



SPIRIT OF 2012  
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS



**CAN EVENTS HELP BUILD  
HAPPY, THRIVING AND MORE  
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES?**

**A SPIRIT OF 2012 INQUIRY  
CHAired BY SIR THOMAS  
HUGHES-HALLETT**

**REPORT**

**1**

# **HOW EVENTS CAN BOOST VOLUNTEERING**

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# FOREWORD

## SIR THOMAS HUGHES-HALLETT

**The Inquiry will consider whether and how events can build happier thriving and more connected communities.**

This country is blessed with numerous national and local events. This is something that the UK has always done really well. But do they do more than create a short-term coming together to celebrate, to combat national emergencies, or simply to have fun and enjoy ourselves in very large numbers? The economic costs of these events are often huge – is there an equal and opposite economic benefit?

We will explore whether and how the social impact of events can be evaluated and extended to both places and individuals long after the event is over. We will consider how we can extend the reach of events involving people who don't always participate, especially disabled people, young people, and people from less-connected places.

We will explore how events can strengthen communities by stimulating a sense of belonging and pride and can connect people to other people in their area around a positive theme.

There is good evidence of how volunteering builds improved health and wellbeing and improved employability for those who participate, and this needs further emphasis and evaluation.

As Inquiry chair, I have been fortunate enough to bring together people from across the four home nations and from all walks of life to help consider this important topic. We will take evidence from experts involved in the managing of events from the Olympics and Paralympics, from food festivals, concerts, and mass participation events to gardening clubs and hobby groups.

For this first report, we have decided to pay particular attention to the benefits of volunteering, not least because of the extraordinary outburst of public support during the pandemic.

How could this have been managed better, and how can we ensure that we capture this spirit for the longer-term interests of local communities and the volunteers themselves?

We know that data management is crucial and yet still poorly executed. Willing volunteers post the London 2012 Games were unable to be contacted for data protection reasons. This needs to change for the future. As we publish this report we note that England has no national volunteering strategy unlike the other three nations of the UK, and no longer a dedicated Minister for Civil Society. Why?

We will publish our findings in Autumn 2022 having learned from the Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and the plethora of other national and local events occurring next year.

# ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF 2012 INQUIRY

## Can events help build happy, thriving and more connected communities? About the Spirit of 2012 Inquiry

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From earliest times, humans have gathered together to mark occasions of significance, perform or compete. Today, events such as the Olympics and Paralympics, Royal Jubilees and Remembrance Day, street parties, music festivals and county shows are occasions that bring people from all walks of life together to take part in moments of importance in national and community life. As well as the pleasure this brings, such moments can act as a catalyst that leads to social and economic changes, some of which may be realised years after event has ended. The economic legacies of events may include new sporting or cultural facilities, local regeneration, a larger visitor economy, new jobs and increased inward investment.

Events can also have social impacts. The Mayor of London's evaluation of the 2012 Paralympic Games showed that coverage of this event raised the profile of disabled people and changed public attitudes towards disability<sup>1</sup>. Event volunteering can be a route to more forms of regular volunteering. The long-term social impacts of events may also be less tangible, leading to increased social connection and civil pride. Nearly a third of people (29%) still feel that the most important legacy of the London 2012 Games was that it brought us together as a country<sup>2</sup>.

While cultural, sporting, civic and community events can leave lasting positive impacts, such legacies have not always been achieved. Sporting events may only generate short-term boosts to levels of physical activity, a phenomenon described as the 'Wimbledon effect'<sup>3</sup>. The London 2012 Games successfully raised the profile of volunteering, but not all volunteers from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were contacted after 2012 with information about further volunteering opportunities<sup>4</sup>. Most sporting, cultural and many community events receive significant public funding: many would argue that it is incumbent on those organise these events to make sure that have impacts on individuals and wider society.

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The London 2012 Games successfully raised the profile of volunteering, but not all volunteers from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were contacted after 2012 with information about further volunteering opportunities.

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## ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF 2012 INQUIRY CONTINUED

Making sure that events have positive, lasting impacts is particularly important at this moment in time. As well as the thousands of regular events, the summer of 2022 will see us celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The following summer sees the 75th anniversaries of the NHS and the arrival of the Empire Windrush. The same period of time will see the UK and Ireland bidding to host the 2030 World Cup. It's because we want to influence the planning and running of these events that Spirit of 2012 has decided to hold an Inquiry about the social and economic impact of events.

The events of 2022 and 2023 will involve hundreds of thousands of volunteers. Without coordinated action, however, these events may not leave a lasting volunteering legacy. This is our rationale for our focus on volunteering in this first report of the Inquiry.

## Terms of reference

The Inquiry will examine how events can help build happy, thriving and connected communities. The Inquiry aims to:

### **Gather evidence to enable a better understanding of the impact of events.**

Specifically, the inquiry will look at how events can act as a catalyst to help increase:

- social, emotional and physical wellbeing
- financial wellbeing and sustainable local economies
- social connections between people of different backgrounds and between individuals and institutions.

### **Develop workable ideas and recommendations**

to maximise the positive impacts that events can bring to individuals, communities and wider society.

**Inform and influence** policymakers as well as those involved in the planning and delivery of future events.

## Membership

The Inquiry is chaired by Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett and draws on the expertise of 25 people listed below. Members of the Inquiry come from all parts of the UK and bring a wide range of expertise. It is important to note that they are sharing their expertise in their personal capacities and the views set out in this report do not represent the views of the organisations that employ them.

Spirit of 2012 staff are acting as the Inquiry's secretariat.



### **Chair Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett**

Tom founded the Marshall Institute for Philanthropy and Entrepreneurship at the London School of Economics. He is also the founder and Chair of Helpforce, a charity championing the greater use of volunteers in health and social care. Tom sits on the Board of the Westminster Abbey Foundation and until recently Chair of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, a trustee of The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and The King's Fund. Tom has also chaired his village parish council and has been the chief executive of Marie Curie.

## ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF 2012 INQUIRY CONTINUED

### Members of the Inquiry

Catherine Anderson	Dr Neil Churchill	Danny Kruger MP	Emma Sims
Petra Barran	Chris Creegan	Bill Morris	Geoff Thompson
Peter Bazalgette	Simon Enright	Mark Pendlington	Professor Patrick Vernon
Hayley Bennett	Kersten England	Nicola Pollock	Jason Wouhra
Esther Britten	George Grima	Susie Rodgers	
Ajay Chhabra	Rev Nicky Gumbel	Jane Robinson	
Angila Chada	Professor Donna Hall	David Sheepshanks	

## The Inquiry's plans

The Inquiry team began their work in September 2021, taking evidence and preparing its launch report which focuses on how events can boost volunteering. Over the 12 months the Inquiry team will continue its work and will:

Take evidence from experts in meetings and through a series of visits across the UK.

Undertake guided discussions with members of the public, chosen to be broadly representative of the population of the UK in relation to gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

*'We want the process to start conversations among those involved in the day-to-day tasks of running events, with the hope that some of you will take practical action to maximise the positive impacts of events.'*

Commission nationally-representative surveys, with its evidence used to inform the work of the Inquiry, and used in its reports.

Commission three interim reports which draw together the evidence on the three themes that the Inquiry is considering: wellbeing, the economic impact of events, and social connection.

Hold an open call for evidence to enable organisations to share their experiences: [www.spiritof2012.org.uk/inquiry-2022](http://www.spiritof2012.org.uk/inquiry-2022)

We plan to publish the Inquiry's final report in Autumn 2022. Its findings will be used to advocate for policies that enable events to secure positive social and economic impacts. But the Inquiry is much more than a research project. We want the process to start conversations among those involved in the day-to-day tasks of running events, with the hope that some of you will take practical action to maximise the positive impacts of events. So do get involved, please take part in our open call for evidence and share your expertise with the Inquiry.

## ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF 2012 INQUIRY CONTINUED

### About Spirit of 2012

Spirit of 2012 is supporting the Inquiry and acting as its secretariat. It was set up by the National Lottery Community Fund as the London 2012 Games legacy funder. It aims to build sustainable social legacies from the inspiration of events, investing in projects that help people become more active, creative and connected. Nearly 45,000 people have offered their time as volunteers through the 225 projects that Spirit of 2012 has funded. Over the last eight years, Spirit of 2012 has built up a strong evidence base about the power of events to catalyse social change, drawn from its own and others' research and learning from the projects it has funded.

For further information about the Inquiry please contact [external.affairs@spiritof2012.org.uk](mailto:external.affairs@spiritof2012.org.uk)

### The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK – we're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since June 2004, we have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people.

*'Since June 2004, we have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people.'*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Major sporting events, royal jubilees, street parties and festivals are occasions that bring people from all walks of life together to commemorate or celebrate moments of importance in national and community life. As well as the pleasure they bring, such moments can act as a catalyst that leads to social and economic change, some of which may be realised years after event has ended. The positive impacts of events can include new sporting or cultural facilities, local regeneration, a larger visitor economy, new jobs, and increased inward investment. Events can also strengthen social connections and increase civic pride. Most events require volunteers for them to run smoothly: 70,000 people came forward to offer their time as Olympic and Paralympic Games. Volunteering at an event can have positive social and economic impacts, and be a route to regular volunteering.**

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We want build on the surge in volunteering we saw during lockdown and use next year's events to grow this social movement even more.

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While events can leave lasting positive impacts, such legacies have not always been achieved.. Research commissioned by Sport England showed that just 7% of first-time volunteers at large sporting events go on to volunteer in grassroots sports<sup>5</sup>. Many organisations that work with volunteers feel that the power of events to boost volunteering is not being fully utilised. Many organisations that work with volunteers feel that more could be done to leverage the power of events to boost volunteering.

Next year will see the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games which will involve 25,000 volunteers. Nearly 5,000 volunteers will be involved in the Rugby League World Cup and the Women's Euros in 2022. It is likely that hundreds of thousands of people will volunteer over the Platinum Jubilee weekend, organising street parties and local pageants. Without a coordinated effort, the events of 2022 may not leave a volunteering legacy. This is why *Happy, Thriving and Connected Communities: The Spirit of 2012 Inquiry into the Impacts of Events* decided to focus on volunteering for its launch report. We want build on the surge in volunteering we saw during lockdown and use next year's events to grow this social movement even more.

To inform this launch report, the Inquiry took expert evidence from people with experience of working with volunteers or organising events and undertook five online discussions with members of the public. Participants were selected to be broadly representative of the UK population in relation to gender, ethnicity and social grade, using a professional market research company. The Inquiry also commissioned a nationally-representative survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken by ICM between 24-27 September 2021.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

**Our findings showed that 40% of UK adults had volunteered before, or since, the start of the pandemic in March 2020, either informally, for example, by helping a vulnerable neighbour or by giving their time to a formally-constituted organisation.**

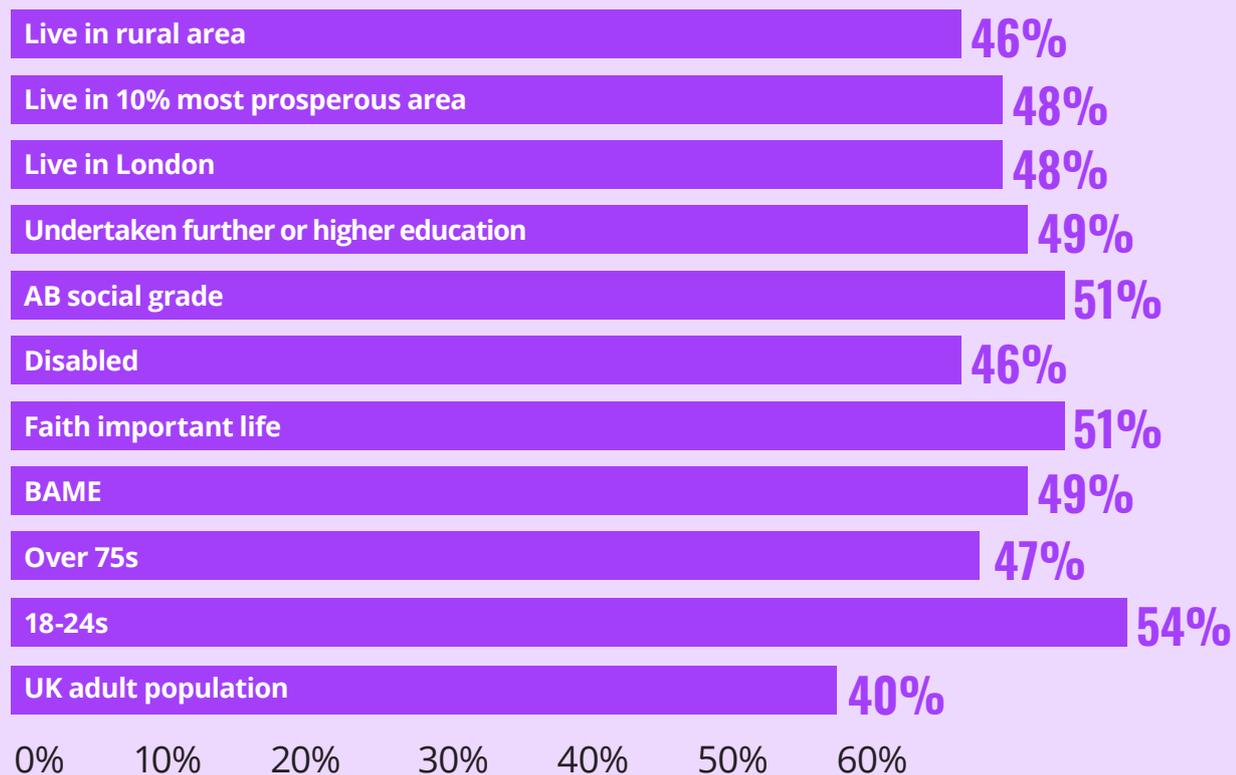
# 85%

**of women feel that volunteering improves people’s mental health and wellbeing, compared to 76% of men.**

Eight out of 10 people volunteer in their local area and people are most likely to give their time to civil society organisations, but some people volunteer in public sector organisations, for example as special constables, in schools or for the NHS. The environment, community development, and health and social care are the volunteering causes that have most appeal, both to those who currently give their time and to those with no history of volunteering.

The availability of free time, social values, and different perceptions about the value of volunteering all influence a person’s propensity to offer their time. Figure 1 shows that some sectors of society are more likely to volunteer. The survey showed that younger people are more likely to be motivated by the impacts that volunteering can have on their employability, with 87% of 18-24 year olds agreeing volunteering helped improve people’s skills and job prospects. 85% of women feel that volunteering improves people’s mental health and wellbeing, compared to 76% of men.

**Fig 1. Percentage of adults who said they had volunteered before or since March 2020**



Source: ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

About half the people who volunteer are regular volunteers, giving their time more than once a month. Scaled up, this suggests that 9% of the adult population of the UK (4.8 million people) are regular volunteers. Younger people and those from higher social grades are less likely to be occasional volunteers, while those who give their time on a regular basis are more likely to be of retirement age. Some 72% of volunteers aged 65-74, and 73% of those over 75 reported that they volunteer more than once a month.

### Who volunteers at events?

Some 14% of adults said that they had volunteered at a local or major event in the last 12 months, with another 29% of people saying that they had volunteered in this way more than 12 months ago. The large majority (86%) of regular volunteers

have given their time to help out at an event, but large and small events also attract first-time and occasional volunteers who can benefit from the experience. Volunteering at community events has a low bar to entry and can be a route to more active involvement in people’s local communities.

### Who does not volunteer?

The survey suggests that 60% of people do not volunteer. About a third of non-volunteers have specific reasons for not giving their time; they may feel volunteering is not for them or it is not their responsibility. The other two-thirds of this group, who amount to 21 million people or 40% of the UK’s adult population, may be interested in volunteering at a future date but currently face barriers that prevent them doing so.

### Of every 50 people



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

### Better volunteering

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Volunteering brings many benefits, to the individuals who give their time and to the organisations that receive help. Sectors such as heritage and grassroots sport would not be able to function without the help of volunteers, as wouldn't most of the UK's smaller charities. Volunteering also strengthens social connections and gives people a stronger stake in society. But these benefits will only be realised if volunteering is a positive experience that leads to positive impacts. The Inquiry has drawn on a range of evidence to develop some practical ideas for action to help achieve these aims. In particular we believe that we can be much better at using the power of events to boost volunteering.

The proposals below represent the Inquiry's initial ideas. We will develop them further over the next 12 months before we produce our final report. However, we are confident that our proposals, if implemented, would mean that volunteering would have greater positive impacts. Here are the Inquiry's initial ideas for action.

# 44%

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**of people who did not volunteer said they would be more likely to volunteer if they knew there were things that they could do that would interest them.**

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### 1. Better communications

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As a society, we need to make a stronger case for volunteering and give people more information about what it involves and the benefits to them and their communities. Nearly half (44%) of people who did not volunteer said they would be more likely to volunteer if they knew there were things that they could do that would interest them; 36% of this group said that they would be more likely to volunteer if they had more information about what in volunteering involved.

We also need to champion volunteering. We would like to see the honours system give greater recognition to volunteers. We would like the Government to consider appointing 100 volunteering champions from a range of different professions and backgrounds, including those from business, faith, education, and from the Royal Family. Each champion would serve a fixed term and be tasked with making the case for volunteering with their peers and in their local communities.

### 2. Better volunteering experiences

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Organisations that work with volunteers, including event organisers, need to consider how they deploy volunteers, the tasks they offer and how volunteers are supported in their roles. Making sure that volunteering is a positive experience will make it easier for these organisations to recruit and retain volunteers. The biggest barrier to volunteering is competing pressures on people's time due to work, study or caring responsibilities. The Inquiry's survey showed that nearly half (46%) of people who were not volunteering said they would be more likely to offer their time if there were flexible ways to help, for example, occasional tasks or things they could do from home or online. Offering people a range of volunteering activities has already been shown to be a successful means of recruiting and retaining volunteers.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

### 3. A funded local infrastructure

Sometimes those who stand to gain the most from volunteering face the greatest barriers that prevent them from taking part. If the benefits that volunteering brings are to be fully realised, such barriers need to be addressed, and volunteers themselves need feedback and support.

This requires Government and philanthropic investment in local volunteering infrastructures, including the legacy organisations that work with volunteers after major events. Such funding should be used to reduce barriers to volunteering faced by disabled people. It should also cover items such as volunteers' travel expenses, and the salaries of paid staff to recruit and support volunteers, and to build relationships with colleges and employers, as well as community and faith groups who can often reach people who are not coming forward to volunteer.

### 4. Better use of digital

We can make better use of technology to encourage volunteering. We would like to see greater use made of digital platforms that link organisations that need volunteers with people who are able to give their time.

The Government should also consider a programme of work to develop a national volunteering wallet or passport that would provide a record of a person's identity and safeguarding checks, training, as well as recording their volunteering experience. This would reduce the delays associated with placing volunteers and make it easier for people to give their time to a number of organisations.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

### 5. Events as an opportunity to recruit volunteers

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The profile of volunteering was raised during the London 2012 Games with evidence suggesting that more people came forward to volunteer. We can use events to champion volunteering, give people information about what it entails and recruit volunteers. We would like to see football matches used to recruit volunteers for grassroots sports and local community organisations. Concerts and festivals should be used to recruit volunteers for arts organisations.

### 6. Use anniversaries to boost volunteering

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Anniversaries present opportunities to champion specific areas of volunteering. The 75th anniversary of the NHS in 2023 could be used to champion volunteering in health and social care, and for projects which aim to improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing. In 2024 it will be 200 years since the RNLI and the RSPCA were founded. The work of land and sea rescue and animal welfare organisations is supported by many thousands of volunteers, and these anniversaries could also be used to boost volunteering for these causes.

### 7. Funder leverage

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Funders should use their influence to make sure that events have positive social and economic impacts. Events should only receive public subsidies if organisers set out detailed delivery plans for securing positive impacts on society, including through volunteering. There should be demarcated funding for legacy volunteering projects in Government, and philanthropic support for sporting and cultural events, including future UK Cities of Culture.

### 8. Planning and strategy

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Taking the above ideas forward will require leadership and delivery plans from the Government, including administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We would like to see volunteering strategies in all four nations of the UK, in the combined authorities and in every local authority. These strategies should be backed up with funding and set out how the UK (i) can increase the number of people who volunteer and improve the experience (ii) can increase the positive social and economic impacts that volunteering can bring, particularly among social groups who are less likely to volunteer.

Planning for legacy volunteering programmes must not be afterthought. It needs to be an integral part of the planning of an event and early decisions need to be taken about the ownership of volunteers' contact details.

## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Case study: Wilson's story



Volunteering helped Wilson find his feet in a new country, gave him an opportunity to gain new skills, and provided crucial connections for him and his family during lockdown. The 41-year-old father of two came to Glasgow as a refugee from Pakistan, settling in Springburn with his twelve-year-old son, Liam, and his eight-year-old daughter, Candice.

After attending taster sessions at his school, Liam got involved in Lord's Taverners cricket programme, Wicketz. Wilson took his son along to weekly sessions at their local hub, and soon his own enthusiasm for the sport led him to become involved as a volunteer coach.

Wicketz is a cricket programme for young people aged 8-19 who are living in deprived communities. By establishing sustainable community cricket hubs, they provide year-round weekly cricket sessions with a focus on bridging social divides, developing crucial life skills, creating stronger communities and enabling brighter futures for those taking part.

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*"I knew I wanted to be more closely involved and become part of such a great initiative. I'd played a lot in Pakistan but had never done any coaching so I knew this was a great opportunity. I was given details of classes and a course to help me develop, which were absolutely amazing. It's definitely expanded my own experience of cricket."*

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*"Because Glasgow was new to us, we thought we were alone but it helped us feel involved and achieve a different state of mind."*

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*"As a volunteer, I'm also learning and gaining new experiences and really enjoy bringing parents and children together. My physical health has improved too - my sporting spirit has definitely returned, and I feel fitter now. It's like being a kid again!"*

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**Over the last 18 months we have come to appreciate the contribution that volunteers have made helping out vulnerable neighbours, local charities and as NHS first responders and vaccine volunteers.**

COVID-19 has highlighted the important role that volunteering plays in our society. About one in five adults are involved in formal volunteering at least once each month, with an equal number offering their time to a constituted organisation on an occasional basis<sup>6</sup>. Organisations that benefit from formal volunteering include charities, community, cultural, sporting or environmental organisations and faith groups. Many public organisations also work with people who have taken on volunteering roles such as Special Constables, parent helpers and school governors, vaccine volunteers, blood bikers, and hospital and care home visitors. Andy Haldane, former Chief Economist at the Bank of England and now heading the Levelling Up Taskforce estimated that in the UK people give about two billion hours each year to formally constituted organisations<sup>7</sup>.

People also give their time to help friends or neighbours, an action that is often termed informal volunteering. In England, 28% of people offered their time in this way in 2020. Indeed, the pandemic saw an 18% increase in the proportions of people who have volunteered informally at least once a month, with similar trends in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales<sup>8</sup>.

Both formal and informal volunteering bring benefits and are an important part of the fabric of our society:

**The organisations that use volunteers benefit from the time that they give.**

This has both an economic value – the value of goods and services that volunteers produce – as well as a wider social value - the impact of these goods and services on society and individual beneficiaries. Many organisations would not be able to function without the help of volunteers: for example, almost all grassroots sports and 45% of heritage organisations are largely or solely run by volunteers<sup>9</sup>.

*"I've been volunteering at the theatre, which is mainly staffed by volunteers in all roles, and just doing bar work and front of house. But that theatre has given me so much. So it's a way of giving back to that theatre. But that theatre is also nearly 100 years old. And for me to volunteer there, they've suffered the worst two years they've ever been through financially. And so it's a way of me making sure that they can carry on for another 100 years and my tiny, tiny, way of trying to make sure that that theatre is around long after I've gone."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

# 80%

**of people agreed that volunteering improved people's mental health and wellbeing**

## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Volunteering brings individual benefits to those who offer their time which include enhanced wellbeing<sup>10</sup>, health benefits and increased skills and employability<sup>11</sup>. In the survey commissioned by the Inquiry, 80% of people agreed that volunteering improved people's mental health and wellbeing and 75% of people agreed that volunteering helped improve people's skills and job prospects<sup>12</sup>. Young people, in particular, felt that volunteering had positive impacts on their employability, with 87% of 18-24 year olds in the survey agreeing that volunteering had such benefits. In turn, these individual benefits lead to wider economic and social benefit, for example, by reducing the costs of treating depression or through increased productivity in the workplace.

*"When you ask people about it, more than 70% of people say that the Big Lunch makes them feel less lonely, happier, safer. And they start to talk about a sense of belonging, rather than they live in a tower block, or they live in a house. Fundraising wasn't one of our aims, but communities use Big Lunches to raise money and most of that stays within the locality of where these types of events take place."*

Evidence given to the Inquiry by Peter Stewart, Eden Project.

Volunteering can have positive impacts on social relationships. Active participation in the local community by volunteering gives people a stronger stake in society. Volunteering can reduce loneliness and strengthen social connections. These can be bonding connections with people who we see as having similar qualities to ourselves or bridging connections across social divides with people we see as different<sup>13</sup>. Such bridging social contact between 'us' and 'them' helps to reduce stereotyping and prejudice, as well as developing greater empathy and shared 'more in common' identities. Bridging connections are particularly important in communities that are divided by ethnicity or faith. Some volunteering also facilitates linking connections – between people and institutions<sup>14</sup>. Organising a street party or being the trustee of a community organisation will often require contact with councillors, their officials or members of parliament, connections that help build trust in democratic institutions.

*"My volunteering comes out of being a Navy wife. So we move around quite a lot. And for me, it's a nice way to get a feel for the local area that I'm in and possibly make friends as we move around."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.



## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

### Missed opportunities

Despite the many benefits that volunteering brings, as a society we are not maximising them. For example, volunteering does not always reach the people who might benefit the most from acquiring new skills. There are often lower levels of volunteering in neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of social isolation.

Harnessing the benefits that volunteering brings requires planning and strategy, including from the Government. While Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have volunteering strategies<sup>16</sup>, none of them have updated their plans to build on the increased volunteering of 2020. There is no volunteering strategy in England, despite 24% of its adult population having volunteered in 2020<sup>17</sup>. Time is now running out to harness the benefits of COVID-19 volunteering.

We are also not systematically using the power of events as a catalyst to encourage more volunteering. Next year will see the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games which will involve 25,000 volunteers. Nearly 5,000 volunteers will be involved in the Rugby League World Cup and the Women's Euros in 2022. It is likely that hundreds of thousands of people will volunteer over the Platinum Jubilee weekend, organising street parties and local pageants. For some people, offering their time to help out at next years' events may be the first time they have volunteered. Given the right conditions this experience can become a route to more regular forms of volunteering. However, most first time volunteers need information and encouragement if they are to continue volunteering. Our concern is that in the absence of leadership from the Government some of these conditions are not in place and that the events of 2022 will not leave a legacy of regular volunteers. This is why we took the decision to make volunteering the focus of the launch report of our Inquiry. We want those all those involved in organising events next year to take action and use the opportunities that these events bring to boost volunteering.



## SECTION 2

# OUR EVIDENCE

**We might describe an event as a noteworthy happening, or a social occasion or activity with this definition encompassing a diverse range of activities. Some events are organised by individuals, for example, marking rites of passage or bringing friends together. Other events are organised by charities and trusts, businesses or by local and central government.**

Events be categorised by their regularity – unique or recurring – who organises them, or how open or closed they are to public audiences. One of the first tasks of the Inquiry was to decide what type of events would fall within the scope of the Inquiry.

We took the decision only to consider events that are open to the public, including paying spectators. The categories of events that fall within the scope of the Inquiry are set out in Table 2.1. It should be noted that these are not discrete groups; for example, Park Runs are community events, but also involve an element of competition.

**In researching this report we examined how events can boost volunteering. Its findings and conclusions have been drawn from a range of sources that include**

## 1

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Evidence provided in the first sitting of the inquiry which took place online on 22 September 2022. We heard from:

**Jenny Betteridge** Strategic Lead on Volunteering, Sport England

**Martin Green** Chief Creative Officer, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and Festival UK 2022.

**Ruth Hollis** Chief Executive, Spirit of 2012

**Jeremy Hughes** Consultant with the Shaping the Future with Volunteering consortium – a group of charities that aims to build on the surge in volunteering during the pandemic to increase the numbers of people who volunteer.

**Peter Stewart** Executive Director for Outreach and Development, the Eden Project. The Big Lunch is managed by the Eden Project and in 2022 it will be part of the official celebrations for her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

## 2

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A nationally-representative survey of 2,073 UK adults carried out by ICM between 24-27 September 2021.

## 3

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Five online discussions held with 35 members of the public in September 2021. Participants were selected to be broadly representative of the UK population in relation to gender, ethnicity and social grade, using a professional market research company. The five groups were:

**Group 1** Cross UK

**Group 2** People who have volunteered

**Group 3** People who live in the North West

**Group 4** People who live in Wales

**Group 5** People who live in East London (Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest).

Basing the discussion on a guide, participants were asked about memorable events they had attended, their views on the legacies of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and their experiences of volunteering and volunteering at events. Participants were also asked about the changes they would like to see made to enable events to have a larger social and economic impact.

SECTION 3

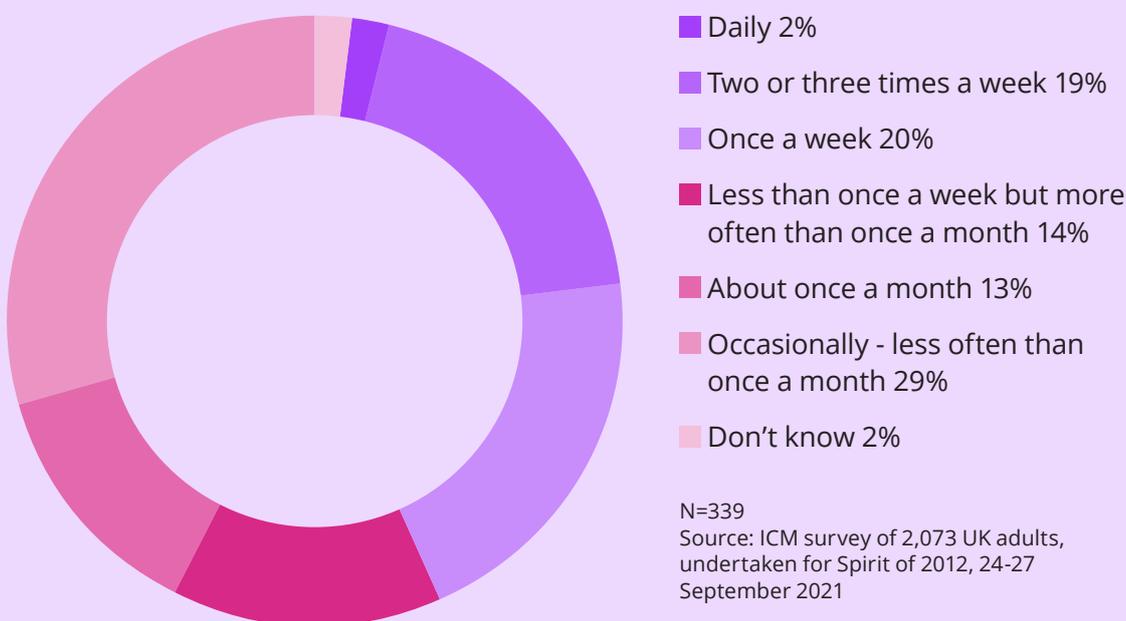
# INQUIRY FINDINGS: PROFILING VOLUNTEERS

**An understanding of how events can boost volunteering requires us to know who does and does not volunteer. Here we present our findings.**

The Inquiry’s survey suggested that 40% of UK adults had volunteered, before or since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Among the four in ten adults who volunteer, many do so informally, for example, helping a vulnerable neighbour, as well as formally by giving their time to a constituted organisation. These findings are consistent with other research on volunteering. The 2020-2021 Community Life Survey (England) suggested that 41% of adults volunteer at least once a month, either formally or informally, with 17% of people volunteering for formally constituted organisations.

There are variations between social groups in people’s propensity to volunteer. Some 54% of 18-24 year olds have a history of volunteering. Other social groups where the level of volunteering was above average (mean) include the over 75s (47% of this group had a history of volunteering), BME ethnicity (49%), disabled people (46%), AB social grades (51%), those with experience of tertiary education (49%), Londoners (48%), those who lived in the 10% least deprived area<sup>18</sup> (48%), those who live in rural areas (46%) and people for whom faith is an important part of their lives (51%)<sup>19</sup>.

**Fig 2. Frequency of volunteering among adults who had volunteered since March 2020**



## INQUIRY FINDINGS: PROFILING VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED

# 54%

### of 18-24 year olds have a history of volunteering

*"I have volunteered in a shelter at Christmas, I did a local soup kitchen in Whitechapel and volunteered at a Chelsea pensioner dinner and fundraiser. I offer companionship for elderly people and also volunteer at my church....it's something while I'm able, what I can contribute, it's something that is important to me, to help those in need. I'm a Catholic, so there is a sense of giving back because I'm, I think I've been fortunate in certain aspects in my life."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

A range of factors are likely to be associated with the likelihood that someone will volunteer. These include individual personality traits and values, social norms and influences of the peer groups, differing perceptions about the value of volunteering and the free time that people have available<sup>20</sup>. There may also be specific barriers that impact people's ability to volunteer; we discuss barriers to volunteering in later in this report.

As can be seen, age and education are strongly associated with the likelihood that a person will volunteer. Those aged under 25 may have fewer caring responsibilities and may be more likely to see volunteering as an activity that helps improve their skills and job prospects, with the Inquiry survey showing that 87% of 18-24 year olds agreed that volunteering had such benefits<sup>21</sup>. It should also be noted that some of the differences described above may cease to be significant after controlling for other factors; for example, higher levels of volunteering in London may be a result of its younger, highly educated and more ethnically-diverse population, as well as higher levels of religiosity in the capital, all factors associated with higher levels of volunteering.

## People who do not volunteer

Some 52% of survey respondents stated that had not volunteered, either before or since March 2020 and 8% replied that they did not know if they had done so<sup>22</sup>. This six in ten group comprises people who do not want to volunteer as well as those who are unable to do so as a result of barriers such as competing calls on their time. The Inquiry's survey showed that those who were less likely to volunteer include those aged 35-44 (just 29% of this group had a history of volunteering), those from social grades C2, D and E (34%), those who had no tertiary education (31%), people who lived in small cities or big towns (28%) and those who had not voted in the 2019 general election (28%).

Some 10% of people agreed that 'volunteering was not for people like me' and 4% agreed that 'volunteering was not my responsibility'. The survey also showed that 23% of people who did not volunteer were not interested in giving their time to any cause' (Figure 5) People who are resistant to volunteering are likely to amount to about 20% of adults, a further 40% may be more open to the idea of volunteering, but face a range of barriers that prevent them from giving their time.

*"This will sound really pathetic, but lack of time stops me volunteering. I'm a plumber, I work sometimes 12 or 14 hour days and I'm absolutely exhausted. I've got a young family and I want to spend my time with them. I've done bits and pieces in the past and my mother volunteered at Barnados. If I get a bit of spare time, it sounds selfish but I want some me time. In future, if I had more time in a day, I'd love to give back a little bit more."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

## INQUIRY FINDINGS: PROFILING VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED

### Regular volunteers

While four in ten adults volunteer, the frequency that people volunteer differs considerably. The Inquiry's survey showed that over half of people (56%) who had offered their time since March 2020 had done so regularly, in that they had volunteered more than once a month (Figure 2). Scaled up this suggests that 9% of the adult population of the UK are regular volunteers, a figure that amounts to 4.8 million people. This finding is again consistent with other recent research, for example, NCVO's Time Well Spent survey which suggested that just under half of volunteers (48%) offer their time on a regular basis<sup>23</sup>.

While the under 25s, those from higher social grades or high level qualifications are more likely to volunteer, they are less likely to be regular volunteers. Regular volunteers are more likely to be over 65, with 72% of volunteers aged 65-74 and 73% of those over 75 reporting that they volunteer more than once a month. Being 'economically inactive' or in part-time work are also factors associated with higher levels of regular volunteering. This suggests that retirement, with its greater availability of free time, encourages people to volunteer on a more regular basis. Organisations wishing to encourage more volunteering might therefore wish to consider targeting this age group.

### The four volunteering 'tribes'

Our findings suggest that people fall into one of four groups when it comes to volunteering; regulars; occasional volunteers; the disengaged, and resisters (Figure 2).

The evidence suggests that 20% of adults are regular volunteers, giving their time more than once a month, often to a range of causes or groups. It is important to maintain the engagement of this group. A further 20% of people are occasional volunteers who could potentially be encouraged to volunteer on a more regular basis.

Among the latter group are many people who volunteer at events and for whom event volunteering could be a route to more regular forms of volunteering.

The Inquiry's survey suggests that around 60% of the UK's adult population do not volunteer, consistent with other research. About a third of this group – around 20% of the adult population of the adult population feel that volunteering is not for them – we have termed this group 'resisters' they have actively do not wish to volunteers. They may want to do other things with their spare time, or volunteering does not interest them. Reaching and engaging this group will be difficult although not impossible. Using social media and other forms of communication to champion volunteering is a priority for this group.

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*"I don't know if this is the right word, but volunteering is not seen as cool. And that's a problem if you want more young people to volunteer. I'm not saying that I agree with this, but for people of a certain age, when you're texting them on what you're doing this weekend if I said I was volunteering, or doing some work for a charity, then the response is you're not getting paid, it is a waste of time. You get that sort of response off people."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

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Another 40% of the population do not volunteer because there are barriers to them doing so, most often competing pressures on their time. We have called this group 'the disengaged'. They are not involved in volunteering, but they are not opposed to offering their time and could potentially be mobilised in future. We discuss strategy for reaching this groups later in this report, but they amount to nearly 21 million of the UK's adults and are an untapped resource.

## INQUIRY FINDINGS: PROFILING VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED

### Volunteering during COVID-19

The pandemic has resulted in changes in patterns of volunteering. The 2020-2021 Community Life Survey (England) suggests a 26% fall in the numbers of people volunteering for formally-constituted organisations at least once a month, compared with the previous year, with 17% of people volunteering at least once a month between April 2020 and March 2021, compared to 23% over the period April 2019-March 2020. The advice that the over 70s should shield undoubtedly impacted on levels of formal volunteering, as regular volunteers are much more likely to be older. Work from home advice, restrictions on sports and the closure of venues such as museums will also have impacted on formal volunteering – grassroots sport, youth groups and the heritage sectors largely rely on volunteers.

At the same time there was an 18% increase in informal volunteering, as people reached out to help their neighbours, or became involved in local mutual aid groups and less formalised relief initiatives, including support organised by local faith organisations and businesses.

There is also much evidence of ‘first-time’ volunteering, with people who had previously not offered their time coming forward with many local charities reporting new offers of help. Within days of the start of lockdown some 750,000 people had come forward as NHS Volunteer Responders<sup>24</sup> with their numbers including many first-time volunteers. Charities also report many first-time volunteers. A survey undertaken for the Together Coalition in December 2020 suggests 4.6 million new volunteers in 2020 out of 12.4 million total volunteers<sup>25</sup>. The Inquiry’s own survey suggests that 5% of the adult population volunteered for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic, a figure that, scaled up, amounts to 2.7 million people<sup>26</sup>.

Looking at the last 18 months, the pandemic appears to have led to:

- A decrease in regular formal volunteering, particularly in sectors such as sport and heritage. These organisations now face the task of encouraging regular volunteers to return;
- A comparable increase in informal or less formal types of volunteering;
- A increase in employer-initiated volunteers, with businesses encouraging their staff to volunteer. Before the pandemic, about 10% of volunteers gave their time through employer-supported initiatives<sup>27</sup>;
- Large numbers – at least 2.5 million and likely to be larger – of new volunteers. The Inquiry survey showed that 82% of first-time volunteers are interested in volunteering again.

While COVID-19 has led to many challenges, it also presents opportunities to the volunteering movement and has increased the number of people who volunteer. Most importantly it has shone a light on the value of volunteering. There is potential to increase volunteering within the health and social care sectors, and for initiatives that improve physical and mental health. There are opportunities to increase employer-supported volunteering. Above all, organisations that need volunteers must harness the community spirit of 2020’s first-time volunteers who want to volunteer again.



## SECTION 4

# WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

**Understanding what motivates people is important if we are to encourage more volunteering.**

Volunteers are more likely to give time in their own neighbourhood, for local organisations and groups, and alongside their friends and neighbours, with NCVO estimating that 81% of volunteers do their volunteering in and for their local communities<sup>28</sup>. However, a range of factors motivate people to give their time, and perceptions about the value of volunteering vary between different groups of people. It is influenced by demographic and social factors, people's values and the organisations to which they give their time. The Inquiry survey showed:

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**86% of volunteers agreed that volunteering helped improve their local community.**

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**Some 85% of women feel that volunteering improves people's mental health and wellbeing, compared to 76% of men. Other studies have also highlighted the importance of wellbeing as both a driver and outcome of volunteering<sup>29</sup>.**

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**85% of volunteers agreed that volunteering helped important causes and charities.**

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**80% of volunteers agreed that volunteering helped improve people's skills and job prospects. This figure was much higher among younger people, with or without a history of volunteering, with 87% of all 18-24 year olds in the survey agreeing that volunteering had such benefits.**

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**74% of volunteers agreed that volunteering freed up the time of paid staff to concentrate on core tasks.**

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**74% of people agreed that volunteering enabled you to meet people from different backgrounds<sup>30</sup>.**

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As can be seen from the above, the impacts on individual wellbeing and the local community are important drivers of volunteering. But it is also important to recognise that people's motivation for volunteering varies, for example, younger people are more likely to be motivated by the impact of volunteering on their skills and career prospects. Different messages about the impacts of volunteering may appeal to different groups of people. This is important when considering how to make a stronger case for volunteering and how best to reach and recruit new volunteers.

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*"When I was living in Glasgow, I wanted to be one of the Commonwealth volunteers. But because of everybody in Glasgow wanted to be a volunteer I didn't get through, but it was something I really wanted to do. But I do volunteer now. On Saturdays, I do a Park Run and I volunteer once a month to organise it. I mark out where the run is, and just kind of cheer people along which makes me feel good. It's satisfying to do the run some weeks and volunteer once a month."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

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*"I was volunteering to help out a Heritage Day event. I got involved in that and was volunteer in running the cafe, which was really nice. It just, you know, had a nice feel about it, I got to meet some different people with different interests outside of my normal, everyday interests."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

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## WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER CONTINUED

### The cause matters

Volunteers are more likely to give time to faith or civil society organisations, but some volunteer for public sector organisations, such as the police, in schools and for the NHS. Our evidence shows that the cause matters. People want to know that giving their time makes a difference. Trusting the organisation to which they are giving their time is also important.

We asked volunteers and non-volunteers what causes or issues had most appeal. As can be seen from Figure 3, the environment and animal welfare, health and social care and local causes have most appeal, both to those who volunteer and those with no history of volunteering. But there are some differences between social groups in the volunteering causes that interest people:

- Women are 36% more likely to be interested in volunteering for an environmental or animal welfare cause compared with men.
- Compared with the overall population, black and minority ethnic groups are 51% less interested in volunteering for environmental or animal welfare causes, but 89% more interested in volunteering for aid and development causes, 86% more interested in faith-based volunteering, 60% more

interested in volunteering in sports and exercise and 31% more interested in volunteering in healthcare.

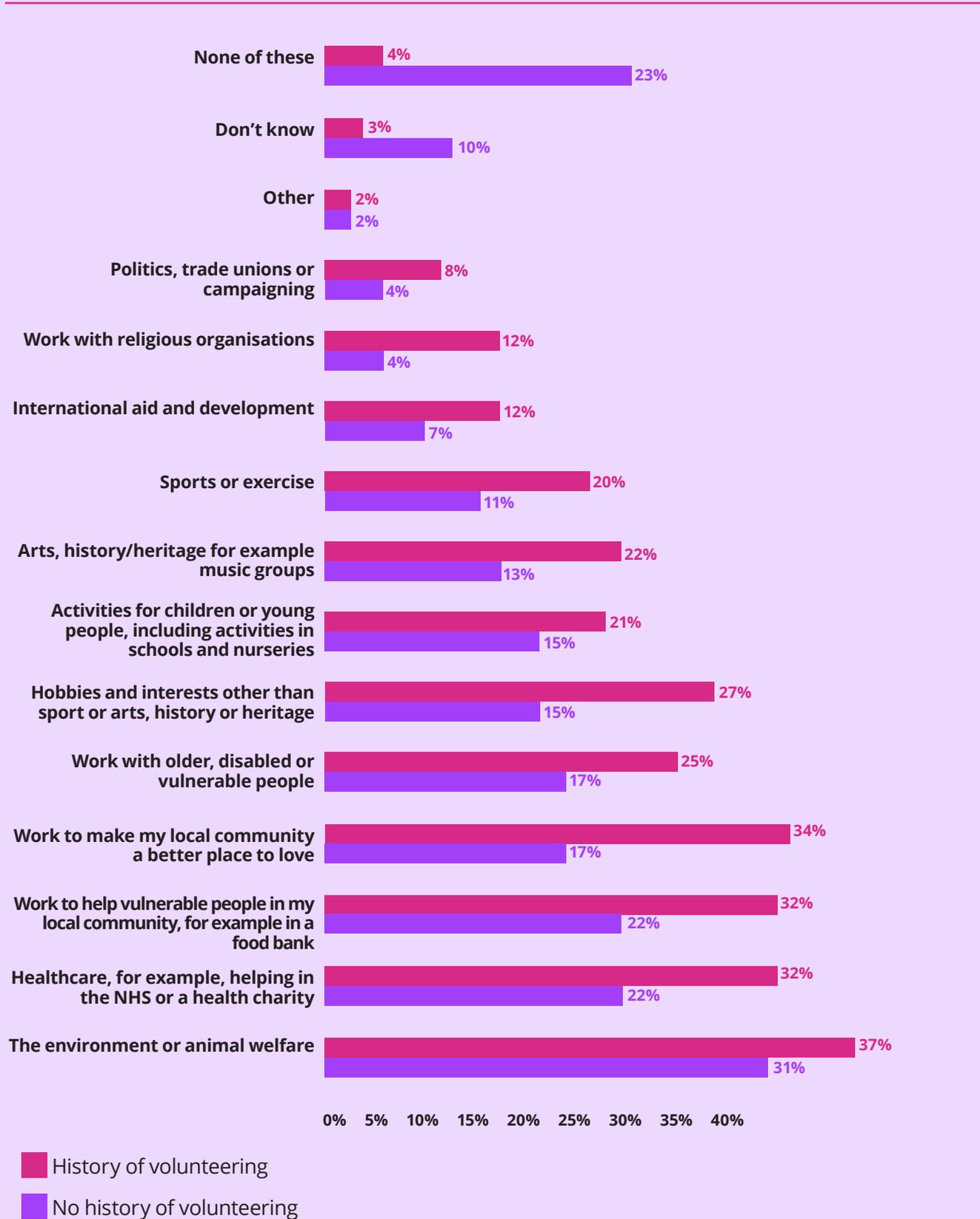
- Compared with the overall population, 18-24 year olds are 120% more interested in political campaigning, 111% more interested in volunteering for aid and development causes, 66% more interested in volunteering in sports or exercise, 56% more interested in volunteering with young people and 34% more interested in volunteering in healthcare.

Overall, UK adults are interested in volunteering for an average of 2.2 different causes. However younger people tend to be interested in volunteering for multiple causes, with 18-24s interested in an average of 2.9 different causes, compared with 64-74s who are interested in volunteering for an average of 1.9 different causes. People with a prior history of volunteering also tend to be interested in giving their time to different causes: 2.8 compared with 2.2 in the overall population. These findings support the development of a volunteering passport or wallet which would make it easier to volunteer for different organisations, as well as reduce delays in taking up volunteers' offers of help. Such a digital tool would provide a record of safeguarding checks, training and prior volunteering<sup>31</sup>. This proposal was backed in the recent Kruger report<sup>32</sup> and is supported by most major charities.



## WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER CONTINUED

Fig 3. If you were able to volunteer for anything you want, what areas or causes would you be interested in being involved in?



Source: ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021.

## SECTION 4

# EVENT VOLUNTEERING

**There is little research into event volunteering, save some studies of Olympic and Paralympic volunteers and those who help at other major sporting events. But understanding more about who does or does not volunteer at events was a key tasks for this part of the Inquiry.**

Some 14% of adults said that they had volunteered at a local or major event in the last 12 months, with another 29% of people saying that they had volunteered in this way more than 12 months ago.

As can be seen from Figure 4, some groups of people are more likely to have volunteered at events. These are similar social groups to those who are more likely to have a history of volunteering. Non-voters group are the group who are least likely to volunteer at an event (31%), or to volunteer at all.

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*"In the first year that the Tour de Yorkshire was run, I put myself forward to volunteer. I didn't think it would happen because of I didn't have a power chair at the time. But they set up the right transport and everything without even asking any questions. They wanted marshals and people to wave flags on the traffic islands. But I got put outside the town hall to tell everybody where the toilet was. So it was a bit frustrating, but I was still part of it, and you felt you were making a difference to your community."*

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*"We got bright green uniforms sponsored by Asda to wear as well which said 'happy to help'. And I think that made people talk to me more than they would have done. They actually came over and said 'Oh, what are you doing? Why are you wearing that uniform?' And I ended up cuddling people's dogs. I did feel the organisers went out of their way to make sure I could take part. But I'd have preferred to be on an traffic island with a flag!"*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

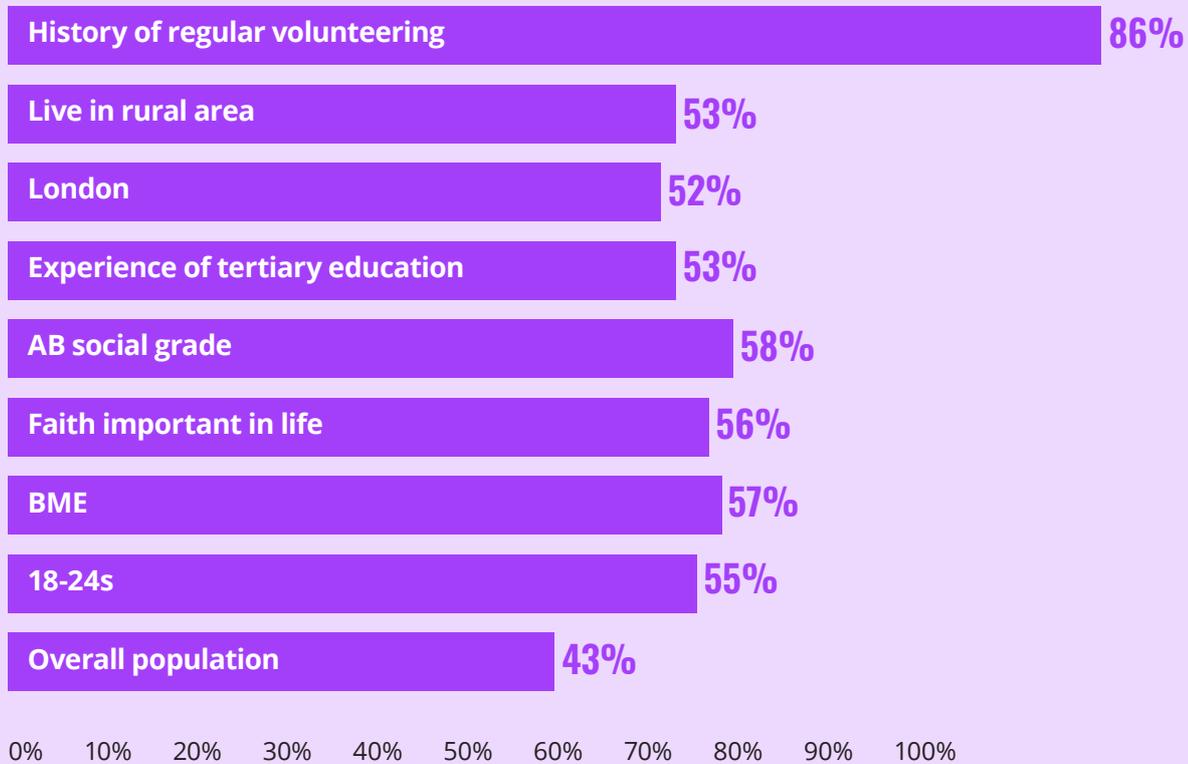
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The evidence from the sittings and public discussions suggests that there are two types of event volunteer:

- people with an existing history of regular volunteering, including volunteering at community events. The survey showed that a very large proportion of regular volunteers (86%) who give their time more than once a month have volunteered at an event. This group of volunteers tend to offer their time at community and local events as well as major events such as the Commonwealth Games.
- people whose main motivation for volunteering is taking part in the event itself, who may have less of a history of regular volunteering. This group of volunteers is more likely to largely or exclusively volunteer at larger sporting or cultural events. They are more likely to be young, or time poor and may be less likely to go on to volunteer on a regular basis.

## EVENT VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

Fig 4. Have you ever volunteered at an event?



Source: ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021.

The public discussions included people who had put their names forward or volunteered at larger events including the Manchester Caribbean Carnival, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games and the Tour de Yorkshire, as well as smaller local and community events. They saw major event volunteering as being a different type of activity driven by a different set of motives compared with volunteering in their local community. Volunteering with friends, meeting new people and incentives such as free tickets and uniforms were factors that motivated people to volunteer at large events. The collective experience of being part of a large event was also something that event volunteers valued. An interest in a particular sport or cultural activity also inspired some people to volunteer at large events.

*“When an Olympics comes to town, it’s a huge event, you know, people hoping to be part of that huge event, maybe hoping to see Usain Bolt. It’s very different to somebody volunteering week in, week out, going into school and listening to readers or going into a care home and talking to the people in the care home. They’re almost very different forms of volunteering.”*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

## EVENT VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

### The value of event volunteering

Different factors sometimes motivate some people to become event volunteers, compared with other forms of volunteering. Nevertheless, event volunteering is an important part of the volunteering ecosystem and can have lasting positive impacts.

1. The positive outcomes associated with volunteering also apply to volunteering at events, including enhanced wellbeing, greater confidence and increased skills and employability. Volunteers at most large events receive training, some of which may look at how their volunteering experience can increase their employability. Volunteering at events can also help build bonding, bridging and linking social connections described on page 16, thus reducing social isolation, mistrust and prejudice.
2. Volunteering at community events has a low bar to entry and can be a route to more active involvement in people's local communities. The Inquiry heard from the Big Lunch, an annual event that encourages people to use food to bring people together at an annual weekend in June. While such events need to be planned in advance, people can become involved by joining in on the day and by bringing food. An evaluation of the Big Lunch, an annual event organised by the Eden Project showed that 54% of people who took part had since worked with their neighbours to improve their local community.
3. Event volunteering often draws people from a much larger area than more regular forms of volunteering where people mostly volunteer in their neighbourhood. As many parts of the UK are socially segregated by wealth, faith and ethnicity, event volunteering can have a role to play in building positive, bridging connections across social divides.

*"All the Big Lunch needs is you, me and a cup of tea."*

Peter Stewart, Eden Project.

4. Volunteering at an event can be a route to more regular volunteering. The Inquiry was told how an evaluation had shown that 38% of people who took part in the 2018 Big Lunch had since taken up a new volunteering opportunity in their local area. Some 60% of people who volunteered during Hull UK City of Culture 2017 went on to volunteer in other organisations after the year-long event<sup>33</sup>. Research commissioned by Sport England showed that 7% of those who volunteered at large sporting events went on to volunteer in grassroots sports<sup>34</sup>.

*"Of 100 volunteers at a major event, you could expect 29 to already volunteer in grassroots sport, 7 of them to go on to be grassroots volunteers, and 22 to consider volunteering in grassroots sport but not go on to do so. Our challenge is to convert the 22 who are considering it into volunteers, as well as reaching out to unsuccessful volunteers."*

Evidence given to the Inquiry by Jenny Betteridge, Sport England.



## SECTION 5

# BETTER VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers, including volunteering at events, can bring many benefits. However, these benefits are not being fully realised. This section of the report looks at how we might increase the proportions of people who volunteer and how volunteering might increase its social and economic impact. Our evidence suggests that to achieve these aims, we need to:

- make a stronger case for volunteering;
- reduce barriers and put the conditions in place that enable people to offer their time, including the conditions that enable people to volunteer at events;
- put in place the conditions that enable volunteering, including volunteering at events, to maximise its social and economic impact.

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*“You don’t want to travel too far to volunteer. So I can’t really imagine myself travelling all the way to the west London to volunteer. And in that perspective, it really helps to post the volunteering opportunities in social media groups. And also, the lack of clarity sometimes might be a barrier. So if they’re posting any opportunities, I want to know the key details which are not ambiguous. And that will help me to decide whether I want to volunteer or not. But also the cause. So what are they actually they’re doing is also important. You know, I want to make an impact.”*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

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## Making a stronger case for volunteering

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Communications are key if new volunteers are to be mobilised and occasional volunteers are to be encouraged to volunteer more often. There is a need to shift social norms associated with volunteering so it is seen as an activity in which everyone takes part, not just particular sections of society.

Those involved in volunteering need to be better at championing it, using language and messengers who appeal to those who are currently not offering their time. For example, stressing the impact on people’s employability is a message that may be particularly successful in encouraging younger people to volunteer: the Inquiry’s survey showed that 59% of 18-24 year olds and 49% of 25-34 year olds said they would be more likely to volunteer if they knew it would improve their skills or job prospects, compared with 34% of all survey respondents.

Participants in the discussion groups told us that they would be more likely to volunteer if they had more information about what it entailed and they knew that there were tasks that would interest them. They also wanted more information about the organisations they were helping, particularly if this organisation was a charity. These findings were supported in the survey; nearly half (44%) of people who did not volunteer said they would be more likely to volunteer if they knew there were things that they could do that would interest them. Some 36% of non-volunteers said that they would be more likely to volunteer if they had more information about what was involved in

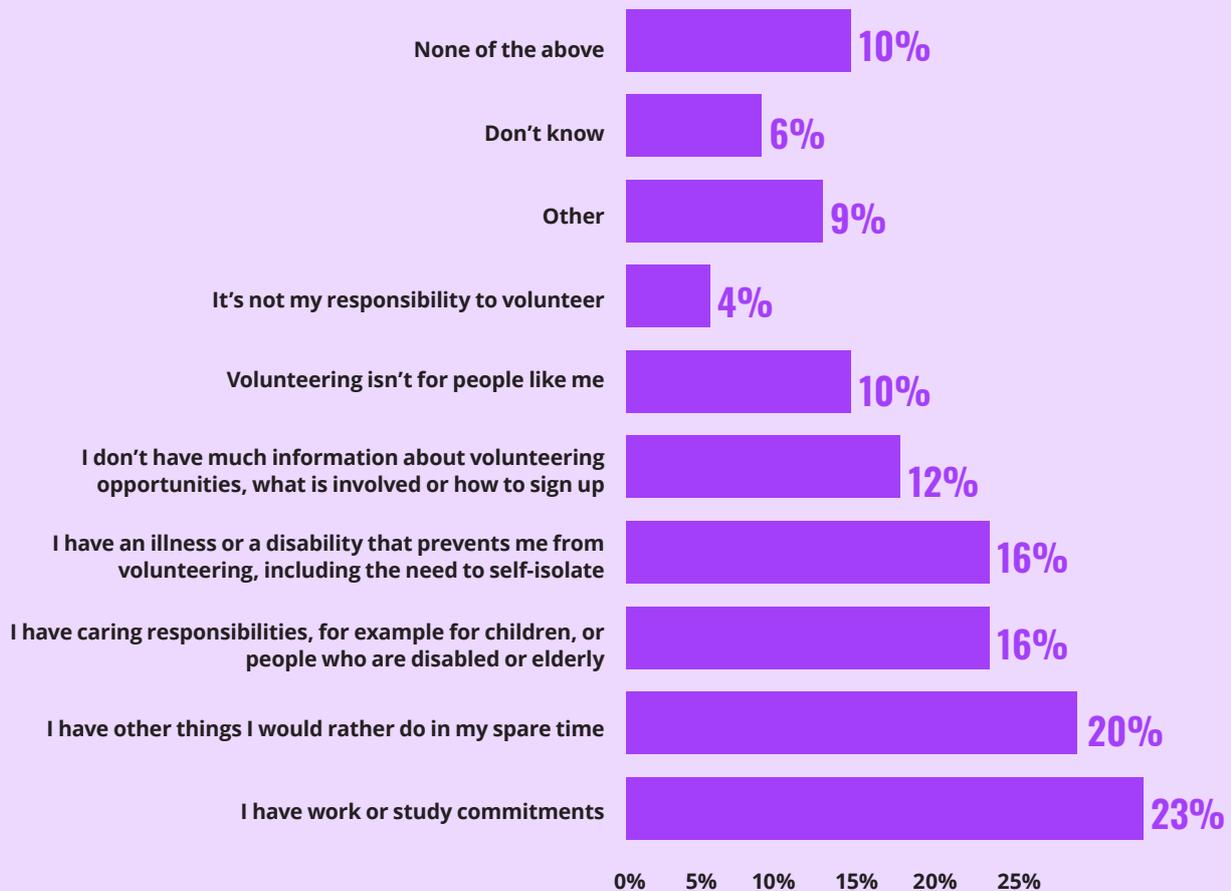
## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

volunteering opportunities (Figure 6). Information about volunteering needs to be jargon-free if it is to engage people who do not currently volunteer. There is also scope for using digital communications to inform people about volunteering activities.

There are examples of successful communications campaigns about volunteers, for example, the recruitment drive for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games significantly raised the profile of volunteering and reached people who had previously not been volunteers<sup>35</sup>.

Messengers are important, the Inquiry survey suggested that 39% of people who do not volunteer said they would be more likely to volunteer if asked by a person or organisation that they trusted. Other successful communications campaigns have used ‘volunteer champions’ or ‘community champions’ who make the case for volunteering with their peer group, for example, fellow employers and employees, congregants or neighbours. Organisations working with volunteers would like to see more of these programmes and for them to also involve high profile individuals such as athletes or members of the Royal Family.

**Fig 5. What are your reasons for not volunteering in the last 18 months?**



n= 1,578, sample of people who said they had not volunteered since March 2020. Source: ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021.

## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

### Reducing barriers and making it easier to volunteer

Many people who do volunteer face barriers that prevent them from volunteering or make it less likely that they give their time on a regular basis (Figure 5). Increasing the proportions of people who volunteer, and thus the impact of volunteering will require action to address barriers and to make it easier to volunteer which should include:

**A varied and flexible volunteering offer:** The biggest barrier to volunteering is competing pressures on people's time due to work, study or caring responsibilities. Offering people a range of volunteering activities, including one-off tasks or things that they can do from home, has been shown to be a successful means to getting more people to volunteer. The Inquiry's survey showed that nearly half (46%) of people who were not volunteering said they would be more likely to offer their time if there were flexible ways to help for example things they could do from home or online, or with members of their family (Figure 6).

*"I would volunteer for somewhere that I could take my daughter and include her because I don't have a big support network for someone to look after her. If I could take her along, and she could actually get involved, and volunteer as well, and be inclusive, then that would also encourage me to do more."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

# 57%

of 18-24 year olds said they would be more likely to volunteer if there was help with transport or expenses.

**Help with expenses:** Some volunteering opportunities require travel and the inability to afford transport is a barrier for some people, particularly those who are unemployed or economically inactive and who might stand to gain from the boost to skills and wellbeing that volunteering can bring. Many organisations that work with volunteers do cover their expenses, but not all of them do. Some 33% of people who were not volunteers and 57% of 18-24 year olds said they would be more likely to volunteer if there was help with transport or expenses.

**Partnership with employers and unions:**

Employer-supported volunteering grew in 2020, with more businesses offering their staff paid leave or flexible hours to enable them to volunteer. There is a business case for volunteering: it improves staff wellbeing and helps team-building and the development of other skills. Employer-supported volunteering has also been shown to help employers retain their staff and increase customer loyalty by highlighting the positive role that businesses play in their local community.

Many organisations who work with volunteers are calling for the greater involvement of employers and trade unions in encouraging more people to give their time. The Shaping the Future with Volunteering consortium of charities is calling for central government to increasing the number of civil service volunteering days. It would also like to see changes to procurement practices in the awarding of Government contracts, with bidders required to show how they encouraging their employees to volunteer<sup>36</sup>.

*"I think the involvement of employers would be useful here. There are some forward thinking employers, which do give staff specific days which are paid on their normal salary, but which they can use to volunteer outside of the company. And I think that's something which most companies should be doing. I think companies have a duty to their communities to invest in their communities."*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

**Better use of digital:** In March 2020 some 750,000 signed-up to be NHS Volunteer Responders through an online process which also managed the allocation of tasks. This digital process was set up in days and highlighted the role that digital technology can play in the recruitment of volunteers. The recruitment of Commonwealth Collective volunteers for the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games has been managed online.

Despite these examples of the effective use of digital technology, a common theme in the public discussions was of 'red tape' and of lengthy, bureaucratic recruitment processes discouraging people from offering their time.

This theme was also highlighted in the recent Kruger Report commissioned by the Prime Minister<sup>37</sup>. Most organisations that work with volunteers agree that people's experiences of signing-up to become a volunteer need to be made quicker and easier, and this can take place without compromising safeguarding checks and training. Digital technology has a role to play here – in the recruitment process, and in the validation of identity and safeguarding checks and prior training.

*'We need an online database. So you could go on and say I'm free on Tuesdays and Saturdays. This is my experience. This is my DBS. These are my skills. This is where I volunteered before....So you do it once, not multiple times.'*

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

# 52%

**of 18-24 year olds said they would be more likely to give their time if they could find volunteering opportunities online.**

Advances in technology have seen the development of online volunteering platforms which match people with local volunteering opportunities. The Inquiry's survey showed that of the 30% of people who were not volunteers, 52% of 18-24 year olds and 47% of 25-34 year olds said they would be more likely to give their time if they could find volunteering opportunities online. A recent report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration recommended that "The Government should commission a single, UK-wide, easy-to-use volunteering platform, linking those who want to offer their time to organisations that need volunteers"<sup>38</sup>. Many organisations that work with volunteers would also like to see greater use made of digital platforms to provide information about volunteering, as well as match people with volunteering opportunities, including at events. But it is also important to note that digital platforms are not a substitute for local face-to-face recruitment processes, such as those that are led by the 120 local volunteer centres across the UK. Nor is it a substitute for volunteer fairs, such as those organised by universities or at large events. Rather, digital platforms are complementary to community-based face-to-face recruitment.

Many organisations that use volunteers are calling for safeguarding checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be fully digitalised. The safety of children and vulnerable adults would not be compromised by this change, as organisations who work with volunteers would still be able to undertake their own checks, but full digitalisation would speed up the process and reduce delays in placing volunteers.

*'The DBS process [should] be fully digitalised; if the DBS process goes back to face-to-face checks, voluntary and community VCSE organisations would struggle to recruit and onboard volunteers in big numbers.... There are numerous benefits to a volunteer passport: volunteer flexibility, control and skills development, quicker deployment of volunteers. It reduces duplication in on-boarding and training and reduces protectionism and ownership of volunteers, ideally leading to better volunteer experience.'*

Evidence given to the Inquiry by Jeremy Hughes, Shaping the Future of Volunteering consortium.

## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

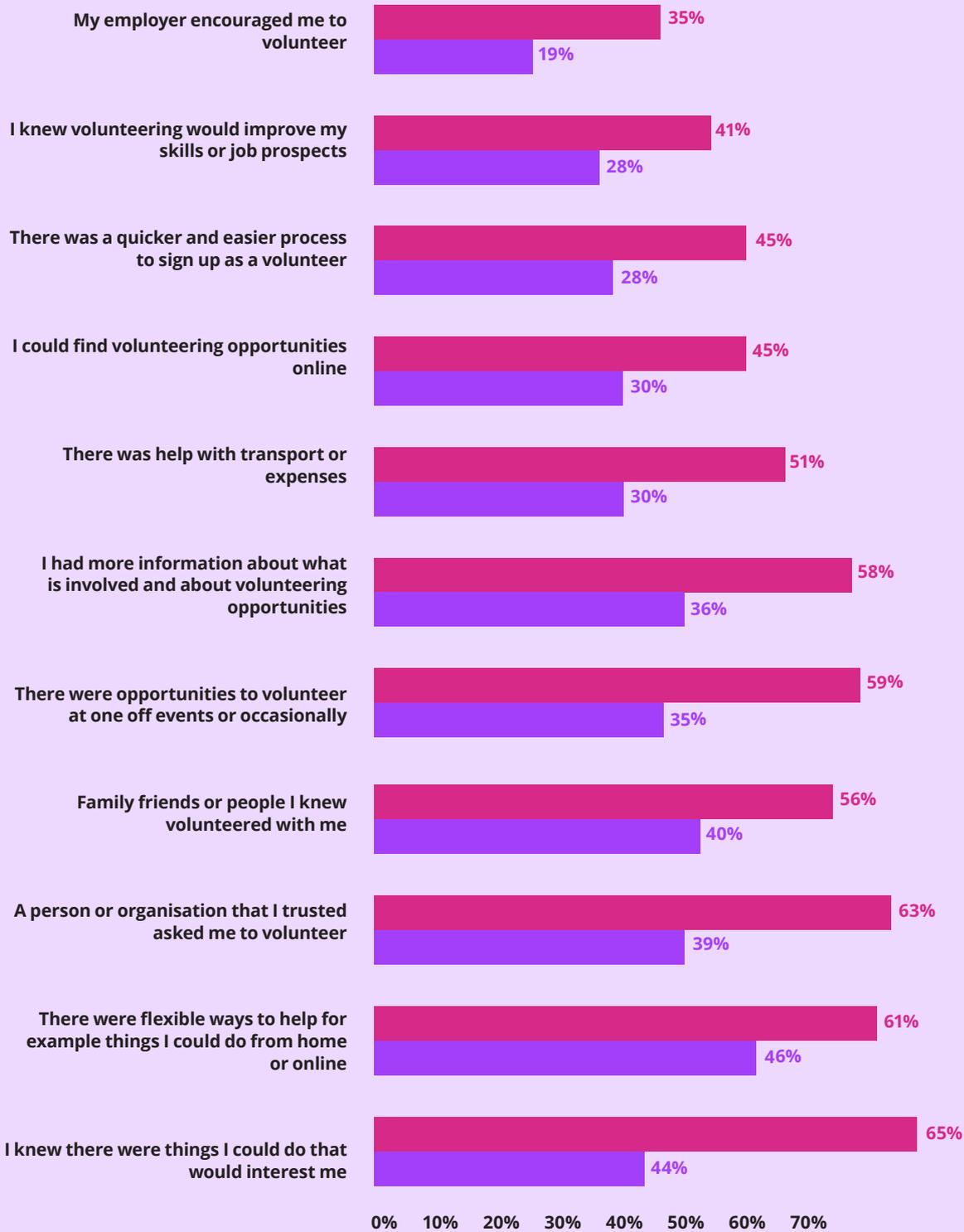
There are also strong arguments for the development of a UK-wide digital volunteering wallet or passport. It has been proposed that such a wallet would verify a volunteer's identity and safeguarding (DBS) checks, as well as include records of training and volunteering<sup>39</sup>. Digital volunteers wallets can also be used to provide incentives to volunteers, for example, offering discounts in local shops. A number of digital volunteer wallets already exist, for example, the Norfolk Volunteer Passport, the development of which has been led by Voluntary Norfolk. However, the development of volunteer wallets requires more work. As with digital platforms and the digitalisation of DBS checks, the process of developing and rolling out a digital volunteer wallet needs to be led by the Government.

**Reducing barriers faced by disabled people:** it is important that volunteering is open to everyone. However, disabled people may face barriers that prevent them from giving their time, for example, an office might not be accessible for someone with reduced mobility. Among organisations that work with volunteers, attitudes about disability can also be a barrier to volunteering. Rather than thinking about what disabled volunteers can offer, some organisations focus on the problems and additional expense that recruiting disabled volunteers might cause for them. Organisations may not know how many of their volunteers are disabled or might not have asked these volunteers about their experiences. Yet there is often funding available to enable volunteering to be more inclusive of disabled people. Local volunteers centres and disability organisations are also willing to give advice about recruiting and supporting disabled volunteers.



## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

**Fig 6. To what extent would each of the following make you more likely to volunteer in future?**



■ History of volunteering  
 ■ No history of volunteering

Source: ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021

## BETTER VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

### Making sure that volunteering has positive impacts

As already noted there is much evidence of the positive impacts that volunteering brings, on the organisations that use volunteers and their beneficiaries, on volunteers themselves and on wider society. But securing these benefits is not an automatic process. For example, volunteering will not improve a person's skills and job prospects if he or she is left alone to undertake routine tasks and given no feedback or opportunities for development.

Organisations that use volunteers, including those who organise events, must plan for and put in place the conditions that are needed to maximise the social and economic impacts that volunteering can bring. With large sporting and cultural events attracting significant amounts of Government funding – £129 million for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and £120 million for the Unboxed Festival – it is incumbent on those who receive public funding to organise events to make sure that these moments have positive and lasting impacts.

For many people, volunteering has an important role to play in boosting their wellbeing and improving their skills and career prospects. In turn, this means that volunteering has positive social and economic benefits. As already argued, young people, in particular, are likely to feel that volunteering increases their employability. But certain conditions need to be put in place if volunteering is to be a route to improved wellbeing and skills:

**Organisations that work with volunteers need to make sure that everyone benefits.** Sometimes those who stand to gain the most from volunteering are also the least likely to take part. Community groups as well as organisations that use large numbers of volunteers need to know who is coming forward to volunteer as well as the groups who are not offering their time. They need to take steps to reach people and reduce the barriers to volunteering discussed above<sup>40</sup>.

**Volunteers need support.** They should be given encouragement, feedback and training. For volunteers who are interested, organisations that use volunteers should provide clear pathways to employment<sup>41</sup>. Many organisations that work with or place large numbers of volunteers employ paid staff to provide this support.

**Work in partnership.** Community and faith organisations can help reach and recruit people who are not coming forward to volunteers. Volunteering will be more successful in helping people move into work, if the organisations that work with volunteers involve local colleges and employers.

There are many examples of organisations taking steps to make sure that volunteering has positive impacts, including projects funded by Spirit of 2012. Such work includes small volunteer-led heritage organisations in Dorset who are taking steps to reach out to and include disabled volunteers in their work in a project run by Volunteer Centre Dorset<sup>42</sup>.

Although not a Spirit of 2012 grantee, the Rugby League World Cup, now to be played in 2022 has planned a detailed social impact programme, covering mental health, employability, schools, grassroots sport, physical activity, a cultural programme, sport and education in low and middle income countries and volunteering<sup>43</sup>. Its volunteering programme, The Power Squad, will recruit 2,500 people to welcome spectators at matches. When the tournament ends, the Rugby League World Cup staff and local clubs will encourage volunteers to become active in their local communities or volunteer in grassroots sport. As part its volunteering programme, the Rugby League World Cup is also working with Community Integrated Care, a charity that provides residential and community care to disabled people. They will be supported to volunteer during the competition alongside their non-disabled peers.

The Dorset Volunteer Centre project and the Rugby League World Cup Power Squad are just two examples of volunteering programmes which have planned and invested in securing positive impact. There are many more that the Inquiry could have mentioned, but they all have common features: good volunteering that secures positive social and economic impacts requires planning, an infrastructure and funding.

## SECTION 6

# HOW EVENTS CAN BOOST VOLUNTEERING

## Case study: Hull 2017 UK City of Culture Volunteering



Over 2,500 volunteers signed up to help during Hull City of Culture, with many of them first-time volunteers. It was always intended that after this event finished, there would be support mechanisms put in place to enable them to keep volunteering.

Three years on, the Hull City of Council Legacy Volunteering programme is now managed by Visit Hull and East Yorkshire, a partnership between Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council and has received funding from Spirit of 2012. Over 750 volunteers are still active, welcoming visitors, offering their time to arts and heritage organisations, as well as in their local communities. There are ambitions to grow this volunteering project in the next three years, using funding from Spirit of 2012. Here Janet tells her story.

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*"I started volunteering in 2014 at a pop up art gallery, just helping with invigilating, and setting up exhibitions and just doing what I could while working. I got my husband John to do more as he had just retired. I also started to help out at the Freedom Festival doing a variety of things. From these it encouraged me to apply for the City of Culture."*

*"I thoroughly enjoyed my volunteering with the gallery and Freedom Festival. You felt you were doing something essential to keep the gallery open and that was great. The City of Culture volunteering went up a complete gear. It was challenging at first doing so many different things and having to come out of my comfort zone, but we were so well looked after and we became part of such a lovely family. It did become life changing. We saw all different things, met and worked with so many different people, our life was enhanced and we learnt so much, especially about ourselves. It wasn't just like the average volunteering we learnt so many new skills and more about the city and its art."*

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## HOW EVENTS CAN BOOST VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

### Case study: Hull 2017 UK City of Culture Volunteering continued

**Janet's husband John** got involved as a volunteer in Hull through his wife, Janet. Volunteering has helped John to see more of his city and meet new people. "The experience has been (and still is) very rewarding. We have volunteered at many events, doing different roles including meeting and greeting visitors to the city. We are busy doing two or three shifts each week ranging from coffee mornings at a community library to shifts at the information pod in the travel interchange.

*"Because of the diversity of the opportunities we have been involved in we no longer have a 'comfort zone'. We have made many new lifelong friends with many other volunteers who we socialise with (COVID permitting) including Christmas parties. As a result of the our volunteer training we have gained knowledge and experience of many different communities. I have carried on volunteering because I enjoy it and also get a lot from it. It makes me feel good to do something for my city."*

**Almost all events – small or large – require volunteers. These moments have a specific role to play in increasing the numbers of people who volunteer or who volunteer on a regular basis.**

## Championing volunteering at events

Events can be used to highlight the role that volunteers play, as happened during the London 2012 Games and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. In both cases, the profile of volunteering was raised by the distinctive uniform that volunteers wore at these two events. The profile of volunteering was also raised as a result of the publicity generated during the London 2012 Games, which in the short-term may have contributed to an increase in proportions of people who volunteer. The evaluation of Hull City of Culture also highlighted how the event raised the profile of volunteering in the area<sup>44</sup>. The visibility of the volunteers in London and Hull had a significant role to play here – in both London and Hull the volunteers had distinctive uniforms. While the London 2012 Games and Hull City of Culture played an important role in raising the profile



## HOW EVENTS CAN BOOST VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

of volunteering, some researchers have raised concerns that this approach risks giving the public a misleading picture of volunteering<sup>45</sup>.

Regional, local and community events can be used to champion volunteering. Almost all county shows and their urban equivalents involve charity exhibitors. These often act as a market place and are usually staffed by volunteers who give our information about how to become a volunteer. The Inquiry heard from Peter Stewart from the Eden Project which organises the annual Big Lunch. Local community organisations that work with volunteers are often present at community events such as the Big Lunch and Great Get Together, sometimes as organisers. As already noted, 38% of people who took part in the 2018 Big Lunch had since taken up a new volunteering opportunity in their local area.

Other gatherings of people could be used to recruit volunteers. Football matches are an opportunity to recruit volunteers for grassroots sports organisations and for local communities. Concerts and festivals could be used to recruit volunteers for arts organisations. This will require that event organisers work with local charities that need volunteers.

## Events as a route to regular volunteering

Signing up and giving time to help out at an event has the potential to be a route to regular volunteering, but this is not always being achieved.

Evidence provided by Sport England showed that 7% of people who volunteered at major sporting events went on to volunteer in grassroots sport. But the same study also showed that 22% of event volunteers wanted to offer their time again, but did not go to become involved in grassroots sport<sup>46</sup>. While the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic volunteering programmes were successful in raising the profile of volunteering, criticism has been levelled at the London 2012 Games for its management of its volunteering legacy<sup>47</sup>. There are key lessons to be learned from the London 2012 Games which show how legacy volunteering schemes might better be managed in ways that maintains the engagement of event volunteers.



## HOW EVENTS CAN BOOST VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

- Planning for volunteering legacy programmes must not be afterthought, it needs to be an integral part of the planning an event.
- The London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) struggled to fund its legacy volunteering programme. There must be demarcated funding for post-event volunteering within the overall event budget.
- The remit of the organisation that oversees legacy volunteering is key to their success. Such programmes must be run by organisations that have expertise in working with volunteers and are part of the local volunteering ecosystem. Combined authorities, councils or local volunteer centres may often be better placed to run legacy volunteering programmes than sports or arts organisations.
- Team London, Sport England and selective national governing bodies for sport were involved in planning the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games volunteer legacy. But organisations that worked with volunteers outside sport were not closely involved in this process. London 2012 Games volunteers were directed to the 'Join In' campaign which encouraged them to continue volunteering in grassroots sport. However, not everyone who volunteered in 2012 was motivated by their interest in sport; some people wanted to volunteer because they wanted to take part in a once-in-a-lifetime event. For this latter group, the post-event volunteering offer was narrow, with few opportunities for London 2012 Games volunteers who had no strong interest in sport. There were also delays in contacting those who had given their time in 2012.

The early signposting for event volunteers towards a variety of future activities is key to maintaining their engagement. Such volunteering opportunities must include options for further one-off volunteering opportunities, activities people can undertake at home, as well as regular volunteering.

- Team London's initiatives included developing a volunteering app to channel London 2012 Games volunteers to new opportunities. The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games also used similar technology, albeit with less success. These were early examples of digital technology being used

to direct event volunteers to future volunteering opportunities. With the existence of digital volunteering platforms such as Dolt, organisers of both small and large events can now use technology to signpost people who have taken part to further volunteering opportunities.

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***"The company who recruited them, the one who runs it, like they need to keep in touch, like regular communication, like saying, like, you know, if you're interested, we've got x, y, and z opportunities."***

Participant in Inquiry public discussion group, September 2021.

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- Major sporting and cultural events need to over-recruit because past experience has shown a large rate of attrition, with people dropping out after they have signed up, and between the selection process and the event. This over-recruitment is inevitable, but it leads to disappointment. It is important to direct people who have not been selected to volunteer to other activities, with planning for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games an example of what can be achieved. Here, people who have not been selected as Commonwealth Collective volunteers will be offered other volunteer opportunities at the Games as well as in the wider areas. They will also be have access to the same employment-focussed training courses as people selected to volunteer at the Commonwealth Games.

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***"If you want 12,000 volunteers, you need 40,000 sign-ups. There is a quite a significant drop-off between initial sign-up and the move to the interview and getting involved. That is completely natural. And then you've got the natural drop-off between the interview and the selection process as people find out more and decide it is not for them. But we have a number of pathways where if someone gets a 'no' or someone decides not to continue, there are other things they can do."***

Evidence given to the Inquiry by Martin Green, Birmingham 2022.

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## SECTION 7

# FIRST IDEAS FOR ACTION

Volunteering brings many benefits, to the individuals who give their time and to the organisations that receive help. Sectors such as heritage and grassroots sport would not be able to function without the help of volunteers, as would most of the UK's smaller charities. Volunteering also strengthens social connections and gives people a stronger stake in society.

Despite the many benefits that it brings, as a society we are not maximising the positive impacts of volunteering. Currently, six in ten people do not volunteer. There is insufficient focus on those whose skills and career prospects would benefit most from volunteering. We are not building on the new volunteering that took place in 2020. And we are not using the power of events to boost volunteering. For these reasons, the Inquiry decided to focus its initial report on volunteering. It looked at how event volunteering might be a route to volunteering on a more regular basis. It also examined how large gatherings of people might

be used to provide information about volunteering and to recruit people to help.

The Inquiry has drawn on a range of evidence to develop a set of practical ideas for ideas for action. They are practical proposals which, if implemented, would mean that volunteering had greater positive impacts. They are also proposals that we believe are capable of attracting broad political and civil society support.

We have concluded that making the most of the catalytic power of events to boost volunteering will require an up-to-date, overarching strategy in all four nations of the UK, better communications and local and digital infrastructure. We have made some proposals that are addressed to a broad range of organisations involved in volunteering, including central government, councils, business and organisations that take on volunteers. Other proposals are specifically aimed at event organisers.



## FIRST IDEAS FOR ACTION CONTINUED

The proposals below also represent the Inquiry's initial ideas. We will develop them further over the next 12 months before we produce our final report. However, we are confident that our proposals, if implemented, would mean that volunteering would have a much greater positive impact. Here are our initial ideas.

### 1. Better communications

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As a society, we need to make a stronger case for volunteering and give people more information about what it involves and the benefits to them and their communities. Nearly half (44%) of people who did not volunteer said they would be more likely to volunteer if they knew there were things that they could do that would interest them volunteering involves; 36% of this group said that they would be more likely to volunteer if they had more information about what in volunteering opportunities involves.

We also need to champion volunteering. We would like to see the honours system give greater recognition to volunteers. We would like the Government to consider appointing 100 volunteering champions from a range of different professions and backgrounds, including those from business, faith, education, and from the Royal Family. Each champion would serve a fixed term and be tasked with making the case for volunteering with their peers and in their local communities.

### 2. Better volunteering experiences

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Organisations that work with volunteers, including event organisers, need to consider how they deploy volunteers, the tasks they offer to them and how volunteers are supported in their roles. Making sure that volunteering is a positive experience will make it easier for these organisations to recruit and retain volunteers. The biggest barrier to volunteering is competing pressures on people's time due to work, study or caring responsibilities. The Inquiry's survey showed that nearly half (46%) of people who were not volunteering said they would be more likely to

offer their time if there were flexible ways to help, for example, occasional tasks or things they could do from home or online. Offering people a range of volunteering activities has already been shown to be a successful means of recruiting and retaining volunteers.

### 3. A funded local infrastructure

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Sometimes those who stand to gain the most from volunteering face the greatest barriers that prevent them from taking part. If the benefits that volunteering brings are to be fully realised, such barriers need to be addressed, and volunteers themselves need feedback and support.

This requires Government and philanthropic investment in local volunteering infrastructures, including the legacy organisations that work with volunteers after major events. Such funding should be used to reduce barriers to volunteering faced by disabled people. It should also cover items such as volunteers' travel expenses, and the salaries of paid staff to recruit and support volunteers, and to build relationships with colleges and employers, as well as community and faith groups who can often reach people who are not coming forward to volunteer.

### 4. Better use of digital

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We can make better use of technology to encourage volunteering. We would like to see greater use made of digital platforms that link organisations that need volunteers with people who are able to give their time. The Government should also consider a programme of work to develop a national volunteering wallet or passport that would provide a record of a person's identity and safeguarding checks, training, as well as recording their volunteering experience. This would reduce the delays associated with placing volunteers and make it easier for people to give their time to a number of organisations.

## FIRST IDEAS FOR ACTION CONTINUED

### 5. Events as an opportunity to recruit volunteers

The profile of volunteering was raised during the London 2012 Games with evidence suggesting that more people came forward to volunteer. We can use events to champion volunteering, give people information about what it entails and recruit volunteers. We would like to see football matches used to recruit volunteers for grassroots sports and local community organisations. Concerts and festivals should be used to recruit volunteers for arts organisations.

### 6. Use anniversaries to boost volunteering

Anniversaries present opportunities to champion specific areas of volunteering. The 75th anniversary of the NHS in 2023 could be used to champion volunteering in health and social care, and for projects which aim to improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing. In 2024 it will be 200 years since the RNLI and the RSPCA were founded. The work of land and sea rescue and animal welfare organisations is supported by many thousands of volunteers, and these anniversaries could also be used to boost volunteering for these causes.

### 7. Funder leverage

Funders should use their influence to make sure that events have positive social and economic impacts. Events should only receive public subsidies if organisers set out detailed delivery plans for securing positive impacts on society, including through volunteering. There should be demarcated funding for legacy volunteering projects in Government, and philanthropic support for sporting and cultural events, including future UK Cities of Culture.

### 8. Planning and strategy

Taking the above ideas forward will require leadership and delivery plans from Government, including administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

We would like to see volunteering strategies in all four nations of the UK, in the combined authorities and in every local authority. These strategies should be backed up with funding and set out how the UK (i) can increase the number of people who volunteer and improve the experience (ii) can increase the positive social and economic impacts that volunteering can bring, particularly among social groups who are less likely to volunteer. Planning for legacy volunteering programmes must not be an afterthought. It needs to be an integral part of the planning of an event and early decisions need to be taken about the ownership of volunteers' contact details.



# APPENDICES

## Results of the nationally representative survey

The Inquiry commissioned a nationally representative survey of 2,073 UK adults carried out by ICM between 24 and 27 September 2021. In addition to the core sample, the survey included a booster samples of 60 respondents from Northern Ireland to enable us to report results for this part of the UK.

The survey findings were analysed by gender, age band, social grade, level of education, household income, ethnic group (white/BAME), household composition, housing tenure, region/nation of residence in UK, settlement type (large city, small city/large town, medium town, small town, rural), Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles, 2019 General Election and EU Referendum voting, importance of faith/religion to respondents and experiences of volunteering (question two) or volunteering at an event (question one). The survey findings are given below and detailed breakdowns of the results are available on request

### Q1

**Have you ever volunteered at an event, as a helper or organiser? This could be a local event such as a street party, or a larger or national event such as a festival or a sporting event.**

<b>In the last week</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>In the last month</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>In the last 6 months</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>In the last 12 months</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>More than 12 months ago</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total: Last 12 months</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Total: Ever</b>	<b>43%</b>

### Q2

**Thinking about volunteering since the start of the COVID pandemic in March 2020, which of the following statements best describes you? When discussing volunteering this could include informal volunteering, such as helping a neighbour, as well as formal volunteering through a local or national organisation.**

<b>I volunteered before the COVID pandemic, &amp; have continued to do so since March 2020</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>I volunteered before the COVID pandemic, but have not done so since March 2020</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>I volunteered for the first time during the COVID pandemic</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>I have not volunteered either before or during the COVID pandemic</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total: Ever</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Total: Never</b>	<b>52%</b>

## APPENDICES CONTINUED

### Q3

You said that you volunteered for the first time during the COVID pandemic. To what extent would you be interested in volunteering again? Asked to all those who said they had volunteered for the first time during the pandemic.

Very interested	17%
Fairly interested	65%
Not very interested	10%
Not at all interested	2%
Don't know	6%

### Q4

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, how often have you volunteered? Asked to all those who said they had volunteered since March 2020.

Daily	2%
Two or three times a week	19%
Once a week	20%
Less than once a week but more often than once a month	14%
About once a month	13%
Occasionally - less often than once a month	29%
Don't know	2%
<b>Total: Once a month or more frequently</b>	<b>70%</b>

### Q5

You said that you have not volunteered during the COVID pandemic. What are your reasons for not volunteering in the last 18 months? Asked to all those who said they had not volunteered during the pandemic.

I have work or study commitments	23%
I have other things I would rather do in my spare time	20%
I have caring responsibilities, for example for children, or people who are disabled or elderly	16%
I have an illness or disability that prevents me from volunteering, including the need to self-isolate	16%
I don't have much information about volunteering opportunities, what is involved or how I sign up	12%
Volunteering isn't for people like me	10%
It's not my responsibility to volunteer	4%
Other	9%
Don't know	6%
None of the above	10%

## APPENDICES CONTINUED

## Q6

To what extent would each of the following make you more or less likely to volunteer in future?

	NET: More likely	NET: Less likely	Much more likely	A bit more likely	No impact	A bit less likely	Much less likely	Don't know
I knew there were things that I could do that would interest me	53%	5%	18%	34%	37%	3%	2%	6%
There were flexible ways to help for example things I could do from home or online	52%	6%	19%	34%	36%	4%	2%	5%
A person or organisation that I trusted asked me to volunteer	49%	6%	15%	35%	39%	4%	3%	6%
Family friends or people I knew volunteered with me	47%	6%	14%	33%	42%	2%	3%	6%
There were opportunities to volunteer at one-off events or occasionally	45%	7%	13%	33%	42%	4%	3%	6%
I had more information about what is involved and about volunteering opportunities	45%	6%	14%	31%	43%	4%	3%	6%
There was help with transport or expenses	41%	6%	14%	27%	48%	3%	3%	6%
I could find volunteering opportunities online	36%	6%	11%	26%	50%	4%	3%	7%
There was a quicker and easier process to sign up as a volunteer	35%	5%	11%	24%	53%	3%	2%	7%
I knew volunteering would improve my skills or job prospects	34%	7%	12%	22%	53%	3%	4%	6%
My employer encouraged me to volunteer	26%	8%	8%	18%	57%	3%	5%	9%

## APPENDICES CONTINUED

### Q7

If you were able to volunteer for anything you wanted, what areas or causes would you be interested in being involved in?

The environment or animal welfare	33%
Healthcare, for example, helping in the NHS or a health charity	26%
Work to help vulnerable people in my local community, for example in a foodbank	26%
Work to make my local community a better place to love	24%
Work with older, disabled or vulnerable people	21%
Hobbies and interests other than sport or arts, history or heritage	20%

Activities for children or young people, including activities in schools and nurseries	18%
Arts, history/heritage, for example music groups	17%
Sports or exercise	15%
International aid and development	9%
Work with religious organisations	8%
Politics, trade unions or campaigning	5%
Other	2%
Don't know	8%
None of these	14%

### Q8

To what extent do you believe the following possible impacts of volunteering are important for people like you and your local community?

	NET: Important	NET: Not Important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
Improving people's mental health and wellbeing	80%	12%	40%	40%	8%	3%	8%
Helping important causes and charities	80%	12%	37%	43%	9%	3%	8%
Helping improve my local community	79%	12%	33%	46%	9%	3%	8%
Helping improve people's skills and job prospects	75%	16%	28%	47%	12%	4%	9%
Freeing up the time of paid staff to concentrate on core tasks	68%	20%	21%	47%	15%	5%	12%
Enabling you to meet people from different backgrounds	68%	24%	21%	47%	17%	6%	8%

Base: All respondents (2,073).

## APPENDICES CONTINUED

## Endnotes

- 1 HM Government and the Mayor of London (2012) *Inspired by 2012: The legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games*, London: The Stationery Office.
- 2 ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021.
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- 5 Goodform (2019) *Researching major event volunteering*, London: Goodform and Sport England.
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- 7 Haldane, A. (2014) *In giving, how much do we receive? The social value of volunteering*, A Pro Bono Economics lecture to the Society of Business Economists, London: Bank of England.
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- 11 Hogg, E and Smith, A. (2021) *Social mobility: unleashing the power of volunteering*, London: Royal Voluntary Service.
- 12 ICM survey of 2,073 UK adults, undertaken for Spirit of 2012, 24-27 September 2021.
- 13 All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration (2021) *Building stronger communities in post-pandemic Britain*, London: APPG on Social Integration.
- 14 British Future (2021) *Our chance to reconnect. Final Report of the Talk Together Project*, London: Together Coalition.
- 15 Hogg, E and Smith, A. (2021) *Social mobility: unleashing the power of volunteering*, London: Royal Voluntary Service.
- 16 See references at the end of this report.
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