



Snapshot of Volunteers in the UK

Image courtesy of
Epilepsy
Society



Volunteer Centre
Bucks



Community Impact Bucks
supporting charities, communities, volunteering

Differences in volunteer motivations

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)
- **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 desire to improve things/help people is a major reason for volunteering in this age group
- 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.**



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. 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 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
- 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 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.**

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:
 - o Sports/exercise groups
 - o Hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs
 - o Groups linked to religion
 - o Children's education and schools
- There are a mix of roles, including organising or helping to run an activity or event, raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events, and getting other people involved.

Reasons for stopping volunteering (in order of importance):

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



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.

www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk



0300 111 1250



@CommunityImpactBucks



@CommunityBucks



Community Impact Bucks



Registered charity no. 1070267