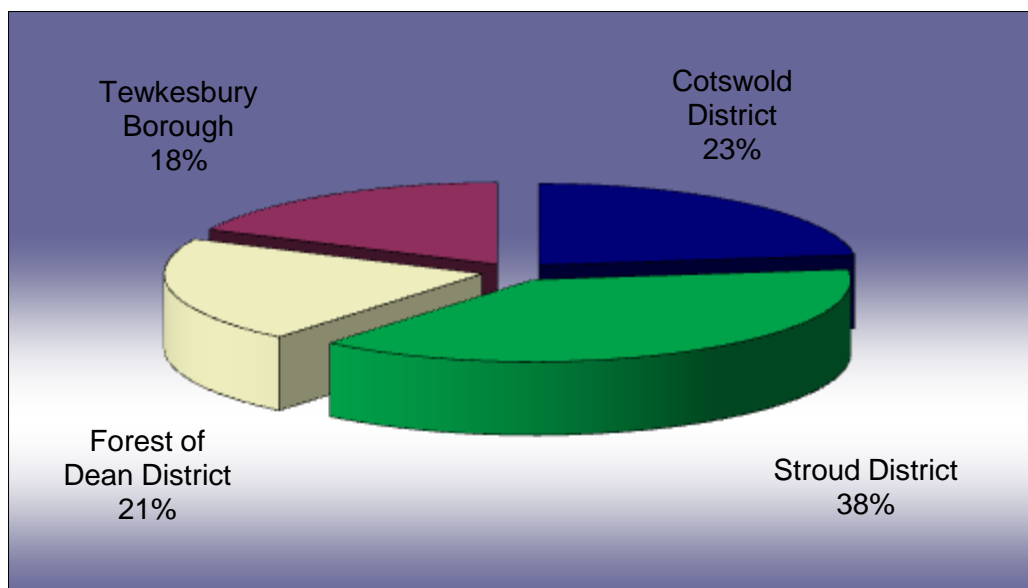
**This report focuses on quarter 2 of year three, October to December 2008.** For earlier reports and newsletters please go to [www.villageagents.org.uk](http://www.villageagents.org.uk)

## 1.0 REFERRALS – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008

After each visit a Village Agent makes, they are required to fill in an online referral, 'gateway' form. The form collects demographic data, the nature of the problem and other information relevant to any follow up visit. The gateway form is then submitted to the required agency by the Village Agent for the query to be addressed.

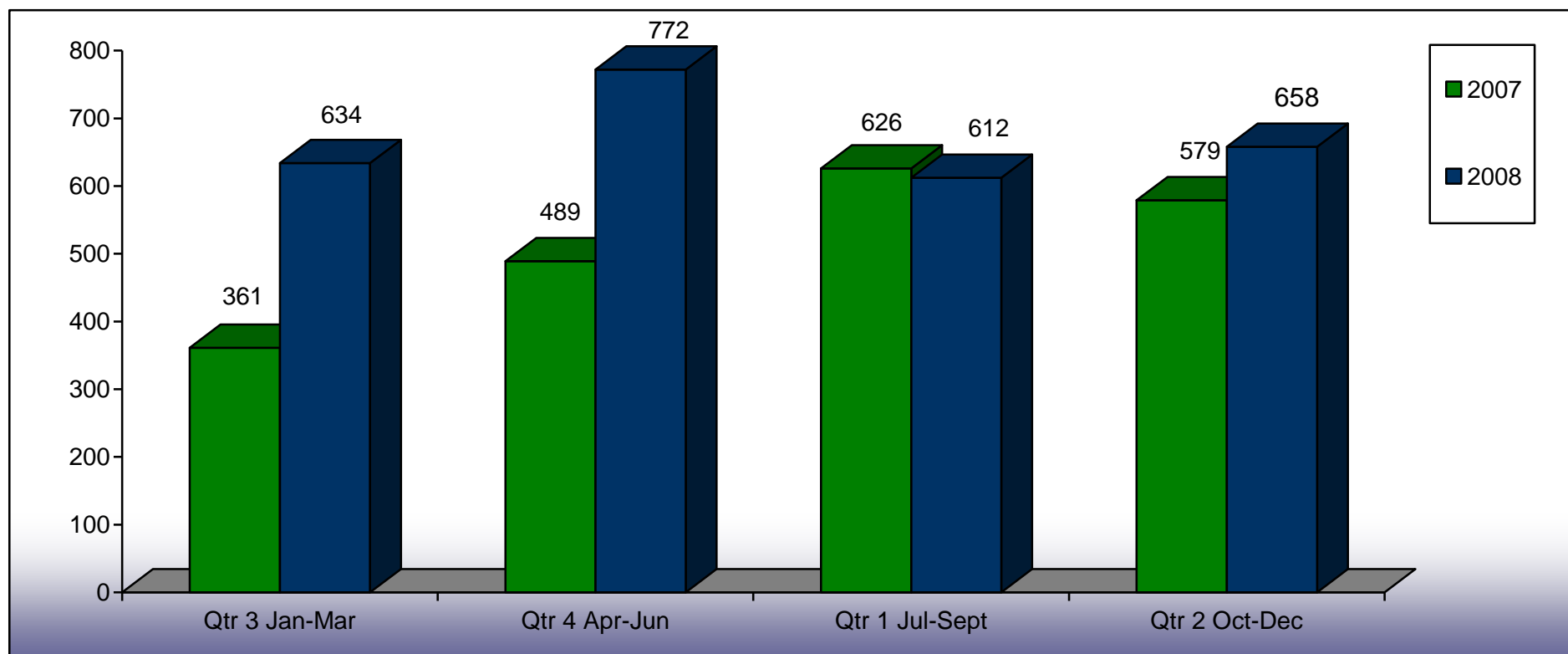


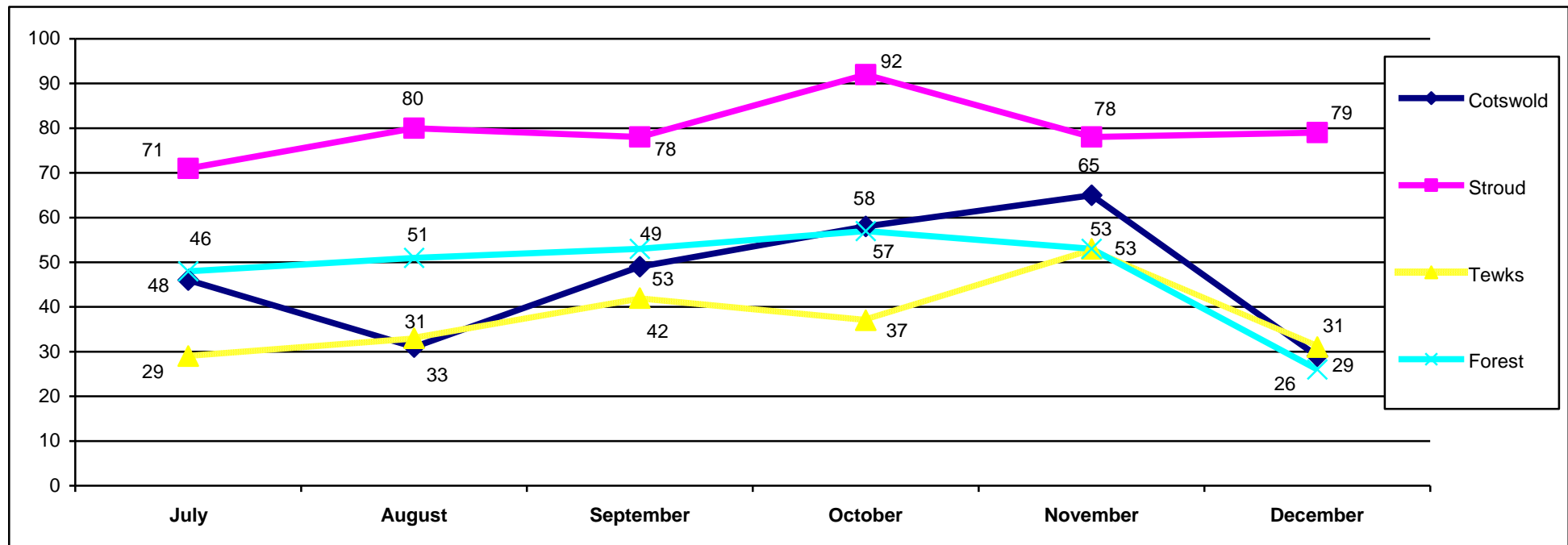
During quarter 2 of year 3, (October to December 2008) a total of **658** gateway forms were submitted by Village Agents. A percentage breakdown by district is shown below.



The district breakdown can vary by month and by quarter, during quarter 1 of year 3 the majority of referrals came from the Stroud area (38%) followed by Cotswold and the Forest of Dean with 23% and 21% respectively.

Each quarter in 2008 has seen a significant increase in the numbers of gateway forms submitted by Village Agents when compared with 2007 with the exception of quarter 1 (July to September) which saw a slight decrease. One of the main reasons for this may be that July 2007 saw major flooding in Gloucestershire and the Village Agents were integral to helping out in their communities in the aftermath and in the months that followed. Therefore a decrease in gateway forms over the holiday/summer months in 2008 is in some part to be expected. October to December saw a significant increase in gateway forms submitted from 579 in 2007 to 658 in 2008. **This brings the total number of gateways for 2008 (calendar year) to 2,676, a 30% increase compared to 2007.**





Over the course of quarter 1, referrals made by the Stroud District Village Agents remained relatively constant with a rise in October. Referrals decreased in the Cotswold District during December. This in part can be attributed to a change in personnel in one cluster and a number of illnesses. Referrals in the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury Borough were also significantly down in December. However, Village Agent activity changes slightly over the Christmas period with focus on organising events such as carol services, lunches and outings, rather than focussing on home visits and referrals to agencies.

## 2.0 ACHIEVEMENTS AND EVENTS QUARTER 2 YEAR 3

### THIRD SECTOR AWARDS

Earlier in the year, Village Agents were shortlisted as finalists in the national Third Sector Excellence Awards in the Public Sector Partnership category. In November the awards ceremony was held at the Hurlingham Club in South London. Despite making the final three, Village Agents were beaten to the award by Battersea Arts for an innovative project in their area of London. Being nominated and reaching the final was excellent publicity for the Village Agent scheme.

### VILLAGE AGENTS AWAY DAY



On 26<sup>th</sup> November all Village Agents met at Maisemore Village Hall to discuss the scheme, ways forward and how to learn from the pilot stage. The day was extremely productive with a number of new ideas being formulated some of which have already been 'actioned' and being used to make the scheme more efficient.

### SHARING BEST PRACTICE NATIONALLY

Over the past few months there has been a great deal of interest from other areas around the country looking to develop their own scheme. In November the Cabinet Office made a two day visit to Gloucestershire and spent their time talking to recipients of the scheme and shadowing Village Agents. Essex County Council along with Essex Rural Community Council made a visit in October and have secured funding to start a Village Agent scheme. In the coming months visits have been arranged for Wiltshire, the Isle of Wight, Leicestershire and Rutland and the Department for Work and Pensions.