



Courtesy of
Chiltern Rangers

Volunteering Innovation Report 2018

The benefits gained from volunteer based activity in Buckinghamshire are significant. Community Impact Bucks has a mission to help local volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers to thrive. This report reveals current volunteering trends, and suggests innovative approaches to stimulate increased volunteering, ultimately creating even greater benefits for the wider community.

Authors: Hazel Finney - Lead, Volunteering, Community Impact Bucks
Stephen Wratten - Specialist skilled volunteer



Volunteer Centre
Bucks



Table of Contents

PAGE

Acknowledgement	3
Report Forward	3
Volunteering Services from Community Impact Bucks	3
Executive Summary	4
A Snapshot of Today's Volunteers in the UK:	16
• Differences in volunteer motivations	17
• Differences in volunteering engagement	20
• Reasons for stopping volunteering	22
• Barriers to volunteering – The Top 10	22
A Snapshot of Volunteers in Buckinghamshire	25
Drivers Leading to a need for Innovation in Volunteering	27
Innovation in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers:	31
• What innovation means	32
• Where innovation is needed most/should be happening	32
• Innovations:	
1. Presenting Volunteering around the Experience/Soft Benefits to the Individual	34
2. The Time Poor Challenge and Making Volunteering Appealing	36
3. Engaging those who have Not Heard about Opportunities/Groups that Need Help	39
4. Using Technology to Facilitate Volunteering	39
5. Dealing with the Childcare Issues many Face when Seeking to Volunteer	41
6. Engaging the Pre-retiree Community in Volunteering	41
7. Engaging the 'Newly Located' in Buckinghamshire	42
8. Engaging those from the most Disadvantaged Communities in Volunteering	42
9. Harnessing the trend towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	44
10. Group Volunteering – Making Friends and Spending Time with Family	46
11. Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities	46
12. Engaging Individuals with Disabilities	47
Retaining Volunteers	50
Resources for Volunteer Managers and Co-ordinators	51
Final Thoughts	52

Acknowledgement

This report would not have been possible without Stephen Wratten, recruited as a specialist skilled volunteer through Reach Volunteering, a key partner of Community Impact Bucks. Stephen's excellent pedigree in market research, ability to analyse vast volumes of data and draw key insights, together with a tenacious attitude, have been absolutely invaluable. Thank you, Stephen, for all your hard work researching and, in particular writing, the data-focused section of this report!

Report Forward

As with the rest of the UK, the voluntary sector, both nationally, and in Buckinghamshire, continues to face a number of challenges. **Community Impact Bucks' State of the Sector Report 2017¹**, reveals that the recruitment and retention of volunteers remains a key concern for volunteer-involving organisations in the county.

This report seeks to address this issue in the following ways:

- By identifying what motivates different cohorts of people to volunteer, and the potential barriers to volunteering
- By identifying innovative approaches that are attracting different cohorts of people into volunteering
- By identifying the different methods that are being used to retain volunteers, and the factors involved in their success.

The overall aim of this report, therefore, is to provide the Buckinghamshire voluntary sector – and indeed the sector at a national level - with practical ideas for new models and methods of attracting and retaining volunteers, in order to help ensure the sustainability of local, and national, volunteer-involving organisations delivering vital services to the county's – and country's - residents.

It must be noted that this report is not intended to be an exhaustive summary of all the various different innovations taking place to attract and retain volunteers – but a focus on some of the key innovations in the UK. Once published, it is hoped that readers will share their own examples via social media and other methods in order to open up a wider discussion in the UK voluntary and community sector.

The publication of this report will be followed by a series of toolkits to help organisations to implement the key innovations explored.

Volunteering Services from Community Impact Bucks

Accredited by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) as the Volunteer Centre for Buckinghamshire, Community Impact Bucks advises and trains volunteer-involving organisations, and promotes volunteering throughout the county. Community Impact Bucks has national partnerships with Reach Volunteering and Do-it, and is represented on the Events' Committee of the Association of Volunteer Managers.

¹ <https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/State-of-the-Sector-Report-2017.pdf>

To access services from Community Impact Bucks, please visit www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk or call **0300 111 1250**.

Please contact hazel@communityimpactbucks.org.uk for further information about this report.

Executive Summary

Please note: data sources, conclusions and comments from individuals included in this summary are fully referenced in the main report.

A Snapshot of Today's Volunteers in the UK

Differences in volunteer motivations

Whilst it is recognised across several studies that volunteering levels have fallen, it is not the case that this is consistent across the different volunteer cohorts. Whilst gender does not throw up any notable differences, assessing reasons for volunteering by age group does (data taken from **NCVO's 2017 UK Civil Society Almanac**).

The younger group:

- Younger respondents are more likely than other groups to volunteer to gain new skills, help their career progress and (to a much lesser degree) get a recognised qualification
- They are also a group which is more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends. What is interesting about this reason is that it also increases for the older age group (see below)
- This is not to say that this group did not also point to other reasons (for example nearly 60% in the 16-34 year old group also stated they wanted to improve things/help people), it is simply outlining the reasons that appear to be more distinct for this group
- **Given the reasons that are more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened by presenting the benefits to them as individuals.**

The mid-life group:

- A critical point on the biggest reasons to volunteer - a desire to improve things/help people - is apparent when exploring the data by age. The importance of this reason overall is heavily impacted by the answers given by the 35-44 and 45-54 year old groups. These age groups account for 36% of all respondents, and as can be seen, have agreed in numbers that this is a major reason for volunteering
- So, in the wider mid-life group different reasons for volunteering emerge. These include: wanting to improve things/help people, the cause being important to them personally, the cause being connected with the needs of friends or family, and perceiving a need in the community.
- Given the reasons more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened by pointing out to potential volunteers why a particular cause is so important
- **This group, however, is also the most time challenged (as outlined under barriers to volunteering), so any activity here by organisations to attract individuals to voluntary activity also needs to consider the ability of this group to overcome these barriers and engage in volunteering. This is discussed further in this report.**



Courtesy of
Age UK
Buckinghamshire

The older group:

- Members of this group are more likely to have time available, and state this as a reason to volunteer, although they may currently be using this time elsewhere. Interestingly, having spare time for volunteering increases through the age groups from 25-34 year olds towards a spike at 56-74 (assumed to be due to retirement). Whilst the 75-84 year old group appears a misnomer in this reason trend, it should be noted that it is more likely the 85+ group is actually potentially the misnomer. Respondent numbers over 85 years old drop dramatically making conclusions very difficult to draw
- Volunteering as part of a personal philosophy has been included for the older group, as whilst it peaks in the 55-64 age group it is a more likely reason in the older group than for those in the younger group (accepting the 85+ group is a very small group of respondents).
- The other reason that becomes more apparent for the 65+ age group, is mentioned for the younger group – those more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends. This appears to peak again at 65-74, when people may be seeking to replace friends connected with their workplace
- **Given the reasons that are more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened through connecting with them prior to retirement.**

Differences in volunteering engagement

It is apparent that:

- 16-24 year olds are giving much greater time to formal volunteering* – perhaps to support their need to gain new skills and improve their employability
- 25-34 year olds are, conversely, giving much less time to formal volunteering – perhaps due to

the economic pressures and challenges in supporting living standards (outlined in more depth in the section on **drivers leading to a need for innovation in volunteering**)

- The middle groups (35-44, 45-54 and 55-64) have experienced some change but not dramatic.
- The 65+ age group appears to be the next interesting group where change has happened. Here, the average time on formal volunteering has dropped by nearly a third. There is evidence, covered in the subsequent section on drivers, that this group is increasing their engagement in family childcare activities to support their families. This may offer part of an explanation for this drop.

***NCVO's Almanac describes 'formal' volunteering as giving unpaid help through a group, club or organisation. 'Informal' volunteering is described as giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative.**

With regard to the types of roles in which volunteers engage, there are a number of observations worth making from the various data sources available. In terms of the types of organisations with which people currently volunteer, and the types of activities in which they engage:

- The organisations (clubs or groups) are dominated by a top 4 including:
 - Sports/exercise groups (50%)
 - Hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs (38%)
 - Groups linked to religion (34%)
 - Children's education and schools (33%)
- There are a mix of roles, including organising or helping to run an activity or event (47%), raising or handling money/ taking part in sponsored events (45%), and getting other people involved (38%).

Regarding volunteer profiles, it is worth noting that there are also interesting divides between geographies. It is interesting to comment that there is a difference in volunteering engagement by geography. For example, there is evidence of increased volunteering in the East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West.

Reasons for stopping volunteering

Data also provides a useful insight into the reasons why individuals stop volunteering after they have become involved. The biggest reason given was that they now did not have enough time due to changing home or work circumstances.

There were other less prevalent reasons – the four biggest ones are noted below after the main reason mentioned:

1. Not enough time due to changing home or works circumstances (52%)
2. Health problems or old age (19%)
3. Getting involved took up too much time (16%)
4. It was a one-off event (9%)
5. Lost interest (9%).

This leaves something for voluntary organisations to consider around how to continue the dialogue and engagement with historic volunteers when circumstances change and their time is limited. It is clearly important to ensure that if individuals' circumstances change again in the future, they will feel ready and keen to engage in volunteering with the organisation (or others) again. It is also important to consider what innovative approaches can be brought to bear to help time-poor individuals engage in volunteering, something considered further in the section of this report on Innovation.

Barriers to volunteering – The Top 10

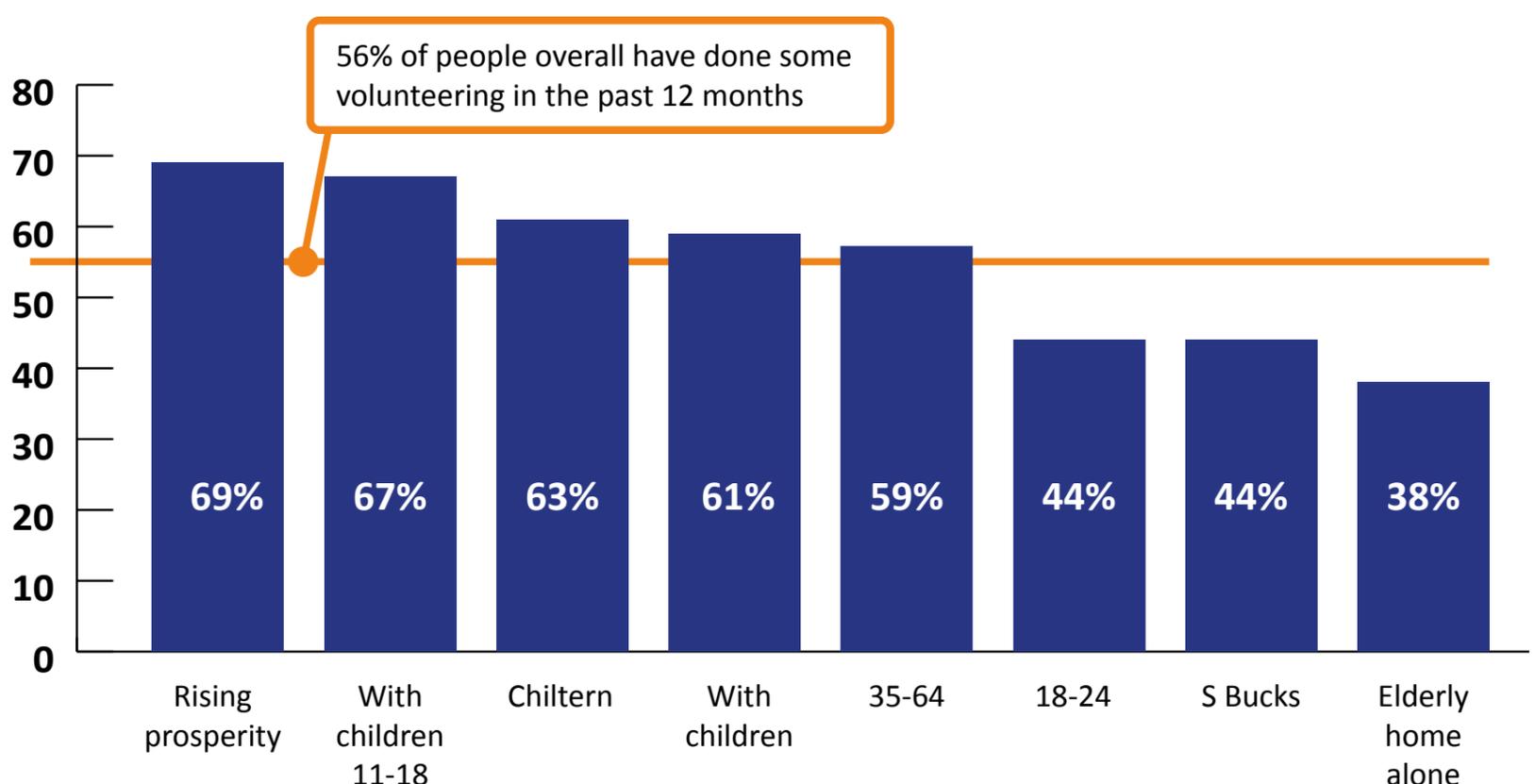
1. Work commitments – a major barrier overall, particularly in the under 65 year olds
2. I do other things with my spare time
3. I look after children – a challenge for young, and also increasingly, older, people
4. I have an illness that prevents me – increases over 65 years old
5. I have never thought about it
6. I am not the right age – naturally greater at over 75, but not before 75
7. I have not heard about opportunities to help – greater in young adults
8. I do not know any groups that need help – also greater in young adults
9. I look after someone elderly or ill – possibly also a dual care responsibility with childcare
10. I have to study.

For volunteer-involving organisations in Buckinghamshire, the focus should be on promoting volunteering to those who have barriers, and how to address them, along with a focus on the motivations of today’s volunteers, to ensure that they are retained in greater numbers.

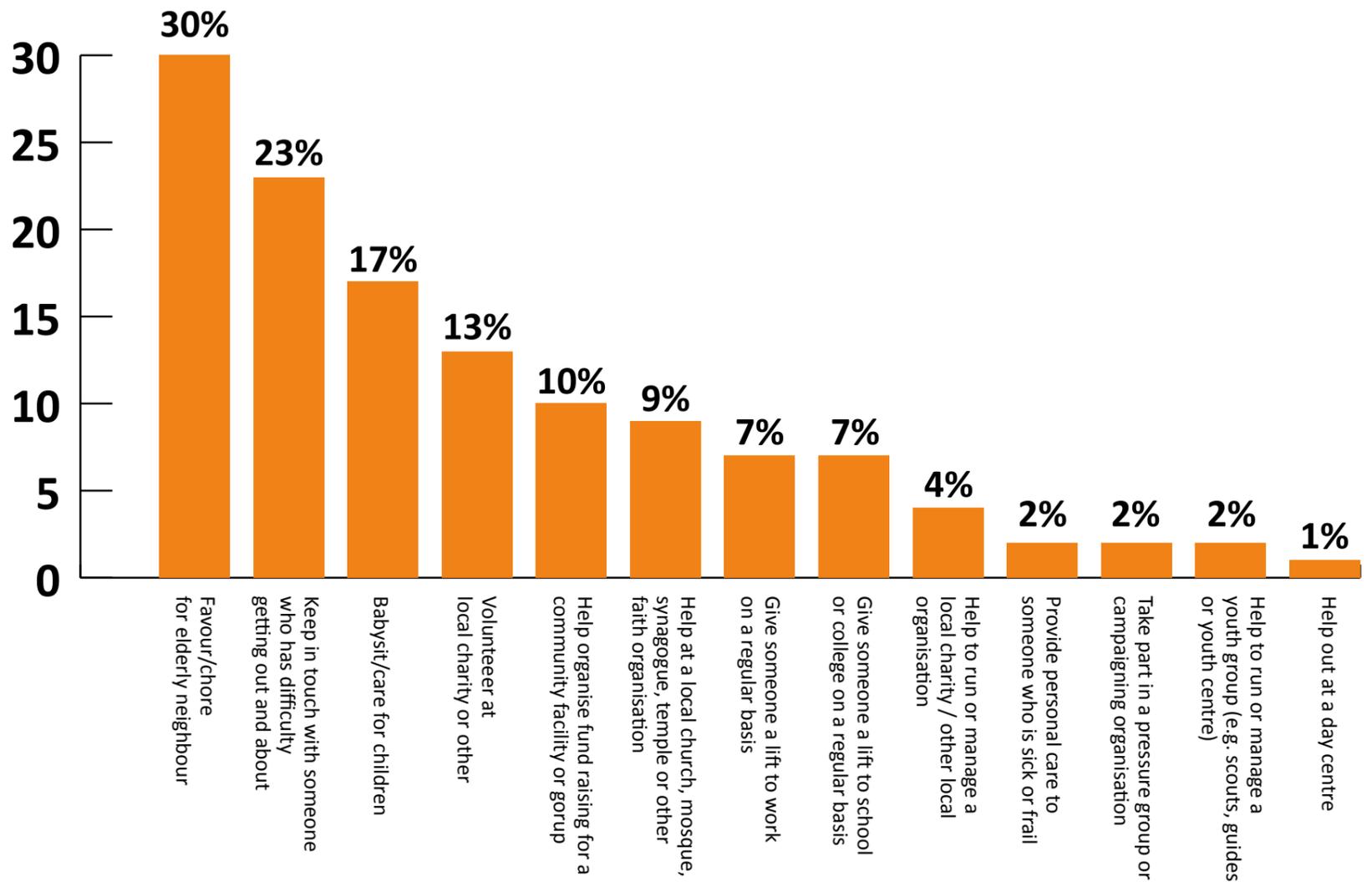
A Snapshot of Volunteers in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire County Council’s last residents’ survey took place in September 2015. 1,000 people, representative of Buckinghamshire’s population, were interviewed face-to-face. Although the survey was (at the time of writing) 2.5 years ago, the following charts have been included in this report to provide volunteer-involving organisations in the county with an insight into the volunteering behaviours of a sample of residents over a 12 month period.

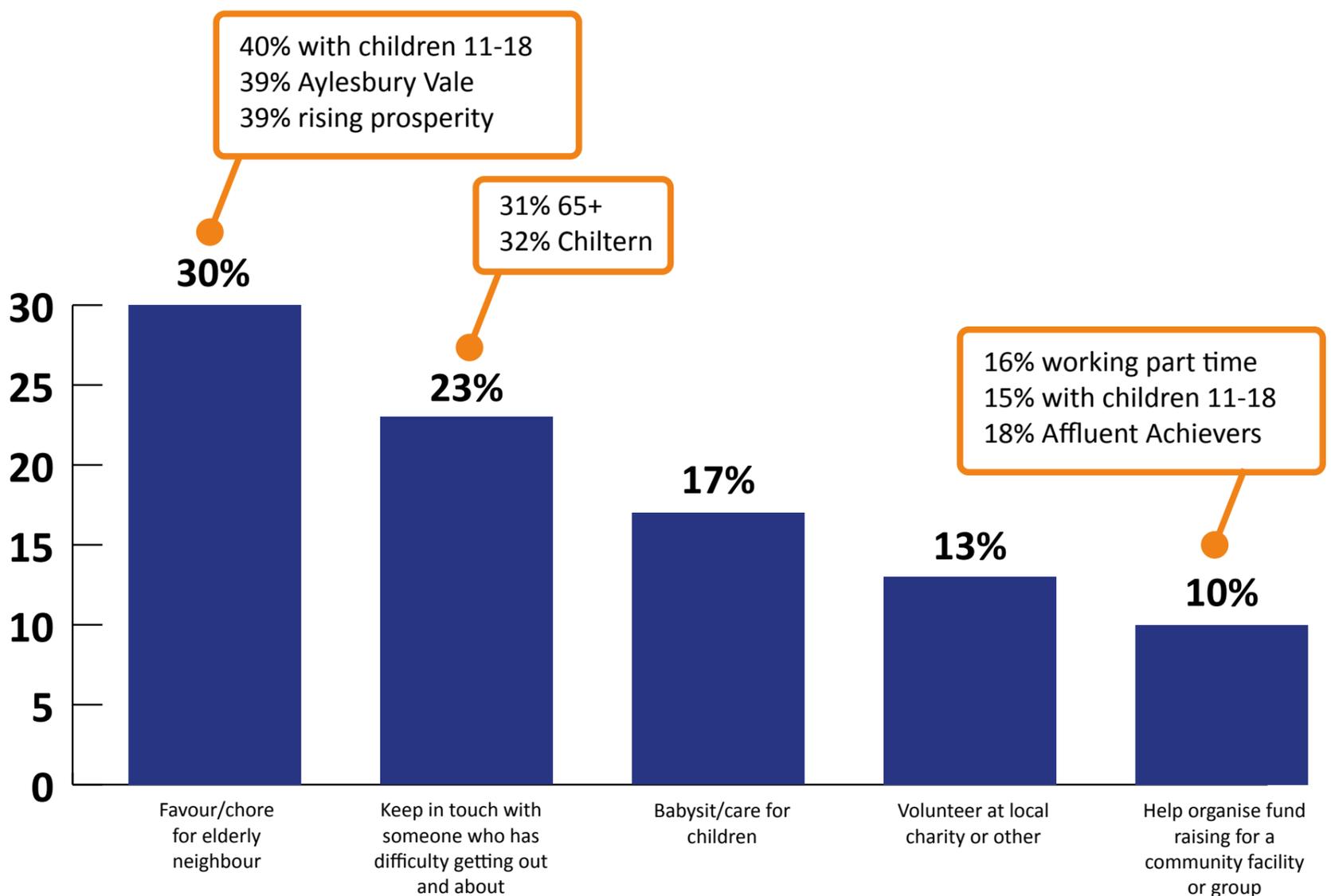
Community Impact Bucks’ State of the Sector Report 2017 estimates that currently around 175,000 adults in Buckinghamshire volunteer at least once a year, with about two thirds of these volunteering at least once a month.



Types of volunteering



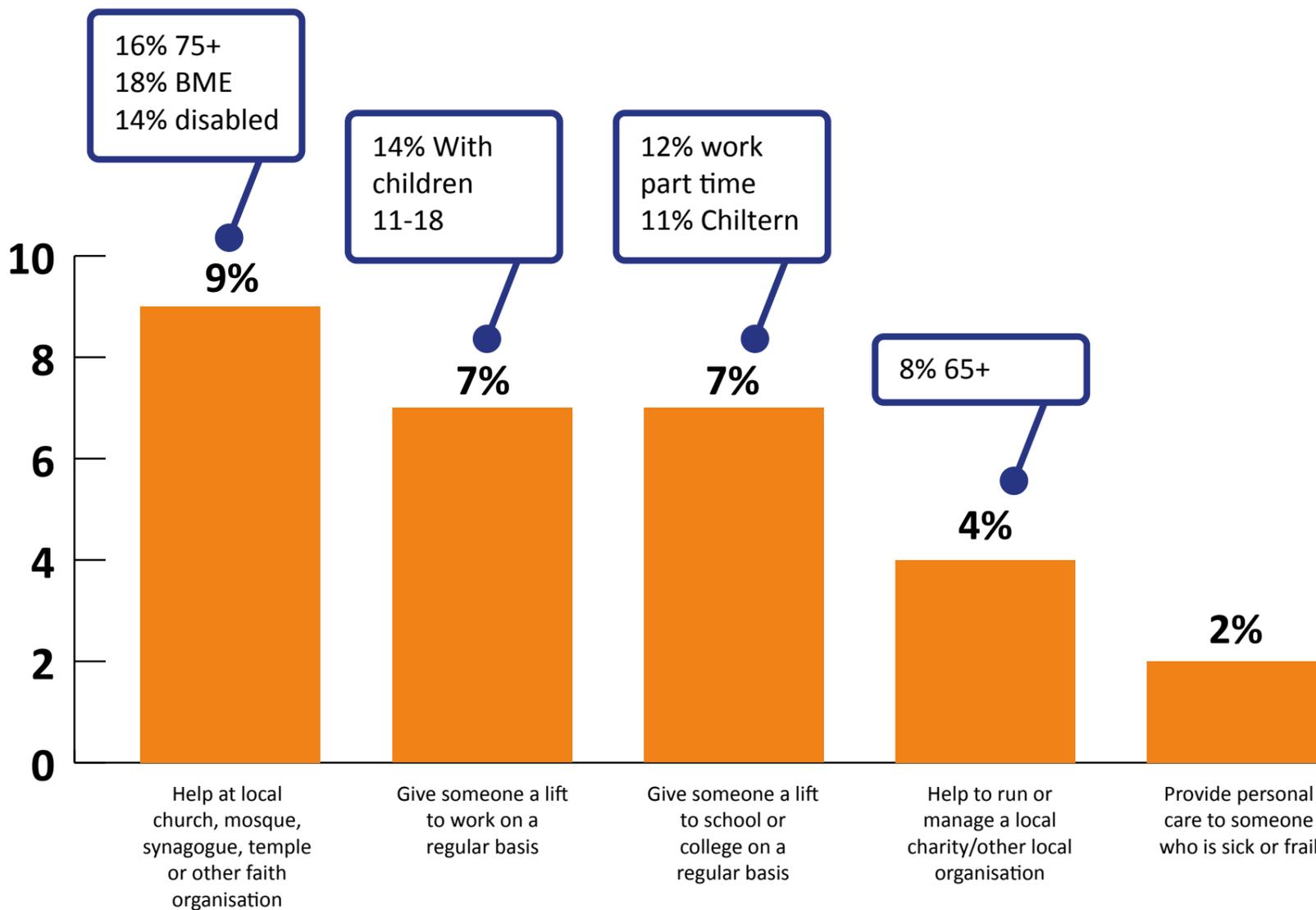
Volunteering breakdown





Courtesy of
**Epilepsy
Society**

Volunteering breakdown



Drivers leading to a need for Innovation in Volunteering

1. Generational shifts:

- Lowering of income and squeeze on living standards is particularly affecting the Millennials' ability to volunteer (those aged around 22-37 in 2017). The 2015 ONS report using UK Harmonised European Time Use Study (HETUS) data shows minutes volunteered per day for this group have dropped dramatically against levels in 2000
- Retirees may now have less time to devote to volunteering because family members need more help. This can be linked in part to a need to devote more time to caring for grandchildren because of childcare costs.

2. Economic conditions:

- Formal volunteering declining since the economic crisis of 2008-2009
- Buckinghamshire's growth rate is only the 104th in a list of 173 UK regions. Buckinghamshire has disadvantaged communities, and it is in these that volunteering is likely to have dropped most dramatically.

3. Brexit:

- Brexit may have a damaging effect on the economic conditions in Buckinghamshire. Figures available for South Bucks estimate that its GVA (Gross Value Added) will be 1.1% lower on average under 'soft Brexit' and 2.2% lower under 'hard Brexit'
- Given the direction of travel towards Brexit, and the possible effect on economic prosperity in Buckinghamshire, its subsequent potential negative effect on volunteering in the region in the coming years is worth highlighting.

4. Individual Need Vs Altruism:

- Social and economic pressures may possibly lead to volunteering becoming an activity to improve one's own skills to better compete in the job market, rather than fulfil a need in society. There may subsequently be a need to shift the volunteer recruitment approach (particularly towards young people) away from the altruistic benefits, towards 'selling' the experience the individual can gain from it individually.

5. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

- Across sectors, employees increasingly want to know and feel that the time and skills they put into their jobs are making a tangible, positive difference in the world. This is especially prevalent amongst millennials, who are often more likely to seek out positions with organisations that offer and support active community engagement and skills-based volunteer opportunities. This is manifesting itself through individual volunteering engagement via employer-supported schemes.

6. Mobility:

- There is evidence that people moving into a new area leads to an incentive to volunteer as a means of embedding themselves in the new location.

7. Technology:

- 90% of households in Great Britain now have internet access, with 73% of adults now accessing the internet on the go using a mobile device or smartphone

- Technological advances will continue to create opportunities for voluntary organisations, both large and small, to communicate their messages and gain support in bigger and also more targeted ways.

8. Legal:

- On 25th May 2018, the current data protection laws will be replaced by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).
- Volunteer-involving organisations will need to consider the impact of GDPR on how they collect and store data related to volunteers.

9. Political:

- There is more than can be done from a political standpoint to enable volunteering barriers to be reduced, and to improve the volunteer experience. These include:
 - Making it easier and more rewarding for people to volunteer
 - Making it easier for volunteers to support our public services, and:
 - Making it easier for people to build their skills and get a good job through volunteering.

All of these drivers of change lead to a necessity to innovate in order to mitigate challenges, and enable traditional, and perhaps less traditional forms of volunteering activity to take place. It also points to some useful avenues to explore further within the Buckinghamshire region around innovation in volunteer recruitment and retention.

Innovation in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers

In the context of this report, innovation, described as ‘new ideas made useful’, is related to Buckinghamshire volunteer-involving organisations capitalising successfully on the local population’s motivations to volunteer, whilst also successfully navigating the changing conditions affecting their ability to do so.

Innovations can be:

- **Incremental** – small steps on an approach already existing
- **Radical** – major improvements often very different from the status quo
- **Revolutions** – when groups of innovations together cause a huge far reaching change.

Where innovation is needed most/should be happening:

All individuals

1. Find innovative ways to engage time poor individuals in volunteering – particularly those who have stopped volunteering due to time constraints (58% said they now didn’t have enough time, 19% said it took too much time)
2. Better engaging with the nearly 13% of individuals who have never thought about volunteering at all, along with the 10% who have not heard about opportunities to volunteer
3. Find innovative new ways to make volunteering appeal when it is competing with ‘other things’ people do with their spare time (27.5% stated this as a reason for not volunteering)
4. Given historic ‘crashes’ in formal (unpaid help given as part of groups, clubs and organisations to benefit others or the environment) and informal volunteering (giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative) in economically challenged times, ensure new approaches are taken to ensure the stability of volunteering in the most disadvantaged groups.

This is particularly needed given the predicted, yet definitively unknown, effects that Brexit will have on the economy.

5. Present the experience/soft benefits of volunteering for individuals – for example, demonstrating the health improvements from volunteering, or CV-enhancing boost that the volunteering experience can offer
6. Activity to engage the 25,000 new residents in Buckinghamshire each year who have an incentive to volunteer in order to engage in their new local community
7. Consider how to harness technology further, given, for example, that access to the internet via a mobile device is now used by 73% of the population and rising.

Younger group specifically

8. Focus volunteer messaging/engagement activity particularly on 16-34 year olds, where 17% have not heard about opportunities to volunteer, and the 17% of 16-24 year olds who do not know of any groups who need help.
9. 16-24 year olds have increased the time they give to volunteering. As a result, it is even more critical to promote the experience/soft benefits (as per Point 5 above) that they can gain in order to attract and retain increasing numbers of them in volunteering. This is critical for those looking to develop new skills for the future.
10. Find ways to engage those studying in volunteering, as studying is seen as a barrier for 34% of 16-24 year olds.
11. As a group more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends, think innovatively to create an environment for younger people to make friends through volunteering.

Mid-life group specifically

12. As with Point 1, find innovative ways to enable the 69% of 35-54 year olds, who stated work commitments as a barrier, to engage in volunteering, whilst meeting their work obligations. Look for examples of what can be done to tap into the continuing trend towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
13. Find ways to help this group balance volunteering with childcare needs (49.3% said looking after children was a barrier).
14. This age group engages in volunteering where the cause is important to them. Find innovative ways to promote charitable causes to this cohort of potential volunteers.

Older group specifically

15. As the population continues to live longer, take action to ensure that (where appropriate) over 75 year olds do not feel that they are too old to volunteer (52% believe they are).
16. As with Point 13 for the mid-life group, find innovative ways to enable retirees to engage in volunteering activities, whilst still ensuring that they are able to carry out their increased childcare activities (a barrier for 17% of 54-75 year olds).
17. As a group also more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends, again think innovatively about how to engage this group before they retire, and also create an environment for this older group to make friends through volunteering.

The final section of the main report addresses the above areas of opportunity for innovation in attracting and retaining volunteers, by providing background information, examples, and suggestions for the future, where appropriate. Although the majority of the volunteer-involving groups that Community Impact Bucks supports are small (half have a turnover of less than £25,000), and therefore may not have the financial, people or physical resources to implement some of the examples and suggestions given, it is hoped that they can be adapted to make them suitable for use. Community Impact Bucks runs free monthly Volunteering Advice Surgeries, where issues and ideas can be discussed in confidence. Visit the Events' section of the website to book.



Courtesy of
Headway

The information provided in the main report related to the following areas is too complex to summarise, therefore please refer to the relevant pages for further information.

Please note - In order to be as complete as possible, this report also discusses engaging volunteers from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community, as well as individuals with disabilities.

1. Presenting Volunteering around the Experience/Soft Benefits to the Individual – Page 34
2. The Time Poor Challenge and Making Volunteering Appealing – Page 36
3. Engaging those who have Not Heard about Opportunities/Groups that Need Help – Page 39
4. Using Technology to Facilitate Volunteering – Page 39
5. Dealing with the Childcare issues many face when Seeking to Volunteer – Page 41
6. Engaging the Pre-Retiree Community in Volunteering – Page 41
7. Engaging the ‘newly located’ in Buckinghamshire – Page 42
8. Engaging those from the most Disadvantaged Communities in Volunteering – Page 42
9. Harnessing the Trend Towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – Page 44
10. Group Volunteering – Making Friends and Spending Time with Family – Page 46
11. Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities – Page 46
12. Engaging Individuals with Disabilities – Page 47

Retaining volunteers

If, as stated by Helen Timbrell (formerly of the National Trust), volunteering is to be presented as a product with various options, then the corollary of this is that volunteers should be viewed as customers and given an excellent experience - and it is well known that it is cheaper to keep customers than to acquire new ones. Retention of volunteers, therefore, is crucial. Jarina Choudhury from NCVO notes that people's experiences in volunteering will not always be linear, and flexible pathways need to be built in to support them along their volunteering journeys, with the focus being on enabling regular volunteers to volunteer more. Kristen Stephenson (formerly of NCVO) says that it is imperative for organisations to build relationships with volunteers to enable them to move into other roles, if they so wish, and to give more time. Even if people decide that a volunteer role is not for them, or something in their life crops up so that they can no longer volunteer, it is crucial to maintain this relationship and to keep the door open for their return.

Within the context of the Buckinghamshire voluntary sector, which is comprised mainly of small charities and other small volunteer-involving organisations, any innovation with regard to volunteer retention is likely to be incremental or radical for these organisations.

Key points are:

- Have a written volunteer recruitment process with clearly assigned responsibilities and associated paperwork/templates: and train all staff and volunteers who manage other volunteers
- Draw up a Volunteer Agreement, setting out expectations on both sides, agree with the volunteer, and get both parties to sign NB include wording that this agreement is in honour only, and is not a legally binding contract of employment, and that no employment relationship is intended either now or at any time in the future.
- Do not forget to do the obvious: introduce new volunteers to members of staff and other volunteers and trustees – make them feel welcome! Introduce them in the staff newsletter
- Make the experience a good one: put in the “fun” factor if possible, but above all, make it rewarding. Do the unexpected, for example inviting volunteers to the next staff team meeting and thanking them
- Provide volunteers with the necessary training for their roles
- Appreciate volunteers' efforts: thanking them regularly and in a genuine manner; for example: verbally, by email, in organisation newsletters, and at specific events e.g. AGMs, annual conferences, thank you events during Volunteers' Week – this could also be an opportunity for Community Impact Bucks - Volunteering Innovation Report 2018 volunteers to invite along friends to see if they might be interested in volunteering. Run an annual Volunteer Awards' event with different categories
- Have regular catch up sessions addressing any issues or concerns, and enable volunteers to shape their roles to fit with their interests or changing life circumstances – thereby putting more control in their hands
- Give each volunteer a named supervisor, and offer the chance to unload: especially if the role is emotionally demanding, for example: with Samaritans or Citizens Advice
- Have regular review sessions (for example every 6 months): understanding volunteers' current motivations and issues, and ensuring that they are given opportunities to give and receive feedback on what they are doing is essential
- Encourage volunteers to complete feedback surveys; these could be anonymised to encourage more frank comments
- Where possible, have a policy of offering to reimburse reasonable expenses, for example travel to and from home and the place of volunteering. Please note that there are strict rules on what expenses should and should not be reimbursed. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses> and <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-expenses#>
- Time Credits: since April 2014, the social enterprise Spice has partnered with Buckinghamshire County Council through its Prevention Matters' programme to offer a Time Credits' programme.

- People volunteering with organisations that supported elderly or vulnerable adults, or with Active Bucks (supporting more people in Bucks to get active) were able to gain a time credit for each hour volunteered, and use these toward various different activities, for example seeing a play, attending Adult Education Courses, or going on visits to London attractions. Research published in 2017, revealed that the scheme was extremely beneficial for those volunteers who participated:

69% feel more able to contribute to the community and peers

64% feel more confident

65% can afford to do more things

71% report improved quality of life

65% feel more positive about their future

56% feel less isolated and lonely

24% are more physically active

11% report improved mental health.

These findings demonstrate that Time Credits are an excellent method of increasing volunteers' wellbeing, and also retaining them. Although Spice's partnership with the County Council will end in April 2018, the organisation is looking at other ways of continuing to work with community groups and services in Buckinghamshire.

Case studies of how volunteers in Buckinghamshire have benefited from the Time Credits' scheme, can be found here: http://www.justaddspice.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/10/Bucks_Case-Study-Booklet-Aug-17.pdf

It should be noted that Time Credits' schemes have also been run in other parts of the UK

- Do not forget: staff and volunteers who manage other volunteers need support too!
- Do whatever you can to keep volunteers' inspiration alive – problems start when they begin to forget why they decided to volunteer with an organisation in the first place!
- Hold exit meetings: should a volunteer unfortunately decide to move on (for whatever reason), these provide an excellent opportunity to understand more about their reasons for doing so, and to ask their permission to stay in touch in case they decide to volunteer in the future. Any comments they make (positive or negative) can also be fed back into your volunteering programme.

Although a detailed examination of Volunteering Strategy and Policy components is outside the remit of this report, it should be noted that these are the foundations from which everything a volunteering-involving organisation does flows – so it is essential that they are comprehensive, signed off at Board level, and understood by staff and other volunteers (as appropriate).

Resources for Volunteer Managers and Co-ordinators

It is important to note, that unless the management and co-ordination of volunteers is properly resourced, however, then any volunteer-involving organisation attempting to try new approaches to attracting and retaining volunteers will be doomed from the outset.

It is heartening that in the report, Stronger charities for a stronger society, published by the House of Lords in March 2017, support for volunteer management was a key recommendation:

Funders need to be more receptive to requests for resources for volunteer managers and co-ordinators, especially where charities are able to demonstrate a strong potential volunteer base. We recommend that Government guidance on public sector grants and contracts is amended to reflect this and set a standard for other funders.

Based on a submission from the Association of Volunteer Managers' (AVM) response to the Select Committee's call for evidence last year, this recommendation is excellent news, and in the words of Debbie Usiskin (now the former Chair of AVM),

Communicating the value and need for volunteer management as a recognised discipline is at the core of what AVM was set up to achieve. Having such high profile confirmation of this is very welcome.

The committee's own evidence gathering supports AVM's submission by revealing the difficulty faced by small charities to find funding for volunteer managers – which is certainly an issue encountered by the thousands of small volunteer-involving organisations in Buckinghamshire.

Final Thoughts

By providing a snapshot of today's volunteers, exploring their motivations and barriers to volunteer, along with a summary of external drivers, and examples of, and suggestions for, innovations in attracting and retaining volunteers, it is hoped that this report provides organisations with a comprehensive insight into how they can build on their volunteer programmes now and in the future.

End of Executive Summary

A Snapshot of Today's Volunteers in the UK

Before exploring the drivers that are affecting the volunteering community, and innovation happening within the sector, it is important to take a moment to explain the volunteer cohorts (profiles) that exist in the UK, and the different volunteering behaviours and motivations within these groups.

Whilst it is recognised across several studies that volunteering levels have fallen^{2,3}, it is not the case that this is consistent across the different volunteer cohorts.

Using 2015/16 volunteer profile data available from **NCVO's 2017 UK Civil Society Almanac**, a number of interesting divergences in motivations and behaviours are apparent⁴. The Almanac contains over 1,000 responses about individuals' motivations and experiences.

The Almanac provides data against volunteer profiles that include gender, age, religion and location.

Some of the useful data points based on these profiles have been outlined below to highlight differences in volunteering motivations and behaviours.

Given the vast array of data available in the Almanac, for this report the NCVO research team kindly provided a detailed breakdown of this data by gender and age. As a result, this is the focus in the next sections on motivations and barriers.

² <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/billion-pound-loss-in-volunteering-effort-in-the-last-3-years/>

³ <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/volunteering-levels-fall-government-figures-show/volunteering/article/1440384>

⁴ https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteer-profiles-4/#Volunteering_and_other_demographics



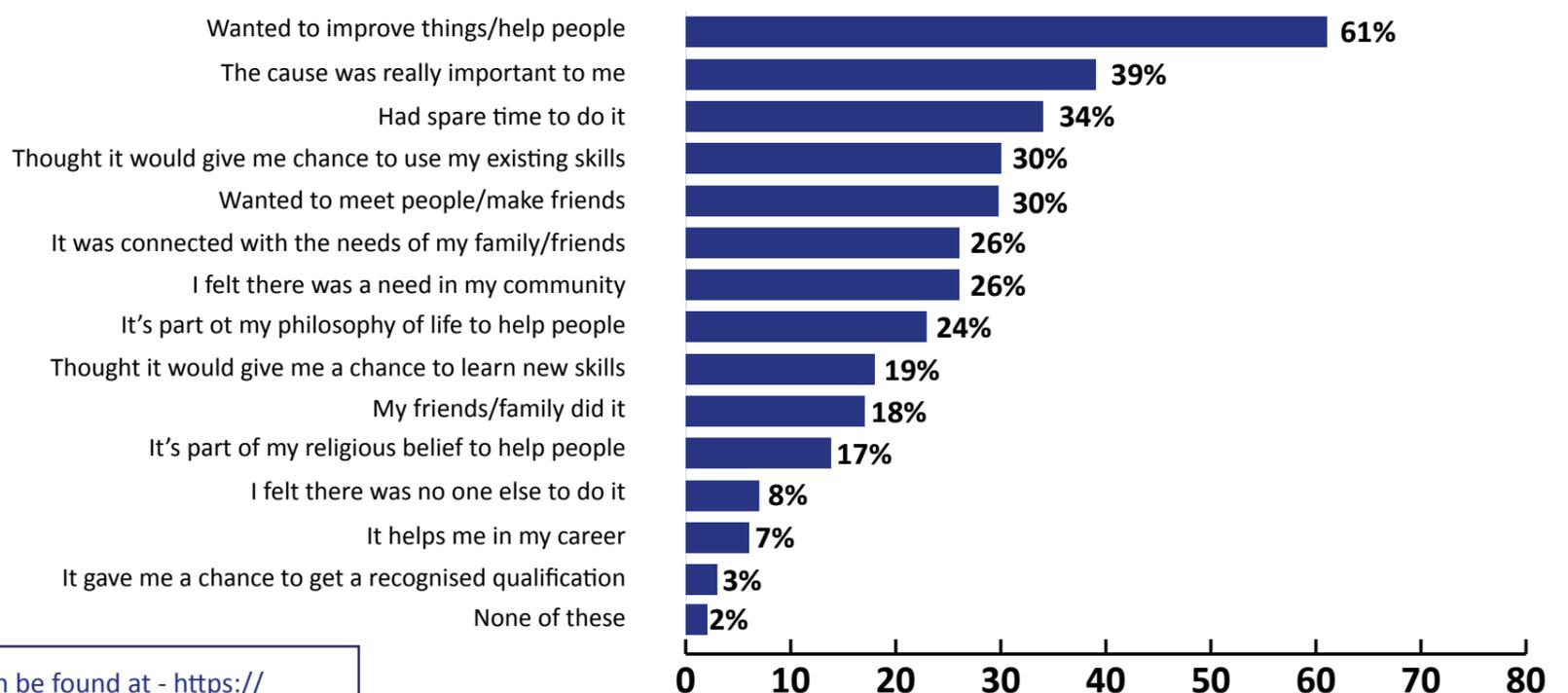
Courtesy of
**Men in
 Sheds
 Winslow**

Differences in volunteer motivations⁵

The Almanac highlights the reasons why individuals get involved in volunteering. This shows a large percentage of respondents felt they wanted to improve things/help people.

Chart 1

Reasons for Volunteering in the last year, 2015/16 (% of respondents)



This chart can be found at - <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/motivations-and-barriers-to-volunteering-3/>

⁵ <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/motivations-and-barriers-to-volunteering-3/>

Whilst gender does not throw up any notable differences, assessing reasons for volunteering by age group does.

The charts below show ten of these reasons with data that appear to differ by age group. **Chart 2** shows spikes in certain reasons for the younger group, **Chart 3** for the mid-life group, and **Chart 4** for the older group. Please note: one reason is shown on two charts.

Chart 2

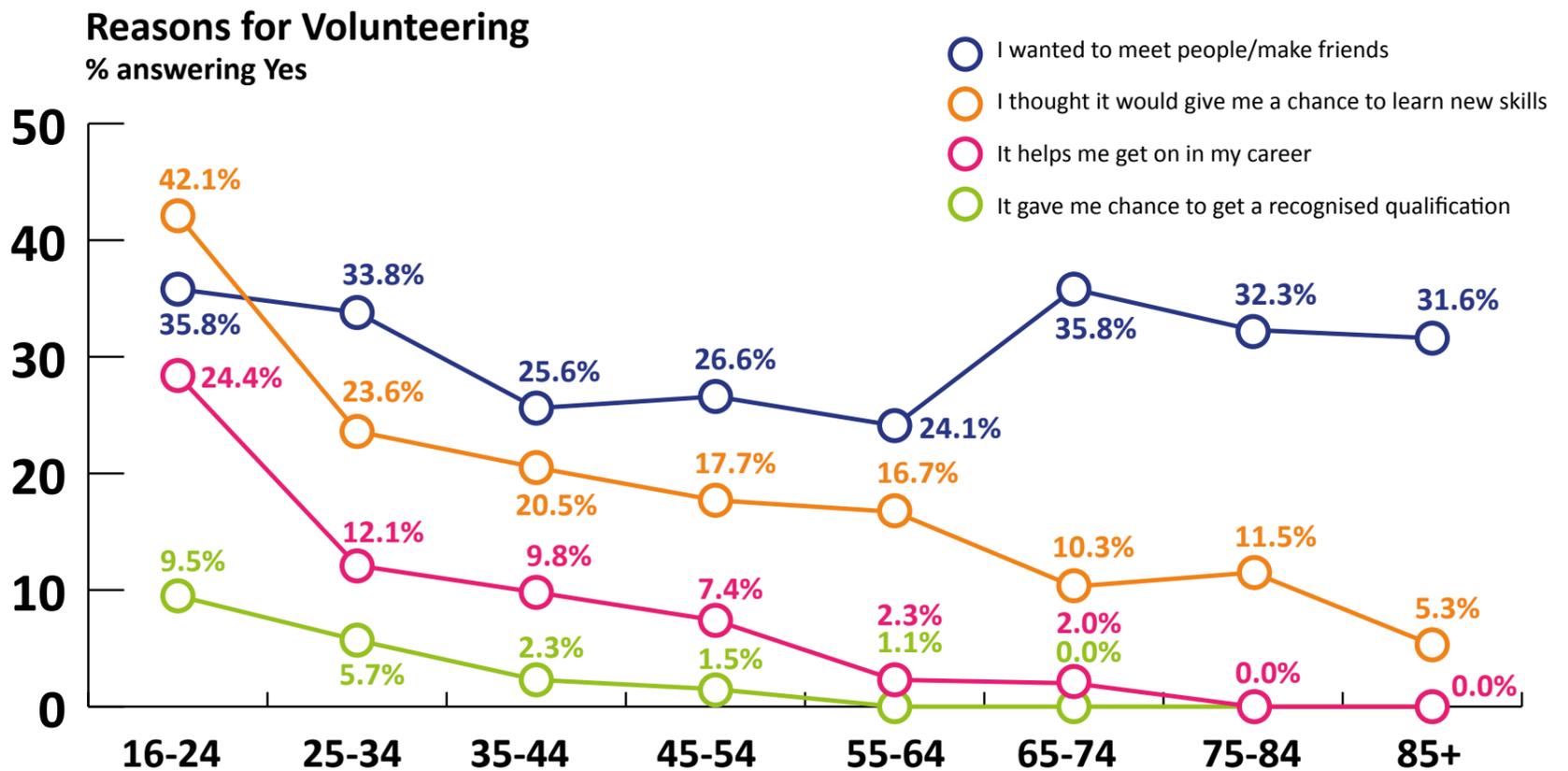


Chart 3

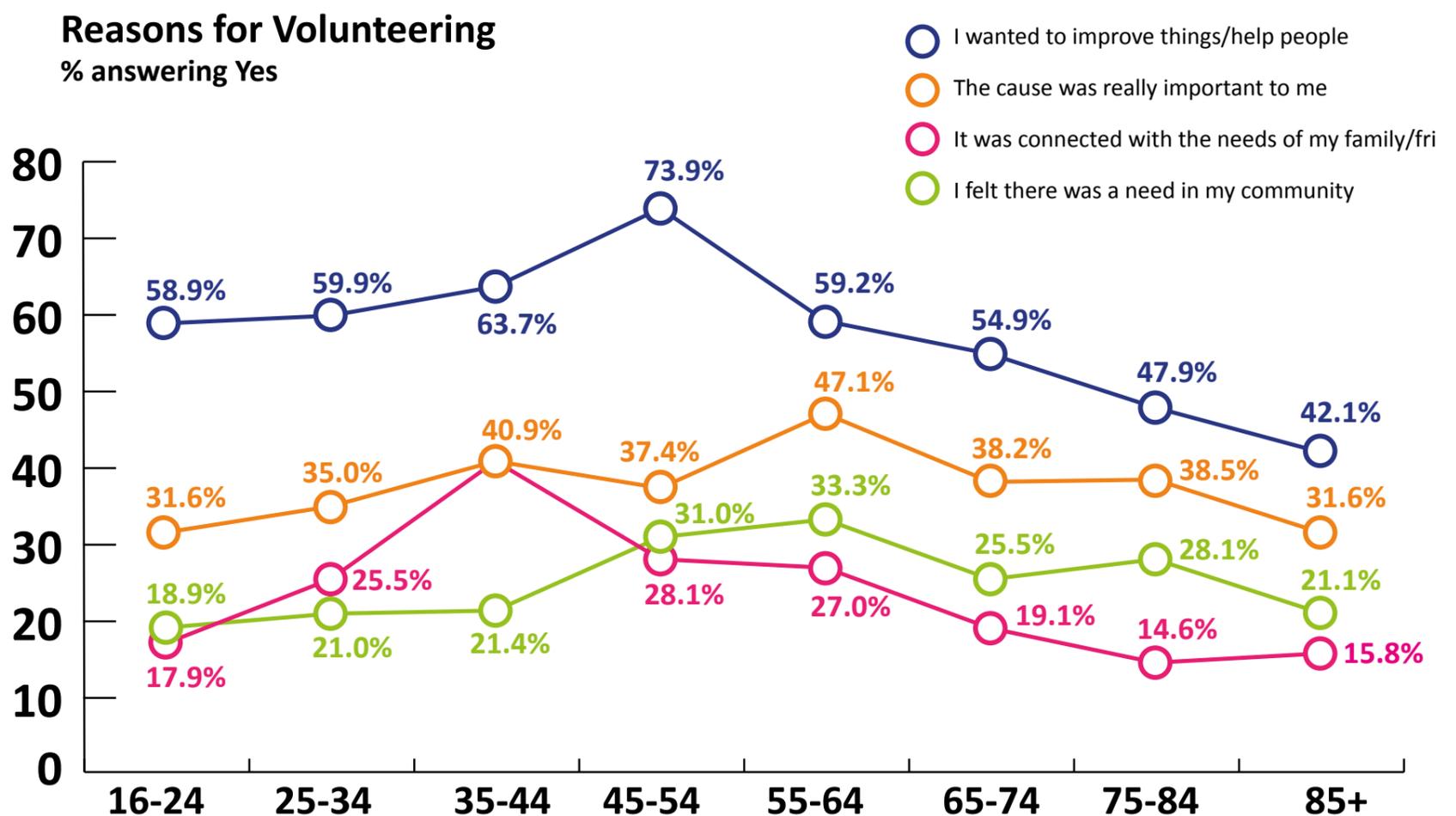
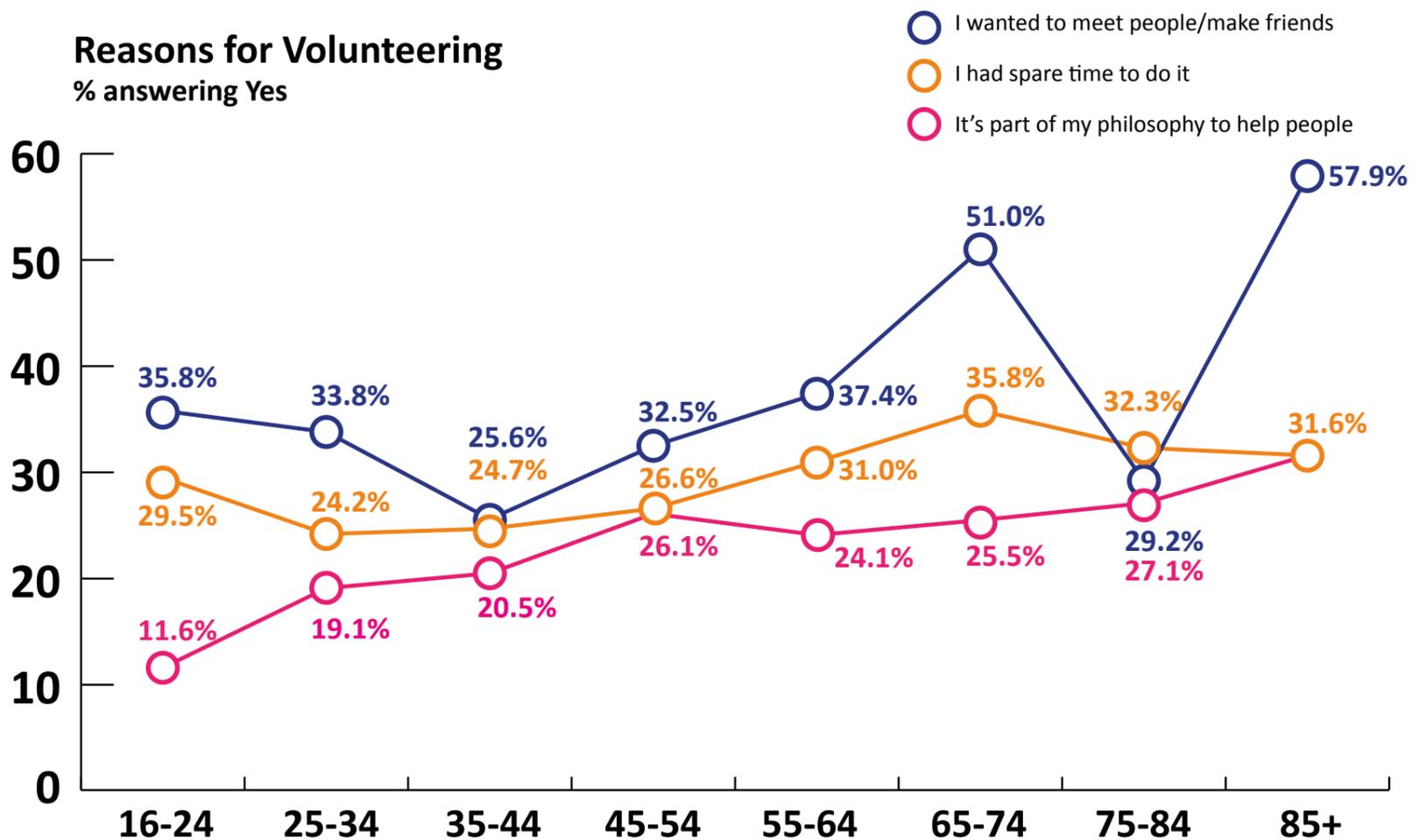


Chart 4



From these charts we can see a number of interesting deeper insights detailed below:

The younger group:

- Younger respondents are more likely than other groups to volunteer to gain new skills, help their career progress and (to a much lesser degree) get a recognised qualification
- They are also a group which is more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends. What is interesting about this reason is that it also increases for the older age group (see later)
- This is not to say this group did not also point to other reasons (for example nearly **60%** in the 16- 34 year old group also stated they wanted to improve things/help people – as can be seen on **Chart 3**), it is simply outlining the reasons that appear to be more distinct for this group
- **Given the reasons that are more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened by presenting the benefits to them as individuals (a subject touched on also in the next section on drivers impacting volunteering).**

The mid-life group:

- A critical point on the biggest reasons to volunteer - a desire to improve things/help people - is apparent when exploring the data by age. The importance of this reason overall is heavily impacted by the answers given by the 35-44 and 45-54 year old groups. These age groups account for **36%** of all respondents, and as can be seen, have agreed in numbers that this is a major reason for volunteering.
- So, in the wider mid-life group different reasons for volunteering emerge. These include: wanting to improve things/help people, the cause being important to them personally, the cause being connected with the needs of friends or family, and perceiving a need in the community.
- Given the reasons more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened by pointing out to potential volunteers why a particular cause is so important.

This group, however, is also the most time challenged (as outlined later under barriers to volunteering), so any activity here by organisations to attract individuals to voluntary activity also needs to consider the ability of this group to overcome these barriers and engage in volunteering. This is discussed further in this report.

The older group:

- Members of this group are more likely to have time available, and state this as a reason to volunteer, although they may currently be using this time elsewhere (covered later in this report). Interestingly, having spare time for volunteering increases through the age groups from 25-34 year olds towards a spike at 56-74 (assumed to be due to retirement). Whilst the 75-84 year old group appears a misnomer in this reason trend, it should be noted that it is more likely the 85+ group is actually potentially the misnomer. Respondents numbers over 85 years old drop dramatically making conclusions very difficult to draw
- Volunteering as part of a personal philosophy has been included for the older group, as whilst it peaks in the 55-64 age group it is a more likely reason in the older group than for those in the younger group (accepting the 85+ group is a very small group of respondents)
- The other reason shown on **Chart 4** that becomes more apparent for the 65+ age group, is mentioned for the younger group – those more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends. This appears to peak again at 65-74, when people may be seeking to replace friends connected with their workplace.
- **Given the reasons that are more likely in this age group, it could be considered that attracting and retaining them in volunteering might be strengthened through connecting with them prior to retirement.**

Please note: These observations are not to say that respondents in these groups did not answer that they agreed with other reasons, they simply point out that certain reasons seem more apparent at different points in people's lives.

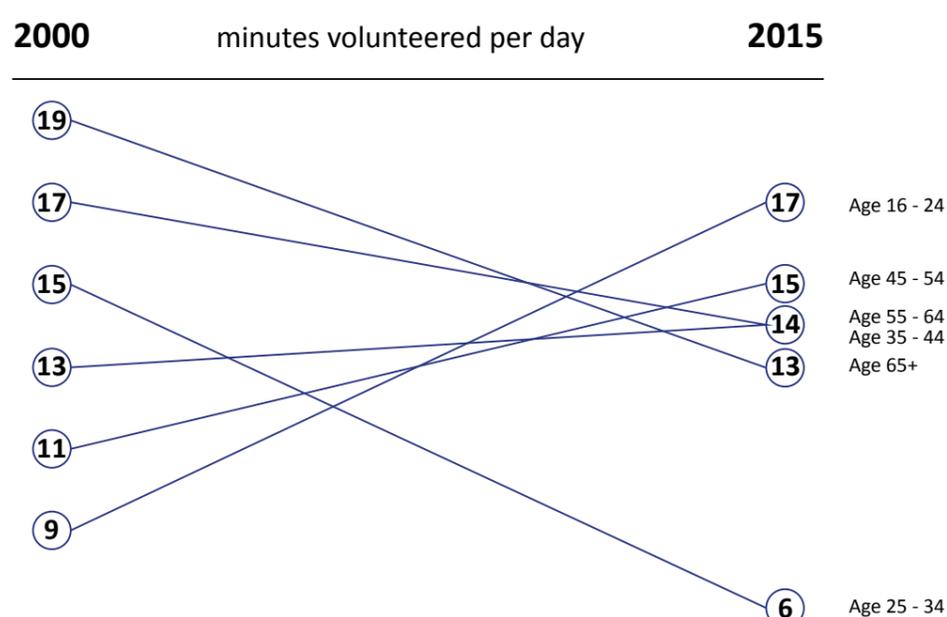
Differences in volunteering engagement

When it comes to engagement in volunteering, there are several aspects worth commenting upon, including:

- The time given to volunteering by different age groups
- The types of volunteering roles that are now being undertaken
- Geographic differences in volunteering engagement – and:
- Reasons for stopping volunteering.

As noted in the previous section, there are differences in the age groups when it comes to the amount of time they give to volunteering activities. **Chart 5** depicts data from the UK Harmonised European Time Use Study (HETUS) showing the changes by age group in average minutes of formal volunteering* in a day⁶.

Chart 5 Average daily minutes of formal volunteering provided, by age, 2000 to 2015



⁶ <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/billion-pound-loss-in-volunteering-effort-in-the-last-3-years/>

From this data it is apparent that:

- 16-24 year olds are giving much greater time to formal volunteering – perhaps to support their need to gain new skills and improve their employability
- 25-34 year olds are, conversely, giving much less time to formal volunteering – perhaps due to the economic pressures and challenges in supporting living standards (outlined in more depth in the next section on volunteering innovation drivers)
- The middle groups (35-44, 45-54 and 55-64) have experienced some change but not dramatic
- The 65+ age group appears to be the next interesting group where change has happened. Here, the average time on formal volunteering has dropped by nearly a third. There is evidence, covered in the subsequent section on drivers, that this group is increasing their engagement in family childcare activities to support their families. This may offer part of an explanation for this drop.

***NCVO’s Almanac describes ‘formal’ volunteering as giving unpaid help through a group, club or organisation.⁷ ‘Informal’ volunteering is described as giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative.⁸**

With regard to the types of roles in which volunteers engage, there are a number of observations worth making from the various data sources available.

The Almanac again helps provide a picture of the types of organisation people currently volunteer with, and the types of activities in which they engage. **Charts 6 and 7** below, show that:

- The organisations (clubs or groups) are dominated by a top 4 including:
 - o Sports/exercise groups (50%)
 - o Hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs (38%)
 - o Groups linked to religion (34%)
 - o Children’s education and schools (33%)
- There are a mix of roles, including organising or helping to run an activity or event (47%), raising or handling money/ taking part in sponsored events (45%), and getting other people involved (38%)

Chart 6

Organisations/clubs/groups to which respondents who had formally volunteered at least once in the last 12 months gave unpaid help, 2015/16 (% of respondents)

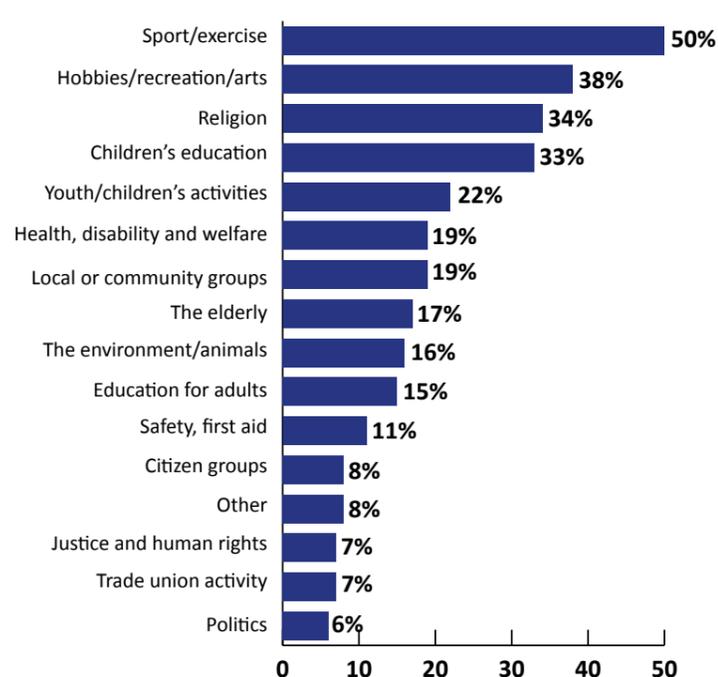
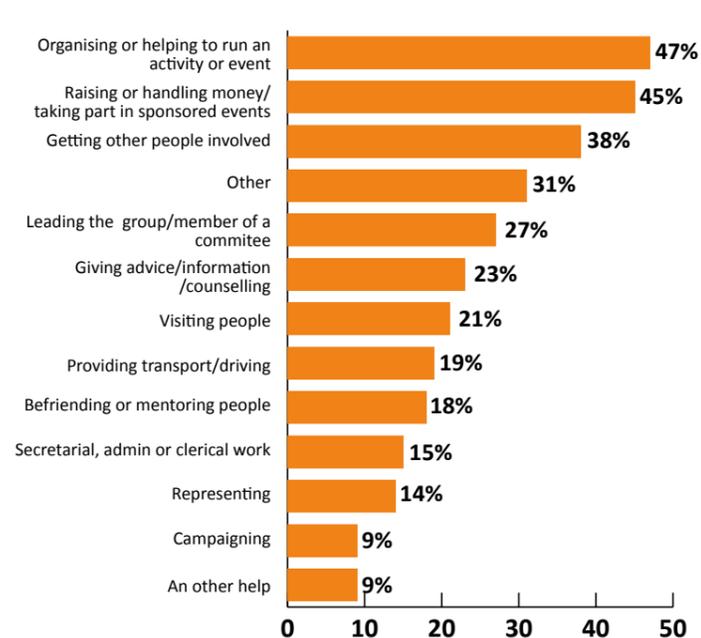


Chart 7

Activities of people who have volunteered in the last year, 2015/16 (% of respondents)



These charts can be found at - <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteer-activities-3/>

7 https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac16/volunteer-overview/#Formal_volunteering

8 <http://www.vcnw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Definitions-of-volunteering.pdf>

With regard to volunteer profiles, it is worth noting that there are also interesting divides between geographies. Whilst this is touched upon further in the next section on **volunteering innovation drivers**, it is interesting to comment that there is a difference in volunteering engagement by geography. For example, there is evidence of increased volunteering in the East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West⁹.

Reasons for stopping volunteering

Data from NCVO's Almanac also provides a useful insight into the reasons why individuals stop volunteering after they have become involved. The biggest reason given was that they now did not have enough time due to changing home or work circumstances. This reason was given by 52% of the individuals surveyed.

There were other less prevalent reasons – the four biggest ones are noted below after the main reason mentioned:

1. Not enough time due to changing home or works circumstances (52%)
2. Health problems or old age (19%)
3. Getting involved took up too much time (16%)
4. It was a one-off event (9%)
5. Lost interest (9%)

This leaves something for volunteer-involving organisations to consider around how to continue the dialogue and engagement with historic volunteers when circumstances change and their time is limited.

It is clearly important to ensure that if individuals' circumstances change again in the future they will feel ready and keen to engage in volunteering with the organisation (or others) again. It is also important to consider what innovative approaches can be brought to bear to help time-poor individuals engage in volunteering, something considered further in the section of this report on **Innovation in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers**.

Barriers to volunteering - The Top 10

Barriers to volunteering have been reviewed again using data from the Community Life Survey and published in the Almanac, the data was extracted by the team in September 2017. Again, the data team at NCVO were kind enough to provide a breakdown of this data by gender and age.

The major impacts are outlined below in order of magnitude (i.e. the biggest reason stated by all respondents at No.1 in the list). Please note, respondents answered 'yes' or 'no' to each of the reasons, so many respondents are very likely to have answered 'yes' to more than one reason.

1. Have work commitments (43.8%) – A major barrier overall, particularly in the under 65 year olds

- Having work commitments is the biggest single barrier in society from this data. Almost **44%** of all respondents to the Community Life Survey gave this as a barrier to their volunteering
- For those under the age of 65 this increases to **59%** of respondents, and peaks in the 35-54 group, with **68.7%** of respondents citing this reason as a barrier
- Nearly **50%** of men said a barrier was work commitments (48.2%), whilst 40% of women cited this as a barrier.

⁹ <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteer-profiles-4/>



Courtesy of
**The Princes
Centre**

2. I do other things with my spare time (27.5%) – A quite high proportion

- This reason is possibly surprisingly the second highest across respondents with **27.5%** of the respondents citing it as a reason for not volunteering
- For men, slightly more cited this as a barrier (**31.4%**), with **24.3%** of women stating that they do other things with their spare time.

3. I look after children (27.4%) – A challenge for young, and also increasingly older people

- This reason was just below ‘do other things with my spare time,’ with **27.4%** stating this
- For men, **20%** cited this as a barrier, whilst **33%** of women cited looking after children as a barrier
- As expected, this peaks at 25-44 years old, where **49.3%** cite looking after children as a barrier
- Examining the older generation (55-74), the barrier of looking after children stays consistent at **17.4%** of respondents, suggesting a need to support children within their family. It would be interesting to assess if this increased since the economic conditions changed – affecting childcare needs. This is picked up further in the next section on drivers leading to innovation in volunteering.

4. I have an illness that prevents me (13.1%) – Increases over 65 years old

- Whilst 13.1% of all respondents cited this, **24.2%** of the over 65’s who responded cited this reason

5. I have never thought about it (12.3%) – Consistent 12% to 13% of respondents

- This barrier is fairly consistent across each ages group up until 75 (averaging **12.8%**), after which it drops off slightly to 8.2% of respondents
- Men are slightly more likely to have not considered volunteering (**14.1%**), against **10.7%** of women.

6. I am not the right age (10.7%) – Naturally greater at over 75, but not before 75

- Whilst this barrier represents a reason for only **10.7%** of all respondents, this is much higher for those 75 years and older, where 51.7% cited this reason. This group only represents **10%** of the total respondent base, but it is interesting to note that this dynamic appears
- This is in direct comparison to those under 75 years old where only **4.5%** stated age as a barrier

7. I have not heard about opportunities to help (9.7%) – Greater in young adults

- Whilst this barrier represents a reason for only **9.7%** of all respondents, this is accentuated for 16-34 year olds where **17%** cited this reason

8. I do not know any groups that need help (8.9%) – Also greater in younger adults

- Whilst this barrier represents a reason for only **8.9%** of all respondents, this is also accentuated at the lower age group, in this case 16-24 year olds (**16.8%** of respondents)

9. I look after someone elderly or ill (8%) – Possibly also a dual care responsibility with childcare

- In addition to the final point about the 55-74 year olds made under ‘looking after children’, it is useful to note that **12%** of this age group cite having someone elderly or ill to look after as a barrier (against an overall average of 8%). The overlap of this **12%** with the **17.5%** looking after children is unclear, but clearly the ageing population and childcare are impacting volunteering

10. I have to study (5.1%) – Only a small percentage, but naturally much greater in younger adults

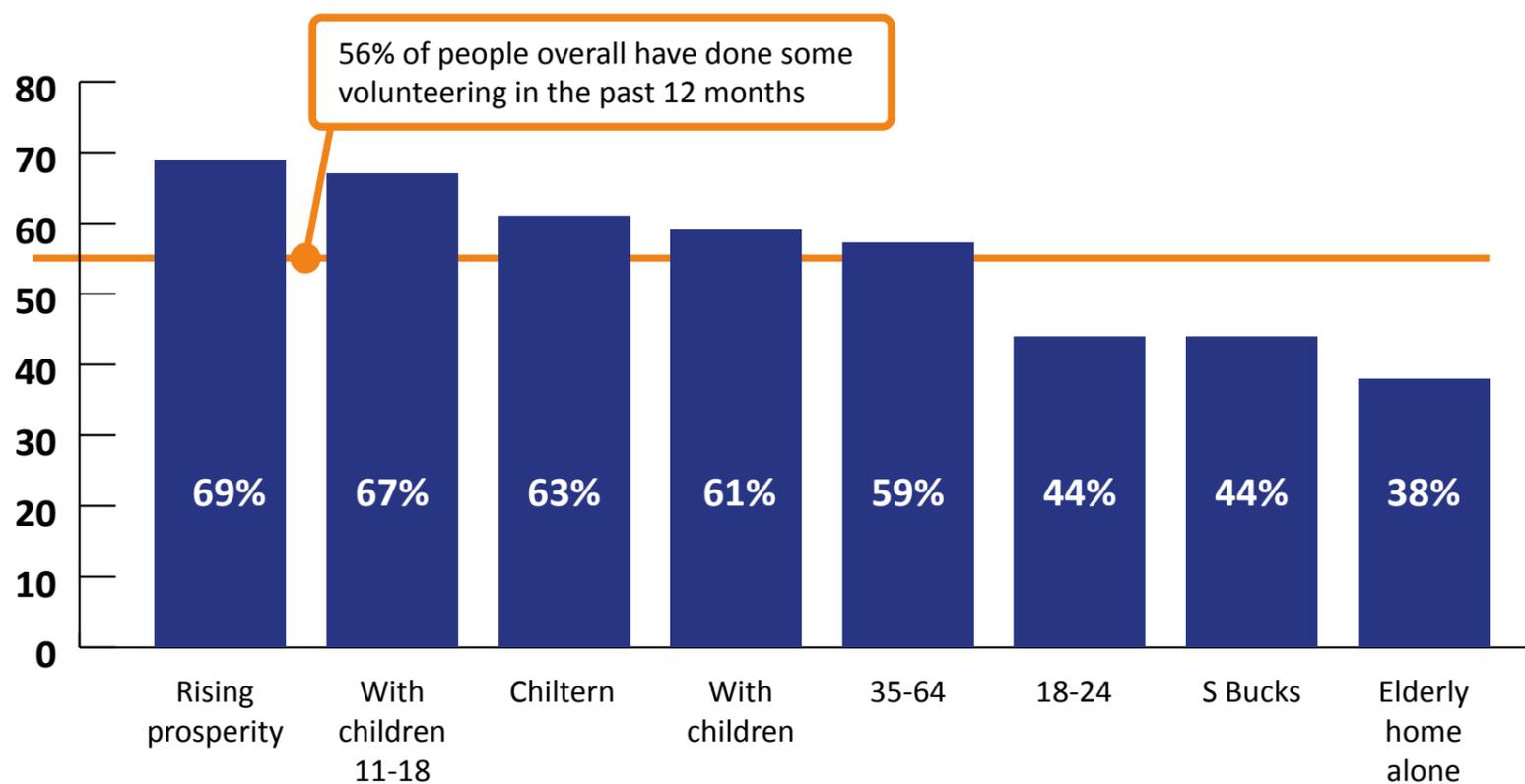
- Whilst this barrier represents a reason for only 5.1% of all respondents, it is accentuated at the lower age group, in this case 16-24 year olds (33.6% of respondents). It will be interesting to see if this changes over time. Whilst overall numbers going to university in the UK has dropped, fuelled by the drop in older students and those coming from the EU, one third of English 18 year olds, and one in four of their Scottish counterparts, have been placed on a degree this year¹⁰

¹⁰ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/record-numbers-teenagers-university-scotland-englandstudy-a7952151.html>

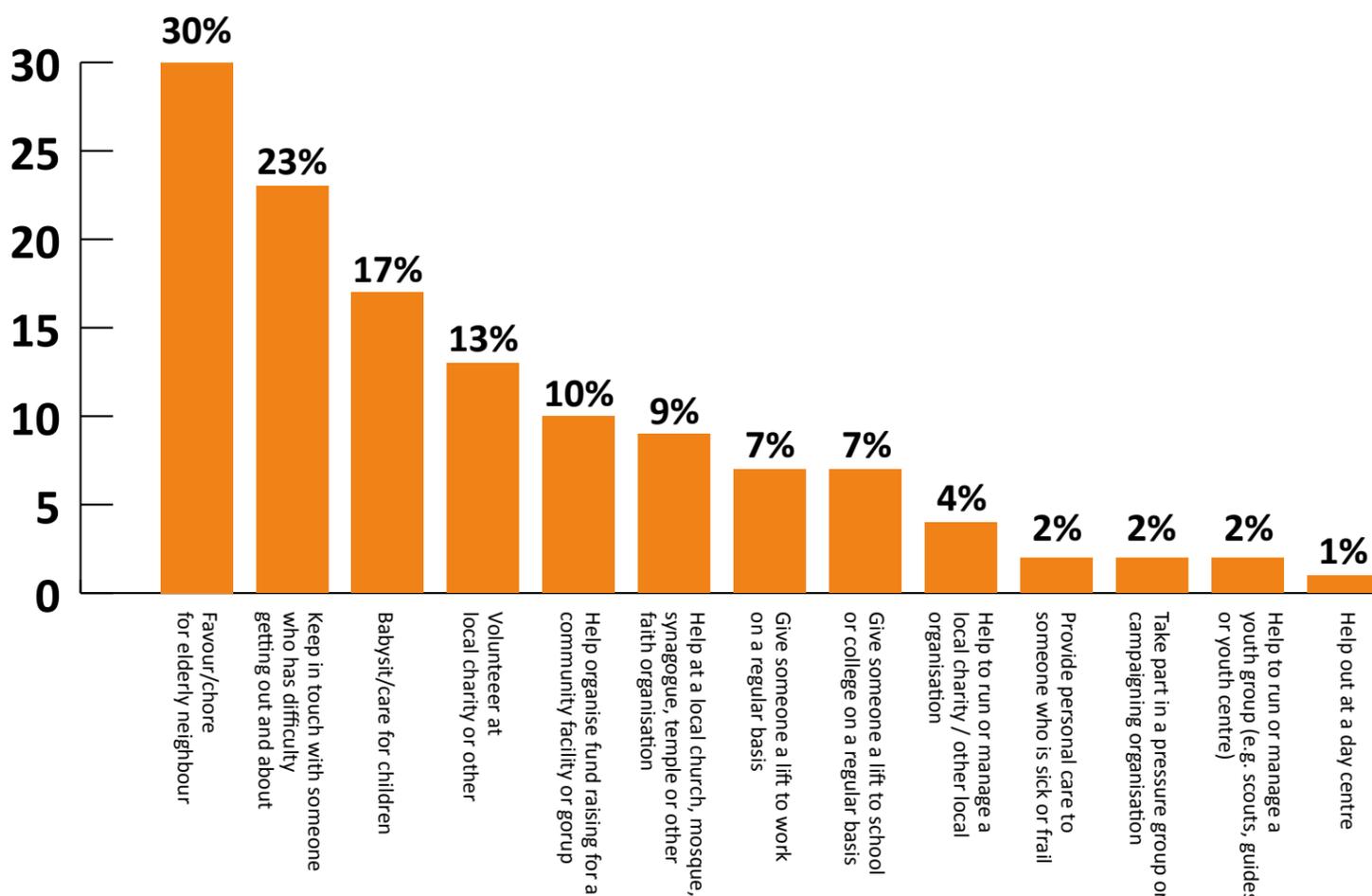
A Snapshot of Volunteers in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire County Council's last residents' survey took place in September 2015. 1,000 people, representative of Buckinghamshire's population, were interviewed face-to-face. Although the survey was 2.5 years ago, the following charts have been included in this report to provide volunteer-involving organisations in the county with an insight into the volunteering behaviours of a sample of residents over a 12 month period.

Community Impact Bucks' State of the Sector Report 2017¹¹ estimates that currently around 175,000 adults in Buckinghamshire volunteer at least once a year, with about two thirds of these volunteering at least once a month.

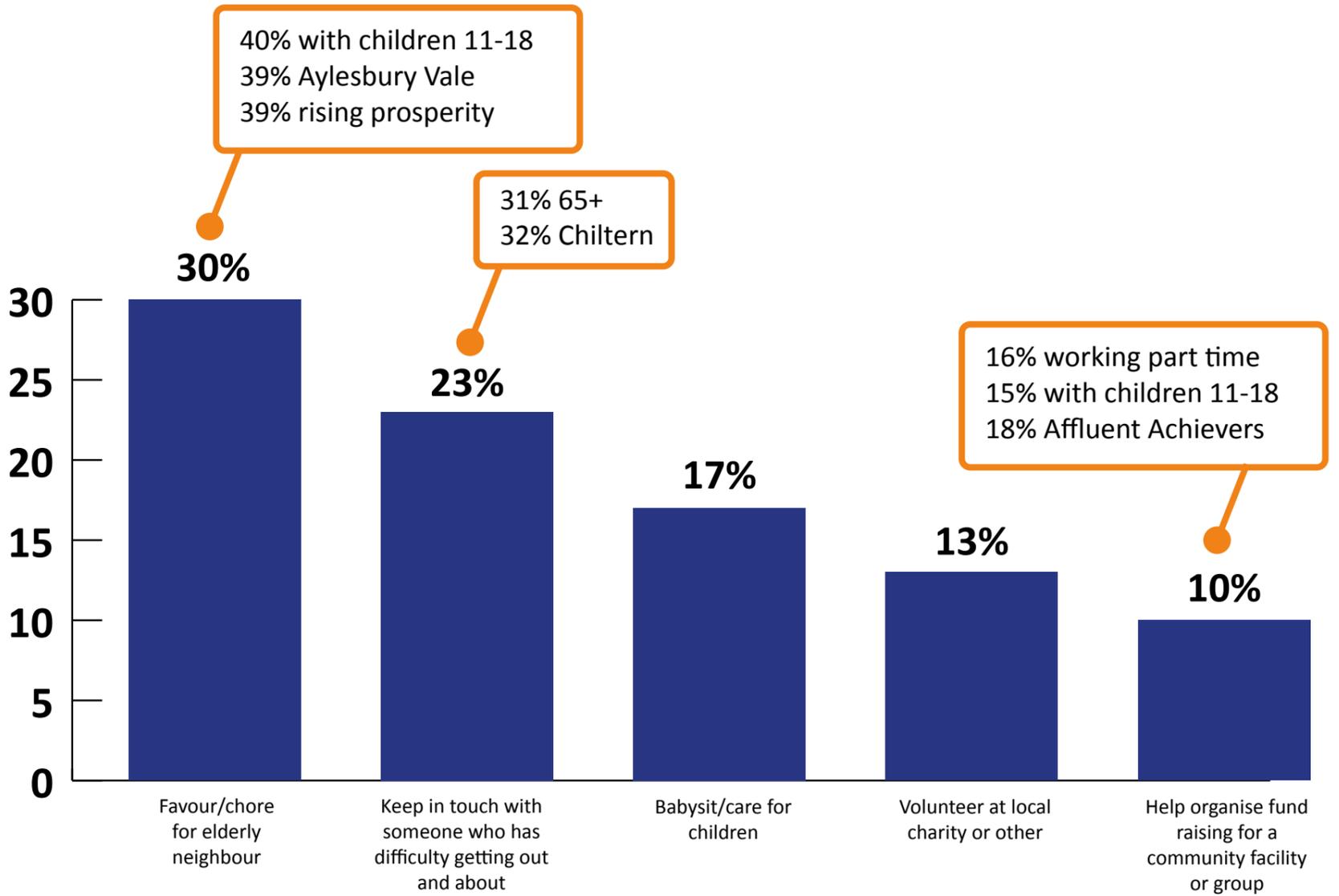


Types of volunteering

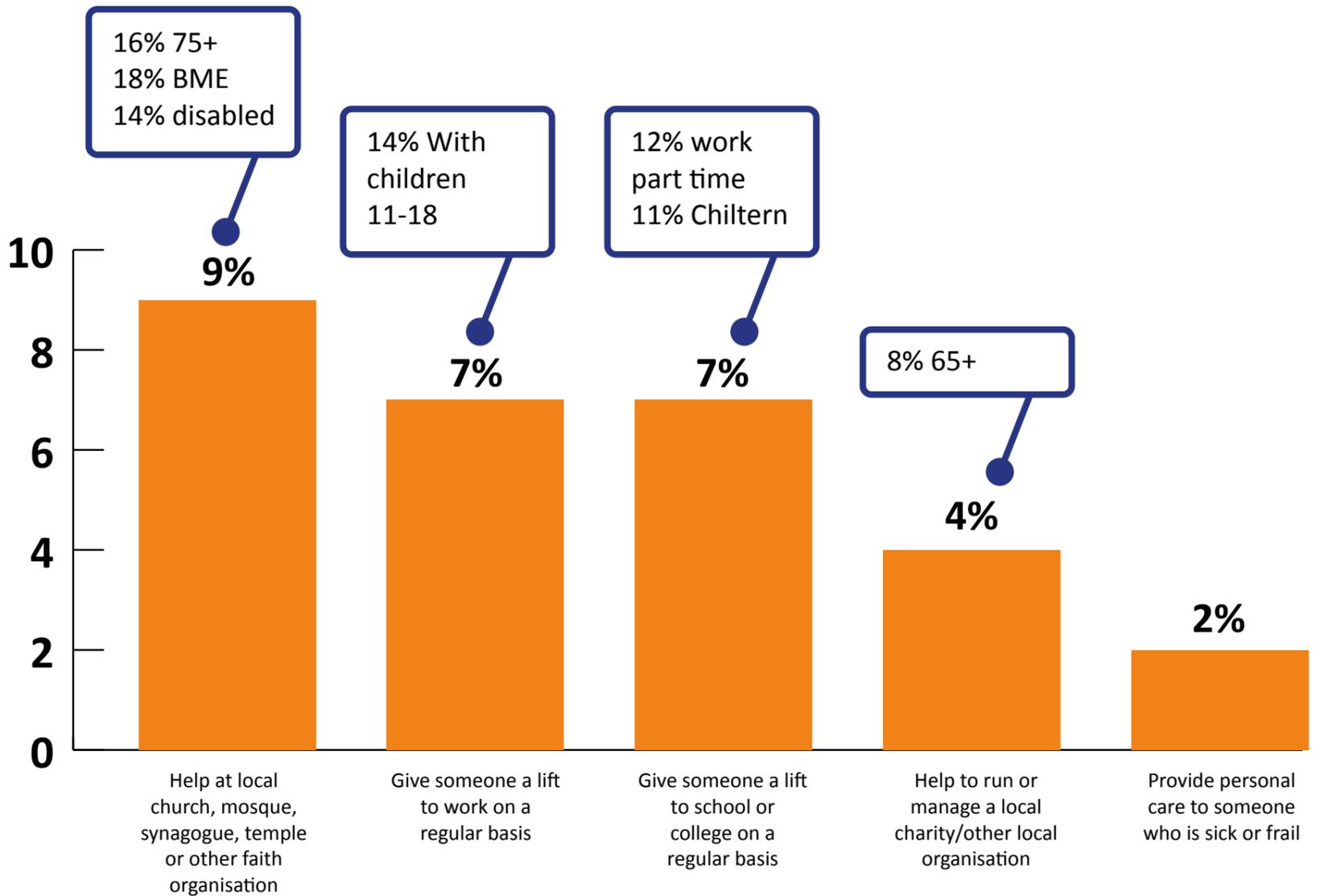


¹¹ <https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/State-of-the-Sector-Report-2017.pdf>

Volunteering breakdown



Volunteering breakdown



Drivers Leading to a need for Innovation in Volunteering

In 2017, there were an estimated 2,505 registered charities in Buckinghamshire with over 175,000 volunteers delivering an estimated unpaid contribution of £225m per year to the UK economy¹². Like every part of society however, volunteering must ride the waves of change apparent in the UK and wider world, and find ways to prosper and grow in order to continue and increase the value it adds in the UK.

With this in mind, before exploring examples of, and suggestions for, innovation within volunteering, it is important to consider some of the drivers behind that innovation and the needs to innovate at this time.

Political, Economic, Social and Technological drivers

1. Generational Shifts – There is economic evidence that those born in the 1980s are the first postwar cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors¹³. The economic factors leading to this are wide, and related to our part in a global economy, itself enabled in part by technology and global transportation advances. The effect of this lowering of income and squeeze on living standards¹⁴ is particularly affecting the Millennials' ability to volunteer (those aged around 22-37 in 2017). As previously stated, the 2015 ONS report using UK Harmonised European Time Use Study (HETUS) data shows minutes volunteered per day for this group have dropped dramatically against levels in 2000¹⁵.

The statistics suggest that those in the youngest age group of 16 to 24 have increased the time they devote to volunteering while those in the 25 to 34 age category have decreased their volunteering time.¹⁶

At the other end of the generational spectrum, further drivers of change are apparent. Whilst it is said that retirement can act as a 'trigger' or catalyst for the older generation to volunteer, as mentioned in the previous barriers section, this group now may have less time to devote to volunteering because family members needed more help. This can be linked in part to a need to devote more time to caring for grandchildren because of childcare costs¹⁷.

There is some evidence from the Northern Ireland project to suggest austerity has put older people under increasing obligations to undertake childcare – at the expense of more formal volunteering activities.¹⁸

This is a trend that will potentially increase given what has been dubbed 'the pensions timebomb'¹⁹ with less people in the working population supporting a greater number who have retired due to extended longevity of life. This is a topic also covered in an article by Rob Jackson in Third Sector, where he points to a number of challenges currently facing the 'squeezed middle' generation (Gen-X) and negatively impacting on their availability to volunteer.²⁰

12 <https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/State-of-the-Sector-Report-2017.pdf>

13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/state-of-the-nation-report-on-social-mobility-in-great-britain>

14 <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/12/uk-cost-of-living-rise-imports-boost-inflation-interestrates>

15 <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/billion-pound-loss-in-volunteering-effort-in-the-last-3-years/>

16 <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/billion-pound-loss-in-volunteering-effort-in-the-last-3-years/>

17 <http://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/wiserd/2015/05/13/economic-austerity-and-older-volunteers/>

18 <http://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/wiserd/2015/05/13/economic-austerity-and-older-volunteers/>

19 <https://www.devere-group.com/news/State-pension-time-bomb.aspx>

20 <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/rob-jackson-squeezed-middle/volunteering/article/1447446>

2. Economic Conditions - Whilst the recession was nearly 10 years ago now, the economic crisis of 2008-09 and its subsequent effects are worth considering given the uncertain economic outlook today. The UK experienced a sharp drop in volunteering following the economic crisis of 2008-09.

The economic recession that followed led to an apparent 'social recession' with a review by the London School of Economics (LSE) identifying formal volunteering declining by around 6%²¹. At the same time, those providing less formal help to friends and neighbours crashed by around 12% in 2 years, a decline the LSE states is usually only seen over generational shifts. When the LSE looked at the drivers behind this, they identified that:

It is in the 20% most disadvantaged communities where the effect was most profound, in these communities there was a 7% decline in volunteering, whereas the 20% least disadvantaged communities volunteering remained stable.²²

Whilst Buckinghamshire is economically generating £15.2bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) with a growth rate of 2.3% (in 2015), it should also be noted that this growth rate was only the 104th in a list of 173 UK regions²³. Buckinghamshire itself has disadvantaged communities, and it is in these that volunteering is likely to have dropped most dramatically.

Note: GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom. GVA is used in the estimation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). $GVA + \text{taxes on products} - \text{subsidies on products} = GDP$ ²⁴

3. Brexit – Further to this, Brexit may have a damaging effect on the economic conditions in the region. An analysis by LSE's Centre for Economic Performance and the Centre for Cities²⁵, has predicted overall GVA (Gross Value Added) will be 1.2% lower on average under 'soft Brexit', and 2.3% lower under 'hard Brexit' (vs remaining in the EU). Whilst figures were not available across the whole region, figures shown for South Bucks are in line with this at 1.1% lower on average under 'soft Brexit', and 2.2% lower under 'hard Brexit'. Given the direction of travel towards Brexit and the possible effect on economic prosperity in Buckinghamshire, its subsequent potential negative effect on volunteering in the region in the coming years is worth highlighting.

4. Individual Need Vs Altruism - A 2014 paper by Jon Dean from Sheffield Hallam University on the dangers of creating a volunteering market²⁶, points to social and economic pressures possibly leading to volunteering becoming an activity to improve one's own skills to better compete in the job market, rather than fulfil a need in society. As a result, there may be a need to shift the volunteer recruitment approach (particularly towards young people) away from altruistic benefits, towards 'selling' the experience the individual can gain from it individually.

5. Corporate Social Responsibility – Across sectors, employees increasingly want to know and feel that the time and skills they put into their jobs are making a tangible, positive difference in the world. This is a common sentiment, especially prevalent among millennials, who are often more likely to seek out positions with organisations that offer and support active community engagement and skillsbased volunteer opportunities.²⁷

64% of Global CEOs say that 'corporate social responsibility is core to their business rather than being a stand-alone programme'²⁸

21 <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/drop-in-volunteering-post-recession/>

22 <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/drop-in-volunteering-post-recession/exit10.pdf> 23 <https://bbf.uk.com/news/buckinghamshires-gross-value-added-2015>

24 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160128204104/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guidemethod/method-quality/specific/economy/national-accounts/gva/relationship-gva-and-gdp/gross-value-addedand-gross-domestic-product.html>

25 <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/brexit10.pdf>

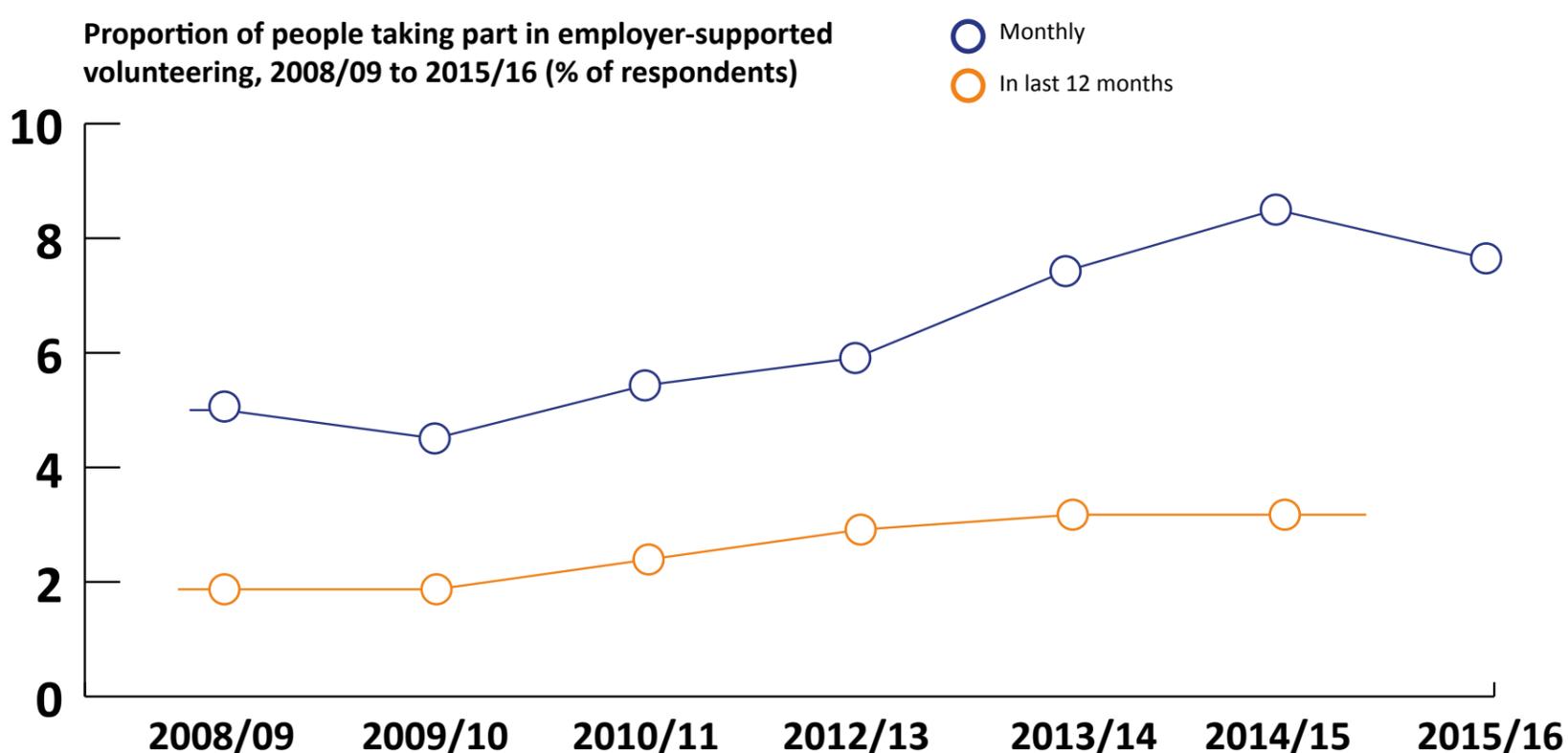
26 <https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/programme.pdf>

27 https://www.huffingtonpost.com/linda-novick-okeefe/csr-grows-in-2016-as-comp_b_13657368.html

28 <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2016/landing-page/pwc-19th-annual-global-ceo-survey.pdf>

One way this is manifesting itself is through individual volunteering engagement via employer - supported schemes. Data pulled together for the Almanac from the Citizenship survey and Community Life survey, show that whilst the percentage of the population is still modest, the number of people engaged in volunteering through this approach could be as high as 4.3 million people²⁹.

Chart 6



6. Mobility – From a volunteering standpoint, geographic mobility across society within the UK is also potentially interesting to consider. In 2015, a WISERD Civil Society, Cardiff University seminar on the impact of economic austerity on the lives of older volunteers (people aged 50+ years) noted the significance of being embedded in the community in order to participate in volunteering, stating³⁰ that:

There is some evidence that people moving into a new area leads to an incentive to volunteer as a means of embedding themselves in the new location

By the nature of location change, this could equally apply to volunteering in other age ranges in society.

For Buckinghamshire, the ONS (Office for National Statistics) estimated the population to be 534,720 in mid-2016, an increase of over 6,000 people since mid-2015³¹. What is interesting, is that migration from within the UK accounted for nearly 25,000 of the new total population estimates in Buckinghamshire in mid-2016³². This has also been an on-going pattern for the past 5 years. So, each year Buckinghamshire has a population that includes nearly 5% of new residents (from within the UK).

Or, to put it another way, if there are around 175,000 individuals volunteering in Buckinghamshire today, each year 25,000 new residents join the community from within the UK with an incentive to engage and volunteer. Given this, innovation is needed to support engaging these new residents in their local community.

²⁹ <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteering-overview/>

³⁰ <http://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/wiserd/2015/05/13/economic-austerity-and-older-volunteers/>

³¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/datasets/localareamigrationindicatorsunitedkingdom>

³² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/datasets/localareamigrationindicatorsunitedkingdom>

Looking further geographically, as previously noted, there are regional differences in volunteer engagement. In the South East of England, 28% of people have volunteered at least once a month, but the East Midlands, West Midlands and the South West are forging ahead, with 33% stating they have volunteered at least once a month³³. This could be down to geographic or socio-demographic reasons, but could equally be due to innovative approaches to volunteer acquisition and retention and may be worth further exploration.

7. Technology – Technological advances have, and will, continue to create opportunities for voluntary organisations, both large and small, to communicate their message and gain support in bigger and also more targeted ways.

90% of households in Great Britain now have internet access, an increase from 57% in 2006. 73% of adults now access the internet “on the go” using a mobile device or smartphone, over double the 2011 rate of 36%. Finding information about goods and services was the second most popular use of the internet (below e-mail) with 71% using it for these purposes, up from 58% in 2007. Social networking use also rose from 45% in 2011, to 66% in 2017.³⁴

Speakers at Community Impact Bucks’ ‘The Digital Journey’ conference in October 2017, highlighted many important ways voluntary organisations can capitalise on these technology trends to drive awareness, fundraising and volunteering. This included how to use social media channels to drive awareness and engagement, and analytics’ tools to understand and better act on the visibility gained.

8. Legal – On 25th May 2018, the current data protection laws will be replaced by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). The key changes are outlined in a number of places, but have also been summarised in a document that law firm DLA Piper has provided on its website³⁵.

As with all organisations, voluntary groups will need to consider the impact of GDPR on how they collect and store data related to volunteers. Community Impact Bucks has a range of suggestions to prepare for GDPR on its website³⁶.

9. Political – Whilst there are clear challenges for the volunteering community and experience going forward (as outlined in these drivers), there is also clearly more that can be done from a political standpoint to enable volunteering barriers to be reduced and improve the volunteer experience. Suggestions around this are captured in blog by Kristen Stephenson (then of NCVO) in 2017³⁷, these include:

- Making it easier and more rewarding for people to volunteer
- Making it easier for volunteers to support our public services, and:
- Making it easier for people to build their skills and get a good job through volunteering .

NCVO sees this as a collaborative effort across the voluntary community, and then working with the government on the relevant changes. It is again important for voluntary organisations to seek early visibility of any changes implemented that may affect volunteering numbers and their experiences.

33 <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteer-profiles-4/>

34 <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/Almanac17/volunteer-profiles-4/>

35 <https://www.dlapiper.com/~media/Files/Insights/Publications/2016/12/General%20Data%20Protection%20Regulation%20Brochure.PDF>

36 <http://www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/pages/gdpr-what-you-need-to-know.html>

37 <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/05/15/a-manifesto-for-volunteering-what-government-can-do-to-helpvolunteering-make-an-even-bigger-difference/>



Courtesy of
St Francis'
Children's Society

A final comment on innovation drivers

All of these drivers of change lead to a necessity to innovate in order to mitigate challenges, and enable traditional, and perhaps less traditional forms of volunteering activity to take place. It also points to some useful avenues to explore further within the Buckinghamshire region around volunteering recruitment and retention innovation. The areas of focus from this section and the wider report to this point will now be highlighted in the following section on **Innovation in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers**.

Innovation in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers

The final section of this report has four specific areas of focus:

1. To specify what innovation means in the context of the voluntary sector
2. To reflect on the previous two sections and signpost where innovation is needed the most (and possibly already occurring due to necessity, but without the label of innovation)
3. To share some examples of innovation with the potential to improve the attraction and retention of volunteers, by design or even as a by-product
4. To share some further suggestions for innovation linked to the areas signposted in this report.

What innovation means

As the NESTA report on Innovation to grow giving in 2014 stated – ‘Don’t get hung up on the term innovation. ... it is important to recognise that innovation means different things to different people. ... Innovation also often depends on the starting point of the organisation involved; what is innovative, creative and different from one organisation may appear to be established practice to another.’³⁸

The above statement from the NESTA report is important for two reasons. Firstly, because it is critical to focus on the outcome being pursued, and not solely the term ‘innovation’, and secondly, because as stated it does depend on the starting point. The ability of an organisation to take risks by trialling and adopting new approaches will vary due to many factors, for example its size, the leadership style, the culture, and overall situation. Whilst we shouldn’t get too focused on the term innovation, it is nevertheless useful to put some very simple parameters around what it can mean:

Innovation, as Dr Max McKeown puts it in his book, *The Truth about Innovation*, can be simply described as ‘new ideas made useful’.³⁹

In the context of this report, ‘new ideas made useful’ is related to Buckinghamshire volunteer-involving organisations capitalising successfully on the local population’s motivations to volunteer, whilst also successfully navigating the changing conditions affecting their ability to do so.

Dr McKeown goes on to say that whilst all innovations are new, they will vary in their degree of newness. Innovations can be:

- **Incremental** – Small steps on an approach already existing
- **Radical** – Major improvements often very different from the status quo
- **Revolutions** – When groups of innovations together cause a huge far reaching change.

As a result, whilst innovation does mean different things to different organisations, in the process of compiling this section of the report, each form of potential innovation has been considered and sought out.

Where innovation is needed most /should be happening

The first two sections of this report outlined the volunteer cohorts that exist, their motivations, the barriers to volunteering, and the drivers changing conditions in the voluntary sector as it moves forward.

The next section of this report details areas of opportunity for innovation:

All individuals

1. Find innovative ways to engage time poor individuals in volunteering – particularly those who have stopped volunteering due to time constraints (58% said they now didn’t have enough time, 19% said it took too much time)
2. Better engaging with the nearly 13% of individuals who have never thought about volunteering at all, along with the 10% who have not heard about opportunities to volunteer
3. Find innovative new ways to make volunteering appeal when it is competing with ‘other things’ people do with their spare time (27.5% stated this as a reason for not volunteering)

³⁸ https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/innovation_to_grow_giving_wv.pdf

³⁹ https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-wont-believe-how-useful-ive-made-definition-dr-maxmckeown/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_profile_view_base_post_details%3B2T8yebVAToCnTvLCutflSw%3D%3D

4. Given historic 'crashes' in formal and informal volunteering in economically challenged times, ensure new approaches are taken to ensure the stability of volunteering in the most disadvantaged groups. This is particularly needed given the predicted, yet definitively unknown, effects that Brexit will have on the economy
5. Present the experience/soft benefits of volunteering for individuals – for example, demonstrating the health improvements from volunteering, or CV-enhancing boost that the volunteering experience can offer
6. Activity to engage the 25,000 new residents in Buckinghamshire each year who have an incentive to volunteer in order to engage in their new local community
7. Consider how to harness technology further, given, for example, that access to the internet via a mobile device is now used by 73% of the population and rising.

Younger group specifically

8. Focus volunteer messaging/engagement activity particularly on 16-34 year olds, where 17% have not heard about opportunities to volunteer, and the 17% of 16-24 year olds who do not know of any groups who need help
9. 16-24 year olds have increased the time they give to volunteering. As a result, it is even more critical to promote the experience/soft benefits (as per Point 5 above) that they can gain in order to attract and retain increasing numbers of them in volunteering. This is critical for those looking to develop new skills for the future
10. Find ways to engage those studying in volunteering, as studying is seen as a barrier for 34% of 16-24 year olds.
11. As a group more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends, think innovatively to create an environment for younger people to make friends through volunteering

Mid-life group specifically

12. As with Point 1, find innovative ways to enable the 69% of 35-54 year olds, who stated work commitments as a barrier, to engage in volunteering, whilst meeting their work obligations. Look for examples of what can be done to tap into the continuing trend towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
13. Find ways to help this group balance volunteering with childcare needs (49.3% said looking after children was a barrier)
14. This age group engages in volunteering where the cause is important to them. Find innovative ways to promote charitable causes to this cohort of potential volunteers.

Older group specifically

15. As the population continues to live longer, take action to ensure that (where appropriate) over 75 year olds do not feel that they are too old to volunteer (52% believe they are).
16. As with Point 13 for the mid-life group, find innovative ways to enable retirees to engage in volunteering activities, whilst still ensuring that they are able to carry out their increased childcare activities (a barrier for 17% of 54-75 year olds)
17. As a group also more likely to volunteer to meet people/make friends, again think innovatively about how to engage this group before they retire, and also create an environment for this older group to make friends through volunteering.

In discussing the drivers and trends with a number of Buckinghamshire volunteer-involving organisations at the ‘The Digital Journey’ conference held by Community Impact Bucks in October 2017, it was clear that a number had been impacted by the earlier mentioned drivers, and were actively seeking innovative ideas to address the new challenges that are emerging.)

Following on from the above points, in her November 2017 “Trends in Volunteering” webinar⁴⁰, Jarina Choudhury, Volunteering Development Consultant at NCVO, sums up the volunteer of the future as follows:

- Time poor but values time
- Loyal to cause
- Digitally aware
- Wants meaningful engagement
- Online and offline
- Needs flexibility.

Innovations in Attracting and Retaining Volunteers

The final section of this report addresses the previously mentioned areas of opportunity for innovation in attracting and retaining volunteers, by providing background information, examples, and suggestions for the future, where appropriate. Although the majority of the volunteer-involving groups that Community Impact Bucks supports are small (half have a turnover of less than £25,000), and therefore may not have the financial, people or physical resources to implement some of the examples and suggestions given, it is hoped that they can be adapted to make them suitable for use. Community Impact Bucks runs free monthly Volunteering Advice Surgeries, where issues and ideas can be discussed in confidence. Visit the **Events’** section of the website to book.

1. Presenting Volunteering around the Experience/Soft Benefits to the Individual

Background

nfpSynergy’s **The New Alchemy** report from March 2015⁴¹, describes today’s volunteer as wanting to know “what is in it for them, be it career-experience, a life-changing experience or a chance to use their skills, build team morale or make friends”. It states that “volunteering experiences that fail to take these motives into account or respect that a placement is a two-way street will always be a struggle to fill and remain high in turnover”.

nfpSynergy’s report urges us to ‘market the product and the mission, not “volunteering”’ – to think about both existing and potential audiences, and identify existing opportunities: ‘Brainstorm the new avenues that always seemed a bit too risky or unfeasible and productise your offers in a way that enables targeted marketing’. The report includes the following examples: “You’re asking a semi-retired baby boomer to contribute one or two mornings a week to assist with stocktaking in their local shop, or for young families to sign up for a weekend to work on an environmental project as a change from the Saturday matinee”. There are numerous examples of innovations in this area, however, for the purposes of this report, two examples related to young people are given below. The ability for young people to demonstrate involvement in voluntary activities in order to enhance their CVs, is of utmost importance nowadays. Indeed, the UCAS form now asks for examples of how young people have spent time volunteering.

⁴⁰ <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/12/12/volunteering-round-up-december-2017/>

⁴¹ <https://nfpsynergy.net/free-report/new-alchemy>

Example 1

A great example of delivering learning and development as part of the volunteering experience is from the Princess Alice Hospice which was recognised with an award for an innovative Ward Support Volunteer programme for 17 year olds at the Hospice UK Awards in 2016.

The programme, which was launched in September 2015, offers young people a bespoke training package including face-to-face and online learning, whilst volunteering in the Hospice working directly with patients, alongside staff members on the In-Patient Unit. The young people help to provide a range of services and they also have the opportunity to gain the Care Certificate qualification.⁴²

Using different approaches to provide learning for one certificate, can be seen as ‘blended learning’ which is “an education program (formal or non-formal) that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods”⁴³.

Other examples of this approach are found in organisations like Macmillan,⁴⁴ where volunteers in a wide variety of disciplines have an induction and on-going learning available, and also the Motor Neurone Association⁴⁵. Further information on effective volunteer training can be found on the NCVO website⁴⁶. Although the above is related to medical conditions, this type of learning and development could be applied to various different settings. If established as a wider, ongoing programme, this type of approach is potentially a useful tool for retaining volunteers, for example, by having different levels or areas of certification available for achievement. Of course, it is appreciated that setting up even a simple inhouse course for one area of volunteering, and keeping it current, would take up significant time and resources, although once created it could be reused by numerous volunteers, numerous times.

Example 2

In her report, **Volunteering and social action among teenagers**⁴⁷, Joanna Stuart from the Institute of Volunteering Research (part of NCVO) cites research suggesting that leadership courses (such as the Sports Leaders UK awards and qualifications), which include volunteering and social action* activities, can make a difference to teenagers’ interest in getting involved in their community. In order to harness this enthusiasm, Joanna Stuart says that it is important for volunteer-involving organisations, clubs and groups to do the following:

- Provide flexible opportunities, including ‘taster’ sessions and activities with family and friends
- Highlight to potential volunteers how their volunteering will benefit a particular cause/help people, and how it will benefit them – for example, by having fun, meeting new people and being able to make a difference.

The research lists the following factors (in order of importance) that would encourage teenagers’ further participation in volunteering and social action, and should be kept in mind by any charity or community groups seeking to retain young volunteers:

- If it was close to where I live
- If it related to my interests e.g. sport
- If it was in my free time
- If I could do it with my family/friends
- If I knew how it would benefit me/my career or others/the environment
- If I could try it once to see if I liked it.

42 <https://www.pah.org.uk/win-award-innovation-volunteering/> 43 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blended_learning

44 <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/learning-development.html>

45 <https://www.mndassociation.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-zone/learning-and-development/>

46 <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/training/effective-volunteer-training#>

47 <https://centres.sportsleaders.org/media/880130/year-2-summary-report-2016.pdf>

Although the examples above are focused on young people, the idea of a specific programme to attract volunteers that offers something over altruism could be widely applied to many groups – job seekers of any age, and those motivated by a sense of achievement.

***Social action is about people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can include volunteering, giving money, community action or simple neighbourly acts.**

2. The Time Poor Challenge and Making Volunteering Appealing

Background

In his June 2017 podcast⁴⁸, Karl Wilding, Director of Public Policy and Volunteering at NCVO, stresses the need to think differently about the concept of time and volunteer roles. The perception that volunteering is a regular, binding commitment of time can put people off – they are looking for more flexible opportunities that fit around their lives. Karl Wilding remarks that volunteering should be seen as a social rather than an individual phenomenon. He notes that it is often the busy, connected people that are more likely to volunteer as they have the strongest social networks, and are more likely to get asked to volunteer and therefore are more likely to take up opportunities. Since volunteering faces substantial competition from other leisure activities, for example, the increasing consumption of mass media, charities and community groups need to respond to this by making volunteering with them as appealing as possible.

In the same podcast, Helen Timbrell, former Volunteering Participation Director at the National Trust, cites volunteering at different times of the day, running volunteering programmes with clearer start and finish times, and enabling people to volunteer in groups with people they already know/ their families, as good ways of engaging time poor people. She states that volunteering needs to be developed as a product (as mentioned earlier in nfp Synergy's report), packaged up with flexible options to make it more attractive to a wider range of people. Kristen Stephenson (formerly of NCVO) supports this by saying that volunteer managers need to have a diverse range of good quality opportunities on offer; the offer being made to volunteers needs to include more regular commitments, as well as more flexible roles.

Example: Episodic or Micro-Volunteering

 Small bite-size volunteering with no commitment to repeat and with minimum formality involving short and specific actions that are quick to start and complete.⁴⁹ 

When this type of volunteering involves going online, it is well suited to the 73% of adults revealed earlier in this report to now be accessing the internet “on the go” using a smart device, and specifically individuals aged 16 to 34 years where virtually all were recent internet users (99%), in contrast with 41% of adults aged 75 years and over. It could also be an approach to engage the time poor Generation X in volunteering.

⁴⁸ <https://soundcloud.com/ncvo/ncvo-podcast-episode-1?in=ncvo/sets/ncvo-podcast>

⁴⁹ <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/12/12/volunteering-round-up-december-2017/>



Courtesy of
Wheelpower

The #1MillionHours' volunteering campaign

This campaign ran throughout 2016 by BBC Radio 1 and 1Xtra, in conjunction with 4 featured charities, and involved both stations motivating their young listeners (18-25 year olds) to pledge 1 million hours of time to good causes over the next 12 months. Cancer Research UK was one of the charities involved, and at the Association of Volunteer Managers' conference in October 2017, Emily Cottrell, Volunteer Acquisition Manager, highlighted the online game that young people could take part in as a micro-volunteering activity:

◀ In Reverse The Odds, players helped a band of colourful creatures whose world is falling into decline, by completing mini puzzle games and rebuilding their magical world. To do that, players earned potions – by answering simple questions about bladder and lung cancer samples. The game won, among other awards, a Digital Emmy and received high praise from the gaming industry and scientists alike. ▶

As well as this being an innovative example of involving volunteers, Emily Cottrell also explained that the campaign was so successful because it tapped into the passions of young people, and thus made it an attractive proposition to compete with their other time commitments, for example studying. Due to its massive reach, the campaign was able to engage individuals who might never have thought about volunteering, or who were not aware of opportunities to volunteer. It is interesting to note that spikes in the campaign were recorded during periods when there was additional case study promotion on social media, peer recommendation, and powerful celebrity endorsements.

The content was varied, fresh and engaging, with a multitude of pictures, tweets and videos. The language used was very inclusive: “we/let’s do this”, and authenticity was achieved by DJs spending time talking to volunteers. The campaign was a huge success, with 1.1 million volunteering hours being pledged.

Running a campaign closer to home NB this is applicable to all types of volunteering opportunities

Whilst it is appreciated that Buckinghamshire volunteer-involving organisations do not have the resources to run campaigns on such a large scale, the county is fortunate to benefit from not for profit community radio stations including Wycombe Sound (wycombesound.org.uk) and Chiltern Voice (chilternvoice.fm). Both are eager to promote local charities and community groups and their volunteer roles. It is highly recommended to get in touch with them.

Key points for a local volunteer recruitment campaign

- Make it as easily as possible for volunteers to sign up and start as quickly as possible (taking into account, of course, time for DBS checks and taking up references) i.e. a simple onboarding process
- As mentioned earlier, have a flexible offer with a variety of roles. Please note that younger people may be more receptive to the word ‘social action’, rather than ‘volunteering’
- Maximise the benefits of the roles: include a Benefits’ section in each role profile. When shaping a role, start with the task required first. Clearly communicate what the volunteer experience is likely to be
- Clearly explain the impact of the role on the organisation and/or local community
- Where, possible, enable volunteers to shape roles to their passions/interests
- Offer taster days.

Other examples

Additional micro-volunteering activities using technology include signing an online petition, retweeting a message, recording chapters of audio books, to tagging photos to assist the visually impaired. Episodic volunteering, however, does not have to involve activity taking place exclusively online.

Examples include: manually proof reading a document, bucket collections, and people getting together in groups. Excellent examples of embedding volunteering into people’s busy daily lives by tying it in with lifestyle activities, are:

- **casseroleclub.com**: specially designed to connect people who like to cook with their older neighbours who aren’t always able to cook for themselves
- **goodgym.org**: a community of runners that combines getting fit with visiting isolated/older people, spending time with them and doing odd jobs
- **northlondoncares.org.uk**: a community network of young professionals and older neighbours spending time together and helping one another out.

It is worth noting that in her November 2017 “Trends in Volunteering” webinar, Jarina Choudhury, Volunteering Development Consultant at NCVO, highlights social media as a very good recruitment method for Episodic Volunteering.

3. Engaging those who have Not Heard about Opportunities/ Groups that Need Help

As previously stated, this barrier to volunteering is accentuated for younger adults (16-34 year olds). As the UCAS form now asks for applicants to give examples of volunteering, many young people do have a powerful motivation to volunteer, so it is important to capitalise on this. Even if they do not intend going on to further education, volunteering experiences are key to enhancing CVs and life skills.

Schools, colleges and universities are urged to also promote the benefits of volunteering to students, and volunteer-involving organisations to approach local institutions to discuss their opportunities. vInspired should be promoted to students. vInspired is the UK's leading volunteering charity for 14-25 year olds, and enables volunteer-involving organisations across the country to advertise their volunteer roles, and young people to apply directly. Community Impact Bucks also encourages local organisations to register and post their roles on this site.

In an article in the Guardian⁵⁰, Stephen Hill from Beat Bullying explains that online social networking offers a powerful tool for attracting younger audiences as volunteers, enabling a variety of ways to engage and build online communities, and is certainly essential so that organisations do not miss out on the skills and enthusiasm of younger people.

Those interested in reading further about how online engagement with young people can lead to offline impact, are encouraged to read vInspired's September 2013 report exploring four digital trends that lead to genuine impact in the real world.⁵¹

4. Using Technology to Facilitate Volunteering

Background

Technology can create far greater reach, and improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness massively as seen in the examples below.

Example 1

The development of more apps like **GoodSam** will facilitate social action in a way that wouldn't be possible without technology. ... (Due to these technology developments) we're also likely to see more people taking part in traditional forms of social action that many people across the UK rely on, from volunteering in times of emergency to peer-to-peer support for carers and people with long-term conditions.⁵²

<https://www.goodsamapp.org/> – “a tool utilising the latest in App development that intends to alert those with medical training to nearby emergencies so that potentially life-saving interventions can be given before the arrival of emergency services. ... Good SAM is a community of Good Samaritans, happy to assist if they are the closest person to an emergency. Many are off duty doctors, nurses, paramedics and other members of the emergency services. They are trained in first aid and may have additional skills. They can maintain an airway, help stop bleeding and if necessary help perform lifesaving cardiopulmonary resuscitation”⁵³.

50 <https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2013/oct/25/top-tips-for-engaging-young-volunteers-usingtechnology>

51 <https://vinspired.com/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTQvMDMvMTEvMTcvMjcNDYvMTk0LzA3XzEzXzI3MF92SW5zcGlyZWRF25saW5lX0VuZ2FnZW1lbn-RfT2ZmbGluZV9JbXBhY3RfUmVwb3J0LnBkZiJdXQ>

52 <https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2015/mar/11/apps-encouraging-volunteers-charity>

53 <https://www.goodsamapp.org/about>

This could be seen as a radical innovation given that it is very different from the status quo. It is appreciated, however, that the development, maintenance and evolution of such an app, and engagement with the volunteer users would be beyond the resources (financial and physical) of the majority of small charities and community groups.

Example 2

The National Trust has a website, called myvolunteering, where volunteers have their own profile, can claim expenses, record hours and update their rotas. myvolunteering also showcases correspondent and volunteer stories, contains document resources and provides up-to-date National Trust news. A monthly myvolunteering newsletter is produced, and there is a volunteers' Facebook group to help everyone keep in touch and share experiences and ideas nationally.

Example 3

The Chiltern Society (<https://chilternsociety.org.uk/>) has a fresh, modern, website, which details the volunteering schedule – dates, times, and locations, and enables volunteers to add them to their electronic calendars. It also has up-to-date Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages with engaging content featuring numerous photographs.

Buckinghamshire New University has a very active student volunteering programme. It advertises volunteering opportunities on its dedicated volunteering portal (<https://www.bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteeringportal/>) which enables students to express their interest directly in roles either within the university itself, or outside.

The university recognises volunteering through hourly increments of 25, 50, 100 and 250, and students who reach these targets will receive a certificate. Students who reach 100 and 250 hours will have their certificates signed by the Vice Chancellor, and will have the chance to receive a personal reference by the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

The university works closely with each external organisation to ensure that they have the necessary policies in place to support and protect the students. When students have expressed interest in particular roles, the Volunteer Co-ordinator discusses the roles with them in more depth before releasing their contact details to the external organisations. The university has the Investing in Volunteers' qualification.

Example 4

Community Impact Bucks is delighted to have partnerships with the key national online volunteer brokerage organisations: Do-it (for more general volunteering roles) and Reach Volunteering (for specialist skilled roles – short term and ongoing - requiring at least 3 years' professional experience, and trustee roles). Both websites enable volunteers to create an account, set up a profile and search and apply for roles posted by volunteer-involving organisations. Reach Volunteering also enables recruiters to contact volunteers on a speculative basis, and promotes roles on LinkedIn, which exposes them to a massive additional audience. Both Do-it and Reach services are free for both volunteers and organisations, although charges do apply for organisations with a turnover of more than £1million that are looking for trustees.

MediaTrust is a further example of a national body which enables volunteer-involving organisations to post opportunities for creative and media volunteers online, and for volunteers to apply directly. It also regularly organises face-to-face speed matching events for volunteers and organisations, with registration taking place online. Again, this is free for both volunteers and organisations.

Indeed, there is a long list of online volunteer brokerage services. Other key examples include:

- **Volo:** an online platform that brings individuals, companies and charities together to create social change
- **GoProBono:** a “super hub” for professional skills-based volunteering enabling organisations to engage with individuals offering their services pro-bono
- **Pilotlight:** a charity that manages teams of senior business people to coach charities through the process of building measurably more sustainable and efficient organisations
- **Slivers-of-Time:** a social business which has developed a web-based platform that makes it really easy for people to volunteer their spare time to employers, voluntary organisations or their local community.

5. Dealing with the Childcare Issues many Face when Seeking to Volunteer

One of the ways in which volunteering can be made more accessible and flexible, is by giving consideration as to how roles might be fulfilled at different times. In Karl Wilding’s previously mentioned June 2017 podcast, Alan Murray, Head of Volunteering and Engagement at the RSPB, cites the example of shop roles requiring more volunteer cover at the busiest time from 10-3pm, rather than from the traditional 9-5pm. This would be better for parents (and grandparents) of school age children. It is perfectly legitimate to reimburse volunteers for reasonable expenses incurred due to caring for dependants – including children – whilst they are carrying out their roles. NCVO’s Knowhow NonProfit website includes useful information about which volunteer expenses should be reimbursed: <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-expenses>.

6. Engaging the Pre-retiree Community in Volunteering

Background

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) can be a useful way for employers to prepare employees for retirement. Although not all organisations have the capacity to give staff time off, they can promote volunteering to employees who are reaching retirement; this might be by using employee payslips, intranet, noticeboards or company newsletters. Charitable organisations are encouraged to approach local employers with a view to providing information about suitable local opportunities and their benefits via soft/hard copy, or short presentation slots. Opportunities might be skills-based, providing retirees with the opportunity to continue using their professional skills, or a chance to try something completely different.

It is interesting to note that fewer than one in five people take up volunteering for the first time after retirement⁵⁴. It is hoped, unless other factors, for example ill health, preclude it, that they will continue this volunteering habit long after retirement, and will not be part of the 52% of over 75 year olds who feel that they are too old to volunteer (as revealed earlier in this report). It may be possible for organisations to overturn this mindset by using case studies of older volunteers when marketing the concept of volunteering to retirees – for example, to members of U3A, Probus and older members of WI. The skills and life experiences of volunteers over 75 years old are invaluable, and certainly it would be a real shame for these individuals to miss out on opportunities to build social connections and a sense of purpose just because they feel that they are too old!

⁵⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2017/jun/09/volunteering-good-for-people-how-encouragethose-benefit-most>

Example

In Karl Wilding's June 2017 podcast, Kristen Stephenson (formerly of NCVO) states that it is important not to assume that older volunteers will want to do structured roles as they often have a wealth of experience and can shape their own projects. She cites Volunteering Matters' Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) which asks older people what matters to them in their community, and enables them to set up and participate in their own volunteering activities. An example is knitting groups, which are growing increasingly popular with over 5,000 social action knitters across the UK producing in excess of 50 big bin-bags worth of knitted goods per month.

Further RSVP projects can be found on the Volunteering Matters' website: <https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/pillars/older-people/>

7. Engaging the 'Newly Located' in Buckinghamshire

Examples

New Neighbours is a free local information service for new residents/home movers across Buckinghamshire. It connects with around 6,000 new residents each year, including the provision of hard copy packs. Community Impact Bucks promotes access to Buckinghamshire-based volunteering opportunities through this service, and highly recommends local charitable organisations to get in touch with the service as an additional route to promote their roles: <https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/service.page?id=tFhTDTYP1c4>

Community Impact Bucks is working with Buckinghamshire County Council and the district councils to ensure that volunteering in the local community is promoted via their websites and other materials, for example in local libraries.

8. Engaging those from the most Disadvantaged Communities in Volunteering

Background

Young people

The #iwill campaign started in 2012, and promotes social action among 10-20 year-olds from all backgrounds. This includes activities such as campaigning, fundraising and volunteering, all of which create a double-benefit – to communities and young people themselves.

So far, more than 700 business, education and voluntary sector partners have committed to embedding social action into the lives of young people, providing a number of high quality opportunities, ensuring social action is inclusive, and by helping young people to develop a habit of social action.

Research on behalf of the #iwill campaign, however, shows that in 2014 and 2015 there was a significant socioeconomic gap in participation in youth social action. This gap unfortunately continues into adulthood. Steve Holliday's recently released Independent Review of Full Time Social Action looks into young people (aged 16-25 years old) giving over 16 hours a week or more for six months or more, to social action activities. The consultation involved 180 organisations and individuals from across the UK. The following statement on the #iwill website is encouraging:



Courtesy of
**Aylesbury
Vineyard
Storehouse**

the key to inclusive expansion will be to find solutions to ensure that more young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds can participate in youth social action without financial hardship. The Review reiterates that young people from less affluent communities stand to gain the most from Full Time Social Action and yet they are the people least able to commit to it under present circumstances.⁵⁵

And from Karl Wilding, Director of Public Policy and Volunteering at NCVO: “I am pleased to see that the independent report clearly acknowledges the value of full-time social action. The recommendations are closely aligned with what is already considered best practice in volunteering, and I’m confident that they will be an important tool in making full-time social action, and indeed all forms of volunteering, even more accessible and inclusive across all sections of society. At NCVO we’ve long believed that we need to do more to make it easier for people to get involved in their community.....The recommendations on greater clarity for job centres are especially welcome. Young people are often unsure of their rights around volunteering while job-seeking, so NCVO has been calling for better support for job coaches for some time, so they can help young people harness the opportunities that volunteering provides.”⁵⁶

Older people

In an article in the Guardian⁵⁷, Dan Jones, Director of Innovation and Change at the Centre for Ageing Better, reveals that although those aged over 75 are just as likely to volunteer once a month as people aged 16-49, they tend to be healthier and wealthier than non-volunteers – and they already have stronger relationships and social networks. He writes that unfortunately those people who have the most to gain from volunteering in later life, for example because they are lonely, are actually less likely to take part.

55 <http://www.iwill.org.uk/full-time-social-action-review-published/>

56 <http://www.iwill.org.uk/full-time-social-action-review-published/>

57 <https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2017/jun/09/volunteering-good-for-people-how-encouragethose-benefit-most>

Rates of volunteering in the most disadvantaged communities in England are only half those found in richer areas – this may be partly due to higher incidences of ill health and disability in disadvantaged communities, since poor health is one of the biggest barriers to taking part; people aged over 50 who are in excellent health are five times as likely to volunteer as those in poor health.

Dan Jones continues by stating that formal volunteering is too often seen as a white, middle class activity – and it may be that there is lots of activity going on in communities that people do not consider as volunteering (for example unpaid help focused on the extended family or places of worship), and that is not recorded in official surveys or academic research. “While there are often fewer organisations or formal volunteering opportunities in disadvantaged communities, people are just as likely to help each other out when needed”.

It will be interesting to read the results of the research to be carried out by the Centre for Ageing Better, and led by older people in four disadvantaged communities across England to understand better the patterns of voluntary activities in these places – what people are already doing to help themselves and their neighbours, and the best ways that they can be supported.

9. Harnessing the trend towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Many employers see volunteering as a way to boost team dynamics and give something back. Skills-based volunteering takes this one step further and offers mutual gain for both the employees who offer their time and those who benefit from their skills and ideas.⁵⁸

Background

nfpSynergy’s **The New Alchemy** report devotes a considerable section to addressing the benefits of workplace engagement in terms of employees volunteering their specialist, rather than practical skills, which have involved teams of employees going in and painting community centres and clearing up canals, for example. It notes that this type of volunteering, as well as being good for team building, also “provides an entry point for employees to engage further as private individuals”. Indeed, as noted earlier in this report, the mid-life group engages in volunteering where the cause is important to them. Cause related marketing (CRM) involves a volunteer-involving organisation linking more intrinsically with a business, enabling it to reinforce its CSR policy, increase sales, raise mutual brand awareness, and strengthen brand loyalty through demonstrating its commitment to the local community. This greater connection with a business may lead to increased volunteering from employees due to a heightened understanding of a charity’s work, particularly if it is family- or health-related.

Rennie Grove Hospice Care is a charity providing care and support for patients in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire diagnosed with life-limiting illness. It has a comprehensive Corporate Partnership programme, and further information can be found here: <http://www.renniegrove.org/support/companies/cause-related-marketing>

Example 1

In September 2016, Volunteering Matters launched ‘Talent Matters’⁵⁹ aimed at businesses seeking to both develop their staff, but also keen to give something back to society potentially as part of their CSR programme. Talent Matters enabled employees to contribute 20-30 hours of professional advice and coaching, over a 2-3 month period, to a worthwhile cause or organisation.

⁵⁸ <http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/how-skills-based-volunteering-can-boost-careers/>

⁵⁹ <https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/news/volunteering-matters-launches-talent-matters/>

Although, unfortunately, the funding does not currently exist in Buckinghamshire to replicate this programme, volunteer-involving organisations are encouraged to approach the HR departments of local businesses with consultative or project-based placements that professionals can carry out within their working hours. The New Alchemy report provides some interesting examples: a simple rolling company commitment to a lunch club, with individual employees signing up to one lunchtime per fortnight, or more ambitious rolling placements involving more focused support on research, finance, HR or marketing. The report notes, however, that volunteering should be presented as entirely voluntary in nature, rather than an additional duty which employees are under pressure to take on.

Example 2

Regardless of whether businesses actively organise volunteering (practical or skills-based) for their workforce, many organisations do allocate their workforce a few paid days per year for volunteering activities, which can be used to participate in individual projects. With this in mind, volunteer-involving organisations are strongly urged to advertise their volunteer roles requiring specialist skills on Reach Volunteering, which, as detailed earlier in this report, promotes these on LinkedIn, as well on its own website. As the vast majority of these types of roles can be carried out remotely, with perhaps a limited number of face to face meetings, advertising on LinkedIn puts these opportunities in front of a huge additional working age audience. As with many things in life, however, sometimes the answer is right under one's nose! nfp Synergy's report reminds us to regularly canvas existing volunteers for their input regarding skills that they would like to share, rather than relying on a coincidence alone.

Local businesses are also potential sources of trustees with a wealth of professional skills. Approaching the HR departments of local businesses is again suggested, as a trusteeship essentially provides an additional approach to bolster employees' management skills. Trustee Boards of numerous volunteer-involving organisations now appreciate the importance of offering a flexible approach to the location and timings of Board meetings in order to embrace the skill sets of people of working age – so it is often possible to Skype in to meetings (helpful if they are during working hours, or indeed, in the evening when physical representation is not possible due to childcare responsibilities). Again, Trustee roles can be advertised on Reach Volunteering (free for organisations with a turnover of less than £1 million). Community Impact Bucks also promotes volunteering widely throughout Buckinghamshire, and also live streams specialist skilled and trustee roles advertised on Reach Volunteering's website, on its website. Community Impact Bucks also runs a Trustee matching event directly after its annual Trustee Conference, which has led to many successful matches between local business people and volunteer - involving organisations.

Final thoughts

In its 2017 general election manifesto, the Conservative Party did not include its previous promise to introduce 3 days of paid volunteering leave for employees. Reacting to this, an NCVO spokesman said it would be:

 disappointing if this policy has been dropped... A nudge like this could have made a real difference by prompting people to explore new opportunities and giving them the time to contribute to their communities. Many employers are discovering the benefits of employer-supported volunteering and this would have helped others to do so as well. The recent House of Lords charities committee report backed our call for the government to explore a right to time off work for trustees, like school governors or magistrates. This would be a simpler commitment to implement than the three days policy, and we hope the government give it serious consideration.⁶⁰ 

⁶⁰ <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/government-accused-of-broken-promise-on-employee-volunteering.html>

10. Group Volunteering – Making Friends and Spending Time with Family

Background

Again, with reference to nfp Synergy's excellent The New Alchemy report, "where volunteering experiences can provide something educational for the kids and the chance to do something novel together, charities have a real opportunity to connect with entirely new audiences... it becomes a brilliant vehicle for building support early in life and effectively breaking down the 'leisure-time'/volunteering dichotomy".

Disappointingly, an online search of family volunteering opportunities in the UK, aside from the large national charities, reveals few results. This is not to say that many of these opportunities do not exist, but if they do, they are not being properly marketed to the digitally savvy target audience. Like any volunteering programme, setting up a family volunteering scheme will require initial thought and preparation, but is definitely worth the effort in order to engage with this key demographic – especially as it is known that successfully involving children in volunteering is more likely to ensure that this activity becomes a lifetime habit.

Example from nfp Synergy's report

Combining leisure and charity: National Trust's family volunteer days. Piloted in 2010, the family volunteering days run by the National Trust are based in a wide range of the Trust's properties. Families can participate with a variety of different tasks, from cleaning beaches to acting out historical roles or acting as tour guides for other groups. The scheme, with its focus on encouraging families to engage with their local trust properties, fits into the wider National Trust strategy that by 2020, "everyone feels like a member" of the Trust. The scheme has also provided the National Trust with a way to tailor their future activities, as participating family volunteers also provide input and feedback on the Trust's events and activities. Family volunteering is also one way that the organisation is trying to expand its traditional volunteering demographics beyond older, wealthier supporters.

The scheme is not without challenges and the benefits of involving families have had to be balanced against a need for efficiency and professionalism in the tasks given. This involves overcoming a traditional tendency in charities to view volunteers as "just a way of getting the work done, rather than a form of engaging with new audiences or with audiences generally." As a programme, however, it is an effective example of how volunteering schemes can be adapted to fit the specific nature of a charity's work in a way that combines necessary work with widening community engagement.

11. Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

Background

In September 2017, Megan Willians from nfpSynergy wrote an interesting article⁶¹ about promoting ethnic diversity in the charity sector. According to the 2011 census, 15% of people were born outside the UK, and this is expected to increase to 30% by 2051. In her words, "This increase in BAME/BME (Black and Ethnic Minority) populations provides a fantastic opportunity for charities to... widen their volunteer...base". She states that in reality, these groups are not fully represented within, or engaged with, the mainstream charity sector. Indeed, "a huge 57.4% of charities have no BAME trustees, and looking at the largest 500 charities in the UK, only 6.3% of trustees are BAME".

⁶¹ <https://nfpsynergy.net/blog/promoting-ethnic-diversity-charity-sector>

Megan Williams asserts that “the inclusion of more BAME individuals occupying volunteer, employee, or trustee positions within charities provides young people from ethnic minority communities with positive role models”. For many volunteer-involving organisations, it is also vitally important that volunteers reflect the communities in which their services are based.

The blog also mentions Inclusive Boards, an agency that supports the third and public sector with their efforts to be more inclusive. It is asking the government to set targets to double the number of BAME trustees to 12% by 2020 – they argue that a significant proportion of service users of charities come from minority groups including ethnic backgrounds, therefore their representation within charities in the form of employees and volunteers, is key to their effective service provision. It will be interesting to monitor this situation.

Examples

The Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) has produced a useful guide⁶² to recruiting volunteers from BAME populations, and gives the following examples of methods to spread the word about volunteering:

- Organisations specifically designed to serve a particular community
- Local shops serving the needs of a diverse community, for example clothing or food shops
- Local specialist restaurants
- Places of worship like mosques or temples
- Local schools
- Hold an open day within the local community
- Make links with local ethnic media
- Form links with organisations and associations that exist to serve specific groups
- Find out if there are local radio stations broadcasting to specific ethnic groups
- Get in touch with local councillors from BAME communities to see if they will help promote volunteering
- Establish links with BAME representatives of BAME communities at the National Union of Students (NUS).

The guide states that it is important to get to know the ethnic mix of the community in which your service is based, and that if you already have volunteers from different ethnic groups, their help should be enlisted to develop awareness of volunteering opportunities. It also stresses that you should not be afraid to ask questions if you are uncertain about particular ethnic traditions, and explain that you want to offer whatever support people might need to volunteer, whilst respecting their cultural differences. A flexible approach, so that volunteers feel comfortable and supported, is very important.

12. Engaging Individuals with Disabilities

Background

According to a blog⁶³ from Abigail Kay (formerly trainee volunteering policy officer at NCVO), disabled people are much less likely to volunteer: “only 38% of people with a disability or long-term limiting illness participate in formal volunteering, compared to 46% with no disability. With so many more disabled people out of employment as well, one might expect the number of disabled volunteers to be significantly higher. But, unlike in employment, the Equality Act does not apply to volunteers. Disabled volunteers have no formal protection under the law. Similarly, there is no permanent equivalent to the Access to Work fund for volunteers.”

62 [https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/Forms%20and%20tools/vol_0601_\(man\)_volunteer_recruitment_handbook_2011-section4-ethnic_communities.pdf](https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/Forms%20and%20tools/vol_0601_(man)_volunteer_recruitment_handbook_2011-section4-ethnic_communities.pdf)

63 <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2015/01/26/harnessing-disabled-peoples-ability-to-volunteer/>

Disability Volunteer Charter

In December 2014, Community Impact Bucks played a pivotal role promoting and supporting the national launch of the pioneering Disability Volunteer Charter⁶⁴ developed by the Disability Action Alliance (DAA), and the closing notes were delivered by Diane Rutter, our Services Director. The launch was hosted by Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS) and the Bucks Legacy Board. The Charter's vision is for a society in which the contribution of disabled people as volunteers is valued and volunteering opportunities are widely available on an equal and accessible basis; its aim is to increase the number, value and accessibility of opportunities for disabled people to volunteer their time, skills and experience. The Charter sets out the core principles that organisations should adopt when recruiting and involving volunteers with disabilities.

Disappointingly, out of the thousands and thousands of volunteer-involving organisations in the UK, only around 100 have signed up to the Charter (although DAA's website does state that the page was last updated in April 2016).

Example 1

Charles Harrison is a customer service volunteer with High Wycombe Shopmobility – Charles had a brain haemorrhage in 1993, followed by 2 strokes, which left him with a weakness on his right hand side, epilepsy, and very poor short term memory. Manager, Claire McMackin, says that they have made various adjustments to enable Charles to volunteer:

Charles' disability is not visible to most people, only when you talk with him or spend time with him are you perhaps aware of his condition and his vulnerability. We have to continually remind him of certain tasks as his short-term memory is very poor, he is unable to cope with certain situations within the shop, so it is agreed that he just walks away. He is very open about his conditions, and most of our customers are aware of them. He has been with us for 13 years and has worked 2,300 hours for us. He is a very valued member of our team and is very popular with the team and customers.

When CIB asked Charles about his volunteering experience, this is what he had to say:

It makes me feel good, it enables me to help less fortunate or less able-bodied people get out and about. I enjoy the socialisation and being part of a team. I feel extremely valued, and there are two mornings of the week that I look forward to, and no-one at Shopmobility takes advantage of me.

Example 2

Chiltern Rangers is a Buckinghamshire Community Interest Company (CIC) which has pledged to the Disability Volunteer Charter. It is well aware of the health benefits to be gained from volunteering, especially for people with physical or mental health and well-being issues. Volunteer Leila says: "Something I had never considered before is how much physical work can have an impact on mental health – the Chiltern Rangers have had a direct and measurable impact on how my head feels and I can only put that down to being outside and working amongst nature, knowing that you are giving back to the world around you and doing your own (even if it is little) thing".

64 <http://disabilityactionalliance.org.uk/projects-3/volunteering/volunteer-charter/>



Courtesy of
**Chiltern
Society**

Additional examples

Volunteering Matters provides some fantastic additional examples of how people with various disabilities are being supported by organisations to have a positive volunteering experience: <https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/pillars/disabled-people/>.

Further action needed

It is heartening that inroads are being made by individual organisations to support volunteers with disabilities, but shocking, however, that in 2018, there is not more support at government level. In addition, aside from the annual Volunteers' and Trustees' Weeks, and Student Volunteering Week, why not have a national Disability Volunteering Week? This would present an excellent opportunity to raise awareness, share stories, and rally together as a county and a country.

People with disabilities are a rich source of volunteers. If volunteer-involving organisations do not take a moment to think about how they might cater for volunteers with differing needs, then they are missing out on a fantastic resource.

Retaining Volunteers

If, as stated earlier by Helen Timbrell (formerly of the National Trust), volunteering is to be presented as a product with various options, then the corollary of this is that volunteers should be viewed as customers and given an excellent experience - and it is well known that it is cheaper to keep customers than to acquire new ones. Retention of volunteers, therefore, is crucial. Jarina Choudhury from NCVO notes⁶⁵ that people's experiences in volunteering will not always be linear, and flexible pathways need to be built in to support them along their volunteering journeys, with the focus being on enabling regular volunteers to volunteer more. Kristen Stephenson (formerly of NCVO) says⁶⁶ that it is imperative for organisations to build relationships with volunteers to enable them to move into other roles, if they so wish, and to give more time. Even if people decide that a volunteer role is not for them, or something in their life crops up so that they can no longer volunteer, it is crucial to maintain this relationship and to keep the door open for their return.

Within the context of the Buckinghamshire voluntary sector, which, as mentioned earlier, is comprised mainly of small charities and other small volunteer-involving organisations, any innovation with regard to volunteer retention is likely to be incremental or radical for these organisations according to Dr. Max McKeown's definitions.

Key points are:

- Have a written volunteer recruitment process with clearly assigned responsibilities and associated paperwork/templates: and train all staff and volunteers who manage other volunteers
- Draw up a Volunteer Agreement, setting out expectations on both sides, agree with the volunteer, and get both parties to sign NB include wording that this agreement is in honour only, and is not a legally binding contract of employment, and that no employment relationship is intended either now or at any time in the future.
- Do not forget to do the obvious: introduce new volunteers to members of staff and other volunteers and trustees – make them feel welcome! Introduce them in the staff newsletter
- Make the experience a good one: put in the “fun” factor if possible, but above all, make it rewarding. Do the unexpected, for example inviting volunteers to the next staff team meeting and thanking them
- Provide volunteers with the necessary training for their roles
- Appreciate volunteers' efforts: thanking them regularly and in a genuine manner; for example: verbally, by email, in organisation newsletters, and at specific events e.g. AGMs, annual conferences, thank you events during Volunteers' Week – this could also be an opportunity for volunteers to invite along friends to see if they might be interested in volunteering. Run an annual Volunteer Awards' event with different categories
- Have regular catch up sessions addressing any issues or concerns, and enable volunteers to shape their roles to fit with their interests or changing life circumstances – thereby putting more control in their hands
- Give each volunteer a named supervisor, and offer the chance to unload: especially if the role is emotionally demanding, for example: with Samaritans or Citizens Advice
- Have regular review sessions (for example every 6 months): understanding volunteers' current motivations and issues, and ensuring that they are given opportunities to give and receive feedback on what they are doing is essential
- Encourage volunteers to complete feedback surveys; these could be anonymised to encourage more frank comments
- Where possible, have a policy of offering to reimburse reasonable expenses, for example travel to and from home and the place of volunteering. Please note that there are strict rules on what expenses should and should not be reimbursed. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses> <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-expenses#>

⁶⁵ <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/12/12/volunteering-round-up-december-2017/>

⁶⁶ <https://soundcloud.com/ncvo/ncvo-podcast-episode-1?in=ncvo/sets/ncvo-podcast>

- **Time Credits:** since April 2014, the social enterprise Spice has partnered with Buckinghamshire County Council through its Prevention Matters' programme to offer a Time Credits' programme. People volunteering with organisations that supported elderly or vulnerable adults, or with Active Bucks (supporting more people in Bucks to get active) were able to gain a time credit for each hour volunteered, and use these toward various different activities, for example seeing a play, attending Adult Education Courses, or going on visits to London attractions. Research published in 2017⁶⁷, revealed that the scheme was extremely beneficial for those volunteers who participated:

69% feel more able to contribute to the community and peers

64% feel more confident

65% can afford to do more things

71% report improved quality of life

65% feel more positive about their future

56% feel less isolated and lonely

24% are more physically active

11% report improved mental health.

These findings demonstrate that Time Credits are an excellent method of increasing volunteers' wellbeing, and also retaining them. Although Spice's partnership with the County Council will end in April 2018, the organisation is looking at other ways of continuing to work with community groups and services in Buckinghamshire.

Case studies of how volunteers in Buckinghamshire have benefited from the Time Credits' scheme, can be found here: http://www.justaddspice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Bucks_Case-Study-Booklet-Aug-17.pdf

It should be noted that Time Credits' schemes have also been run in other parts of the UK.

- Do not forget: staff and volunteers who manage other volunteers need support too!
- Do whatever you can to keep volunteers' inspiration alive – problems start when they begin to forget why they decided to volunteer with an organisation in the first place!
- Hold exit meetings: should a volunteer unfortunately decide to move on (for whatever reason), these provide an excellent opportunity to understand more about their reasons for doing so, and to ask their permission to stay in touch in case they decide to volunteer in the future. Any comments they make (positive or negative) can also be fed back into your volunteering programme.

Although a detailed examination of Volunteering Strategy and Policy components is outside the remit of this report, it should be noted that these are the foundations from which everything a volunteering - involving organisation does flows – so it is essential that they are comprehensive, signed off at Board level, and understood by staff and other volunteers (as appropriate).

Resources for Volunteer Managers and Co-ordinators

It is important to note, that unless the management and co-ordination of volunteers is properly resourced, however, then any volunteer-involving organisation attempting to try new approaches to attracting and retaining volunteers will be doomed from the outset.

⁶⁷ <http://www.justaddspice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Spice-2017-Buckinghamshire-1.pdf>

It is heartening that in the report, **Stronger charities for a stronger society**⁶⁸, published by the House of Lords in March 2017, support for volunteer management was a key recommendation:

Funders need to be more receptive to requests for resources for volunteer managers and co-ordinators, especially where charities are able to demonstrate a strong potential volunteer base. We recommend that Government guidance on public sector grants and contracts is amended to reflect this and set a standard for other funders.

Based on a submission from the Association of Volunteer Managers' (AVM) response⁶⁹ to the Select Committee's call for evidence last year, this recommendation is excellent news, and in the words of Debbie Usiskin (now the former Chair of AVM), "Communicating the value and need for volunteer management as a recognised discipline is at the core of what AVM was set up to achieve. Having such high profile confirmation of this is very welcome."

The committee's own evidence gathering supports AVM's submission by revealing the difficulty faced by small charities to find funding for volunteer managers – which is certainly an issue encountered by the thousands of small volunteer-involving organisations in Buckinghamshire.

Final thoughts

By providing a snapshot of today's volunteers, exploring their motivations and barriers to volunteer, along with a summary of external drivers, and examples of, and suggestions for, innovations in attracting and retaining volunteers, it is hoped that this report provides organisations with a comprehensive insight into how they can build on their volunteer programmes now and in the future.

⁶⁸ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldchar/133/133.pdf>

⁶⁹ <https://volunteermanagers.org.uk/2017/03/27/avm-welcomes-lords-recommendations-on-charities/>

Notes:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the width of the page.

Notes:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, set against a white background that is partially obscured by a large orange circular graphic on the right side of the page.

www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk

 0300 111 1250

 @CommunityImpactBucks

 @CommunityBucks

 Community Impact Bucks

