

Evaluation of Safer Living Foundation Circles of Support and Accountability

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Research Team

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Evaluation of prison and community based CoSA

Study One: Demographics and Journeys of Core Members

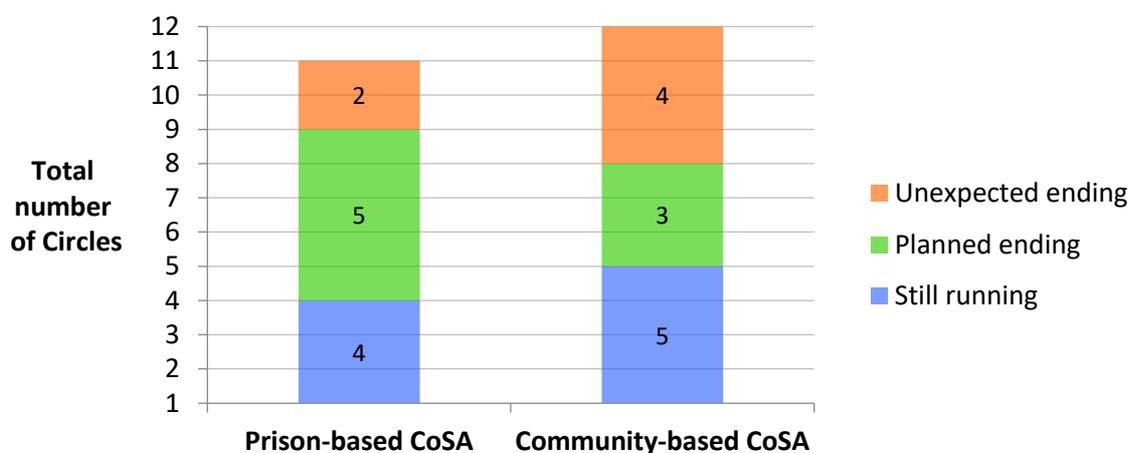
This study addresses the following aims:

- To report on the types of referrals received to the service in order to understand the demographics of the sample and inform appropriate referrals in the future;
- Explore reasons for Circles ending;

Referrals and overview of journeys

Twenty-four Circles have started to date and figure 1 below provides a summary of the operation of these Circles. Eleven of these are prison-based, 12 are community-based and one is a CoSA for a young person. The figure below shows the number of CoSA that are still running as well as those which have ceased and whether this was planned or not. The two prison-CoSA which had unexpected endings were due to a recall to prison and a drop out. Of the four community CoSA which ended unexpectedly, two were recalled, one dropped out and one was removed due to risk issues.

Figure 1. Summary of operation and ended prison and community CoSA



Demographics

The data below is based on a sample of Core Members who consented to participate in the evaluation.

Core Members' age at commencement of CoSA ranged from 45 to 73 (mean: 60.29, std dev: 8.83) (n=7). All participants were white British (n=7). Five had no religion and the remaining two were Buddhist. Four of the seven had some form of learning disability, two had a mental health condition and two had a physical/mobility disability. In terms of marital status, three were divorced/separated,

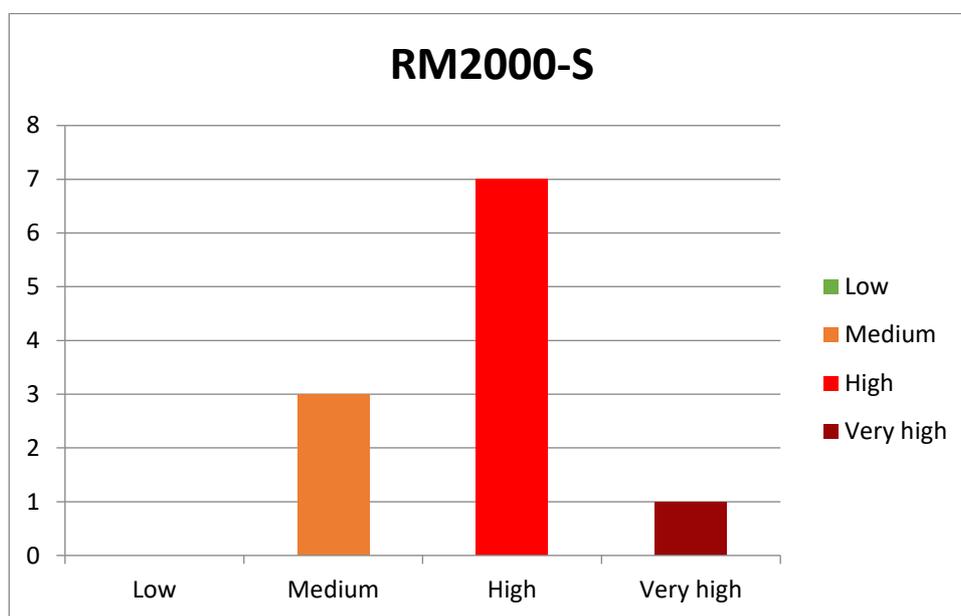
one was married and two had never been married. Four of seven had no qualifications and two had a vocational qualification.

The sample had completed a range of treatment programmes during their time in prison including SOTP (n=8), cognitive behavioural treatment (n=5), HSP (n=1), extended (n=1) and substance use (n=1).

Risk

Figure 2 below summarises the different levels of risk of sexual reoffending for 11 Core Members according to the Risk Matrix 2000-Sexual; seven were classed as high risk, three as medium and one as very high risk. In terms of risk of violent reoffending (RM2000-V), five were classed as low risk, four as very high and two as high risk.

Figure 2. Summary of risk level for Core Members (RM2000-S)



Study Two: Psychological change over time

This study addresses the following aim:

- To understand the impact of CoSA in relation to a number of psychological factors associated with risk of reoffending and/or successful reintegration (by assessing psychometric change over time).

This study will address the following research questions:

1. Are there any changes in levels of (i) hope, (ii) personal growth, (iii) social/emotional loneliness, (iv) social support and (v) mental wellbeing over time for individuals on a prison-based CoSA?
2. Are there any changes in levels of (i) hope, (ii) personal growth, (iii) social/emotional loneliness, (iv) social support and (v) mental wellbeing over time for individuals on a community-based CoSA?

Method

Procedure

The following psychometric scales were administered to both prison and community-based CoSA Core Members at the time points outlined in table 1 below:

- i) Hope scale (Snyder et al., 1991)
- ii) Personal Growth Initiative Scale II (PGIS II; Robitschek et al., 2012)
- iii) Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale-short version (SELSA-S; Ditommaso, Brannen & Best, 2004)
- iv) MOS Social Support Survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991)
- v) Adapted Emotional Loneliness Questionnaire (NOMS)

Table 1.

	Time 1 (T1)	Time 2 (T2)	Time 3 (T3)	Mid Time (MID)	Time 4 (T4)
Prison-CoSA	Pre-Circle	2-4 weeks pre-release	2-4 weeks post-release	Mid point of CoSA	Post-Circle
Community-CoSA	Pre-Circle	N/A	N/A	Mid point of CoSA	Post-Circle

There are additional time points surrounding the time of release for prison-based CoSA. This is due to the significance of this period of time and the literature that indicates the period of release is particularly sensitive when thinking about desistance from sexual crime (see Aresti, Eatough & Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Pratt, Piper, Appleby, Webb & Shaw, 2006).

The data is collected at the time points to allow for analysis of change over time. In particular, the pre and post-Circle time points are of interest as it is hypothesised that they should indicate significantly improved scores on the psychological constructs measured over time on a Circle.

In addition to the psychometric scales mentioned above, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant et al., 2006; Tennant et al., 2007) is also administered every three months (including a pre and post-CoSA time point).

Results

Analysis is limited to a small number of participants at present. For this report, statistical analysis was used to compare T1 (pre-CoSA) and T2 (pre-release) and T1 and T3 (post-release). These time points were selected due to the insufficient sample size for any data from later time points. The results are also only based on the prison-CoSA sample as data for community-CoSA commenced later and has an insufficient sample size at present.

Below are the psychometrics that demonstrated significant difference, i.e. a significant change in scores over the time points analysed.

Hope

There was a significant difference in the scores for the Hope Pathway domain at T1 (M=2.93, SD=0.40) and T2 (M=3.32, SD=0.51); $t(6)=-2.98$, $p = 0.025$. These results suggest that participating in a Circle whilst still in prison affects participants' success in planning to meet goals. Specifically, the results suggest that after participating in a Circle for a number of weeks in prison, the ability to plan to meet goals increased and thus their hope increased (n=7). There was no significant difference across T1-T3 for Hope Pathway or for Hope Agency across both time comparisons. However, it should be noted that the Hope Pathway domain showed very poor reliability and therefore these results (and the reliability of this scale) need investigating further once sample size increases.

Social and Emotional Loneliness

There was a significant difference in the scores for the SELSA Family sub-scale at T1 (M=3.69, SD=1.71) and T2 (M=2.74, SD=1.51); $t(6)=3.97$, $p = 0.007$. Similarly, the same sub-scale showed significant difference at T1 (M=5.07, SD=0.98) and T3 (M=4.29, SD=1.10); $t(5)=4.21$, $p = 0.008$. These results suggest that participating in a Circle whilst still in prison affects participants' loneliness in relation to family. Specifically, the results suggest that after participating in a Circle for a number of weeks in prison (T1-T2), and once in the community (T1-T3), the loneliness of participants in relation to family decreased, meaning they felt less lonely in this area (n=7; n=6 respectively). There was no significant difference across T1-T2 or T1-T3 for the social loneliness domain or the romantic loneliness sub-scale.

Social Support

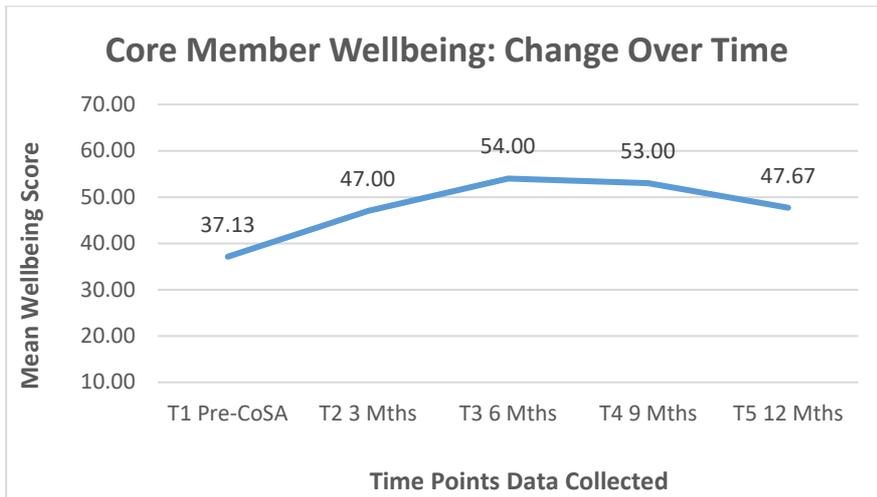
There was a significant difference in the scores for MOS Social Support at T1 (M=2.34, SD=.60) and T3 (M=2.63, SD=.63); $t(4)=-6.04$, $p = 0.004$. These results suggest that participating in a Circle whilst in prison and up to release into the community affects participants' perceived social support. Specifically, the results suggest that after participating in a Circle for a number of weeks in prison and in the community, the perceived social support of participants increased (n=5). These results require breaking down further into the domains of social support. This will be done once sample size has increased.

Mental Wellbeing

Numbers are very low (n=8, 2, 2, 1, 3 consecutively for the reported time points) and therefore statistical analysis was not conducted.

Figure 3 below demonstrates the samples' wellbeing means from pre-CoSA to 12 months into CoSA. The average population mean of wellbeing is 51 for males (WEMWBS User Guide). The results demonstrate that prior to commencing a Circle, the sample of Core Members had below average wellbeing (mean 37). At 6 months in, their wellbeing is shown to increase to comparable levels to that of the general population (mean 54). Interestingly, wellbeing scores decrease slightly at 9 and 12 months. However, this data is based on very small numbers of participants and therefore no conclusions can be drawn from this data trend at this stage.

Figure 3. Core Member Wellbeing Scores Over Time



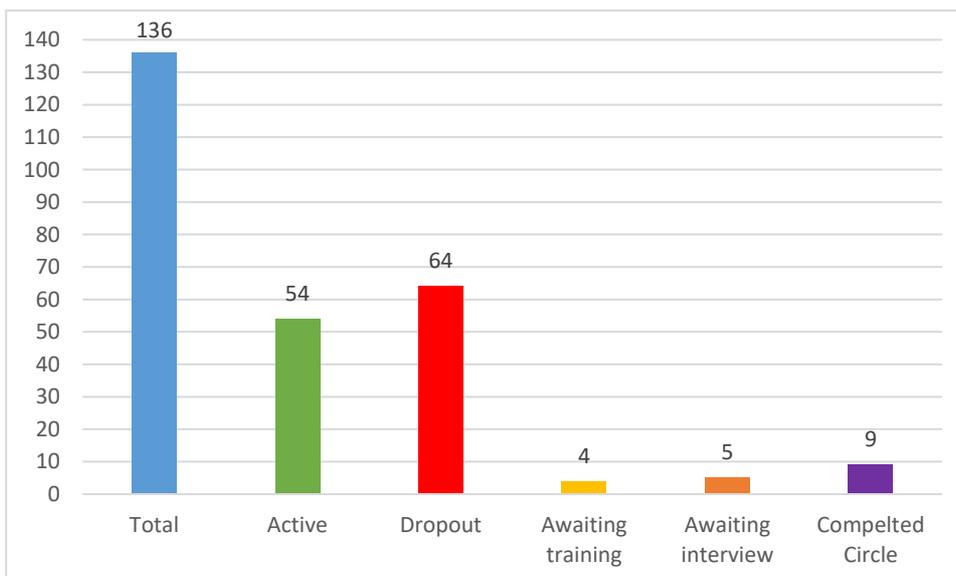
Study Three: Volunteers

This study addresses the following aim:

- To understand reasons for volunteers exiting the service in order to inform volunteer selection, recruitment and engagement.

Since SLF CoSA became operational, there have been a total of 136 volunteers to engage in the service at some level. There are currently 36 volunteers active on a Circle (plus five who are on hold and 13 awaiting Circle allocation), four awaiting training (training due 19th June) and five awaiting interview. Seventy-three volunteers have dropped out in total (21 before interview, 11 before training, seven after training and before Circle allocation, 25 whilst on a Circle and nine did not return after completing a Circle). Figure 4 below demonstrates in graphical form the volunteer numbers described.

Figure 4. Volunteer numbers

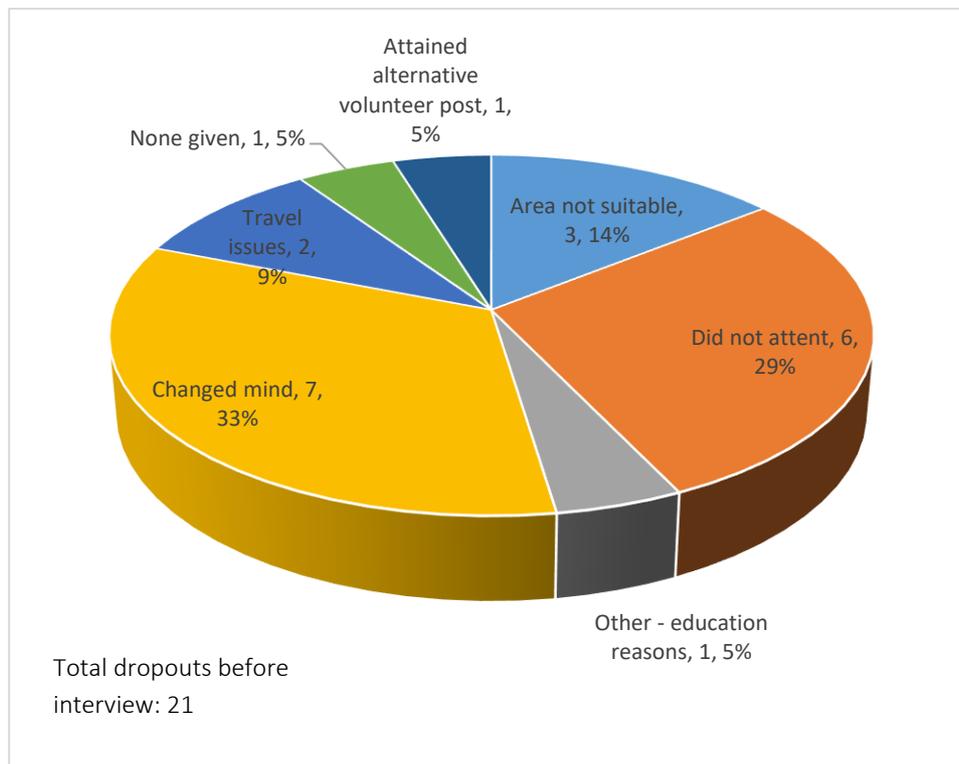


For the purpose of this study the volunteer dropouts are of interest. These results demonstrate that just over 50% of volunteers dropout. This is a high dropout rate and is important to explore due to

the difficulties faced when recruiting volunteers and the high demand for more CoSA for Core Members.

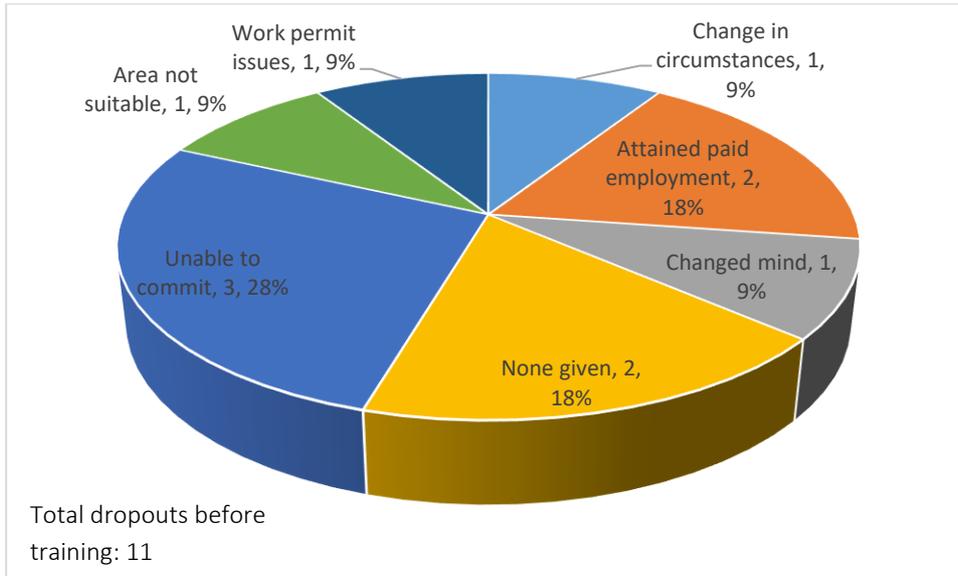
Reasons for volunteer dropout include volunteers changing their mind about participating, attaining paid employment and the area not being suitable. Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 below provide a summary of the reasons for volunteer dropout at the different stages of CoSA involvement.

Figure 5. Reasons for drop out before interview



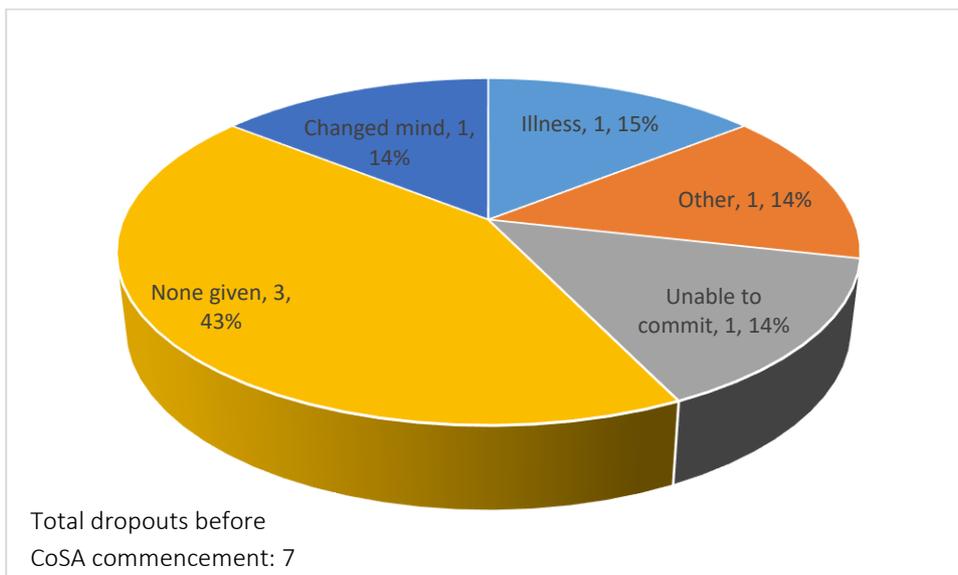
The total number of volunteer dropouts prior to interview were 21. The highest reason for volunteer dropout prior to interview was a change of heart (33%). However, this was closely followed by volunteers who do not turn up to interview (29%). It would be useful for future research to engage with those volunteers who do not attend interview to determine why this was. It may be that once specific reasons are identified, these fit with the other reasons already identified within figure 5. This would be interesting to investigate. Moreover, it would also be interesting to explore in more detail the sample who have changed their mind.

Figure 6. Reasons for drop out before training



The total number of volunteer dropouts prior to interview were 11. The highest reason for volunteer dropout prior to training was volunteers feeling unable to commit to CoSA (28%). This was followed by volunteers attaining paid employment (18%). It is hypothesised that those volunteers who dropout due to being unable to commit had considered the time commitments that are explained to them in detail in the interview process and have since decided they cannot commit. This indicates that the interview process is a useful tool for sifting out those who will not be able to engage in a CoSA. However, arguably it would be more useful and less resource intensive for this to occur prior to interview. This is something that may want to be considered by the SLF when thinking about advertisement and recruitment.

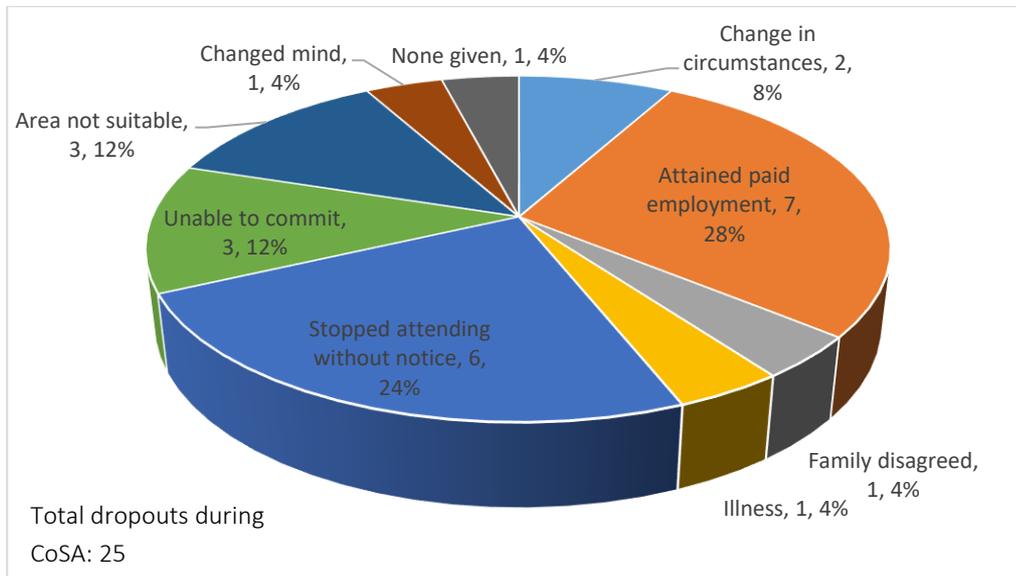
Figure 7. Reasons for drop out before CoSA commencement (post-training)



The total number of volunteer dropouts prior to interview were seven. Half of the volunteers gave no reason for dropout, the remaining reasons for the four volunteers who dropped out at this stage

can be seen in the figure. Dropout rates are lowest at this stage, indicating good volunteer commitment post-training.

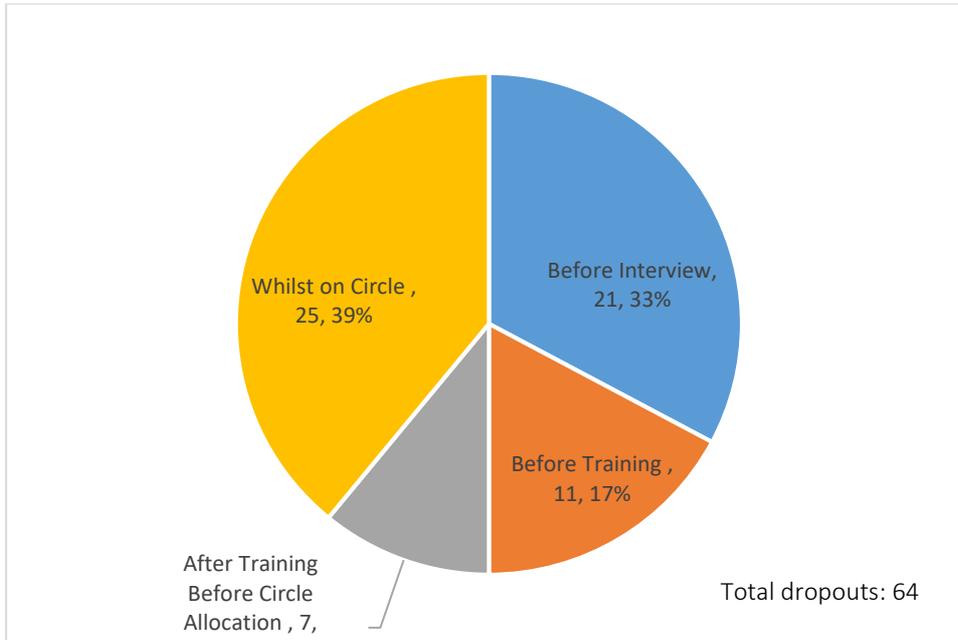
Figure 8. Reason for dropout during CoSA



The total number of volunteer dropouts prior to interview were 25. This number is the highest dropout rate of all the stages referred to. This is discussed in more detail below. The most prevalent reason for volunteer dropout whilst engaging with CoSA was volunteers gaining paid employment (28%). Although possibly having a negative impact on the CoSA, this reason should not be seen in a negative light as volunteers gaining employment is something which indicates positive contribution to society. It does however raise questions over the type of volunteers recruited. For example, if lots of students are recruited, this may account for this high dropout. The second highest reason for drop our was volunteers stopping attending without giving any notice. This indicates that there were no further reasons given as to why these volunteers dropped out. This would be interesting to explore in more detail, as this is a high rate of dropout.

The final figure below (figure 9) demonstrates the total dropouts at the different times engaging in a CoSA. The graph demonstrates that the highest dropout rates are actually when volunteers are already engaging in a Circle (39%), closely followed by dropouts prior to interview (33%). It is important to note this as this demonstrates that dropouts are occurring at a time when high investment has been made by the SLF, volunteers and Core Members (i.e. volunteers have already been interviewed, trained and have formed a relationship with the volunteers and Core Member on a CoSA). There are two immediate negative consequences of this: to the SLF resources, and to the CoSA itself. The impact of volunteers dropping out once engaging in a CoSA could mean delays in Circle continuation, decrease in morale of volunteers and Core Member and at worst, folding of the Circle and possible recall or reconviction for the Core Member. As already stated, further exploration into the reasons for dropout at this stage would be useful as it may inform possible ways to prevent this in the future.

Figure 9. Volunteer dropout rates at different points of time engaging in CoSA



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