TIME WELL SPENT

A NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

NCVO100

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, we would like to thank the NCVO Board of Trustees for agreeing to fund this research, and particularly its Chair, Peter Kellner. Our thanks also go to Karl Wilding, Director of Public Policy and Volunteering, who did everything to make this project happen.

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Two years ago, when NHS hospitals – among other organisations around the world – were attacked by ransomware hackers, one of the first to have their computers back up and running was the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. It did not pay the hackers a penny. Instead, Hertfordshire police provided a team of young techies from their squad of volunteers, whose employers encouraged their staff to support local charities and public services. Welcome to 21st century volunteering.

The scale of volunteering in today's Britain is prodigious. Two in five adults – almost 20 million people – have taken part within the past year. The vast majority, 96%, are happy with the experience. 81% do their volunteering in and for their local communities.

These figures come from a survey of more than 10,000 people conducted by YouGov for NCVO. It provides the most detailed analysis of volunteering for a decade.

It depicts the rich diversity of civil society in action in villages, towns and cities throughout Britain. As a sector – indeed, as a nation – we can be proud of what it shows.

That said, there is room for improvement; and not just room but an urgent need. Our survey finds that stubborn demographic gaps remain. Britain's volunteer community is tilted towards people who are white, middle-class and middle-aged. We need active strategies to close these gaps.

We also need a new settlement between the world of volunteering and the provision of public services. The relationship has grown, is certain to continue growing, and needs to be done in a way that ensures a triple win: for the users of public services, for the providers, and for the volunteers who help them.

That settlement must be based on two pillars: ensuring the best volunteering experience, and making sure that their role is to support, and not replace, the paid professionals, be they teachers, doctors, nurses, care workers or support staff.

One glaring need highlighted by our survey is to expand employer-supported volunteering. The talented techies who restored the Lister Hospital's computer system provide a stunning example of what can be achieved. Many employers allow staff paid time off to take part in volunteering; but their employees are often unaware of this – or are aware but say that their organisation does not actively encourage it.

We therefore face a double challenge: to encourage many more employers to offer time off – and for a much higher proportion of workers to take up the offer. We should aim for workers who do *not* engage in employer-supported volunteering to be rare exceptions. If we work effectively for this goal, at all levels, in all industries and in the public, private and third sectors, then we shall not only contribute to a healthier, happier society; we should finally be able to close the demographic gaps that still persist.

All this needs to be done at a time when new technology poses challenges to the world of volunteering as great as to any other section of our economy and society. Only 6% of volunteering is done exclusively online; but as much as 57% is done through a mix of online and offline activities. The opportunities are plainly huge: we can expect many more services such as the RNIB's telephone-based support by tech volunteers for blind and partially sighted people

As the figures for digital volunteering grow, our sector needs to think hard about how it can be done best.

Do we need more flexible arrangements, especially for the younger, most tech-savvy volunteers? What can we learn from disabled volunteers, who are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to provide their service online?

How can small charities, with few if any staff, be helped to embrace digital volunteering? How do we best combine online help with the face-to-face service that so many citizens value?

On these, as on so many issues, our survey raises more questions than it answers. Good research invariably does that. I am proud of the outstanding NCVO team that has produced this report.

They deserve our thanks; and the best way to thank them will be for us all – in NCVO, our sector, and British society more generally – to answer those questions and rise to the challenges the survey has so clearly identified.

Peter Kellner
Chair, NCVO

1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the survey's background, the overall research objectives, our approach, and a guide to reading the report, with a note on definitions.

1.1 Research background

People get involved in volunteering in a variety of ways and are motivated to do so for a multitude of reasons. Organisations, associations and institutions can act as a catalyst for people's involvement, providing opportunities that resonate with what matters to them, their interests and their aspirations, as well as their concerns and needs.

How an organisation engages with people is paramount to whether they start and continue their involvement. In a context where there is much interest in getting more people to volunteer, including in public services, it seems more important than ever for practice and policy to consider the experience of volunteering from the volunteers' perspectives and understand what makes a quality experience in their eyes.

This research builds on existing knowledge on volunteering from other data sources, principally the Community Life Survey[1] funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Whilst the Community Life Survey provides a very useful statistical resource on volunteering trends, it does not include questions on the volunteer experience, volunteer management and the impact of volunteering.

These topics were last included in a national survey over 10 years ago when the Office of the Third Sector commissioned the Institute for Volunteering Research and NatCen to produce Helping Out[2]. We wanted our research to focus on these gaps.

This research also builds on a range of other volunteering research, which we quote throughout the report. The Pathways through Participation research[3], a qualitative project conducted by NCVO, the Institute for Volunteering Research and Involve that looked at how people's involvement changes over their lifetime, has been particularly influential in shaping our thinking.

1.2 Overall aims and objectives

The overall objectives of this research are to understand volunteers' experience of volunteering, provide rich and practical insights to inform practice and policy, address knowledge gaps and generate new evidence. Specifically, it aims to:

- gain a **rounder view of participation** and capture the different ways people volunteer and recent trends
- understand **how volunteering fits into people's lives**, including whether opportunities are meeting needs and expectations and what drives or prevents a meaningful experience
- understand **people's experiences across the volunteer journey** and explore what a quality experience and quality management look like from the volunteer's perspective
- explore the **impact of volunteering**, primarily on volunteers themselves
- understand **how to better engage potential volunteers**, including barriers and enablers to volunteering.

1.3 Our approach

This survey was completed by adults aged 18+ in Great Britain through YouGov's panel, via an online self-completion questionnaire between 4 and 15 May 2018. The total sample achieved was 10,103 respondents. The data was weighted to reflect the national population by key demographics: age, gender, education level and social grade.

Questionnaire development was informed by a scoping phase, which included a review of existing literature and stakeholder interviews.

As well as engaging with stakeholders during the questionnaire development stage, we engaged with them at the analysis stage to review emerging findings and refine lines of enquiry. We also organised a number of stakeholder workshops to further discuss our findings and explore what they meant for practice and policy.

More details of our methodology and approach can be found in Appendix 1.

1.4 Reading this report

To do justice to the richness of the survey data, we have produced a very detailed report, which is not intended to be read from beginning to end. We see it more as a reference tool that people should consult when looking for data on a particular topic, dipping in and out as the need arises.

The report describes the main findings from the research and is divided into seven key sections. For ease of use, the beginning of each section includes a summary of key findings. At the end of the report, we bring together what we have learned from the research and look at the implications of the findings for practice and policy.

All tables and charts in this report show weighted percentages. Base sizes (the number of cases on which percentages are based), where shown, are unweighted. Generally, differences between groups in the research findings are statistically significant at the 95% level.

A few words on definitions

We know that not everyone will call their involvement 'volunteering'; in this survey we have tried to capture the range of activities that people undertake when giving unpaid help through groups, clubs and organisations.

Throughout the report, we use the term 'volunteering' to refer to formal volunteering through groups, clubs or organisations, which is the focus of this survey. It does not examine the more informal ways of giving time and helping others outside groups, clubs or organisations.

Whilst 'volunteering' is used throughout the report, in the survey respondents were not asked if they had volunteered. Instead, they were asked whether they had been involved with any groups, clubs or organisation and then whether they had *provided unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations*, prompted by a list of activities as in the Community Life Survey. This method was used to encompass the full range of volunteering activities, some of which may not otherwise be recognised by respondents as volunteering.

Throughout the report, we look at the extent to which people have formally volunteered over their lifetime and recently. We refer to people using the following categories:

- **recent volunteers**, who have volunteered ***at least once in the last 12 months***
- **lapsed volunteers**, who volunteered ***between one and three years ago***
- those who have volunteered ***in the past but more than three years ago***
- those who have ***never volunteered*** through a group, club or organisation.

We generally refer to frequency of volunteering using the following categories:

- **frequent volunteers**, who volunteered ***at least once a month***
- **occasional volunteers**, who volunteered ***less frequently than once a month***.

A fuller list of definitions is included in Appendix 1.

1 DCMS (2018) *Community Life Survey* https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-2017-18 (accessed January 2019).

2 Low, N., Butt, S., Ellis, P. and Davis Smith, J.(2007). *Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving.* London: Cabinet Office. http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/2547/1/Helping%20Out.pdf (accessed January 2019).

3 Brodie, E. et al. (2011) *Pathways through Participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship?* London: NCVO/IVR/Involve. https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/publications/project-reports/pathways-through-participation (accessed January 2019).

2 AT A GLANCE

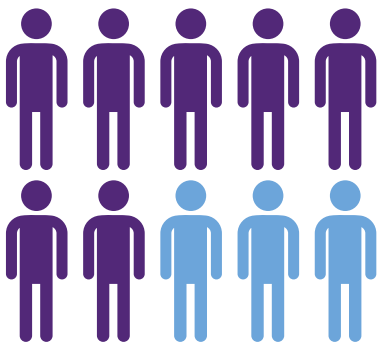
This section provides a quick overview of what's covered in this report. It includes the areas explored and some of the key findings.

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

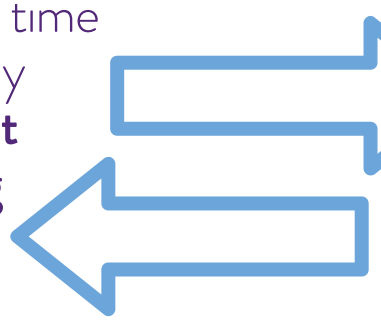
Section 3 describes the levels of volunteering through a group, club or organisation, both recently (over the last 12 months) and over people's lifetimes. It also explores who does and does not volunteer by key demographic groups.

7 in 10

people taking part in this survey have **volunteered through a group, club or organisation** at some point in their lives.

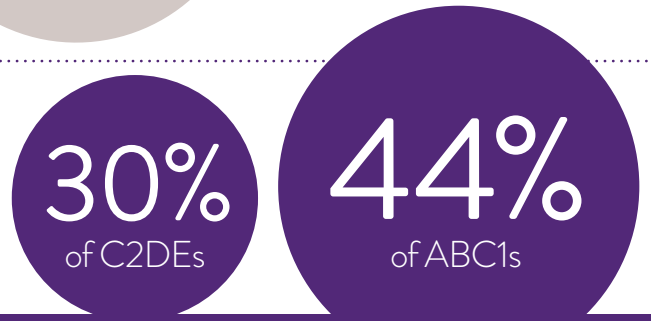


Those who give time most commonly **move in and out of volunteering** throughout their lives.



Of those surveyed, those who are **both consistently and heavily** involved over their lifetime are **a minority**.

Those from **lower socio-economic groups** (C2DE) are less likely to have volunteered recently than those from **higher socio-economic groups** (ABC1).



VOLUNTEER CONTEXT

Section 4 looks at the context of volunteering, focusing on recent volunteers' main volunteering experience: what volunteers do, when and how they give their time, who they give time to and how they get started, including their motivations.

81%

of volunteers give help **locally, in their own neighbourhoods**.

10% of volunteers give time through **employer-supported volunteering**.

Volunteers most often carry out activities through **a mix of online and offline activities** (57%).

Volunteers **combine different types of activities, causes, organisations and frequency of involvement** which reflect their own lifestyles, values and priorities.

23%

exclusively volunteer as part of a **one off** activity or **dip in and out of** activities.

Most volunteers give time to **civil society** organisations

67%

...but a significant minority volunteer for **public sector** organisations.

17%

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Section 5 explores in detail the experience of recent volunteers across the volunteer journey, focusing on their *main* organisation. It looks at how their experience varies by different types of volunteers and volunteering, and whether and how volunteers' experiences are meeting their needs and expectations.

96%

say they are very or fairly satisfied with their volunteering.

Whilst overall perceptions are very positive, some volunteers tend to have less positive views about some aspects of their experience, including **younger volunteers**, **disabled volunteers**, those **volunteering through employers** and **public sector volunteers**.

7 in 10

say they have **already or would recommend their volunteering** to a friend or family member.

agree things could be **much better organised**.

20% vs **10%**

Public sector volunteers are twice as likely to agree that their volunteering is 'too structured or formalised' than **civil society volunteers**.

83%

agree they feel **well supported**.

Key aspects of the volunteer experience most strongly associated with satisfaction include **feelings of support, recognition and belonging**.

1 in 5

volunteers feel their volunteering is becoming **too much like paid work**.

VOLUNTEER IMPACTS

Section 6 looks at the volunteers' perceptions about the impacts of volunteering, including the benefits they feel they get out of taking part and any negative experiences they have had. These findings focus on recent volunteers.

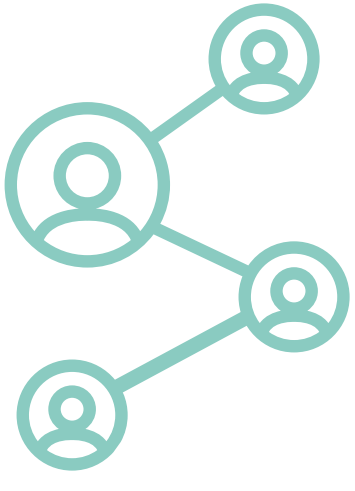
Enjoyment ranks highest among a range of benefits that volunteers feel they get out of volunteering.

Few volunteers report having **negative experiences**.

The most common negative experiences include **too much time being taken up**, being out of pocket and being pressured to do more.

90%

of volunteers feel they **make a difference** through their volunteering – most commonly to an individual's life.

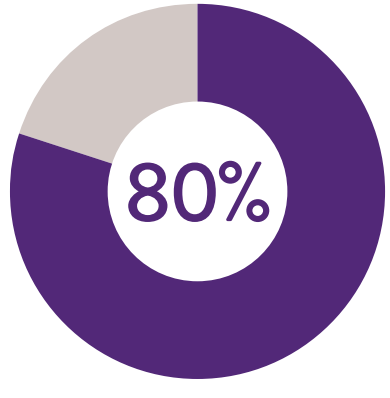


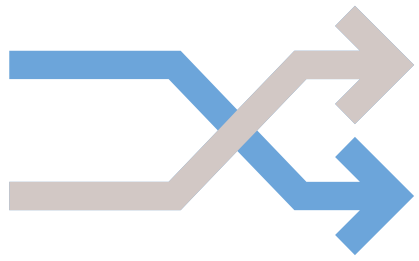
The age groups most likely to agree that their volunteering **helped them feel less isolated** are **18–24 year-olds** (77%) and **25–34 year olds** (76%).

VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Section 7 looks at how likely recent volunteers are to continue volunteering with their *main* organisation over the next year and their reasons for continuing or not. It also explores the experience of lapsed volunteers and the reasons they stopped volunteering. Finally, it draws together the factors most strongly associated with volunteer retention.

The majority of recent volunteers say they are **likely to continue volunteering** over the next 12 months.





Among recent volunteers unlikely to continue volunteering in the next 12 months, the most common reason given is **changing circumstances**.

The factors particularly strongly associated with recent volunteers continuing to volunteer include: **enjoyment**, **making a difference**, **not feeling pressured** and **not having too much of their time taken up**.

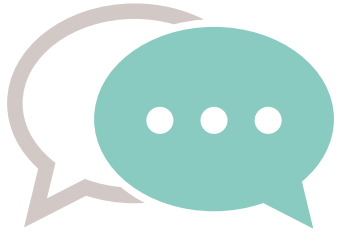
LOOKING AHEAD

Section 8 looks to the future, focusing on those who have not volunteered recently, and explores what stops people from volunteering and what might encourage them to get involved in the future. It then looks at levels of interest in a number of future volunteering opportunities, among both volunteers and non-volunteers.

Key barriers to volunteering (among those not involved in the last three years or ever) are **doing other things in their spare time** and **not wanting to make an ongoing commitment**.

Among those who have never volunteered, one of the most frequently cited reasons for not volunteering is that they have **never thought about it**.

Having flexibility and **being asked directly** are most likely to encourage those who have not volunteered recently.



Among all those surveyed who were interested in future opportunities, the most appealing are:

52%

Opportunities to **make use of existing skills or experience**.

50%

Opportunities to take part in **fun and enjoyable activities**.

44%

Opportunities to combine volunteering with **existing hobbies or interests**.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Section 9 summarises some of our key learnings from across the research. It identifies a number of areas for organisations to think about if they want to support people in having a quality volunteer experience. It also looks at what the findings might mean for policy, in the context of current societal trends.

The research suggests **eight key features that make up a quality experience** for volunteers and may be considered by volunteer-involving organisations, government and civil society more broadly when looking at the challenges and opportunities of volunteering.

Across these, our overall conclusion is that **at its best, volunteering is time well spent**.

This section describes the levels of participation in volunteering through a group, club or organisation both recently (in the last 12 months) and over people's lifetimes. It also explores who is more and less likely to volunteer by key demographic groups.

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

Levels of participation

- Of those surveyed, most people (seven in ten) have volunteered through a group, club or organisation at some point in their lives, and 38% have done so in the last year (ie recently).
- Around half of recent volunteers have given their time to more than one organisation.
- Recent volunteers are more likely to give time frequently (at least once a month) than occasionally (less than once a month) to their main organisation; these frequent volunteers make up around one quarter (26%) of the people who took part in the survey.
- The average (median) hours of volunteering undertaken per month is eight hours.

Participation over people's lifetime

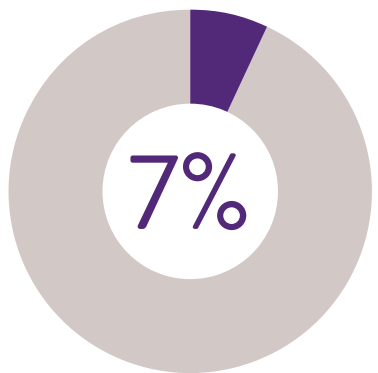
- People most commonly move in and out of light volunteering throughout their lives.
- Those who are both consistently and heavily involved in volunteering over their lifetime are a minority (7% of all surveyed).
- There are indications that volunteers are getting involved at a younger age than they did previously, with 70% of 18–24-year-olds reporting volunteering at some point, compared with 35% of those aged 65 and over saying that they had volunteered by age 25. This may be partly explained by incorrect recall.

Who volunteers and who doesn't?

- Participation levels in recent volunteering are highest among those aged 65 and over (45%). They are lowest among 25–34 year-olds (31%), and generally lower for people aged between 25 and 54.
- The most notable difference between those who volunteer and those who do not relates to socio-economic status, with those from lower grades much less likely to have volunteered recently than those from higher grades (30% vs 44%), or ever.
- Full time workers are less likely to have volunteered recently than those working part time, retired people and students. However, they are more likely to volunteer than those who are unemployed or not working who have the lowest rates of participation across the different working statuses.
- There are lower levels of participation among those living in urban areas than those living in town and fringe, and rural areas.
- Women are more engaged than men, but this is likely related to their working patterns.
- Variations by ethnicity or by disability are less marked.

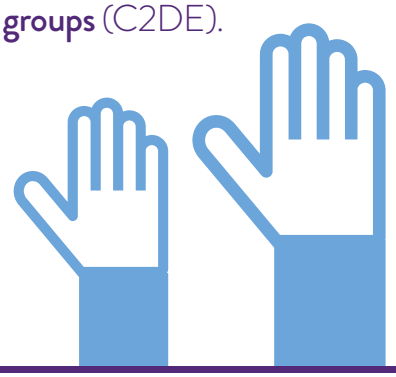
7 in 10 of those surveyed have **volunteered through a group, club or organisation** at some point in their lives.

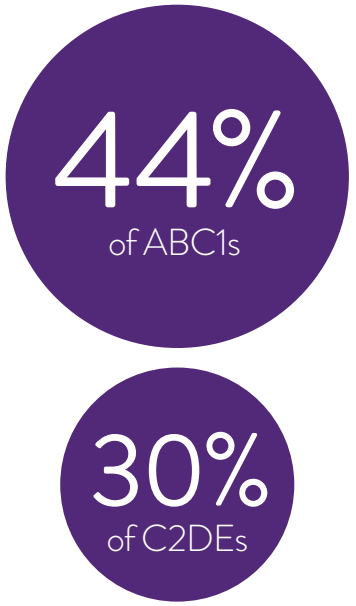
People most commonly **move in and out** of volunteering throughout their lives.



Those who are **both consistently and heavily** involved in volunteering over their lifetime are **a minority**.

Those from **higher socio-economic groups** (ABC1) are more likely to have volunteered in the last 12 months compared with those from **lower socio-economic groups** (C2DE).





3.2 OVERALL LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

This section looks at levels of involvement in volunteering[4] through a group, club or organisation, and how much people give their time.

There is a spectrum of engagement, but most people have volunteered through a group, club or organisation (ie formal volunteering) over their lifetime.

As seen in Figure 1, almost seven in ten (69%) of people taking part in the survey have formally volunteered at some point in their lives.

Around four in ten (38%) are recent volunteers, ie have volunteered at least once in the last 12 months. This represents similar findings to the Community Life Survey[5] though some caution should be taken when comparing these surveys.[6] A further 11% volunteered between one and three years ago and 20% at some point three or more years ago.

The remainder, around three in ten (31%), reported that they had never volunteered through a group, club or organisation. This is higher than some other studies,[7] however comparison is challenging due to differing definitions of volunteering, and there is little other data on this area.

38% of the people surveyed have volunteered recently, ie at least once in the last 12 months

Around one in two volunteers give their time to more than one organisation.

Over half (55%) of recent volunteers had given time to more than one organisation in the last year: 29% to two organisations and 26% to three or more organisations. Lapsed volunteers (those who volunteered within the last three years but *not* within the last year) were more likely to have volunteered for just one organisation than recent volunteers (63% vs 45%).

An average (median) of eight hours of volunteering is undertaken per month.

Around one in five (22%) recent volunteers said they did not know how many hours they had given in the past four weeks. Of those that did recall, the average (median) time given was eight hours.[8] This included a small number of respondents who reported giving a significant amount of time (including over 100 hours).

4 The term 'volunteering' was not used in the questionnaire – respondents were asked if they had given unpaid help, prompted by a number of activities; see Appendix 1 for more on this. Respondents were also not asked about informal volunteering carried out on an individual basis (ie not through a group, club or organisation), which is covered in other studies, including the Community Life Survey.

5 DCMS (2018) *Community Life Survey* www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-2017-18 (accessed January 2019).

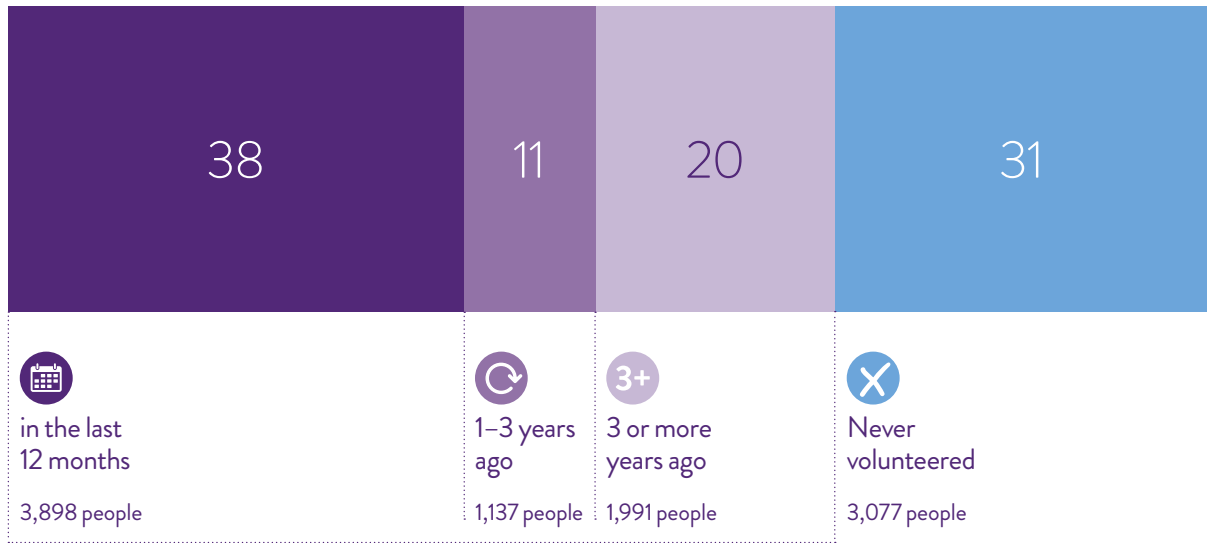
6 Respondents in this survey are 18+, compared with 16+ in the Community Life Survey. This survey also covers England, Scotland and Wales, whereas the Community Life Survey covers England only.

7 Including Kamerāde's analysis of the British Household Survey in: Kamerāde, D. (2011) 'An untapped pool of volunteers for the Big Society? Not enough social capital? Depends on how you measure it....' http://usir.salford.ac.uk/18041 (accessed January 2019).

8 The median is provided as an average rather than the mean (which is 13.6 hours), as a small number of respondents reported giving a significant amount of time which skews the mean, therefore the median is a more likely reflection of the average.

Figure 1: Spectrum of engagement

Involvement in volunteering through a group, club or organisation (% of all people surveyed)



69% of people taking part in the survey have volunteered at some point in their lives

10,103
BASE: TOTAL – ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Recent volunteers are more likely to give their time frequently.

As seen in Figure 2, around two-thirds (67%) of recent volunteers reported volunteering at least once a month (ie volunteered frequently) for their main organisation.[9] The most frequent volunteers, who volunteered at least once a week, made up 39% of recent volunteers. A lower proportion (27%) had volunteered less frequently than once a month (ie occasionally).

Those who had volunteered both in the last year and at least once a month (for their main organisation) made up around a quarter (26%) of the people surveyed overall.

This is slightly higher than the 22% reported in the 2017/2018 Community Life data.[10]

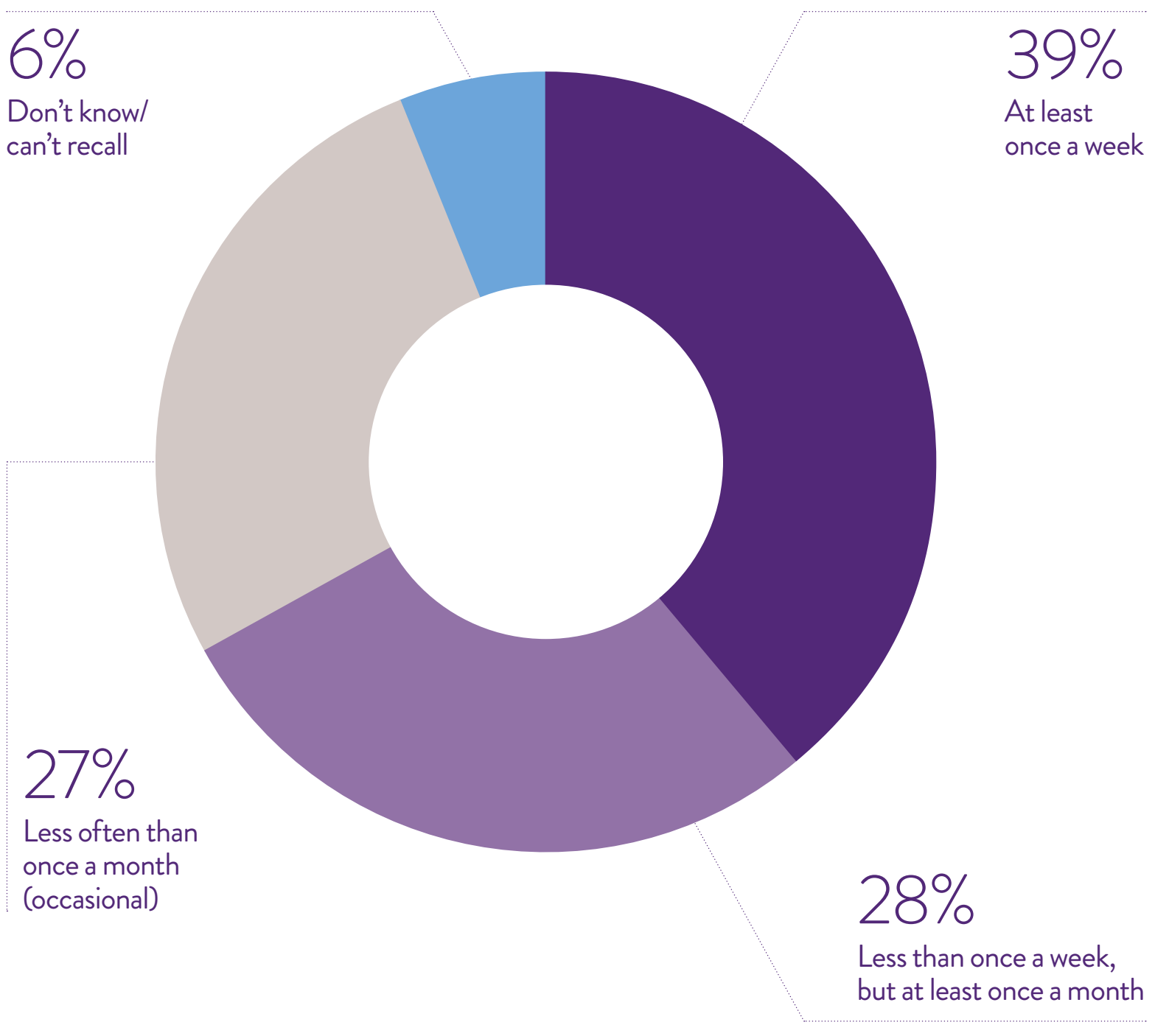
Lapsed volunteers were much less likely to have volunteered on a frequent basis than recent volunteers and were equally likely to have volunteered frequently and occasionally (both 45%).

9 If volunteers gave time to more than one organisation, they were asked to refer to the one they gave the most unpaid help to over the past year (ie gave the most time, resources, etc). If they had given to two of these equally, they were asked to choose the one they helped most recently.

10 DCMS (2018). Again, caution should be applied when comparing figures. As well as differences cited previously, data on frequency in this survey refers to volunteers' main organisations, whereas the Community Life Survey looks at frequency across all volunteering.

Figure 2: Frequency of volunteering

Main organisation (% of all recent volunteers)



67% of recent volunteers give time at least once a month (ie frequently).

3.3 VOLUNTEERING OVER PEOPLE'S LIFETIME

This section looks at volunteering through groups, clubs or organisations over one's entire life.

People most commonly move in and out of volunteering over their lifetime.

As seen in Figure 3, of those who have volunteered at some point in their life, over half (55%) said that they had been involved occasionally throughout the course of their life. This was more common than those who said they had been consistently involved (22%) or hardly involved (21%).

This reflects the dynamic nature of volunteering, with people moving in and out of groups, clubs and organisations, reflecting what is happening in their lives at different times, as highlighted in other studies.[11]

Volunteers are more likely to be lightly than heavily involved when they give their time.

More than half (52%) of volunteers described their involvement over the course of their life as 'always light or more light than heavy' – compared with a much smaller proportion who described it as 'always heavy or more heavy than light' (17%).

The remainder described it as something in between: 'equally light and heavy' (25%).

Recent involvement reflects a higher level of engagement generally.

Recent volunteers were more likely to have been consistently involved (34%) than those who had volunteered longer ago (10% of lapsed volunteers and 6% of volunteers who had given time three or more years ago).

Conversely, those who had volunteered further in the past were more likely to be occasionally or hardly involved, though this may be related to issues of recall.

Similarly, 23% of recent volunteers said their involvement had been 'always heavy' or 'more heavy than light', contrasted with 9% of lapsed volunteers and 11% of those who volunteered three or more years ago. The contrast was even greater among recent volunteers who gave time frequently (28%).

Those who have given time both consistently and heavily over their life course are very much a minority.

Looking at both the frequency and intensity of volunteering over the life course (Figure 3), the research identifies a very small group of volunteers who reported being both consistently and heavily involved over time (7% of the people surveyed overall).

This supports existing evidence that a small proportion of the population – the 'civic core' – carries out most volunteering. Research has found that 9% of the adult population accounts for 51% of all volunteering hours.[12]

Volunteers may be getting involved at a younger age than they did in the past.

Of those aged 18–24 year-olds, 70% reported they had been volunteers, either recently or at some point previously. By contrast, 35% of those aged 65 and over reported that they had volunteered by age 25.

This difference may be explained by inaccurate recall, as those in the 65+ age group were remembering something that happened potentially over 50 years ago. However, the difference might also indicate that people are coming into volunteering at a younger age than has been the case in the past.

Other evidence has shown that rates of formal volunteering among 16–25 year-olds have increased in recent years, possibly influenced by youth-focused volunteering programmes, the 2012 Olympic Games and a tough employment market.[13]

However, the latest Community Life survey[14] data shows that recent volunteering among 16-24 year-olds who give time at least once a year are similar to overall rates for the whole population.

11 Kamerāde (2011); Brodie, E. et al. (2011) *Pathways Through Participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship?* London: NCVO/IVR/Involve.

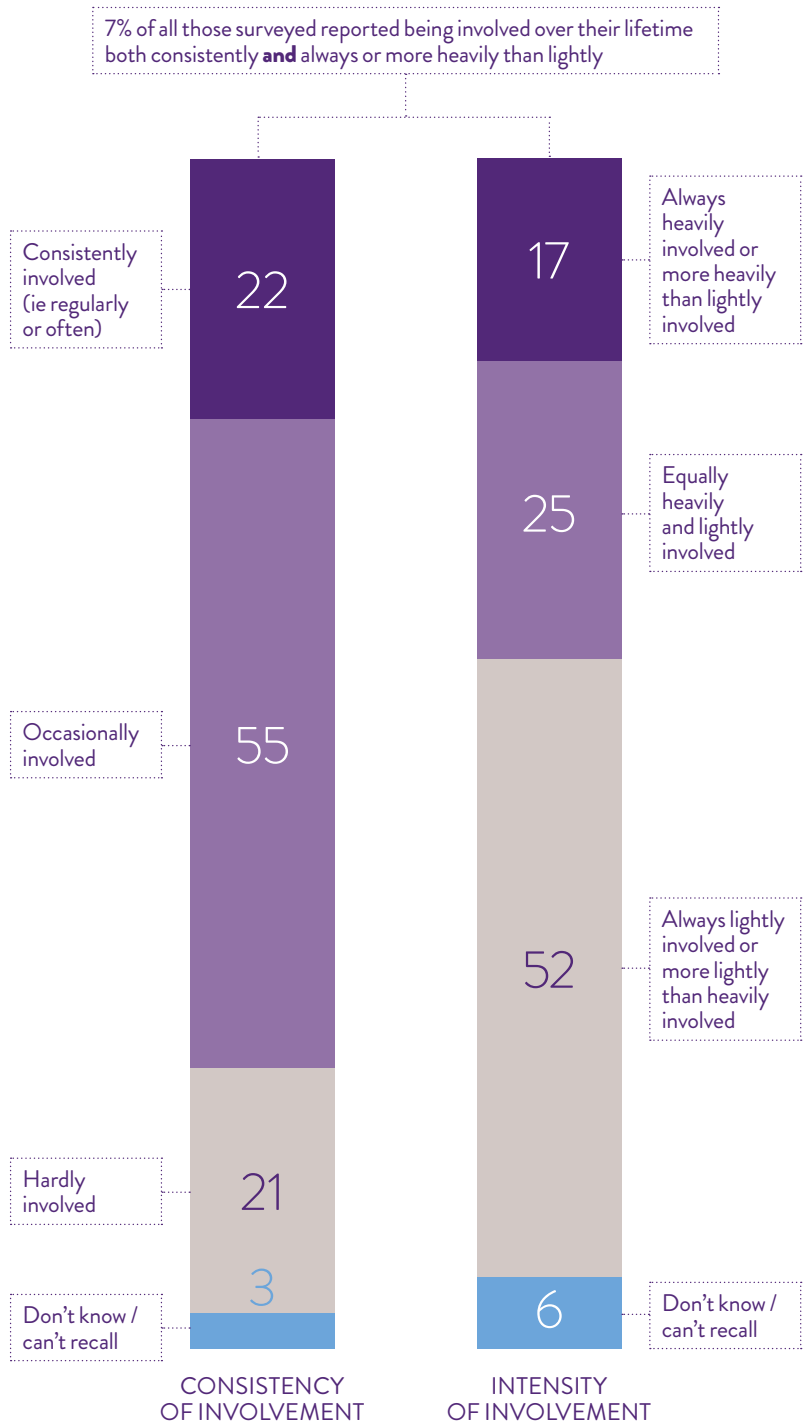
12 Mohan, J. and Bulloch, S. L. (2012) 'The idea of a "civic core": What are the overlaps between charitable giving, volunteering, and civic participation in England and Wales?' *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper 73*. https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/documents/tsrc/working-papers/working-paper-73.pdf (accessed January 2019).

13 Hornung, L., Egan, J. and Jochum, V. (2017) *Getting Involved*. London: NCVO. https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/participation/NCVO_2017_Getting_Involved.pdf (accessed January 2019).

14 DCMS (2018).

Figure 3: Volunteering over life course

Consistency and intensity when volunteering (% of all who have volunteered at some point)



3.4 WHO VOLUNTEERS AND WHO DOESN'T?

This section looks at who is more and less likely to volunteer through groups, clubs or organisations by key demographic groups. Each socio-demographic group is taken separately – this does not take into account interactions between the different factors themselves, although we specify where this may be having an effect.

We focus on variations across demographics among recent volunteers (ie those who have volunteered in the last 12 months), recent volunteers who have given time frequently (at least once a month) and those who say they have never volunteered through a group, club or organisation.

The variations are more marked within these groups at each end of the engagement spectrum, whereas those in between, ie those who had volunteered between one and three years go (lapsed) and more than three years ago, were less notable.

Those aged 65 and over are most likely to have volunteered recently.

As shown in Figure 4 people aged 65 and over were the most likely to have volunteered recently with 45% saying they had volunteered in the last year. Similarly, people in this age group were most likely to volunteer frequently (35%).

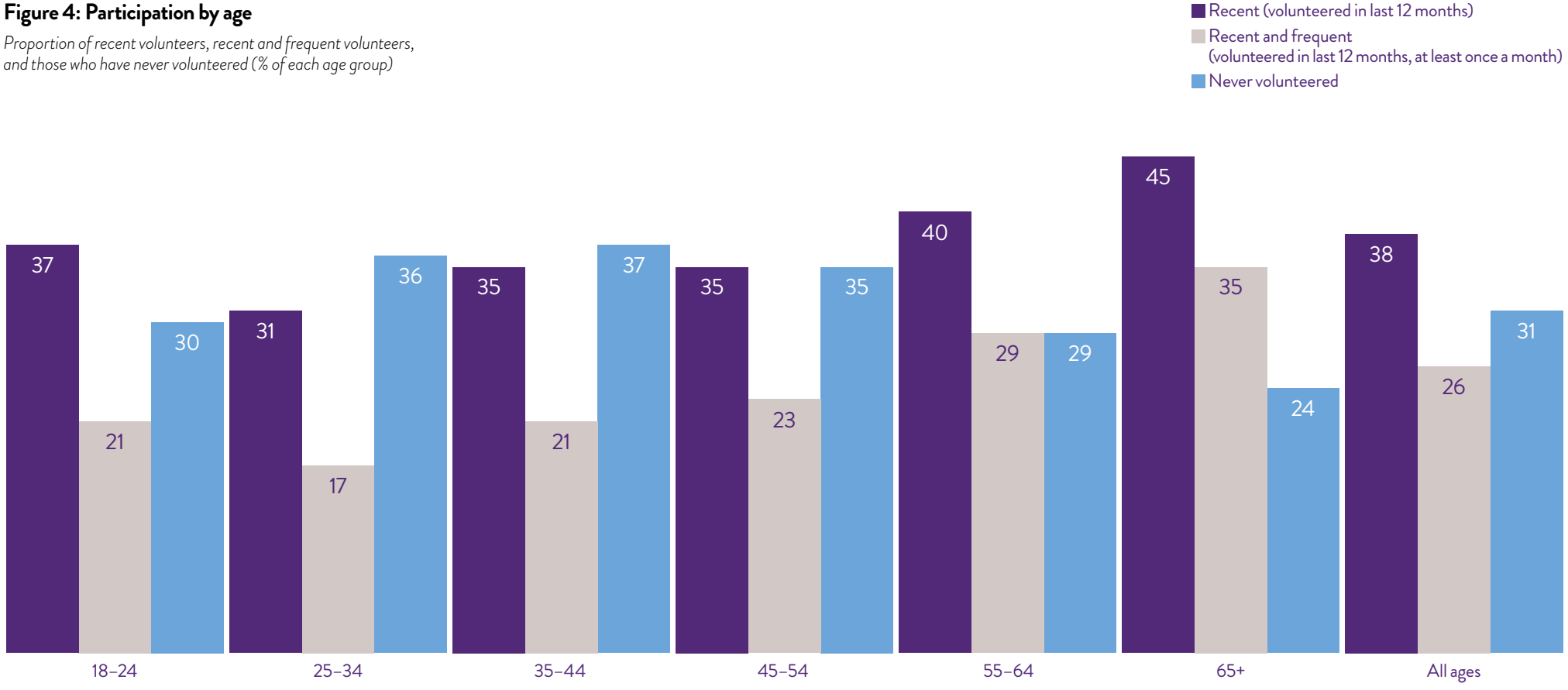
In other data, including the Community Life Survey, a drop in participation is seen for those aged 75+ when compared with the 65–74 age group, which is not observed in these survey findings.[15]

The proportion of those who had volunteered in the last 12 months was lowest among 25–34 year-olds (31%) and generally lower for people aged between 25 and 54.

15 One possible explanation for this difference is the data collection methods that the surveys use. While our survey is solely collected online, the Community Life Survey sends out a significant number of paper questionnaires alongside the online version. In 2017/18, 26% of all Community Life Survey respondents returned a paper questionnaire, and this proportion was the highest for 75+ age group where half (52%) of the respondents made use of the paper format.

Figure 4: Participation by age

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each age group)



People aged **65 and over** were the **most likely** to have volunteered recently.

45% of 65+ year-olds

VS

31% of 25–34 year-olds

The most significant differences between volunteers and non volunteers relate to socio-economic status and education levels.

As seen in Figure 5, people from higher socio-economic groups (ABC1[16]) were more likely than those from lower grades (C2DE) to be recent volunteers (44% vs 30%) and frequent volunteers (30% vs 19%). Those from lower socio-economic groups were most likely to say they had never volunteered (40% C2DE vs 25% ABC1).

Among those who had volunteered at some point, those in socio-economic grades ABC1 were more likely than those in grades C2DE to say that they have been consistently involved (24% vs 19%) and that they have always been involved heavily or more heavily than lightly (19% vs 15%).

Additionally, those with higher educational qualifications were more likely to have volunteered recently than those with lower educational qualifications. For example, 48% of those educated to degree level or above had volunteered recently, compared with 20% of those with no qualifications.

This confirms what we know from other studies; those from well-educated backgrounds and higher socio-economic groups are more likely to volunteer.[17] Indeed, the 'civic core'[18] that comprises the most engaged (see section 3.3) is made up of people who are more likely to be from managerial and professional occupations and who have higher educational qualifications.

16 Social grade is a classification based on the occupation of the chief income earner of the household, with six categories. In this report we group them into two broad categories, ABC1 (non-manual occupations) and C2DE (manual occupations and people not working). More detail of individual groups here: www.nrs.co.uk/nrs-print/lifestyle-and-classification-data/social-grade (accessed January 2019).

17 NCVO (2018) *UK Civil Society Almanac*. London: NCVO. https://data.ncvo.org.uk/ (accessed January 2019).

18 Mohan and Bulloch (2012).

Those **educated to a higher level** are more likely to have volunteered recently.

48% Degree level or above

VS

20% No qualifications

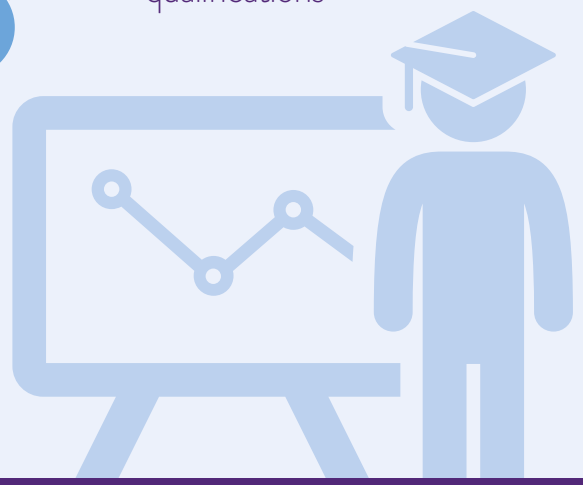
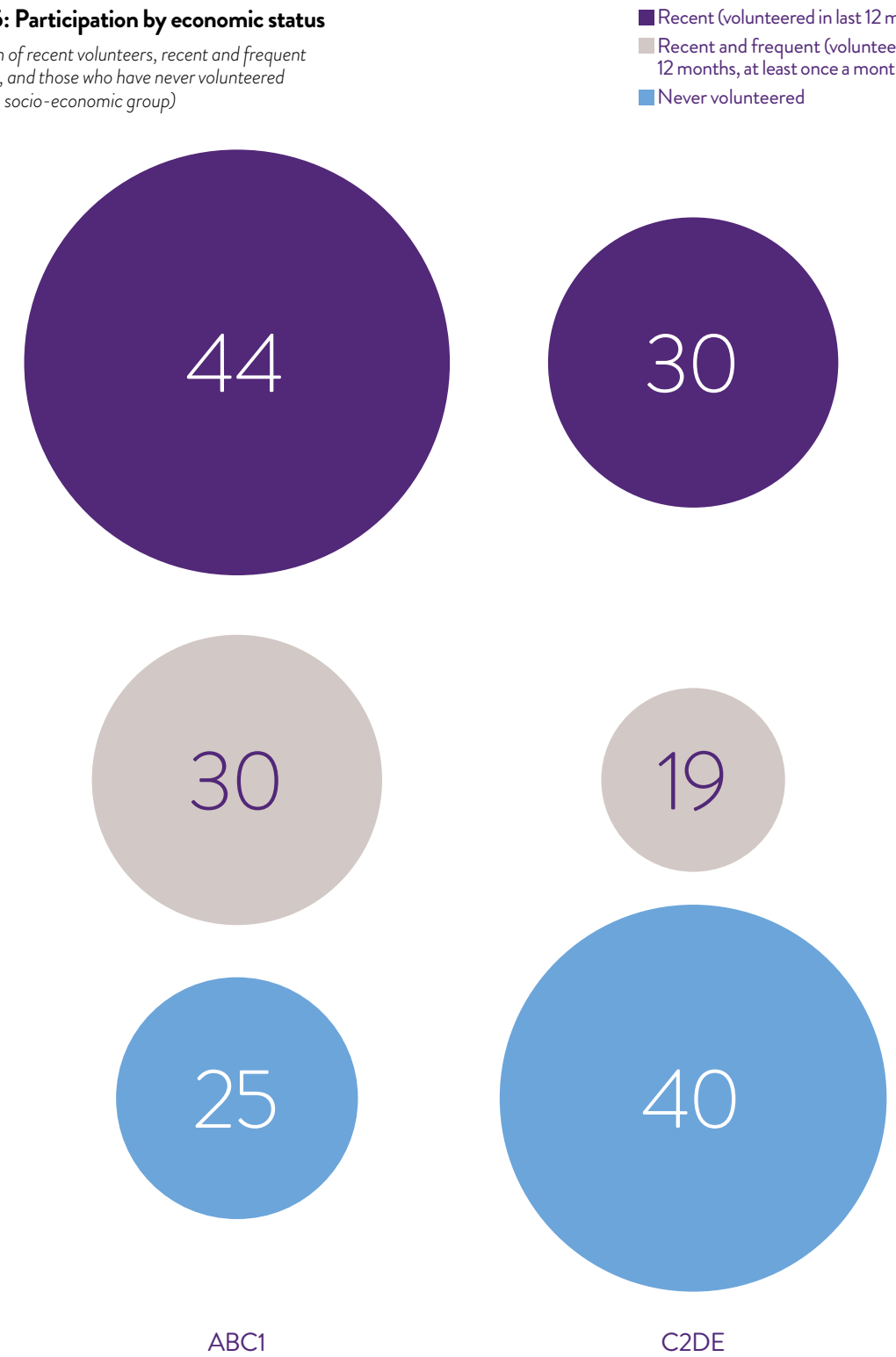


Figure 5: Participation by economic status

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each socio-economic group)



Unemployed people and those not working are least likely to have ever volunteered.

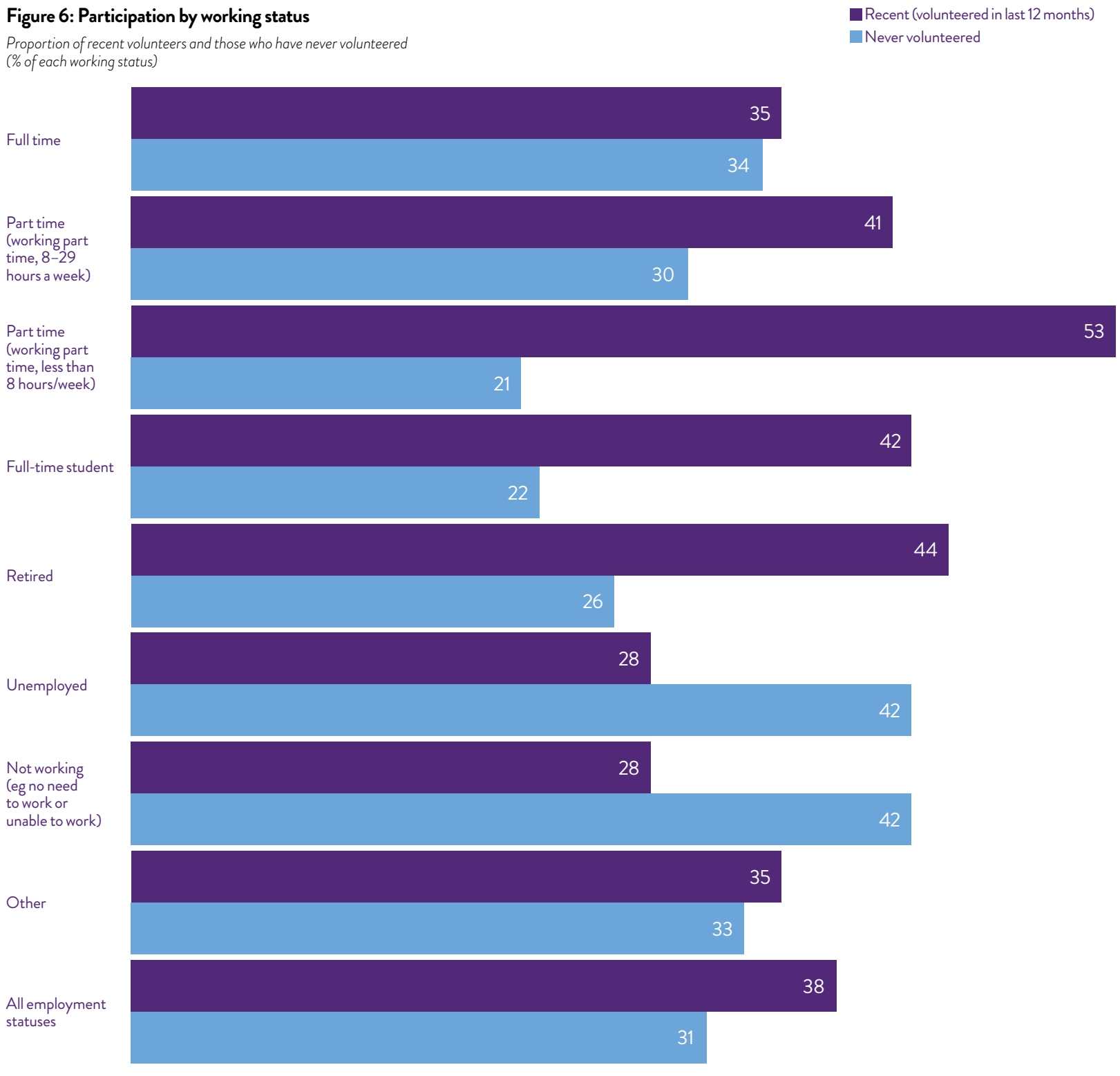
As shown in Figure 6, people who are unemployed or not working (eg no need to work or are unable to work) were most likely to say they had never volunteered (both 42%) and showed the lowest recent participation rates overall (both 28%) and for frequent volunteering (both 18%). People working full time were less likely to have volunteered in the last year (35%) than those working part time for 8–29 hours a week (41%) or fewer than eight hours a week (53%). They were also less likely to volunteer than retired people (44%) or full-time students (42%).

Those working part time (fewer than eight hours a week) and retired people were most likely to report consistent involvement over their lifetime (34% and 28%). Retired people were the most likely to say they had always been heavily involved or more heavily than lightly involved (23%).

Those **working part-time (less than 8 hours a week)** are most likely to have volunteered recently.

Figure 6: Participation by working status

Proportion of recent volunteers and those who have never volunteered (% of each working status)



Women are more engaged than men, but this is likely related to their working patterns.

As shown in Figure 7, women were slightly more likely to be recent volunteers than men (39% vs 37%) and to have volunteered frequently (27% vs 25%).

This seems to be largely explained by work patterns, as when we look at just full-time workers, part-time workers and the unemployed, we see no differences in the propensity of men and women to volunteer.

Across our surveyed respondents, a greater proportion of women than men work part time[19] and, as seen above, part-time workers were more likely to volunteer. This may explain the slightly higher instance of volunteering among women.

Men were more likely to say they have never volunteered than women (34% vs 29%) and men who have volunteered at some point were more likely than women to say they have been hardly involved throughout their life (23% vs 19%).

However, when involved, men were more likely to say their involvement was always or more often 'heavy' than women (19% vs 16%). It should be noted, however, that the differences are not very large.

Ethnicity has little bearing on overall propensity to volunteer.

Rates of volunteering were similar for people who were white and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME) with 38% and 36% respectively being recent volunteers; this was similar across individual ethnic groups as well as overall (Figure 8).

There is some indication that people from BAME backgrounds may be less likely to volunteer frequently, however low base sizes (provided in Figure 8) among BAME respondents, especially among those who are older, means the data is not conclusive.[20]

Life course participation is similar between those from BAME backgrounds and white ethnic groups.

19 The greater number of women working part time is also supported by other evidence, including ONS (2013) 'Women in the labour market.' https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/womeninthelabourmarket/2013-09-25 (accessed January 2019).

20 See note on BAME findings in *Spotlight (2): on the experience of BAME volunteers* (section 5).

Figure 7: Participation by gender

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each gender)

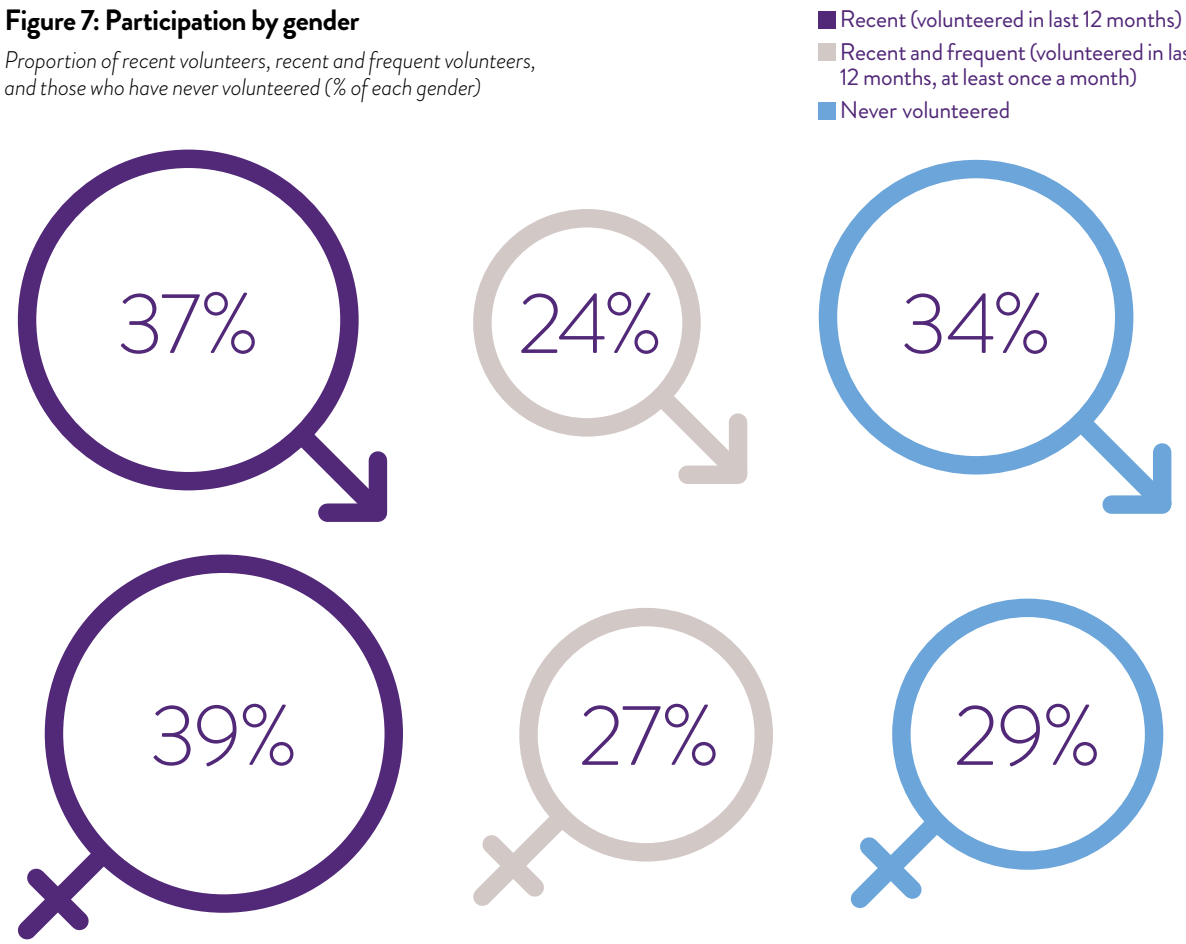


Figure 8: Participation by ethnicity

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each ethnicity)

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	BAME (all)	White	All ethnicities
	(213)	*(73)*	*(126)*	*(52)*	*(464)*	*(9,606)*	*(10,103)*
Recent (volunteered in last 12 months)	33	32	39	43	36	38	38
Recent and frequent (volunteered in last 12 months, at least once a month)	15	21	23	21	19	26	26
Never volunteered	35	37	34	23	34	31	31

There is little variation based on disability overall, though some by age.

As shown in Figure 9, people who reported that their day-to-day activities were limited in some way because of a health problem or a disability (disabled people) were no more or less likely to be recent volunteers (39%) than people who reported that their activities were not limited in any way (non-disabled people)[21] (38%). Disabled respondents were slightly more likely to be frequent volunteers (27% vs 25%).

However, these figures mask significant variation by age. Young disabled people (those aged 18–24 and 25–34) were more likely to have volunteered recently and frequently than non-disabled people of the same age, and older disabled people (55+) were *less* likely to have volunteered recently than non-disabled people of the same age. This could be reflective of the types of disability experienced by each age group or the different impact disability has on people as they get older.

People in urban areas are less likely to volunteer – but this is likely linked to their age profile.

Reflecting other data,[22] people living in urban areas were less likely to be recent volunteers than those living in rural areas and town and fringe areas (37% vs 44% and 43%). They were also more likely to say they have never volunteered (33% vs 27% and 25%).

This is also reflected in involvement over the life course, with urban volunteers less likely to say they have been consistently involved than those living in town and fringe, and rural areas (21% vs 27% and 26%) and more likely than those in rural areas to say their involvement has always been light or more light than heavy (53% vs 48%).

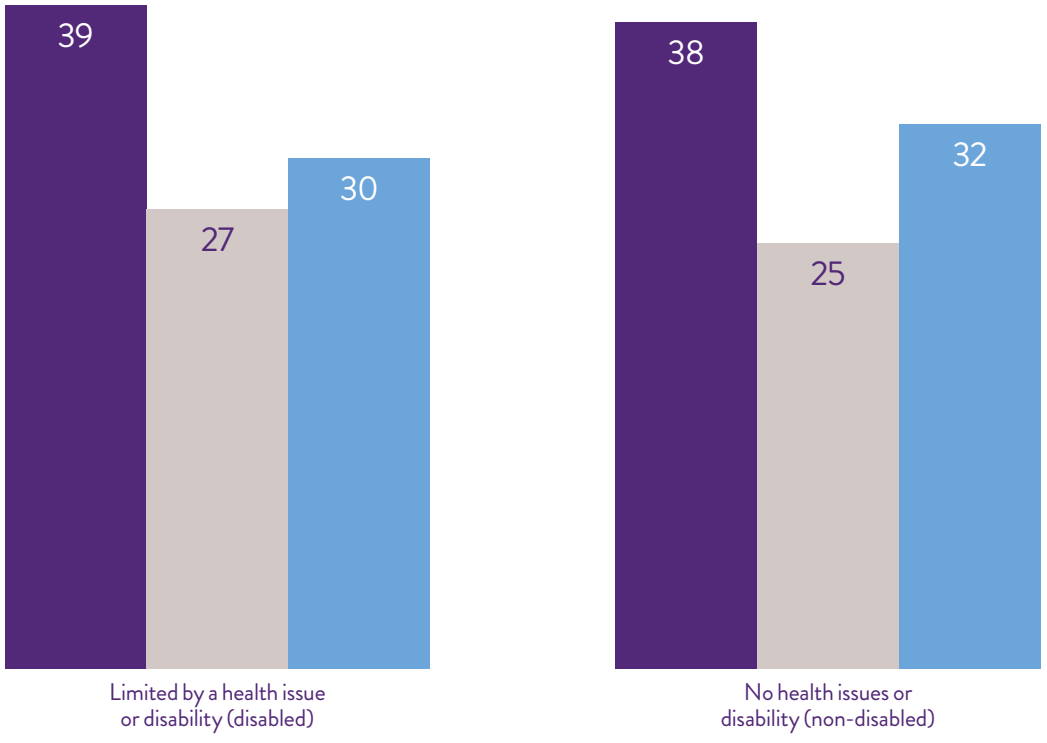
These differences, however, seem to be at least partly related to the age profile of people living in urban areas compared with town and fringe, and rural areas. Urban dwellers are more likely to be younger, and therefore less likely to volunteer – indeed when we control for age in the data, the differences by urban, rural, and town and fringe are far less clear cut.

21 These groups will be referred to as 'disabled people' and 'non-disabled people' for the remainder of the report. See Appendix 1 for more on this.

22 DCMS (2018).

Figure 9: Participation by health/disability

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each group)



People living in **urban areas** are less likely to be recent volunteers than those living in **rural areas**.

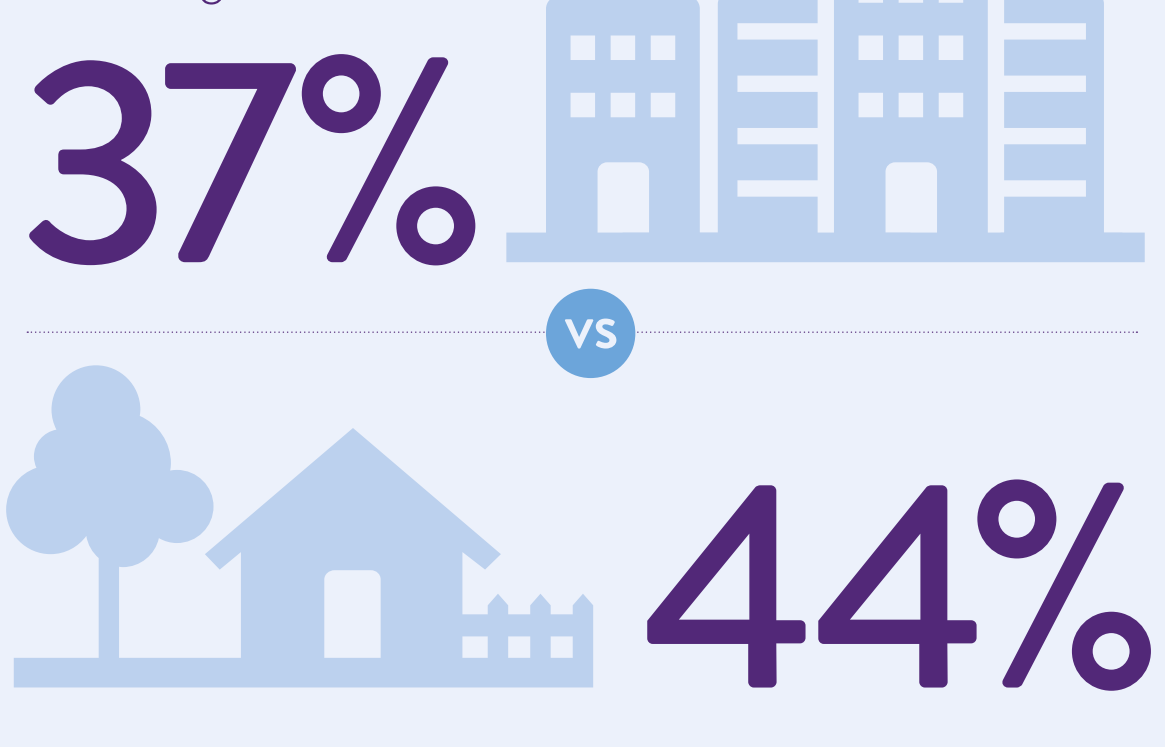
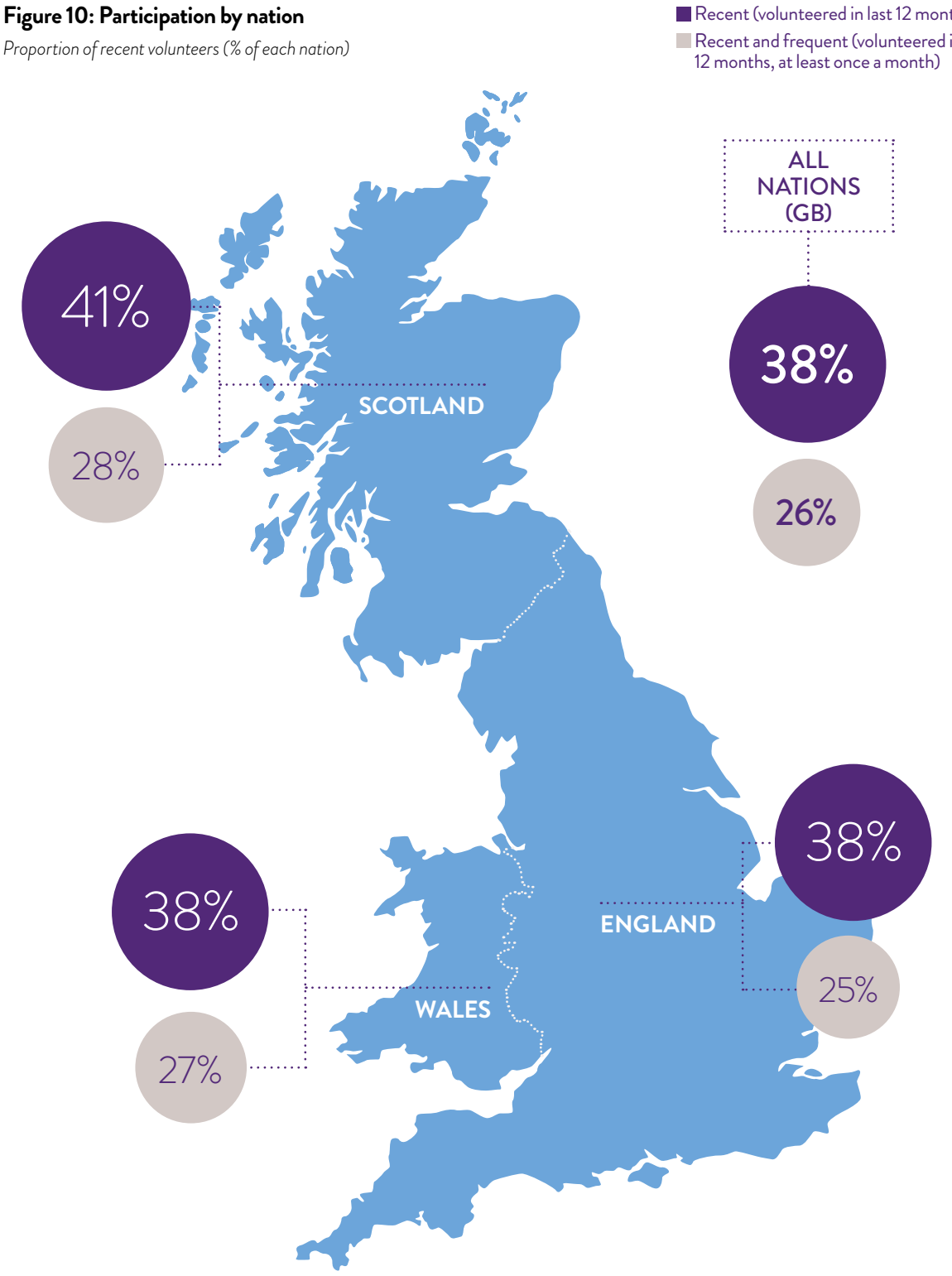


Figure 10: Participation by nation

Proportion of recent volunteers (% of each nation)



Levels of involvement are largely consistent across the nations, with some variation within England.

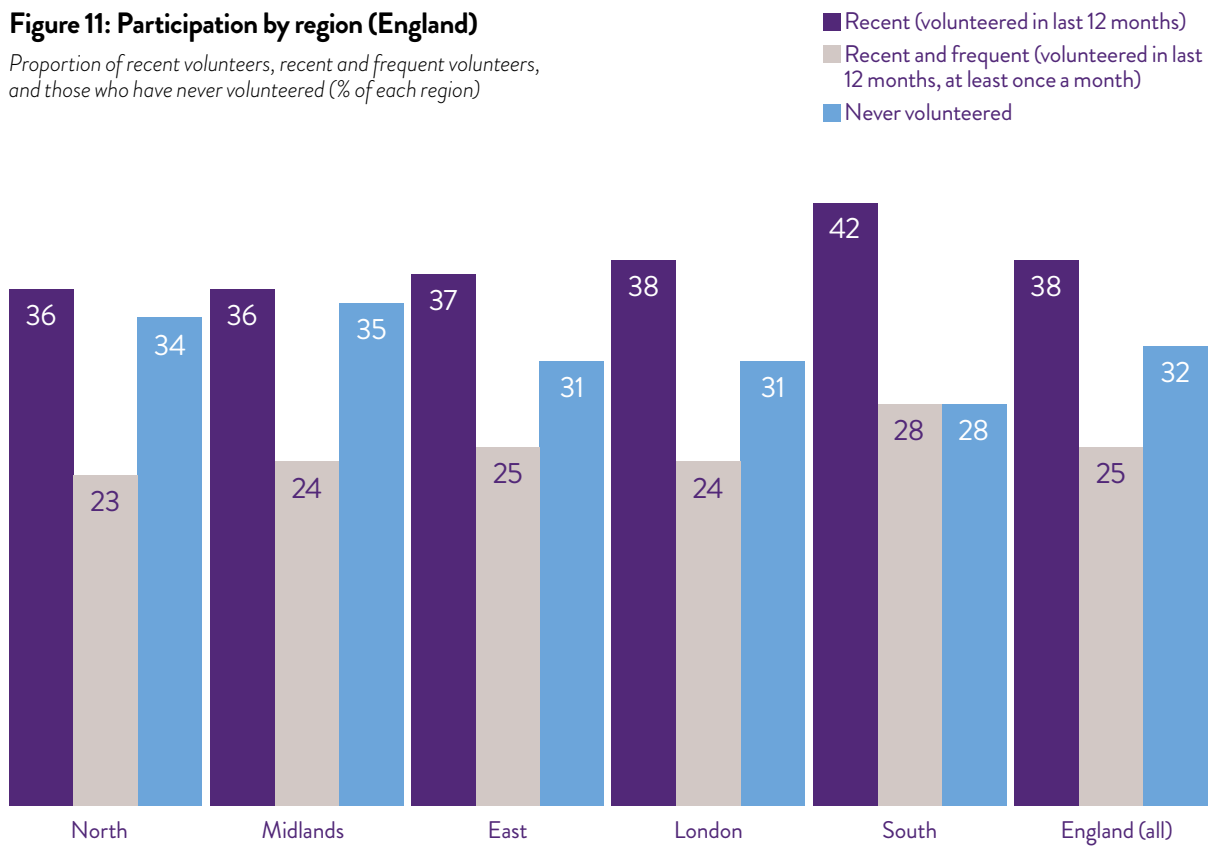
As shown in Figure 10, there were no significant differences between participation levels for recent volunteers between England, Wales and Scotland (38%, 38% and 41%). However, as shown in Figure 11, people living in the south of England were more likely to be recent volunteers than the England average (42% vs 38%). They were also more likely to volunteer frequently (28% vs 25%). People living in the North and the Midlands were more likely to say they have never volunteered (34% and 35% respectively) than the England average (32%).

Across different regions, people living in the **South of England** are most likely to have recently volunteered.

42%

Figure 11: Participation by region (England)

Proportion of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and those who have never volunteered (% of each region)



3.5 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT

In section 3, we have explored levels of participation and how they vary across different socio-demographic groups.

It has shown that many people have been engaged in volunteering through groups, clubs or organisations, primarily dipping in and out over their lifetime.

We know that even more people are involved in informal ways of giving help, though this is not the focus of this report.

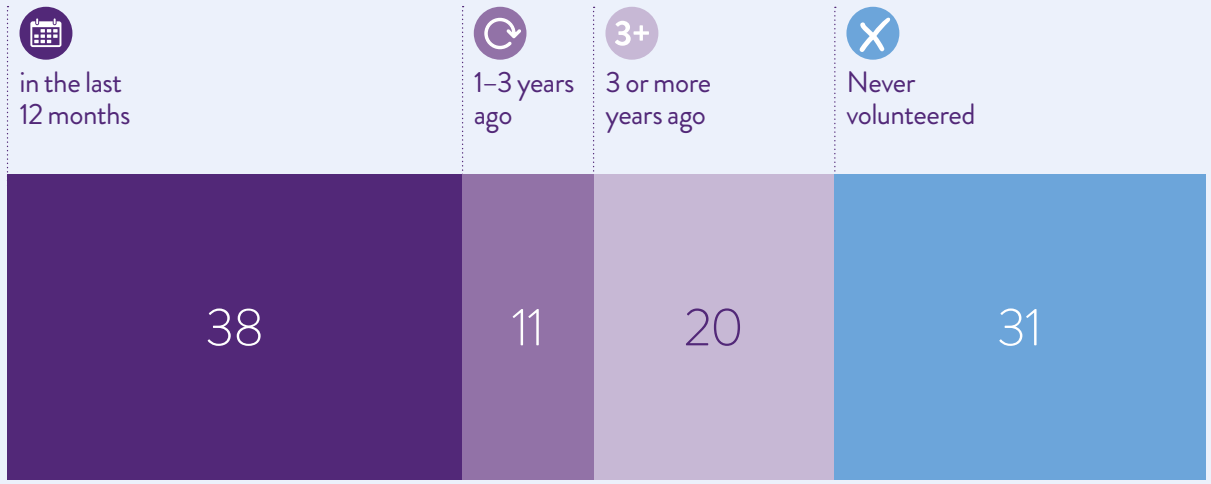
Below, we bring together some of our learning about the spectrum of engagement and what the research has found about who is more or less likely to volunteer.

However, it is important to recognise that people from all walks of life volunteer and what this spectrum does is highlight some general patterns rather than provide a definitive picture of the profile of volunteers and non-volunteers.

It confirms some of the issues that previous research has evidenced about the lack of diversity of volunteers and indicates that more could be done in this area. It also raises questions about engaging volunteers in the future (see section 8).

Figure 12: Characteristics of recent volunteers and those who have never volunteered

(% of all people surveyed)



RECENT VOLUNTEERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE:

- 65+ year-olds
- female
- from higher socio-economic groups
- educated to a higher level
- retired or working part time
- living in town and fringe, or rural areas.

THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER VOLUNTEERED ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE:

- 25–54 year-olds
- male
- from lower socio-economic groups
- educated to a lower level
- unemployed or not working
- living in urban areas.

This section looks at the context of volunteer participation and focuses on recent volunteers' *main* volunteering experience: what volunteers do, when and how they give their time and where they are. Finally, it looks at how people get started with their volunteering: what motivates them to begin and how they start.

4.1 KEY FINDINGS

Volunteering context

What do people do when they volunteer?

- Volunteers are most likely to be involved in range of activities, most commonly relating to events (39%), administration (28%) and getting others involved (27%).
- Volunteers from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to undertake activities that involve organising and leading, for example being a trustee or member of a committee (15% C2DE vs 23% ABC1).
- Women are less likely than men to be involved in representative roles, such as representing the organisation at meetings or events (28% vs 22%).

Where do they volunteer?

- People mainly volunteer locally, in their own neighbourhoods (81%) and most commonly in community spaces (eg community hall) (35%) although volunteering also happens at home (26%) and 'on the go' (eg via phone or laptop) (16%).

When do they volunteer?

- 10% of recent volunteers give time through employer-supported volunteering, reflecting relatively low levels of awareness generally for this type of volunteering.

Who do they volunteer for?

- 42% of recent volunteers first got involved with the main organisation they volunteer five or more years ago, suggesting many have a long-standing relationship with their organisation.
- These organisations are more likely to be recreational or leisure groups (20%), local community or neighbourhood groups (20%) or health, disability and social welfare organisations (18%).
- Most are civil society organisations (67%), but a significant minority (17%) are public sector organisations.
- In these organisations, volunteering is organised by an unpaid coordinator or no one specifically (45% and 18%), rather than by a paid member of staff (28%).

How do they volunteer?

- Among recent volunteers, volunteering on a regular basis is most common (48%) but around a quarter (23%) exclusively volunteer as part of a one-off activity or dip in and out of activities.
- Two-thirds of volunteers say they are always or often alongside other volunteers when volunteering.
- Their volunteering is more likely to involve a mix of online and offline activities (57%) than one or the other. Very few volunteer exclusively online (6%).
- Disabled people are more likely to volunteer online than non-disabled people.

Getting started

- The most common reason for volunteering is wanting to benefit others (42%), although practical factors like having spare time also play a part for many.
- Motivations vary both by different demographics (eg gaining skills and career development ranked much higher among those aged 18–24 than other age groups), and by who they volunteer for and how their volunteering is organised.
- Most volunteers go through an entry process that is largely informal (43%). Formal processes are more common when activities involve safeguarding risks.

81%

Most people volunteer **locally, in their own neighbourhoods.**

Volunteering most often involves **a mix of online and offline** activities (57%).

A small proportion (10%) volunteer **during work time** or are **organised through employers.**

23% exclusively volunteer as part of a **one-off** activity or **dip in and out of** activities.

67% volunteer for **civil society** organisations and **17%** for **public sector** organisations.

4.2 WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO FOR AND HOW?

This section looks at recent volunteers (those who have volunteered over the last year) and the context of their volunteering, focusing on the *main organisation* they have volunteered with.[23]

It explores what they are doing, when, where it takes place, who for and how. Where there are notable findings in relation to lapsed volunteers (those who volunteered in the last three years but not in the last year), these are highlighted.

4.2.1 What do people do when they volunteer?

Activities relating to events, administration and getting others involved are most common.

As shown in Figure 13, organising or helping to run events was the most popular type of volunteering activity (39%) followed by helping with secretarial/administration or clerical work (28%). Raising money or taking part in sponsored events and getting other people involved in the organisation were also among the more common activities (27%).

Many are involved in multiple volunteering activities, especially frequent volunteers.

Of those who could recall the types of volunteering activities they undertook, around a third (34%) were involved in one activity, meaning most undertook a number of different activities within the same organisation.

Those who were frequent volunteers (ie gave time at least once a month) were more likely to be involved in multiple types of activity than occasional volunteers (who volunteered less than once a month). For example 56% of frequent volunteers were involved in three or more activities, compared with 24% of occasional volunteers.

Frequent and occasional volunteers get involved in different types of activity.

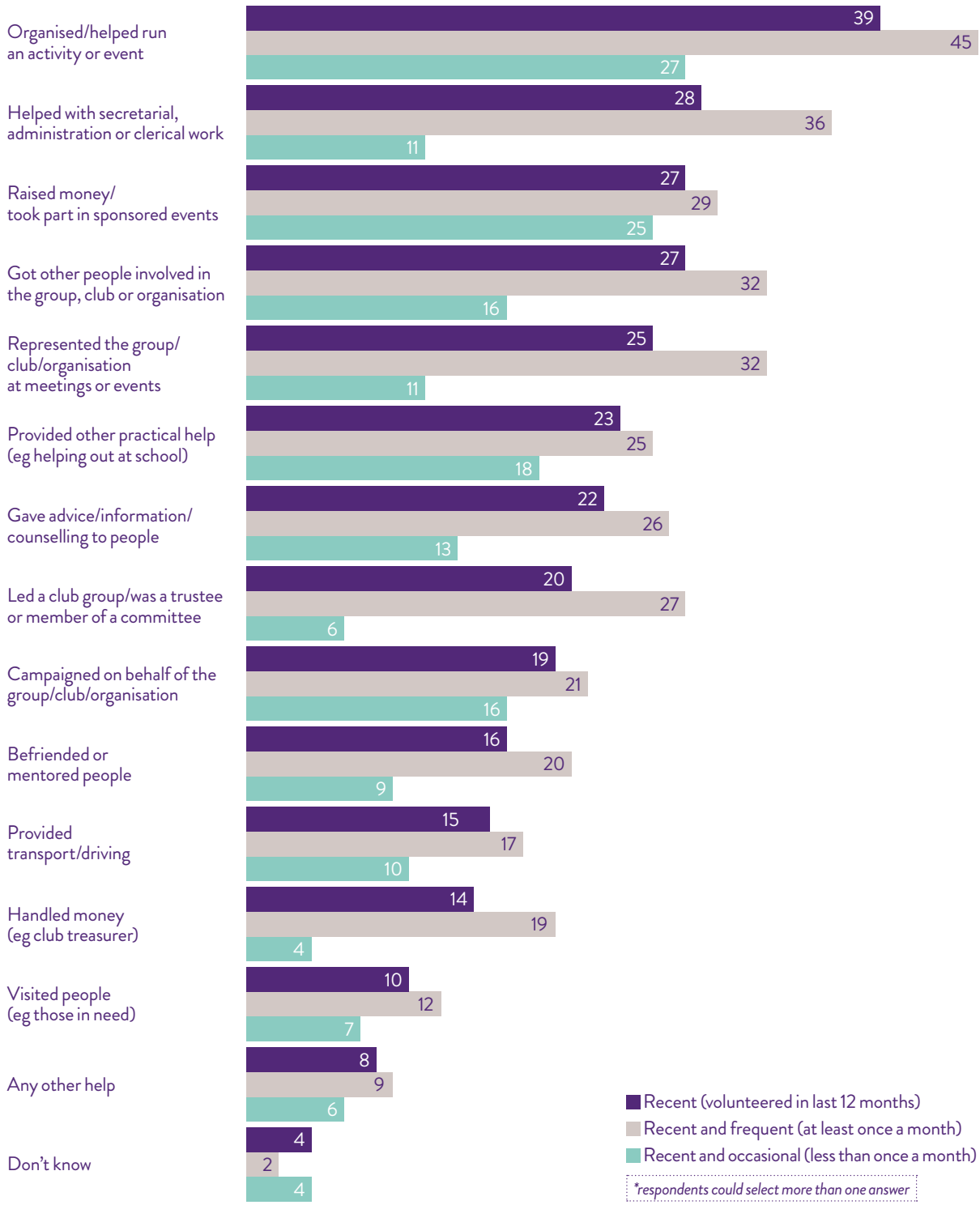
Some activities were much more likely to be undertaken by frequent volunteers than occasional volunteers such as:

leading a group/being a trustee, handling money and representing the group – with low proportions of occasional volunteers listing these activities (see Figure 13). This is likely to be because these activities require a certain level or type of time commitment.

The most common activities among occasional volunteers were organising, helping to run an event (27%) and raising money or taking part in sponsored events (25%) – activities suited to more sporadic or even one-off involvement. These activities were also common among lapsed volunteers (who had volunteered in the last three years, but not recently). This is likely to be explained by the higher proportion of occasional volunteers among the lapsed group.

23 If they volunteered for more than one organisation, respondents were asked to focus on the one they gave the most unpaid help to over the past year (ie gave the most time, resources, etc). If they had given to two of these equally, they were asked for the one they helped most recently.

Figure 13: Volunteering activities* *(% of recent volunteers, recent and frequent volunteers, and recent and occasional volunteers)*



There are some notable differences by demographics in the types of activities undertaken.

Organising or helping to run an activity or event was the most common activity across all groups, however there was some variation in participation across other activities.

- **Volunteers from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to undertake activities that involve leading or organising.**

Those from ABC1 social grades were more likely to do certain activities than C2DE social grades, with the largest differences observed for organising or helping run an activity or event (42% vs 33%), helping with administration or secretarial work (31% vs 21%) and leading an organisation or being a trustee or member of a committee (23% vs 15%).

- **Older volunteers were more likely to be involved in administration and management roles.**

Those over 65 were most likely (than other age groups) to be helping with secretarial or administration (35%), leading an organisation or being a trustee or member of a committee (27%) and handling money (19%). This is likely to be explained primarily by the higher proportion of older volunteers who volunteer frequently and are from a higher social grade.

One of the more common activities among the youngest age group (18–24) was befriending and mentoring, which around one in five (23%) of this age group were involved in; this ranked lower among other age groups.

- **Women are less likely to be in representative roles.**

Women were more likely to have organised/helped run an activity or event than men (42% vs 35%) and provided other practical help, such as helping out at school (24% vs 20%).

Men were more likely than women to have represented the organisation they volunteer for at meetings or events (28% vs 22%), given advice, information or counselling to people (25% vs 19%) or campaigned on behalf of the organisation (21% vs 16%). They were also more likely to have led an organisation or been a trustee or member of a committee (22% vs 19%) and provided transport (17% vs 13%).

These variations indicate that there may be some imbalances in relation to who is doing certain activities, as well as who is participating overall, as highlighted in section 3.

Women were less likely to **represent the organisation** they volunteer for.

4.2.2 Where do they volunteer?

A large majority of volunteers give their time locally, especially older volunteers.

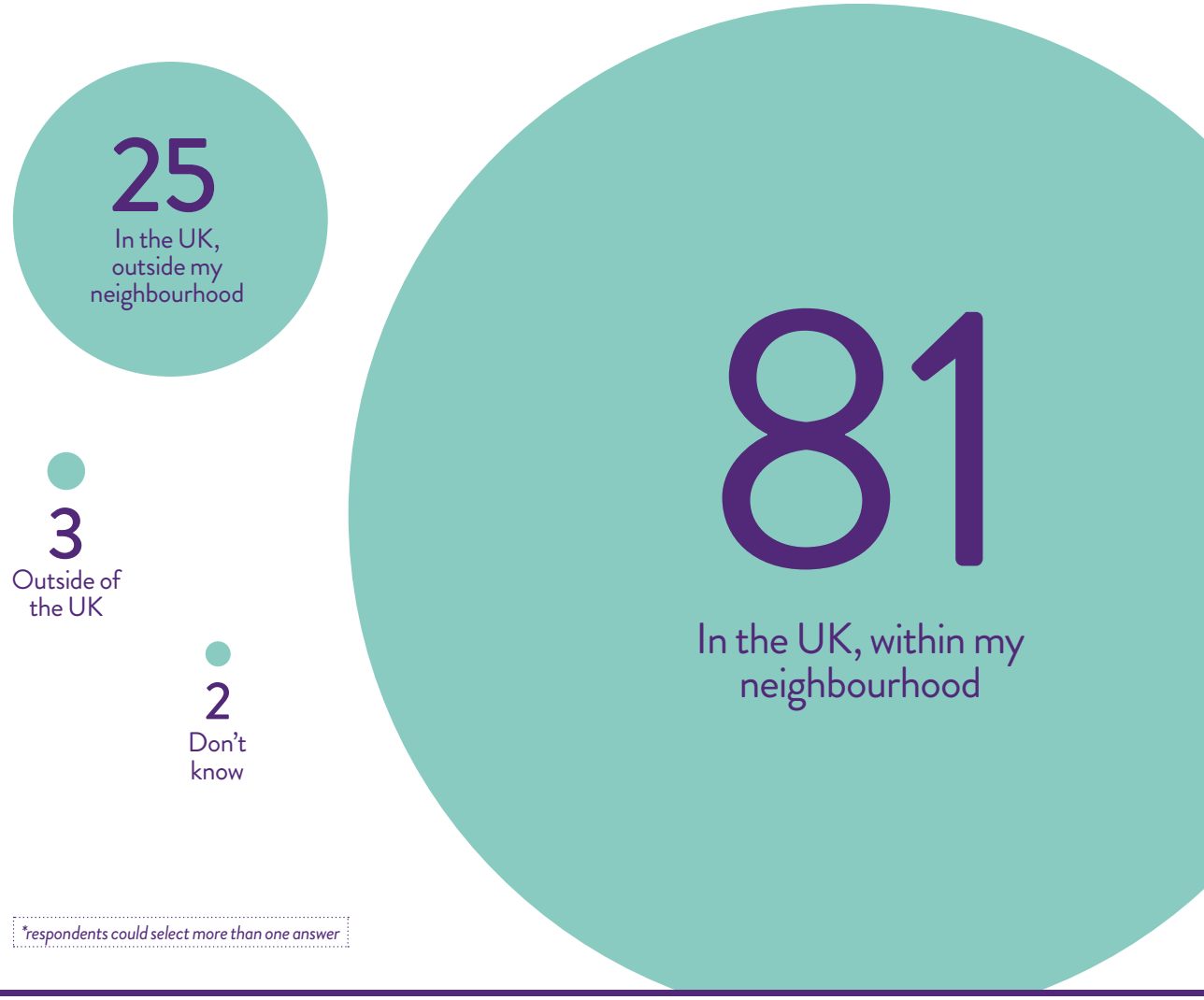
Figure 14 shows that eight in ten (81%) recent volunteers said that their volunteering takes place within their own neighbourhood, a number which rises for frequent volunteers (86%).

A quarter of volunteers participated outside of their neighbourhood but still in the UK. A very small proportion (3%) volunteered outside of the UK.

Older age groups were more likely to volunteer in their own neighbourhoods (88% of those aged 55+) than those aged under 55, the biggest contrast being with 25–34 year-olds (69%).

Volunteers aged 25–34, on the other hand, were the most likely to give time outside their neighbourhood (36%) or outside the UK (6%).

Figure 14: Locations where volunteering activities carried out* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

Volunteering most commonly takes place in community spaces or the organisation's premises.

Volunteering happens in a variety of different places and spaces. Among recent volunteers, four in ten (42%) said they carried out their volunteering in more than one place.

The most common places were community spaces such as community halls (35%) followed by the organisation's offices or premises (32%).

Around a quarter (26%) said that their volunteering took place in their own homes.

This was more common among older (34% of 55+) than younger (16% of 18–34) volunteers. 'On the go' volunteering (eg on their phone/ laptop) was selected by 16% of volunteers, among the different ways they were volunteering.

16% carry out their volunteering activities 'on the go'.

4.2.3 When do they volunteer?

Volunteering organised by employers or undertaken during working hours is not common.

Half (50%) of volunteers were working for an employer at the time of their volunteering. Of these, the vast majority (82%) said they volunteered for their main organisation outside of their work hours and this was not organised by their employer (Figure 16).

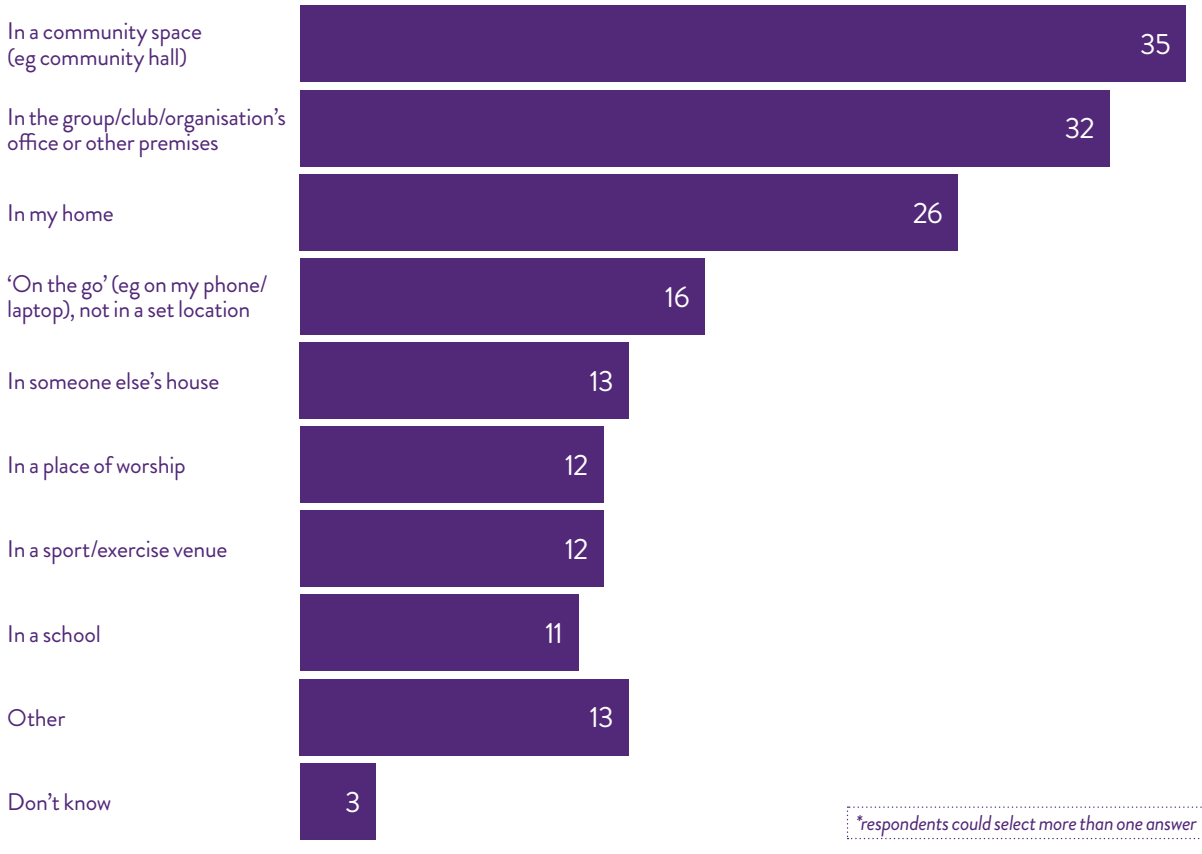
Only a small proportion volunteered during work hours, either organised by their employer (5%) or more commonly not organised by their employer (10%).

Employer-organised volunteering activities outside work hours were participated in by 7%.

Those who volunteered in one of these ways (ie any employer-supported volunteering) made up 10% of recent volunteers.[24] Our findings show that volunteers giving time in this way were most likely to be in the 25–34 (22%) or 35–44 age groups (20%).

24 The Community Life Survey measures participation in employer-supported volunteering differently but also highlights that it is not very common (*UK Civil Society Almanac*, NCVO, 2018).

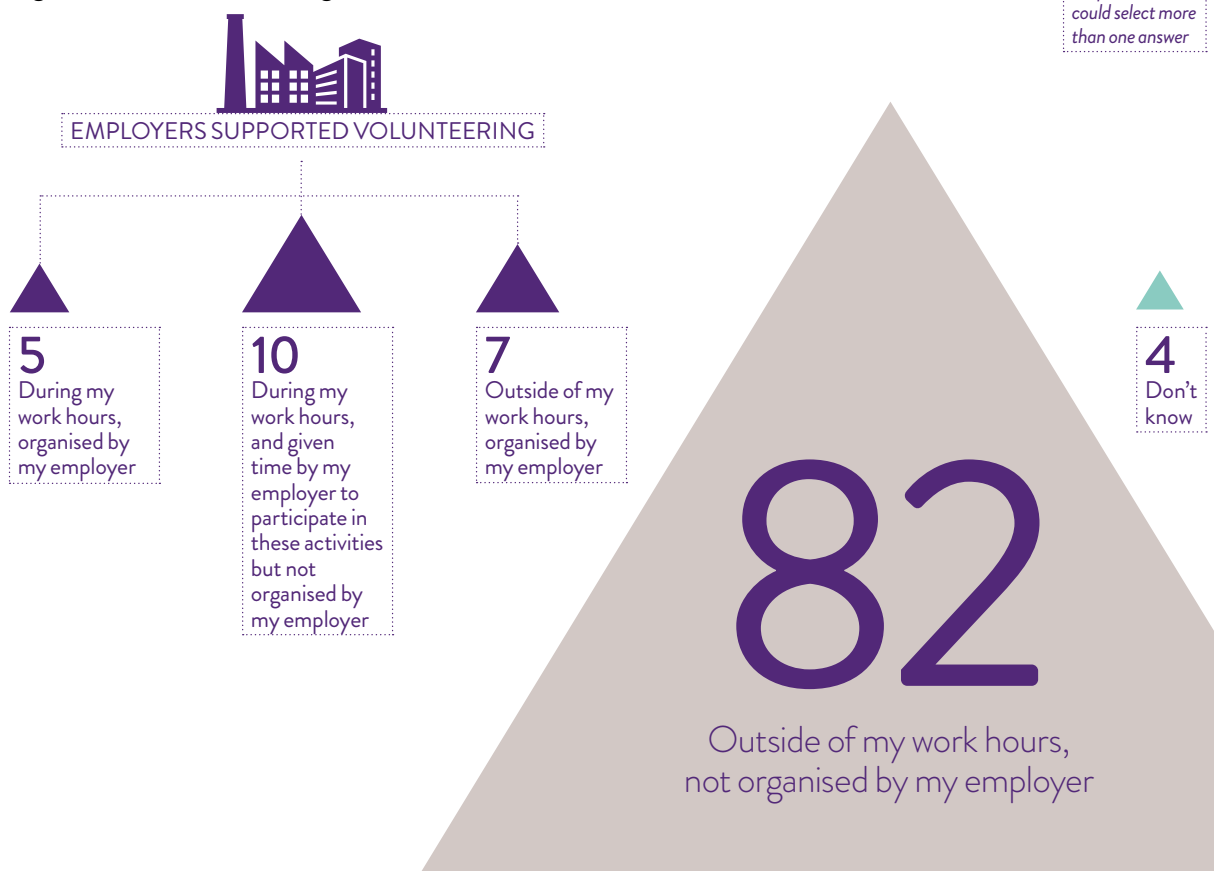
Figure 15: Place(s) where volunteering activities carried out* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

Figure 16: When volunteering activities carried out* *(% of those employed at the time of volunteering)*

*respondents could select more than one answer



Spotlight (1) on: employer-supported volunteering

The research shows that the majority of employees who volunteer do so outside their work or in a way that is separate from their work. We undertook further analysis into employer-supported volunteering and its provision to understand these participation levels further.

Our analysis highlights the following.

A majority of employees say their employer doesn't provide opportunities for volunteering or they don't know if they do.

Among those working for an employer at the time of the survey (across all respondents taking part in the survey, not just volunteers) a quarter (25%) said they 'didn't know' if their employer encouraged or provided a scheme for volunteering, and half (51%) said that their employer did not provide these opportunities (Figure 17).[25]

Even among those who were given time by their employer to volunteer or took part in volunteering activities organised by their employer, around a third did not feel their employers actively encouraged this kind of volunteering (34% said their employer encouraged it 'not very much' or 'not at all').

This may help to explain why some do not know whether their employer provides opportunities or not.

Opportunities may be limited to those in bigger organisations.

Where such opportunities were available, these tended to be for employees working in larger organisations; this is supported by other research which found employer-supported volunteering schemes were more common among FTSE 100 companies than others.[26]

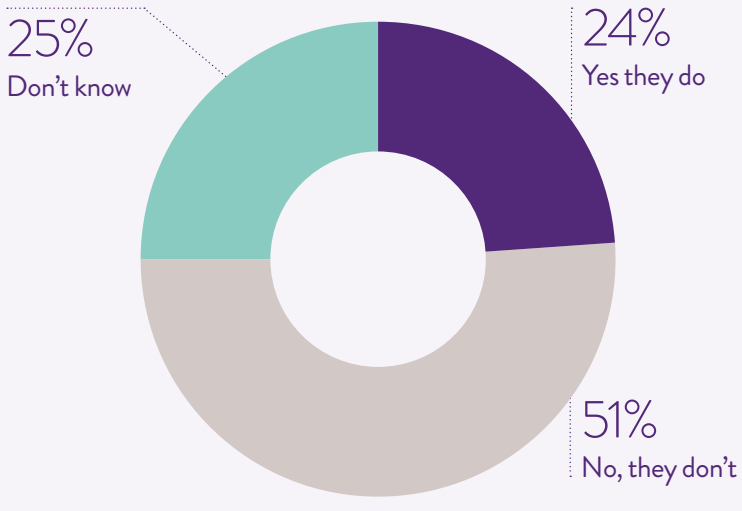
Wider levels of awareness are also relatively low.

More widely, awareness of employer-supported volunteering schemes among respondents whose employers did not provide them and those who were not employed at the time of the survey was fairly low, with 60% saying they were not aware that these opportunities existed.

These findings indicate that there is some scope for improving awareness and encouragement for employer-supported volunteering.

Figure 17: Whether employer actively encourages or has a scheme for employees to take part in volunteering

(% of those working for an employer at the time of the survey)



25 Previous data suggested that 64% of employees worked for an employer that did not have a volunteering scheme. Low, N., Butt, S., Ellis Paine A. and Davis Smith, J. (2007).

26 These statistics, some dating back a decade, come from a variety of sources and are cited in: CIPD (2015) *On the Brink of a Gamechanger?* London: CIPD. https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/about_us/media-centre/CIPD-on-the-brink-of-a-game-changer.pdf. (accessed January 2019).

4.2.4 Who do they volunteer for?

Most people volunteer for local organisations.

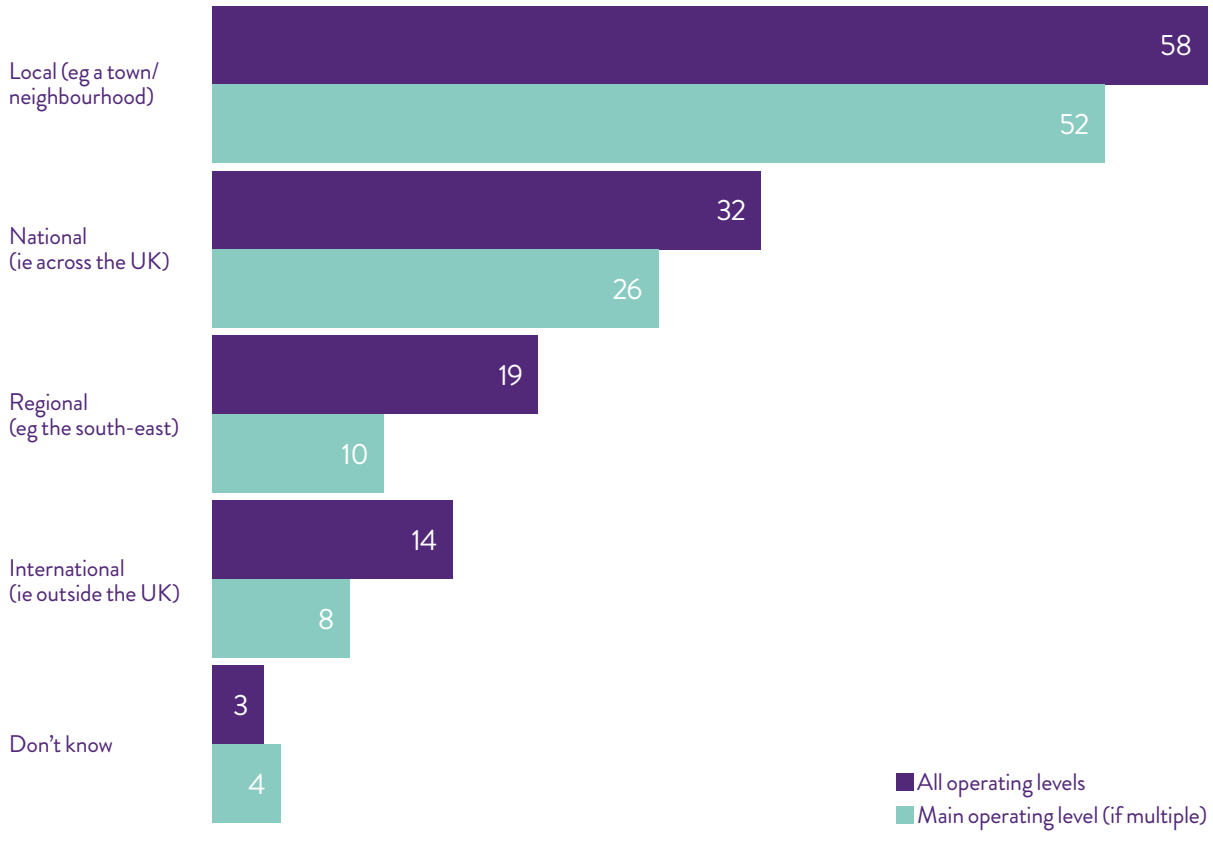
Figure 18 shows that the majority of recent volunteers gave time to organisations operating at a local level (58%). Around a third (32%) volunteered for an organisation operating at a national level and one in five (19%) for an organisation operating regionally. Volunteering for organisations operating internationally was least common (14%).

People who volunteered for an organisation that operated at multiple levels were most likely to say that its main focus was local (52%).

Frequent volunteers were more likely than occasional volunteers to volunteer for an organisation operating locally (61% vs 54%) or an organisation operating internationally (15% vs 10%). Occasional volunteers in turn were more likely to volunteer for organisations operating nationally (35% vs 31%).

58% of volunteers give time to local organisations.

Figure 18: Level of operation of organisations volunteers give time to *(% of recent volunteers)*



Many volunteers have a longstanding relationship with the organisation.

Figure 19 shows that 42% had first been involved with the organisation they volunteered with five or more years ago. A much smaller proportion (15%) had first got involved with them recently (in the last year). Across different age groups, 25–34 year-olds (26%) were most likely to have first got involved in the last year.

Volunteers are most likely to support leisure organisations or community groups.

Figure 20 shows the most common causes or areas people volunteered for (they could select more than one) are hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs (20%), local community or neighbourhood groups (20%) and health/disability and social welfare (18%).

Areas or causes varied by age and gender but less so across other demographic groups.

- The most common areas or causes differed across age groups. For example among 18–24 year-olds hobbies, recreation, arts and social clubs ranked highest by far (32%), whereas for 35–44 year-olds children's education or schools (20%) and youth or children's activities outside of school (19%) were most common. Volunteers aged 55 and over were most likely to volunteer for local community or neighbourhood groups (26%) and were more likely than all age groups under 55 to be involved in groups or organisations that support older people (21%).
- Men and women broadly supported similar causes. However some notable differences included that women were more likely than men to volunteer in children's education or schools (16% vs 10%) and youth or children's activities outside of school (16% vs 12%). Men were more likely to be involved in sports or exercise (20% vs 11%), which was the most common cause among male volunteers. They were also more likely to be involved in politics (13% vs 6%).

There are fewer differences in the areas or causes that people volunteer for by other demographic groups, including social grade, level of educational qualifications and ethnicity.

Figure 19: When they first started volunteering for their main organisation

(% of recent volunteers)

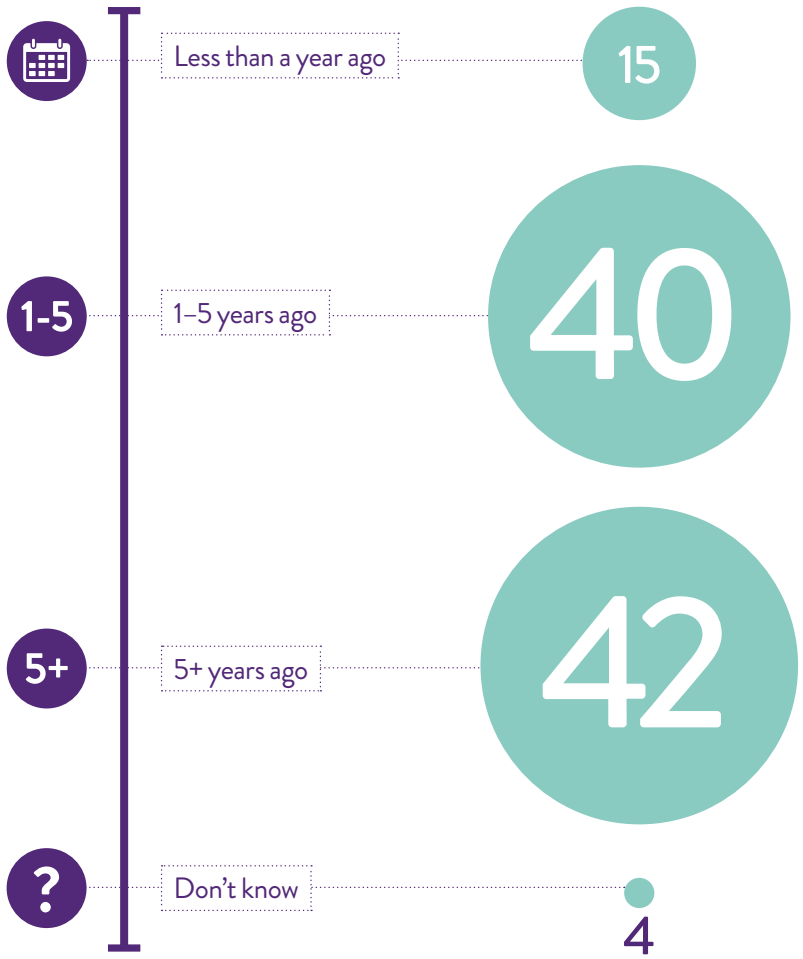
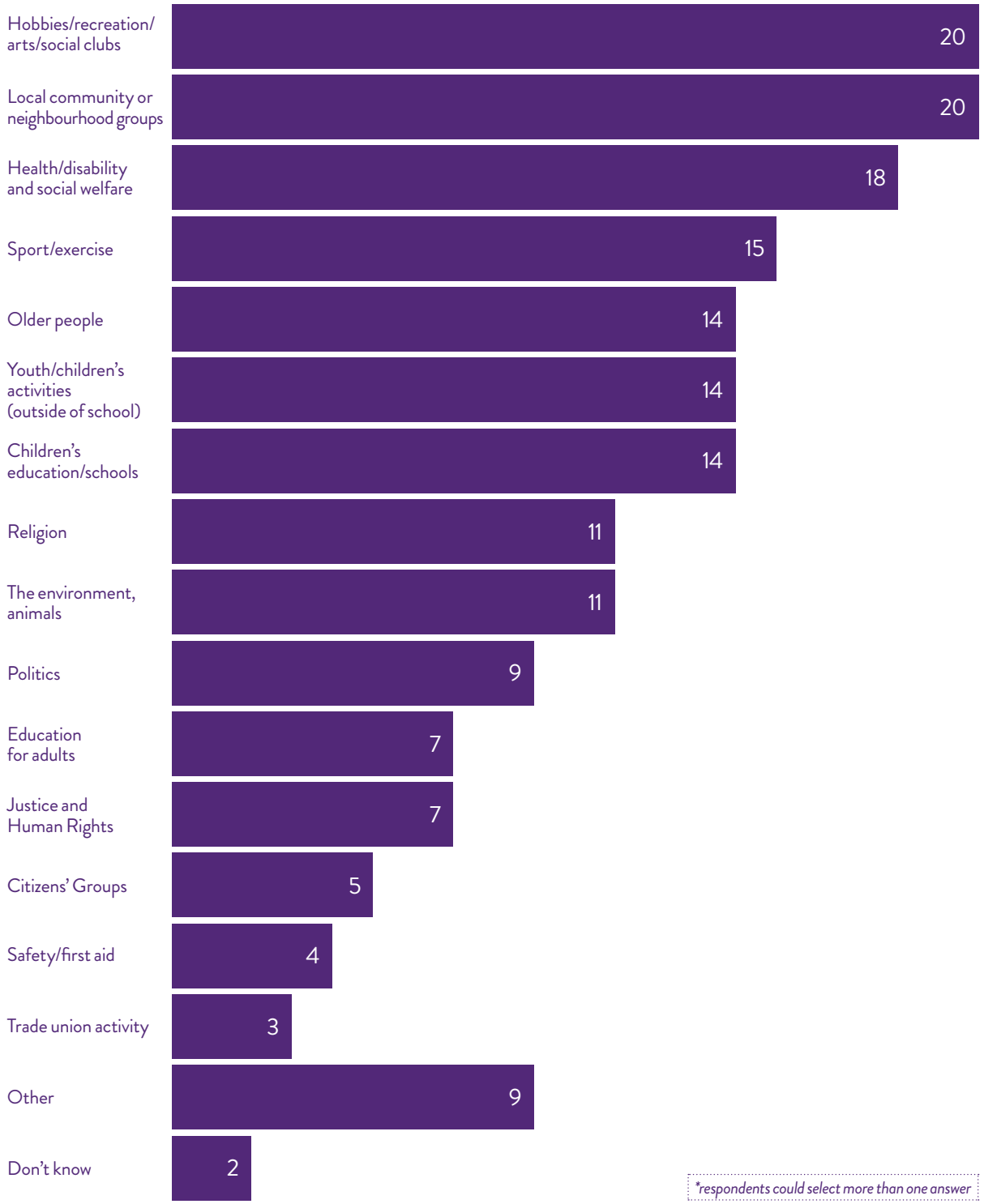


Figure 20: Areas or causes the organisation is involved in* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

However, it is important to note that BAME volunteers were more likely to volunteer for religious causes than white volunteers (19% and 10% respectively). This reinforces the finding that BAME people were more likely to cite their religious belief as a factor in their decision to volunteer (see section 4.3.1).

Volunteering for civil society is most common.

Around two-thirds (67%) of recent volunteers had volunteered for civil society organisations (eg charity, voluntary organisation, community groups[27]), with 17% volunteering in the public sector and 10% in the private sector (Figure 21).[28] This is in line with previous research, which cited similar proportions.[29]

Volunteers are not always able to identify the sector, especially those who say they volunteer for private sector organisations.

Of recent volunteers, 7% said they do not know in which sector their volunteering took place. The youngest age group of 18–24 year-olds are the age group most likely to say they don't know (13% of 18–24s).

Further analysis revealed that some volunteers do not correctly identify the sector of their organisations. This was more common among those who reported volunteering for a private sector organisation but named national charities.

Among these volunteers there was also a higher proportion who responded 'don't know' to naming their organisation (separate to those who said they preferred not to say).

Caution should therefore be taken when interpreting the data relating to private sector volunteers. As a result, the report focuses on differences primarily between those volunteering for civil society organisations and those volunteering for public sector organisations.

There were some differences in participation by age and by areas or causes.

These are summarised in Table 1.

27 Respondents were prompted by a list of examples for each sector, see Appendix 1.

28 See Appendix 1 for sector definitions.

29 Low et al. (2007).

Figure 21: Sector of the organisation *(% of recent volunteers)*

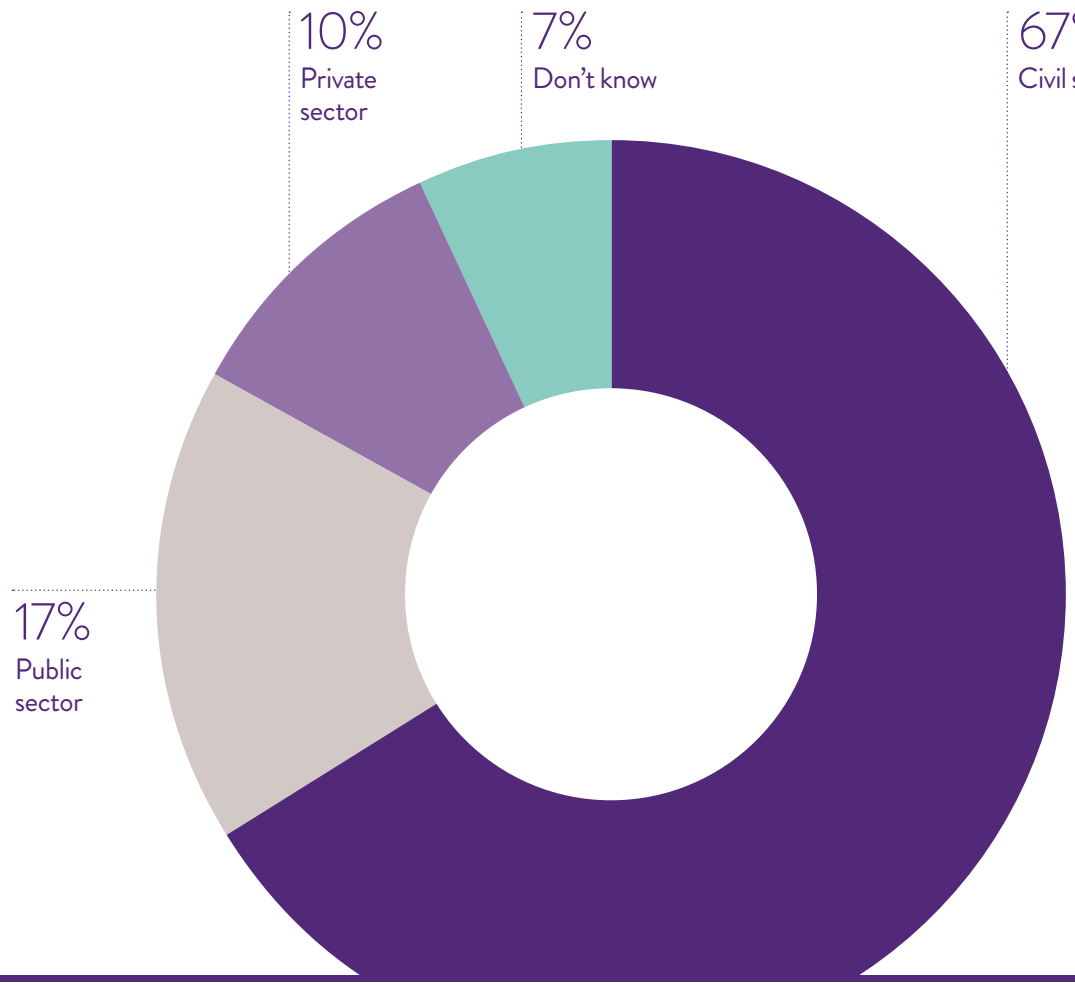


Table 1: Differences across sectors by age and by areas or causes

(% of recent volunteers in different age groups, and different areas or causes)

	Age	Most common areas or causes
Civil society organisations	Those aged 55+ were more likely to volunteer for civil society organisations (72%) than younger age groups (range from 60–63%)	Local community groups (23%), hobbies, recreation, arts, social clubs (22%), health, disability and social care (20%)
Public sector	Age groups under 55 (range from 19–21%) more likely to volunteer for public sector than those over 55 (13%)	Children's education or schools (36%), local community groups (17%), health, disability and social care (16%)
Private sector	No differences by age	Hobbies, recreation, arts and sports (30%), sports/exercise (23%), health, disability and social care (15%)

Volunteers in civil society organisations are more likely to give time frequently than public sector volunteers.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of volunteers gave their time to civil society organisations frequently (ie at least once a month), contrasting with 59% of public sector volunteers (Figure 22). It should be noted, however, that this was still higher than among those who volunteered occasionally for public sector organisations (34%).

The majority of volunteers give time to organisations without a paid volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers were asked whether the person organising and coordinating their volunteering was paid or unpaid or if there was no one specifically responsible for doing this.[30]

Around three in ten (28%) volunteers said they were organised by a paid coordinator (Figure 23). A larger proportion were volunteering for organisations where volunteers were organised by an unpaid coordinator (45%).

For around one in five (18%), there was no specific person whose responsibility it was to organise and coordinate volunteers. There were 9% who said they did not know how volunteers were coordinated.

Being organised by an unpaid coordinator was most common across all age groups, but volunteers over 65 years old were the most likely to volunteer for an organisation with no one specifically responsible for coordinating (24%).

There were some variations by sector and area or cause.

These are summarised in Table 2.

30 If there was more than one person organising and coordinating the unpaid help at this group, club or organisation, they were asked to think about the person who did this most often.

Figure 23: How volunteers were organised and co-ordinated *(% of recent volunteers)*

Figure 22: Frequency of volunteering by sector *(% of sector)*

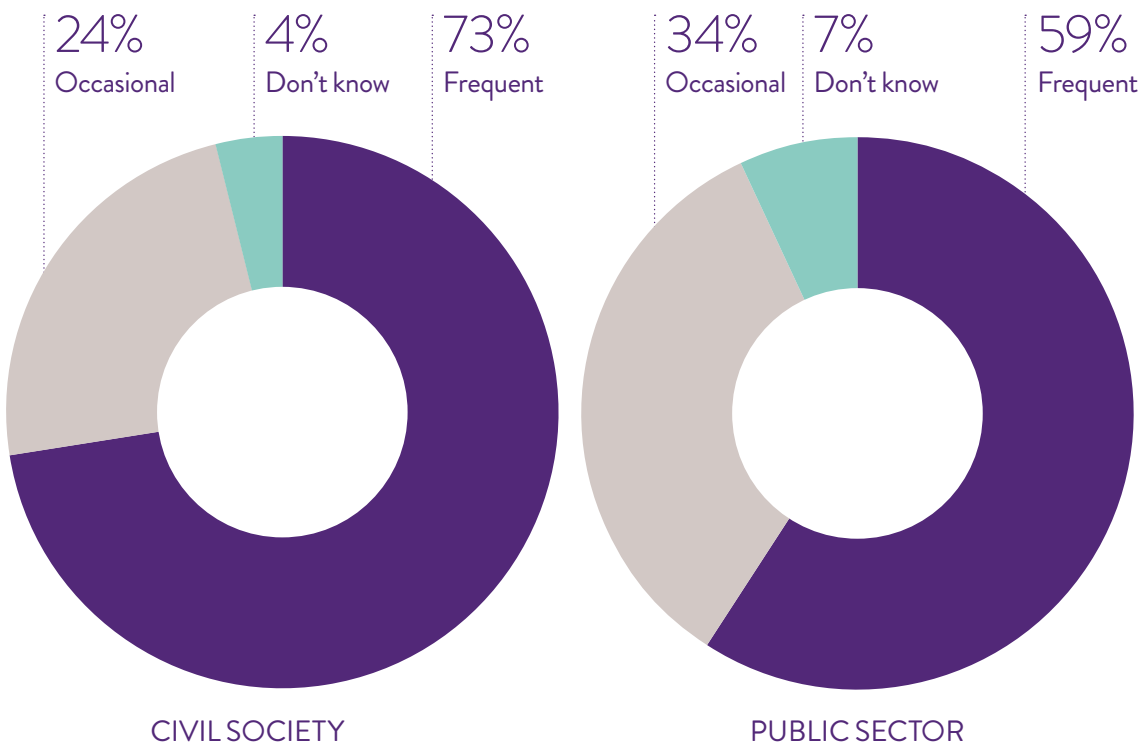


Table 2: How volunteers were organised and co-ordinated by sector and area or causes

(% of recent volunteers in different sectors and different areas or causes)

	Sector	Most common areas or causes
Paid coordinator	Public sector volunteers were more likely to have a paid coordinator than unpaid coordinator (41% vs 36%)	Health, disability and social care (28%), children's education or schools (19%)
Unpaid coordinator	Volunteers giving time to civil society organisations were more likely to have an unpaid coordinator than paid coordinator (49% vs 26%)	Hobbies, recreation, arts and social clubs (24%), local community groups (23%) and sports or exercise (20%)
No coordinator	No differences by sector	Hobbies, recreation, arts and social clubs (27%), local community groups (22%), older people and sports or exercise (18%)

4.2.5 How do they volunteer?

People volunteer in a range of ways, though most commonly on a regular basis.

As shown in Figure 24, volunteers most commonly said they took part in volunteering activities on a regular basis (48%).

However, a significant proportion also reported volunteering as part of a one-off activity or event (27%), dipping in and out of activities (28%) and volunteering as part of an ongoing project (27%). Over a third (39%) volunteered in more than one way.

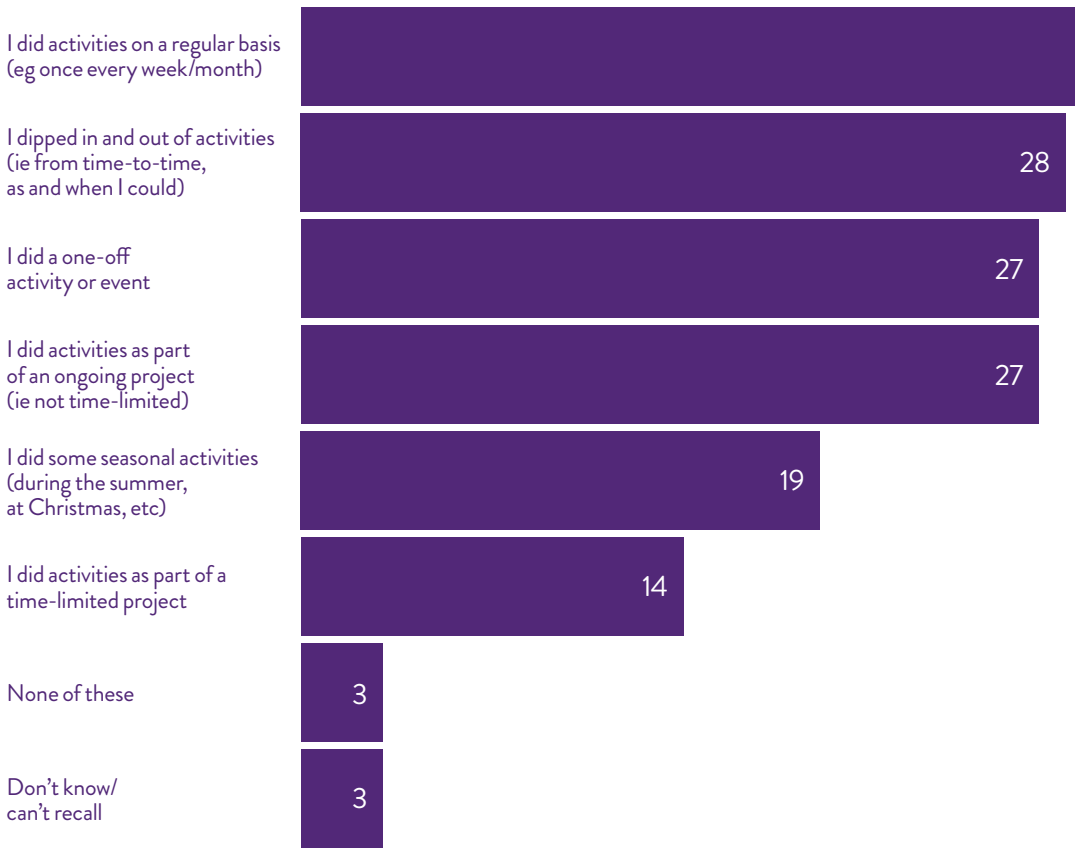
23% of volunteers said they volunteered exclusively as part of a one-off activity or dipped in and out.

This indicates that volunteers are commonly participating in short-term (or 'episodic') volunteering (ie volunteering that is limited in time).

This type of volunteering is not new but has been associated with the rise of the more 'reflexive' volunteer who, due to the circumstances of their lives, prefers to get involved in a more ad-hoc way and will more readily change the organisation they volunteer with and the volunteering they do.[31]

Nearly 1/4 volunteer exclusively as part of a one-off activity or dipped in and out.

Figure 24: Types of involvement* *(% of recent volunteers)*



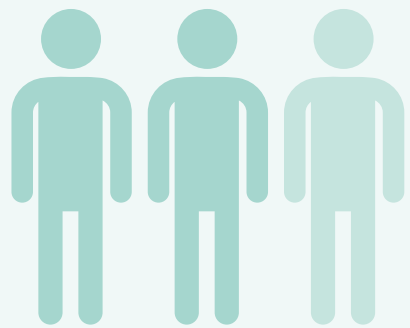
*respondents could select more than one answer

Volunteering takes place mostly alongside others.

A minority of 9% said they were rarely or never alongside other volunteers when volunteering, contrasted with two-thirds of volunteers (66%) who said they were always or often with others. This was particularly the case among frequent volunteers (74%).

Those volunteering 'on the go', in their home or at others' homes were more likely to volunteer rarely or never alongside others than those volunteering in other locations, but they were still more likely to be volunteering with others than alone.

2 in 3 volunteers say they are always or often alongside others when volunteering.



31 Hustinx, L. and Lammertyn, F. (2003) 'Collective and reflexive styles of volunteering: A sociological modernization perspective.' *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 167–187. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225236077_Collective_and_Reflexive_Styles_of_Volunteering_A_Sociological_Modernization_Perspective (accessed January 2019); Browne, J., Jochum, V. and Paylor, J. (2013) The Value of Giving a Little Time: Understanding the Potential of Micro-Volunteering. London: IVR/NCVO. https://www.wcva.org.uk/media/739801/micro_volunteering_full_report_071113.pdf. (accessed January 2019).

The role of digital in volunteering is a mixed picture.

Volunteers were asked whether the activities they carried out as part of their volunteering involved being online (examples were provided, such as starting an e-petition, updating a website, responding to emails, etc). Figure 25 shows there was a spectrum of online usage but more people reported some kind of online interaction than none at all (63% vs 35%). However, it was rare for volunteering to be undertaken exclusively online (6%).

Those aged over 55 were least likely to volunteer exclusively online, with 3% of this age group volunteering in this way, but otherwise there were few differences across age groups.

Disabled volunteers are more likely to be volunteering online than non-disabled volunteers.

Disabled people were more likely to volunteer exclusively online (10%) than non-disabled people (4%), and this was even higher among those whose day-to-day activities were limited a lot because of a health problem or disability (16%).

Disabled volunteers were also more likely to be often or very often online, indicating that online volunteering may be providing a means for disabled people to get involved.

Those volunteering exclusively online were more likely to have started giving time recently.

Volunteers who had got involved with the organisation in the last 12 months were more likely to have volunteered exclusively online than those who had started volunteering longer ago (11% vs 5%).

Whilst the findings cannot ascertain whether this kind of volunteering will increase in the future, it suggests that more of these opportunities might attract new volunteers to organisations. Other evidence showing that exclusive online volunteering is an area that is likely to expand in the future[32], supported by the growth of areas such as citizen science.

The largest proportion of volunteers undertake activities relating to their volunteering through a mix of online and offline.

Almost six in ten volunteers (57%) reported volunteering through a mixture of both online and offline (ie excluding those who were volunteering either exclusively or never online).

This is likely to reflect the fact that people may be using digital tools and devices as part of the administration of their volunteering (for instance writing emails to other volunteers to make arrangements or putting themselves on an online rota) as well as carrying volunteering activities online as part of their role.

In some cases, it may also reflect the different activities volunteers are involved in – as highlighted in section 4.2.1.

Other research has shown that that volunteering online or 'virtual volunteering' can offer new opportunities and provide existing volunteers an additional way to help an organisation or cause they are already involved with.[33]

Occasional volunteers were more likely to be offline than frequent volunteers.

Of those who volunteer occasionally (ie less than once a month), 43% said that they were 'never' online, compared with 32% of frequent volunteers.

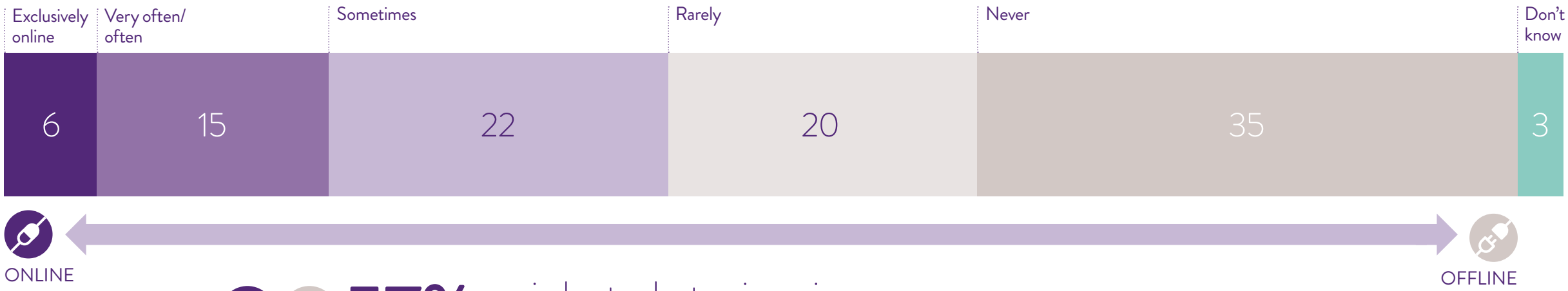
This is likely to relate to the types of activities they are undertaking (involvement in activities relating to events, for example, were most common) as well as the fact that they are less likely to be doing multiple activities compared with frequent volunteers (see section 4.2.5).

This highlights that whilst digital opportunities may increase, there is still a sizeable proportion of volunteers who are not getting involved through digital means.

32 For examples see the UN Online www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/why-online-volunteering or Missing Maps Project www.missingmaps.org (accessed January 2019).

33 Cravens, J. and Ellis, S. (n.d.) 'Myths about virtual volunteering.' http://www.coyotecommunications.com/vvwiki/myths.shtml (accessed January 2019).

Figure 25: Extent of volunteering activities carried out online *(% of recent volunteers)*



4.3 GETTING STARTED

This section looks at the beginning of volunteers' involvement, including why they start volunteering and the processes they go through.

4.3.1 Why do they volunteer?

Volunteers get involved for a range of reasons, but it is most commonly to benefit others.

Volunteers were asked for the most important reasons why they had first started volunteering. The motivations were wide ranging, and many were driven by a mix of different reasons (Figure 26).

The most common reason overall for getting involved was wanting to improve things or help people (42%). This mirrors findings from the 2017/18 Community Life Survey,[34] which also reports this as the most common motivation for volunteering.

Having a personal connection with a particular cause or particular organisation also ranked highly, as did being motivated by a need in the community or to use their existing skills.

Practical factors like having spare time also play a role in getting involved.

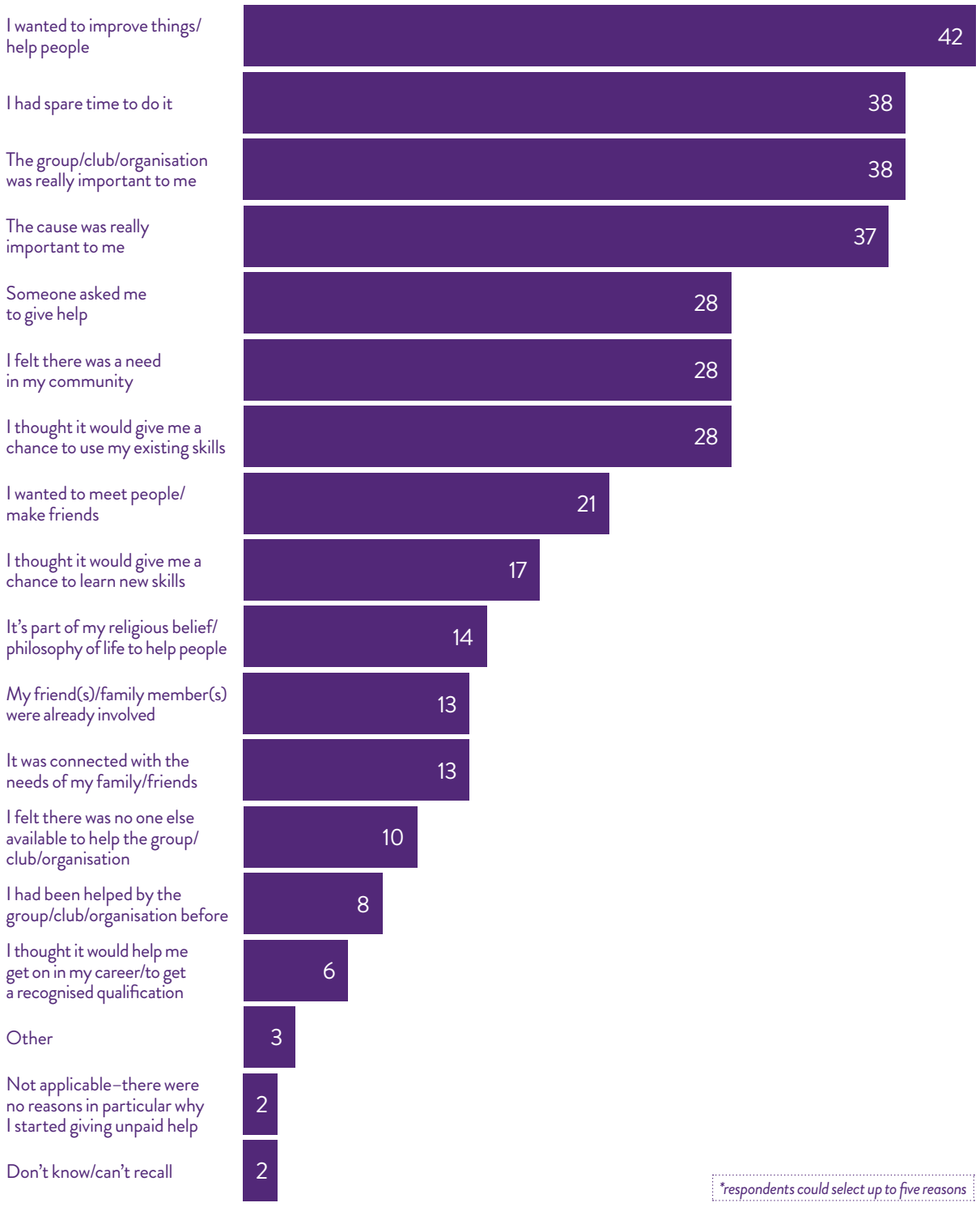
Having the spare time was the second highest-rated reason overall for starting to volunteer (38%) (Figure 26). This was, however, less prominent among those working full time (24%) compared with other work statuses, especially those who were retired (55%).

For over a quarter of volunteers (28%), it was prompted by someone else asking them to help. Only a small proportion – one in ten (10%) – reported 'feeling like there was no one else available' as one of their primary reasons for getting involved.

34 DCMS (2018).

Wanting to improve things or help people is the most common motivation for volunteering.

Figure 26: Motivations for first getting involved in volunteering with the organisation* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select up to five reasons

Motivations varied by demographics, reflecting individual priorities, life stage and context.

The highest ranked motivations remained consistent across all groups, but there were some variations. Examples include the following.

- Gaining skills and doing it for one's career was a low priority, except for those aged 18–24. Overall, a higher proportion of people were motivated by using existing skills (28%) than gaining them (17%). Doing it for one's career or to get a qualification (6%) was among the lowest motivators for volunteering.

The exception, however, was among those aged 18–24; gaining skills was more of a priority for them than using skills (37% vs 26%) and was on a par with wanting to improve things or help people (36%).

In addition, around one in five of this age group (22%) were motivated by their career or qualifications, a significantly higher proportion than any other age group.

- The social aspect of volunteering was more of a motivation for certain age groups and for women. Overall, around one in five (21%) volunteers started volunteering to meet people or make new friends. Across the different age groups, those aged 18–24 and 65–74 were most likely to be motivated by this reason (both 25%). Women were also more likely to volunteer for this reason than men (23% vs 18%).
- BME volunteers were more likely to volunteer because it was part of their religious belief than white volunteers (21% vs 14%). Similar findings have been reported in other studies, which highlight religious belief as an important motivation amongst BME groups.[35]

People's motivations for getting involved also varied according to context.

Examples of variations by contexts included the following.

- Occasional volunteers were more likely than frequent volunteers to start volunteering because their friends or family were already involved (17% vs 12%) or because it was connected to the needs of family or friends (16% vs 11%).
- There were some differences in motivations among public sector volunteers and those volunteering for civil society organisations. For example public sector volunteers were more likely than those giving time to civil society organisations to volunteer because it was connected with the needs of their family or friends (18% vs 11%) and less likely to volunteer because they wanted to meet people or make friends (13% vs 23%).
- Those volunteering in organisations with an unpaid coordinator or no coordinator were more likely to start volunteering for a range of reasons, including because someone had asked them to help (33% unpaid coordinator and 29% no coordinator vs 23% paid coordinator), the organisation was important to them (42% unpaid coordinator and 40% no coordinator vs 32% paid coordinator) and they felt no one else was available (12% unpaid coordinator and 15% no coordinator vs 5% paid coordinator).
- On the other hand, volunteers with a paid coordinator were more likely to have started because they wanted to gain skills (25% paid coordinator vs 16% unpaid coordinator and 10% no coordinator) and get on in their career (12% paid coordinator vs 4% unpaid coordinator and 2% no coordinator).

Identifying this mix of different motivations, both altruistic (desire to do something for others) and those that benefit themselves (instrumental), is important.

However, we should also bear in mind that individuals' motivations change over time and we need to look at motivations alongside other factors when we want to understand why people get involved. We need to consider context as well as the triggers that get them started and the resources needed to volunteer.

Previous research showed that the drivers of participation (personal motivations and triggers) are tempered by people's access to practical resources (eg time, money, health and access to transport), learnt resources (eg skills, knowledge and experience) and felt resources (eg confidence and sense of efficacy).[36]

35 Birdwell, J. (2013) *Commissioning Faith Groups to Provide Services Can Save Money and Strengthen a Community*. London: Demos. https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Faithful_Providers_-_web.pdf?1358533399 (accessed January 2019).

36 Brodie et al. (2011); Rochester, C., Paine, A.E., Howlett, S., Zimmeck, M., Ellis Paine, A. (2010) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

4.3.2 How do they get started with volunteering?

Respondents were presented with a list of different entry points they may have gone through and information and resources they may have been given (see Figure 27); these included both informal and formal information and resources.

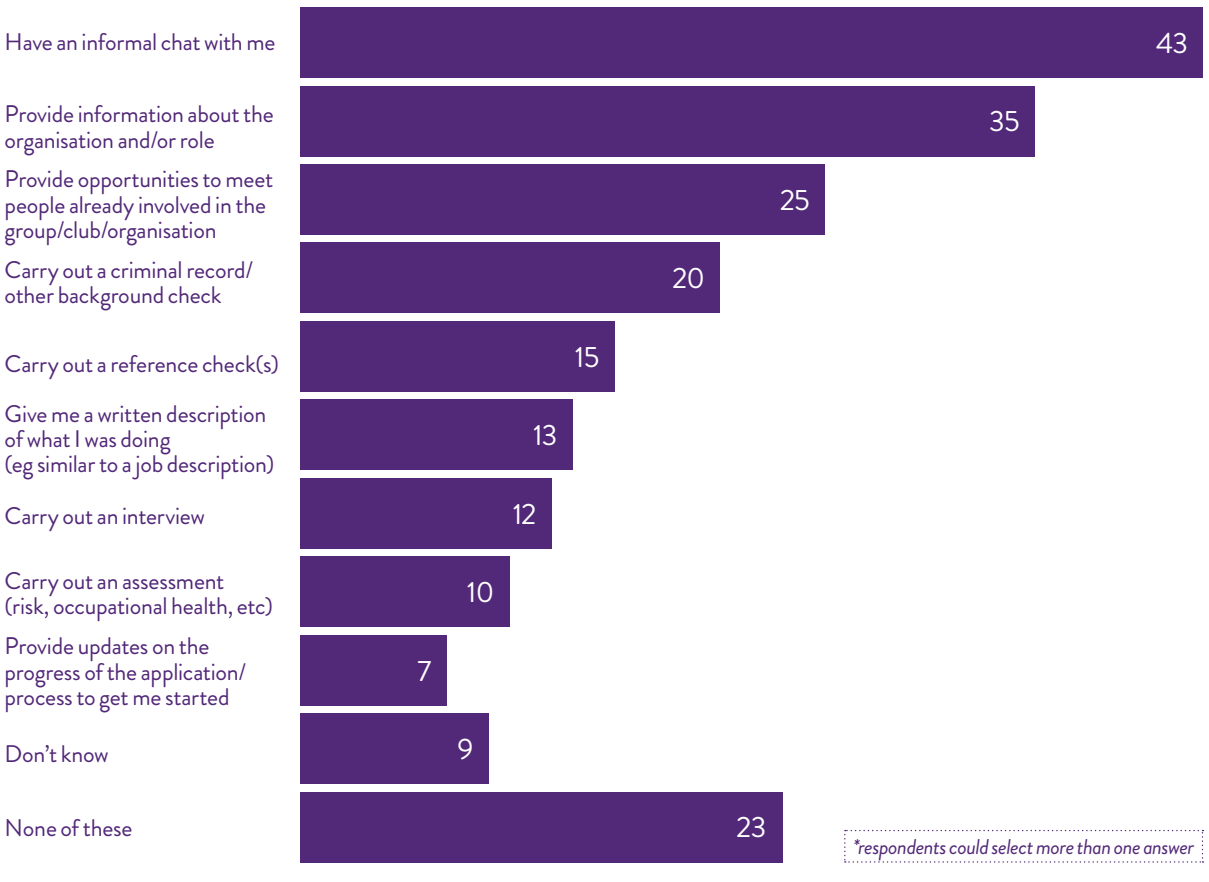
For most, there are few processes to getting into volunteering.

Almost a quarter (23%) said they had gone through or experienced none of the processes listed. Of those who had, over half had undergone one or two processes (58%); those who had undergone five or more were a minority (16%).

It was more common for volunteers to have gone through informal processes (eg 43% informal chat) or received general information (eg 35% information about the organisation and/or role) than formal processes such as assessments (10%), criminal record or other background checks (20%) or role descriptions (13%).

Volunteers were more likely to go through **informal** processes than **formal** ones to start getting involved.

Figure 27: Entry points before starting to volunteer with the organisation* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

However, this varies according to type of organisation and volunteering activities.

The number and formality of the entry processes or information provided varied by how people were volunteering and who they were volunteering for.

- Those volunteering more frequently (at least once a month) were more likely to have had a more extensive entry journey: of those who had undergone an entry process, 19% of those who had volunteered frequently had undergone five or more processes, compared with 7% of those who had volunteered occasionally (less frequently than once a month).
- Those giving time to organisations where volunteers were informally organised were more likely to have not gone through any processes than in organisations where there was a paid volunteer coordinator (44% of organisations with no coordinator and 25% of organisations with an unpaid coordinator vs 9% of organisations with a paid coordinator).
- Those in certain areas or causes, or those doing specific types of activities where volunteers were more likely to be working with vulnerable people and safeguarding issues, were more likely to have gone through multiple (and more formal) processes.

This included those volunteering in areas such as children and young people, older people, health, disability and social welfare, safety and first aid, and justice and human rights, and undertaking activities such as visiting people, befriending and mentoring, and giving advice, information or counselling.

- Finally, across the different sectors, those volunteering for public sector organisations were more likely than those giving time to civil society organisations to have gone through some of the more formal processes such as reference checks (19% vs 15%), criminal record/other background checks (30% vs 20%) and role descriptions (18% vs 13%).

4.4 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE DIVERSITY OF VOLUNTEER JOURNEYS

In section 4, we have identified how people are more likely to volunteer in their main organisation,as summarised below in Table 3.

However, behind these common features lies a more complex reality. The findings highlight the dynamic and multiple ways people get involved, with volunteers combining different types of activity, locations, causes, organisation and levels of involvement. The shape of their involvement reflects their lifestyles, values and priorities, which can vary both between individuals and over an individual's lifetime.[37]

In the following section (section 5), we explore the volunteer experience in more detail. These findings on 'what, where, when, who for, how and why' people volunteer provide context for this and draw our attention to the multitude of volunteer journeys that this covers and the complexity this brings for volunteer-involving organisations.

37 Brodie et al. (2011).

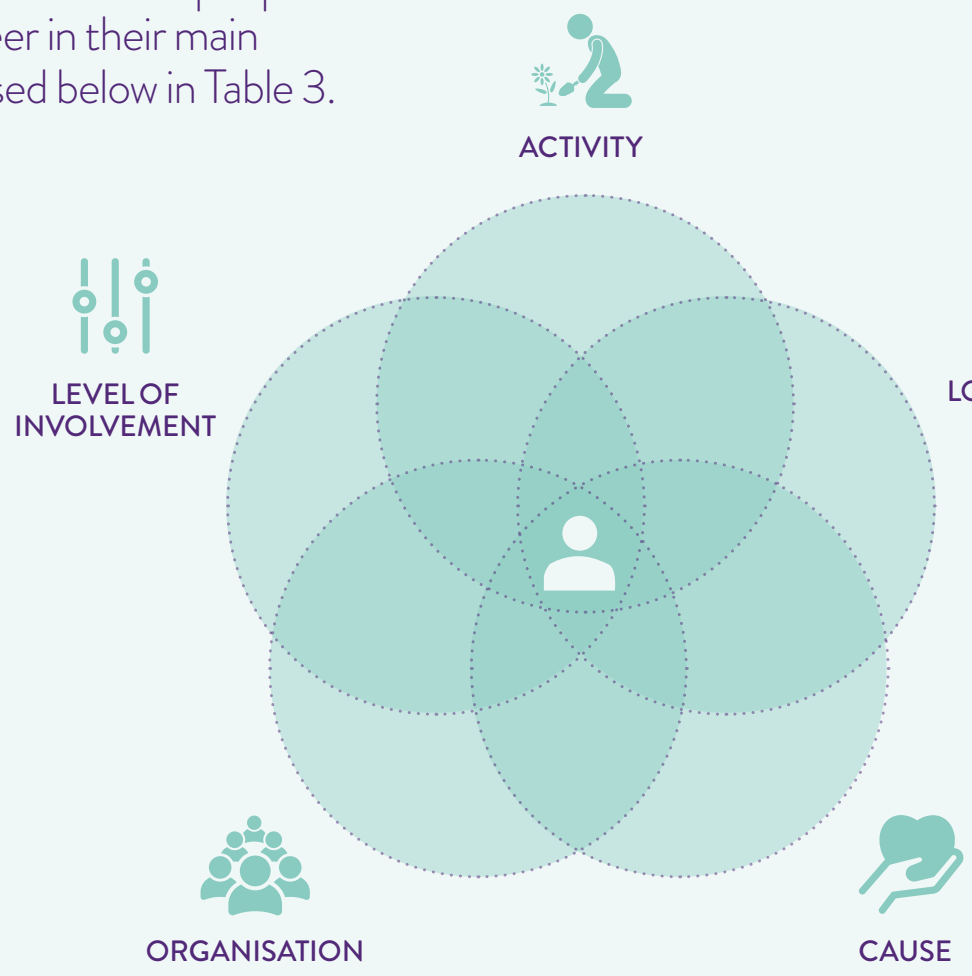


Table 3: How people are more likely to volunteer

What	Activities relating to events (organising, helping, taking part), helping with administration and getting others involved
Where	In the local neighbourhood
	Most commonly in community spaces, organisations' office or premises, at home
When	In their own time (for those employed, not during working hours/related to employer)
Who for	Organisations operating locally
	Organisations they have a longstanding relationship with
	Leisure organisations, community groups, health/disability and social welfare
	Civil society organisations rather than public or private sector organisations
	No paid coordinator organising volunteers
How	On a regular basis but also many dipping in an out or as part of a one-off activity or event
	Online in some way (but very few exclusively online)
	Volunteering alongside others rather than alone
Why	Wanting to help people or improve things, the organisation or cause being of great importance, having the spare time

5 VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

This section explores the volunteer journey, looking at how it varies by different types of volunteers and volunteering, and whether and how volunteers' experiences are meeting their needs and expectations. It focuses on the experience of recent volunteers, ie those who have given time in the last 12 months (for those who volunteered for more than one organisation, it relates to their *main* experience). The experience of lapsed volunteers is covered in section 7.3.3.

5.1 KEY FINDINGS

Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend

- Overall satisfaction with volunteering is very high: 96% of recent volunteers say they are very or fairly satisfied. Almost seven in ten (69%) have already or would recommend their volunteering.
- Some groups are more likely to be more satisfied than others. Older volunteers aged 55 and over are more likely to report being satisfied than those aged 18-44. Other groups more likely to be satisfied include non-disabled compared with disabled volunteers and those volunteering for civil society organisations compared with public sector volunteers.

Experiences of volunteer organisation and management

- Most (90%) feel it is easy and straightforward to start volunteering, however some groups, including young people (22%), are more likely to expect the process to be quicker.
- Overall, volunteers feel positive about the way their volunteering is managed, including feeling well supported (83%) and being given flexibility around the time they give (85%).
- However, over a third (35%) think things could be better organised and around a quarter (24%) feel there is too much bureaucracy.
- Nearly a fifth (19%) feel their volunteering is becoming too much like paid work. This is more prevalent among the most frequent volunteers, those volunteering in the public sector or in organisations with a paid coordinator.
- Disabled volunteers are less likely to be positive about the way their volunteering was organised and managed compared with non-disabled volunteers.
- Across different age groups, generally those aged 55 and over are most positive about the way their volunteering was organised.
- Being recognised is more important for some than others, but most (84%) feel recognised enough for the help they give.
- Receiving thanks from the organisation (42%) or individuals (32%) is the way most people thought volunteers want to be recognised for their unpaid help.
- Just over half (55%) said they would be reimbursed expenses if they wanted the organisation to; public sector volunteers are more likely to say they would not be reimbursed than civil society volunteers.
- Almost half (48%) of volunteers receive training, and most are positive about the way it has helped them.
- Those who use professional skills and experience in their volunteering are more likely to be older and from higher socio-economic groups; however, a wider range of volunteers use other non-professional skills.
- Over one in six say they have skills and experience they would like to use in their volunteering that they are currently not using.

Perceptions of the organisation and relationships with others

- People are generally positive about the organisation they volunteer for – 87% agree there is a culture of respect and trust.
- Most feel a sense of belonging to the organisation (85%), especially those who volunteer frequently, but a lower proportion feel they have opportunities to influence the development of the organisation (66%).
- Those organised with a paid coordinator are less likely to feel that they can influence the development of the organisation (59%) than those organised by an unpaid coordinator (75%) or no coordinator (66%).
- Most feel that the organisation they volunteer for provides the 'right amount' of communication overall (79%) about what is going on internally (75%) and about the difference being made (76%).

What matters most for overall satisfaction

- Further analysis highlights that it is how people experience the different elements of the volunteering journey that is most important for their overall satisfaction.
- Key aspects of the volunteer experience strongly associated with being satisfied include: there being a culture of respect and trust and feeling well supported, recognised enough and that they belong to the organisation. On the other hand, volunteers were much less likely to be satisfied where they felt things could be much better organised or the organisation wasn't going anywhere.

96%

say they are very or fairly satisfied with their volunteering.

Almost

7 in 10

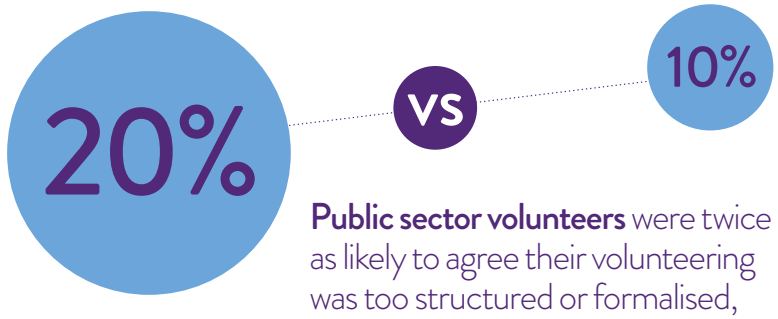
said they had **already or would recommend their volunteering** to a friend or family member in the future.

Over **1/3**

think things could be **much better organised**.

83%

agreed they feel **well supported**.



Public sector volunteers were twice as likely to agree their volunteering was too structured or formalised, than **civil society volunteers**.

Around

1 in 5

feel their volunteering is becoming **too much like paid work**.

5.2 SATISFACTION AND LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND

Volunteers were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their volunteer experience and their likelihood to recommend it.

5.2.1 Overall levels of satisfaction

The vast majority of volunteers have a positive experience.

Almost all recent volunteers (96%) ie who had given time in the last 12 months to a group, club or organisation, reported being satisfied with their volunteering, with over half (54%) saying they were 'very' satisfied (Figure 31).

This high level of satisfaction was consistent across all volunteers, however there were some variations by socio-demographic factors and types of volunteering. Table 4 summarises which groups reported being more satisfied than others.

Figure 28: Overall satisfaction with volunteering

Main organisation (% of all recent volunteers)

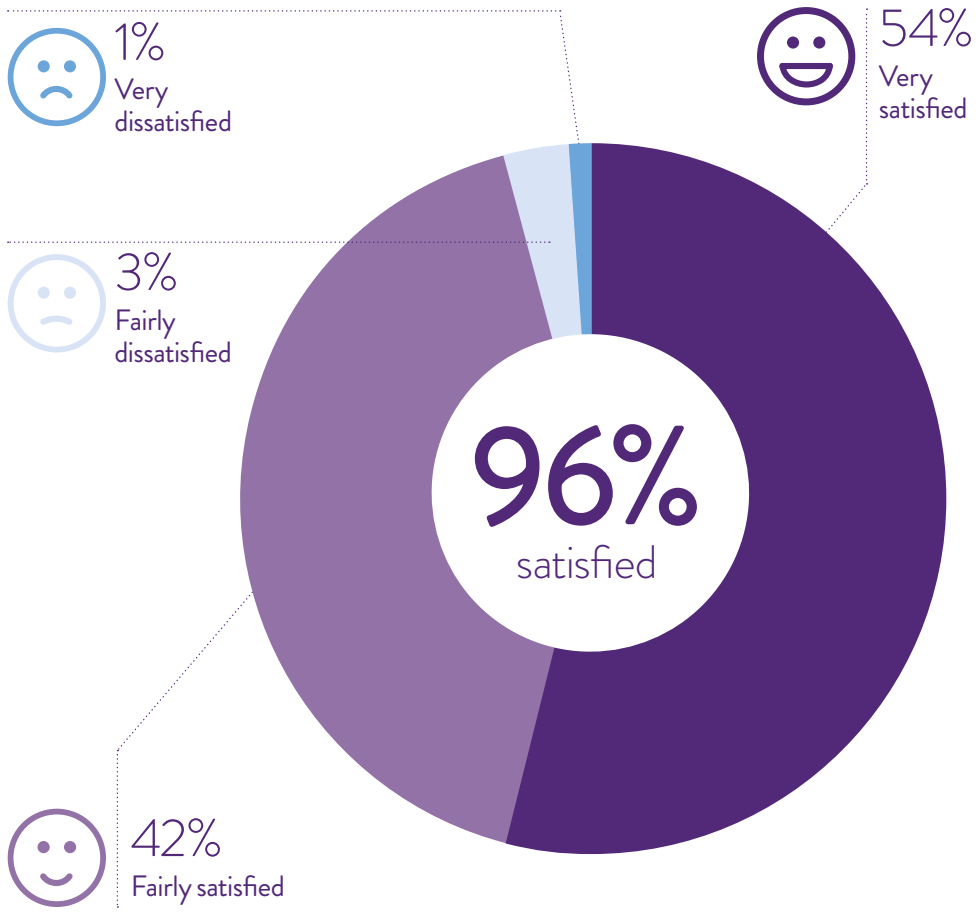


Table 4: Who is more satisfied with their volunteering?

By demographics	• **Volunteers aged 55 and over** (97%) compared with those aged 18–34 (94%) and 35–44 (94%). This gap was most visible for those who were very satisfied (62% vs 43% and 46%). • **Non-disabled volunteers** compared with disabled volunteers (97% vs 93%).
By how they volunteer and who for	• **Frequent volunteers** compared with occasional volunteers (60% vs 45% very satisfied) – there was no difference for overall satisfaction (ie those who said they were satisfied or very satisfied). • **Those volunteering always or often alongside others** than those volunteering rarely or never alongside others (97% vs 92% satisfied and 60% vs 45% very satisfied). • **Those volunteering inside the UK** than those volunteering outside of the UK (overall satisfaction: 97% in neighbourhood and 96% outside neighbourhood vs 89% outside UK). • **Those volunteering for civil society organisations** than those volunteering for public sector organisations (97% vs 94% satisfied and 58% vs 47% very satisfied). • **Those volunteering separately to employers**[38] than those taking part in employer-supported volunteering (96% vs 91% satisfied and 56% vs 39% very satisfied).

38 This excluded those who had never had a job.

5.2.2 Overall likelihood to recommend

Almost seven in ten volunteers had recommended volunteering with their main organisation or were likely to in the future.

Overall, almost half of volunteers (47%) had already recommended volunteering with this organisation to friends or family and a further 22% said they were likely to in the future. Around a quarter (24%) said they had not and were unlikely to in the future (Figure 32).

Satisfied volunteers are more likely to have already recommended volunteering or be inclined to in the future.

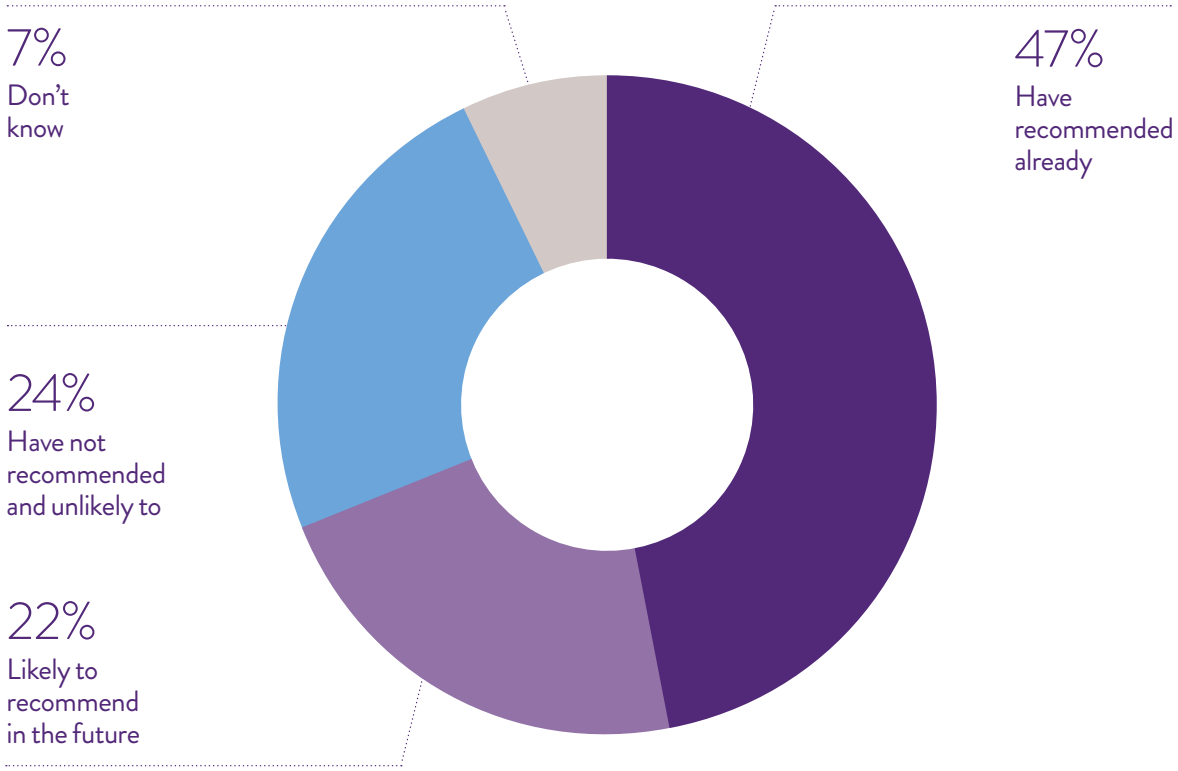
Those who were satisfied overall were much more likely to have already recommended or be likely to in the future than those who were dissatisfied (70% vs 39%).

In general, groups who were more likely to be satisfied were also more likely to recommend – including frequent volunteers compared with occasional volunteers, those volunteering for civil society organisations compared with public sector volunteers and those volunteering always or often with others compared with those volunteering rarely or never with others.

An exception to this was differences by age. As seen in section 5.2.1, those aged 55 and over were generally more likely to be satisfied, however these groups (and 45–54 year-olds) were more likely to say they had not and were not likely to recommend their volunteering in the future than younger volunteers (27% of 45–54 year-olds and 27% of 55+ vs 19% of 18–34 year-olds).

Figure 29: Whether volunteers had already or were likely to recommend volunteering with their organisation

(% of all recent volunteers)



Spotlight (2) on: the experience of BAME volunteers

This survey included 177 responses from individuals from BAME backgrounds who were recent volunteers (ie had volunteered in the last 12 months). However, the results from this group are difficult to interpret, as older individuals are under-represented in the group, although this may be linked to the age profile of BAME groups in the wider population.[39]

Due to the relatively low number of BAME respondents, we have also not been able to breakdown the results by different ethnicities and look at differences between them.[40]

For these reasons, we have chosen not to include much analysis of the BAME respondents throughout the report. However, there are some consistent patterns coming through the data worth considering with the caveats above.

Overall, satisfaction among BAME volunteers was lower than among white volunteers (91% vs 96%). This difference was seen over a range of factors.

- BAME volunteers were less likely to agree that getting involved was easy and straightforward (83% vs 91%).
- They were more likely to agree the organisation they mainly volunteered for could be 'much better organised' (49% vs 34%).
- They were much more likely to agree that the organisation was too structured (36% vs 12%), there was too much bureaucracy (34% vs 24%) and too much concern about risk (34% vs 15%).
- They were less likely to agree that they received enough recognition (73% vs 84%).
- They were less likely to feel they 'belong' in their main organisation (77% vs 85%).

BAME volunteers were also more likely to report negative experiences, including feeling unappreciated and excluded. They were more likely to report tensions and conflict within the organisation (37% vs 28%) and less likely to feel they volunteered within a culture of respect (81% vs 88%).

Given all this, it is perhaps not surprising that those from BAME backgrounds were less likely than white volunteers to say they planned to continue volunteering in future (73% vs 81%).

Because the profile of BAME volunteers is younger, and younger volunteers tend on the whole to be less satisfied with certain aspects of their experience of volunteering, we should interpret these findings with caution. The low number of BAME respondents does not allow us to ascertain whether dissatisfaction is due to age or ethnicity. However, the consistency of the findings and the fact that some of them seem to be valid across age groups means this is something that warrants further investigation.

91% BAME **vs** **96%** White

Satisfaction among BAME volunteers was lower than among white volunteers.

39 According to Office for National Statistics (ONS), the white ethnic group has the highest median age, at 41 years, and 25% of people from white ethnic groups are aged 60 years and over, the highest percentage in this age range out of all ethnic groups: ONS (2018) 'Age groups.' https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/british-population/demographics/age-groups/latest (accessed January 2019).

40 The last Citizenship Survey to have comprised a core sample and an ethnic minority boost sample showed that there were differences between ethnicities: DCLG (2011) *Community Action in England: A report on the 2009–10 Citizenship Survey*. London: DCLG. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919214044/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/2056233.pdf (accessed January 2019).

5.3 VOLUNTEERING MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Volunteers were asked to respond to a series of statements about the way their volunteering was organised and managed.

The statements related to volunteer management generally, as well as specific elements such as managing the entry process, risk and time. They were also asked about training and using skills. These are explored in further detail, by theme, below.

- The entry process (5.3.1)
- The level of organisation, structure and bureaucracy (5.3.2)
- Risk management (5.3.3)
- Raising issues and receiving support (5.3.4)
- Recognition (5.3.5)
- Reimbursement of expenses (5.3.6)
- Perceptions of time and time management (5.3.7)
- Provision of training (5.3.8)
- Experience of training (5.3.9)
- Interest in further training (5.3.10)
- Use of skills and experience (5.3.11)

5.3.1 The entry process

Overall, few report issues with the ease and speed of entry process.

The vast majority of volunteers (90%) agreed that 'the process of getting involved was easy and straightforward', and only a small proportion (14%) agreed they 'expected the process to be quicker'.[41]

Younger volunteers are less likely to agree that the process was easy or that it was as quick as expected.

Around one in five (22%) 18–24 year-olds and almost a quarter (24%) of 25–34 year-olds agreed that they expected the process to be quicker. This contrasted most with those aged 65 and over (only 8% agreed with this statement).

The younger age groups were also least likely to say the process of getting involved overall was easy and straightforward (see Figures 30 and 31).

It is difficult to say from the data whether this indicates different expectations, different experiences or both. However, it may point to generational differences that are highlighted in research on Millennials.[42] This suggests that, due in part to the rise of digital technology, Millennials (ie those aged around 22–37 in 2018) show greater impatience in some aspects of their lives.

As such, this cohort may have higher expectations around how long it should take to get involved in volunteering than older generations.

90%

agree the process of getting involved is **easy and straightforward**.

41 Experiences of the entry journey among those who had looked into volunteering but did not go ahead with it are covered in section 8.2.2.

42 Ng, E. and McGinnis Johnson, J. (2015) 'Millennials: Who are they, how are they different, and why should we care?' In R. J. Burke, C. Cooper and A. Antoniou (eds) *The Multi-generational and Aging Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282368010_Millennials_Who_are_they_how_are_they_different_and_why_should_we_care (accessed January 2019).

Figure 30: Volunteers who agreed with 'I expected the process of getting involved in the organisation to be quicker' *(% of recent volunteers by each age group)*

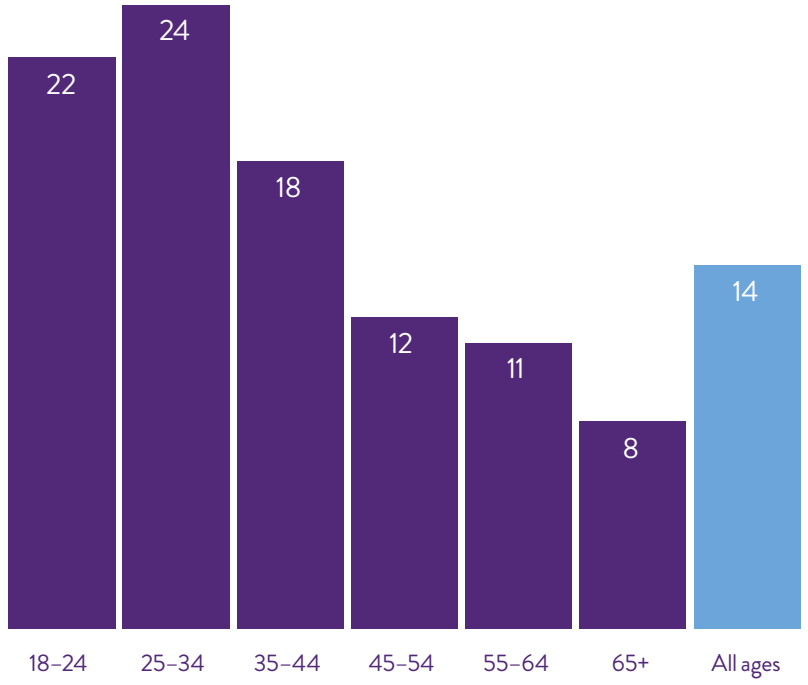
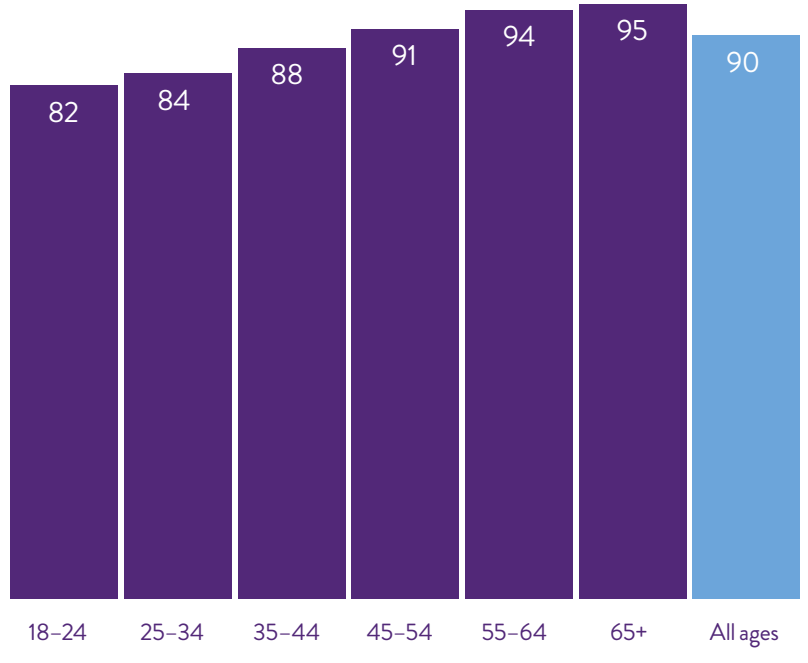


Figure 31: Volunteers who agreed that 'the process of getting involved was easy and straightforward' *(% of recent volunteers by each age group)*



Those going through formal processes and those organised by a paid coordinator also had higher expectations.

Those who had gone through more formal entry processes were more likely to say they had expected a quicker process than those who had undergone more informal processes. For example, 23% of those who said the organisation carried out an interview agreed that they expected it to be quicker, compared with 13% of those who said they had had an informal chat (note that respondents could select both options).

Those who volunteered for organisations with a paid coordinator were also more likely to expect a quicker process (18%) than those with an unpaid coordinator (12%) or no coordinator (10%).

This may be because organisations with a paid volunteer manager are more likely to have formal processes in place (as seen in section 4.3.2) or that volunteers, assuming they are better resourced, have higher expectations of them as a result (see *Spotlight on how volunteering is organised*).

5.3.2 Level of organisation, bureaucracy and structure

A significant minority perceive a lack of organisation.

Over a third of volunteers (35%) felt 'things could be much better organised' in the organisation they volunteered for. Although a direct comparison cannot be made due to different methodologies and framing of the statement, in the previous national survey of this scale (*Helping Out* in 2007[43]) 31% of volunteers agreed with this statement.

This indicates that this continues to be an area to address, 12 years on. Perceptions that there was too much bureaucracy were also quite common, with around one in four (24%) agreeing with this statement.

Whilst with both of these statements volunteers were more likely be positive than negative, the findings suggest that they represent the two areas of volunteer management with the greatest room for improvement.

Only a minority (13%) agreed organisations were too structured or formalised, suggesting that this is less of an issue for volunteers.

Some demographic groups are more likely to be dissatisfied. Across all three statements relating to organisation, bureaucracy and structure, younger volunteers were in general more likely than older volunteers to have negative views (as was seen in perceptions of the entry process).

Additionally, disabled volunteers were less likely to be positive about the level of organisation, structure and bureaucracy than those with no health issues, and men were less positive than women (see Figure 32).

Views about how things are organised also vary by how people volunteer.

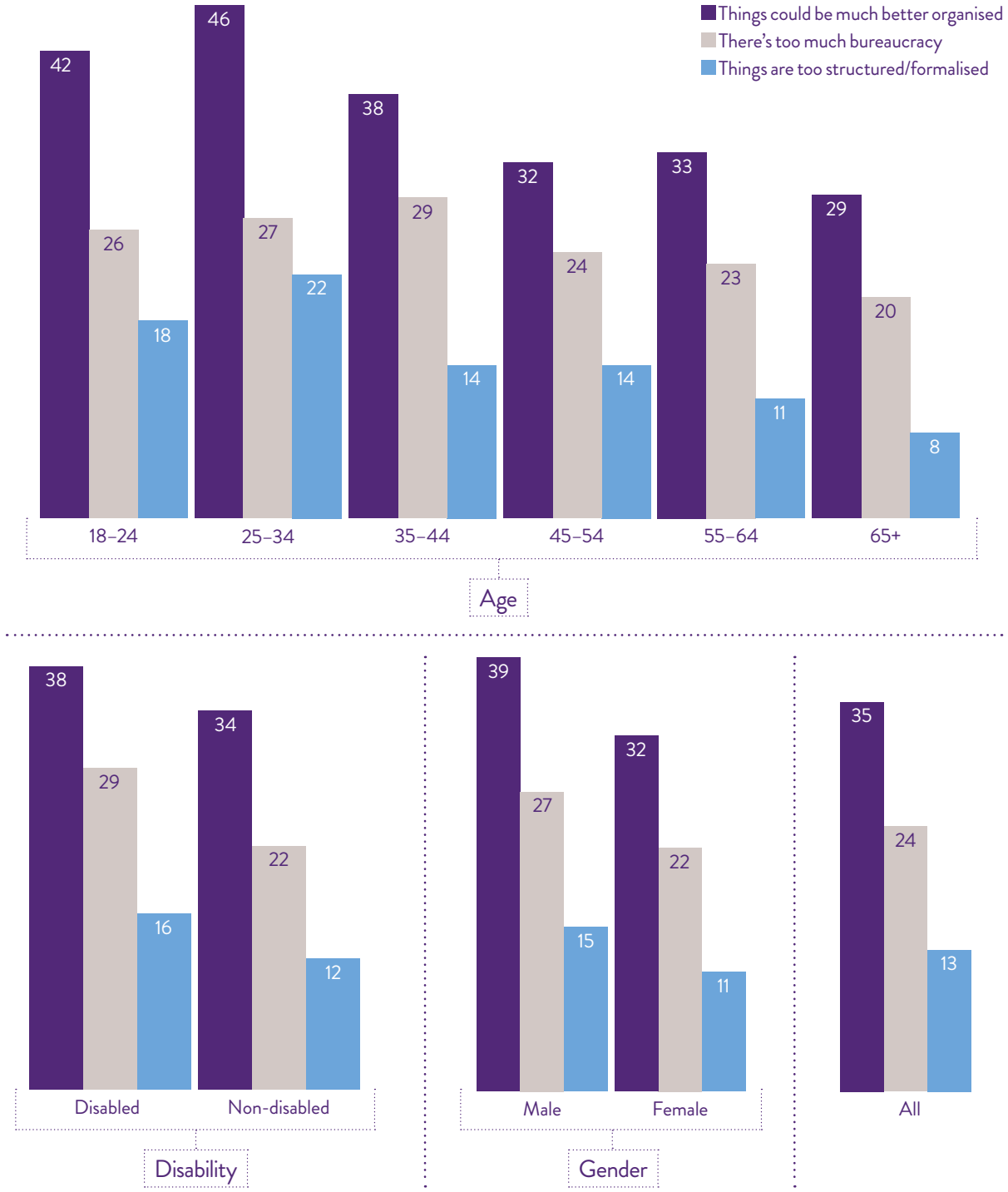
Examples of this include the following.

- **Those who volunteered frequently** were more likely to agree that things could be better organised (37%) than occasional volunteers (32%).
- **Those who volunteered outside of the UK** were more likely to think things were too structured (33%) than those who volunteered in the UK, especially within their own neighbourhood (12%).

  There were no significant differences in perceptions of level of organisation and bureaucracy.
- **Those giving time through employer-supported volunteering** were less likely to be positive about the levels of organisation, structure and bureaucracy than those who volunteer separately from their employers – most notably half (51%) of these volunteers felt things could be much better organised (vs 33%).

43 Low *et al.* (2007).

Figure 32: Volunteers who agreed with statements relating to organisation and management of volunteering – by age, disability and gender *(% of all recent volunteers from each age, disability and gender group)*



Issues of over-formalisation and bureaucracy are perceived more among those volunteering in public sector organisations.

As highlighted in Figure 33, public sector volunteers were twice as likely to agree that 'it was too structured or formalised' than civil society volunteers (20% vs 10%); additionally, almost a third (32%) of public sector volunteers felt there was too much bureaucracy.

Again, this was higher than volunteers in civil society organisations, where around one in five (21%) agreed with this statement.

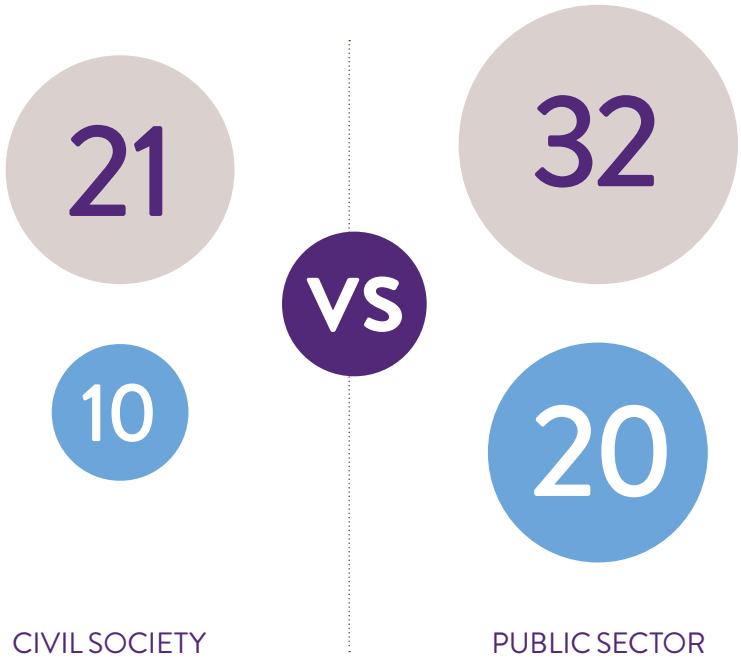
Perceptions do not vary significantly by how formally volunteers are organised.

There were no significant differences in perceptions of volunteer management based on whether volunteers were organised by a paid or unpaid coordinator.

It is worth noting that volunteers with no coordinator had a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses (16–18%) which suggests these statements may be less relevant or applicable to volunteers who self-organise (see spotlight 4 on how volunteering is organised).

Figure 33: Volunteers who agreed with statements relating to organisation and management of volunteering – by sector

(% of all recent volunteers from each sector)



5.3.3 Risk management

Views about risk management broadly reflect attitudes to formalisation.

Only 16% of volunteers agreed the organisation was 'too concerned about risk', a similar proportion to the statement 'the organisation of my unpaid help was too structured and formalised' (13%).

Similar demographic differences were also seen: that the organisations were too concerned about risk was more likely to be the view of younger volunteers than older ones (20% of 18–34 vs 13% of 55+), disabled volunteers than non-disabled volunteers (20% vs 14%) and men than women (18% vs 14%). Across all of these groups, however, the majority disagreed with this statement, which suggests this was not generally a concern among volunteers.

16% agree the organisation is too **concerned about risk**.

5.3.4 Raising issues and receiving support

The majority of volunteers feel they know how to raise an issue and are well supported.

A total of 87% of volunteers agreed they knew how to raise an issue if they needed to and a similar proportion of volunteers (83%) also agreed they 'feel well supported' overall.

There were more marked differences in relation to knowing how to raise an issue than with perceptions of support.

- 93% of volunteers aged 55+ agreed they knew how to raise an issue if they needed to, compared with 79% of those aged 18–34. Similar differences were seen for perceptions of support (87% vs 78%).
- 91% of volunteers who are always or often volunteering alongside other volunteers agreed they knew how to raise an issue, compared with 79% who were rarely or never with others, and there were also differences in relation to support (86% vs 76%).
- 91% of those volunteering for civil society organisations knew how to raise an issue, compared with 84% of public sector volunteers. Less marked differences were observed for support (85% vs 79%).

Those who volunteer frequently and occasionally feel equally well supported.

Of frequent volunteers, 92% agreed that they knew how to raise an issue; this was lower among occasional volunteers (82%). However, there were no significant differences in perceptions of support between those volunteering frequently and not (85% vs 82%).

Views also did not differ by whether coordinators were paid or not.

The proportion of those who knew how to raise an issue and those who felt well supported did not differ significantly by whether volunteers were organised by a paid or unpaid coordinator. Those with no coordinator still mostly felt they knew how to raise an issue (84%) and felt supported (77%) but were more likely than the other two groups to say 'don't know/can't recall'.

83% agree they feel **well supported** overall.

87% of volunteers agree they know how to **raise an issue** if they need to.

5.3.5 Recognition

Being recognised for volunteering is more important for some than others.

Overall, four in ten (39%) volunteers agreed with the statement 'it is important to me to be recognised for the unpaid help that I give'. However, some groups were more likely to agree that recognition was important, as highlighted in Table 5.

Most feel recognised enough, but some groups are more likely to feel undervalued.

The majority of volunteers (84%) reported feeling recognised enough for their volunteering. Most (82%) of those who agreed with the statement said that being recognised was important.

However, some were less likely to feel recognised enough. These included younger volunteers (75% of those aged 18–34 agreed they felt recognised enough, compared with 90% of 55+) and those who volunteered through employers (76%, compared with 85% of those volunteering in their own time and separately from their employment).

Receiving thanks is how most thought volunteers want to be recognised.

Volunteers were asked how they thought volunteers want to be recognised for their time (Figure 34). The most popular forms of recognition were 'verbal or written thanks from the organisation' (42%) and 'verbal or written thanks from the individual helped' (32%). Being recognised with an invitation to a celebration or social event was something that 28% thought volunteers wanted.

Views were largely consistent across age groups, although younger volunteers were more likely to value recognition in the media, on social media or through awards.

However, thanks from the organisation or individual helped, and an invitation to a celebration or social event still ranked highest among young people, as it did in other demographic groups.

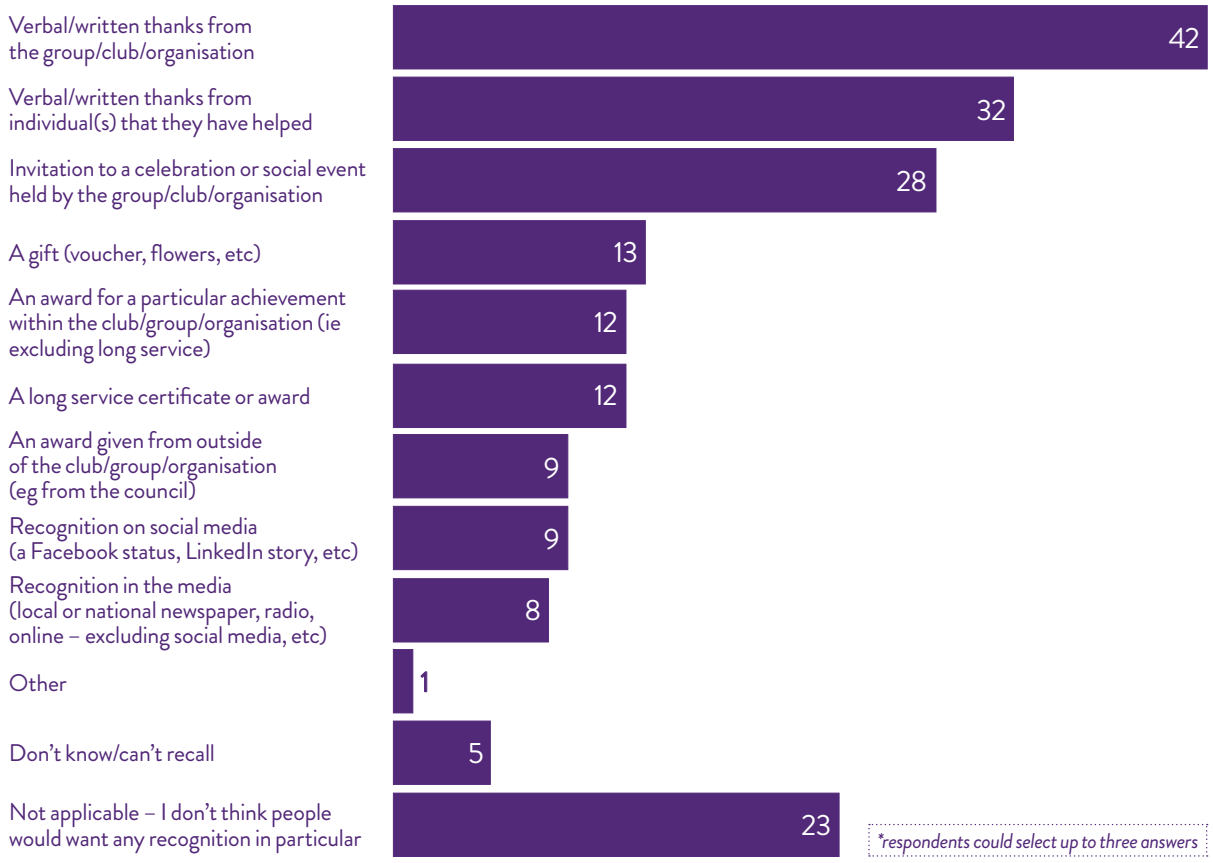
Around a quarter (23%) of volunteers said they did not think people wanted any recognition.

Those in organisations where there was no coordinator for volunteers were more likely to select this statement (35%) than those where there was an unpaid or paid coordinator (22% and 18% respectively). This is likely to indicate that actively receiving recognition (especially in a formal way) may be less of an expectation among more self-organising volunteers; and in fact, around three-fifths (58%) of these volunteers disagreed with the statement 'it is important to be recognised for the unpaid help I give'.

Table 5: Who is recognition more important to?

By demographics	• 25–34 year-olds were the age group most likely to feel recognition was important, with just over half (51%) saying it was important; conversely older volunteers aged 55+ were least likely to say it was important (35%).
By how they volunteer and who for	• Those volunteering more frequently compared with those volunteering occasionally (41% vs 36%). • Those who were volunteering during work time or organised by employers compared with those who volunteered independently from their employers (55% vs 37%). • Those who started volunteering to learn new skills, use existing skills or get on in their career were also more likely to agree it was important compared to those who had been prompted by other motivations. • Where volunteering was organised by a paid coordinator (47%) compared with where there was an unpaid coordinator (37%) and no coordinator (33%).

Figure 34: Ways volunteers think that people giving unpaid help would most like to be recognised for the help they give* *(% of all recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select up to three answers

Spotlight (3) on: the recognition of volunteers in wider society

The findings highlight that, for volunteers, the importance of being recognised for the help they give varies by individual.

To explore the issue of recognition of volunteers more widely, all respondents (including non-volunteers) were asked whether they had used or accessed any activities or services provided by people giving unpaid help (ie volunteers) in the last 12 months, prompted by a list of different examples.[44]

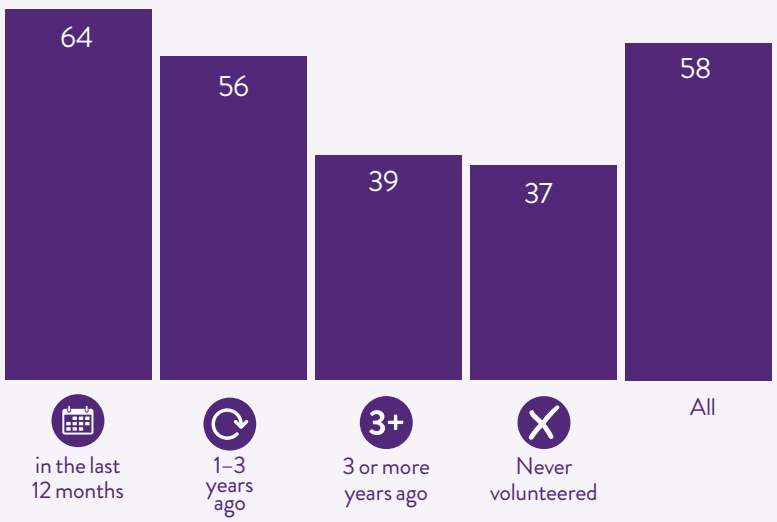
The analysis shows that:

- Most respondents (70%) reported that they have not used or accessed services provided by volunteers in the last 12 months. This is broadly in line with other survey data about the proportion of people receiving help or benefiting from charity services.[45] More generally, it raises questions around the visibility and recognition of volunteers in wider society. Other evidence has shown that people do not always know who has provided a service.[46]
- People who volunteer are more likely to recognise the value that other volunteers bring. Among those who had used an activity or service provided by volunteers, the perceived benefit was greater among those who had volunteered recently (within the last 12 months) and those who had volunteered within the last three years (Figure 35).

This suggests that those who have experience of volunteering are able to identify when volunteers are involved and recognise their contribution more easily. It may also be that they have used the service themselves, as a beneficiary.

Figure 35: Proportion of each group who said they benefited from the activities / services provided by volunteers 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' in the last 12 months

(% of each group)



44 These included receiving advice or information, taking part in an activity run by a club or society and attending an event – a full list can be found in the questionnaire.

45 Charity Commission (2017) Trust and Confidence in the Charity Commission 2017. London: Charity Commission https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trust-and-confidence-in-the-charity-commission-2017 (accessed January 2019); Charity Commission (2014) Public Trust and Confidence in Charities (RS31). London: Charity Commission. Although the question is not identical, this source provides the nearest comparison available from reliable national data. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-trust-and-confidence-in-charities-rs31 (accessed January 2019).

46 ONS (2010) Measuring Outcomes for Public Service Users. London: ONS. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110110153641/http:/www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/measuring-outcomes-for-public-service-users/mopsu-reports-and-updates/mopsu-final-report.pdf (accessed January 2019).

5.3.6 Reimbursement of expenses

Reimbursing expenses was not seen as common practice for all volunteers.

As not all volunteers incur expenses, they were asked to respond to the statement 'the organisation would reimburse me any expenses if I wanted them to'. Around a quarter said that the organisation would not reimburse them (27%) and a further 18% said they 'don't know'. This left just over a half (55%) of volunteers who thought they would be reimbursed.

Frequent volunteers are more likely to agree they would be reimbursed.

Those who volunteered frequently were more likely to agree they would be reimbursed than those who gave their time occasionally (63% vs 41%). Those involved in activities such as handling money, leading a group/being a trustee, representing the group or helping with administration/secretarial work were also more likely to agree compared than those involved in other activities. As outlined in section 4.2.1, these activities were more common among frequent volunteers.

Those volunteering in the public sector are less likely to say that expenses would be reimbursed.

Public sector volunteers were less likely to agree that they would be reimbursed if they wanted than volunteers giving time to civil society organisations (47% vs 59%).

Given that public sector volunteers are more likely to be managed by a paid coordinator and their volunteering overall involves more formal processes, this difference is surprising.

It may point to lower levels of awareness among some public sector volunteers that they are able to have their expenses reimbursed, or it might highlight a slower take-up of good practices around the reimbursement of expenses amongst certain organisations in the public sector. Some public sector organisations such as the NHS have published specific guidance[47] in relation to managing volunteers, but there has been much less written about volunteer management within other settings, such as educational institutions.

47 NHS England (2017) Recruiting and Managing Volunteers in NHS Providers: A Practical Guide. London: NHS England. https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/recruiting-managing-volunteers-nhs-providers-practical-guide.pdf (accessed January 2019).

55%

thought they would be **reimbursed for any expenses**. This was lower among public sector volunteers (47%).

5.3.7 Perceptions of time and time management

Most feel they have flexibility around the time they give.

Overall, volunteers agreed the organisation they volunteered for was flexible around the time they gave (85%).

Although the majority of volunteers were positive, some were less likely to agree they were given flexibility, including:

- **younger volunteers** (with 75% of 18–24 year-olds saying they have flexibility vs 91% for those aged 65+)
- **public sector volunteers** (79% vs 88% of those volunteering for civil society organisations)
- **those giving time through employer-supported volunteering** (68% vs 87% of those volunteering separately to employers)
- **people volunteering outside the UK** (75% vs 86% of those volunteering in the UK, inside and outside their neighbourhood)
- **occasional volunteers** (84% vs 88% of frequent volunteers).

A minority felt the organisation had unreasonable expectations of how much they did.

In total, 17% of the volunteers thought the organisation had unreasonable expectations of how much they did.

This was highest among those aged 25–34, with almost a quarter (24%) of this age groups agreeing with this statement (compared with 10% of 65+) and among public sector volunteers (22% compared with 14% of civil society organisations).

Employer-supported volunteers and those volunteering outside of the UK were also more likely to perceive that there were unreasonable expectations of how much they did. There were no significant differences between frequent and occasional volunteers.

The feeling of volunteering 'becoming too much like paid work' is more prevalent among those aged 25–34 and more frequent volunteers.

Around one in five (19%) agreed that their volunteering was 'becoming too much like paid work'. Across different age groups, those aged 25–34 were most likely to agree with this statement (26%).

As shown in Figure 36, the more frequently volunteers gave their time, the more likely they were to report thinking that it was becoming too much like paid work, with almost a quarter (24%) of those volunteering most frequently – at least once a week – agreeing with this statement.

Those involved in activities such as handling money, leading, visiting people and representing the organisation were more likely to think that it was becoming too much like paid work than those doing other volunteering activities (as seen in section 4.2.1) these activities were also more likely to be carried out by frequent volunteers). The feeling of volunteering becoming 'work' like also varied by context.

85%

agree the organisation is **flexible around the time they give.**

Those who were more likely to feel their volunteering was becoming too much like paid work included similar groups to those who were less likely to perceive flexibility and more likely to feel the organisation had unreasonable expectations, such as:

- **employer-supported volunteering** (41% vs 16% of those whose volunteering was unrelated to employers)
- **public sector volunteers** (24% vs 16% of volunteers in civil society organisations)
- **those volunteering outside of the UK** (33% vs 18% of those volunteering in the UK within their neighbourhood and 22% of those volunteering in the UK outside their neighbourhood).

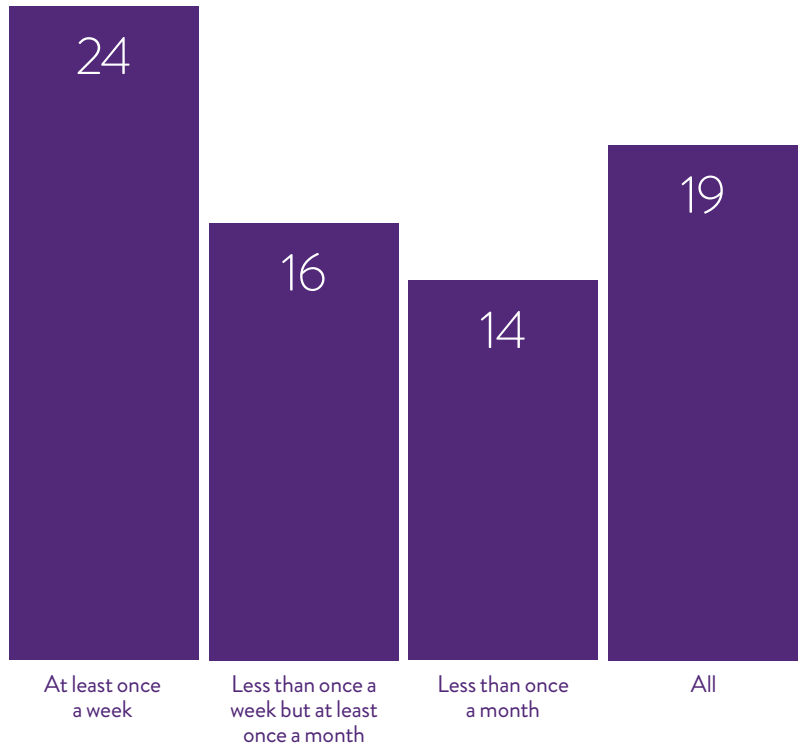
Additional differences include the following.

- Those whose volunteering was **organised by a paid coordinator** were more likely to agree that their volunteering was becoming too much like paid work (23%) than those with an unpaid (17%) or no coordinator (18%).
- Those whose primary motivations to start volunteering were **because there was no one else available, to gain new skills or for their career** were more likely to agree with this statement than those with other motivations.

Together, these differences suggest that the contexts in which volunteers are more likely to feel like their volunteering is becoming too much like paid work tend to be more formalised or structured, or are related to the expectations and motivations they themselves come with.

Figure 36: Volunteers who agreed that their volunteering was 'becoming too much like paid work' – by frequency

(% of recent volunteers by different frequencies of volunteering)



5.3.8 Provision of training

Around half of volunteers received training as part of their volunteering.

Almost half (48%) of volunteers reported receiving some kind of training from the organisation they volunteered for. Over a quarter (27%) had received an induction as well as training on policies and procedures and around one in five (22%) role-specific training (respondents could select more than one of these) (see Figure 37).

The most notable difference by demographics was for age. As with the entry process (section 4.3.2), there was also variation by type of organisation and volunteering activity (see Table 6).

5.3.9 Experience of training

The majority of those who received training are positive about it.

Over three-quarters (77%) of volunteers who had received training agreed that it had helped them 'carry out their volunteering to the best of their abilities' and a similar proportion (78%) thought they 'benefited from new skills and knowledge' through the training they had received.

Volunteers who had learning new skills as one of their primary motivations for volunteering were more likely to agree they had benefited from new skills and knowledge through training they had received (91%).

5.3.10 Interest in further training

Those who have received training tend to want more, but those who haven't mostly don't feel the need for it.

Of those who had already received training, 40% felt that more training would help them in carrying out their volunteering activities. This was higher among public sector volunteers, with around half (49%) of these volunteers agreeing that more training would help them (compared with 38% of civil society volunteers).

Among those who had not received any training, a much smaller proportion of 15% agreed that having training would help them. This may reflect the kinds of volunteering activities they are involved in and types of organisations they volunteer with.

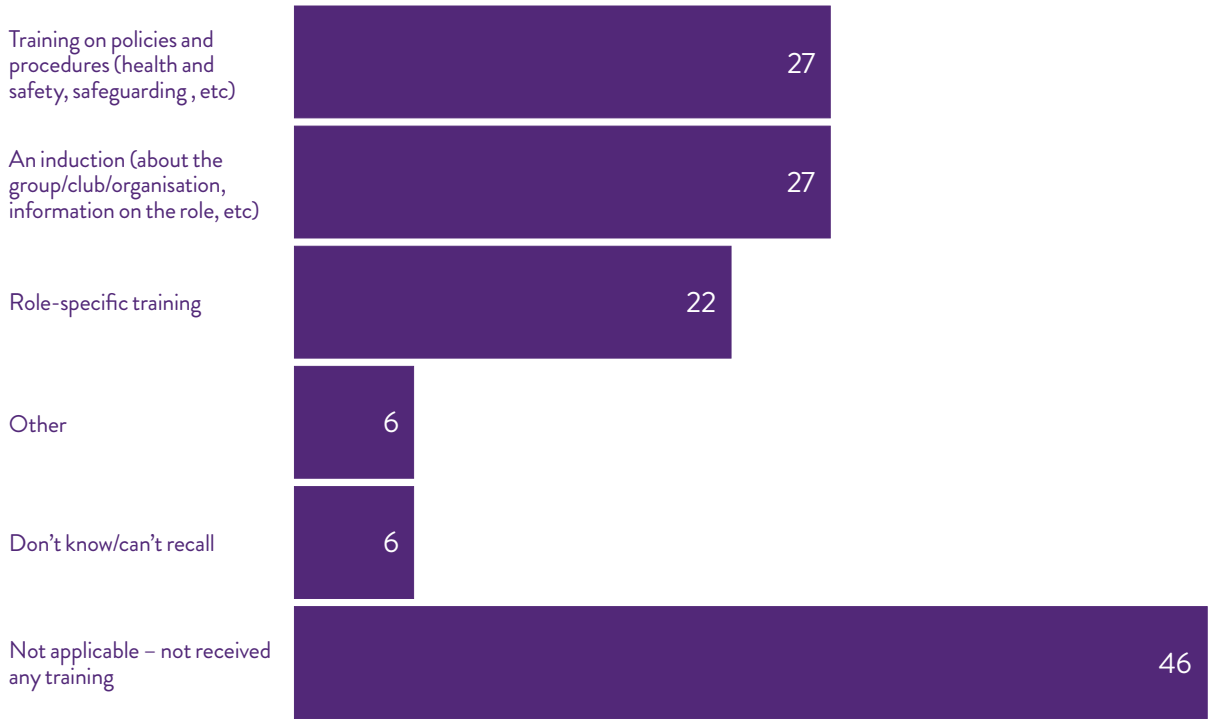
Whether they had already received training or not, those under the age of 45 were more likely to be interested in receiving training.

Over 3/4 of volunteers who had **received training** agreed that it had helped them **'carry out their volunteering to the best of their abilities'**.

Table 6: Who is more likely to have had training?

By demographics	• 18–24 year-olds were most likely to have received training (62%), contrasting most with those aged 55+ (44%).
By how they volunteer and who for	• Volunteers coordinated by a paid member of staff were more likely to have had training (68%) than those with an unpaid coordinator (46%) and those with no volunteer coordinator (27%). This is likely to reflect the formality of the organisation or resources available in organisations with paid staff. • Public sector volunteers were more likely to have received some kind of training than those volunteering for civil society organisations (54% vs 48%). • Frequent volunteers were more likely to have had training than occasional volunteers (54% vs 39%). • Those doing certain activities (eg visiting people, befriending, counselling) and involved in certain areas or causes (eg children, young people, health, safety and first aid). Like for the entry process, this was associated with working with vulnerable people and activities with safeguarding issues.

Figure 37: Provision of training for volunteers *(% of all recent volunteers)*



5.3.11 Use of skills and experience

Half of volunteers use their professional or occupational skills and experience.

Half of volunteers (50%) stated that they had used their existing professional skills and experience when volunteering – with most (81%) either doing so 'a lot' or 'a fair amount'.

These volunteers were more likely to be:

- **older than younger** (58% of 55+ vs 38% of 18–34s)
- **retired** (58%) than any other non-working status, especially compared with **students** (38%), **unemployed people** (38%) or **those not working** (36%)
- from **higher socio-economic groups** (54% ABC1 vs 40% C2DE) and have **higher educational qualifications** (degree level and above 56%).

They were also more likely to be frequent (ie volunteering at least once a month) rather than occasional volunteers (ie volunteered less than once a month) (56% vs 38%). They were more likely to be doing certain activities, such as leading the group, giving advice or information to people, helping with administration or secretarial work and representing the organisation, which are (as we have noted before) more common among frequent volunteers.

As shown in Figure 38, for those using their existing professional skills and experience, the most commonly used skills were communications and marketing skills (46%), administrative and secretarial skills (45%), management skills (38%) and digital and IT skills (34%).

A wider range of volunteers use other (non-professional) skills and experience.

A similar proportion (52%) to those who used their professional skills and experience said they used other (non-professional) skills in their volunteering (respondents could select both options).

Demographic differences were not as marked as in the use of professional skills and there were no significant differences by age, ethnicity or socio-economic status.

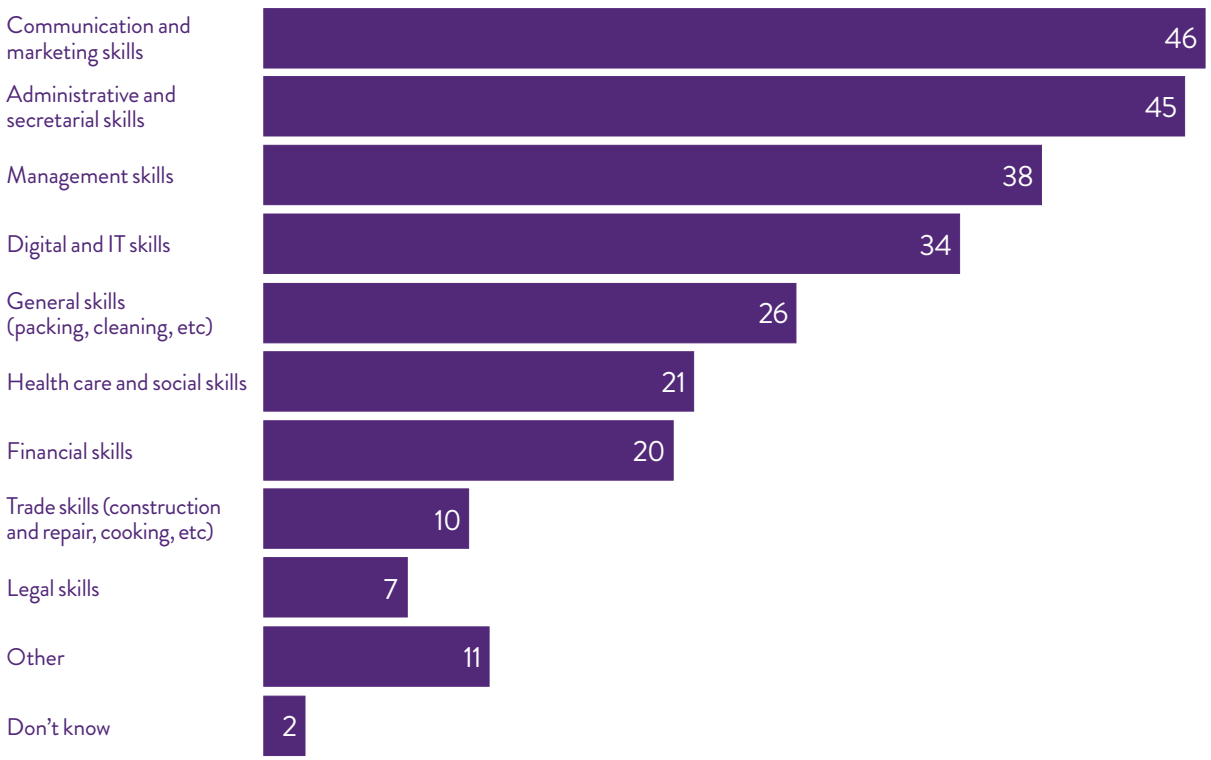
Some volunteers feel their existing skills and experience are underused.

Despite the range of volunteers who said they used their existing skills and experience (whether professional or non-professional), around one in six volunteers (16%) said they have skills and experience that they would like to use in their volunteering that they are not currently using. Some of the groups who are more likely to feel this way are highlighted in Table 7.

Additionally, almost one in five volunteers (18%) who said that 'having a chance to use my existing skills' was among their top reasons for getting involved in volunteering felt that they had skills and experience they would like to use in their volunteering that they weren't currently using.

Figure 38: Types of professional skills used when volunteering

(% of recent volunteers who said they used their professional skills when volunteering)



16% say they have **skills and experience** they'd like to use, but aren't currently using in their volunteering.

Table 7: Who feels they have more skills and experience to offer?

By demographics	• Those aged 25–34 (22%). • Disabled volunteers compared with those with non-disabled (18% vs 14%). • Those from lower socio-economic groups compared with those from higher socio-economic groups (17% vs 15%), although the differences between them were small.
By how they volunteer and who for	• Those with paid volunteer coordinators compared with those with unpaid or no coordinators (23% vs 13% and 11%). • Public sector volunteers compared with those volunteering for civil society organisations (21% vs 14%).

5.4 THE ORGANISATION AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

As well as being asked about the organising and management of their volunteering, respondents were asked about their perceptions of the organisation they volunteered for and those within it.

Different aspects are covered in the sections below:

- Other volunteers (5.4.1)
- The culture of the organisation (5.4.2)
- Tensions and conflicts (5.4.3)
- Connection to the organisation and ability to influence (5.4.4)
- How well the organisation is doing (5.4.5)
- Level of communication received (5.4.6).

5.4.1 Other volunteers

Most agree that they volunteer with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Almost three-quarters of volunteers (73%) agreed that 'there was a wide range of backgrounds among those who volunteered' with them.

Those living in urban areas were more likely to agree with this statement, than those living in town and fringe, and rural areas (75% vs 68% and 69%). This is likely to reflect the more diverse nature of urban areas overall.[48]

73% agree volunteers within the organisation come from a **wide range of backgrounds**.

5.4.2 The culture of the organisation

Most reported feeling positive about the culture of the organisation.

The organisation was one of the primary motivations for people getting involved in the first place. Almost nine in ten volunteers (87%) agreed that 'there was a culture of respect and trust' in the organisation they volunteered for. This was particularly the case for:

- **older volunteers** aged 55 and over (91% agree), especially compared with 18–34 year-olds (82%) and 35–44 year-olds (84%)
- those from **higher socio-economic groups**, compared with those from lower groups (89% vs 84%)
- **non-disabled** volunteers, compared with disabled volunteers, although differences were relatively small (88% vs 86%).

28% volunteers reported **tensions and conflicts** within their organisation.

5.4.3 Tensions and conflicts

Tensions and conflicts are not uncommon.

Almost three in ten (28%) volunteers reported tensions and conflicts within their organisation. There were some demographic variations, including: men were more likely to report tensions and conflict than women (32% vs 25%); disabled volunteers were more likely to report tensions and conflict than non-disabled (32% vs 26%).

Other notable differences included those online, who were more likely to report tensions and conflicts than those never online (30–41% vs 21%) and those volunteering outside of the UK (46%), compared with those volunteering within the UK, in their own neighbourhood (28%) or outside (32%).

As highlighted in other literature, tensions and conflicts can 'develop as an intended consequence of participation'[49] where activities involve seeking or resisting change. In these contexts, they are not necessarily a negative aspect of volunteering.

The findings from this survey highlighting that those volunteering in politics or trade unions are more likely to experience tensions and conflict than in other areas or causes are likely to reflect these contexts.

That is not to say, however, that there are not more negative contexts within which tensions and conflicts occur.

Some of the negative impacts of group dynamics, including feeling excluded and being in conflict with others, are explored further in section 6.3 on negative experiences.

48 ONS (2018) 'Regional ethnic diversity.' www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/british-population/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest (accessed January 2019).

49 Brodie *et al.* (2011).

5.4.4 Connection to the organisation and ability to influence

Most volunteers feel a sense of belonging, but fewer feel that they can influence the development of the organisation.

As highlighted in section 4.3.1, one of volunteers' highest-ranked reasons for starting to volunteer in the first place was the way they felt towards the organisation they wanted to volunteer for.

This sense of connection to the organisation continues into their experience, with the majority of volunteers (85%) agreeing that they felt they 'belonged' to the organisation. However, a much lower proportion felt they were given the opportunity to influence its development, with two-thirds (66%) of volunteers agreeing with this statement.

Those who volunteer more frequently feel a stronger sense of belonging.

Those who volunteered frequently were much more likely to feel they belonged than occasional volunteers (90% vs 77%). This is likely to be explained by the greater amount of interaction these volunteers have with the organisation and others within it.

There were some other variations: older volunteers, those from higher socio-economic groups and those who volunteer for civil society organisations were all more likely to say they felt they belonged to the organisation. Those volunteering alongside other volunteers were also more likely to feel they belonged to the organisation than those who volunteer rarely or never alongside others.

These differences can be explained, in large part, by the fact that these volunteers are more likely to be frequent volunteers and fit the profile of a typically 'engaged' volunteer as outlined in section 3.5.

Volunteering online is not a barrier to feeling you are a part of the organisation – but those who volunteer exclusively online were least likely to feel they belong.

Those who volunteered online often or very often were more likely to agree they belonged than those who were never online (90% vs 84%). This may be related to the kinds of activities these volunteers were involved in and the frequency with which they were involved (see section 4.2.5).

It indicates that being online frequently is not a barrier to feeling part of a group, however those who volunteer exclusively online were the least likely to feel they belong (77% vs 85% overall).

Those who most feel they belong are also more likely to feel they can influence the organisation.

As outlined above, two-thirds (66%) of volunteers felt they were given the opportunity to influence the development of the organisation. These volunteers have a similar profile to those who have a feeling of belonging. Notably, those who volunteered frequently were much more likely to feel they were given the opportunity to influence the organisation than occasional volunteers (73% vs 53%).

Men feel they have more opportunities to influence.

Additionally, men were more likely to agree they had the opportunity to influence the organisation than women (70% vs 62%) (this difference was not seen in relation to feeling a sense of belonging). This may be related to the types of roles they are undertaking: as seen in section 4.2.1, men were more likely to have certain roles, including representative roles, than women.

There is some variation by whether there is a paid coordinator or not.

As shown in Figure 39, those who were organised by a paid coordinator were less likely to agree (59%) that they had the opportunity to influence than those organised by an unpaid coordinator (75%) or no coordinator at all (66%).

There was some variation in relation to their perception of belonging, but this was less marked. It suggests that the presence of paid staff may affect the dynamic within organisations and volunteers' perceptions of the level of involvement in decision making that they can have.

85%

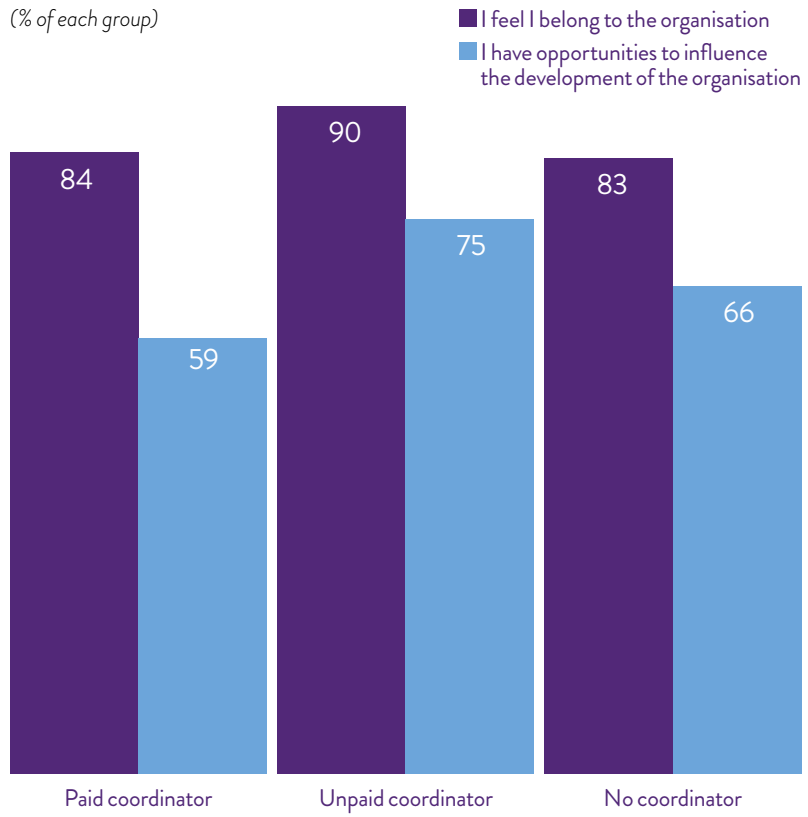
feel **they belong** to the organisation they volunteer for.

2/3

agree they are given the opportunity to **influence the development** of the organisation.

Figure 39: Proportion of recent volunteers with a paid coordinator, unpaid coordinator and no coordinator who agree with the statements 'I feel I belong to the organisation' and 'I have opportunities to influence the development of the organisation'

(% of each group)



Spotlight (4) on: how volunteering is organised

In section 4, while exploring the different ways people volunteer, we looked at whether volunteers were organised by paid or unpaid coordinators, or no one specifically. This was partly to capture the varying degrees of formality within what is often referred to as 'formal' volunteering (ie volunteering through a group, club, or organisation).

As an aspect which hasn't been included in previous surveys on volunteering, this is an area we have explored in more detail. Our analysis looks at how it relates to the volunteer experience, with some notable variations around volunteers' perceived connection to the organisation and their ability to influence the development of it (see Section 5.4.4).

Table 8 summarises some of the findings in this area from across the report. Along with other evidence, it raises the following points for consideration.

- The way volunteering is organised depends on a range of factors, including who is taking part, how many are involved, what activities they're involved in and where involvement takes place. Within different contexts there is a spectrum of formality, from people involved in very informal settings and self -organising (for example, a group of neighbours organising a litter pick in their local area) to more formalised settings with a specific person, paid or unpaid, tasked with coordinating and managing volunteers. Previous research has found that formal volunteer management practices are more common in larger organisations. However, formalised processes are increasingly used in a wide variety of contexts.[50]
- In the survey, we noted that volunteers with no coordinator generally had a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses, especially in relation to questions relating to volunteer management. This suggests that some of the statements volunteers were asked to consider are less relevant or applicable in settings where volunteers are more likely to self-organise.
- It is useful to look at the findings in light of previous research[51], which makes a distinction between 'modern' and 'home-grown' approaches to organising and managing volunteers. Whereas the 'modern' approach to volunteer management applies the processes already used for employees to volunteers and is more top-down, the 'home-grown' approach is less structured and more participatory. Some organisations will combine different elements of both these approaches. The survey findings suggest that this might be more the case in settings where there is an unpaid coordinator. In such settings there is a degree of formalisation and volunteers feel well supported. They are also the most likely to feel they can influence the development of the organisation.

50 Zimmeck, M. (2001) The Right Stuff: New ways of thinking about managing volunteers. London: IVR, University of East London. http://www.attend.org.uk/sites/default/files/U1-L3_Zimmeck_2000_The%20right%20stuff.pdf (accessed January 2019).

51 Rochester et al. (2010).

Table 8: Summary of differences by how volunteering is organised

Context	• Public sector volunteers are more likely to have a paid coordinator than unpaid coordinator. • By contrast, civil society volunteers are the opposite (more likely to have an unpaid than paid coordinator). • Paid coordinators are more commonly found in health, disability and social welfare, children's education or schools. Volunteers with an unpaid coordinator are more common in civil society organisations and are most commonly found in hobbies, recreation, arts and social clubs, local community groups and sports or exercise organisations. These areas, as well as those relating to older people, are also the most common for those volunteering with no coordinator.
Motivations	• Volunteers with a paid coordinator are more likely than those with an unpaid coordinator or those with no coordinator to have started volunteering because they wanted to gain skills and get on in their career. • Both volunteers with an unpaid coordinator and those with no coordinator are more likely than those with a paid coordinator to have started volunteering because someone had asked them to help, the organisation was important to them or they felt no one else was available.
Experience	• Volunteers with a paid coordinator are most likely to have gone through a formal entry process, followed by those with an unpaid coordinator and those with no coordinator. They are also more likely than the other two groups to have expected the recruitment process to be quicker. • There are no significant differences in perceptions of aspects of volunteer management such as levels of organisation, bureaucracy etc based on whether volunteers are organised by a paid or unpaid coordinator. Volunteers with no coordinator have a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses which is also common across other statements, including feeling well supported, which may explain the variations for these statements. • Volunteers with a paid coordinator also more likely than those with an unpaid coordinator to feel that their volunteering was becoming too much like paid work. • Volunteers with an unpaid coordinator are the most likely to feel they can influence the organisation and those with a paid coordinator are the least likely to feel this way. Volunteers with an unpaid coordinator are also most likely across the three groups to feel that they belong to the organisation.
Retention	• Volunteers with an unpaid coordinator and those with no coordinator are both more likely than those with a paid coordinator to say they are likely to continue volunteering because of a lack of people to take their place.

5.4.5 How well the organisation is doing

Those who felt the organisation they volunteered for was 'not going anywhere' were in a minority (16%).

Perceptions in this area reflect other findings in the report. Younger volunteers (26% of 18–34s vs 12% of 55+) and those with a disability (20% vs 15% of those with no health issues) were more likely to agree with this statement.

This was also the case for those who volunteered for the public sector (20%, compared with 14% of those giving time to civil society organisations).

5.4.6 Level of communication received

Volunteers were asked about whether the communication they received from the organisation was too much, too little or the right amount. This related to the overall communication they received, the information about what is going in the organisation and the information about the difference being made by the organisation.

Most people feel the organisation they volunteer for communicates with them enough.

Almost eight in ten (79%) volunteers felt that the overall amount of information they received from the organisation was right.

A similar proportion felt that they got the right amount of information about what was going on internally at the organisation (75%) and the difference being made (76%).

Overall, where volunteers did not feel it was the right amount, they were more likely to say the level of communication was 'too little' (12–16%) than 'too much' (2–5%) (see Figure 40).

There were few demographic differences to note, although in general, across different age groups, younger (18–34 year-olds) volunteers were less likely to say it was 'the right amount'.

For example, for overall communication, 71% of 18–34 year-olds felt it was the right amount, which contrasted most with those aged 55+ (84%).

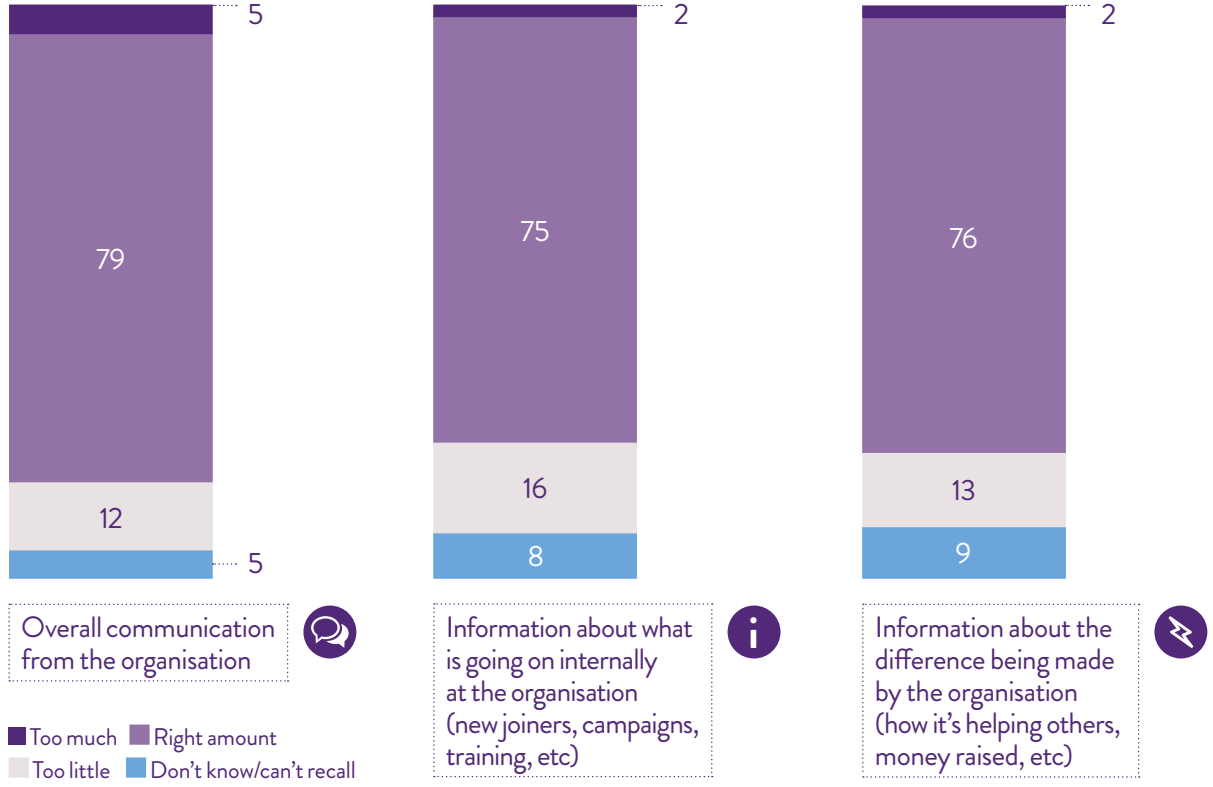
Those who felt the organisation they volunteered for was **'not going anywhere'** were in a minority (16%).

Almost **8 in 10** feel they receive the **right amount of communication** overall from the organisation.

Volunteers are more likely to feel there is **too little** information about the difference being made by the organisation (13%) than **too much** (2%).

Figure 40: Perceptions of level of communication among recent volunteers by different types of communication

(% of all recent volunteers)



5.5 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WHAT MATTERS MOST FOR SATISFACTION?

In section 5, we have looked at different aspects of the volunteer experience, including levels of overall satisfaction and volunteers' perceptions of the organisation they volunteer for.

Whilst it is helpful to understand how satisfied volunteers are, digging deeper into what is 'behind' their satisfaction or dissatisfaction is perhaps more useful for volunteer-involving organisations that are looking to provide volunteers with good experiences.

We have undertaken further analysis (by using a multivariate logistic regression[52]) to explore responses across different questions and identify factors that might be significantly and independently associated with people's overall satisfaction with volunteering.

This analysis involved looking at a large set of factors, such as: demographic factors (age, sex, social grade, ethnicity, disability); types of volunteering (whether volunteering with others or alone, whether volunteering in the public, private or civil society volunteering inside or outside the UK, frequency of volunteering); experience of recruitment, induction and training.

This highlighted a number of key findings.

- **How volunteers feel about their volunteering experience is most strongly associated with overall satisfaction – over and above 'who they are'.**

When all factors are examined together, it is the way people feel about their volunteer experience that has the strongest association with overall satisfaction. That is not to say that overall satisfaction does not vary with demographic factors; we saw earlier that young volunteers and disabled volunteers, for example, were less likely to feel positive about certain aspects of their experience. However, it is the factors relating to experience that have the strongest association with overall satisfaction, more than demographic and other factors.

- **Key aspects[53] of the experience that are most strongly associated with satisfaction include feelings of support, recognition and belonging.**

As seen in section 5.3.5, when asked directly, many volunteers say that it is not important for them to be recognised for their contribution. The regression analysis indicates, however, that this direct question may be affected by 'social desirability bias' (ie respondents may feel it is not socially acceptable to say they need recognition) and that recognition does play a part in volunteers feeling satisfied overall.

Our analysis highlights several areas that are central to a quality volunteer experience, including feeling positive about how organisations operate, what they are achieving and how people are involved.

52 Further details of the multivariate logistic regression and full results of the model including odds ratios is shown in Appendix 2.

53 Some other aspects, such as volunteering alone or volunteering outside the UK, also had independent associations with satisfaction, however we focus on the aspects that relate to experience here. See Appendix 2 for more detail.

Table 9: Key aspects of the volunteer experience associated with being satisfied

Those who agree with...	*... are much more likely to be satisfied overall*
• there is a culture of respect and trust	
• I feel well supported	
• I feel recognised enough for the help given	
Those who agree with...	**... are much less likely to be satisfied overall**
• I feel the organisation was not really going anywhere	

Key aspects of the volunteer experience most strongly associated with satisfaction include **feelings of support, recognition and belonging**.

This section looks at the volunteers' perceptions about the impacts of volunteering on themselves, including the benefits they feel they get out of taking part and any negative experiences they have had. These findings focus on recent volunteers (ie those who volunteered in the last 12 months).

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

Benefits of volunteering

- Volunteers feel they benefit from their volunteering in a number of ways, with enjoyment being the highest rated (93%). Those who volunteer frequently particularly feel these benefits.
- The majority of volunteers feel like they make a difference through their volunteering (90%), and they most commonly feel they make a difference to an individual's life (47%) or a particular group of people or issue in society (44%).
- Many report social benefits from their volunteering. Almost nine in ten volunteers say they have met new people. Young people aged 18–24 (77%) and 25–34 (76%) are the age groups most likely to say their volunteering helped them feel less isolated.
- Over three-quarters of volunteers (77%) reported that volunteering improved their mental health and wellbeing. This benefit was more widespread than physical health benefits (53%).
- Improved employment prospects are the lowest ranked of the listed benefits (34%) but are more commonly reported among 18–24-year-olds (69%) than older groups (14% of 55+), and public sector volunteers (41%) than those giving time to civil society organisations (32%).
- Those who volunteer through employer-supported volunteering report the same benefits as those doing other forms of volunteering (primarily around enjoyment and fulfilment). Career-related benefits rank lower.
- Most volunteers cite benefits that match their initial motivations for volunteering (to meet people, gain skills, etc) but they also report additional benefits.

Negative experiences and impacts

- Those who report having negative experiences are few. The most commonly experienced include too much time being taken up (33%), being out of pocket (31%) or being pressured to do more (28%).
- Frequent volunteers are more likely to report negative (as well as positive) experiences than occasional volunteers, probably because they have greater levels of interaction with the organisation and with others.

Impacts and overall satisfaction

- Further analysis (using a multivariate logistic regression analysis) highlights that making a difference, enjoying volunteering, feeling appreciated and safe are key aspects of the volunteering experience associated with overall satisfaction.

Enjoyment ranked highest among a range of benefits that volunteers feel they get out of volunteering.

18–24 year olds and 25–34 year olds are the age groups most likely to agree their volunteering **helps them feel less isolated**.

Of those who had **negative experiences**, the most common is **too much time being taken up**.

90%

of volunteers feel they **make a difference** through their volunteering.

Over **3/4** of volunteers say that their volunteering improves their **mental health and wellbeing**.

6.2 PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers were asked to reflect on what they got out of volunteering, prompted by a list of different benefits and impacts.

Enjoyment ranks as the highest of the perceived benefits.

'I enjoy it' was the most common benefit identified by recent volunteers (93%) as seen in Figure 41. As well as being the highest-ranked benefit overall, volunteers also felt most positively about the enjoyment they got from volunteering, with almost half (49%) of volunteers 'definitely' agreeing with this statement. This was much higher than for all other statements (for which the proportion of those who 'definitely' agreed ranged from 10% to 37%).

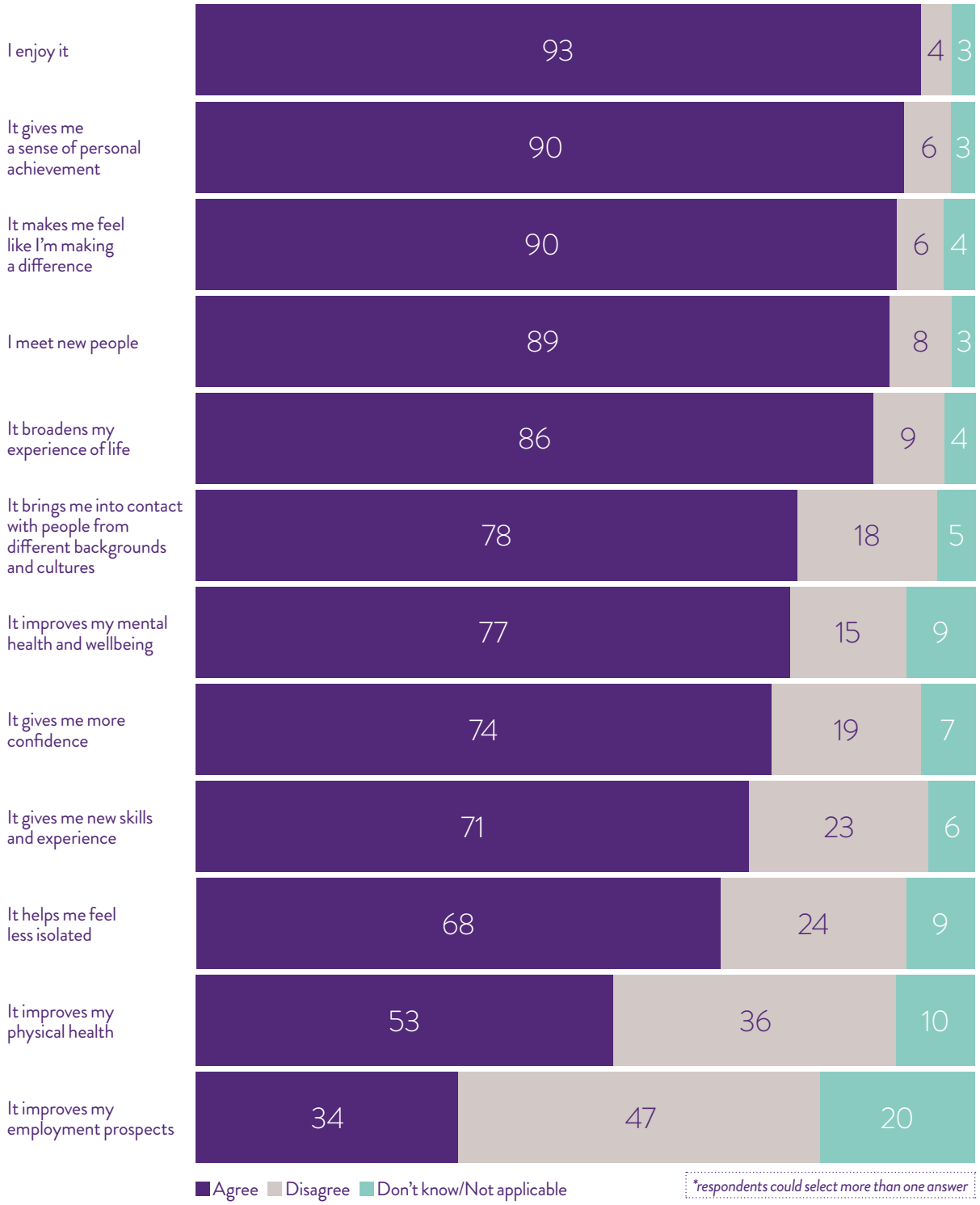
'I feel like I'm making a difference' and 'It gives me a sense of personal achievement' also ranked very highly among volunteers (90% for both).

Across different age groups, older volunteers aged 55+ were most likely to agree with these highest-ranked statements, with 97% of those aged 55+ saying they enjoy it, 93% saying they feel they make a difference and 93% saying it gives them a sense of personal achievement.

Overall, whilst there were variations by demographics, there were few differences in relation to perceived benefits across different ways of volunteering and types of organisation they volunteer for.

Volunteers perceive a range a benefits from their volunteering – most commonly **enjoyment**, a sense of **personal achievement** and feeling they **make a difference**.

Figure 41: Perceived benefits from being involved in volunteering with the organisation* *(% of recent volunteers)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

Those who give time frequently say they benefit more.

Although the ranking order was similar for frequent volunteers (giving time at least once a month) and occasional volunteers (giving time less frequently than once a month) across the majority of the statements, a higher proportion of frequent volunteers agreed that they benefited in these different ways than occasional volunteers.

For example, 96% of frequent volunteers said they 'enjoy it' compared with 90% of occasional volunteers, and a similar pattern was seen for feeling like they made a difference (93% vs 85%) and feeling a sense of personal achievement (93% vs 88%).

Volunteers most commonly feel they make a difference to an individual's life or a particular group of people or issue in society.

As shown in Figure 42, among those who felt they had made a difference, the largest proportion of volunteers (47%) felt they made a difference to an individual or individuals' lives, followed by a particular group of people or issue in society (43%). The least common area for volunteers to feel they made a difference to was global or international causes (10%).

There was some variation depending on what volunteers were giving time to. For example, those volunteering for a public sector organisation were more likely to feel they made a difference to a physical place than volunteers giving time to civil society organisations (33% vs 11%), whereas those volunteering for civil society organisations were more likely to feel they were making a difference to a particular group of people or issue in society (48% vs 35%).

Volunteers benefit from new social connections.

Overall, almost nine in ten volunteers (89%) agreed that they had met new people through their volunteering; across different age groups. This was particularly high among 55–64 year-olds (92%). Additionally, almost eight in ten volunteers (78%) agreed that their volunteering had brought them into contact with people from different backgrounds. This echoes the findings of other research that indicate volunteers have higher levels of social connectedness than others[54] and that volunteering both builds on existing social connections and generates new ones[55].

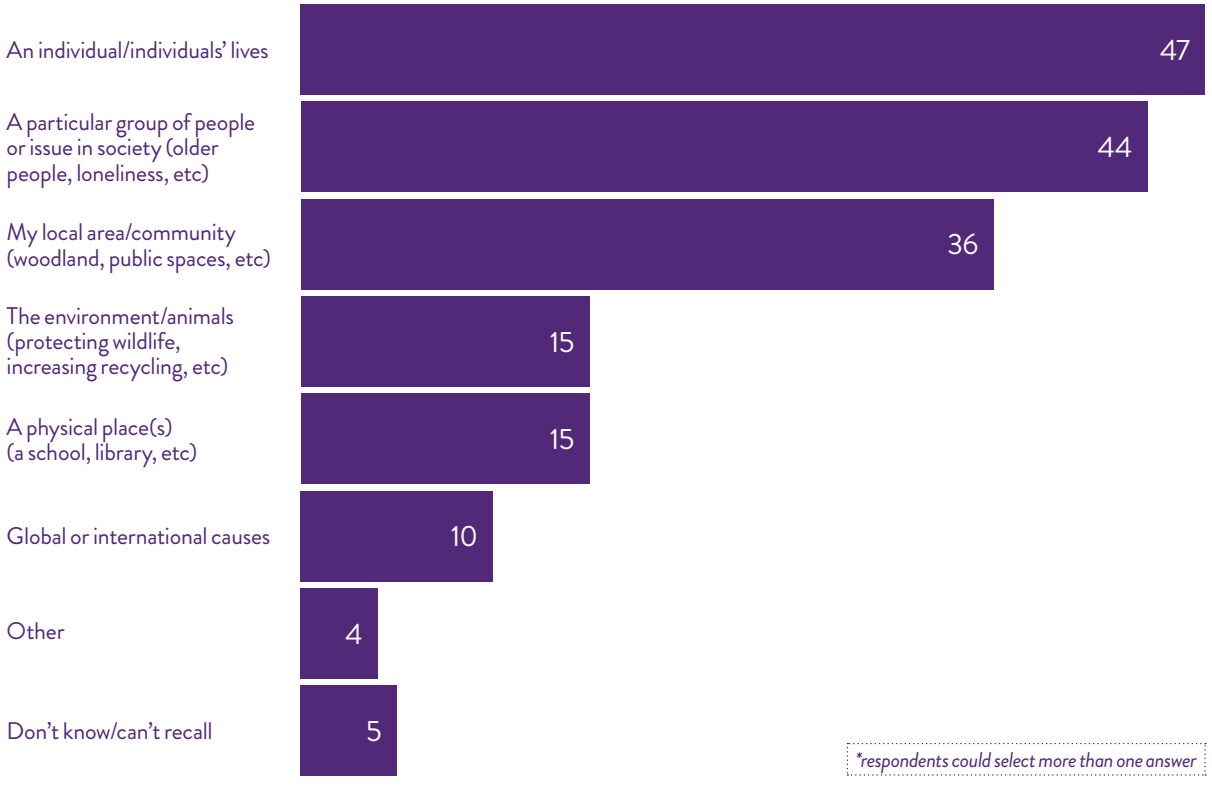
Those volunteering always or often alongside others were more likely to agree that they met people than those who were rarely or never with others (92% vs 74%) and more likely to say it had brought them into contact with people from different backgrounds and cultures (81% vs 70%).

54 Brown, K. M., Hoye, R. and Nicholson, M. (2012) 'Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social connectedness as mediators of the relationship between volunteering and well-being.' *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 468–483.

55 Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997) 'Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work'. *American Sociological Review*, vol. 62, pp. 694-713.

Figure 42: What volunteers feel they make a difference to*

(% of recent volunteers who said they feel they make a difference through their volunteering)



*respondents could select more than one answer

89%

Almost nine in ten volunteers agreed that they had **met new people** through their volunteering.

Young people are most likely to feel that volunteering helps them feel less isolated.

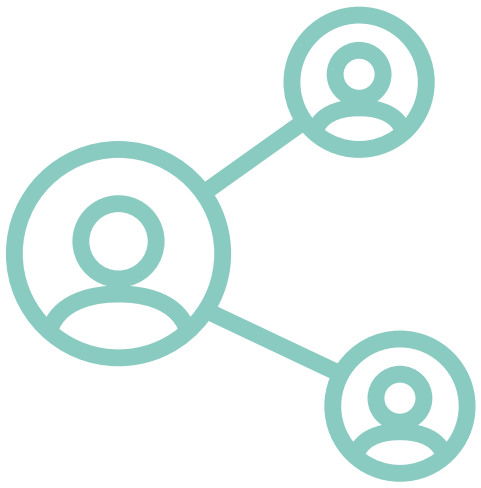
Around two-thirds of volunteers (68%) agreed their volunteering had helped them feel less isolated (Figure 43). This was highest among 18–24 year-olds (77% agree) and 25–34 year-olds (76%). Previous research in this area has focused on the impact volunteering can have on reducing loneliness and isolation among older people.[56] Our findings show that these effects can also be felt among younger age groups (and are more likely to be felt by them). This may reflect the fact that these groups are more likely to feel lonely than other age groups.[57]

Volunteers were more likely to perceive **benefits to their mental health** than their **physical health**.*

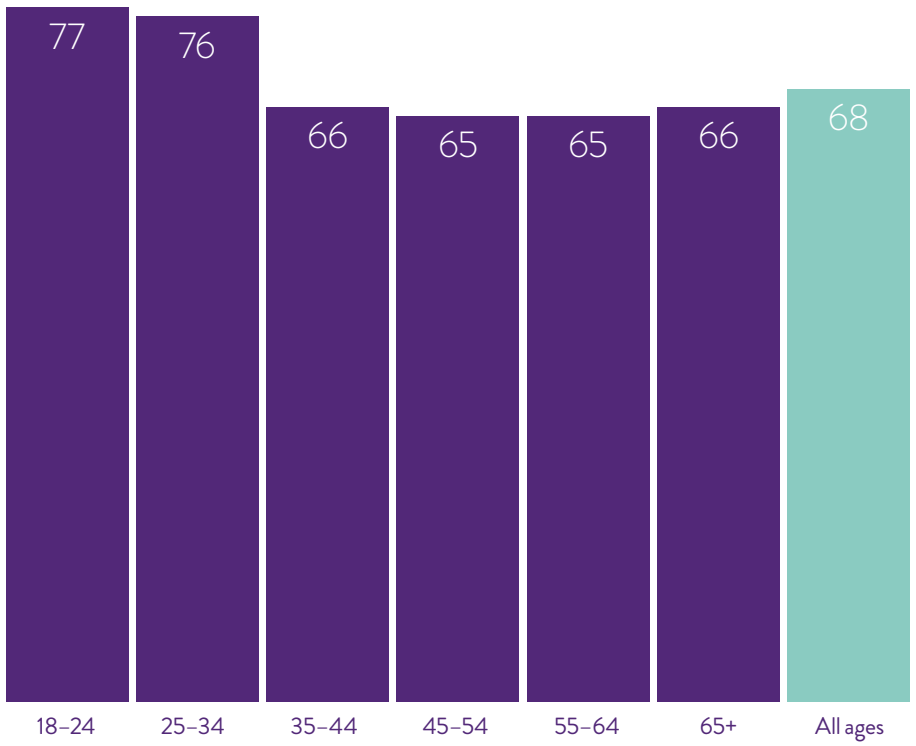
77% vs 53%

*Respondents could agree with both statements

Figure 43: Those who agreed that their volunteering with the organisation 'helped them feel less isolated' *by age group (% of each age group)*



18–24 year olds and **24–35 year olds** are most likely to say volunteering **helps them feel less isolated**



Perceived mental health benefits of volunteering are more widespread than improved physical health.

Over three-quarters (77%) of volunteers agreed that volunteering had improved their mental health and wellbeing; this compares with just over half (53%) who agreed their physical health had improved (note, these were separate statements, so respondents could agree with both). A significant minority of 10% also responded 'don't know/not applicable' to the statement about physical health benefits.

There was little demographic variation in relation to the perceived benefit of volunteering on mental health. Most research in this area has concentred on impacts on older people, with some suggesting that positive effects are only felt among those over 40.[58] Our findings suggest that all age groups can perceive benefits to mental health through volunteering.

There were more demographic differences for perceived physical health benefits. This included volunteers from lower social grades being more likely to agree that their physical health had improved from their volunteering than those from higher social grades (57% C2DE vs 52% ABC1). Those volunteering in the areas of sport and exercise, safety and first aid and environment and animals were also more likely to report impacts on physical health than other sectors or areas.

Existing research has found that volunteers report better physical health, although the majority of the research related to volunteering in general, rather than any particular type of setting or role[59]. Our research builds on this knowledge by suggesting some of the contexts where this is more likely to be felt.

These findings indicate that physical health benefits are more likely to be experienced with specific types of volunteering, whereas mental health benefits are felt by a wider range of volunteers.

56 Nazroo, J. and Matthews, K. (2012) *The Impact of Volunteering on Well-Being in Later Life*. Cardiff: WRVS. https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/Reports%20and%20Reviews/the_impact_of_volunteering_on_wellbeing_in_later_life.pdf (accessed January 2019); Carr, D. C., Kail, B. L. and Rowe, J. W. (2018) 'The relation of volunteering and subsequent changes in physical disability in older adults.' *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, vol. 73, no. 3, pp. 511–521.

57 The Community Life Survey found that 8% of 16–24 year-olds feel lonely often or always, compared with 3% of 65–74 year-olds (DCMS, 2018).

58 Wilson, J., Son, J., Smith, D., and Gotz, J. (2016) 'Longer-term volunteering impacts on volunteers and association members/participants', in Horton Smith D., Stebbins R. and Grotz J. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Tabassum, F., Mohan, J. and Smith, P. (2016) 'Association of volunteering with mental well-being: A lifecourse analysis of a national population-based longitudinal study in the UK.' *BMJ Open*, vol. 6, e011327. https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/400216/1/BMJ%2520Open-2016-Tabassum-.pdf (accessed January 2019).

59 Casiday, R. (2015) *Volunteering and Health: What Impact Does It Really Have?* London: Volunteering England. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228628782/Volunteering_and_Health_What_Impact_Does_It_Really_Have (accessed January 2019).

84%

of 18–24 year olds feel their volunteering gives them **more confidence**.

18–24 year-olds are most likely to feel they gain more confidence, as well as new skills and experience.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of volunteers agreed that volunteering had given them more confidence. Across different age groups, 18–24 year-olds were most likely to think that volunteering had given them confidence (84%). Women were more likely to agree their confidence had improved than men (76% vs 71%).

The youngest group of volunteers was also more likely to say they had gained new skills and experience (85%) than other age groups, and this was much higher than the overall proportion (71%) of volunteers citing this benefit.

Improved employment prospects are the lowest ranked of the benefits but are higher amongst younger volunteers and public sector volunteers.

The benefits of volunteering to employability was the lowest ranked overall (34%), however this was more likely to be reported as a benefit (as with skills and experience benefits) among volunteers aged 18–24 (69% of 18–24 year-olds, contrasted with 14% of 55+ respectively).

There were some variations by sector and type of organisation, with public sector volunteers being more likely to perceive career benefits than volunteers giving time to civil society organisations (41% vs 32%) and those volunteering for organisations with a paid volunteer coordinator (42%) more likely to perceive career benefits than volunteers with an unpaid coordinator (32%) or no coordinator at all (24%).

Previous research has focused on the impact on unemployed people taking part in volunteering programmes designed to improve employability, rather than the impact on employability among all types of volunteer. It found that volunteering could improve people's skills (including soft skills such as teamwork) didn't necessarily lead to employment.[60]

Perceived benefits of employer-supported volunteering are similar to other forms of volunteering.

Those who volunteered through or were supported by employers were also more likely to report the employability benefits of their volunteering (58%) than those who were not working for an employer at that time (23%) or doing volunteering separate to their work (30%).

It should be noted, however, that among those volunteering through or supported by employers, a higher proportion agreed with other statements relating to enjoyment and making a difference than those agreeing with statements about benefits to their careers.

This reflects findings from a larger group of respondents who had participated in employer-supported volunteering at some point in their lives who were asked to rank the key benefits they gained from volunteering in this way. These respondents rated the benefits around enjoyment (52%), making a difference (47%) and a sense of personal achievement (44%) highest. Career-related benefits (able to put on CV 12%, making new contacts 6%) ranked lower.

The benefits of volunteering match what volunteers set out to gain from their experience.

The findings from this survey indicate that most people get out of their volunteering what they hope or intend to when they first start. For example:

- 95% of those who cited 'improving things/helping people' as being among their biggest motivations for getting involved in volunteering agreed they were making a difference through their volunteering.
- 93% of those who stated that gaining skills was among their key reasons for getting involved and 82% of those looking to improve their career prospects agreed that they had benefited in these ways.
- almost all (96%) of those who said they wanted to meet people as a key motivation agreed they had.

As well as getting the benefits they intended, the data suggests that volunteers gain additional benefits and perhaps more unintended benefits from their volunteering.

For example, many volunteers (84%) who were not primarily motivated by wanting to make a difference at the start of their volunteering experience later felt that this was a benefit. Similarly, many volunteers who did not start volunteering to make new friends selected 'I met new people' as a benefit (84%).

Other research has found that young people experienced additional effects when taking part in volunteering aimed at improving their employment prospects, such as greater feelings of altruism.[61]

60 NCVO (2018) *Impactful Volunteering: Understanding the impact of volunteering on volunteers*. London: NCVO. https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Impactful-volunteering-understanding-the-impact-of-volunteering-on-volunteers.pdf (accessed January 2019).

61 Kay, T. and Bradbury, S. (2009) 'Youth sport volunteering: Developing social capital?' *Sport, Education and Society*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 121–140. https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/bitstream/2134/24539/3/SB%20in%20SES%202009.pdf (accessed January 2019).

Among volunteers whose primary motivations for volunteering was to improve things or help people, 95% feel they **make a difference** through their volunteering.

6.3 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES AND IMPACTS

Volunteers were asked to reflect on any negative experiences and impacts of volunteering, prompted by a list.

Negative experiences most commonly relate to time, expenses, pressure and recognition.

Around two-thirds (65%) of volunteers said they had not experienced any of the negative experiences and impacts listed (Figure 44). This reflects the largely positive perceptions among volunteers about their experiences, as outlined in the previous sections.

The volunteers who had experienced at least one of these negative experiences or impacts most commonly reported issues related to too much time being taken up (33%), being out of pocket (31%) and feeling pressured (28%), unappreciated (27%) and in conflict with others (22%). Note that they could choose more than one option.

Certain negative experiences affect some more than others.

Some groups were more or less likely to experience some of these negative experiences.

- Younger volunteers were more likely to feel volunteering had negatively affected their work or studies (20% of 18–24 year-olds vs 2% of 55+).
- Younger people were more likely to feel excluded than older volunteers (25% of 18–24 year-olds vs 8% of 55+).
- Disabled volunteers were more likely say volunteering had negatively impacted their health and wellbeing than those with no health issues (16% vs 9%).

These findings should be taken with some caution due to small base sizes.

Frequent volunteers were more likely to have negative (as well as positive) experiences.

As seen in section 6.2, frequent volunteers were more likely to report a range of positive impacts than occasional volunteers. However, they were also more likely to report negative experiences in some areas. For example, frequent volunteers were more likely than occasional volunteers to report too much time being taken up (37% vs 23%); being in conflict with others (24% vs 17%); and negative effects on family life (12% vs 5%).

This suggests frequent volunteers may be more likely to feel some of the highs and lows of volunteering because of the greater amount of interaction they have with their volunteering organisation and those they volunteer with.

Researchers have debated a 'tipping point' in relation to the number of hours of volunteering required to feel benefits such as those relating to mental wellbeing.[62] The findings from our survey add to this research by indicating that there can also be negative impacts felt among those who volunteer most frequently.

These more negative aspects of participation are important to explore and understand if we are to have a fuller picture of the volunteer experience. Research[63] highlights how volunteers can feel over-burdened and how volunteer burnout can result from high levels of commitment.

The negative effects on personal relationships have also been reported, with concerns that the time spent volunteering can cause resentment amongst volunteers' partners.[64] Our research further highlights these tensions and the concerns volunteers have about the negative impacts of volunteering on family life, particularly for those who volunteer frequently.

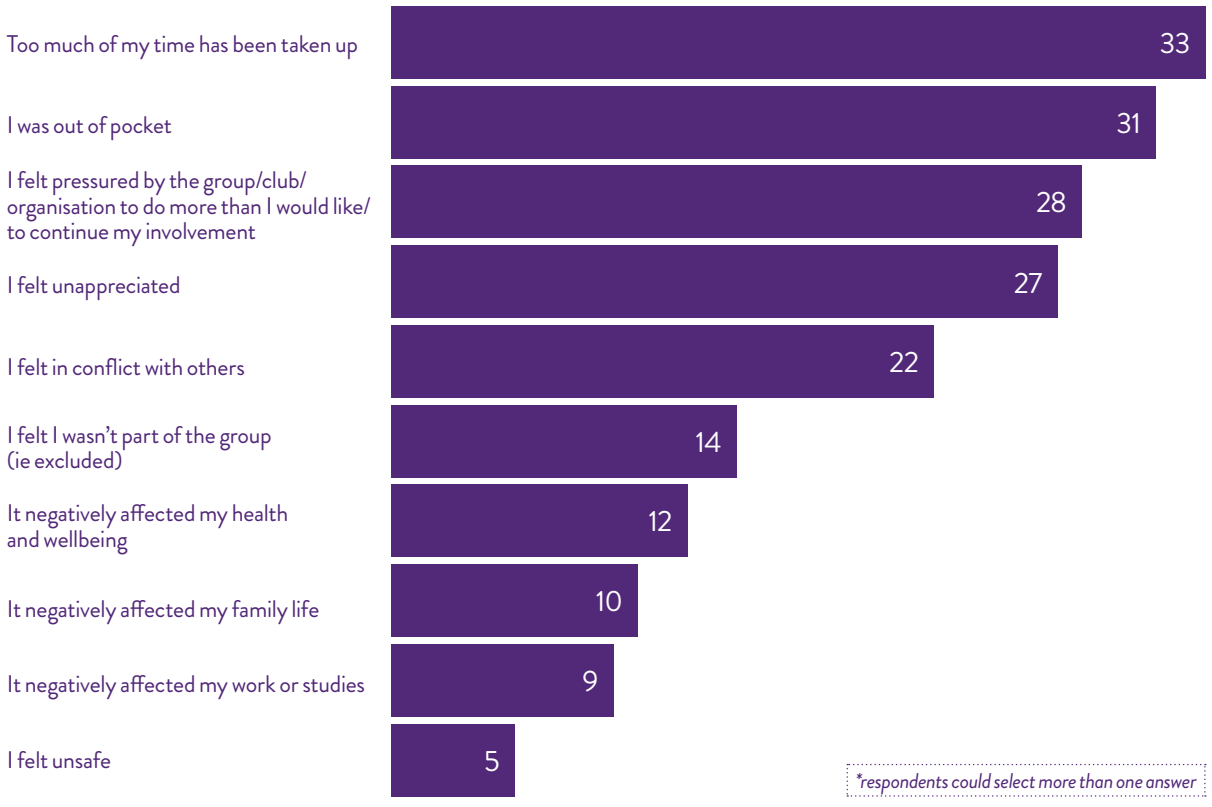
62 *Impactful Volunteering: Understanding the impact of volunteering on volunteers* (NCVO, 2018).

63 Musick, M. A and Wilson, J. (2008) Volunteers: *A Social Profile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Brodie et al. (2011).

64 Ellis Paine, A. (2015) *Telling tales of volunteering: Family insights* (TSRC, 2015)

Frequent volunteers are more likely to feel the **negative as well as positive** impacts of volunteering.

Figure 44: Negative experiences and impacts* *(% of recent volunteers who experienced at least one of the listed experiences and impacts)*



*respondents could select more than one answer

6.4 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: HOW DO THE PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF VOLUNTEERING AFFECT SATISFACTION?

At the end of the previous section, several aspects of the volunteer experience were shown by the regression analysis[65] to be strongly associated with satisfied volunteers.

In addition to these aspects, the impacts (both positive and negative) explored in this section (section 6) were included in the regression analysis, and a number of these were found to be strongly associated with satisfaction. These are summarised in Table 10.[66]

This highlights how important it is for volunteers to feel they are making a difference, which, as seen in section 4.3.1, is the most common reason why people volunteer. It again emphasises the value of enjoyment in volunteering, which almost all volunteers agreed they benefited from. We know that enjoyment can mean different things to different people; it could be about having fun, but this won't be the case for all volunteers, especially those whose volunteering activities are, by nature, challenging and difficult.

Enjoyment is likely to be the result of many things – the activities undertaken, the interactions with others, a personal sense of achievement or fulfilment, people's emotions etc.

The finding in relation to feeling unappreciated reflects the importance of recognition, despite volunteers saying that it is not important for them when asked directly, as highlighted in section 5.5.

Feeling unsafe was found to be independently associated with overall satisfaction, although only a small proportion of volunteers reported experiencing it.

One framework that may help us to understand volunteer satisfaction is the psychological contract[67]. This can be thought of as the social exchange or relationship between a volunteer and an organisation. The psychological contract is based on a set of shared mutual expectations or promises. When these expectations are met, satisfaction increases. However, if these expectations are not met or are changed, volunteers may feel less positive about the relationship and withdraw altogether.

65 Further details of the multivariate logistic regression technique, and the full results of the model including odds rations can be found in Appendix 2.

66 Some other aspects also had independent associations with satisfaction. See Appendix 2.

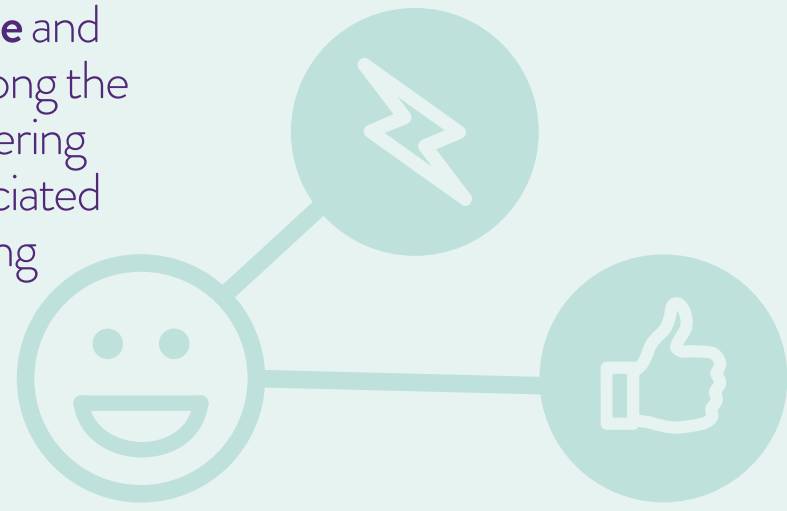
67 Conway, N. and Briner, R. B. (2005) *Understanding Psychological Contracts at Work: A critical evaluation of theory and research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Nichols, G. (2013) 'The psychological contract of volunteers: A new research agenda.' *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 986–1005.

Table 10: Key aspects of the volunteer experience associated with being satisfied

Positive and negative impacts of volunteering

Those who agree with...	*... were much more likely to be satisfied overall*
• It made me feel I was making a difference	
• I enjoy it	
Those who agree with...	***... were much less likely to be satisfied overall***
• I feel unappreciated	
• I feel unsafe	

Making a difference and **enjoyment** are among the benefits of volunteering most strongly associated with volunteers being satisfied overall.



This section explores the issue of volunteer retention. It looks at how likely recent volunteers are to continue volunteering with their *main* organisation over the next year and their reasons for continuing or not. It also explores the experience of lapsed volunteers and the reasons they stopped volunteering. Finally, it looks at what factors are most strongly associated with volunteers who continue to give their time.

7.1 KEY FINDINGS

Recent volunteers' likelihood to continue volunteering

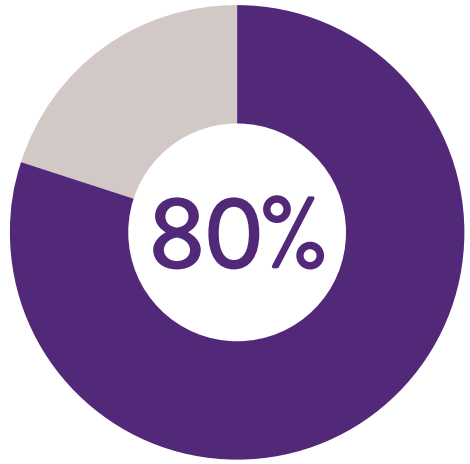
- The majority (80%) of volunteers say they are likely to continue volunteering with their main organisation over the next 12 months.
- Key reasons for continuing are the volunteers' attachment to the organisation (52%) or the cause (49%), but some reasons are stronger than others for different groups.
- The most common reason for not continuing is changing circumstances (33%), but around one in five said that they felt they had done their bit; 15% cited health reasons, which was higher among older volunteers.
- Reasons for discontinuing that related to volunteer management or relationships with others were not commonly stated. However, they were more likely to be cited by those who are dissatisfied overall.

Lapsed volunteers' experiences and reasons for stopping

- Lapsed volunteers (who volunteered in the last three years but not in the last year) are mostly positive about their experience of volunteering when looking back (93% are satisfied with their experience of volunteering with their main organisation).
- However, they are less positive than recent volunteers. This could be for a range of reasons, including having a different perspective on their experience because of the time that has passed.
- When asked why they stopped their volunteering, the highest response was that there was no reason in particular (28%). Where a reason was given, it most often related to circumstances, it being a one-off activity or event or feeling they had 'done their bit'.

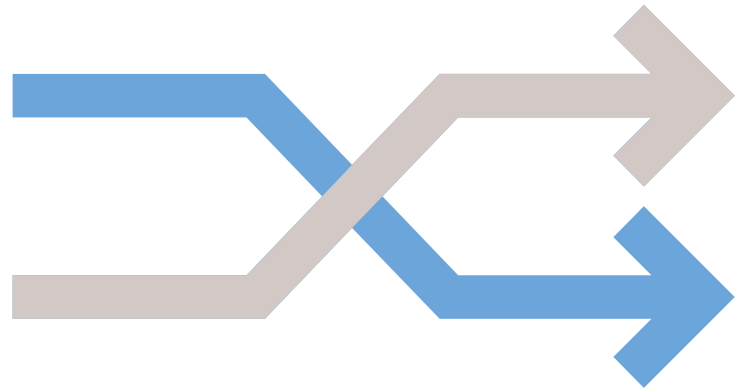
Factors associated with being likely to continue

- Further analysis (using a multivariate logistic regression analysis) highlights that, whilst people often report stopping volunteering because of changing circumstances, experience also affects whether they continue.
- Some factors seem to be particularly strongly associated with continuing to volunteer, including factors also associated with overall satisfaction: namely enjoyment, feeling like they belong to the organisation, there being a culture of respect and trust, making a difference and not feeling that things could be better organised.
- Additionally, not being pressured to do more or to continue and not feeling that too much of their time is taken up are strongly associated with continuing to volunteer.



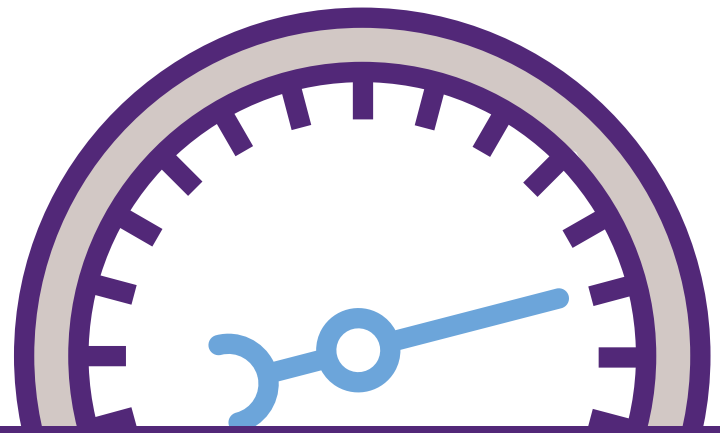
The majority of volunteers say they are **likely to continue** volunteering with their main organisation over the next 12 months.

The most common reason for not being likely to continue to volunteer with the organisation is due to **circumstances changing**.



Factors strongly associated with continuing to volunteer include **enjoyment** and **making a difference**.

Volunteers who feel **pressured to do more** or that **too much of their time is taken up** are less likely to carry on volunteering.



7.2 HOW LIKELY ARE VOLUNTEERS TO CONTINUE?

Recent volunteers were asked how likely they were to continue volunteering with their main organisation in the next 12 months.

Most say they are likely to continue volunteering.

Four-fifths (80%) of volunteers reported being likely to continue volunteering with their main organisation, with over half (53%) saying they are 'very likely' to (Figure 45). Frequent volunteers were more likely to continue than occasional volunteers (85% vs 75%).

The likelihood of continuing to volunteer for the organisation was greater among those who were satisfied.

The proportion of volunteers who said it was likely they would continue giving time to their organisation was much higher among satisfied volunteers, with 83% of satisfied volunteers saying they were likely to continue.

In contrast, just under a third (31%) of dissatisfied volunteers reported being likely to continue.

Some groups are more likely to continue than others.

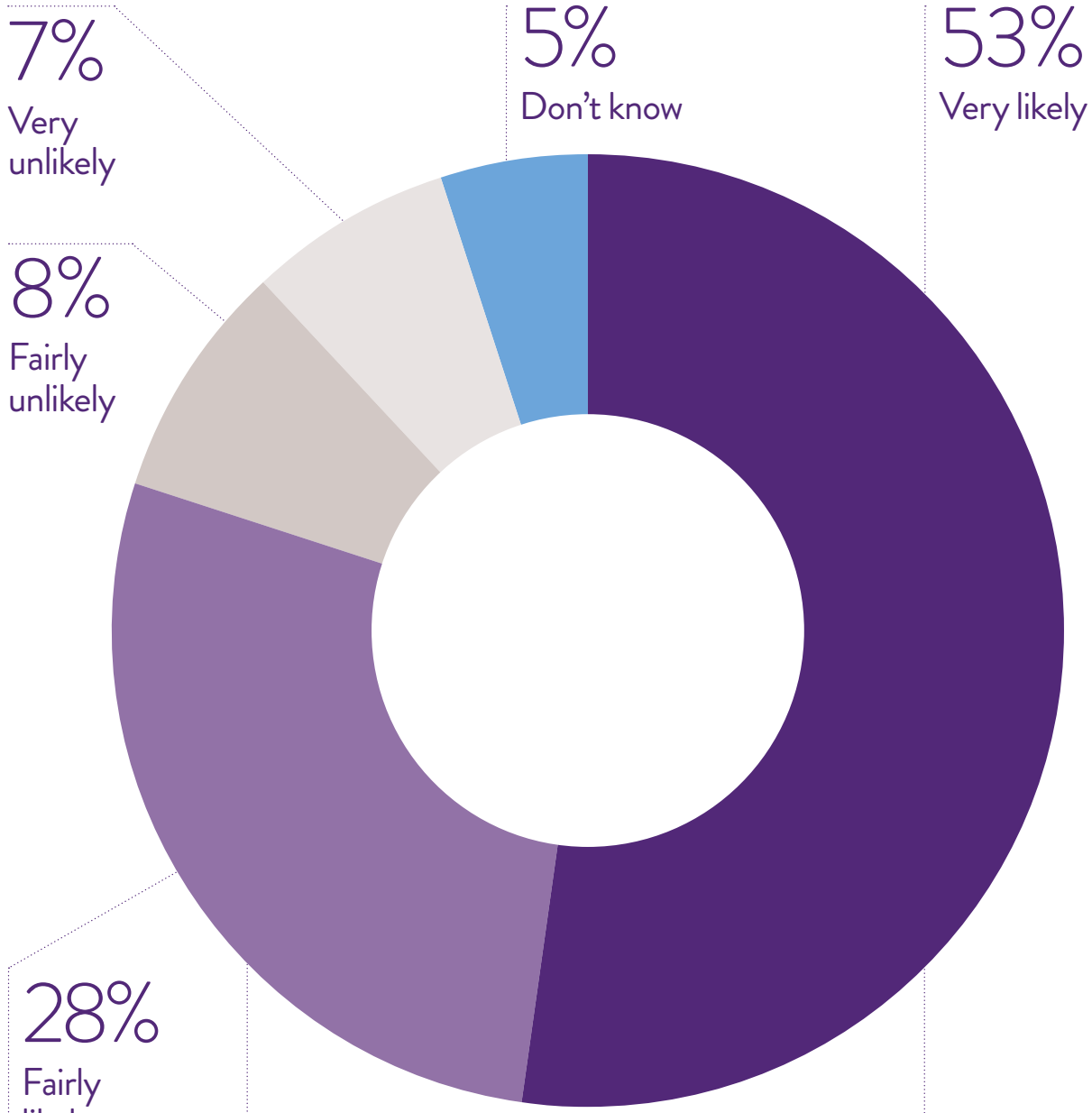
Across all groups, the majority were more likely to continue than not. However, some groups are more likely to continue than others. Table 11 highlights some of the groups who are less likely to continue.

Table 11: Who is less likely to continue volunteering with their (main) organisation?

By demographics	• Younger volunteers, in particular 18-24 year olds, compared with older volunteers (62% of 18–24s say they are likely to continue vs 87% of 65+). • Disabled volunteers compared with non-disabled volunteers (78% vs 82%). • Volunteers from lower socio-economic groups compared with those from higher socio-economic groups (78% C2DE vs 82% ABC1).
By how they volunteer and who for	• Occasional volunteers compared with frequent volunteers (75% vs 85%). • Those who rarely or never volunteer with others compared with those who are always or often alongside others (71% vs 84%). • Those volunteering for public sector organisations compared with those volunteering for civil society organisations (76% vs 83%).

Figure 45: Likelihood of continuing to volunteer with main organisation in the next 12 months

(% of all recent volunteers)



80% of recent volunteers are likely to continue volunteering.

7.3 WHY DO VOLUNTEERS CONTINUE OR STOP?

This section explores why volunteers continue with their volunteering and why they might stop. It looks at the reasons for this relating to their main organisation and explores the experience of lapsed volunteers and why they stop.

7.3.1 Reasons volunteers give for continuing

Volunteers say they are most likely to continue with their main organisation because of the organisation itself and the cause.

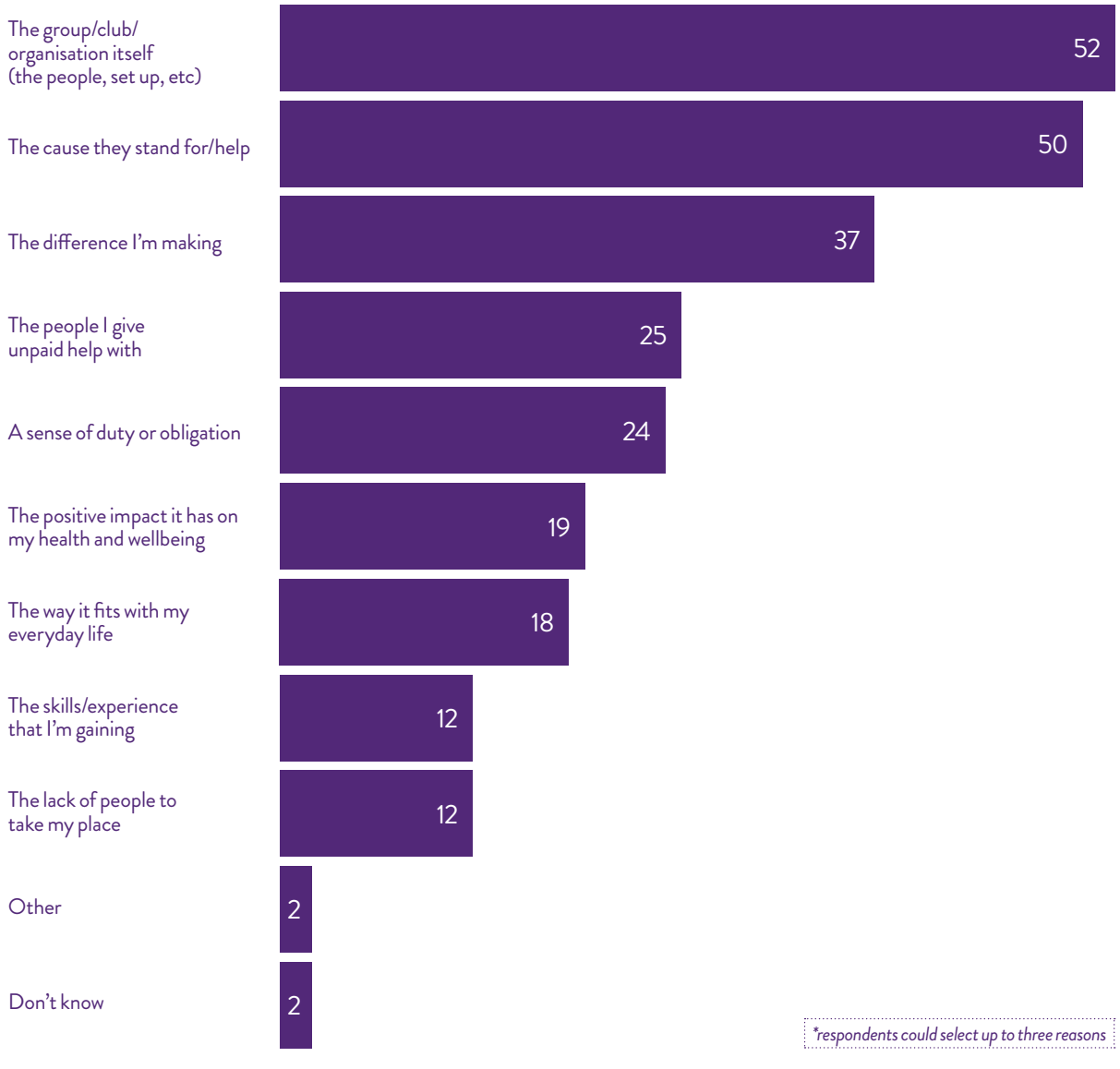
Figure 46 shows that among those who said they were likely to continue, the most common reasons for this (up to three could be selected) were the organisation itself (52%), the cause (50%) and by the difference they were making (37%).

The most common reasons volunteers say they are likely to continue are **the organisation itself** and the **cause it stands for**.

These top reasons were mostly consistent across different groups, although there were some volunteer groups who were more likely to cite certain reasons.

- **Public sector volunteers were more likely to report 'the difference I'm making' as a reason for continuing** than those volunteering for civil society organisations (45% vs 36%).
- **18–24 year-olds and public sector volunteers were more likely to cite skills or experience they were gaining:** 32% of 18–24 year-olds selected this reason for continuing their volunteering, compared with between 5% and 20% of other age groups. This reflects earlier findings (section 4.3.1) showing the importance of skills development for young volunteers. Public sector volunteers were also more likely to cite skills and experience than those volunteering for civil society organisations (17% vs 10%).
- **Older volunteers and those volunteering with organisations without paid staff are more likely to continue because of lack of people to take their place:** 16% of volunteers aged 55+ gave this reason, compared with 6% of 18–34 year-olds. Additionally, 13% of those with an unpaid coordinator and 17% of those with no coordinator gave this reason, compared with 9% of those with a paid coordinator.

Figure 46: Reasons volunteers give for being likely to continue to volunteer with the organisation over the next 12 months* *(% of recent volunteers who said they were very or fairly likely to continue)*



*respondents could select up to three reasons

7.3.2 Reasons volunteers give for being unlikely to continue

Those not likely to continue giving time to their main organisation cite changing circumstances as their key reason but many also feel they have 'done their bit'.

Among those who said they were unlikely to continue, the most common reason for this was having less time due to circumstances changing, with a third of volunteers (33%) selecting this reason, followed by feeling they had 'done their bit', which was cited by around one in five (21%) (Figure 47).

Health reasons were cited by 15% of volunteers overall, but this was more likely to be reported by older volunteers (26% of people aged 55+ compared with 8% of people aged 18–34), disabled volunteers (34% compared with 3% of non-disabled volunteers) and those from lower socio-economic groups (21% compared with 12% of higher socio-economic groups).

Experience-related reasons were less frequently mentioned but were higher among those who said they were dissatisfied.

Reasons relating directly to the volunteer experience and management were less frequently mentioned; only 8% cited not being happy with the way their volunteering was managed as a reason for being unlikely to continue. However, those who said they were dissatisfied overall were much more likely to cite this reason (30%) than those who were satisfied (4%).

Recent volunteers most commonly say **changing circumstances** are the reason they are unlikely to continue volunteering with their main organisation in the next 12 months.

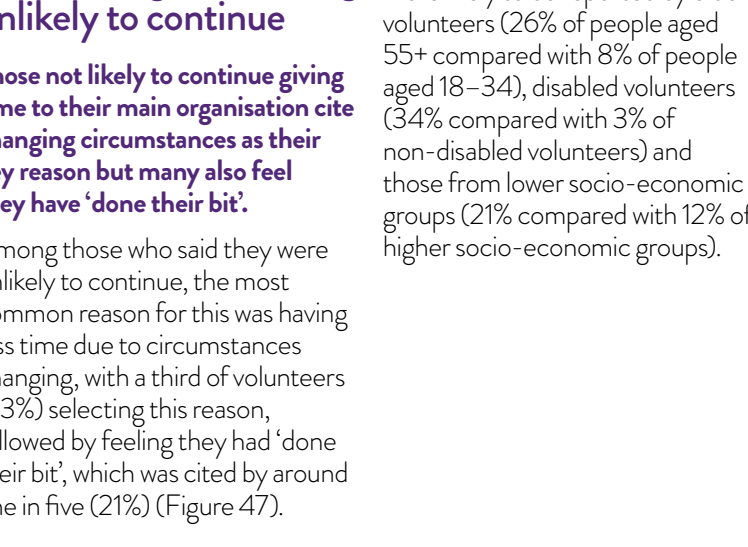
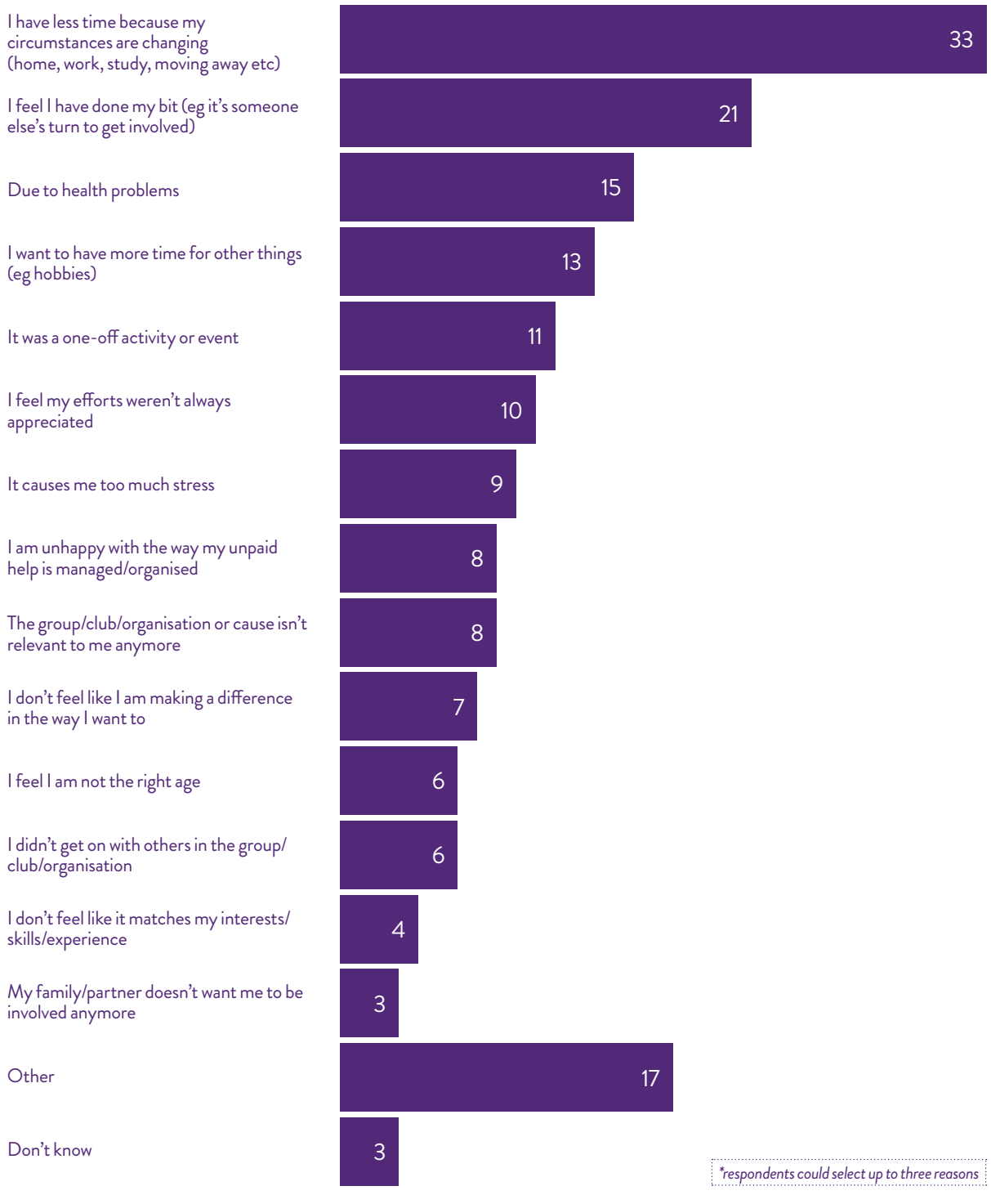


Figure 47: Reasons volunteers give for being unlikely to continue to volunteer with the organisation over the next 12 months* *(% of recent volunteers who said they were very or fairly unlikely to continue)*



*respondents could select up to three reasons

7.3.3 Lapsed volunteers' experiences of volunteering and the reasons they stop

Most lapsed volunteers look back on their volunteer experience positively.

Lapsed volunteers (who volunteered between one and three years ago) were generally positive about their experiences of volunteering during that time period (where they had volunteered for more than one organisation, this related to the main organisation they gave time to).

They reported a high level of overall satisfaction (94%) and reflected positively on different aspects of their volunteering experience.

They also identified a range of benefits from their volunteering, with enjoyment (86%) and feeling like they made a difference (83%) ranking highest.

In general, lapsed volunteers are less positive than recent volunteers.

Whilst they were positive in their perceptions overall, lapsed volunteers were less positive than recent volunteers. The proportion of 'very satisfied' volunteers was much higher among recent volunteers than lapsed ones (54% vs 41%) and there was a higher proportion of lapsed volunteers who said they were 'dissatisfied' than recent volunteers (6% vs 4%).

Lapsed volunteers were also more likely than recent volunteers to say they had not recommended volunteering with the organisation they gave time to and were not likely to (31% vs 24%).

In some cases, issues of recall may explain differences between the two groups. Lapsed volunteers' perceptions of volunteering may differ because they are looking at an experience in the past rather than one in the present. However, lapsed volunteers still emerged as being less satisfied with their volunteering than recent volunteers. Reasons for this could include having a poor experience of volunteering (see further discussion below).

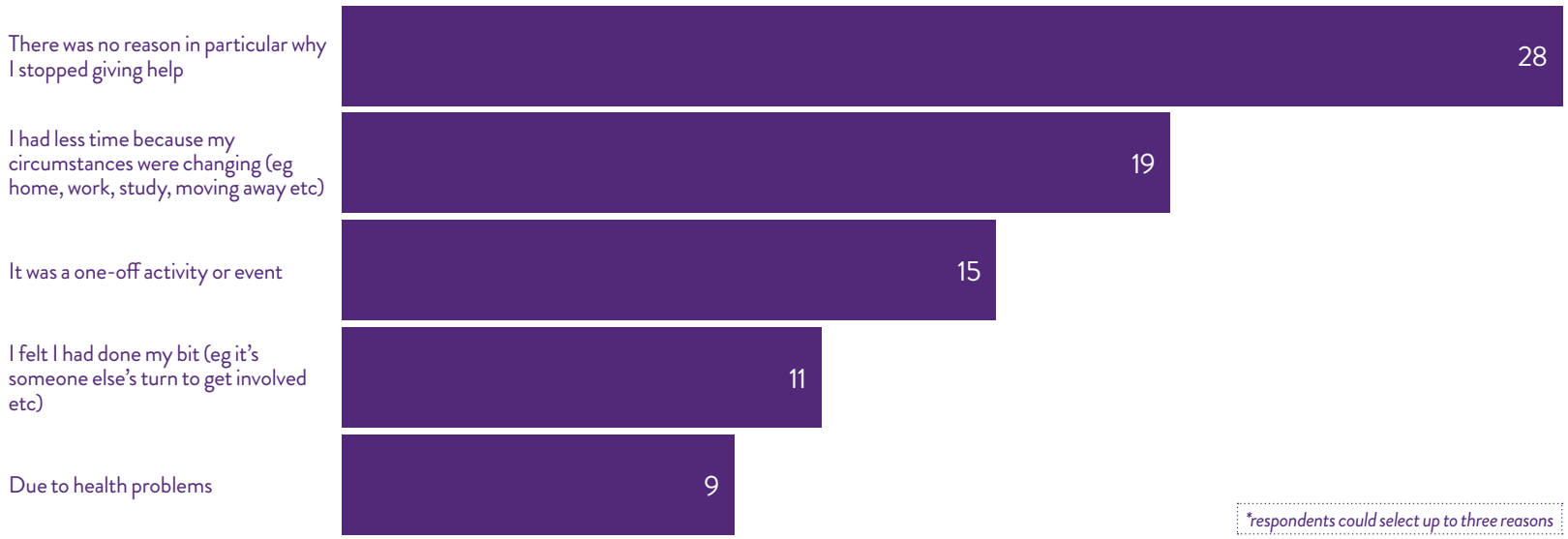
Lapsed volunteers most commonly say there is 'no reason in particular' why they stopped their volunteering.

Lapsed volunteers were asked about their reasons for stopping their volunteering with the organisation they gave time to (within the last three years). 'No reason in particular' was the most common response (28%).

Lapsed volunteers and recent volunteers who said they were unlikely to continue were given different possible reasons to pick from, so the data cannot be compared directly.

However, similar reasons were commonly given as reasons for stopping, such as having less time, it being a one-off activity or event, 'feeling I have done my bit' and health issues (see Figure 48). As with recent volunteers, reasons relating directly to their volunteering experience itself were not common.

Figure 48: Top 5 ranked reasons for stopping volunteering* *(% of all lapsed volunteers)*



7.4 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WHAT MATTERS MOST FOR RETAINING VOLUNTEERS?

In section 7, we have explored the reasons volunteers give for continuing and not continuing to volunteer, the latter from the perspective of both recent and lapsed volunteers.

A multivariate logistic regression analysis[67] was undertaken, focusing on recent volunteers, to identify what factors might be significantly and independently associated with their likelihood of continuing to volunteer (as with overall satisfaction – see sections 5 and 6).

As seen previously, this analysis involved looking at demographic factors (age, sex, social grade, ethnicity, disability), types of volunteering and a range of experience and impact questions.

The key findings of this analysis are as follows.

Experience matters for the retention of volunteers.

The analysis shows that it is the statements summarising how volunteers felt about their experience and the impact it has on them that are most strongly associated with the likelihood to continue, rather than the influence of demographic factors.

Whilst people most commonly stop volunteering due to changing circumstances, and only a minority say they have stopped volunteering for reasons relating to the management of their volunteering (see section 7.3.2), the regression analysis shows that whether they continue or not is, in fact, associated with *how volunteers feel about their experience* – including how it is organised and managed.

Unpicking people's experiences is not easy, as they are made up of many different factors. Volunteers themselves are not always able to say why they stopped volunteering. When they can, they often cite more than one reason.

Other research exploring why people start, continue and stop participating has also found that volunteers stop being involved because of a poor-quality experience, as well as other more practical factors, such as a lack of resources (eg time, money or health) or a life event.[68]

Some key aspects are most strongly associated with continuing to volunteer.

Despite this complexity, the regression analysis has drawn out a number of key factors[69] relating to the experience and impact of volunteering, which are most strongly associated with people's likelihood to continue volunteering, as shown in Table 12.

Some factors (asterisked* in Table 12) were also were seen to be strongly associated with overall satisfaction (see sections 5.5 and 6.4). This points to the importance of these aspects for the retention of volunteers, as we know that satisfied volunteers are also more likely to continue.

Some factors emerged specifically for continuing to volunteer, notably time-related issues (feeling pressured to do more or continue and too much time being taken up) outlined in section 6.3, which highlights potential issues of burnout.

Table 12: Key aspects of the experience associated with being likely to continue

Those who agree with...	*...were much more likely to continue with their volunteering*
• there was a culture of respect and trust*	
• it made me feel I was making a difference*	
• I enjoy it*	
• I feel I belong to the organisation	
• it improves my physical health	

Those who agree with...	*...were much less likely to continue with their volunteering*
• things could be much better organised	
• I felt pressured to do more/continue	
• too much of my time taken was taken up	

**Those marked with an asterisk were also associated with overall satisfaction*

68 Further details of the multivariate logistic regression technique and the full results of the model including odds ratios are shown in Appendix 2.

68 Brodie et al. (2011).

69 Some other aspects also had independent associations with satisfaction. See Appendix 2 for more detail.

The factors particularly strongly associated with recent volunteers continuing to volunteer include: **enjoyment**, **making a difference**, **not feeling pressured** and not having **too much of their time taken up**.

This section looks to the future, and focuses on those who have not volunteered recently. It explores what stops people getting involved and what might encourage them to get involved in the future. It then looks at levels of interest in a number of future volunteering opportunities, among both volunteers and non-volunteers.

8.1 KEY FINDINGS

What stops people from getting involved?

- Among those who have not volunteered through a group, club or organisation the last three years or ever, the most common reasons people give for not being involved are doing other things with their spare time (27%) and not wanting to make an ongoing commitment (25%).
- Among those who have never volunteered, one of the most frequently cited reasons is that they have never thought about it (19%).
- Barriers to involvement reflect life stages and personal circumstances, such as older volunteers (55+) being more likely to cite not wanting to make an ongoing commitment (31%) and younger people giving work or study commitments as a reason (25% of 18–34s).
- Around one in five (19%) lapsed volunteers (who had volunteered in the last three years but not in the last 12 months) said they had looked into opportunities to volunteer in the last year. A much lower proportion of those who had never volunteered said that they had done the same (4%).
- Among those who had looked into volunteering, perceptions of commitment, flexibility and suitability of opportunities are the key factors that prevented them going through with it.

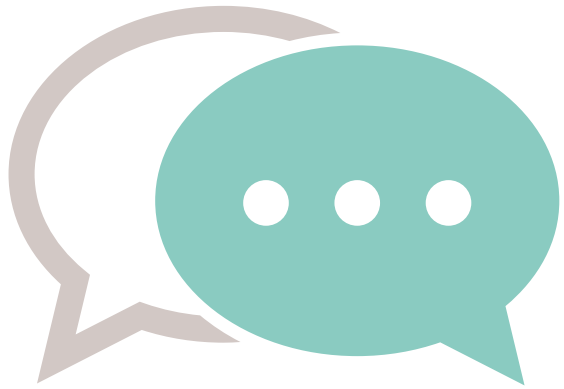
What might encourage people to volunteer?

- Among those who had not volunteered in the last year, some said they could be encouraged to get involved. The things that would most encourage them to get involved are having flexibility with their time committed (50%), flexibility with the way they give their help (eg doing it from home) (40%) and being asked directly (28%).
- However, the less recently they have volunteered, the more likely they are to say that nothing would encourage them to get involved.
- Disabled people and those aged 55 and over are the least likely to to say they could be encouraged.

Interest in future opportunities

- Generally, how recently people have volunteered indicates how likely they are to be interested in volunteering opportunities in the future.
- Among those interested in at least one way of giving time, people are more attracted to opportunities where they can dip in and out of activities (53%) or one-off activities and events (49%) than give time on a regular basis (30%).
- For those interested in at least one of a number of different ways of getting involved in the future, opportunities to make use of existing skills or experience (52%), take part in fun and enjoyable activities (50%) and combine volunteering with existing hobbies or interests (44%) are the most popular.

Having flexibility and **being asked directly** are most likely to encourage involvement among those who have not volunteered recently.

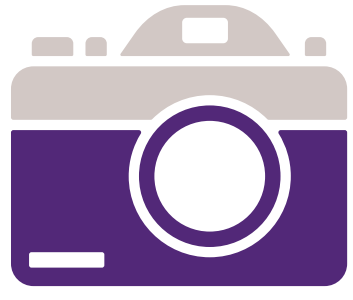


Among those who have never volunteered, one of the most frequently cited reasons for not volunteering is that they have **never thought about it** (19%).

Of those interested, the most appealing opportunities are:

50%

Opportunities to take part in **fun and enjoyable activities**.



52%

Opportunities to **make use of existing skills or experience**.

44%

Opportunities to combine volunteering with **existing hobbies or interests**.

8.2 WHAT STOPS PEOPLE FROM GETTING INVOLVED?

This section explores the barriers to volunteering through a group, club or organisation in volunteering through a group, club or organisation and focuses on those who have not participated in volunteering for a while (in the past three years) or at all.

8.2.1 Barriers to volunteering

Doing other things and not wanting to commit are the most common reasons people do not volunteer.

Among those who had not volunteered in the past three years (including those who had never volunteered), the most common reasons for not volunteering were: 'I do other things with my spare time' (27%) and 'I don't want to make an ongoing commitment' (25%). Other key barriers included not being asked (16%), work or study commitments (14%) and an illness or disability (11%).

These key barriers were largely consistent among those who had volunteered at some point and those who had never volunteered; where there were slight differences, these related to the proportions within these groups and order in which they ranked them (see Figure 49).

This links to other research which shows that participation stops when there is a poor quality experience, a lack of resources (such as time or confidence) or a life event (such as the birth of a child or taking on caring responsibilities).[70]

The least common barriers were that 'my family or partner wouldn't want me to get involved, 'I would be worried about the risks' and 'I have been put off by negative experiences giving unpaid help in the past' (all 3% and under).

Around one in five people who have never volunteered say that they have never thought about it.

One of the most frequently cited reasons among those who had never volunteered (an option only applicable to this group) was 'I had never thought about it', with around one in five (19%) giving this reason.

This is also likely to explain the lower numbers of these respondents selecting other barriers than those who had volunteered more than three years ago (see Figure 49).

Some barriers are more prominent for certain groups.

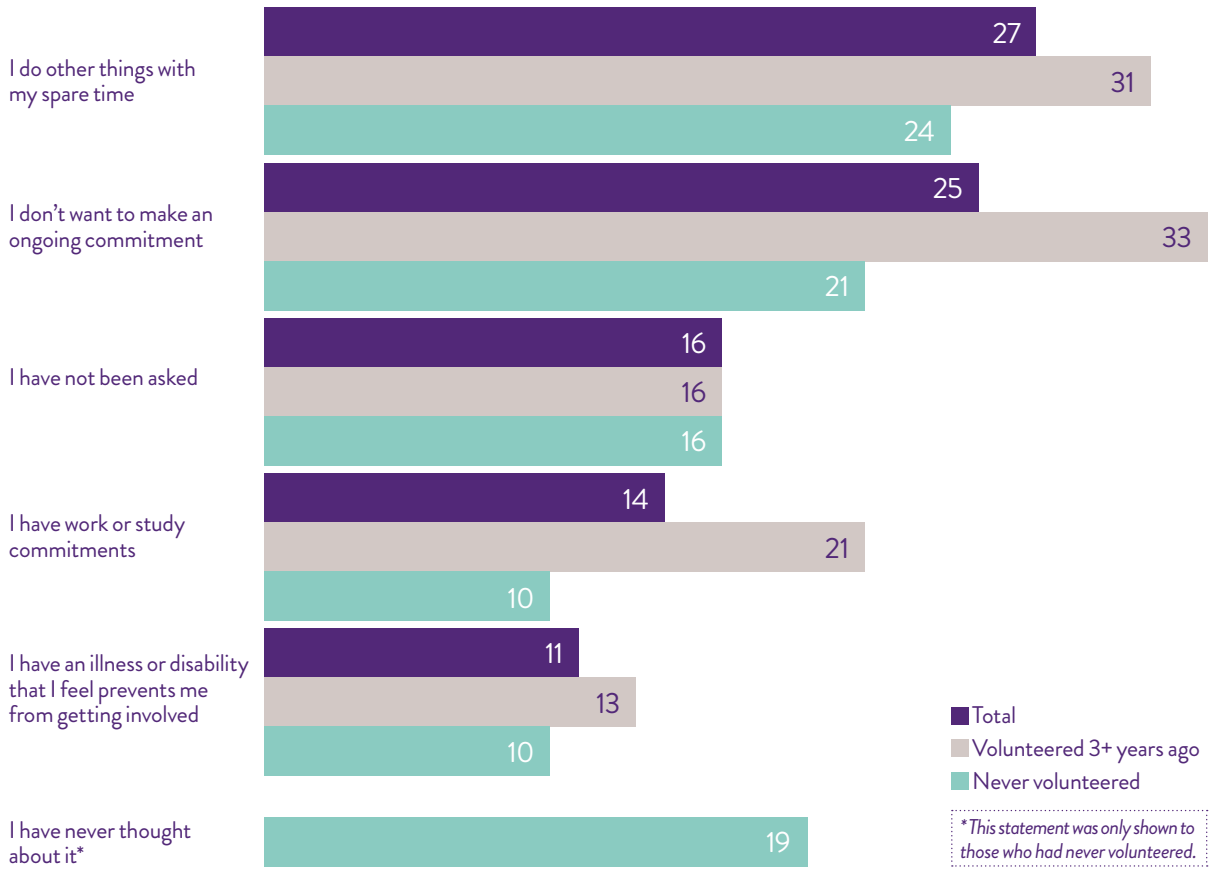
Across both those who had volunteered three or more years ago and those who had never volunteered some barriers were particularly relevant for certain groups.

- Across different age groups, older respondents (aged 55–64 and 65–74) were most likely to be put off by bureaucracy or administrative processes (13% and 14% respectively), contrasting most with those aged 18–24 (4%). These older age groups were also most likely to cite 'not wanting to make an ongoing commitment' (31% and 34% compared with 15% of 18–24s).
- For those aged 75 and over, 'I feel I am not the right age' was the biggest barrier (26%), and this reason was also common among those aged 65–74.
- Unsurprisingly, the most common barrier among those with existing limiting health conditions was an illness or disability (34%); this was the case regardless of age, but, overall, health reasons were given most commonly by older respondents aged 65 and over (16%).
- Younger respondents were more likely to see work or study commitments as a barrier, with 25% of 18–34s citing this as a reason, compared 5% of those aged 55 and over.
- Those from social grade ABC1 tended to be more concerned about ongoing commitment (29% ABC1 vs 22% C2DE) and were more likely to say they are doing other things with their time (31% ABC1 vs 22% C2DE) or have work or study commitments (19% ABC1 vs 10% C2DE) than those from social grade C2DE.
- Women were more likely than men to say their commitments to look after someone were a barrier (11% vs 6%).

70 Brodie *et al.* (2011).

Figure 49: Top reasons for not volunteering

(% of those who had volunteered three or more years ago and never volunteered)



8.2.2 Looking into volunteering opportunities

People who had previously volunteered were more likely to look into ways to do it again.

Almost one in ten (9%) of all respondents who had not volunteered in the last year reported that they had looked into ways of giving unpaid help during that time. As shown in Figure 50, this was higher for lapsed volunteers (people who have volunteered between one and three years ago) (19%) and lowest for people who have never volunteered (4%).

There was little to distinguish those who had looked into it by demographic factors, however the data indicates those who had looked into it were more likely to be under 45 years old.

Key barriers at entry are perceptions of commitment, lack of flexibility and the suitability of the opportunities.

Around a quarter (23%) were still in the process of looking into the volunteering opportunity. Again, this was higher among those who had volunteered between one and three years ago (ie lapsed) (35%) than those who had volunteered three or more years ago (17%) or never (16%).

Figure 51 shows that among those who had looked into volunteering, excluding those who were still in the process of applying for or looking into it, the most common reason given was that 'it involved more time than I could commit' (28%). This supports the findings in section 8.2.1 that time-related barriers are most common.

A lack of flexible opportunities (17%) and a lack of opportunities that matched skills, interests or experience (17%) were also barriers for these potential volunteers. Too much paperwork or too many administrative processes and not thinking they would make enough of a difference ranked lowest.

On the whole, the key barriers were consistent regardless of how recently they had volunteered. However, those who had volunteered three or more years ago or never volunteered were more likely to report 'I didn't think I had the necessary skills or experience for the role' as a barrier (12% and 17% respectively) than those who had volunteered more recently (between 12 months and three years ago) (4%).[71]

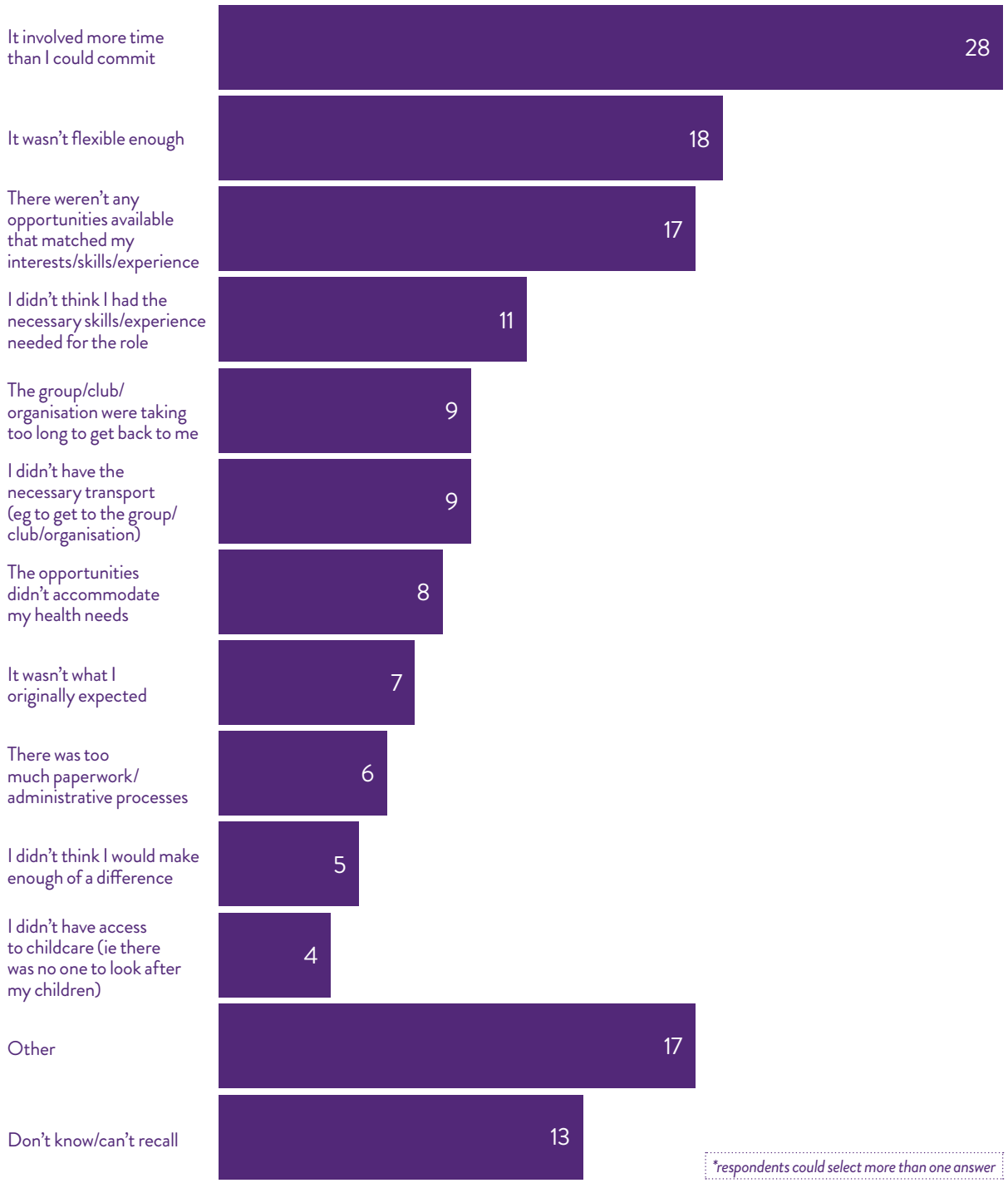
71 Further demographic analysis is limited by low base sizes.

Figure 50: People who had looked into volunteering through a group, club or organisation in the last year

(% of those who had volunteered between one and three years ago, three or more years ago and never)

Figure 51: Reasons for not going on to volunteer after looking into it*

(% of those who had looked into volunteering in the last 12 months but not gone on to volunteer excluding those who were still in the process of applying for/ looking into it)



*respondents could select more than one answer

8.3 WHAT MIGHT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER?

Those who had not volunteered recently (in the last year) were asked whether a range of different factors would encourage them to volunteer. They could select up to three of these that would most encourage them or say that nothing in particular would encourage them to get involved.

Lapsed volunteers were most likely to be encouraged to get involved again.

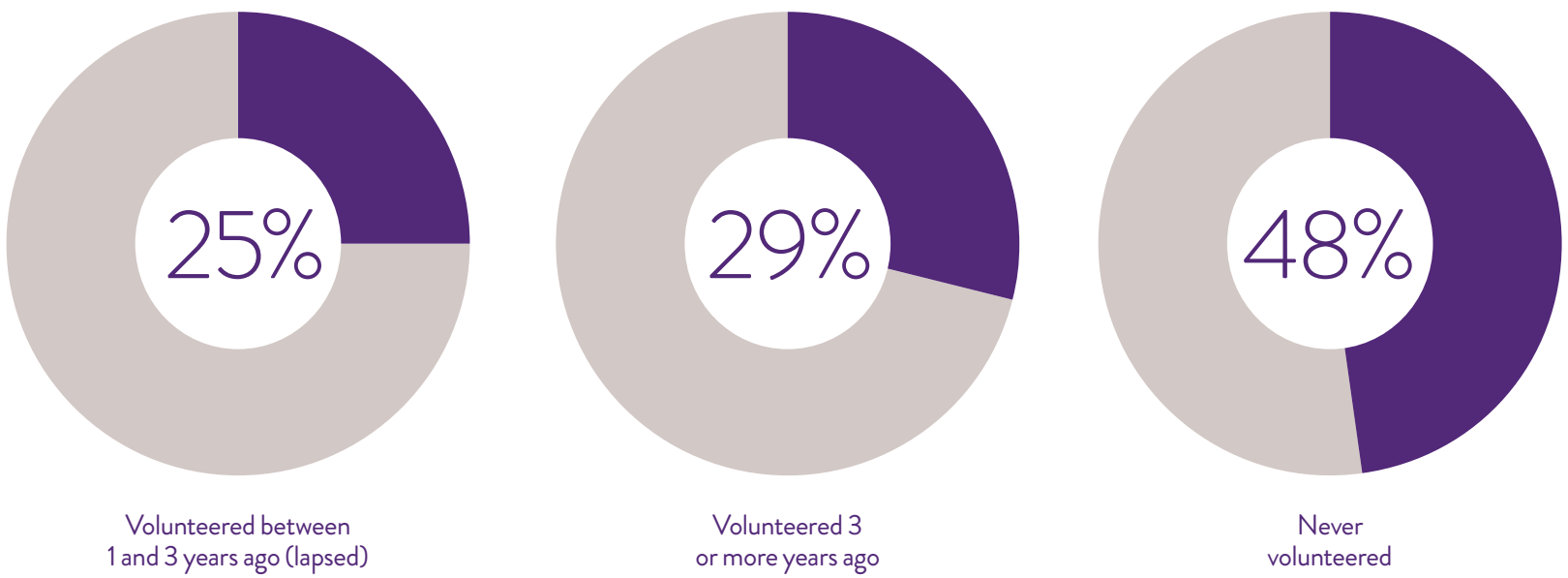
A quarter of lapsed volunteers (those who had volunteered between one and three years ago) said that 'nothing in particular would encourage me to get involved'; this rose to almost half (48%) of those who had never been involved (see Figure 52).

This indicates that the more recently involved they have been, the more likely they are to be open to encouragement. However, even among those who had never volunteered, 40% selected at least one factor that would encourage them to volunteer, suggesting that there are opportunities across all groups to encourage future involvement.

Disabled people and older people are less likely to be encouraged.

Regardless of past involvement, disabled respondents were more likely to say that nothing in particular would encourage them to get involved (44%) than non-disabled respondents (35%). Across different age groups, older respondents (aged 55 and over) were least likely to be encouraged, with almost half (47%) of this age group saying nothing in particular would encourage them.

Figure 52: Respondents who said that 'nothing in particular would encourage me to get involved' *(% of each group)*



Almost half of people aged 55 and over who had not been involved recently say **'nothing in particular' would encourage them to volunteer.**

Flexibility and being asked directly are most likely to encourage people to volunteer.

Among those who felt they could be encouraged to volunteer, being flexible with the time committed was the key factor cited by all groups, whether they had volunteered or not (50%) (Figure 53). Flexibility of the role (40%) and being asked (28%) were also commonly mentioned. Employers supporting or encouraging volunteering had one of the fewest mentions (12%); it is likely that this is not relevant for all as not everybody is employed.

Some factors were more likely to encourage certain demographic groups than others.

As with barriers, there were some factors that were more likely to apply to certain demographic groups, although the key factors were broadly consistent across demographics regardless of whether they had been involved at some point or never

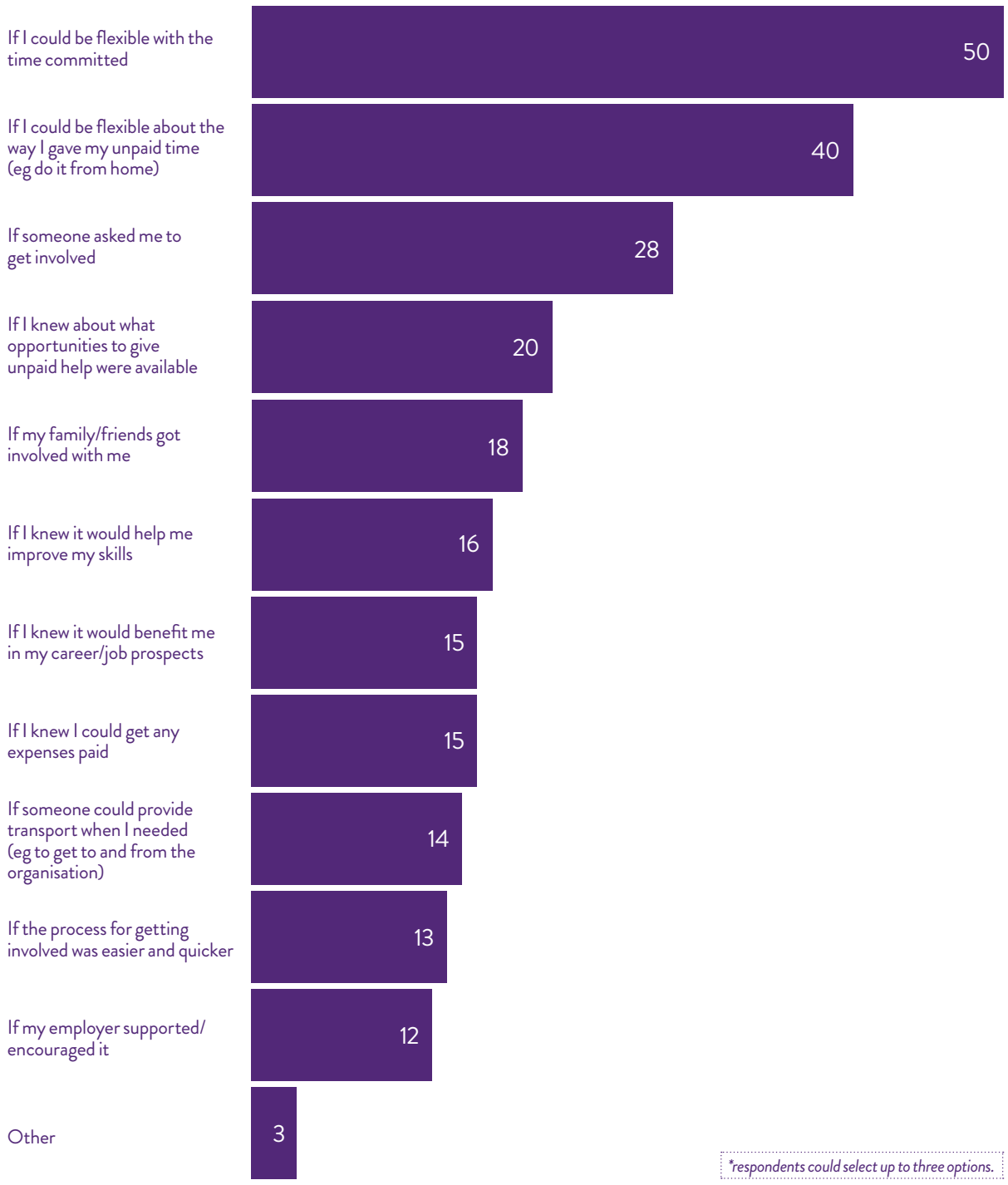
The following points apply to those who felt they could be encouraged by something.

- Reflecting earlier findings on motivation among recent volunteers, younger respondents were more likely to be encouraged to volunteer by the prospect of gaining skills or benefiting their career; this was highest among 18–24s (30% skills, 38% career) but also common among 25–34s (24% skills, 25% career).
- Younger respondents were more likely to be encouraged by volunteering alongside friends and family (26% of 18–24s and 21% of 25–34s) than all other age groups (range between 13–16%).
- Flexibility around time was more likely to encourage women than men (52% vs 48%); similar differences were seen for being flexible about the way they volunteered (43% vs 36%).
- Disabled respondents were more likely to be encouraged by transport being provided than non-disabled respondents (20% vs 12%); this was the same for those who were unemployed or not working (25% and 21 vs 10% of those in full-time work).

Flexibility with the time committed is the factor most likely to encourage people to get involved (50%).

Figure 53: Factors that would encourage people to get involved*

(% of lapsed volunteers, those who volunteered three or more years ago and never – who said that they would be encouraged by at least one of these factors)



*respondents could select up to three options.

8.4 WHAT FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OF INTEREST?

All respondents (both volunteers and non-volunteers) were shown two lists of potential future opportunities, the first focusing on ways of giving time and the other on ways to get involved.

Respondents were asked to select any opportunities that they would be interested in doing over the next 12 months (for those who had volunteered recently, this related to any organisation – not just the one they had given time to as their main organisation in the last year).

Current levels of participation indicate likely future interest.

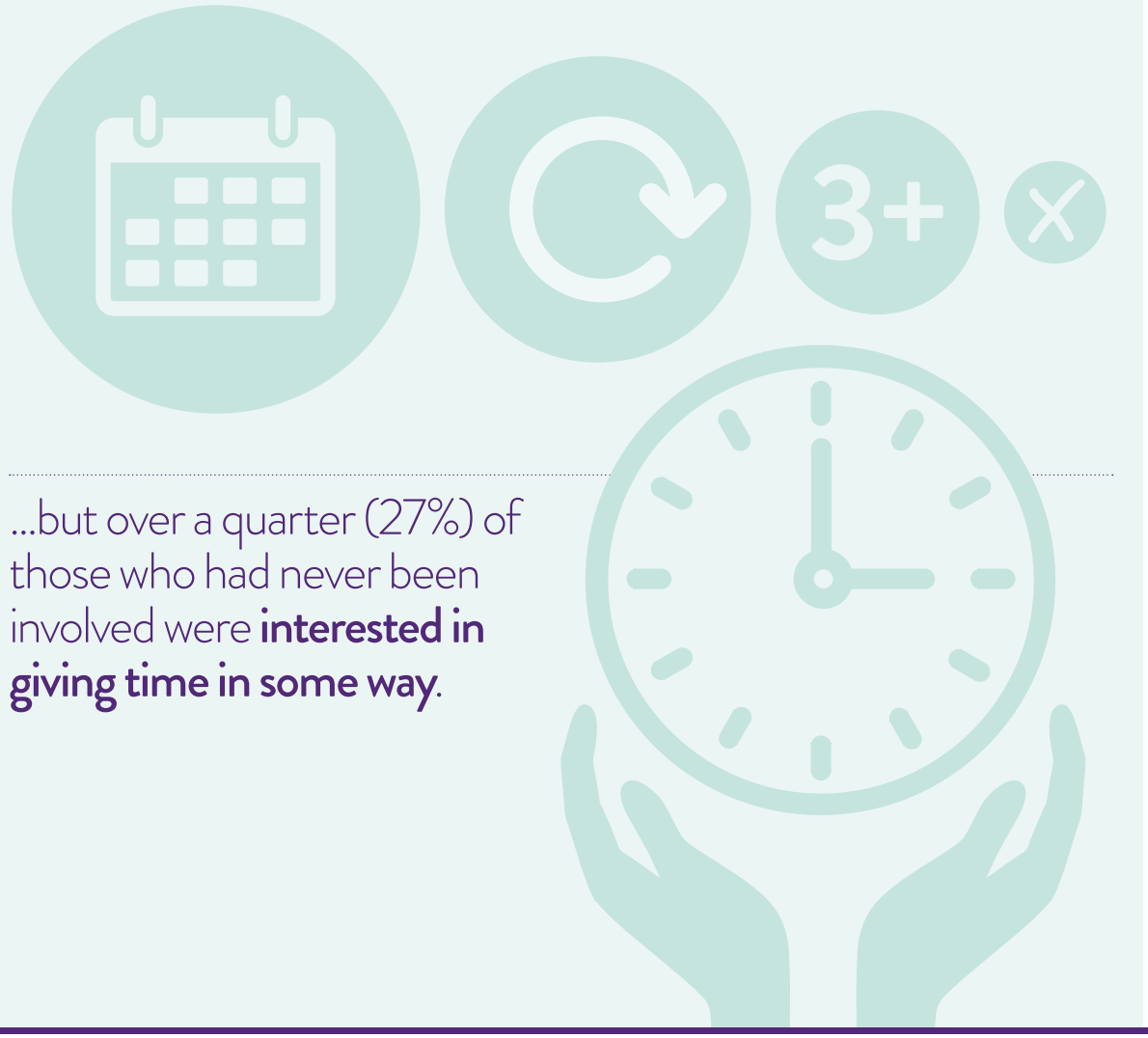
As seen in Figures 54 and 56, those who had never volunteered were the least likely to be interested in any of the listed ways of giving time (53%) or getting involved (51%); this contrasted most with recent volunteers (9% and 11%). There was also a higher proportion of 'don't know' responses among those who had never volunteered.

However, reflecting earlier findings on what would encourage people to get involved, there was some interest even among those who had never been involved (27% selected at least one of the ways of giving time and 28% for ways of getting involved).

Also reflecting earlier findings, older volunteers (aged 55+) were less likely to be interested in the listed future opportunities (than younger volunteers). Disabled people who were not recent volunteers were less likely to be interested in future volunteering opportunities, but recent volunteers were equally likely to be interested, whether they were disabled or not.

Among recent volunteers who had reported being unlikely to volunteer for their main organisation in the next year (see section 7.3), there was still some interest in future opportunities that related to volunteering for 'any' organisation, indicating a wider interest in continuing to volunteer more generally. As seen in section 3.2, many volunteers were already volunteering for more than one organisation.

The more recently people had volunteered the **more interested they are in future opportunities** to get involved...



...but over a quarter (27%) of those who had never been involved were **interested in giving time in some way**.

8.4.1 Future opportunities – ways of giving time

More volunteers are interested in dipping in and out and one-off activities than giving time on a regular basis.

As seen in Figure 55, among those who were interested in at least one of the listed opportunities (they could select more than one), the opportunities of most interest were focused on casual, low-commitment ways of giving time, namely: being able to dip in and out (53%), giving time for a one-off event (49%) and carrying out activities at a time/and or place of their choosing (39%).

A lower proportion (30%) were interested in giving time on a regular basis; those who had volunteered recently (ie in the last 12 months) were most likely to be interested in volunteering on a regular basis (38%). This was even higher for recent volunteers who had volunteered frequently for their main organisation (46%). Comparatively, those who had volunteered less recently, or never, showed less interest in this kind of regular involvement (with only 18% of those who had never volunteered saying they were interested).

Some opportunities are more appealing to certain demographic groups.

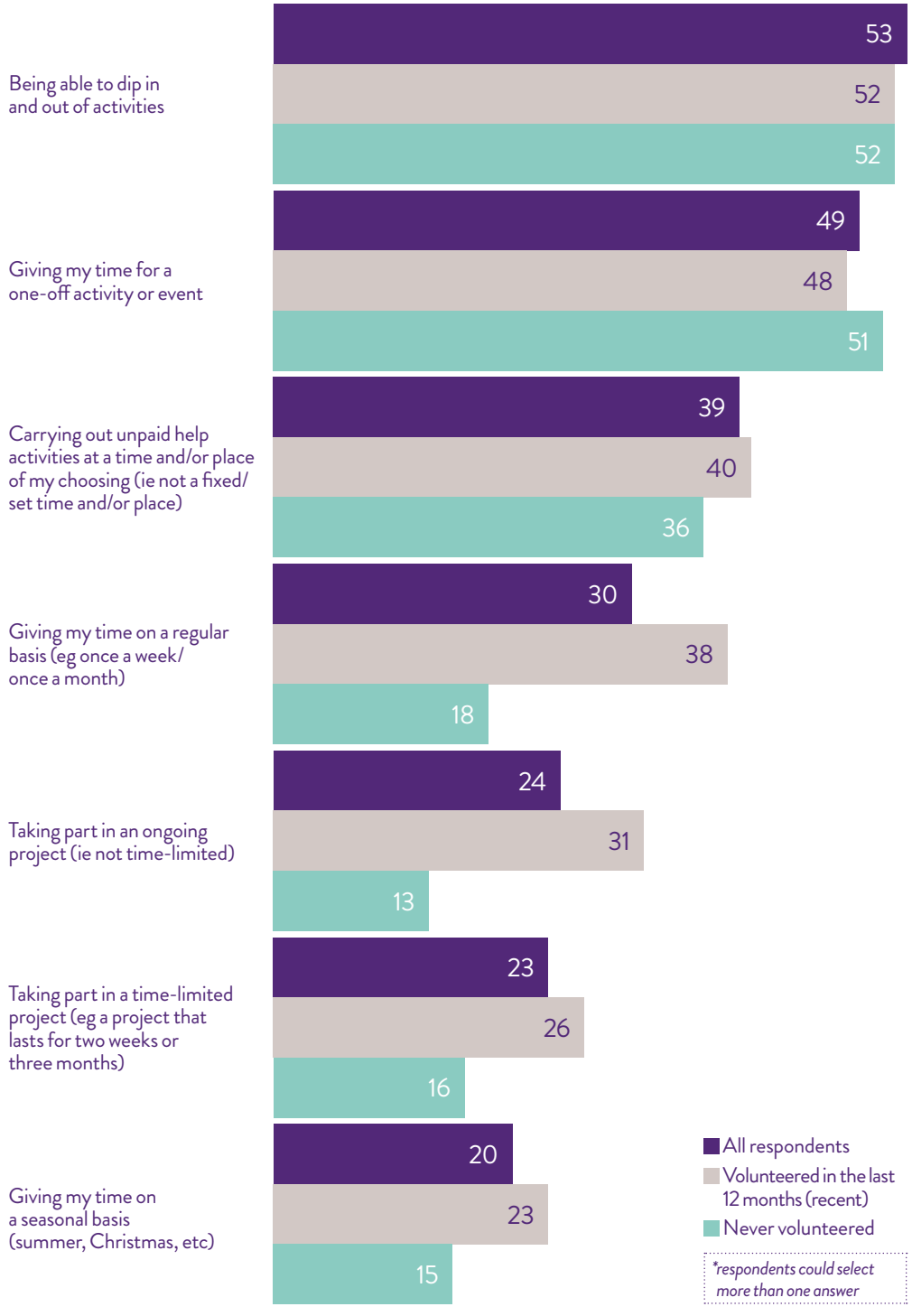
Excluding people who had said they would not be interested in any of the opportunities listed, there were some demographic differences in the types of activity that people find appealing. These included the following.

- Opportunities to dip in and out, to participate in one-off activities or volunteer seasonally were more likely to appeal to younger volunteers than volunteers aged 55+ (54% vs 50% dip in and out, 54% vs 44% one-off, 26% vs 15% seasonal). Older volunteers, conversely, were more likely than younger one to be interested in opportunities that involved carrying out activities in a time and place of their choosing (43% vs 34%).
- Women were more likely than men to be interested in the flexible ways of giving time, such as one-off events (51% vs 47%), or opportunities that allowed them to dip in and out (55% vs 51%).
- Men were more interested than women in ongoing projects (27% vs 22%).

Figure 54: Those who said they were not interested in a list of different ways of giving time in the next 12 months *(% of all respondents)*

Figure 55: Interest in different ways of giving time in the next 12 months*

(% of respondents interested in at least one of the listed ways of giving time)



8.4.2 Future opportunities – ways of volunteering

The opportunity of most interest was one where they could make use of existing skills or experience.

Of those who selected at least one future opportunity of interest from those listed (Figure 57) the most appealing was 'giving unpaid help in a way that makes use of my existing skills or experience' (52%).

This confirms earlier findings that highlight this as one of the most common motivations for starting volunteering (section 4.3.1) and as something that some volunteers wanted to be doing more of within their volunteering (section 5.3.11).

Recent volunteers, in the context of their main organisation, were also asked whether they preferred to use skills and experience that were similar to those they used day to day (the skills used in work, at university etc) or different skills. There was not much difference in these preferences (33% and 30% respectively) and a similar proportion (30%) said neither of these.

Across different working statuses, however, those working full time were most likely to say they preferred to use different skills and experiences from their day to day (39%). These findings indicate that volunteers are interested in using a wider range of the skills and experience they have.

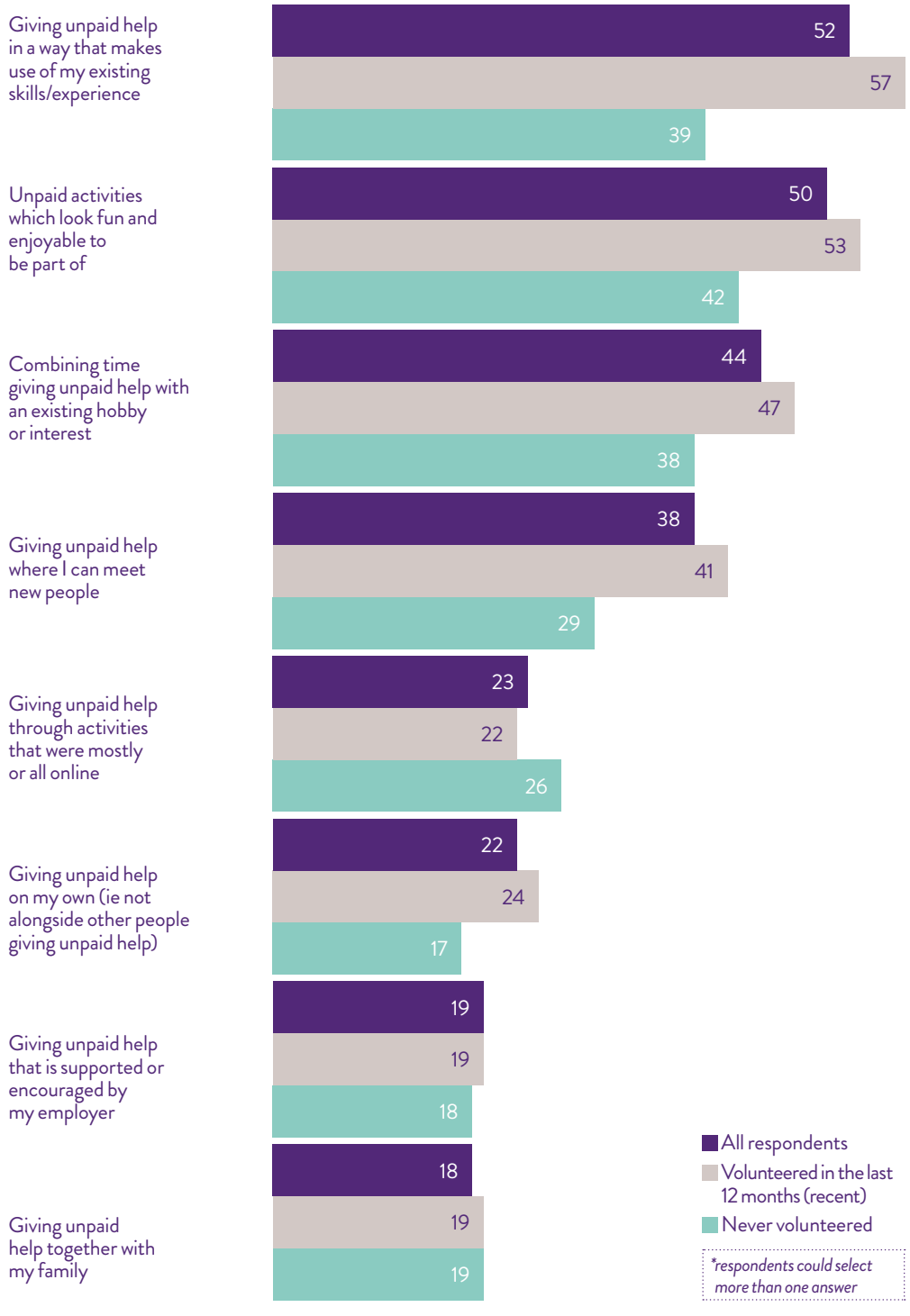
Other opportunities of interest reflect how people want to spend time in ways that reflect their interests.

Aside from using their existing skills or experience, people were interested in unpaid activities that look fun and enjoyable to be part of (50%), combining time with an existing hobby or interest (44%) and activities where volunteers can meet new people (38%). These show the enjoyment and social elements of volunteering, as highlighted previously.

Figure 56: Those who said they were not interested in a list of different ways of volunteering in the next 12 months *(% of all respondents)*

Figure 57: Interest in different ways of volunteering in the next 12 months*

(% of respondents interested in at least one of the listed ways of volunteering)



Among those who had never volunteered through an organisation, volunteering opportunities that looked fun and enjoyable were of most interest across all the different options listed (42%).

Across all groups, opportunities of less interest included giving unpaid help that is supported by employers or giving unpaid help with their family – these are likely to appeal to more limited groups. For example, employer-supported volunteering was of more interest among 18–24 year-olds and 25–34 year-olds than other age groups.

For recent volunteers, interests for the future largely reflect recent participation.

Among recent volunteers, the types of opportunities they selected were similar to some of the ways they were already participating. For example, those who were volunteering online already were more likely to be interested in giving unpaid help mostly or all online than those who were rarely or never online, and those whose recent volunteering experience rarely or never involved volunteering with others were more likely to say they were interested in giving unpaid help on their own than those who had volunteered alongside others.

This may reflect the fact that many (80%) are likely to continue with volunteering with their main organisation.

Those who have previously been less engaged are more interested in online-based volunteering than those who have volunteered in recent years.

Overall, future opportunities of most interest were consistent, regardless of past involvement.

Notably, however, those who had volunteered three or more years ago (27%) or never (26%) were more likely to select opportunities to volunteer mostly or all online than those who had volunteered in the last three years (22% of recent volunteers and 19% of lapsed volunteers). This suggests that this type of volunteering may appeal more to volunteers who have not been engaged recently or at all.

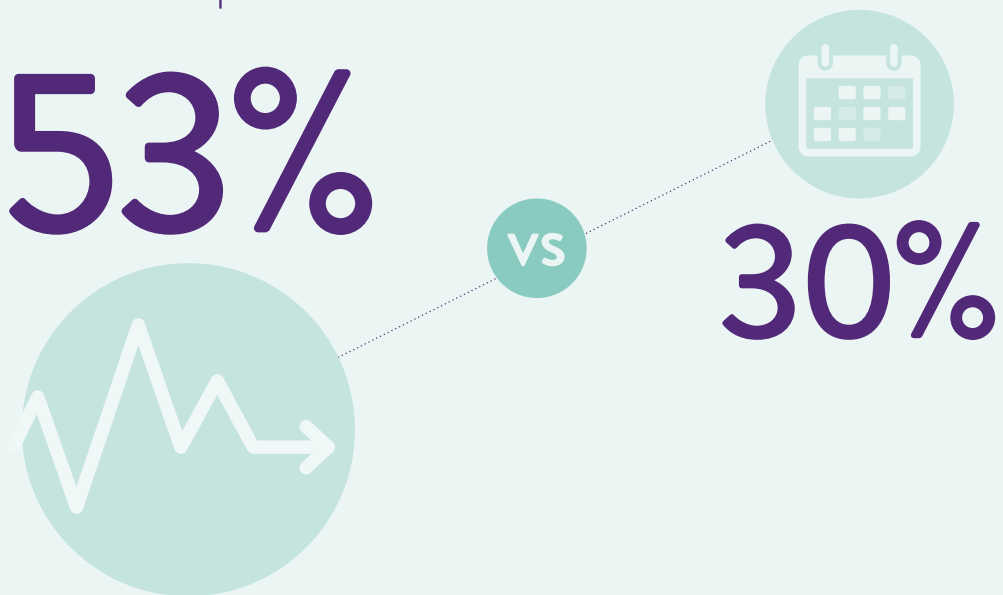
This is supported by the findings in section 4.2.5, which showed that recent volunteers who had given time exclusively online for their main organisation were more likely to have started volunteering with the organisation in the last year.

There are some differences in interest across demographic groups.

These included the following.

- Among younger volunteers (aged 18–34), enjoyable and fun opportunities (55%) and those that combined volunteering with an existing hobby or interest (51%) appealed most.
- Interest in employer-supported volunteering declined with age, with 36% of 18–34-year-olds interested, compared with 3% of those aged 55+.
- Those from higher social grades and with a higher level of educational qualification were more likely to be interested in using existing skills (56%) than those from lower grades and with lower qualifications (47%).
- Reflecting earlier findings about the ways recent disabled volunteers gave their time (section 4.2.5), disabled respondents were more likely to be interested in opportunities that could be done all or mostly online than non-disabled people (28% vs 21%).

Of those interested in future opportunities, opportunities to **dip in and out** appeal more than giving time on a **regular basis** (respondents could choose both).



Of those who are interested in at least one future opportunity, more than half of 18–34 year olds are interested in opportunities that look **fun and enjoyable to be part of**.

8.5 FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Understanding the barriers, enablers and areas of interest, especially among those who don't currently volunteer, provides important insights into how to shape future volunteering opportunities.

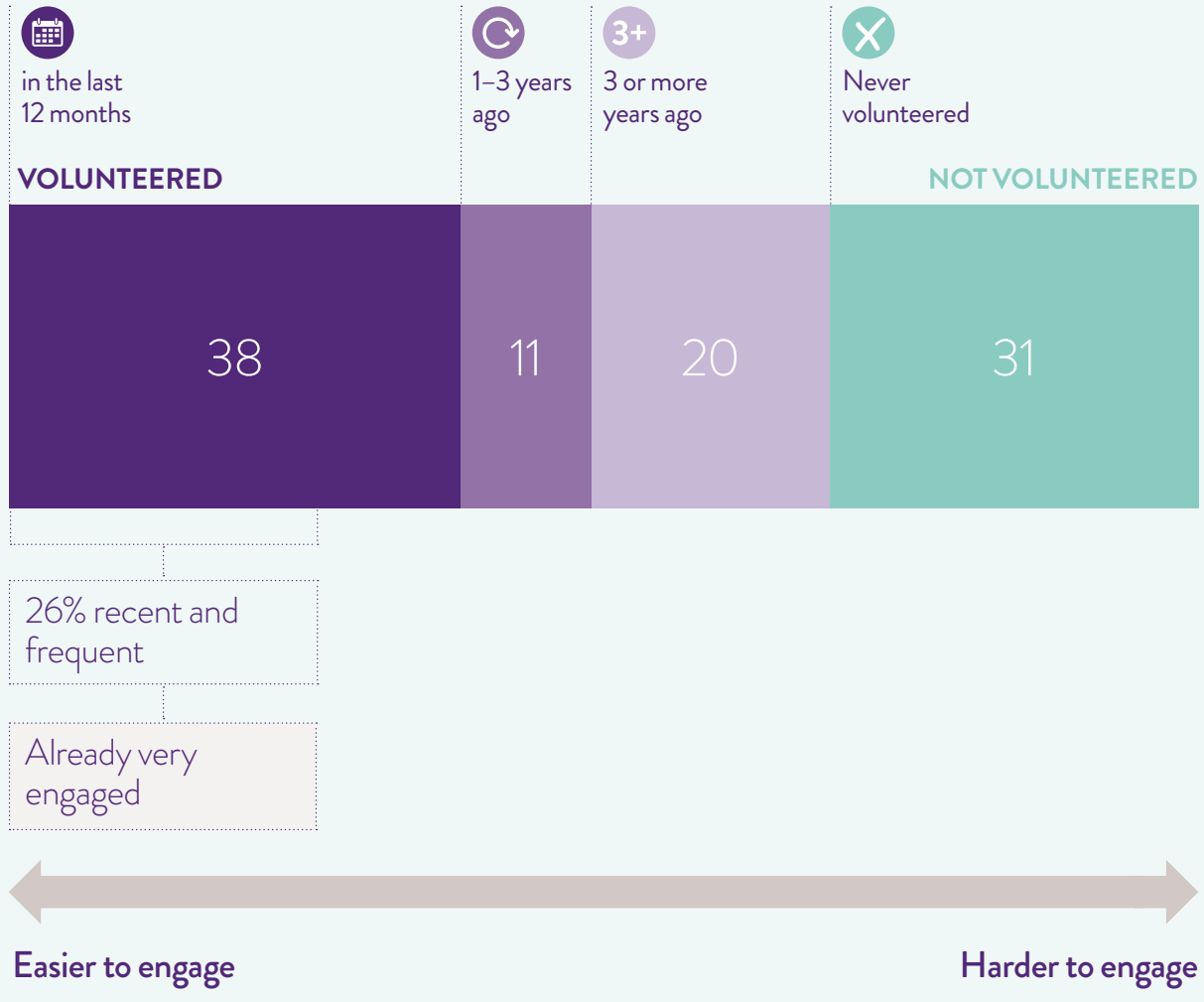
The findings highlight how perception of time and commitment associated with volunteering matters. This suggests the need for organisations and groups not only to provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities, but also to show people how volunteering can fit in their lives and be time well spent.

We found that the more recently someone has volunteered, the more likely they are to volunteer again. However, there is potential across all groups for future engagement, although as suggested previously, caution should be taken to not overburden those who are already giving a lot of time to volunteering.

This raises questions about where people are currently on the spectrum of engagement that we outlined in section 3 (and shown here in Figure 58), where they could be in the future and where there is most potential for change.

There are indications that some groups may be easier to engage than others, however, if we are to address the diversity issues highlighted in section 3.5, efforts to engage potential volunteers need to be applied to all and not just specific groups of people.

Figure 58: Potential for future engagement *(% of all respondents)*



9 CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

This section summarises some of our key learnings from across the research and identifies a number of areas for organisations to think about if they want to support people in having a quality volunteer experience. It also looks at what the findings might mean for policy in the context of current societal trends.

9.1 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

We summarise here some of our key learnings from the research: first, about who volunteers and how they give their time; second, about the experience of volunteering; third, about engaging volunteers for the future. Finally, we take all the findings together to consider what makes a good quality volunteer experience.

What have we learned about who volunteers and how they give their time?

Most people have volunteered during their lifetime.

This survey tells us a great deal about how the people of Britain volunteer through groups, clubs or organisations, not just recently but also over their lifetime.

The findings highlight a spectrum of engagement. Of the people surveyed, around seven in ten (69%) had formally volunteered at some point in their lives. Most get involved in a light-touch way, dipping in and out of opportunities with participation shaped by what is happening in their lives.

Those who sustain their involvement consistently and intensely over their lifetime are a minority, but these are the volunteers that organisations and groups are likely to depend on the most.

Diversity continues to be an issue.

Many, including politicians, policy makers and volunteer-involving organisations, have high aspirations for getting more people to volunteer. However, it is also important to look at who volunteers.

Our research confirms that recent volunteers who participate in formal volunteering frequently (ie at least once a month) are more likely to be older, well-educated and from higher socio-economic groups.

On the other hand, those from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to say they have never been involved, and those who have are less likely to be in certain leadership or representative roles, like being a trustee.

Research on volunteering, and on participation more broadly, consistently indicates that inequalities of resources and power means that some people are more likely to be excluded from certain activities.

There are different levels of formality.

Whilst this survey focuses on 'formal' volunteering, this picture of volunteering only tells part of the story. We know that people make contributions to their communities in varied ways. Some people that are under-represented in formal volunteering participate more in informal ways, for example though acts of neighbourliness.

The findings also highlight that there is a wide spectrum of formality within volunteering through groups, clubs or organisations, from large organisations with paid staff and more formal policies and procedures to more informal grassroots community groups.

Formal volunteering processes, such as having an interview before starting to volunteer or role-specific training, are more common in certain settings and activities, for example where there are safeguarding risks. For many, the journey into and through volunteering is characterised by informal processes or ad-hoc organising.

There is no one volunteer journey.

This research looked more in detail into the context of volunteering – what activities volunteers do, where they volunteer, when they volunteer, who they give time to and how they do it.

The findings highlight some common features: volunteers are likely to give time in their own neighbourhood, for local organisations and groups, and alongside others. They are much more likely to give time to civil society organisations, but some volunteer for public sector organisations, such as the police or the NHS.

Those who volunteered recently (in the last year) most commonly took part in volunteering activities on a regular basis. A significant proportion also reported volunteering as part of a one-off activity or event or dipping in and out of activities.

Whilst these common features provide an overview of how people volunteer, the reality is more complex – a volunteer will combine different types of activity, cause, organisation, frequency and intensity of involvement, which reflect their own lifestyle and life stage, values and interests. People's lives and priorities change and, consequently, the ways they get involved may also change.

The role of digital in volunteering provides a mixed picture.

How much people are online as part of their volunteering varies widely – though more say that their activities involve some kind of online interaction than none at all. This is likely to reflect different types of involvement, with some people carrying out their volunteering activities online (eg webchat online) and others mainly using digital tools and devices to facilitate their volunteering (eg emailing other volunteers to set up a meeting).

Nevertheless, over a third of people who volunteer say they are never online. This is currently much more common than people saying they volunteer exclusively online. However, the latter group are more likely to have started volunteering recently, which suggests that volunteering exclusively online may be attracting new volunteers to organisations and could become a bigger trend.

Disabled volunteers were more likely to be online (exclusively or often) than non-disabled volunteers, suggesting that digital platforms may provide opportunities for people who might otherwise find it difficult to participate.

Volunteering through employers remains low on people's radar.

Of the volunteers who were working for an employer, the majority said the volunteering they do for their main organisation take place outside of their work hours and is not organised by their employer.

The low levels of participation in employer-supported volunteering reflect a wider lack of awareness of this kind of volunteering. As well as scope to increase awareness, the fact that around a third of volunteers who participated in employer-supported volunteering in the last year felt their employers did not actively encourage it suggests there is more that could be done to promote it.

What have we learned about the experience of volunteering?

Volunteering is a positive experience, for almost all volunteers.

Satisfaction levels are very high – this is in spite of frustrations that some people report experiencing. Volunteers also cite a range of benefits they get from taking part.

This is a huge testament to the work of volunteer-involving organisations, which the majority of volunteers perceive to be supporting them well and recognising them for their contribution. It also sets a high benchmark for these organisations to continue to meet.

Overall perceptions are positive, but the findings highlight there is no room for complacency. Some groups of volunteers tend to be less positive in their views about certain aspects of their experience, including younger compared with older volunteers, occasional compared with frequent volunteers, public sector compared with civil society volunteers and disabled compared with non-disabled volunteers.

There are also indications that those from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) backgrounds are less likely to be satisfied than white volunteers, however further research would be needed to support this.

It is not clear whether these variations are due to differing expectations, experiences or both. However, they provide some food for thought, particularly as organisations look to attract and retain young people, more people want to dip in and out of activities and the public sector seeks to involve more volunteers.

Meeting expectations is a balancing act.

With such variation in volunteer journeys, a challenge for volunteer-involving organisations is meeting the range of expectations that come with them. These are shaped by both personal and societal factors, as well as previous experiences of volunteering and other forms of participation.

Meeting the expectations volunteers have about the level and nature of organisation and management is a particular challenge for volunteer-involving organisations. Over a third of people who volunteer agree that 'things could be better organised', indicating that there is still scope for organisations to improve the volunteer experience. However, organisations need to balance this with the risk of becoming overly bureaucratic (something that over a quarter of volunteers already currently feel) or formalised.

As noted previously, there is a spectrum of formality. This highlights the challenge for volunteer-involving organisations to understand and respond to the needs of their current and future volunteers, whilst delivering services and activities effectively and safely.

There are some aspects of the volunteer experience that seem to matter most to those who volunteer.

1. People want to give time on their own terms.

Most people are happy with the way their time is managed when volunteering. However, there is a risk that too much pressure to do more or to continue, is placed on some volunteers, especially those who are giving their time on a frequent basis.

These frequent volunteers are more likely to feel the positive benefits of volunteering but also more likely to report negative experiences, including feeling like too much of their time is taken up. Generally, volunteers who feel this way are less likely to continue with their volunteering.

2. Volunteering isn't paid work.

Part of the risk in overburdening volunteers is that their volunteering starts to feel 'work like'. The findings show that the more frequently people volunteered, the more they felt this to be true. Public sector volunteers and those volunteering in more formal settings were also more likely to feel this way.

Volunteering often overlaps with the world of paid work, where, for example, paid staff manage and work alongside volunteers. However, it isn't paid work and the distinction is reinforced by the ways people get involved and say that they want to be involved.

As seen from the low levels of participation via employers, most people actively separate it from their own employment. Those who volunteer to improve their career prospects are also a minority (except among 18–24 year-olds). Additionally, those working full time are more likely to say they prefer using skills and experience that are different from their day-to-day work.

This suggests that volunteer-involving organisations should consider not just how much time people can give, but also how that time feels to volunteers. Whilst volunteering will coincide with the world of paid work, it should be distinct.

3. Making a difference matters.

Helping people or improving things was the key reason people said they started volunteering and those who felt they had a positive impact on others were much more likely both to be satisfied with their volunteering and to continue with it. Those who volunteer also report a wide range of personal benefits from volunteering, including enjoyment and improved well-being.

Organisations are sharing the impact of volunteers' contributions by communicating with them about the difference being made, though our findings highlight that even more of this could be done.

The fact that most people (whether they have volunteered or not) say they have not used or accessed services provided by volunteers might indicate that the contribution of volunteers is not recognised in wider society. There may be more scope to showcase and celebrate the contribution of volunteers more widely.

4. Feeling connected lies at the core of the volunteer experience.

Among the different benefits people feel they gain from volunteering is a sense of connection. Volunteering, for most, involves being with others – very few say they do it alone. The majority of those who volunteer say they meet new people and have contact with people from different backgrounds. Many also say their volunteering has helped them feel less isolated, especially younger volunteers.

People's sense of a connection to the organisation people volunteer with and the cause it supports is also a key aspect of the volunteer experience. Most report that they feel a sense of belonging to the organisation and a culture of respect and trust – factors that are strongly associated with their likelihood to continue. Ensuring volunteers feel part of something – an organisation, a common endeavour – is key to the volunteer experience.

5. Enjoyment shouldn't be undervalued.

When volunteers were asked what they got out of their involvement, 'I enjoy it' was the most chosen statement. Enjoyment can mean different things to different people; it could be about having fun, but this won't be the case for all who volunteer, especially those whose volunteering activities are, by nature, challenging and difficult. It is likely to be the result of many things – the activities undertaken, the conviviality of interacting with others, a personal sense of achievement or fulfilment, people's emotions, etc.

Our findings indicate enjoyment is associated with both satisfied volunteers and those who continue with volunteering. In addition, opportunities that look fun and enjoyable to be part of appeal to those interested in future volunteering opportunities, especially among those who haven't volunteered before.

The importance of enjoyment to volunteers suggests that it is not only about helping others or achieving something; enjoying the experience itself whilst taking part also really matters.

What have we learned about engaging volunteers for the future?

Positive experiences are likely to lead to continued participation.

People are most likely to leave volunteering because of changes in circumstances, such as moving away or changing job. However, it is how people experience the different elements of the volunteering journey that is important for both their overall satisfaction and the likelihood that they will continue. This is true for all who have volunteered, regardless of who they are. Experience matters for future involvement.

Given that people tend to dip in and out of volunteering, the findings suggest a good quality volunteering experience will impact their likelihood to keep coming back over their lifetime.

There is potential for future engagement across all groups, with some transitions more challenging than others.

The more recently people have volunteered, the more likely they are to say they will volunteer again. Given that there is a risk of overburdening the most involved volunteers, the research indicates that the most potential for shifting engagement levels are among those who have recently volunteered but not very frequently, and those who have volunteered in the past.

However, if we are to tackle the issue of diversity in volunteering, we will need to explore how best to reach those who have never volunteered and invest in these efforts too.

A significant proportion of those who have never volunteered through a group, club or organisation say that they are not interested in future opportunities to do so. However, some are – this highlights that there is potential to widen engagement regardless of their past involvement, even if this may be a more challenging task.

Some people have never thought about volunteering – taking a 'first step' is key.

Wherever people are at now, tackling existing barriers is likely to be a step-by-step process. For those who are not currently volunteering, a key part of this is encouraging them to take a first step – either back into volunteering or for the first time. It is the latter that is the most challenging.

As one of the main barriers for those who have never volunteered is that they have never thought about it, raising awareness of volunteering may encourage them to start volunteering for the first time. But it is not only about raising awareness, it's also about providing opportunities that resonate with their own lives and aspirations, and ensuring they can shape the way they get involved.

People are protective of their time, but opportunities that are meaningful to volunteers are likely to help overcome this initial barrier.

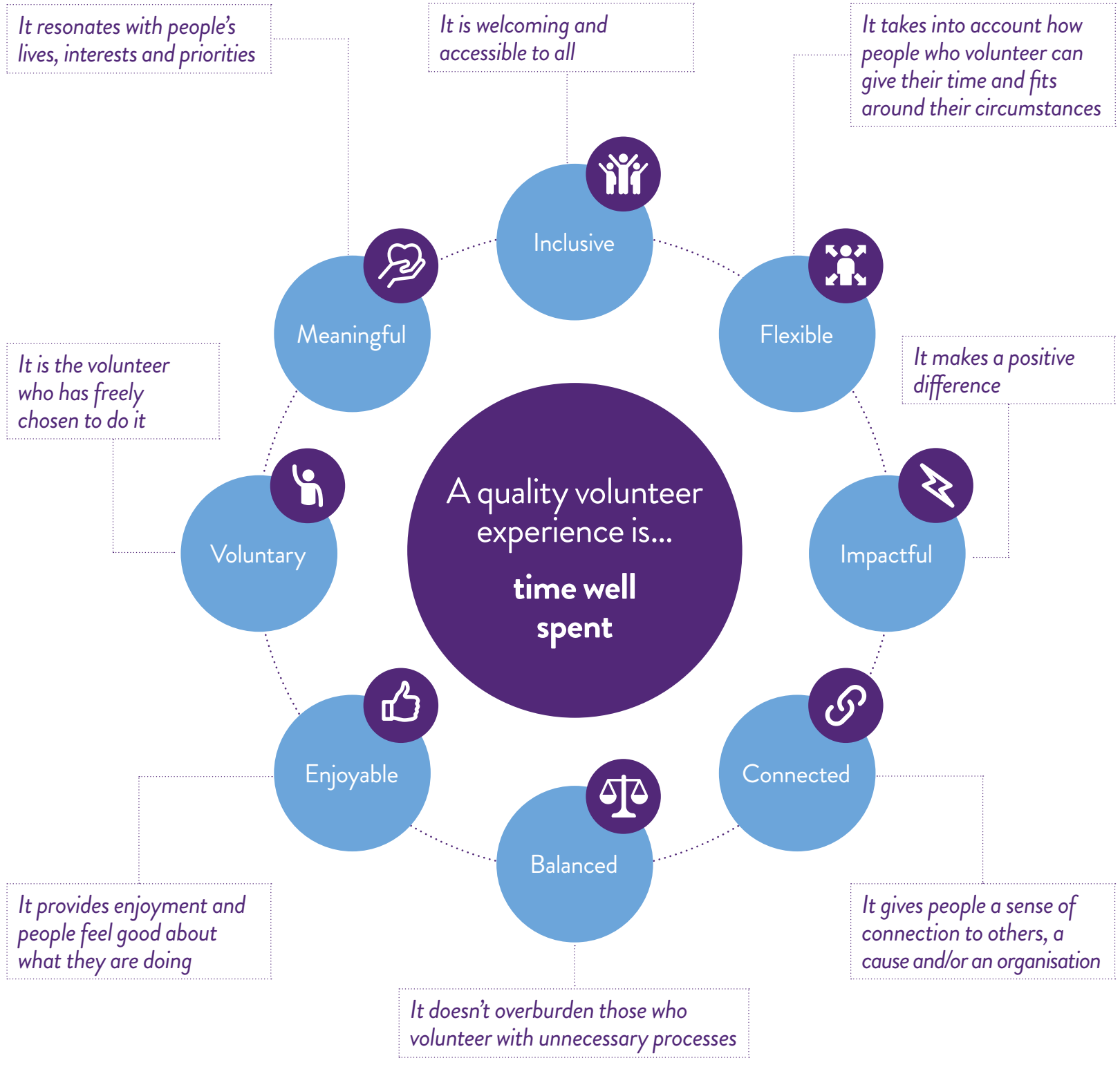
The issue of time is hard to ignore. The survey confirms well-known challenges around the perceived barrier of time and commitment. However, it is not simply a matter of 'not enough' time – a key barrier for those not volunteering is 'I do other things with my spare time.' Concerns about time and commitment seems to be most relevant before starting; once involved, most people who volunteer say they are happy with the flexibility they have and the expectations placed on them.

Future opportunities of interest highlight that potential volunteers want their volunteering to fit in with their lives and for their time to be worthwhile and purposeful.

From a range of opportunities, those that attracted most interest include: ones where people can dip in and out of activities, make use of their existing skills and experience, combine with hobbies and interests, and which look fun and enjoyable to be part of. Opportunities to meet new people were also appealing. These are the types of opportunities that might help people reconsider how they prioritise their time.

What have we learned about what a quality volunteer experience might look like?

The research suggests a number of key features that make up a quality experience for volunteers. Different journeys and context mean that some of these elements will be more relevant than others. Across these different features, our overall conclusion is that, at its best, volunteering is time well spent. It is positive that most volunteers seem to agree, and more can be done to reassure potential volunteers that their time will be well spent.



9.2 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PRACTICE?

The complex and dynamic nature of participation highlighted in this research strongly suggests that volunteering is shaped by a multitude of factors and that there is no single lever that will result in more and better involvement. However, we have identified several areas for organisations to think about if they want to support people in having a quality volunteer experience.

We focus first on practice, because the way organisations engage with current and potential volunteers can make a real difference to people's experience and whether they sustain their involved or not.

However, there is a role for policy makers in ensuring that the wider environment is conducive to people wanting to get involved and in thinking about how structural barriers to participation might be addressed.

We suggest volunteer-involving organisations should consider what we think are the eight key features of a quality experience and what these might mean for the way they engage with current and potential volunteers.

These areas of consideration have been developed through workshops with different stakeholders about the implications of the research findings. This was important in grounding the research in practice and the daily experience of organisations.

We explore each of these focus areas in more detail in the following pages, looking at what we have learned from the research and what it might look like from the organisational perspective if these are put into practice and the impact it might have on the volunteer experience.

Inclusive *Offering inclusive volunteering opportunities and experience*

Balanced *Ensuring an appropriate level of formalisation*

Flexible *Creating volunteer journeys that can adapt to the variety of volunteers and their life circumstances*

Enjoyable *Trying to make the experience enjoyable for volunteers*

Impactful *Maximising the impact volunteering has on volunteers and on those they help*

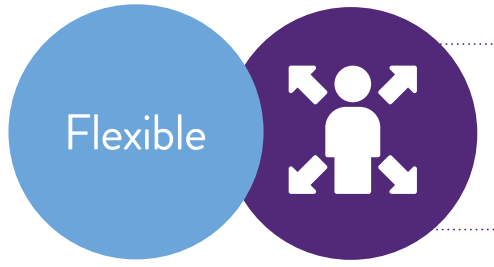
Voluntary *Ensuring volunteering feels truly voluntary at all times*

Connected *Strengthening the connections that are at the heart of volunteering*

Meaningful *Supporting volunteers to give time in ways that are meaningful to them*

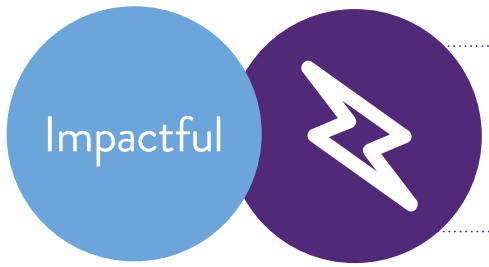
Offering inclusive volunteering opportunities and experience

What we've learned	Organisational perspective	Volunteer perspective
• Diversity continues to be an issue, with some groups less likely to volunteer through groups, clubs or organisations than others • People are protective of their time and worry about commitment, which can stop them from getting into or back into volunteering • Certain groups are under-represented in some leadership or representative roles	• Our organisation makes it easy to get it involved (eg offers taster sessions) • We reach out to different people using a range of recruitment methods depending on the person and task or role (eg supporting beneficiaries to become volunteers, peer recruitment, working with community and faith organisations) • The culture of our organisation actively encourages equality, diversity and inclusion at all levels • We talk about volunteering and volunteers in a way that people can understand and engage with • We encourage volunteers to be themselves and bring their lived experience to their role • We ensure our online and offline volunteering opportunities are accessible and well-supported	• I can give volunteering a go to see if it's for me • I feel that the organisation welcomes all who want to give their time, whoever they are • I feel 'volunteering' or being a 'volunteer' is something I can be involved in or be • I do not feel there are roles that I would not be able to do because of who I am • I am able to be myself when volunteering



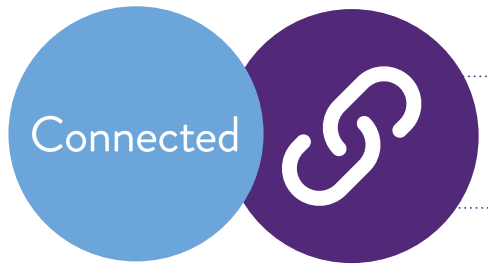
Creating volunteer journeys that can adapt to the variety of volunteers and their life circumstances

What we've learned	Organisational perspective	Volunteer perspective
• People tend to dip in and out of volunteering over the course of their lives • There is no one volunteer journey – the way people give their time combines different activities, causes, organisations, frequency and intensity of involvement. It changes with people's lives and their priorities • People have different expectations that are shaped by a variety of factors • Positive experiences are likely to lead to continued participation over a lifetime	• Our organisation listens to what volunteers and potential volunteers are looking for and want to offer, and doesn't just think about what it needs • We recognise the common values volunteers share as well as their differences • We are realistic and manage volunteers' expectations, signposting volunteers to other organisations so that their willingness to give time is not wasted • Volunteers are given the opportunities to shape their journeys with flexibility to change or leave their roles • We offer and provide a 'good exit' for any volunteers who leave and keep the door open for them to come back again	• I feel that the organisation listens to and tries to fit my needs and offers me a way of giving my time (even if for a different organisation) • I am able to be flexible with the way I give my time • When my life circumstances or other things change, I feel I have options to do something else or stop • If and when I stop volunteering at a particular time, I am left feeling I have a good experience that I could come back to at another time



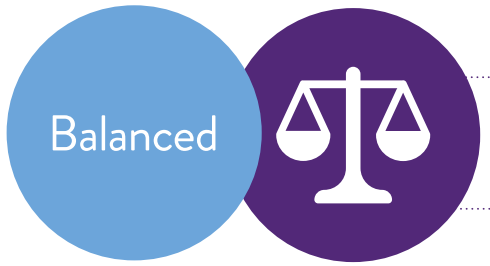
Maximising the impact volunteering has on volunteers and on those they help

What we've learned	Organisational perspective	Volunteer perspective
• People volunteer for a range of different reasons. The most common motivation for volunteering is to improve things/help people • The feeling of making a difference is strongly associated with being satisfied and continuing to volunteer • Most feel the organisation communicates with them about the impact made, but more feel there is 'too little' communication than 'too much'	• Volunteers are valued and recognised in a variety of ways, and this is communicated to both volunteers themselves and others • The impact of volunteers' contribution is assessed, so we have something concrete to show • We contribute to changing the culture around the value of volunteering • We invest in supporting volunteers to do the best they can in their role • We value the role of volunteer coordinators or managers (where applicable) in supporting volunteers to make a difference	• I feel I make a difference in my volunteering • I feel the organisation communicates with me about why and how my contribution matters • I feel I am given the support and the tools (eg training) to fulfil my role and tasks



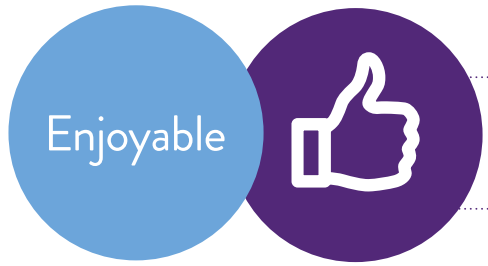
Strengthening the connections that are at the heart of volunteering

What we've learned	Organisational perspective	Volunteer perspective
• Most volunteers give time alongside others and meet people through their volunteering • Feeling connected to an organisation or the cause are among the most common reasons to start volunteering and to continue • Younger volunteers (aged 18–24 and 25-34) were most likely to say volunteering helped them feel less isolated • Most feel they belong to the organisation, fewer feel they have the opportunity to influence it. Those giving time to organisations with a paid coordinator were less likely to say they belonged and had the opportunity to influence	• We facilitate opportunities for volunteers to meet and socialise with others if they want to • The organisation has structures that are designed to enable volunteers' voices to be heard and volunteers are part of the culture of the organisation • We think about different ways to connect people to the organisation, others and the activities they take part in • We think about how to help connect those who might otherwise feel excluded	• I feel part of the organisation and connected • I feel the people I volunteer for believe in the same cause and share a common objective • I can meet people if I want to • I feel I am given the opportunities to have a voice, should I want to



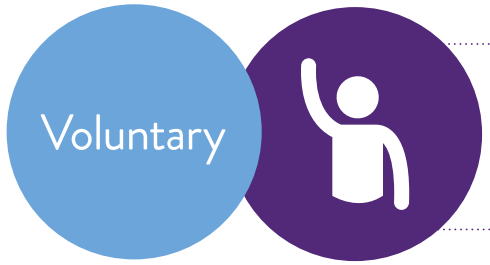
Ensuring an appropriate level of formalisation

What we've learned	Organisational perspective → Volunteer perspective
• The variety of volunteer journeys means there is also a range of expectations that volunteers come with • Meeting expectations is particularly challenging in relation to the level and nature of organisation and management • A significant minority of volunteers feel things could be much better organised, but people are also concerned with there being too much bureaucracy or formalisation • Thinking that volunteering is becoming too much like paid work is more prevalent in more formal settings	• We think about how to be proportionate in what we do and how we do it • We explain why any necessary processes are in place • We promote ways of making the role rewarding for the volunteer • Volunteering roles are distinguished from paid roles and focus on what makes volunteering different
	• I understand why there are processes in place (where needed) • I feel appreciated for my contribution as a volunteer • I don't feel overburdened by the demands and processes of the organisation • I am valued for what I bring as a volunteer



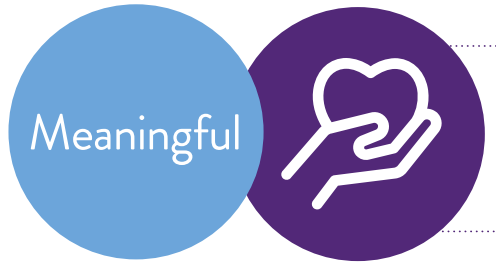
Trying to make the experience enjoyable for volunteers

What we've learned	Organisational perspective → Volunteer perspective
• Enjoyment was the highest ranked out of a list of benefits from volunteering • Enjoyment was strongly associated with being satisfied with volunteering and continuing with it • Opportunities which look fun and enjoyable are among the most popular of a list of potential future volunteering opportunities	• We make efforts to ensure volunteering is an enjoyable experience • We promote volunteer opportunities in a way that means potential volunteers will look forward to being part of the organisation • We take an interest in our volunteers and what they want to get from volunteering • We support our volunteers and ensure they know how to raise an issue if they need to
	• I enjoy taking part • Even if my role can be challenging, I feel supported and positive about my contribution



Ensuring volunteering feels truly voluntary at all times

What we've learned	Organisational perspective →	Volunteer perspective
• Most people are happy with the way their volunteering time is managed • Some (especially frequent volunteers) are more likely to feel too much time is taken up and pressured to do more than they'd like • Feeling like their volunteering is becoming too much like paid work is more prevalent among frequent volunteers • Frequent volunteers are most likely to feel the benefits of volunteering but also are more likely to have negative experiences than occasional volunteers	• We check in on volunteers, especially the most involved, to avoid burnout • We don't put pressure on anyone and ensure volunteers feel free to leave • We regularly discuss the volunteers' roles with them to see if their expectations are being met	• I feel that I give my time on my own terms • I can choose to stop if I wish • I can ask to change my role or the amount of time I give



Supporting volunteers to give time in ways that are meaningful to them

What we've learned	Organisational perspective →	Volunteer perspective
• Participation is personal, with the variety of volunteer journeys reflecting individual values and priorities • People want to hear how they have made a difference	• We try to engage with volunteers to understand what is important to them • We support volunteers to find a way to give time in a fulfilling way • We match roles with what people want to give and their offer of time • We are transparent about our roles • We give feedback on how people make a difference • We manage people's expectations to avoid disappointment	• The organisation understands why I want to volunteer • My volunteering has a purpose that resonates with what matters to me • My volunteering feels fulfilling • I know how I make a difference and how much this is valued

9.3 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR POLICY?

Our research raises a number of broader questions and issues that we believe are of wider public interest. In this section, we focus on some key topical issues and identify questions to stimulate discussion about the challenges and opportunities for volunteer-involving organisations, government and civil society more broadly.

Diversity

Our findings suggest that access to volunteering opportunities is unequal. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds and people with a lower level of educational attainment are less likely to get involved as volunteers, which we conclude is to their disadvantage. Moreover, disabled people and those from a BAME community seem to be having a less positive experience for some aspects of their volunteering than non-disabled and white volunteers.

- Diversity is a much-discussed topic in society, including in charities, but discussions frequently focus on paid staff. Is there more that we can do to raise the debate about volunteering and diversity, particularly if we think that unequal access to opportunities is entrenching disadvantage or harming social mobility?
- It is widely recognised that creating good-quality volunteering opportunities requires investment. However, organisations that might be best placed to support greater involvement in communities where volunteering rates are relatively low rarely have the capacity to invest. How can we provide support to build capacity in areas where fewer people are getting involved, such as BAME organisations?
- Where disabled people are less positive about their experience, is this related to the attitudes of others or a lack of reasonable adjustments? Are there variations by different impairments or conditions? And would an 'Access to Volunteering' fund – as NCVO has previously called for – provide a mechanism for improving the volunteering experience for disabled people?

Youth social action

Different age groups have different expectations over what good volunteering looks like. Much attention has been given to encouraging young people to volunteer. Yet, it is those in the 18–24 age bracket who are more likely to stop volunteering.

- Are schemes aimed at young people too focused on employment prospects and opportunity, when other motivations might be more enduring over time?
- When considering new initiatives and funding, how can we ensure that young people are able to shape opportunities?

Loneliness

While loneliness and isolation are two separate concepts, the link between them helps us to see how volunteering can create connectedness and potentially reduce loneliness. Feeling connected is a key part of the volunteer experience; making new connections is both a motivator and an impact of volunteering.

- Certain groups are more likely to feel lonely than others, including younger people, older people and disabled people. How can we ensure that volunteering opportunities that connect them to others are accessible and inclusive?
- Is enough weight placed on this aspect of volunteering when organisations are considered for funding? Are these outcomes given less importance than other easier-to-measure or 'higher-order' outcomes?

Localism

Volunteering is often embedded in local communities. Whilst there are many instances of collective action around communities of interest, people say they get involved primarily at a local level and in their own neighbourhoods.

- The shift to digital platforms for volunteer brokerage and support has occurred at a time when investment in local brokerage and support, particularly via volunteer centres, appears to be in decline. Does the evidence in this report suggest it is time to rethink the role of volunteer centres?
- Local initiatives such as Cities of Service and Tempo Time Credits have been successful in encouraging local participation. What can we learn from their development, particularly if we want to strengthen participation in places where engagement is relatively low?

Public services

Investment in programmes such as Q-Volunteering and Helpforce illustrate significant interest amongst funders and policy makers in widening the role of volunteers in public services. Although the majority of volunteers in the public sector have a positive experience, they are less likely to be satisfied and to continue volunteering than those volunteering for civil society. They are also more inclined to say their volunteering feels like paid work and that there is too much bureaucracy.

- As public services are subject to greater scrutiny over outcomes, processes and standards than other services, how can they balance this need in a proportionate way?
- What roles and tasks in public services are suitable for volunteers, considering that many value the flexibility to dip in and out of volunteering and want to volunteer on their own terms?
- Is there potential to encourage and support volunteering that is beneficial for public services and their users but sits outside or between traditional and formal services?

Skills

Much emphasis has been placed on skills-based volunteering through employer-supported volunteering. Whilst a proportion of volunteers (particularly younger volunteers) want to gain skills through volunteering, the majority of people want to use the skills they have to give back to the community.

- With large employers committed to supporting employees' health and wellbeing as a part of the Civil Society Strategy, is there more scope to encourage time off for volunteering?
- How can employers support volunteering in a light-touch way that fits with what motivates volunteers?

10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

This appendix provides further details of the survey methodology and other technical details, including:

- sample
- weighting
- questionnaire development and testing
- further stakeholder engagement
- data collection and response
- sampling errors and statistical significance
- table and figure conventions
- variables (including definitions):
  - socio-economic and demographic analysis variables
  - volunteering analysis variables
  - other analysis variables.

Sample

The sample was drawn from the YouGov panel, which is designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over in Great Britain. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition (see below) to provide a representative reporting sample. The total sample size was 10,103 adults.

Weighting

The survey data were weighted to the marginal region, social grade and age/gender/educational-level distributions, as set out below in Table A1.1. All the percentages presented in this report are based on weighted data. Details of weighted and unweighted bases for standard demographics are shown in Tables A1.3 and A1.4, at the end of Appendix 1.

Table A1.1 Targets aimed for in YouGov samples

Region	Weight targets (%)
North	24
Midlands	16
East, South	32
London	14
Wales	5
Scotland	9

Social grade	Weight targets (%)
AB	28
C1	29
C2	21
DE	22

Gender interlock age and education	Weight targets (%)
Men over 65	10
Men 50–65 high	3
Men 50–65 mid	5
Men 50–65 low	4
Men 40–49 high	3
Men 40–49 mid	3
Men 40–49 low	3
Men 25–39 high	5
Men 25–39 mid	5
Men 25–39 low	3
Men 18–24 high	2
Men 18–24 mid and low	4

Gender interlock age and education	Weight targets (%)
Women over 65	12
Women 50–65 high	3
Women 50–65 mid	5
Women 50–65 low	4
Women 40–49 high	3
Women 40–49 mid	3
Women 40–49 low	2
Women 25–39 high	5
Women 25–39 mid	4
Women 25–39 low	2
Women 18–24 high	2
Women 18–24 mid and low	3

Questionnaire development and testing

Questionnaire development was informed by a scoping phase to help shape the research and its focus. This was comprised of two parts.

1. We conducted a rapid review of existing literature, and previous and current national surveys on volunteering, to look at the existing evidence base on the subject area and identify knowledge gaps. The review included the Community Life Survey[72] (the current survey on volunteering trends), Helping Out[73] (the previous national survey which explored the volunteer experience) and Pathways through Participation[74] (looking at how people's involvement changes over their lifetime).
2. We undertook 18 telephone interviews with stakeholders across the voluntary sector to understand their current priorities and interests in relation to the volunteer experience to help define the focus of the survey. In addition to telephone interviews, we also engaged with stakeholders at events where volunteer managers were present.

From this scoping phase, we identified a number of priority areas, which formed the basis of the questionnaire development. We drew on existing survey questions where relevant – especially where these questions had previously undergone cognitive testing. Expert reviews of the draft questionnaire were also carried out; this involved a broad range of stakeholders including researchers, volunteer managers and other voluntary sector experts. These reviews were used to ensure relevance of the questions and their responses and helped us to prioritise questions, given the limited number of questions which could be included in the survey.

Throughout the questionnaire development phase, different versions were tested with some members of the general population to check clarity and interpretation, focusing particularly on new questions.

Further stakeholder engagement

In order to ensure that the research reflected the needs and interests of those engaging with volunteers and that it generated insights that would be practical and useful, we engaged with a variety of stakeholders (eg volunteer-involving organisations and networks) throughout the research process, not just during the questionnaire design phase.

During the initial analysis phase, we conducted a workshop in July 2018 with a small number of stakeholders to feed back on and discuss early findings. We then carried out a more formal set of three workshops in September 2018, two in London and one in Leicester, and engaged with over 70 stakeholders, to present some of the emerging findings from our research and provide an opportunity for people to discuss and debate the implications of these for practice and policy. These were used to inform the 'Conclusions and implications' section of the report. Stakeholders represented a broad range of organisations, including smaller organisations, and were from a variety of sectors.

Data collection and response

The survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov UK panel of 800,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Fieldwork was undertaken between 4 and 15 May 2018.

Emails were sent to panellists selected at random from the base panel sample. The email invited them to take part in a survey and provided a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicked on the link, they were sent to the survey that they were most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas (the sample definition could be 'GB adult population' or a subset such as 'GB adult females'). Invitations to surveys do not expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey.

Because of the allocation to different surveys according to sample quotas, it is difficult to calculate a 'traditional' response rate. We do have information on dropout; 11,247 started the survey, whilst there were 10,103 final respondents, a response rate of 90%.

Sampling errors and statistical significance

No sample precisely reflects the characteristics of the population it represents, because of both sampling and non-sampling errors. In a random sample, where every adult has an equal and independent chance of inclusion, it is straightforward to calculate the sampling error of any percentage and a confidence interval for the true population percentage, which helps determine whether differences between two percentages are statistically significant.[75] However, simple random sampling is almost never used in practice, because of time and cost; most sample designs are more complex.

As noted above, our sample is a mix of random and quota sample from the YouGov panel. With any complex design such as this, the sampling errors are larger than for a random sample of the same size and depend not just on the percentage and sample size but also on how that percentage response is spread across the different types of people in the sample. To estimate that greater sampling error, various measures are used.[76] YouGov estimate the efficiency of their weighting design, with the weighting to the target distributions shown in Table A1.1, to be 88%.

In general in the report, we discuss findings where the differences between groups are statistically significant at the 95% level. On the occasions where we draw attention to a finding that is not statistically significant, or that is based on a small sample size, we normally comment on that.

Table and figure conventions

The following conventions are used for tables and figures throughout the report.

1. When findings based on the responses of fewer than 100 respondents are reported in the text, reference is made to the small base size. Such findings are not generally included in charts.
2. Percentages equal to or greater than 0.5 have been rounded up (e.g. 0.5% = 1%; 36.5% = 37%).
3. Due to the effects of rounding and weighting, percentages will not always add up to 100%.

72 Funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

73 Commissioned by the Office of the Third Sector, carried out by the Institute for Volunteering Research and NatCen.

74 Conducted by NCVO, the Institute for Volunteering Research and Involve.

75 Using the formula: s.e. (p) = p(100 - p)/n where n is the number of respondents on which the percentage is based. The 95% confidence interval, for example, would be given by the formula: p ± 1.96 x s.e. (p).

76 In clustered samples, 'design effects' and 'effective sample sizes' are used. Other measures include the 'power' of a survey sample and the efficiency of the post-survey weighting.

Variables (including definitions)

Socio-economic and demographic analysis variables

A number of standard variables have been used for the analyses in the main part of this report. The key ones are described below.

Social grade

Social grade is a classification based on the occupation of the chief income earner of the household, with six categories. Information is collected about their current or last job, so that all respondents except those who had never worked are coded. For more detail of individual groups see: **http://www.nrs.co.uk/nrs-print/lifestyle-and-classification-data/social-grade/** (accessed January 2019).

There are six classification categories:

- A Professional etc. occupations
- B Managerial and technical occupations
- C1 Non-manual skilled occupations
- C2 Manual skilled occupations
- D Partly skilled manual occupations
- E Unskilled occupations.

In this report we group them into two broad categories, ABC1 (non-manual occupations) and C2DE (manual occupations and people not working).

Other socio-demographic analysis variables

These are generally taken directly from information collected by questionnaire when people join the YouGov panel and to that extent are more self-explanatory. The principal ones are:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity
- highest educational qualification obtained
- working status
- disability.

For disability, the following definitions are used.

- **Disabled**: reported day-to-day activities being limited in some way because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.
- **Non-disabled**: reported no limitations to day-to-day activities because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

Volunteering analysis variable

One of the key variables underpinning the report is the extent to which people have volunteered through a group, club or organisation, over their lifetime and recently.

Where the term 'volunteering' is used, this refers to formal volunteering through groups, clubs or organisations, which is the focus of this report.

It does not include the more informal ways of giving time and helping others outside groups, clubs or organisations.

Whilst 'volunteering' is used throughout the report, in the survey respondents were not asked if they had volunteered. Instead, they were asked whether they had been involved with any groups, clubs or organisations and then whether they had provided unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations, prompted by a list of activities (see questionnaire). This method, following that used in the Community Life Survey, was used to capture the full range of volunteering activities, some of which may not otherwise be recognised by respondents as volunteering.

For the analyses in the report, we group people into the following categories:

- **recent volunteers**, who have volunteered ***at least once in the last 12 months***
- **lapsed volunteers**, who volunteered ***between one and three years ago***
- those who have volunteered ***in the past but more than three years ago***
- those who have ***never volunteered*** through a group, club or organisation.

We also refer to frequency of volunteering, generally by the following:

- **frequent volunteers**, who volunteered ***at least once a month***
- **occasional volunteers**, who volunteered l***ess frequently than once a month***.

Table A1.2 provides the base numbers in these categories by age.

Table A1.2 Sample composition by volunteering status

		Age					
		18–24	*25–34*	*35–44*	*45–54*	*55–64*	*65+*
(i) Overall level of volunteering participation							
Has volunteered in last 12 months	Weighted	418	484	621	501	683	1,136
	Unweighted	263	497	635	563	824	1,116
Has volunteered in last three years (but not in last 12 months)	Weighted	162	175	187	157	169	281
	Unweighted	114	180	199	170	200	274
Has volunteered in the past, but more than three years ago	Weighted	215	335	304	260	377	485
	Unweighted	144	335	307	289	443	473
Has never volunteered	Weighted	338	563	653	496	494	609
	Unweighted	200	532	647	544	559	595
All	Weighted	1,133	1,557	1,765	1,414	1,723	2,511
	Unweighted	721	1,554	1,788	1,566	2,026	2,458
(ii) Frequency of volunteering (recent volunteers)*							
Frequent, at least once a month	Weighted	235	268	361	324	502	887
	Unweighted	150	276	369	368	606	874
Occasional, between once a month and once in the last 12 months	Weighted	120	165	225	152	166	225
	Unweighted	71	171	230	170	202	218

**note that the sum of the 'frequent' and 'occasional' volunteers is less than all recent volunteers because some recent volunteers said 'don't know' to the question about frequency.*

Table A1.3 Sample bases, weighted and unweighted, for age and ethnicity by gender

(i) Age and gender				
		Male	*Female*	*All*
18–24	Weighted	560	575	1,135
	Unweighted	242	479	721
25–34	Weighted	716	841	1,557
	Unweighted	632	912	1,544
35–44	Weighted	937	829	1,766
	Unweighted	875	913	1,788
45–54	Weighted	689	724	1,413
	Unweighted	731	835	1,566
55–64	Weighted	875	847	1,722
	Unweighted	972	1,054	2,026
65+	Weighted	1,129	1,381	2,510
	Unweighted	1,182	1,276	2,458
All ages	Weighted	4,906	5,197	10,103
	Unweighted	4,634	5,469	10,103

(ii) Age and ethnic group				
		White	*BAME**	*All*
18–24	Weighted	953	169	1,135
	Unweighted	629	87	721
25–34	Weighted	1,393	158	1,557
	Unweighted	1,397	141	1,554
35–44	Weighted	1,600	156	1,765
	Unweighted	1,642	136	1,788
45–54	Weighted	1,351	60	1,413
	Unweighted	1,502	61	1,566
55–64	Weighted	1,699	21	1,723
	Unweighted	2,000	22	2,026
65+	Weighted	2,483	22	2,510
	Unweighted	2,436	17	2,458
All ages	Weighted	9,479	586	10,103
	Unweighted	9,606	464	10,103

**Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic*
Note that the sum of the 'White' and 'BAME' volunteers is less than the total because some volunteers said 'prefer not to say' in response to the question about ethnicity.

Table A1.4 Sample bases, weighted and unweighted, by social grade and educational qualification

(i) Social grade		
ABC1	Weighted	5,759
	Unweighted	6,198
C2DE	Weighted	4,344
	Unweighted	3,905
All social grades		
(ii) Educational qualification		
Degree or above	Weighted	4,334
	Unweighted	4,541
A level or equivalent	Weighted	1,509
	Unweighted	1,400
GCSE or equivalent	Weighted	1,513
	Unweighted	1,484
No qualifications	Weighted	601
	Unweighted	576
Other	Weighted	1,751
	Unweighted	1,742

Other analysis variables

A number of other variables are used throughout the report for analysis. These focus primarily on: *how people volunteer and who they volunteer for.*

The majority of these are self-explanatory, but it is worth taking note of the following definitions.

- **Employer-supported volunteering**: volunteering which is done either during working hours (with the time given by employers) or organised by employers; not including schemes for giving money.
- **Civil society/third sector**: a charity, voluntary organisation, community group, faith-based organisation, social enterprise, non-profit organisation (eg local sports club, environmental group, befriending scheme).
- **Public sector**: a public service, body or institution (eg NHS, local council, school, library, police).
- **Private sector**: a private company, corporate, business, profit-making organisation (eg private nursery, private museum, private health organisation, private care home, theatres).

APPENDIX 2
LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multivariate logistic regression was used to tease out which of the many factors are significantly and independently associated with the overall satisfaction and likelihood of continuing to volunteer, as described in some of the 'Food for Thought' sections of the main report (5.5, 6.4 and 7.4).

Regression analysis techniques[77]

Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a 'dependent' variable and one or more 'independent' variables. It shows how well we can *estimate* a respondent's score on the dependent variable from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables. It is sometimes presented as supporting a claim that the independent variables *cause* the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable, but this is not correct; causality can only be inferred through special experimental designs or through assumptions made by the analyst.

All regression analysis assumes that the relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables takes a particular form. In *linear regression*, it is assumed that the relationship can be adequately summarised by a straight line.[78] *Logistic regression* is an alternative form of regression, more suitable for variables such as ours, which fits an S-curve rather than a straight line; the impact on the dependent variable of a one-percentage point increase in an independent variable becomes progressively less the closer the value of the dependent variable approaches 0 or 1.

The statistical scores most commonly reported from the results of regression analyses are as follows.

A measure of variance explained

This summarises how well all the independent variables combined can account for the variation in respondents' scores in the dependent variable. The higher the measure, the more accurately we are able in general to estimate the correct value of each respondent's score on the dependent variable from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables.

A parameter estimate or coefficient

This shows how much the dependent variable will change on average, given a one-percentage point change in the independent variable (while holding all other independent variables in the model constant). The parameter estimate has a positive sign if an increase in the value of the independent variable results in an increase in the value of the dependent variable, and a negative sign if an increase in the value of the independent variable results in a decrease in the value of the dependent variable.

It is possible to compare the relative impact of different independent variables; those variables with the largest estimates can be said to have the biggest impact on the value of the dependent variable.

Regression also tests for the statistical significance of parameter estimates. A parameter estimate is said to be significant at the 5% level if the range of the values encompassed by its 95% confidence interval are either all positive or all negative. This means that there is less than a 5% chance that the association we have found between the dependent variable and the independent variable is simply the result of sampling error and does not reflect a relationship that actually exists in the general population.

Details of the regression analysis carried out on overall volunteer satisfaction and likelihood of continuing to volunteer

A large set of variables were included in the regression models, organised into blocks. Table A2.2 lists the blocks and the variables included within them: demographic factors; type of volunteering; experience of recruitment, induction and training; and respondents' opinions about the positive and negative impacts and experiences that volunteers had experienced.

We used a block-wise forward selection method of entry.[79] With this method the dependent variables are grouped into blocks, based on psychometric consideration or theoretical reasons,[80] and a stepwise selection is applied. Each block is applied separately while the other predictor variables are ignored. Variables can be removed when they do not contribute to the prediction. With this method we were able to identify which variables within a block were contributing to the equation and which could be ignored, before adding further block(s).

Since the order of entry can have an impact on which variables will be selected (with those entered in the earlier stages having a better chance of being retained), we began with the demographic variables and then other more 'factual/objective' variables, such as type of volunteering, before moving on to more 'subjective' variables, such as experience of volunteering.

The analyses were carried out on all recent volunteers, that is those who have volunteered in the last 12 months.[81]

77 With thanks to NatCen's British Social Attitudes 35 report, which explains the technique so well that this text is based largely on the regression section in the Technical Details appendix of that report. www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/downloads/bsa-35-downloads.aspx (accsessed January 2019).

78 This means that a one-percentage point increase in the value of an independent variable is assumed to have the same impact on the value of the dependent variable on average.

79 The standard method, of entering all independent variables into the equation at the same time, is appropriate when dealing with a small set of predictor-dependent variables. When dealing with large sets of variables, as in this case, there are various selection procedures that can be used to yield the most appropriate regression equation: forward selection, backward elimination, stepwise selection and block-wise selection.

80 In general, the dependent variables included in the blocks will be inter-correlated.

81 An alternative initial regression model included both recent and lapsed volunteers, with recent/lapsed as an additional variable entered into the regression. The model fitted recent volunteers better, not surprisingly given the time-lag for many lapsed volunteers, so it was decided to limit the regression analysis to recent volunteers.

Findings from the logistic regression

The key findings have been described in sections 5, 6 and 7 of the report and confirm indications earlier in the report that it is some of the statements on how volunteers feel about their volunteering experience which are most strongly associated with overall satisfaction and propensity to continue.

Table A2.1 lists all the factors (and their coefficients) found to be significantly and independently associated with satisfaction with volunteering or with the likelihood of continuing to volunteer. In Table A2.1 (a) we present the logistic regression where the dependent variable is 'being very or fairly satisfied with volunteering' (as opposed to being very or fairly dissatisfied).

In Table A2.1 (b) the dependent variable is 'being very or fairly likely to continue giving unpaid help over the next 12 months'[82] (as opposed to being very or fairly unlikely to continue). A positive coefficient indicates a higher score while a negative coefficient indicates a lower score. For categorical variables, the reference category is shown in brackets after the category heading.

Looking at the satisfaction model (Table A2.1 (a)), most of the positive and negative associations between overall satisfaction and aspects of how volunteers feel about their volunteering experience have been reported in section 5.5.

Two other rather different factors also featured: volunteering outside the UK (with increasing likelihood of volunteering outside the UK associated with less likelihood of being satisfied) and having received role-specific training (with increasing likelihood of having received such training associated with greater likelihood of being satisfied).

In addition, there was also a small but significant negative association with one of the four wellbeing questions 'Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?'.

Looking at the model for likelihood of continuing to volunteer (Table A2.1 (b)), most of the positive and negative associations between overall satisfaction and aspects of how volunteers feel about their volunteering experience have also been reported in section 5.5.

Again, two other rather different factors also featured: sometimes volunteering alone (with increasing likelihood of volunteering alone being associated with greater likelihood of continuing to volunteer) and a reference check being carried out as part of the recruitment process (with checks having been carried out being associated with greater likelihood of continuing to volunteer).

Looking at the two sets of factors alongside each other, three statements are significant factors for both overall satisfaction and likelihood of continuing: culture of respect and trust; made me feel I was making a difference; enjoyment (I enjoy it).

It is perhaps not surprising that some of the same factors are associated with both satisfaction and continuing to volunteer. In an attempt to more clearly separate influences on satisfaction and on continuing to volunteer, we repeated the 'continuing to volunteer' regression model with overall satisfaction included as an additional variable. The results were, however, very similar. The model shown below therefore does not include overall satisfaction – see Table A2.1 (b).

82 For both variables, those who said they did not know were included in the positive category, along with the 'very/fairly' satisfied' or 'very/fairly likely to continue'.

Table A2.1 Factors in logistic regression significantly associated with

Very/fairly satisfied with volunteering		Very/fairly likely to continue giving unpaid help	
Factor	*Coefficient*	*Factor*	*Coefficient*
Feel well supported	0.48	**Things could be better organised**	-0.24
Feel recognised enough for the help I gave	0.69	**Feel like I belong**	0.34
Feel organisation was not really going anywhere	-0.87	**Culture of respect and trust**	0.42
Culture of respect and trust	0.48	**It improves my employment prospects**	-0.23
Made me feel I was making a difference	0.72	**It improves my physical health**	0.29
I enjoy it	0.81	**Made me feel I was making a difference**	0.33
Felt unappreciated	1.78	**I enjoy it**	0.24
Felt unsafe	2.46	**Felt pressured to do more/continue**	0.51
Received role-specific job training	-1.38	**Too much of my time taken up**	1.00
Wellbeing: overall how happy I felt yesterday	-0.27	**Carried out reference check for individuals/groups**	0.39
Volunteered outside UK	1.47	**Sometimes volunteered alone**	0.18
R2	0.55	**Volunteering less often than once a month**	0.25
Sample size	1,688	**R2**	0.16
		Sample size	1,662

Table A2.2 Blocks and individual variables entered into the regression analysis

Block	Variables
Demographic	Age (increasing 20 years)
	Gender (female vs male)
	BAME (white)
	'Prefer not to say' what ethnic group belong to (white)
	Being disabled (not having a disability)
	Social grade C2DE (social grade ABC1)
Type of volunteering	Increasing frequency of volunteering alone
	Volunteering in the third sector (in public or private sector)
	Volunteering outside the UK (inside the UK)
	Volunteering less often than once a year (more frequently than once a year)
	Activities done only online (not at all online)
	Did online activities very often or often (sometimes or less)
	Volunteering coordinated by paid member of staff (coordinated by unpaid staff or don't know/not applicable)
	Did any activities during working time (not in working time)
	First got involved with volunteering more than a year ago (first got involved less than a year ago)
Skills and experience used (Q35)	Use existing occupational/professional skills and experience (did not use those)
	Use other skills/experience (did not use those)
	Have skills and experience that did not use (not the case)
Experience of recruitment, induction and training (Q32 and Q41)	Each of nine things in Q32 that were done before volunteer got involved, and none of these (each not done)
	Received induction about the organisation (did not)
	Received training on policies and procedures (did not)
	Received role-specific training (did not)
	Receipt of training not applicable (was not)
Opinions about the positive and negative impacts and experiences that volunteers had experienced	Q34a to Q34l
	Q43a to Q43h
	Q46_1 to Q46_12
	Q48_1 to Q48_10
Communication/ information received (Q44)	Right amount of overall communication from organisation (too much or too little information)
	Right amount of information about what is going on internally at the organisation (too much or too little information)
	Right amount of information about the difference being made by the organisation (too much or too little information)
Wellbeing (Q63)	Satisfied with life nowadays (not satisfied)
	Felt happy yesterday (not happy)
	Felt anxious yesterday (not anxious)
	Things you do in your life are worthwhile (not worthwhile)

APPENDIX 3 FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

Tables

APPENDIX 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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