



FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERING AN EVIDENCE-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

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Introduction

Who is this framework for?

This framework is for anyone interested in the involvement of families in volunteering in their organisation.

How can this framework help you?

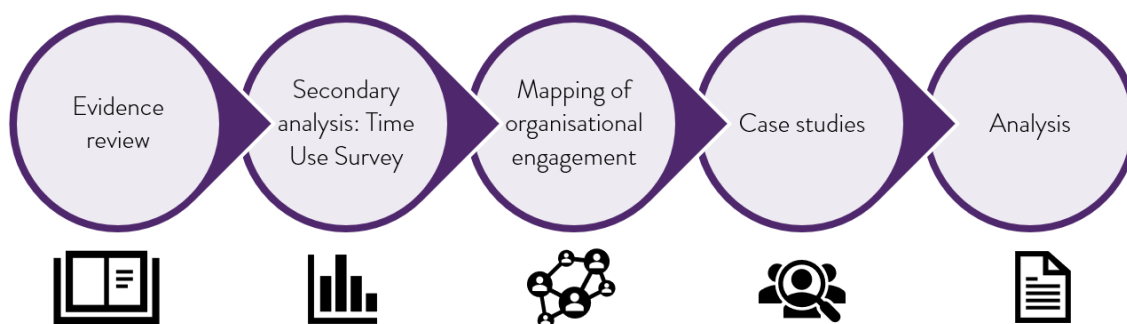
This framework will help you to reflect on how your organisation currently involves families in volunteering and how you could develop this in the future.

Drawing on the findings from our research, we provide a series of questions to help you think through your approach and some practical ideas for developing family-friendly volunteering.

How did we develop this framework?

The framework is based on a programme of research carried out by NCVO, in partnership with the University of Birmingham and the University of Salford. The research brings together evidence on the relationship between family and volunteering and captures the experiences of organisations and families through mapping activities, interviews, focus groups and observations. It draws on examples of practice from case study organisations that involve families in volunteering.

You can read about our findings in more detail in the full research report and summary report [links to be inserted when published]. More information on our research approach can be found page 23.



Key questions to help you involve families in volunteering

This framework is to help you develop or enhance family volunteering in your organisation and consists of seven core questions on the things you need to consider to see how this might work in the context of your organisation.

The key questions for you to reflect on are as follows.

- Question 1: How do families currently engage with your organisation?
- Question 2: How do you want to involve families and what approach to family volunteering is right for you?
- Question 3: Can you enhance the volunteering pathways for families within your organisation?
- Question 4: Can you do more to help families balance volunteering with family life?
- Question 5: How can you ensure that family volunteering is as inclusive as possible?
- Question 6: How does the balance you are striking between risk management and being inclusive affect the involvement of families in volunteering?
- Question 7: How can you help to ensure that families, and your organisation, get the most out of volunteering?

A summary of the framework can be found on page 18.

Question 1: How do families currently engage with your organisation?

Family volunteering is diverse

Family volunteering looks and feels very different in different families and organisations. It includes, but is not just about, parents and children volunteering together; more often it means couples and sometimes siblings, or grandparents and grandchildren. It goes beyond what people typically think of as 'family volunteering' and family members volunteering together. We identified five different types of family volunteering: do together, do alongside, do for, bring along and do separately (figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Types of family volunteering

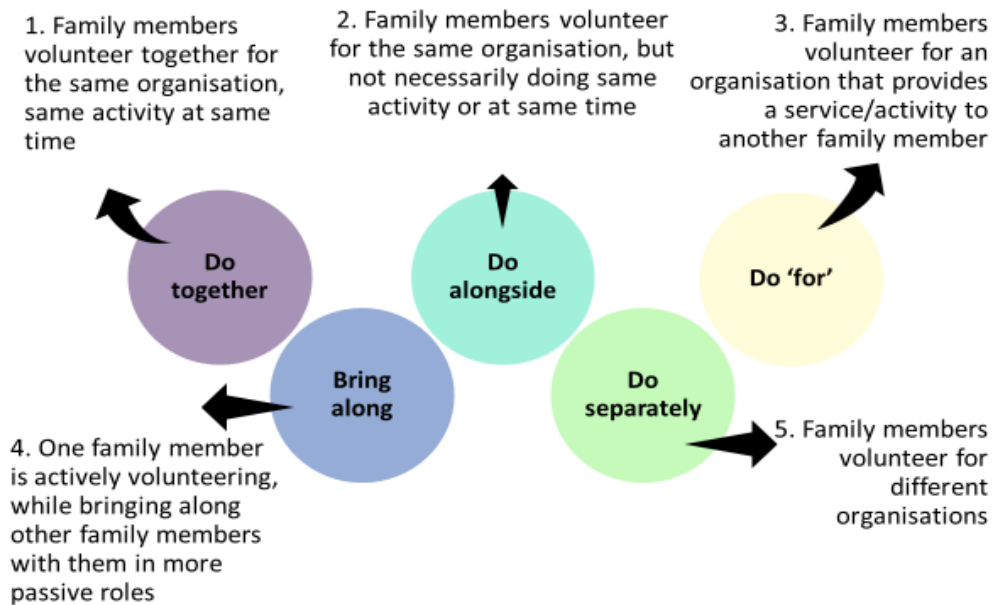


Figure 2: Examples of types of family volunteering



Family involvement changes and evolves over time

Families may get involved in these different types of volunteering at any one time, or at different stages of their lives. Often, they move between them as their circumstances change. On moving to a new area, couples may, for example, volunteer together to integrate themselves into the community. Parents may volunteer for activities in which their young children are involved, but as their children grow older, they may volunteer alongside each other. After the children leave home, the family members may all volunteer separately. It is rarely, however, such a linear journey.

Different types of family volunteering: Kids Run Free

[Kids Run Free](#) aims to get children healthier, happier and more confident through running. Their Park Kids programme involves children of all ages in regular running events. Volunteers play a central role in setting up and running these activities and the programme involves over 120 volunteers across 25 events. At these events, different types of family volunteering are happening, often in spontaneous ways.

Most volunteering is 'do for' where parents are organising and supporting the events while their children are participating. Many of these parents are getting involved casually and helping out on the day. Some family members are volunteering together, including couples running the events together or older children providing an extra pair of hands and helping their

parents. Other volunteers bring along their children in the hope that they might get involved in running or volunteering.

Your organisation could consider...

- looking at how families currently engage with your organisation as volunteers but also as trustees, members, service users, participants and staff.
- identifying what types of family volunteering – do together, do alongside, do for, bring along and do separately – are happening in your organisation.
- assessing how much family volunteering takes place in your organisation, by including a question in your volunteer survey. For example: ‘Are any other members of your family involved in volunteering with our organisation?’.

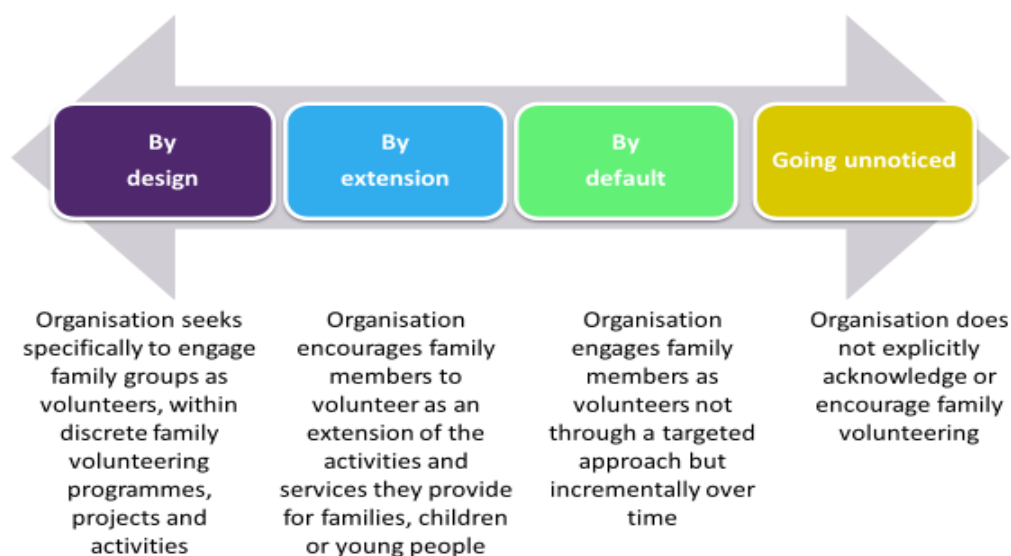
Question 2: How do you want to involve families and what approach to family volunteering is right for you?

Family volunteering can develop across organisations in different ways for different reasons

Our research found a variety of approaches to involving families in volunteering (see figure 3). In some organisations, family volunteering is ‘by design’, where organisations have designed specific family volunteering schemes in which families (particularly parents and children) are explicitly encouraged to volunteer together. These schemes are often driven by a desire to fulfil organisational aims or values or as a way to widen participation in their organisation, particularly to diversify their volunteer base.

In other organisations, family volunteering might be ‘going unnoticed’, or it might be something that has developed organically, largely ‘by default’. Family volunteering is often not a discrete thing, but a core part of an organisation’s engagement with volunteers, and often reflective of its work with families or communities.

Figure 3: The spectrum of ways that family volunteering can develop



Some of the barriers to volunteering could be tackled through family volunteering

Specifically designed family volunteering schemes offer the potential to overcome some of the barriers to volunteering. This might be through, for example, allowing parents to volunteer with their children or to bring them along while they are volunteering.

However, this can be resource intensive and the variety of opportunities which organisations are able to develop for families might be limited. Family volunteering by default offers a more organic approach with the potential to involve a wider range of families and types of participation but may require strong leadership and a shift in culture and practices.

Family volunteering by default: St Mary's church

St Mary's is a lively church located in the market town of Wendover in the Chilterns. Alongside all the things you would expect of a church, St Mary's runs a gift and ethical-goods shop in the town centre and has a series of associated groups and activities, including a youth centre and dementia-care group. All these activities rely on volunteers.

Families have always been involved in volunteering at St Mary's church and like all volunteering at the church, this is largely organic, self-organised and not formally 'managed'. There has been no drive to specifically encourage families to volunteer and no discretely designed family volunteering project, instead families have got involved in the church over the years by default:

they come to the church together and get involved together; roles are often shared out amongst family members or passed on from one generation to the next.

Family volunteering by design: The Whitworth

As part of The Whitworth's drive to become more representative, relevant and embedded within the local community, the gallery has designed interventions specifically aimed at engaging families as both visitors and volunteers. The family volunteering scheme has developed incrementally, building on the success of existing activities targeted at families, including a well-established early years programme. There is a specific family workshop volunteer role (not exclusively for people wanting to volunteer with members of their own family) and parents can bring along their babies when volunteering. They are also able to volunteer together, with children of a very young age encouraged to help with small tasks. All are given a Whitworth volunteer t-shirt, even the babies.

Your organisation could consider...

- identifying what category – by design, by extension, by default or going unnoticed – best describes your current approach to family volunteering.
- thinking about how your approach to family volunteering is helping you to achieve your organisational aims.
- exploring whether adopting a different approach to family volunteering could help you achieve more.
- identifying how you might change your existing approach to family volunteering and what some of the challenges and unintended consequences could be.

Question 3: Can you enhance the volunteering pathways for families within your organisation?

Family life can provide a route into volunteering

Our research found that family life can often provide triggers for, and routes into, volunteering. Having children was itself an important trigger for volunteering, and children's involvement in

education and leisure activities opened up volunteering to parents. When those activities came to an end for the children, however, this often meant the end of volunteering for those parents.

Others might be encouraged or asked to get involved by another family member. For example, a husband ‘mucking in’ to support his wife’s volunteering. But some volunteers and family members highlighted that sometimes they weren’t choosing to get involved; they felt obliged to help out a partner, for example, or had been told to help out by a parent.

Volunteering pathways are breaking down for family members

Some organisations in our research had clear routes or pathways for families to move into different roles, activities or wider forms of engagement. For instance, a pathway for young people to move on from participating in an activity to volunteering to help with the running of that activity.

However, it was also clear that pathways which in the past had helped to promote family volunteering have begun to break down due to societal changes, and, in part, to a lack of attention and/or leadership. In some organisations, for example, there used to be a ‘natural migration’ of parents moving from volunteering to help with their children’s activities into wider roles.

Natural progression of family members: St John Ambulance

As a large organisation that is heavily reliant on volunteers, [St John Ambulance](#) has a broad range of opportunities. As well as being focused on different activities/practical tasks, opportunities carry with them various levels of responsibility and require different skills, competencies and time commitments. This is seen to support the involvement of multiple family members within the organisation, while also enabling the progression of individual family members, both of which contribute to volunteer retention.

As one person reflected: ‘So, you can bring your whole family to Saint John because we have offers for different ages, we have offers for different intensities. Because we work outside of the working day, in the evenings and the weekends and stuff, it is something you can do on family time.’ While the organisation has never had a specifically designed scheme for family volunteering, it welcomes, encourages and celebrates family involvement.

Your organisation could consider...

- checking whether your volunteering policies and practices are ‘family friendly’ and how these could be further developed; this might include volunteer recruitment, on-boarding, adapting roles, support and supervision, recognition and volunteers moving on/stepping back
- providing a variety of roles that people of different ages and genders can get involved in and how could you expand your offer for family volunteers; this might involve working with potential volunteers to identify what they or their family might offer the organisation or identifying the ‘trigger’ points in family life that could promote family involvement, for example, a couple having children or grandparents retiring
- looking at how easy it is for family members to step up and step back from volunteering; this might involve doing more to support people to move through and between volunteer roles or finding ways to accommodate potential breaks from volunteering when their circumstances change. For example, if they no longer have the time to volunteer due to the arrival of a new baby or taking care of a sick relative
- encouraging movement through different forms of engagement within your organisation not just volunteering; for example, becoming a member or participating in different activities the organisation provides
- improving how you support your service users and beneficiaries to become volunteers.

Question 4: Can you do more to help families balance volunteering with family life?

Fitting volunteering into a busy family life can be challenging

Volunteering is one of many roles and responsibilities that families juggle on an ongoing basis. Fitting volunteering in can be especially challenging when other responsibilities and activities take priority within families. Our research found that there are important gender dimensions to family volunteering too, which reflect those within wider society. This includes women often shouldering the responsibility for making volunteering fit within the family schedule.

Support within the family influences volunteering

The level of support provided by other family members affects the possibilities for and

experiences of volunteering; this is critical if the volunteering role is particularly intense. Both practical and emotional support were found to be important in our research. Practically, a family member may, for example, directly help their partner or parents with a volunteering role.

Emotionally, families can be a source of encouragement for volunteering and recognition, a boost in confidence, an ear to listen to and a shoulder to cry on. In supportive families, volunteering was described as a 'team effort' but in others a lack of support can cause tensions and resentments. Some families, including some single-parent families, will have no or limited support from others to draw on for volunteering and will find it more challenging to fit volunteering in.

Flexibility can help families fit volunteering into their lives

Our research highlighted that organisations need to recognise that family life is increasingly busy and support their volunteers with this. Organisations and families felt that a key way to do so is by being flexible. This does not necessarily mean moving to short-term, episodic volunteering roles with no expectation of commitment; it means being specific about what levels of commitments are required and then being flexible in terms of how these are met. Some organisations, for example, offered:

- *greater flexibility in the duration and frequency* of volunteering, recognising that different 'working' hours suit different people at different stages in their lives and that volunteers may be able to do more on some days than others
- *flexibility in who does the volunteering*, recognising that families can share volunteering roles/responsibilities amongst themselves.

Family volunteering can help overcome family barriers and constraints

We found that family volunteering can help to overcome some of the barriers to volunteering by making it an extension of other roles and responsibilities or helping it to become part of 'family time'. This included allowing parents to bring along their children when they are volunteering, encouraging family members to volunteer together or making sure volunteering is enjoyable for all so it becomes part of leisure time rather than competing with it.

Recognising and accommodating families in these kinds of ways helped to create a family-friendly environment within organisations. It is, however, important to remember that some

people want to volunteer as part of ‘me time’, as something separate from other family members/commitments.

Family-friendly opportunities: Little Village

Little Village helps local families to support one another during times of need through the collection and redistribution of clothes, toys and kit for families with young children. Volunteers are central to the organisation and nearly all the volunteers are mothers, including some who have been beneficiaries.

Reflective of the organisation’s mission and ethos, Little Village offers a family-friendly environment, in which family volunteering is actively encouraged. The organisation is flexible and provides a range of opportunities across the week for different family members to get involved in (older children of adult volunteers, for example, can volunteer as part of The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and/or during special sessions in the summer holidays), and volunteers are encouraged to bring family members along with them to social events.

On two mornings a week, special sessions are run to enable volunteers to bring their children along with them. While volunteers can bring children to both these sessions, on one day a week a crèche is provided to enable volunteers to focus on their volunteering while feeling reassured that their child is being looked after nearby.

Your organisation could consider...

- checking in on volunteers to see how they are fitting family responsibilities and other roles in with their volunteering and whether this is proving difficult for them.
- reviewing whether your current approach to family volunteering acknowledges and takes into account the constraints and challenges that people might be facing.
- exploring different ways of creating a more family-friendly environment which welcomes families and accommodates the family circumstances of volunteers.
- exploring how volunteering could be made more flexible for family volunteers; this could include offering greater flexibility in the duration and frequency of volunteering or allowing family members to share volunteer roles.

- developing opportunities and activities that would enable and encourage families to volunteer together or alongside each other.

Question 5: How can you ensure that family volunteering is as inclusive as possible?

Family volunteering can help to engage different groups but can also exclude people. Family volunteering helped to widen participation for the organisations we spoke to, with the involvement of a more diverse range of volunteers – particularly children, and parents of young children. Creating a family-friendly atmosphere, providing flexibility opportunities, allowing children to be brought along and providing childcare facilities were all examples of how organisations felt they had achieved this.

However, some recognised that family volunteering could have the opposite effect and lead to the exclusion of some groups. Efforts at engaging mothers and their children, for example, had not been successful at involving men. There were also examples of ‘family takeover’, with certain families dominating an activity, group or organisation, which risked excluding and putting off others.

Diversity and inclusion through flexibility and variety within family volunteering: The Scouts

Throughout its history, the Scouts has involved parents as volunteers for events, camps and outdoor activities. In recent years, it has responded to changing family needs with a more flexible and varied volunteering offer. For example, in response to being approached by families from Muslim communities, it has assisted them to set up over 200 local sections nationwide. To support this, it established the Muslim Scouts Fellowship to train parents to become Scout leaders and allows them to bring their families along to weekend training events where it provides children’s activities.

It has also been involved in a Department for Education-funded [early years pilot](#) to address child attainment gaps across five English locations. Adults over 18 bring a four- to five-year-old close relative – mostly parents with their child – to a Scouts location where they are supported and trained by a volunteer to deliver communications group activities (both verbal and written). Pilots have benefited from a flexible definition of close relatives. For example a grandparent can take a grandchild to events held after school or on weekend days if a parent has work or childcare responsibilities.

Your organisation could consider...

- assessing whether your approach to family volunteering currently helps you engage with a diverse range of volunteers, and identifying where the gaps might be and what barriers might be contributing to those gaps.
- seeing what more you could do to make your organisation family friendly to enable and encourage different people to get involved; this could involve ensuring there is enough flexibility and variety in roles and activities to suit people's interests, needs and time constraints, including those of different generations.
- developing your volunteering offer to make it more inclusive of different types of families, while recognising that family structures have now become more diverse.
- thinking about how you can guard against the risk of 'family takeover', which could prevent other people from getting involved.

Question 6: How does the balance you are striking between risk management and being inclusive affect that the involvement of families in volunteering?

Concern over risk and regulation is a key barrier to family involvement in volunteering

A specific challenge for family volunteering is the management of risk and regulation (particularly safeguarding) and the wider processes of formalisation and professionalisation in organisations. These have tended to work against the flexibility that families need to get, and stay, involved in volunteering. In our research, the balance that organisations struck between risk and regulation, and flexibility and formality, influenced their approach to family involvement. Fears and uncertainties about what was and wasn't allowed, particularly in terms of involving young people, had led some organisations to be particularly cautious.

Family members volunteering together can help reduce concerns over risk

On the whole, people felt that a growing amount of 'red tape' has created barriers to family volunteering. It was seen as increasingly difficult, for example, for parents to bring young children along with them when volunteering. Sometimes, organisations adopted blanket policies which ruled out volunteering by people under the age of 18 or 16, creating a direct barrier to some forms of family volunteering and limiting the potential to build pathways through participation.

Developing specific family volunteering schemes was seen as one way to overcome some of these issues within a contained programme, enabling children and young people to get involved.

Royal Voluntary Service: Developing opportunities while managing risks

Royal Voluntary Service is a charity that encourages volunteering through supporting people in hospitals and helping to improve the wellbeing of older people in the community. The charity has shifted towards recruiting a more diverse pool of volunteers by addressing barriers to participation, one of which is childcare responsibilities for parents and grandparents.

To accommodate this, Royal Voluntary Service has changed the way that it both recruits and engages volunteers. First, volunteer recruitment campaigns are tailored to appeal to parents and are clear that they are able to volunteer with their children. Second, Royal Voluntary Service uses a non-prescriptive recruitment model based on what the individual wants to do and brokers arrangements where volunteers can bring or volunteer with any child below the age of 14.

These approaches have resulted in major challenges to managing risk. Royal Voluntary Service has worked with its insurance company to demonstrate that it could manage the safeguarding risks. For example, depending on the role, the charity allows children to participate in lower-risk home companionship or community group activities – especially where children can bring a special type of interaction with older people – but not with higher-risk people like those recovering from illnesses or a stay in hospital.

Your organisation could consider...

- reviewing how you are currently managing risk with the involvement of families in volunteering and whether you are striking the right balance between risk management and being inclusive.
- finding out whether there are specific groups of people, such as young people, currently excluded from volunteering due to organisational concerns about risk.
- exploring how family volunteering could open up volunteering to these groups.

Question 7: How can you help to ensure that families, and your organisation, get the most out of volunteering?

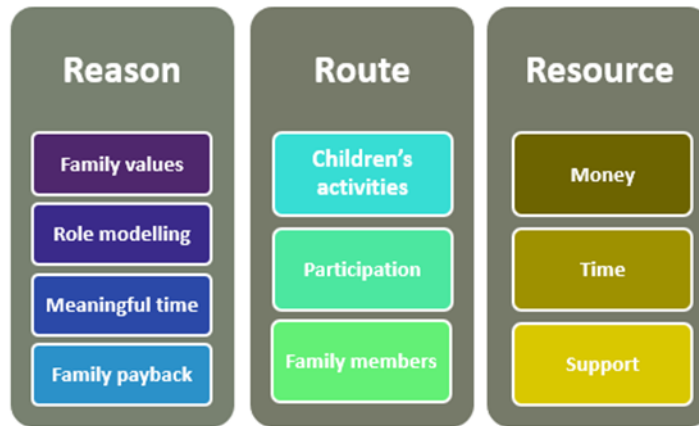
Family influences and shapes an individual's volunteering

Our research highlights the influence that family has on how and why people get involved in volunteering and how they experience it. Family can provide the reason for volunteering, the route in and the resources volunteers draw on (see figure 4). This is important for understanding not only the motivations of family volunteers and the factors that keep them volunteering, but also the barriers and constraints that they face. Family was a motivation for volunteering amongst many of those we spoke to in the research.

The reasons that people gave included those specifically related to their children or their sense of family and their role within the family unit. Family also provided triggers for, and routes into, volunteering. Lastly, family can provide resources to help (or hinder) a family member in their volunteering. This might be in the way that they share family chores to make time for

volunteering or providing practical help. All of these factors can shape not only why and how family members volunteer, but also what they get out of the experience.

Figure 4: Family as a driver for volunteering



Family volunteers perceive a range of benefits from their volunteering

Volunteering can make a considerable difference to those families that get involved. It can be an enjoyable way to spend quality, meaningful, active time together. Perhaps more significantly, it can deepen the bonds between family members, providing a point of commonality and an expression of shared values and identity. It can be a route to new opportunities and experiences. However, it can also add to the stresses and strains of family life. When volunteering becomes too much – in time and/or energy – it can take its toll not just on those individuals directly involved, but also on the wider family.

Family volunteering can make a positive difference to organisations but also brings challenges

Family volunteering benefited the organisations, enabling them to bring in additional resource and diversity to their volunteer base, as well as support them in achieving their mission. For organisations focused on improving outcomes for families, family volunteering could be a direct way to achieving that: both through the volunteering itself and through what it achieved for others.

In other words, family volunteering was a means to an end as well as an end in itself. However, family volunteering did pose challenges for volunteer management. Alongside concerns about risk and regulation, replacing families that leave could pose challenges for organisations – when one family volunteer leaves, the whole family can stop volunteering, which risks leaving gaps within organisations. Organisations also suggested that the risk of conflict was higher when

whole families were involved. Domestic tensions within families may bubble over into the organisation and create an uncomfortable environment for others.

Overcoming concerns and widening participation through family volunteering: National Trust

The National Trust oversees cultural and conservation activities in heritage properties across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its engagement with family volunteers is one of the most well-known examples of family volunteering by design. Having incorporated inclusion into its last volunteering strategy in 2013, families are seen as being important for diversifying its volunteering base.

The National Trust actively promotes [family volunteering](#) via its website and provides videos and case studies that mention how multiple families or different generations can volunteer together and a search engine for suitable opportunities. However, local properties are responsible for creating family volunteering activities at a local level based on their priorities. These family-friendly activities tend to involve practical outdoor activities, like harvesting vegetables and planting trees, and one-off events, like chalking the [White Horse](#).

The regional volunteering and participation consultants support local National Trust properties that want to develop family volunteering with guidance on designing activities and incorporating volunteering into local conservation plans. Despite initial scepticism about including families and managing additional insurance costs and DBS checks, local staff have been positive about what families have achieved.

The National Trust intends to hold a strategic review in the near future, which will explore ways to strengthen links with community groups and businesses, work with urban communities on green-space conservation and apply the new young people's strategy, which will all consider the role of family volunteering.

Your organisation could consider...

- looking at whether your current approach recognises and accommodates the motivations and family circumstances of volunteers
- thinking about what more you could do to improve the experiences of family volunteers
- assessing the difference that family volunteering is making to your organisation and those you work with, acknowledging the positive outcomes but also where things haven't been

successful

- exploring how you could mitigate some of the potential challenges of family volunteering and achieve more through family volunteering.

Framework summary

This summary highlights the key findings from our research and questions for you to reflect on when developing or enhancing the way you involve families in volunteering.

UNDERSTANDING HOW FAMILIES ENGAGE

Question 1: How do families currently engage with your organisation?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family volunteering is diverse and extensive. It is about much more than family members volunteering together. Families get involved in volunteering in different ways: do together, do alongside, do for, bring along and do separately. Families may be involved in different types of volunteering at any one time, or at different stages of their lives. When family members volunteer together, most often it is couples who are involved, followed by parents with children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do families currently engage with your organisation? Consider volunteers, trustees, members, service users, participants and staff What types of family volunteering are happening in your organisation? Consider the five different types: do together, do alongside, do for, bring along and do separately How much family volunteering is happening in your organisation?

IDENTIFYING HOW TO INVOLVE FAMILY VOLUNTEERS

Question 2: How do you want to involve families and what approach to family volunteering is right for you?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way that family volunteering develops within organisations differs, from the specifically designed family volunteering scheme through to family volunteering going entirely unnoticed. Many organisations involve multiple members of the same family in volunteering by default rather than by design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you describe your current approach to family volunteering? Consider the different categories: by design, by extension, by default and going unnoticed. How is your current approach helping you to achieve your organisational aims?

- Organisations that have set out to develop family volunteering saw it as a means to meet their mission/values and/or a way to widen participation in their organisation.
- How could adopting a different approach to family volunteering help you achieve more?
- If you change your approach to family volunteering, what could some of the challenges and unintended consequences be?

CREATING AND ENHANCING PATHWAYS FOR FAMILIES

Question 3: Can you enhance the volunteering pathways for families within your organisation?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family can provide a trigger and route into volunteering, for example, children open up volunteering opportunities for their parents. • Some organisations had clear routes, or 'pathways', into and through volunteering, for example for parents to widen their engagement beyond helping with their children's activities. • For other organisations, pathways which traditionally helped to promote family volunteering have begun to break down due to societal changes and a lack of attention and/or leadership. • Pathways for families could be created by: developing a wider variety of roles suited to a wider range of people; enabling family members to try out volunteering; encouraging movement through different forms of engagement with the organisation – not just volunteering; supporting people along the journey from being beneficiaries of an activity to actively supporting it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your volunteering policies and practices 'family friendly' and could these be developed? • Do you provide a variety of roles that people of different ages and genders can get involved in? How could you further develop your offer for family volunteers? • How easy is it for family members to step up and step back from volunteering? Can you do more to support people to move through and between volunteer roles or to step back from their volunteering if they want to? • How can you encourage movement through different forms of engagement within your organisation, not just volunteering? • How could you improve the ways you support your service users and beneficiaries to become volunteers?

ENABLING FAMILIES TO BALANCE VOLUNTEERING WITH FAMILY LIFE

Question 4: Can you do more to help families balance volunteering with family life?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitting volunteering into busy lives can be challenging for many families. • The level of practical and emotional support provided by families influences the possibilities for volunteering, as well as experiences of volunteering. • A lack or absence of family support can be a barrier to starting or continuing to volunteer. • Flexibility can help families to fit volunteering into their lives. This can include enabling family members to share roles and being flexible with the duration and frequency of volunteering. • Creating a 'family-friendly' environment is important and includes supporting volunteers in ways which recognise and accommodate not just their individual circumstances, but also the constraints that family life can put on them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of how much your volunteers are juggling family responsibilities and other roles with their volunteering? • How is your current approach to volunteering taking into consideration these constraints and challenges? How could you develop this? • How can you create a more family-friendly environment which welcomes families and accommodates the family circumstances of volunteers? • How can you make volunteering more flexible for family volunteers? • How can you encourage families to volunteer together or alongside each other?

MAKING FAMILY VOLUNTEERING INCLUSIVE

Question 5: How can you ensure that family volunteering is as inclusive as possible?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family volunteering helped to widen participation within organisations, enabling the involvement of a more diverse range of volunteers – particularly children, and parents of young children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does family volunteering currently help you engage with a more diverse range of volunteers? • What more could you do to make your organisation family friendly to enable and

- Creating a family-friendly environment, offering flexible opportunities and encouraging volunteers to bring along their children were ways that organisations helped to make volunteering more inclusive.
 - Concerns were raised about the potential impact of ‘family takeover’ (when certain families dominate an activity, group or organisation), and there is a risk that it could put others off volunteering.
- encourage different people to get involved in volunteering?
 - How can you develop your volunteering offer to make it more inclusive of different types of families?
 - How can you guard against the risk of ‘family takeover’?

BALANCING RISK MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSION IN VOLUNTEERING

Question 6: How does the balance you are striking between risk management and being inclusive affect the involvement families in volunteering?

What we’ve learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing risk, particularly the safeguarding of children, was identified as a specific challenge of family volunteering and was perceived to make it harder to involve young people as volunteers. • Organisations face challenges about how to balance a desire to be inclusive, particularly of children, with a need to ensure safeguarding measures are followed. • Formalisation, professionalisation and more ‘red tape’ have acted against the flexibility that family volunteering often needs, including allowing volunteers to bring along their children. • For some organisations, the introduction of a specifically designed family volunteering scheme had been a way to overcome some of these barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you currently managing risk with the involvement of families in volunteering? Do you think you are striking the right balance between risk management and being inclusive? • Are specific groups of people, such as young people, currently excluded from volunteering due to organisational concerns about risk? • How could you open up volunteering to these groups through family volunteering?

MAXIMISING THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VOLUNTEERING

Question 7: How can you help to ensure that families, and your organisation, get the most out of out of volunteering?

What we've learned	Key considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family shapes how and why people get involved in volunteering and how they experience it.• Recognising the influence of family is important for understanding not only the motivations of volunteers and the factors that keep them volunteering, but also the barriers and constraints that they face.• Volunteering can make a considerable difference to families that get involved: providing enjoyable, meaningful and quality time together; deepening bonds between family members; providing a route to new opportunities, experiences and skills.• Family volunteering can help organisations meet their mission and boost volunteer diversity, recruitment and retention.• Managing family volunteering can be challenging and raise issues around risk and regulation, filling gaps when whole families leave and potential problems in dealing with tension and conflict within families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is your current approach recognising and accommodating the motivations and family circumstances of volunteers?• What more could you do to improve the experiences of family volunteers?• What difference is family volunteering making to your organisation and those you work with?• How could you achieve more through family volunteering?

More about the research

Our research included:

An evidence review – a search of existing literature on family and volunteering. We found 232 relevant documents. Read the [full review report](#) and [blog](#).

Secondary analysis of the Time Use Survey – analysis of the UK Time Use Survey (UKTUS) 2014/2015 data. This is a nationally representative large-scale household survey, in which people aged eight and over from 4,216 households in the UK complete diaries about how they spend their time. Read the [blog](#) and [detailed report](#).

Mapping existing family volunteering opportunities – a review of organisational websites, expressions of interest and discussions with organisations.

Organisational case studies – research activities with five volunteer-involving organisations in England – [Kids Run Free](#), [Little Village](#), [St John Ambulance](#), [St Mary's church](#) in Wendover and [The Whitworth](#). Data collected included: interviews with staff/leaders; focus groups and/or interviews with volunteers; family case studies; a review of organisational documents and administrative data; observations of volunteering activities, where possible.

Case studies with families – the 12 case studies with families typically involved a joint interview and mapping activity with as many of the family members as possible followed by a series of one-to-one interviews with individual family members.

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