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Final Project Report

Greater Manchester Physical Activity, Sport and Movement Volunteering

Prepared for

GreaterSport

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Who are GreaterSport and 10GM?

GreaterSport, supporting GM Moving in Action:

GreaterSport is a Greater Manchester charity with a clear purpose to Change Lives Together through movement, physical activity and sport. GreaterSport lead, support and connect people and partners across the system to develop and deliver on the whole system vision and approach to **GM Moving in Action**. GreaterSport are one of 43 **Active Partnerships**; a network across the country who work collaboratively to create the conditions for an active nation and use the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives. We also work with Sport England to support the local implementation of the **Uniting the Movement Strategy**.

10GM:

10GM is a joint venture to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Greater Manchester. The founding members are: Action Together, Bolton CVS, Macc and Salford CVS. We are local infrastructure organisations operating strategically and collaboratively; our shared purpose is to champion local voluntary and community action and social enterprise across the city-region in order to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Greater Manchester's people and communities.

Executive Summary

This report presents the key research activities conducted for a GreaterSport-commissioned project 'Greater Manchester Physical Activity, Sport and Movement Volunteering,' and discusses findings and recommendations drawn from these activities. The overall goal of this project is to help GreaterSport attain its central aim: *'To work alongside VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sector organisations to create a collective understanding of how to develop a systemic approach to volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement across Greater Manchester.'*

This goal is accompanied by three objectives:

- 1) Understand the value and impact of building relationships between VCSE infrastructure organisations and voluntary led physical activity organisations and groups.
- 2) Identify the underlying trends, inequalities, and barriers within physical activity, sport and movement volunteering to make it more accessible, inclusive, and reflective of Greater Manchester communities.
- 3) Determine what training, support, resources, information, and funding is needed and the role of the system to develop physical activity, sport and movement volunteering across Greater Manchester.

To achieve Objective 1, secondary research of academic and grey literature (e.g., research reports, case studies, white papers) was conducted to synthesise the up-to-date knowledge on the value and impact of establishing cross-sector partnerships involving VCSE organisations. Secondary research findings reveal three types of the value and impact of establishing cross-sector partnerships for the promotion of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering: (a) increasing access to potential volunteers, (b) enhancing the practice of recruiting, supporting, and coordinating volunteers, and (c) providing ideas for revenue generation.

To achieve Objective 2, five focus groups (N=37) were conducted with volunteers (x2 groups), non-volunteers (x2), and volunteer coordinators (x1), recruited from diverse groups in Greater Manchester. Findings are presented in three themes. Firstly, volunteers and non-volunteers have contrasting perceptions with respect to volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. Volunteers viewed volunteering in these fields as open to all, regardless of their experience and commitment levels. In contrast, non-volunteers viewed this type of volunteering as a specialist activity generally only available to those with a sporting background and those who could commit to regular, fixed schedules. Secondly, there are a range of barriers which limited volunteer recruitment and retention in Greater Manchester, including narrow and poor-quality advertisement, a lack of role models, stereotypes, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Thirdly, several facilitators were felt to enable volunteer recruitment and retention in Greater Manchester. These include recruitment methods which align with the needs and abilities of volunteer candidate pools, clarity on volunteer roles and responsibilities, and partnerships in the Greater Manchester VCSE sector.

To achieve Objective 3, two types of data were gathered and analysed: (a) discussions that took place during two workshops with the Advisory Group consisting of representatives from select Greater Manchester-based VCSE organisations (N=14), and (b) survey responses from wider Greater Manchester-based organisations and groups (N=96). These data highlight the perceived importance of (a) volunteer training in child protection/safeguarding, basic skills, and volunteer development, and (b) intangible resources (e.g., information for appropriate funding, networks/contacts), to promote volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester. The data also underscore the need to provide Greater Manchester-

based organisations and groups with better support to understand where they can access relevant information, resources, and funding opportunities that are suitable for their needs.

Based on a synthesis of the findings for the three objectives, eight recommendations are developed to support volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester through a systemic approach involving cross-sector partnerships. These eight recommendations are classified into four overarching themes, including: (a) partnership and community, (b) information sharing and distribution, (c) communication and promotion, and (d) research.

Recommendations for Partnership and Community:

- 1) Facilitate relationship building between sport/physical activity organisations and groups, other VCSE organisations, local infrastructure organisations/volunteer centres, national governing bodies, and organisations with potential volunteer pools (e.g., schools, universities, companies).
- 2) Create Greater Manchester 'Community of Practice' in the sphere of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering to enable the sharing of best practice and provide a collaborative space to address shared issues and challenges.

Recommendations for Sharing and Distribution:

- 3) Ensure that organisations and groups know where they can access available information and resources for the training programmes and funding opportunities that are right for them.
- 4) Enhance and expand recruitment channels to attract and retain a larger and more diverse group of new and existing volunteers through more informative and clearer advertisements.

Recommendations for Communication and Promotion:

- 5) Define the future of volunteering that is attractive to younger generations and demographics that are not currently volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, aligned to the [Vision for Volunteering](#) where relevant.
- 6) Develop campaigns for communicating with diverse groups in Greater Manchester, featuring role models for these groups, and changing perceptions/stereotyping associated with physical activity, sport and movement volunteering.

Recommendations for Research:

- 7) Gather input and feedback from smaller grassroots organisations and groups beyond surveys to better understand and address their needs.
- 8) Understand (a) how emerging trends and factors, such as the cost-of-living crisis, technology and innovation, and decentralised power, may impact volunteers and organisations; and (b) how different volunteer motivations can influence the ways in which organisations and groups in Greater Manchester support and promote volunteering opportunities.

This report presents rationales for each of the eight recommendations and ideas on the implementation of the recommendations. The report concludes with a reflection of the close collaborative relationships the research team has developed with Advisory Group members.

1. The Purpose and Structure of the Report

This report describes the key activities the research team has conducted for the project—‘Greater Manchester Physical Activity, Sport and Movement Volunteering’—commissioned by GreaterSport. It also discusses findings and recommendations drawn from these activities.

This report is structured as follows. First, it identifies the goal, objectives, and overarching approach of the current project. This is followed by more detailed information about the methodology used for each objective, and a summary of key findings addressing the objective. Next, as central project outcomes, the report presents a set of recommendations regarding how volunteering in the physical activity, sport and movement sector across Greater Manchester can be supported through a systemic approach that involves cross-sector partnerships. This report concludes with a reflection of the close collaborative relationships the research team has established with representatives of VCSE organisations constituting the Advisory Group.

This report further includes multiple appendices that present additional project information. These appendices cover findings from a literature review, copies of research instruments developed to achieve the project’s objectives, and characteristics of individuals and organisations participating in this project.

2. The Overview of the Project's Goal, Objectives, and Approach

The overall goal of this project is to help GreaterSport attain its central aim: *'To work alongside VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sector organisations to create a collective understanding of how to develop a systemic approach to volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement across Greater Manchester.'*

To achieve this goal, we have addressed the following three objectives:

- 1) Understand the value and impact of building relationships between VCSE infrastructure organisations and voluntary led physical activity organisations and groups.
- 2) Identify the underlying trends, inequalities, and barriers within physical activity, sport and movement volunteering to make it more accessible, inclusive, and reflective of Greater Manchester communities.
- 3) Determine what training, support, resources, information, and funding is needed and the role of the system to develop physical activity, sport and movement volunteering across Greater Manchester.

We have developed a holistic, multi-method approach to gathering and analysing collective insights from key stakeholders in Greater Manchester, including diverse residents with and without prior experience of volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, volunteer coordinators, and representatives of VCSE organisations and physical activity organisations/groups. Specifically, our approach consisted of the following methodologies:

- **Methodology for Objective 1:** Secondary research of academic and grey literature (e.g., research reports, case studies, white papers) to synthesise the up-to-date knowledge on the value and impact of establishing cross-sector partnerships for the physical activity/sport/movement and related sectors (e.g., health).
- **Methodology for Objective 2:** Focus groups with: (a) current volunteers of physical activity organisations/groups, (b) non-sport/physical activity volunteers, and (c) volunteer coordinators.
- **Methodology for Objective 3:**
 - Two workshops with the Advisory Group consisting of representatives from select Greater Manchester-based VCSE organisations.
 - Web-based survey administered to representatives of wider Greater Manchester-based VCSE organisations and physical activity organisations/groups.

3. Objective 1: Methodology and Findings

3.1. Methodology

To achieve Objective 1, we gathered a range of academic articles, research reports, and case studies through academic databases and general search engines. Then, using these resources, we have developed a literature review that offers comprehensive insight into the key features, value, and impact of partnerships involving VCSE organisations. Based on initial discussions with GreaterSport, we also expanded the scope of our literature search to capture articles and reports that explain the definitions and benefits of volunteering as well as other issues, such as barriers and enablers to volunteering. In this section, we provide a review of literature specifically in relation to Objective 1. The literature review on other topics (e.g., the definitions and benefits of volunteering) is included in Appendix 1.

3.2. Findings

What is the VCSE sector?

The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, sometimes referred to as the third sector or civil society, has played an increasingly significant role in the UK's economic, political, and social life (Pilkington et al., 2021). This sector entails four main groups (Haugh & Kitson, 2007; National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, 2023):

- The voluntary sector (e.g., charities, housing associations, community associations, and national campaigning organisations)
- The community sector (e.g., small and locally organised groups, such as civic societies, support groups, and community and neighbourhood associations)
- The social enterprise sector (e.g., businesses with social objectives, such as credit unions and community interest companies)
- Local infrastructure organisations (i.e., organisations which assist local charities and voluntary groups in the areas of leadership and advocacy, partnerships and collaborations, capacity building, and volunteering)

The VCSE sector is characterised by a diversity of goals, structures, and motivations, as well as their traditional reliance for income on philanthropy and donations (Alfes et al., 2016). It is also increasingly seen as a legitimate deliverer of public services and a means of reducing social inequalities (Hazenberg, 2017).

In 2018/19, there were 163,150 voluntary organisations in the UK, contributing about £20bn, or 0.9% of GDP to the UK's economy. The voluntary sector consisted of 18 subsectors, such as social services, culture and recreation, religion, and health, with social services being the largest voluntary subsector (National Council for Voluntary Organisations [NCVO], 2022a).

In Greater Manchester, in 2019/20 there were about 17,494 VCSE organisations, with an estimated total income of £1.2bn. The top four areas of work/activities that the VCSE organisations across Greater Manchester offer were: community development (50%); physical activity and sport (39%); wellbeing, health and social care (28%); and economic wellbeing (21%) (GMCVO, 2021).

What are the features of VCSE partnerships in Greater Manchester?

Partnership is integral to VCSE organisations to enable the sector to function effectively and efficiently. In Greater Manchester, there is a good indication that diverse VCSE organisations have formed some level of collaboration with other VCSE organisations across the 10 localities

(85%), with local VCSE organisations (70%), with private businesses (63%), and with local councils (51%). Three organisations from the local public sector have encountered the most frequent dealings: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, and Greater Manchester Police (GMCVO, 2021).

These partnerships perform a number of features and functions, which include (GM VCSE Leadership Group, 2020):

- Services: providing direct support and services for citizens
- Advocacy: campaigning and lobbying on behalf of people, communities, and those less likely to be listened to
- Supporting each other: informing, influencing, connecting, and developing other VCSE organisations and groups
- Connecting: engaging other sectors with people and communities
- Enabling: community leadership, resilience, community action, and organising
- Social innovation: including data, intelligence, and policy development

What are the value and impact of the VCSE sector?

The VCSE organisations in the UK and Greater Manchester offer a variety of activities and services to local communities and beyond. They are an essential part of the social and economic fabric of society.

Economic impact: In 2018/19, there were 163,150 voluntary organisations in the UK, contributing about £20bn, or 0.9% of GDP to the UK's economy. The data from the Office for National Statistics suggest that there are a total of 75,610 paid employees in the sector (46,122 FTEs), providing 1.45 million hours valued at £843 million (based on the living wage, £9.50 per hour). Reports on the VCSE services in response to COVID-19 included recruiting and supporting volunteers as well as coordinating volunteer activity among many other priorities, such as health, social care, community development and innovation (McCabe et al., 2020; Pilkington et al., 2021). In Greater Manchester, according to the Greater Manchester State of the VCSE Sector 2021, there is a total of 496,609 volunteers supporting the VCSE sector across Greater Manchester, giving 1.4 million hours each week valued at £692 million per annum (based on the living wage, £9.50 per hour).

Social impact: The VCSE sector in Greater Manchester has worked with and benefited a diverse population. According to the latest survey (GMCVO, 2021), the main beneficiaries of VCSE services included underrepresented social groups, such as older people (20%), women (20%), and children and young adults (14%). Literature suggests that the VCSE sector plays a key role in fostering strong and cohesive communities. Over two-thirds (68%) of VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester reported that they were improving people's mental wellbeing, while over three-fifths (63%) stated they were addressing the needs of disadvantaged members of the community. In addition, 60% saw themselves as increasing people's skills (Damm et al, 2017).

What are the value and impact of building VCSE partnerships?

There is limited evidence on the value and impact of building VCSE partnerships in the physical activity, sport and movement sector. However, we can draw upon some valuable lessons from other sectors, such as health and care system. In these sectors, VCSE partnerships are often explored and used to improve outcomes/services in population health and healthcare. NHS England (2021) highlights that the VCSE sector has strong links into communities and is well placed to support and promote engagement and connection at the local level. This sector has a long track record of finding creative ways to improve outcomes for underserved, vulnerable, and under-represented communities (Webster et al., 2022).

During the pandemic, it has been a key partner working at pace and scale to meet communities' need. Evidence suggests that nine in ten UK households have accessed a service delivered by a VCSE organisation (NHS Confederation, 2021). Hence, deepening partnerships with these organisations will be essential and valuable in supporting physical activity, sport and movement volunteering in Greater Manchester and the UK.

Specifically, five main values of VCSE partnerships were highlighted in the independent report by the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England and NHS England (2016):

- User-led: VCSE organisations involve people experiencing health inequalities and build their capacity for social action. Often organisations draw on the contributions of staff, trustees and volunteers with first-hand knowledge and experience. This is particularly useful to ensuring a more effective service and creating a route for individuals to progress through volunteering to paid work.
- Community experts: VCSE organisations promote understanding of the specific and often intersectional needs of their communities. This means that VCSE organisations open channels to support the complex needs of socially excluded groups and allocate sufficient time and tailored interventions to meet the complexity of their needs.
- Trusted: VCSE organisations have a track record of trust. The report mentioned that individuals may be reluctant to engage with statutory services and more willing to trust VCSE organisations in their community.
- Accessible: VCSE organisations are accessible, with many operating a 'no wrong door' policy. This is particularly helpful where people have encountered barriers to accessing services and enables more efficient outcomes.
- Holistic: VCSE organisations offer holistic services so that people's needs are fully met. VCSE organisations stick with people, take a wider view of their wellbeing, and help them to overcome personal challenges, even when these are complex or entrenched.

It is clear from the literature that the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester has a diverse and solid web of organisations that work with nearly everyone from different social groups across the 10 localities. For physical activity, sport and movement volunteering, one of the barriers highlighted in the literature is the need for more volunteers (Taylor, 2003). Hence, the first main value of partnering with VCSE organisations in recruiting and supporting volunteers in physical activity, sport and movement would be to increase access to the targeted populations for volunteer recruitment. This can be achieved by better utilising the local resources that VCSE organisations offer to enable more effective volunteering support.

The second main value lies in the relative maturity of VCSE organisations in recruiting, supporting, and coordinating volunteers (or volunteering activities). Partnerships with VCSE organisations thus could offer expertise and guidance for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, which tends to encounter issues in volunteer management (Hallett et al., 2020).

The third value lies in the fact that 75% of the VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester have at least one source of non-public sector funds. This suggests that they are relatively independent financially and have means of generating income that allows them to sustain. There could be an opportunity for sport and physical activity organisations/groups and their employees and volunteer coordinators/leads to learn from VCSE organisations about revenue generation.

Nonetheless, challenges were highlighted in the literature in the VCSE sector, especially in the recruitment of 'quality volunteers' (Hallett et al., 2020). Other challenges included how to 'engage with the VCSE sector in a systematic way,' considering its diverse and complex

landscape, the need to balance financial sustainability and voice independence from funders, increased disconnection between the sector and the state, and other rising issues brought by the pandemic (e.g., mental health issues and financial challenges) (Damm et al, 2017; GMCVO, 2021). Addressing these issues requires VCSE organisations to actively seek partnership with other organisations (be it other VCSE organisations, public bodies, or private businesses) to collaboratively address these issues.

Other factors that can lead to ineffective partnerships include conflicting goals and missions, lack of opportunity or incentive to collaborate, inflexible policies and procedures that do not support the partnership, constrained resources, mistrust, group attitudes about each other that may not be accurate, different organisational norms and culture, and lack of support or commitment to the partnership (Babiak & Thibault, 2009).

4. Objective 2: Methodology and Findings

4.1. Methodology

For Objective 2, five focus groups were conducted with volunteers (x2 groups), non-volunteers (x2), and volunteer coordinators (x1). Details of these groups are as follows:

- People with current or previous experience of volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'volunteers' in this section) (n=21)
- People with no previous experience of volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'non-volunteers') (n=11)
- People with current or previous experience of working in volunteer coordinator positions within organisations which operate in the physical activity, sport and movement sector in Greater Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'coordinators') (n=5)

In total, 37 participants took part in focus groups. All participants were over 18 and resided in Greater Manchester. The interview schedules developed for these focus groups are included at the end of this report (Appendices 2-4). Focus groups took place virtually on Microsoft Teams between October 2022 and January 2023. The participants were provided the option of in-person or virtual formats ahead of their focus group, and all of them chose the virtual format.

Appendix 5 provides detailed information on the characteristics of the participants who took part in the focus groups. Some key characteristics are also highlighted below:

- **Gender**
 - o 50% of participants identified as male
 - o 50% of participants identified as female
- **Ethnicity**
 - o 58% of participants were White
 - 52% White British
 - 6% Other White background
 - o 39% of participants were Asian or British Asian
 - 21% Indian
 - 6% Chinese
 - 6% Bangladeshi
 - 3% Pakistani
 - 3% Other Asian background
 - o 3% of participants were Black or Black British
 - 3% Black Caribbean
- **Place of residence (Greater Manchester borough)**
 - o 41% of participants lived in Manchester
 - o 20% of participants lived in Bolton
 - o 15% of participants lived in Stockport
 - o 12% of participants lived in Tameside
 - o 6% of participants lived in Salford
 - o 3% of participants lived in Rochdale
 - o 3% of participants lived in Trafford

4.2. Findings

The findings presented outline key themes developed from focus group data with respect to trends, inequalities, and barriers within physical activity, sport and movement volunteering in Greater Manchester. Firstly, this section outlines trends with respect to understandings of volunteering and volunteers across Greater Manchester. Secondly, this section discusses several barriers to volunteer recruitment and retention in Greater Manchester. Thirdly, this section discusses several facilitating factors which may enable volunteer recruitment and retention in Greater Manchester.

Understandings of volunteering

Consistent with prior research (The Young Foundation, 2021), a wide range of definitions emerged from focus group participants with respect to who volunteers are and what the activity of volunteering is. These perceptions differed significantly according to whether participants had voluntary experience or not. For example, several non-volunteers reported their belief that regarding volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, a background or interest in sport was a key requisite to participants in volunteering in these fields. While this perception mirrors previous research which found that volunteers in sport often emerge from within their own sports (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009), several non-volunteers felt that this idiosyncrasy meant volunteering in these fields was exclusively for 'sporty' people. This was highlighted in the comments of one non-volunteer below:

"I would say that I probably wouldn't consider myself sporty... I suppose I also probably would think that the people who would volunteer in a particular sport would, would perhaps already be doing that sport. And so, they would naturally be the ones that feed into being the volunteers." (Non-volunteer, Salford)

For those with little to no sporting background, it was felt that a lack of relevant knowledge and applicable experience meant that these groups were less likely to see themselves as physical activity, sport and movement volunteers. This was illustrated in the thoughts of two non-volunteers below, who indicated their belief in the importance of a sporting background—and the skills this provided—to be able to volunteer in sport:

"You might not necessarily volunteer for a sport if you've never tried that sport before." (Non-volunteer, Salford)

"I think it's confidence as well. I think you've got to be confident in the rules of the sport that you're volunteering in." (Non-volunteer, Bolton)

In contrast, people who have volunteering experience stated in the focus groups that anybody could volunteer in physical activity, sport and movement, and that a background in sport was not a requirement for such roles. Some volunteers reported that they did share the perceptions of the above non-volunteers before they began their own volunteering journeys. However, upon starting these roles they felt their lack of experience presented little obstacle to their capacities. This was articulated by two volunteers below who suggested they faced no difficulties owing to their lack of experience:

"I had zero sporting experience before I started volunteering... You don't have to have any sporting background in my opinion." (Volunteer, Bolton)

"I had that perception in terms of you can only volunteer for cricket if you have a cricket background or if you have some expertise in cricket, but you don't, anybody can volunteer in any sport, you don't have to come with the experience." (Volunteer, Bolton)

There were also differences between volunteers and non-volunteers in understandings of the time commitments that volunteering opportunities demanded. In general, non-volunteers reported their beliefs that volunteering opportunities required people to commit to regular, fixed periods of time. These perceptions aligned strongly with the idea of 'continuous volunteering,' whereby volunteers offer their time and effort to a sport organisation on a regular basis over a prolonged period of time (Bang & Chelladurai, 2009; Bang et al., 2012). A number of non-volunteers alluded to the disincentivising impacts of this idea, as they reported their inability or reluctance to sign up to opportunities that they felt would consume a large amount of their free time. This perspective was exemplified in the comments of two participants below:

"They tend to be quite a big time commitment and I often feel like, I might be able to help out once a month or something but I can't commit to be able to do it every weekend." (Non-volunteer, Salford)

"If certain organisations are asking for like eight hours or longer shifts, I think it makes it harder on me to stay committed for that long time." (Non-volunteer, Manchester)

Perceptions contrasted strongly with the viewpoints of many volunteers and coordinators for whom volunteering was a flexible activity that could fit around the daily schedules of volunteers, and that could often be undertaken on an ad hoc basis. These perceptions instead suggested that volunteering could also be 'episodic', where roles are '*more flexible, short-term, and once off*' (Dunn et al, 2016, p.428). It was felt among several coordinators and volunteers that organisations and the wider volunteering community needed to be clearer in outlining the commitments expected from volunteers. In particular, it is important to make clear that volunteers could sign up to opportunities without pledging themselves to long-term, fixed hours. Two volunteers below shared their views in this respect:

"I think it should be made a bit more aware for people that you don't have to have it take over your life." (Volunteer, Manchester)

"People might think that if they volunteer then that means they need to volunteer every week ... actually, you can just volunteer as and when you want to." (Coordinator, Manchester)

Relatedly, several volunteers felt that there needed to be more knowledge of the benefits of volunteering to different groups. Many volunteers of all ages commented on the benefits they felt volunteering provided to them. For example, several older volunteers reported the physical, mental, and social wellbeing benefits of meeting new people and 'giving something back' to the local community. Those of working age and particularly younger people commented on the personal and professional development opportunities that volunteering provided. However, it was also felt that the benefits volunteering can offer to different groups of people were not widely known, and that more needed to be done in the VCSE sector to publicise these benefits. One example was provided by a volunteer in their comments on the employability advantages they felt volunteering can provide for young people:

"There needs to be more knowledge of how this (volunteering) can contribute to your adult life and give you an insight into the kind of fields that you want to be going into." (Volunteer, Manchester)

Barriers to volunteering

Lack of promotion of volunteering opportunities

Many non-volunteers reported that they were unaware of the voluntary roles available in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester. Non-volunteers reported both a lack of visibility of roles and a lack of knowledge of how to access roles. This was reflected in the comments of two non-volunteers below:

"I don't know whether you'd go on Indeed or LinkedIn or wherever you know, I just wouldn't know where to start." (Non-volunteer, Bolton)

"I know it's definitely accessible, but there's also the case that I wouldn't know how to go about doing it." (Non-volunteer, Bolton)

Opacity of volunteer advertisement

Where roles were advertised, a lack of clarity provided on the roles and responsibilities of specific volunteering opportunities was felt to restrict the likelihood of people entering volunteering opportunities. For example, several participants reported seeing and receiving numerous opportunities, but could garner little information on the roles and responsibilities involved from adverts. This was articulated by one coordinator below:

"I think another barrier for me in terms of volunteering is not necessarily the visibility of opportunities but understanding what the opportunity actually entails. So, I'm part of the orienteering club and they constantly send me emails saying, "We need volunteers for X, Y and Z." I've absolutely no idea what any of those roles are or what they do because I'm fairly new into orienteering." (Coordinator, Salford)

Another coordinator indicated that a lack of detail on the requirements of volunteer roles in their advertisement missed vital opportunities to build people's confidence in their ability to undertake roles:

"We're guilty of that ourselves. When we put out a poster about needing volunteers, we don't actually put down what we actually want from you. It's the lack of information. The lack of 'What do they expect of me? What is the role that they want from me?' It comes back to confidence... a guideline of what you expect from people may give them the confidence to say 'I can do this, I will get in touch with them or email them.'" (Coordinator, Rochdale)

These features of advertisements were deemed particularly important for those groups with little sporting experience, to assuage any concerns about their ability to undertake volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. For example, a non-volunteer in Bolton suggested that clear and well-defined job advertisements would help to neutralise the doubts of those unfamiliar with the physical activity, sport and movement landscape:

"You know when you apply for a job and there's a job role, for example? If there's something that describes what the actual volunteering role is, then I reckon that'd be better for a lot of people who just aren't good at sports or aren't confident." (Non-volunteer, Bolton)

Lower levels of diversity and inclusivity in the VCSE sector

Regarding diversity within volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement in Greater Manchester, two patterns emerged. Firstly, there was generally felt to be low levels of diversity in this VCSE sector, and, secondly, where higher levels of diversity were present this was felt to be clustered in particular locales of Greater Manchester. These trends were indicated respectively in the below comments of three coordinators:

“I’ve done a lot of different volunteering roles. Generally speaking, you see the same type of people volunteering. It’s generally white, middle-class people that I see in volunteering roles.” (Coordinator, Manchester)

“For us lot, we see lots and lots of South Asian volunteers because that’s the geographic, that’s the people who live there so they’re the ones who are volunteering there.” (Coordinator, Rochdale)

“I think it’s reflective of the area that the running club is in. It’s generally a very white, middle-class population.” (Coordinator, Manchester)

These patterns were felt to negatively impact the recruitment of a more diverse volunteering base across Greater Manchester. For example, several volunteers and coordinators felt that the lack of diversity among the volunteer base of some organisations resulted in a shortage of role models which could help to attract volunteers from minority and disadvantaged groups:

“I’d say for barriers of taking part in volunteering and certainly the clubs I work with, the lack of diverse role models is preventing certain people from volunteering.” (Volunteer, Salford)

“I don’t know whether people are put off volunteering because they think either, ‘I’m not in that group so it’s not for me,’ or they feel excluded by the people they see typically volunteering.” (Coordinator, Manchester)

Relatedly, participants felt that there continued to be stereotypes regarding the perceived capabilities of different groups in volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. Lower levels of diversity within organisations can lead to the unchecked activation and application of stereotypes towards marginalised groups (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Spencer et al., 2015). Stereotypes relating to the ability of volunteers from minority ethnic backgrounds to undertake their duties were reported by several participants. Such stereotypes were felt to limit opportunities for volunteering amongst these groups. One coordinator commented below:

“It might be the way they (volunteers) are dressing up, wearing the abaya or the headscarf and sometimes they think they’re not going to be able to do it, before even they’re given a chance.” (Coordinator, Rochdale)

More broadly, women regardless of ethnicity were also felt to be subject to stereotypical assumptions around their competence to undertake leadership roles in physical activity, sport and movement volunteering. Such stereotypes have been found to be relatively common with the sport and physical activity landscape, which has traditionally valued ‘masculine’ traits and behaviours in such positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Sibson, 2010). These stereotypes were reported to act as a disincentive for women volunteer leaders to undertake their roles, as one coordinator reported below:

“I’ve got a lot of knowledge, but the older people think I don’t because I’m younger and I’m a woman and I was doing a job within the kind of the man’s role... you know a blonde girl turns up, they think I don’t know anything, basically, and I got a bit put off.” (Coordinator, Manchester)

Cost-of-living crisis

The ongoing cost-of-living crisis was cited by many focus group participants as adversely impacting the ability of people to begin volunteering and for organisations to retain volunteers. For example, several coordinators reported that their organisations had lost volunteers due to their need to take on more paid employment to limit the financial pressures brought about by the current economic climate:

“There are definitely people who have left. People who worked part-time and volunteered a bit have left because they need to work more to manage their cost of living. So, there’s certainly been volunteers left because of that.” (Coordinator, Manchester)

Volunteers with families and socio-economically disadvantaged volunteers in receipt of state benefits were identified as particularly vulnerable to the cost-of-living crisis, with respect to having the time to volunteer and travelling to volunteer opportunities:

“People that might really like to volunteer and they might be really useful if they could, they are trying so hard to work hard enough to feed their kids and put the heating on but they just couldn’t possibly fit it in.” (Volunteer, Trafford)

“We know with the cost-of-living crisis that some people that are on certain types of benefits and everything else like that may struggle to get to that volunteering opportunity.” (Coordinator, Stockport)

Facilitators to volunteering

Advertisement-candidate fit

The importance of aligning recruitment methods with the needs and capabilities of the potential volunteer pool was emphasised in focus groups. This was particularly relevant to some groups who felt the Internet-based advertisement of opportunities could exclude certain potential volunteer populations. For example, less technologically savvy groups or those with particular disabilities were felt to benefit more from offline, informal recruitment methods. A visually impaired volunteer indicated the importance of ‘advertisement-candidate fit’ in the recruitment of volunteers below:

“I believe in word of mouth, but it is all on the Internet. I mean, I’m all right on the Internet, but I’m not great [at it], you know. So I’d rather someone just approached me and said, “Hey, would you be interested in doing this?” (Volunteer, Stockport)

The coordinator of an organisation in Rochdale providing mental health support to the local South Asian community commented on how offline methods were more effective in reaching their potential volunteer base, who were felt to lack technological literacy:

“We’re centred around the South Asian community, not all of them are tech savvy and so we just go face-to-face and on the phone.” (Coordinator, Rochdale)

Job role clarity

Well-defined job roles were deemed important by many participants in ensuring volunteers continue to volunteer. The provision of unambiguous and clear information on their duties and responsibilities has been found to create more satisfied volunteers who are more likely to volunteer for a longer time (Kulik, 2007; Tang et al., 2009). Various strategies of how this may be achieved were outlined by volunteers belonging to different organisations. For example, the coordinator of a large volunteering infrastructure organisation in Stockport spoke of the value of 'insight days':

"When we're working with organisations and supporting them to support volunteers, we put in a package of insight days into what new volunteers can expect. That's really helpful."
(Coordinator, Stockport)

Strategies to ensure volunteers know what is expected of them were deemed particularly apposite in ensuring retention after the early novelty of a new volunteering opportunity had worn off. This was articulated by a volunteer below as they outlined their use of existing volunteers in their onboarding and orientation processes:

"We have a buddy system where we put you up with another volunteer so that we can volunteer better basically. Otherwise, some of our volunteers and maybe myself included, would have stopped volunteering after the initial hype of volunteering disappeared, the honeymoon period of volunteering." (Volunteer, Bolton)

Partnerships in the Greater Manchester VCSE sector

The benefits of partnerships in recruiting volunteers within physical activity, sport and movement organisations and groups in Greater Manchester were championed by numerous focus group participants. Other VCSE organisations, volunteer centres, national governing bodies, and organisations with potential volunteer pools (e.g., schools, universities, companies) were touted as potentially fruitful formal and informal partners that could benefit organisations regarding volunteer recruitment and retention. For example, one volunteer reflected on how a talk arranged between two VCSE organisations informed her of the need for volunteers at their current organisation, of which she previously knew little:

"I volunteer with Walthew House. And I got into there because I'm a member of the Women's Institute. And we nominated them as our charity one year, they came and gave us a talk and said, "We're looking for volunteers." Well, I didn't know... I mean, I knew Walthew House was there, but I didn't know anything about it." (Volunteer, Stockport)

More formal partnerships cited included those between local universities and VCSE organisations. The personal experiences of one student volunteer indicated how partnering with universities can grant voluntary organisations access to a significant population with the time to volunteer:

"How I got into volunteering was one of my lecturers at university would consistently be sending us emails regarding volunteering opportunities just around the Manchester area... university seems to be the time where I can probably do it the most because we probably aren't working a full-time job." (Volunteer, Manchester)

Formalised partnerships between local businesses and voluntary organisations were also felt to create a volunteer recruitment pipeline for voluntary organisations. As explained by the below non-volunteer, these types of corporate partnerships, where the time to volunteer was embedded into work contracts, were felt to have the potential to generate a long-lasting supply line of volunteers:

“I used to work for a company where they gave you volunteering days. I think that’s a really good opportunity. You could have a range of opportunities for people to volunteer, and then you’re feeding people into those volunteering opportunities and then hopefully some of those people will then take up that activity. You’re then hopefully going to have a much higher retention rate, I would imagine, for people staying volunteering within that organisation.” (Non-volunteer, Salford)

5. Objective 3 – Workshops #1: Methodology and Findings

5.1. Methodology

In relation to Objective 3, Workshop 1 was held on 21st October 2022 via Microsoft Teams with four members of the research team and 11 members of the Advisory Group. The workshop, which lasted for two hours, gathered information from the participants around five key areas: training, resources, information, funding needs, and challenges faced.

The following guiding questions were used to facilitate the discussion:

- **Training.** What does training mean for physical activity, sport and movement volunteering?
- **Resources.** How do we define resources in physical activity, sport and movement volunteering?
- **Information.** Where do we find information about volunteering opportunities?
- **Funding needs.** How is funding for volunteering accessed and used?
- **Challenges.** What are the challenges that may result from undertaking collaborative cross-sector efforts for promoting volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement?

The session was recorded and transcribed, and key information was collected through Mentimeter word clouds (see below). Workshop participants also shared their ideas in the chat box on Microsoft Teams. Additionally, the research team developed meeting notes to summarize the main points of the discussion. The themes for each discussion area emerged by analysing the transcript, Mentimeter word clouds, meeting notes, and chat history. These are summarised in the next section.

5.2. Findings

Training

The key themes from the discussion on training focused on several key areas.

- **Defining ‘volunteer.’** Some volunteers see themselves as more than a volunteer, such as a coach or group leader so a key question is: *Is volunteer training the correct terminology for these individuals?* At the other end of the spectrum some see themselves as ‘helping out’ so may not access training.
- **Types of training** include on-boarding/induction/basic training, mandatory training (e.g., health and safety-related training), specialist training (e.g., coaching qualifications), and progression or developmental training for volunteers who had been in roles for a while. The group debated how these are differentiated and planned for responding to a need, vision, or strategic planning. The following comments from Advisory Group members (AGM) support this theme:

“It’s that individualised pathway, person-centred that starts with profiling and understanding a person before you put them on training.” (AGM1)

“We need to have a training offer that is really focused on the needs of the community that we’re doing it for.” (AGM2)

“Onboarding training is really important, but I think there should be more focus on progression training.” (AGM3)

- **Barriers to training** include language, time, cost, and flexibility. These also relate to cultural appropriateness and the culture or governance of organisations. The importance of removing such barriers is highlighted by the following comment:

“If there [are] too many barriers to go through...it can put off people because it is too much of a big step before they see the benefits of volunteering.” (AGM1)

- **Appreciation of volunteers** refers to showing appreciation for volunteers for being involved in training programmes by giving rewards/recognition or by offering further training. There was also an acknowledgment that some training can be promoted as a steppingstone to other opportunities (paid or unpaid).

Resources

Figure 1. Mentimeter Word Clouds for Resources

Resources



- **Defining ‘resources.’** Some key questions were raised in relation to the definition of resources. For example: What does resource mean? Does it include financial or operational resources, information, people, training, or anything else? Are resources contextual to the times we are living in? Are some resources constants such as access to training or infrastructure support?
- **Systems** were identified as a main type of resource for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. This includes management systems to support recruitment and tools to help organisations to find funding.
- **Funding** was identified as another key resource as organisations and groups promote volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. Funding may be required in relation to training, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service), socials/meetups, marketing, and volunteer recruitment and development. In addition, as illustrated in the following comment, the cost-of-living crisis has impacted the availability of volunteers and organisations’ spaces, resources, and offers:

“It is true the cost-of-living crisis is having a huge impact for all the organisations and the volunteering.” (AGM4)

Advisory Group members further underscored the importance of working together to lobby local authorities/combined authority to improve funding during the cost-of-living crisis. They also suggested taking more of a collaborative approach, rather than competing for pots of funding.

- **Connections** are an additional type of resource identified by Advisory Group members, referring to pooling resources between organisations. It is important to avoid silo working and take more of a multi-agency approach. Working to meet the needs of the community/local area, rather than the needs of the organisation, is emphasised in the following comment:

“The multi-agency approach I think is much better because we get what our community needs from a variety of organisations.” (AGM5)

Information

Figure 2. Mentimeter Word Clouds for Information

Information



The key themes from the discussion on information focused on the following areas.

- **Word of mouth** refers to trusted voice providing the recommendation of potential volunteers. To share the existing relationships, a database of available volunteers and their skills may be established. Volunteers tend to approach the organisation based on their existing knowledge or recommendation from service users and other volunteers. The following comment describes both the limitation and value of using word of mouth for the recruitment of volunteers.

“Word of mouth can be quite restrictive in terms of who is involved and how we reach certain communities, but I feel there is still great value in it and it definitely shouldn't be overseen.” (AGM6)

- **Outsiders.** This theme refers to how organisations can widen their volunteering body to include people who come from other routes than the player pathway or through family connections. Other sources of volunteers may come from the private sector volunteers and volunteers who have usable skills other than a previous involvement with a specific sport. Schools, colleges, and universities can be seen as another source of volunteers with the understanding that student volunteers may need experience. The key questions that arose are: How do we approach and use other local organisations to recruit

volunteers? What are the limitations that stop people from volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement? As many sports require additional checks such as a DBS and therefore the process can take longer, does this result in lost volunteers? How can diversity and the feeling of inclusion be ensured if organisations go outside of trusted sources to recruit volunteers?

- **Working together** refers to the importance of collaborating with local infrastructure organisations, volunteer centres, and local authorities, for example, to share good practice and avoid duplication. There are dedicated databases for opportunities and information which could be further established. The use of Manchester VIP, as commissioned by GreaterSport, was patchy with some boroughs and organisations opting in but not all using it. It is important to be mindful of small organisations and ensure diversity and inclusion in terms of languages and how to approach community leaders. Digital access is another area of consideration. The following two comments explain the importance of cross-sector collaboration.

“There is much to be said about local authorities working more closely with each other to share good practice, avoid duplication and ensure that people who want to volunteer are getting the right opportunities.” (AGM3)

“One of the really good things that could happen from collaborating is to promote the social good involved in volunteering, but collectively.” (AGM1)

Funding needs

Figure 3. Mentimeter Word Clouds for Funding

Funding



The key themes on funding needs are as follows.

- **Approaches to funding** include word of mouth and hearing about the opportunities through different channels and networks. The Advisory Group discussed whether the existing channels are the best way for disseminating funding opportunities or there are alternative channels that could be used.
- **Writing the bid.** Language used in bid writing can be very formal. Therefore, there was a question of how organisations capture the feeling and the impact in a very structured bid. The group discussed the ways funding bids could be improved through more creativity,

such as submitting video and storytelling. Currently, there is limited opportunity to be brave or radical and to do things differently, as highlighted in the following comment:

“Some of the large funders...do allow you to put videos and hashtags and these types of things...most funders simply don't have that so they have to use a very prescriptive, simple in a way to process.” (AGM7)

There was a consensus that volunteer organisations need skills and support in writing bids (e.g., how to write key performance indicators) and must understand what the funder wants. The Advisory Group discussed whether there are ways the group or GreaterSport could collectively influence the current system of bidding to improve the process. They also commented that organisations may not be able to accommodate costs associated with writing bids.

Challenges

Figure 4. Mentimeter Word Clouds for Challenges

Challenges



- **Collaborative working** for promoting volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement involves various challenges. For example, Advisory Group members raised questions such as: How do we promote the social good and share stories? In working with diverse groups, how do we manage the balance between different group needs (intentional exclusion)? What are the needs of various groups? Who leads the collaboration?

6. Objective 3 – Survey: Methodology and Findings

6.1. Methodology

Based on the key themes that emerged from Workshop 1, we developed an online survey (see Appendix 6) administered to representatives of Greater Manchester-based VCSE organisations and physical activity organisations/groups (hereafter ‘GM organisations/groups’ in this section). The link to this online survey was distributed by GreaterSport through its email newsletter and social media pages as well as through targeted outreach to individual contacts.

The survey was open for approximately one month between 14 December 2022 and 13 January 2023. During this period, a total of 96 valid responses were obtained. Appendix 7 provides detailed information on the characteristics of the GM organisations/groups answering the survey. Some key characteristics are highlighted below:

- **Organisational identity:**
 - 25% described the identity of their organisation/group as ‘sport club.’
 - 23% selected ‘community leisure’ for their identity.
 - 12% selected ‘other.’
 - 10% selected ‘incorporated voluntary organisation.’
- **Sector:**
 - 48% operate in the sport/leisure/physical activity sector.
 - 12% operate in the employment/work/welfare sector.
 - 10% operate in the voluntary & community sector.
 - 8% operate in the health/public health sector.
- **Location:** The largest proportion of responses came from organisations/groups operating across Greater Manchester (27%), followed by those in Manchester (18%), in Stockport (10%), in Bolton (10%), and in Oldham (8%).
- **Size:** 63% had an annual income of £50,000 or above during the fiscal year 2021/2022, while the other 37% had an annual income of less than £50,000.
- **Years of operation:**
 - 45% has been operating for 11 or more years.
 - 23% has been operating for 4 to 10 years.
 - 20% has been operating for 2 to 3 years.
 - 13% has been operation for 2 or less years.
- **Extent of focus on volunteering:**
 - The majority (57%) of the organisations/groups indicated that they focused *entirely* or *mostly* on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering.
 - 31% indicated that they focused *somewhat* on this type of volunteering.
 - The remaining 12% indicated that they focused *a little* or *did not* focus on this type of volunteering.
- **Knowledge about Club Matters:**
 - 65% were aware of the Club Matters programme by Sport England.
 - Of those organisations/groups that were aware, 58% used resources from Club Matters.
- **Knowledge about local volunteer centres:**

- 63% were aware of local volunteer centres.
- Of those organisations/groups that were aware, 70% has been connected with local volunteer centres.
- **Respondent position:** The largest proportion of responses were provided by strategic lead or manager (39%), followed by delivery lead (25%), volunteer (17%), those in other roles (13%), and trustee (7%).

6.2. Findings

The main sections of the survey asked respondents to rate the importance of several areas in relation to (a) training support, (b) resources and information, (c) informational support for volunteer recruitment, and (d) support for securing funding, for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. Each item was assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 (*'not at all important'*) to 5 (*'extremely important'*). Detailed survey results are discussed next.

Training support

Respondents rated the importance of eight areas of training support to their organisations/groups. These areas and their mean importance scores are presented in Figure 5. As shown in this figure, all areas had a mean score between 3 (*'moderately important'*) and 4 (*'very important'*). Specifically, **child protection and safeguarding (3.85)** had the highest mean score, followed by **basic skills for volunteering (3.57)**, **training for volunteer development (3.56)**, and **training specific to needs to the people/beneficiaries the organisation/group works with (3.44)**. In contrast, the areas with the lowest mean scores included **training for volunteer recruitment and retention (3.17)**, **training for the organisation/group (3.28)**, and **training for volunteer management (3.30)**.

Figure 5. Mean Importance Ratings for Areas of Training Support



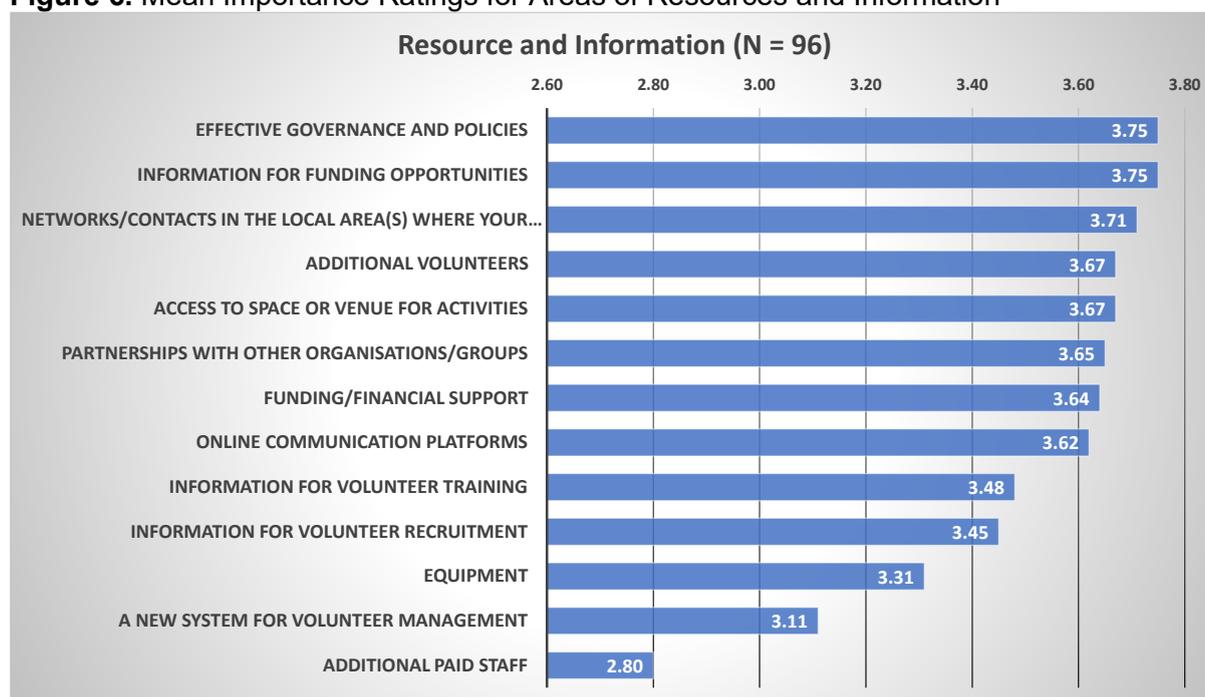
Overall, the results indicate that the GM organisations/groups surveyed consider training in child protection/safeguarding, basic skills (for new volunteers), and development/progression

(for existing volunteers) to be the most important areas of training support for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

Resources and information

Figure 6 presents mean importance scores for the 13 areas of resources and information for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. The areas with the highest mean scores included **effective governance and policies (3.75)**, **information for funding opportunities (3.75)**, **networks/contacts in the local area(s) where the organisation/group operates (3.71)**, **additional volunteers (3.67)**, and **access to space or venue for activities (3.67)**. On the other hand, the areas with the lowest mean scores were **additional paid staff (2.80)**, **a new system for volunteer management (3.11)**, and **equipment (3.31)**.

Figure 6. Mean Importance Ratings for Areas of Resources and Information

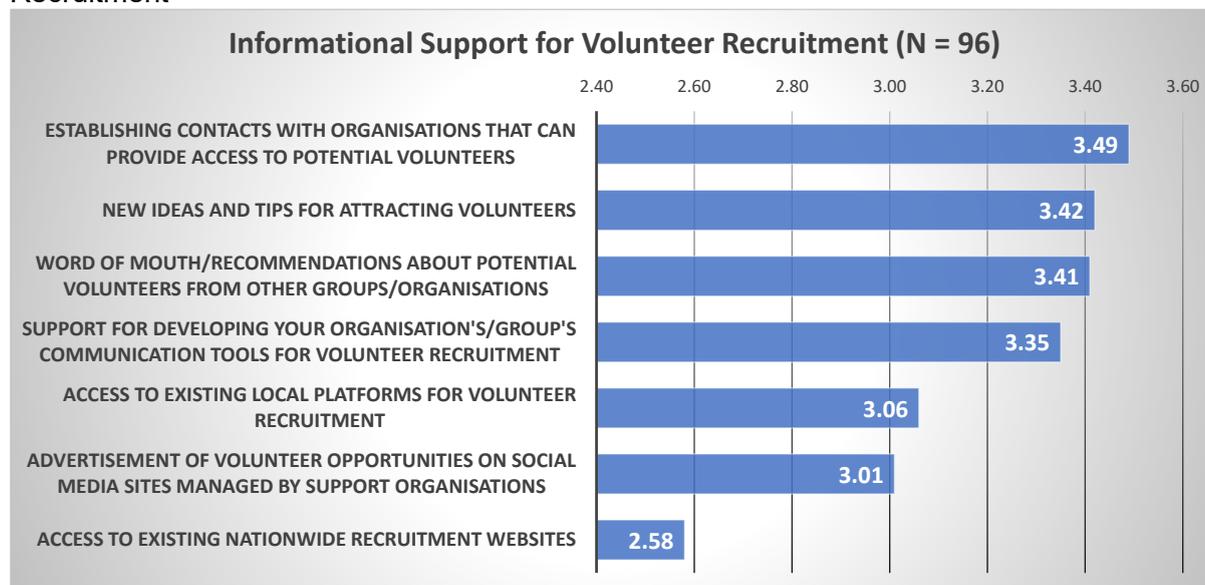


The results collectively suggest that GM organisations/groups tend to place greater importance on intangible resources (e.g., governance and policies, information for funding, networks/contacts) than on tangible resources (e.g., additional staff, a system for volunteer management, equipment) for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

Informational support for volunteer recruitment

Figure 7 shows mean importance scores for the seven areas of informational support for volunteer recruitment in physical activity, sport and movement. The areas with the highest mean scores were **establishing contacts with organisations (e.g., schools/universities, companies) that can provide access to potential volunteers (3.49)**, **new ideas and tips for attracting volunteers (3.42)**, and **word of mouth/recommendations about potential volunteers from other organisations/groups (3.41)**. In contrast, the areas with the lowest mean scores included **access to existing nationwide recruitment websites (2.58)**, **advertisement of volunteer opportunities on social media sites managed by support organisations (e.g., 10GM, GreaterSport) (3.01)**, and **access to existing local platforms for volunteer recruitment (3.06)**.

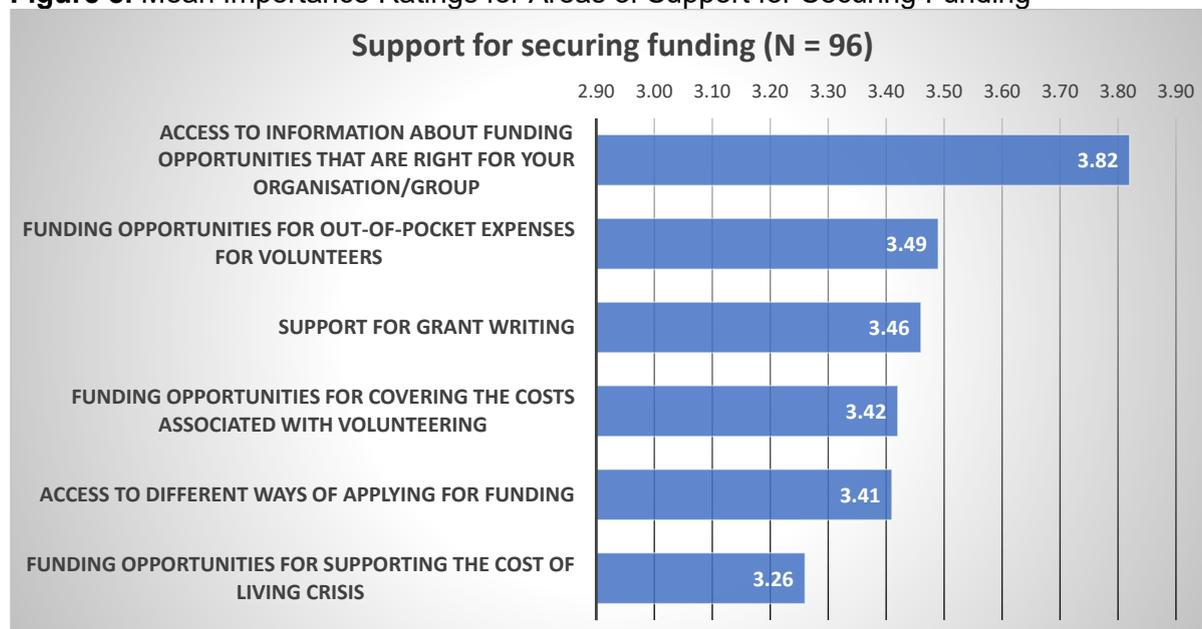
Figure 7. Mean Importance Ratings for Areas of Informational Support for Volunteer Recruitment



Based on these results, it appears that GM organisations/groups are seeking to increase their access to potential volunteers through partnerships with schools/university and companies and via word of mouth/recommendations from other local organisations/groups. On the other hand, recruitment support from formal means of communication (e.g., search websites, local recruitment platforms) is perceived as less important.

Support for securing funding

Figure 8. Mean Importance Ratings for Areas of Support for Securing Funding



Mean importance scores for the six areas of support for securing funding in physical activity, sport and movement are presented in Figure 8. The area with the highest mean score was **access to information about funding opportunities that are right for the organisation/group (3.82)**, followed by **funding opportunities for out-of-pocket expenses**

for volunteers (3.49), and support for grant writing (3.46). Notably, **funding opportunities for supporting the cost-of-living crisis (3.26)** had the lowest mean importance score. These results suggest that GM organisations/groups are eager to gain information about the appropriate funding opportunities that align with their goals and circumstances.

Comparisons by organisational characteristics

We conducted additional analyses to examine if the mean importance scores differed depending on the characteristics of GM organisations/groups. Specifically, we examined the effects of four characteristics: sector (the sport/leisure/physical activity sector vs. other sectors); organisational size (an annual income of less than £50,000 vs. an annual income of £50,000 or above); years of operation (3 years or less vs. 4 or more years); and the extent of focus on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering (somewhat or less vs. mostly or entirely):

- **Sector:** There were statistically significant differences in the mean importance scores between organisations/groups in the sport/leisure/physical activity sector (n = 46) and those in other sectors (n = 50). In terms of training support, **the organisations/groups in the sport/leisure/physical activity sector provided higher mean importance scores for sport-specific skills or qualifications (4.00) and child protection and safeguarding (4.13)**, compared to the organisations/groups in other sectors (2.82 for sport-specific skills or qualifications; and 3.60 for child protection and safeguarding). In addition, in terms of resources and information, **the organisations/groups in the sport/leisure/physical activity sector provided higher mean importance scores for online communication platforms (4.00)**, than the organisations/groups in other sectors (3.28).
- **Size:** There were statistically significant differences in the mean importance scores between smaller organisations/groups with an annual income of less than £50,000 (n = 35) and larger organisations/groups with an annual income of £50,000 or above (n = 60). In terms of training support, **the larger organisations/groups provided higher mean importance scores for training for volunteer management (3.53)**, than the smaller organisations/groups (2.89). In addition, in terms of resources and information, **the larger organisations/groups provided higher mean importance scores for additional paid staff (3.22) and equipment (3.52)**, than the smaller organisations/groups (2.06 for additional paid staff; and 2.94 for equipment). Moreover, as for informational support for volunteer recruitment, **the larger organisations/groups provided higher mean importance scores for access to existing nationwide recruitment websites (2.87), access to existing local platforms for volunteer recruitment (3.38), advertisement of volunteer opportunities on social media sites managed by support organisations (3.35), new ideas and tips for attracting volunteers (3.63), and establishing contacts with organisations that can provide access to potential volunteers (3.78)**, compared to the smaller organisations/groups (2.11 for access to nationwide websites; 2.51 for access to local platforms; 2.40 for advertisement on social media sites; 3.06 for new ideas and tips; and 3.00 for establishing contacts).
- **Years of operation:** There was no statistically significant difference in the mean importance scores between younger organisations/groups that were in operation for 3 years or less (n = 31) and their older counterparts that were in operation for 4 or more years (n = 65).
- **Extent of focus on volunteering:** There were statistically significant differences in the mean importance scores between organisations/groups with greater focus on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering (n = 55) and those with less focus on this type

of volunteering (n = 41). In terms of training support, **the organisations/groups with greater focus on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering provided higher mean importance scores for sport-specific skills or qualifications (3.76)**, than the organisations/groups with less focus (2.88). In addition, in terms of resources and information, **the organisations/groups with greater focus on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering provided higher mean importance scores for funding/financial support (3.87), access to space or venue for activities (3.91), and effective governance and policies (3.96)**, compared to the organisations/groups with less focus (3.32 for funding/financial support; 3.34 for access to space or venue; and 3.46 for effective governance and policies). Moreover, regarding informational support for volunteer recruitment, **the organisations/groups with greater focus on physical activity, sport and movement volunteering provided higher mean importance scores for access to existing local platforms for volunteer recruitment (3.39) and advertisement of volunteer opportunities on social media sites managed by support organisations (3.32)**, compared to the organisations/groups with less focus (2.82 for access to local platforms; and 2.78 for advertisement on social media sites).

7. Objective 3 – Workshop #2: Methodology and Findings

7.1. Methodology

The second workshop was held face-to-face on 18th January 2023 with all members of the research team, three members of the team from GreaterSport, and eight members of the Advisory Group. The research team presented the overview of the initial findings from the focus groups, the first workshop, and survey. Two discussion groups (with each group consisting of four members of the Advisory Group, one member of the GreaterSport team, and one member of the research team) were then formed to consider the main findings from the focus groups, the first workshop, and survey. This was followed by a full group discussion to share ideas identified during the small group discussion. The whole workshop lasted for 2 hours, and the research team developed meeting notes to compile the key ideas shared during the workshop.

7.2. Findings

Workshop participants raised questions about response from the survey, especially for the low response rate of smaller organisations, and discussed the best methods to target these organisations. This discussion led to a recommendation for developing a greater understanding of how smaller grassroots organisations can be supported, particularly in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.

Workshop participants also discussed the areas of funding and training. Particular attention was given to the discrepancy between the survey responses and the focus group participants' comments regarding focus of importance, and underlying reasons for this discrepancy. The survey and focus group findings on informational support were also seen as key, with workshop participants discussing questions about platforms for training courses and support resources for organisations. Based on these discussions, recommendations were identified in two areas: (a) the development of a platform where information on all available training programmes and resources is provided, and (b) the creation of a collaborative space where organisations and groups can ask questions about individual cases and exchange ideas on the implementation of training materials.

8. Recommendations

By synthesising the findings for each of the three project objectives, we have developed eight recommendations for how volunteering in the physical activity, sport and movement sector across Greater Manchester can be supported through a systemic approach involving cross-sector partnerships. These eight recommendations are classified into four overarching themes: (a) partnership and community, (b) information sharing and distribution, (c) communication and promotion, and (d) research. This section explains the eight recommendations by theme and presents rationales for the recommendations as well as ideas for implementation.

8.1. Partnership and Community

In relation to the theme of partnership and community, we provide the following two recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** *Facilitate relationship building between sport/physical activity organisations and groups, other VCSE organisations, local infrastructure organisations/volunteer centres, national governing bodies, and organisations with potential volunteer pools (e.g., schools, universities, companies).*
- **Recommendation 2:** *Create Greater Manchester 'Community of Practice' in the sphere of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering to enable the sharing of best practice and provide a collaborative space to address shared issues and challenges.*

Rationales for recommendations

Recommendations 1 and 2 are supported by a range of evidence gathered in this project. According to the secondary research, establishing cross-sector partnerships involving VCSE organisations can increase access to potential volunteers; enhance the practice of recruiting, supporting, and coordinating volunteers; and provide new ideas for revenue generation. In addition, based on the survey results, networks and contacts are an important resource for promoting volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, and organisations/groups in Greater Manchester are eager to establish contacts with organisations, such as schools, universities, and companies, that can provide access to volunteers.

Moreover, during the workshops, Advisory Group members underscored the need for creating a collaborative space to allow organisations and groups to share ideas, information, and good practices. This is especially valuable for addressing issues that are not covered by standard training programmes and support resources. Focus group findings further indicated the positive outcomes emergent from partnerships involving VCSE organisations across Greater Manchester with respect to volunteer recruitment and retention. To this end, focus group participants reported that partnerships between other VCSE organisations, local business, and universities could raise awareness of the need for volunteers in the region, create direct links between organisations and volunteer candidate pools, and craft the space and time for volunteering in the otherwise busy schedules of employees of local business.

Ideas for implementation

- Findings lend themselves to a centralised portal overseen by GreaterSport and accessible to organisations and groups in Greater Manchester. In this space, organisations can post details of their volunteer roles and responsibilities and request their interest in forming partnerships. This space could also be used as a place where best practice guidelines and

considerations are posted which are relevant to different organisations (which can be designed to correspond to organisational size and scope).

- Regular network events and symposiums can be organised to facilitate relationships building among sport/physical activity organisations and groups, other VCSE organisations, local infrastructure organisations/volunteer centres, sport governing bodies, and universities/companies with potential volunteer pools.
- It is essential to boost the profile of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering landscape in Greater Manchester. GreaterSport may want to consider how the organisation could contact and collaborate with organisations across Greater Manchester to establish relationship building and partnership networks.

8.2. Information Sharing and Distribution

For the theme of sharing and distribution, we present the following two recommendations:

- **Recommendation 3:** *Ensure that organisations and groups know where they can access available information and resources for the training programmes and funding opportunities that are right for them.*
- **Recommendation 4:** *Enhance and expand recruitment channels to attract and retain a larger and more diverse group of new and existing volunteers through more informative and clearer advertisements.*

Rationales for recommendations

The survey results support Recommendation 3, as they indicate that organisations/groups in Greater Manchester place great importance on accessing training programmes, particularly related to child protection/safeguarding, basic skills, and volunteer development. Furthermore, organisations/groups rate access to information about appropriate funding opportunities as the most significant factor in securing funding for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. However, the results also reveal that over one-third of the surveyed organisations/groups are unaware of the available resources and opportunities through Sport England Club Matters and/or local volunteer centres. This finding underscores the need to provide organisations/groups across Greater Manchester with better support to understand where they can access relevant information, resources, and opportunities that are suitable for their needs.

The focus group findings support Recommendation 4. Participants highlighted that volunteer recruitment in the physical activity, sport and movement sector is often limited to closed and informal networks. While there is a move towards digital recruitment methods, this can still pose a challenge for less technologically-savvy individuals and those with certain disabilities who may struggle to find volunteer opportunities. Participants also highlighted that, in addition to expanding recruitment channels, it is crucial to improve the clarity of volunteer advertisements to attract a wider range of potential volunteers. This suggestion applies particularly to those who may be unfamiliar with the physical activity, sport and movement landscape.

Ideas for implementation

- Findings suggest the benefits of creating an information database which details information and resources on training and funding opportunities that are readily available for different organisations.
- Semi-regular correspondence reminding organisations of the existing training and funding opportunities available to them may prove helpful to organisations which lack the time to search for opportunities.
- Advocate to organisations across Greater Manchester to consider the most effective combination of recruitment methods, emphasising the importance of contextually specific methods which best align with the needs and abilities of pools of potential volunteers.
- Create and distribute advertisement templates and checklists that can be used by organisations when formally advertising positions. These templates could include minimum levels of information that organisations are encouraged to provide when publicly advertising the need for volunteers.

8.3. Communication and Promotion

For the theme of communication and promotion, we suggest the following two recommendations:

- **Recommendation 5:** *Define the future of volunteering that is attractive to younger generations and demographics that are not currently volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, aligned to the [Vision for Volunteering](#) where relevant.*
- **Recommendation 6:** *Develop campaigns for communicating with diverse groups in Greater Manchester, featuring role models for these groups, and changing perceptions/stereotyping associated with physical activity, sport and movement volunteering.*

Rationales for recommendations

Support for Recommendations 5 and 6 emerged from the focus groups findings. First, participants stressed that, to promote physical activity, sport and movement volunteering to younger and underrepresented populations, more targeted efforts are needed to help individuals understand the value and benefits of this type of volunteering, such as opportunities for personal and professional development. Second, participants noted that low levels of diversity and inclusivity among current volunteers and volunteer coordinators hinder the participation of marginalised and underrepresented groups in physical activity, sport and movement volunteering. Third, participants stressed that pre-existing stereotypes about the perceived ability of volunteers from different groups to perform specific volunteering tasks are detrimental to promoting volunteering to a broader range of individuals. Importantly, the two recommendations and their supporting evidence are closely aligned with the Vision for Volunteering, which was developed through a national collaboration of key partners in volunteering. The Vision for Volunteering highlights a need to explore how volunteering must adapt and evolve so that by 2032 volunteering will become “something we all do across the different settings and stages of our lives” (Vision for Volunteering, 2022).

Ideas for implementation

- Generate a ‘myth busting’ marketing campaign about volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement. Key ‘myths’ to challenge include perceptions on who volunteers (i.e., anyone, regardless of sporting experience or demographic characteristics) and

commitments of volunteering (can be episodic and ad hoc as opposed to always continuous and fixed). This campaign could include online and offline advertising around Greater Manchester, such as newsletters, email chains, and social media posts, and should include stories and imagery representative of the diversity of Greater Manchester. For example, consider actively showcasing the contributions of minority ethnic volunteers in relevant promotional materials.

- Publicise benefits that volunteering can provide. This messaging could be targeted at specific age cohorts. Younger people may be more receptive to messaging which emphasises the personal and professional development which volunteering can provide, and the routes it may create into future employment. Older populations could be targeted with messaging which emphasises the physical and mental wellbeing, social, and kinship benefits of volunteering.

8.4. Research

For the theme of research, we suggest the following two recommendations:

- **Recommendation 7:** *Gather input and feedback from smaller grassroots organisations and groups beyond surveys to better understand and address their needs.*
- **Recommendation 8:** *Understand (a) how emerging trends and factors, such as the cost-of-living crisis, technology and innovation, and decentralised power, may impact volunteers and organisations; and (b) how different volunteer motivations can influence the ways in which organisations and groups in Greater Manchester support and promote volunteering opportunities.*

Rationales for recommendations

The survey results provide strong support for Recommendation 7. First, a limited number of smaller organisations and groups (particularly with an annual income of less than £50,000) responded to the survey. This suggests that online surveys via email or social media may not be an effective means of gathering comprehensive input from these organisations/groups. Second, the available data from the survey revealed that smaller organisations/groups have different needs for support and resources compared to their larger counterparts. Thus, additional research efforts beyond surveys, such as face-to-face interviews, are essential to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of smaller organisations/groups for physical activity, sport and movement volunteering.

We have developed Recommendation 8 based on a synthesis of survey, focus group, and workshop findings. First, the survey results indicated that funding opportunities for supporting the cost-of-living crisis were not particularly valued by organisations/groups in Greater Manchester. However, focus group and workshop participants noted that the crisis has had substantial impacts on organisations/groups and volunteers. These conflicting perspectives underscore the need for further research to fully understand the implications of the cost-of-living crisis for physical activity, sport and movement volunteering, along with other emerging trends and factors. Second, both focus group and workshop findings suggest that motivations and drivers of volunteers, particularly those from underrepresented groups, require further understanding to develop initiatives and campaigns that encourage broader participation in physical activity, sport and movement volunteering.

Ideas for implementation

- Undertake localised, targeted research which works in community ‘hubs’—ethnographic research where members of research teams ‘embed’ themselves in a voluntary organisation as a volunteer for a period of time.
- Plan and implement longitudinal research where organisations are asked to fill out regular surveys and participate in semi-regular interviews to get a stronger sense of their capabilities and needs. Our current research took more of a ‘broad brush’ approach to exploring volunteering in Greater Manchester. Moving forward, more focussed research could be ‘on the ground’ to target organisations who may not have been reached in this research.
- Conduct survey and focus group research which specifically examines the impact of the current cost-of-living crisis on the ability for people to volunteer and on the sustainability and effectiveness of organisations.
- Develop detailed focus groups and interviews with volunteers which more accurately maps different motivations and drivers for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement and the pathways people take into volunteering.

9. Reflection

We conclude this report by reflecting on our close collaboration with the Advisory Group for the current project. Overall, we found that this collaboration played a crucial role in successfully implementing all project activities, most notably the development and refinement of the eight recommendations presented above.

The most critical aspect of this collaboration was the face-to-face interactions we had with the Advisory Group. We met with Advisory Group members three times throughout the project period, spending roughly 2-2.5 hours on each meeting. These in-person meetings created a collaborative and engaging environment that enabled us to establish trusted relationships with the Advisory Group, share ideas, and resolve any concerns related to the project. Face-to-face interactions also facilitated our online communications with Advisory Group members. For example, by interacting with Advisory Group members during the project kick-off meeting, we were able to actively engage with them during the first workshop conducted via Microsoft Teams one week later.

The close and active collaboration with the Advisory Group enabled us to combine academic knowledge and skills that form the core strength of the research team with practical insights informed by the extensive field experience of Advisory Group members. For example, we developed the survey administered to GM organisations/groups based on the comments and suggestions provided by Advisory Group members during the first workshop. Before implementing the survey and focus groups, we asked Advisory Group members to review a draft of the research materials (i.e., survey questions, interview schedules) and incorporated their feedback to improve the clarity and appropriateness of the language used. Moreover, during the second workshop, we presented a draft of our recommendations to Advisory Group members and integrated any feedback obtained from them into the final recommendations identified in this report. Importantly, receiving and incorporating input from Advisory Group members not only improved the research materials and recommendations but also served as a valuable learning lesson for us. It taught us to be less academically driven and more focussed on creating accessible research for all project stakeholders.

By working with the Advisory Group, we have learned the importance of both careful planning and flexibility in project timescales. Throughout the project, we made several necessary changes to the timescales to accommodate the availability of research team members, GreaterSport personnel, and Advisory Group members. Although these adjustments allowed us to complete all project activities as planned, they resulted in a delay of a few months to the project end date. This experience highlighted the need for careful consideration of project timescales at the planning stage and the importance of building in some flexibility to allow for adjustments in response to partner availability.

Our collaboration with the Advisory Group has provided us with potential future research directions that expand on the current project. For example, based on feedback from the Advisory Group regarding the final recommendation proposed above, we recognize the need for a better understanding of what motivates Greater Manchester residents to volunteer for the physical activity, sport and movement sector. To address this, we propose conducting additional in-depth focus groups and interviews with a diverse group of Greater Manchester residents, including those from underrepresented groups that were not included in the current focus groups. Such future research efforts will build upon the findings of this project and provide valuable insights for the further development of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering in Greater Manchester.

In summary, the close collaboration between the research team and Advisory Group was the central driver of success for the current project. The constant interaction and regular project progress updates that occurred face-to-face and online allowed both groups to create a shared understanding of the research activities and key insights drawn from them. We hope that this reflection will provide guidance for future projects involving the collaboration between academic institutions and industry partners and this model of close collaboration will continue to be a driver of success.

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Appendix 1. Secondary Research on Volunteering

Definitions of volunteering

Volunteering is an activity aimed at benefiting people other than one's closest acquaintances. It is typically not linked with an expectation of remuneration and is connected with the donation of one's own time to groups, people or ideas (Nowakowska, 2022). The UK's National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)¹ defines volunteering as 'any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.' Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

Although the definition of the term 'volunteering' is somewhat contested over the last two decades, there is a wider use of the word which can be broadly broken down into two categories: 'formal' and 'informal' volunteering (DCMS, 2020; Pearce et al., 2022). *Formal volunteering* refers to providing unpaid help on behalf of an organisation (or groups/clubs), whereas *informal volunteering* is directly helping people outside one's household, such as picking up their groceries (Pearce et al., 2022).

Based on the frequency of formal volunteering, the NCVO further categorises volunteers into: (a) *frequent volunteers*, who volunteer at least once a month; (b) *occasional volunteers*, who volunteer less frequently than once a month; and (c) *non-volunteers*, who have never volunteered through a group, club, or organisation. There is also a notion of *lapsed volunteers*, referring to those volunteers who became invalid/not consistent with their volunteer motivations.

According to the UK Civil Society Almanac, there were more people involved in informal than formal volunteering in 2020/21 (NCVO, 2022). About 16.3 million people have formally volunteered through a group, club, or organisation. In contrast, 29.4 million people (about 54% of the population) volunteered informally at least once a year, and 17.9 million people (33%) did so at least once a month. During the COVID-19 pandemic, informal volunteering has played a significant role in supporting individuals and communities in need (NCVO, 2022). The pandemic has seen a rise in not only volunteerism, but also the forms of volunteering efforts such as the involvement of online/technological platforms.

There has also been the emergence of *micro volunteering* over the past decade. Volunteer Ireland (2018) defines this type of volunteering as 'bite-sized, on-demand, no commitment actions that benefit a worthy cause'. Heley et al. (2022) discussed how micro volunteering can be used by organisations as an opportunity to widen a volunteer base as the opportunities require little time commitment.

In relation to volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement, Bang and Chelladura (2009) improved on the work of MacDuff (1995) to create a typology of sports volunteers ranging from continuous to episodic. *Continuous volunteers* are those who volunteer in community sports organisations for a lengthy period of time. *Episodic volunteers* are those who provide a service for a sporting event or as a one-off for a sports club. Episodic volunteering has been on the rise in recent years and is defined as 'more flexible, short-term, [and] once off' opportunities (Dunn et al., 2016: 428). Episodic volunteering is seen most frequently at sport events of all types and sizes. However, episodic volunteering at sport events differs in characteristics from volunteering at other types of events in terms of the scale of the events and the visibility of the volunteers (Okada et al., 2021).

¹ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy>

Volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement is different from volunteering in other contexts, as sport volunteers will produce and consume the sporting experience (Harris et al., 2009). This means that sports volunteers often emerge from within their own sport (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009).

In sum, there seems to be a varying understanding of what people perceive as a volunteer or volunteering activity (The Young Foundation, 2021), for example, through the act of neighbourliness. This disparity of understanding may potentially impact people's response to, perception, and/or experience of volunteering.

Benefits of volunteering

Volunteering is associated with benefits to the individuals who volunteer, to the communities where people volunteer, to organisations that involve volunteers, to beneficiaries of the organisations, and to the economy (Harflett, 2015). Because of its association with individual and community benefits, volunteering is frequently put forward as a solution to social problems, including social exclusion, unemployment, social isolation, and lack of community cohesion.

According to Warwick-Booth and colleagues (2020), those who volunteered reported significant health and social benefits. Positive outcomes such as improved self-rated health status, quality of life, family functioning, and social support have all been noted within previous research (Casiday et al., 2008; Von Bonsdorff & Rantanen, 2011). In some instances, volunteering can be transformative, enabling individuals to gain employment, education, or new roles. James (2016) reports the power of volunteering beyond the contribution of volunteers in that their actions can contribute to improved wellbeing, and they frequently serve as social connectors.

In addition, there is a positive association between frequency of volunteering and mental wellbeing. That is, regular volunteers generally have higher wellbeing scores than those who volunteer as a one-off or not at all (Sport England, 2022). There is also evidence suggesting a positive relationship between frequency of volunteering and individual development, especially in aspects such as achieving their individual goals (Sport England, 2022). Volunteering in sport and physical activity has also been shown to be beneficial for building social trust and community cohesion overall.

The benefits of volunteering serve as a key rationale for the development of the Vision for Volunteering by key national partners in volunteering, including Association for Volunteer Managers, Volunteering Matters, NCVO, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, and Sport England, in 2022 (NCVO, 2022a). This 10-year strategic plan aims to harness the benefits of volunteering for both individuals and communities. The Vision for Volunteering further seeks to address the inequalities from the COVID-19 pandemic by making volunteering more accessible and collaborative.

Barriers and enablers to volunteering

Barriers to volunteering: According to the Time Well Spent report (2019), the main barriers to volunteering for different groups (occasional and lapsed volunteers) can be somewhat consistent. For instance, the key barriers or reasons stopping individuals from volunteering include other commitment such as work or study (especially for younger people aged 18-34), the reluctance to make an ongoing commitment to volunteering (especially for older people aged above 55), and an illness or disability. Other barriers include a poor-quality experience, a lack of resources (e.g., time and confidence), and a life event (e.g., the birth of a child, or taking on caring responsibilities). For those who have never volunteered, literature suggests that around one in five people say that they 'have never thought about it.' Other key barriers

include 'not being asked' or 'putting off by bureaucracy or administrative processes' (Time Well Spent, 2019).

Enablers to volunteering: Some reports (e.g., Time Well Spent, 2019) suggest that volunteers are most likely to be motivated by the flexibility with the time committed to voluntary activities, and/or flexibility about the way they give their unpaid time. Other reports (e.g., NCVO, 2017) indicate that the desire to improve things and help people is one of the main motivators for volunteering. Other enablers include being asked directly to get involved, being informed about the opportunities to volunteer, if family/friends get involved with volunteering, if the opportunity helps with improving their skills or career/job prospects, and if employers supported/encouraged volunteering. In a nutshell, people volunteer for a variety of reasons.

Socio-demographic profiles of volunteers

In the UK, older people, women, and those from less deprived socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to volunteer. According to the Community Life Survey 2019/20 (DCMS, 2021), people aged 65–74 are the age group most likely to volunteer on a regular basis—twice as much as those aged 25–34. Women are more likely than men to volunteer informally (37% vs 28%). Disabled people are slightly more likely to volunteer regularly than non-disabled people, but are slightly less likely to volunteer occasionally. People from the most deprived socioeconomic areas are less likely to volunteer than those in the least deprived areas. Those living in rural areas showed a higher participation in volunteering than those in urban areas. People who received a higher education are more likely to volunteer than people educated to a lower level.

Volunteering participation varies by ethnicity, but different data sources tell different stories. According to Community Life Survey 2019/20, in England, Black people (24%) or White people (23%) are more likely to volunteer than other ethnicities such as Asians (15%). However, Time Well Spent (2019) data tells another story. White people volunteer the same as the average (26% for at least once a month and 38% for at least once a year) while Black people volunteer less for both at least once a month (21%) and at least once a year (32%). In 2018, Jump² contributed evidence to the long-discussed under-representation of individuals from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in volunteering. This evidence suggests that Asian groups, in particular, have significantly lower odds of volunteering, compared to other BAME groups. This has significant consequences for the strategy of those in the sector trying to improve representation of marginalised groups in volunteering. It is important to bear in mind that the sample size collected in this aspect can be rather small to offer conclusive findings.

Socio-demographic profiles of sport volunteers: According to the Active Lives Adult Survey 2020-21 Report (Sport England, 2022), the typical socio-demographic profiles of sport volunteers are somewhat different from the general volunteering profiles depicted above. Specifically, gender wise, men are more likely to regularly volunteer to support sport and physical activity than women, comprising 63% of all weekly volunteers. Age wise, the greatest share of regular volunteers come from the age groups of 16-24, 35-44 and 45-54. Ethnicity wise, black adults are slightly under-represented among regular volunteers, compared to Asian and white other groups. Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are less likely to volunteer to support sport and physical activity (12%), compared to those without (15%). Nevertheless, some similarities were identified between sport and general volunteering profiles. For example, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to volunteer and comprise just 11% of all weekly sport volunteers. Based on our literature search, we were unable to identify information on the socio-demographic profiles of volunteers in the physical activity, sport and movement sector in Greater Manchester.

² www.jump-projects.com

Appendix 2. Volunteer Focus Group Interview Schedule

Introductions

- Hi everyone, just before we get started I wanted to state that I will now start recording and transcribing the session
- To begin, it might be helpful for everyone if we could all state our names and ages

Understanding 'volunteering'

- To begin with we are interested in perceptions on what a 'typical' volunteer is and/or looks like. So, in the background we have a mentimeter wordcloud running. If everyone could go to this link [mentimeter link] and input words or phrases they associate with volunteering and volunteers that would be extremely appreciated.
- What do you understand volunteering to be?

Volunteering experiences

- How did you first become involved in volunteering?
- Has your volunteering activity changed over time?
 - Changed in type of activity
 - Changed in regularity
- Have you volunteered outside of sport, movement, and physical activity?

Benefits of volunteering

- What do you believe are some of the benefits of volunteering to volunteers?
 - Personal
 - Social
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Employment
- Do you feel supported when volunteering by the organisation you volunteer with?
 - Why?
 - Why not?
- Do you feel valued as a volunteer?
 - Why?
 - Why not?

Barriers to volunteering

- Do you consider volunteering to be accessible for everyone?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you feel there are barriers which stop people from volunteering?
 - If so, what are the main barriers?
- What would you say are the main reasons for why people do not volunteer?
 - Time
 - Economic
 - Family
 - Illness
 - Geography (lack of voluntary opportunities close by)
 - Previous bad experience
 - Don't see other people like them volunteering
- Have you personally experienced any barriers in your own volunteering activity?
- What, if anything, do you feel could make volunteering more inclusive?
- Did Covid-19 impact upon the volunteering you undertake?
 - In what ways?

Enablers to volunteering

- What motivates you to volunteer?
- Do you volunteer as much as you would like?
- If no, what do you feel would enable you to volunteer more?

Closing up

- Would anyone like to add anything else before we finish?

Appendix 3. Non-volunteer Focus Group Interview Schedule

Introductions

- Hi everyone, just before we get started I wanted to state that I will now start recording and transcribing the session
- To begin, it might be helpful for everyone if we could all state our names and ages

Understanding 'volunteering'

- To begin with we are interested in perceptions on what a 'typical' volunteer is and/or looks like. So, in the background we have a mentimeter wordcloud running. If everyone could go to this link [mentimeter link] and input words or phrases they associate with volunteering and volunteers that would be extremely appreciated.
- What do you understand volunteering to be?

Volunteering experiences

- Have you ever volunteered in any capacity?
- Have you ever volunteered in sport, movement, and physical activity?
 - If so, what caused you to stop?
- Why have you never volunteered in sport, movement, and physical activity?

Barriers to volunteering

- Do you consider volunteering to be accessible?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you feel there are barriers which stop people from volunteering?
 - If so, what are the main barriers?
- What would you say are the main reasons for why you do not volunteer?
 - Time
 - Economic
 - Family
 - Illness
 - Geography (lack of voluntary opportunities close by)
 - Previous bad experience
 - Don't see people like you represented
- What, if anything, do you feel could make volunteering more inclusive?

Enablers to volunteering

- Do you intend to volunteer in the future?
 - Why?
 - Why not?
- What factors would make you personally more likely to participate in volunteering?

Closing up

- Would anyone like to add anything else before we finish?

Appendix 4. Volunteer Coordinator Focus Group Interview Schedule

Introductions

- Hi everyone, just before we get started I wanted to state that I will now start recording and transcribing the session
- To begin, it might be helpful for everyone if we could all state our names and ages

Understanding 'volunteering'

- To begin with we are interested in perceptions on what a 'typical' volunteer is and/or looks like. So, in the background we have a mentimeter wordcloud running. If everyone could go to this link [mentimeter link] and input words or phrases they associate with volunteering and volunteers that would be extremely appreciated.
- What do you understand volunteering to be?

Running a volunteering organisation

- How do you recruit volunteers?
 - Challenges in recruitment?
- How do you support volunteers?
 - Challenges in supporting volunteers?
- How do you retain volunteers?
 - Challenges in retaining volunteers?

Partnerships

- What type of partnerships do you have with other volunteer organisations?
 - Do you consider these partnerships successful?
 - Why/why not?
- What challenges do you face in partnering with other organisations?
- What resources would help you to have more successful partnerships?

Benefits of volunteering

- What do you believe are some of the benefits of volunteering to volunteers?
 - Personal
 - Social
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Employment
- Do you feel volunteers are often supported by the organisation they volunteer with?

Challenges in leading volunteering

- Do you feel there are barriers which stop people from volunteering?
- What would you say are the main reasons for why people do not volunteer?
 - Time
 - Economic
 - Family
 - Illness
 - Geography (lack of voluntary opportunities close by)
 - Previous bad experience
 - Don't see other people like them volunteering?
- Are there any particular aspects of volunteering that you think discourages people from volunteering?
- What, if anything, do you feel could make volunteering more inclusive?
- What were the impacts of COVID-19 on your work?

Enablers to volunteering

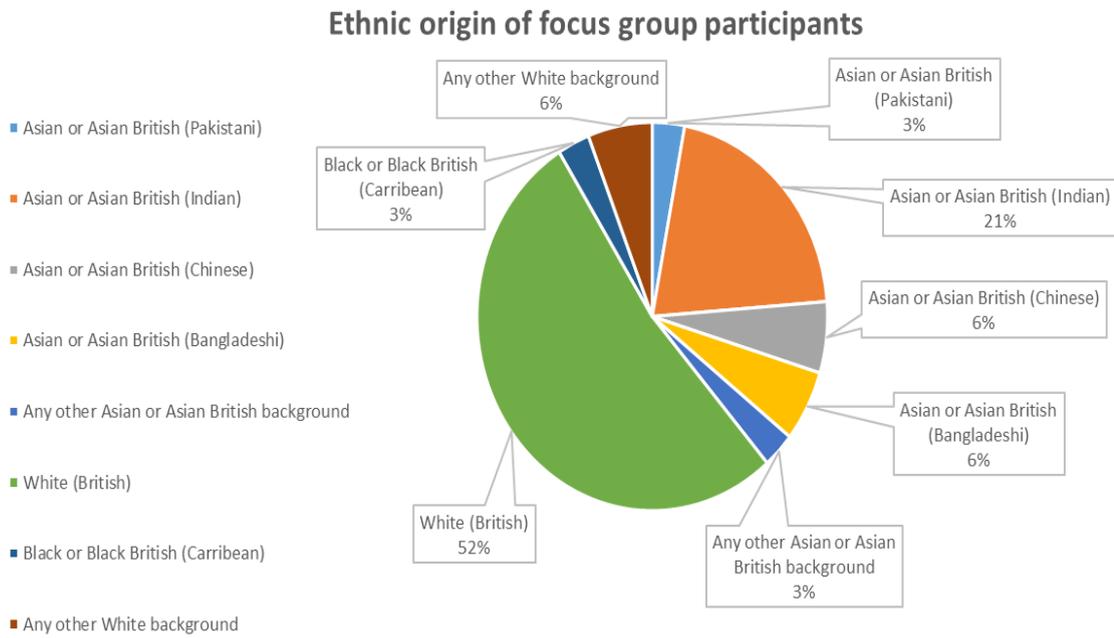
- In your experiences, what motivates people to volunteer?
- What do you feel would enable people to volunteer more?

Closing up

- Would anyone like to add anything else before we finish?

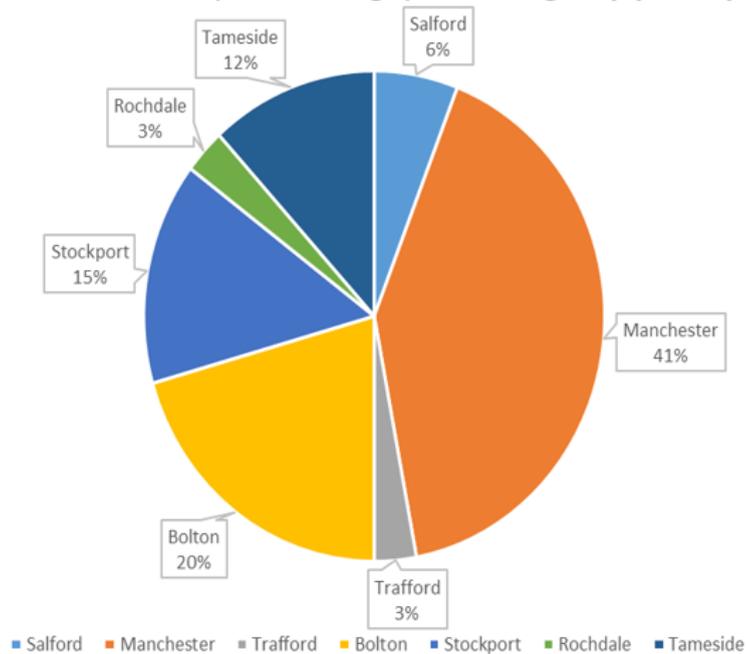
Appendix 5. Participant Characteristics for Focus Groups (N=37)

Ethnicity



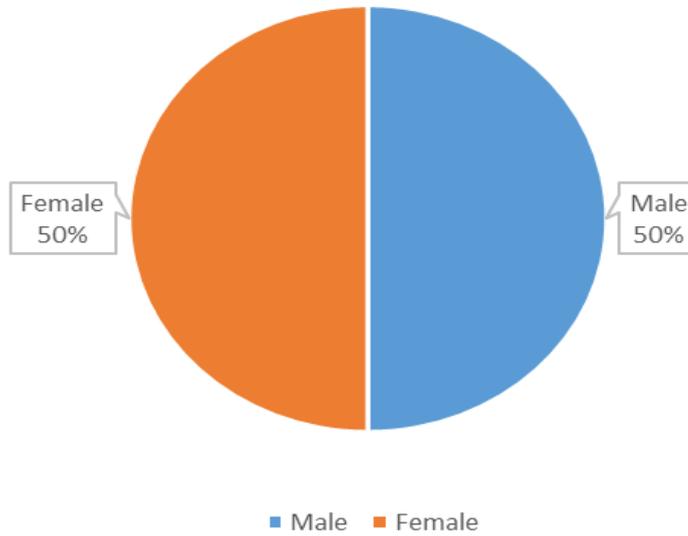
Place of residence

Place of residence (GM borough) of focus group participants



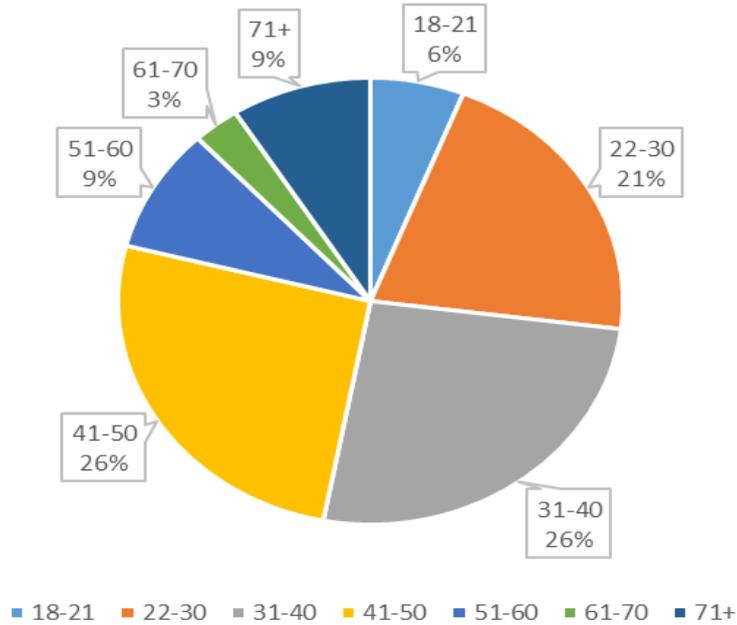
Gender

Gender of focus group participants



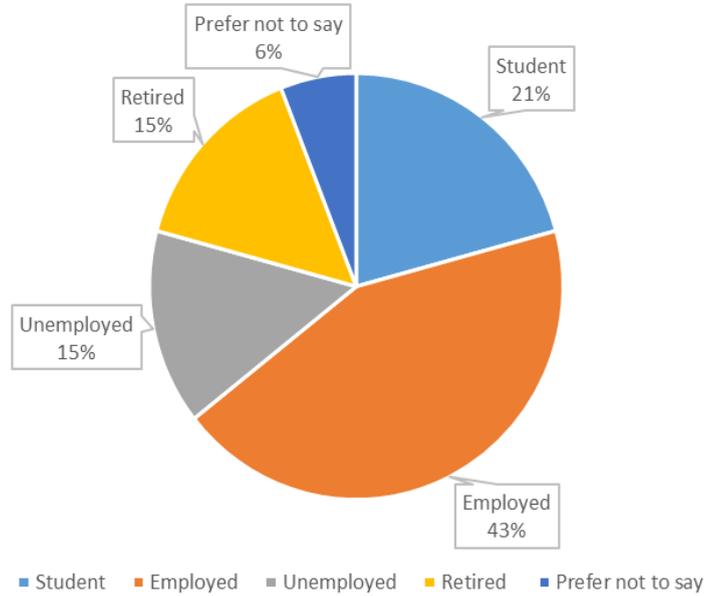
Age

Age of focus group participants



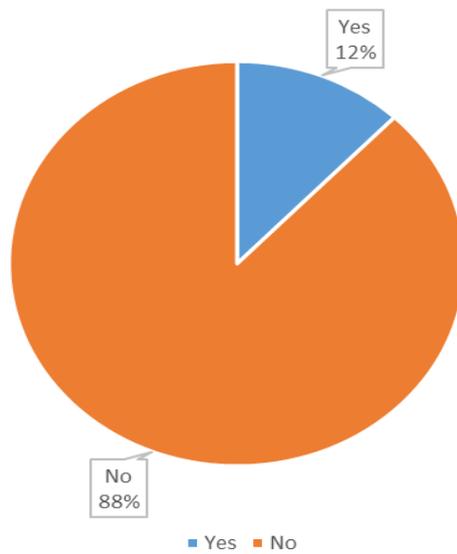
Employment status

Employment status of focus group participants



Disability status

Do focus group participants consider themselves to have a disability?



Appendix 6. A Copy of Survey Items

How do you describe the identity of your organisation/group?

- Community leisure
 - Incorporated voluntary organisation
 - Informal community group
 - Private sector
 - Public sector
 - Sport club
 - Sport governing body
 - Other (please specify)
-

How long has your organisation/group been operating? Please provide your best estimate.

- Less than a year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 3 years
- 4 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- 21 to 49 years
- Over 50 years

How long has your organisation/group been offering activities/programmes related to physical activity, sport and movement? Please provide your best estimate.

- Less than a year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 3 years
- 4 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- 21 to 49 years
- Over 50 years
- Not applicable (do not offer any physical activity, sport and movement-related activities/programmes)

In which main geographic location does your organisation/group work? If you work in multiple locations, please select 'Across Greater Manchester'. Otherwise, please select the relevant borough.

- Across Greater Manchester
- Bolton
- Bury
- Glossop
- Manchester
- Oldham
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Stockport
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Wigan

Who are the main groups of people/beneficiaries that your organisation/group works with? (Please select a maximum of three)

- Asylum seekers / refugees
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities

- Carers
 - Children (under 18)
 - Disabled people
 - Faith community
 - Homeless people
 - LGBTQ+ community
 - Men
 - Offenders / ex offenders
 - Older people (over 55)
 - Parents / families
 - People out of work
 - People with learning disabilities
 - People with long-term health conditions
 - Supporting people with mental health
 - Women
 - Young adults (18-24)
 - Any client group (no specialist focus)
 - Other (please specify)
-

To what extent is physical activity, sport and movement volunteering the focus of your organisation/group?

- None at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Mostly
- Entirely

What service sector does your organisation/group primarily operate in? (Please select one)

- Sport / Leisure / Physical Activity Sector
 - Crime / Justice Sector
 - Education Sector
 - Employment / Work / Welfare Sector
 - Health / Public Health Sector
 - Housing Sector
 - Private Sector
 - Public Sector / Public Administration (General)
 - Social Care Sector
 - Transport Sector
 - Voluntary & Community Sector
 - Other Sector (please specify)
-

What was your organisation's/group's annual income in the last financial year (2021/2022)? Please provide your best estimate if you don't have fully audited accounts. Include all income – grants, trading, contracts, donations etc.

- Under £5,000
- £5,000 - £9,999
- £10,000 - £49,999
- £50,000 - £249,999
- £250,000 - £499,999
- £500,000 - £999,999
- £1million - £4,999,999
- Over £5 million

How many paid staff do you currently employ? Include all paid staff as a total number of individuals, irrespective of whether Full time or Part time

- Don't employ any paid staff
- 1 to 9
- 10 to 49
- 50 to 249
- 250+

How many volunteers are involved with your organisation/group currently? Please include Trustees and Committee members in your total count of volunteers. Please type your answer (only number) in the below box.

Of these volunteers, how many are involved in your organisation/group's activities specific to physical activity, sport and movement? Please type your answer (only number) in the below box.

What is your current position in your organisation/group?

- Strategic lead or manager
 - Delivery lead (e.g., project manager/officer, volunteer coordinator)
 - Trustee (Board/Steering Group)
 - Volunteer
 - Other role (Please specify)
-

Are you aware of the Club Matters programme by Sport England?

- Yes
- No

Has your organisation/group used resources from Club Matters?

- Yes
- No

What is/was your main purpose of using Club Matters resources? Please describe in the below box.

Are you aware of local volunteer centres?

- Yes
- No

Has your organisation/group been connected with local volunteer centres?

- Yes
- No

What is/was your main purpose of connecting with local volunteer centres? Please describe in the below box.

Please rate how important it is to your organisation/group to have each of the following areas of training support for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

| | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Sport-specific skills or qualifications (e.g., coaching of a specific sport) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Basic skills for volunteering (e.g., communication, basic teaching skills, organisational skills) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Training for volunteer development | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child protection and safeguarding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Training for your organisation/group (e.g., governance, organisational management, policy development) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Training specific to the needs of the people/beneficiaries your organisation/group works with | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Training for volunteer recruitment and retention (e.g., how to advertise volunteer opportunities or host volunteer appreciation events) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Training for volunteer management (e.g., how to support and supervise volunteers) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In the below box, please describe any other areas of training support that are important to your organisation/group for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

Please rate how important it is to your organisation/group to have each of the following areas of resources and information for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

| | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Funding/financial support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Additional paid staff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Additional volunteers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| A new system for volunteer management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Partnerships with other organisations/groups | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Equipment (e.g., laptop, phone, | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| software, uniform) | | | | | |
| Access to space or venue for activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Online communicati on platforms (e.g., website, social media) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Networks/co ntacts in the local area(s) where your organisation/ group operates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Effective governance and policies | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information for volunteer recruitment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information for volunteer training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information for funding opportunities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In the below box, please describe any other areas of resources and information that are important to your organisation/group for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

Please rate how important it is to your organisation/group to have each of the following types of information support for recruiting volunteers in physical activity, sport and movement.

| | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Word of mouth/reco mmendation s about potential | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| volunteers from other organisations/groups | | | | | |
| Access to existing nationwide recruitment websites (e.g., Do IT, Indeed) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Access to existing local platforms for volunteer recruitment (e.g., volunteer centre websites) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Advertisement of volunteer opportunities on social media sites managed by support organisations (e.g., 10GM, GreaterSport) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Support for developing your organisation's/group's communication tools (e.g., website, social media site, newsletter, poster, campaign) for volunteer recruitment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New ideas and tips for | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| attracting volunteers | | | | | |
| Establishing contacts with organisations (e.g., schools/universities, companies) that can provide access to potential volunteers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In the below box, please describe any other areas of information support that are important to your organisation/group for recruiting volunteers in physical activity, sport and movement.

Please rate how important it is to your organisation/group to have each of the following areas of support for securing funding for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

| | Not at all important | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Access to different ways of applying for funding (e.g., video presentation) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Support (e.g., training, advice) for grant writing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Access to information about funding opportunities that are right for your organisation/group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Funding opportunities for supporting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| the cost of living crisis | | | | | |
| Funding opportunities for covering the costs associated with volunteering (e.g., hosting, recruiting, developing, and supporting volunteers) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Funding opportunities for out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers (e.g., travel expenses, meals, equipment) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

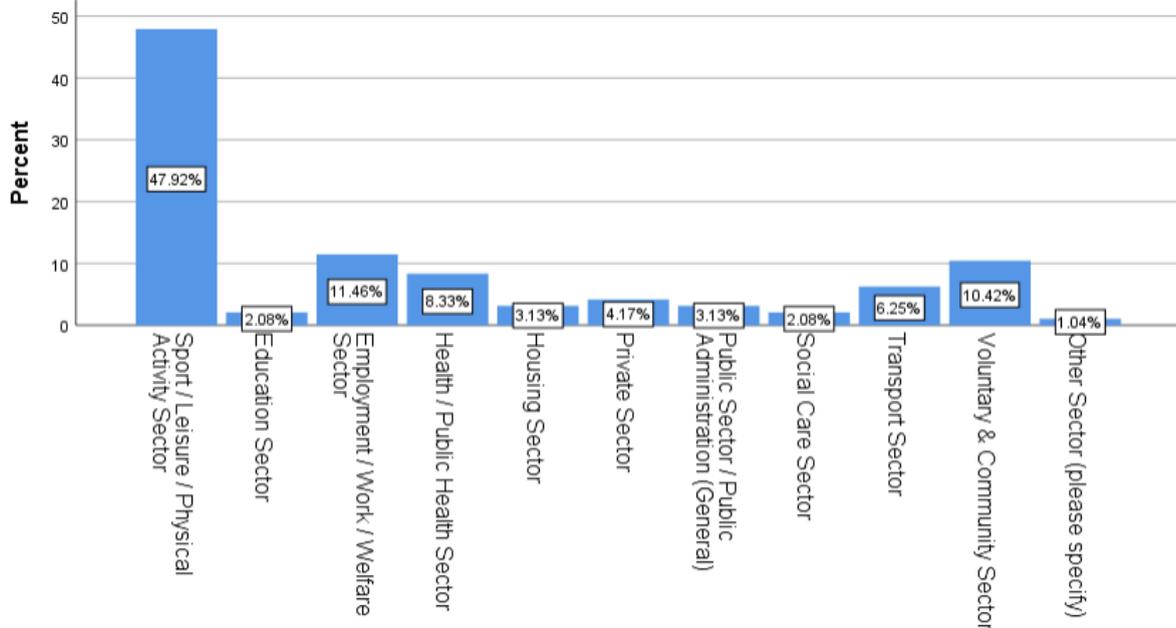
In the below box, please describe any other areas of support for securing funding that is important to your organisation/group for volunteering in physical activity, sport and movement.

In the below box, please share your thoughts on any unique challenges associated with the promotion of physical activity, sport and movement volunteering, compared to other forms of volunteering.

Appendix 7. Characteristics of Organisations/Groups Answering the Survey (N=96)

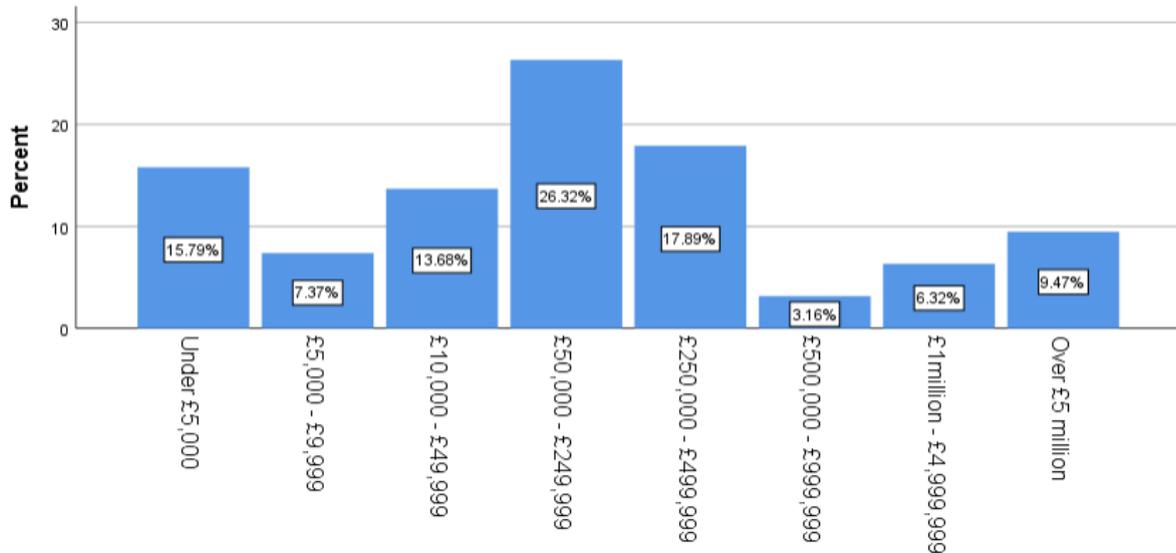
Sector

What service sector does your organisation/group primarily operate in? (Please select one) - Selected Choice



Size

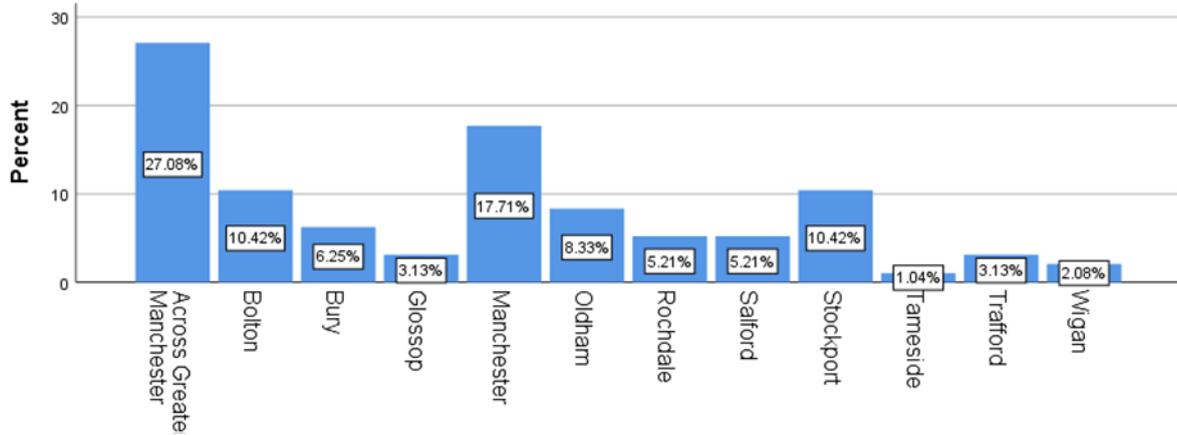
What was your organisation's/group's annual income in the last financial year (2021/2022)? Please provide your best estimate if you don't have fully audited accounts. Include all income – grants, trading, contracts, donations etc.



Location

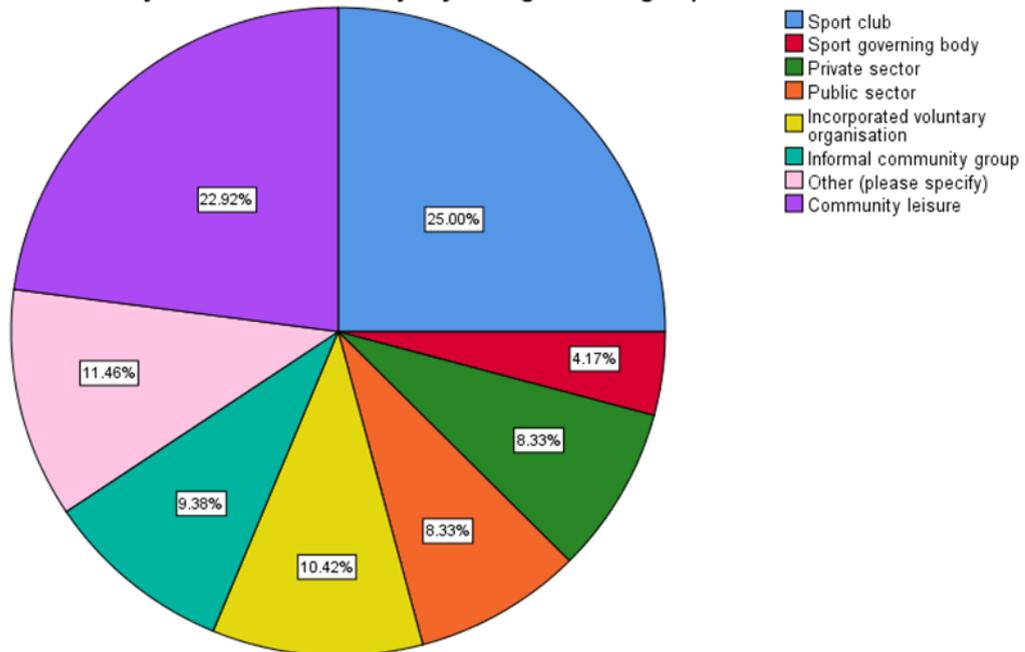
In which main geographic location does your organisation/group work?

If you work in multiple locations, please select 'Across Greater Manchester'. Otherwise, please select the relevant borough.

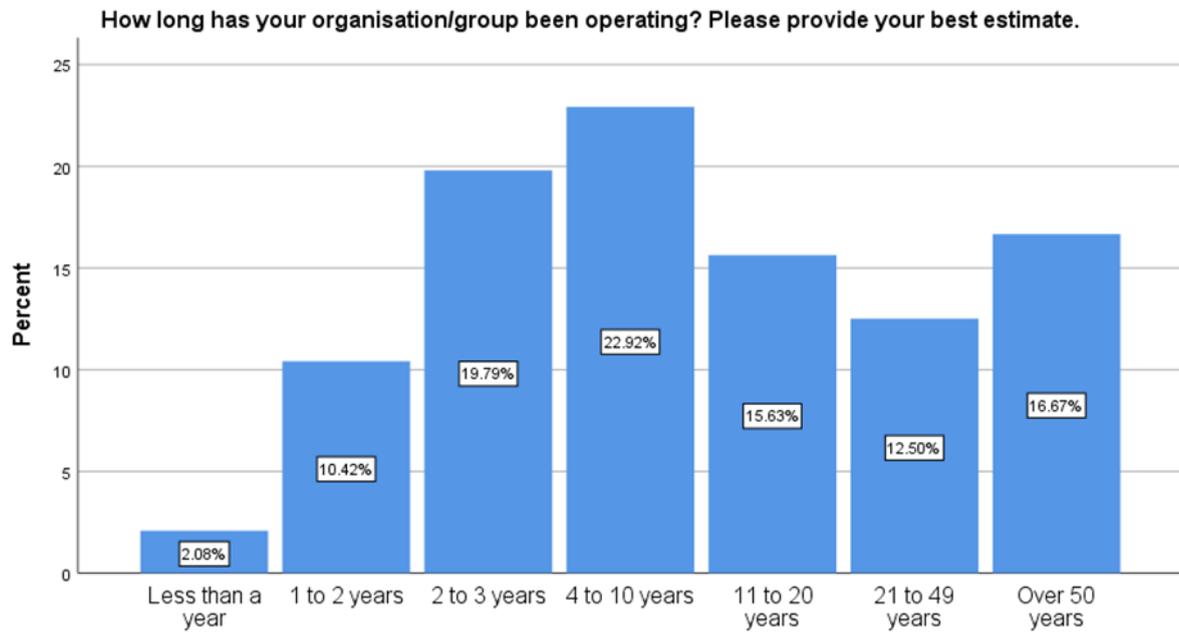


Organisational identity

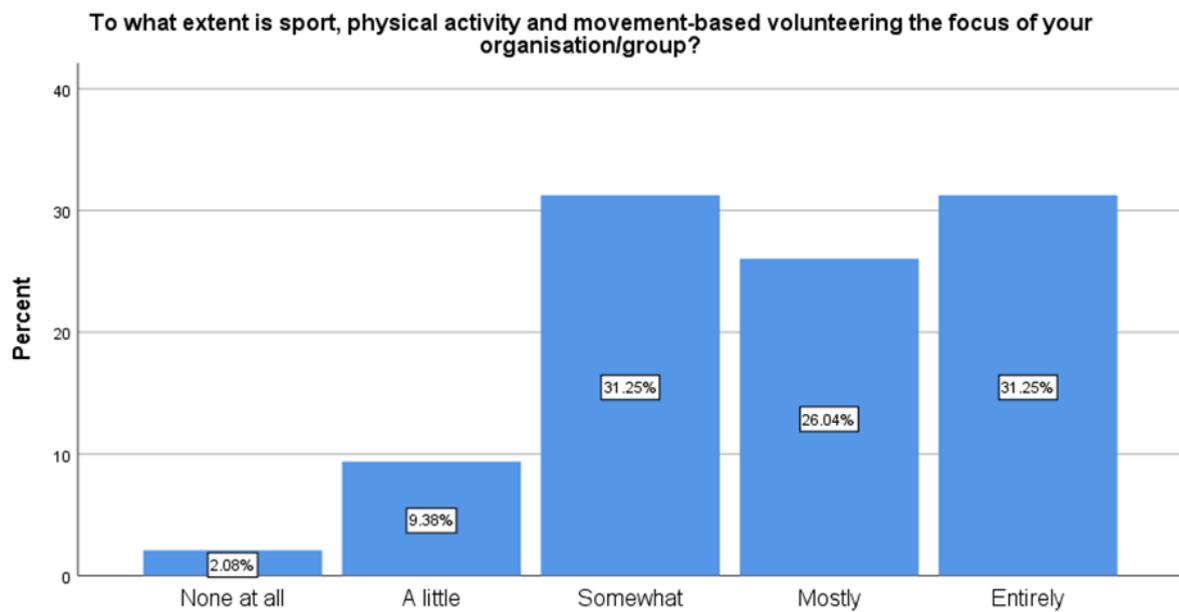
How do you describe the identity of your organisation/group? - Selected Choice



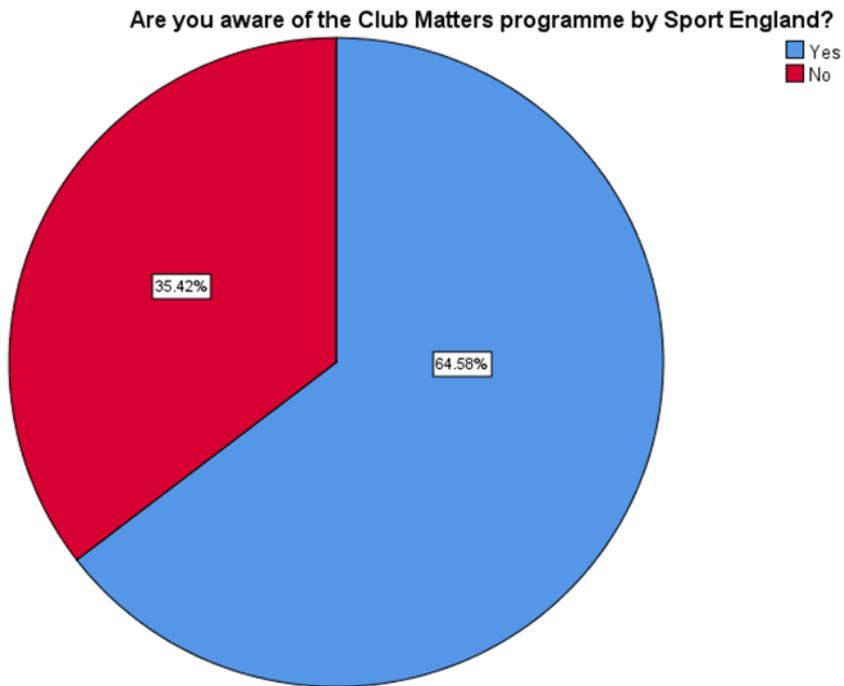
Years of operation



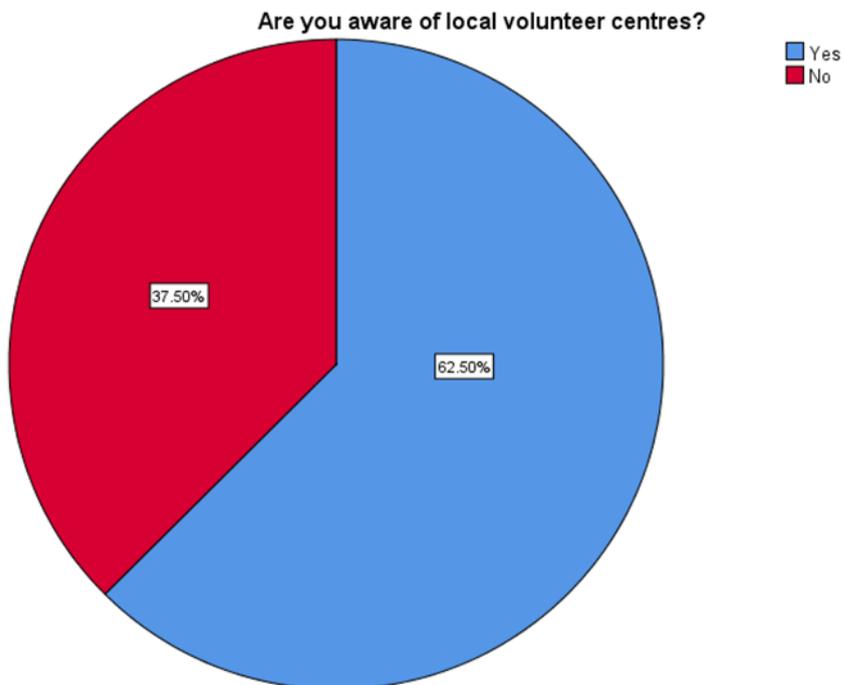
Extent of focus on volunteering



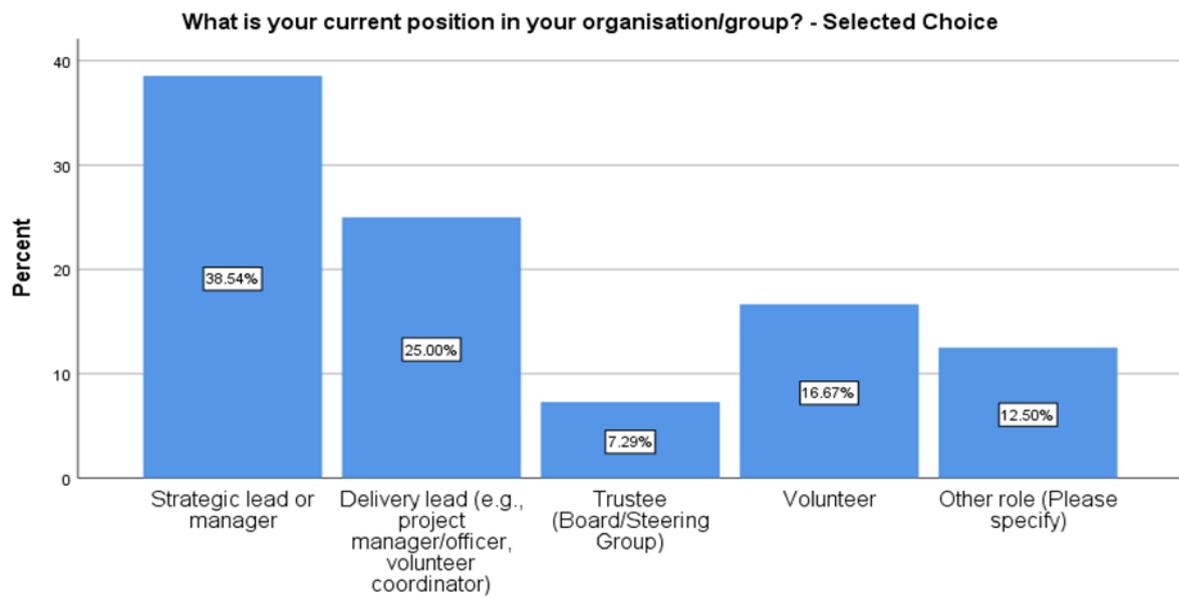
Knowledge about Club Matters



Knowledge about local volunteer centres



Respondent position





**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

**Bolton
Council**

Business School
Manchester Metropolitan University
All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester
M15 6BH

For more information on the Faculty, please contact ke.hpsc@mmu.ac.uk
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Twitter: [@MMU_business](https://twitter.com/MMU_business)