



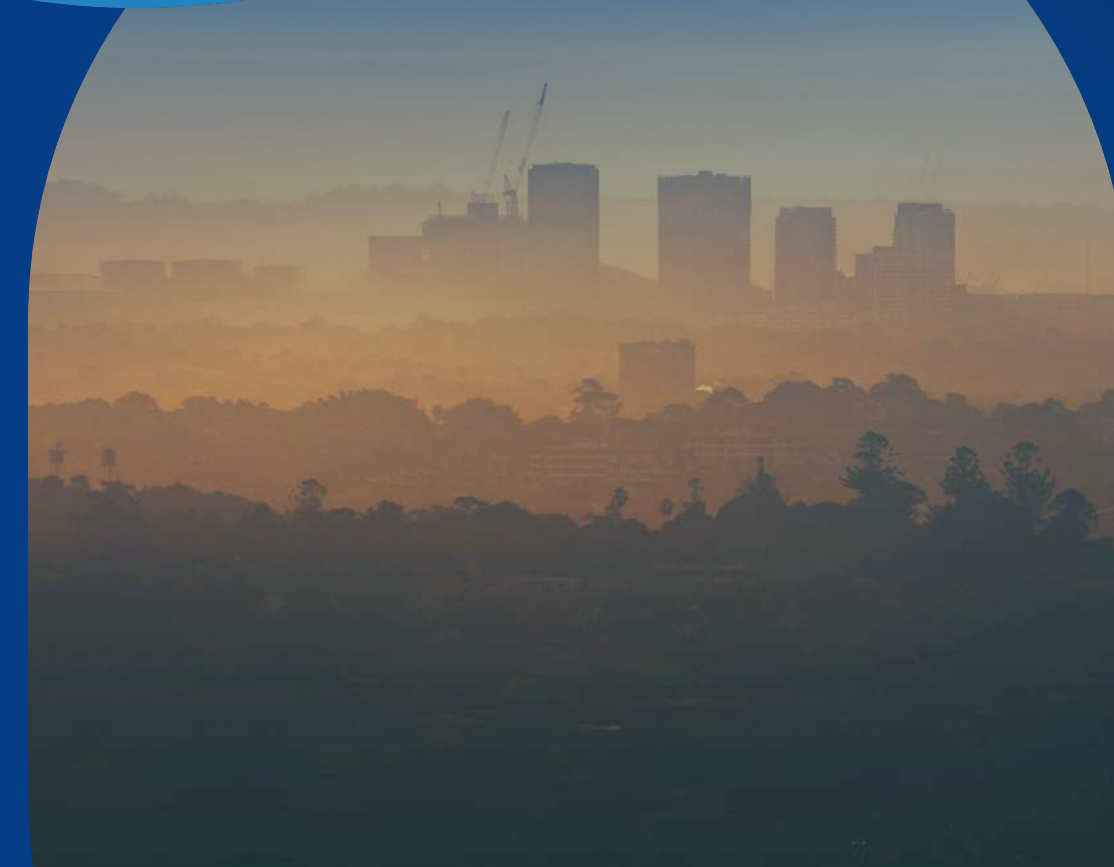
# What if everyone stopped volunteering?

Understanding the reality of how important volunteering is to our society

Report by Dominic Pinkney  
Works4U

with contributions by expert stakeholders across the UK

SEPT 2025





# “a disaster of biblical proportions ... human sacrifice, dogs and cats living together... MASS HYSTERIA!”

Dr Peter Venkman to Mayor of New York, *Ghostbusters* (1984)



*Ghostbusters* photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures

In this classic scene from the 1984 comedy film, the Ghostbusters try to convince the Mayor of New York that the implausible issue of ghosts is about to become a catastrophic problem. There is skepticism in the room but the team manage to convince the Mayor to take action.

If all volunteers stopped volunteering it may not be a disaster of biblical proportions, but the impact would be considerably worse than most realise, with far-reaching negative impacts on many parts of our society that would effect millions of people. This report explores some of the many areas of society that would be significantly impacted.







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# Introduction

***‘Volunteering is the quiet infrastructure that binds our communities together. Its absence would expose the fragility of systems that rely on civic duty and goodwill.’***

Rebecca Wilkinson  
CEO, LawWorks





# Introduction

Although everyone seems to be aware of volunteering, it appears to be a well kept secret just how integral volunteering is to how British society operates and functions.

Whether a conscious choice or not, the UK has developed into a society where volunteering, in all of its forms, is tightly woven into its very fabric. However, the wider perception of the importance of volunteering does not reflect reality. Volunteering is often referred to in quite benign terminology, being ‘nice’ and a ‘lovely thing to do’.

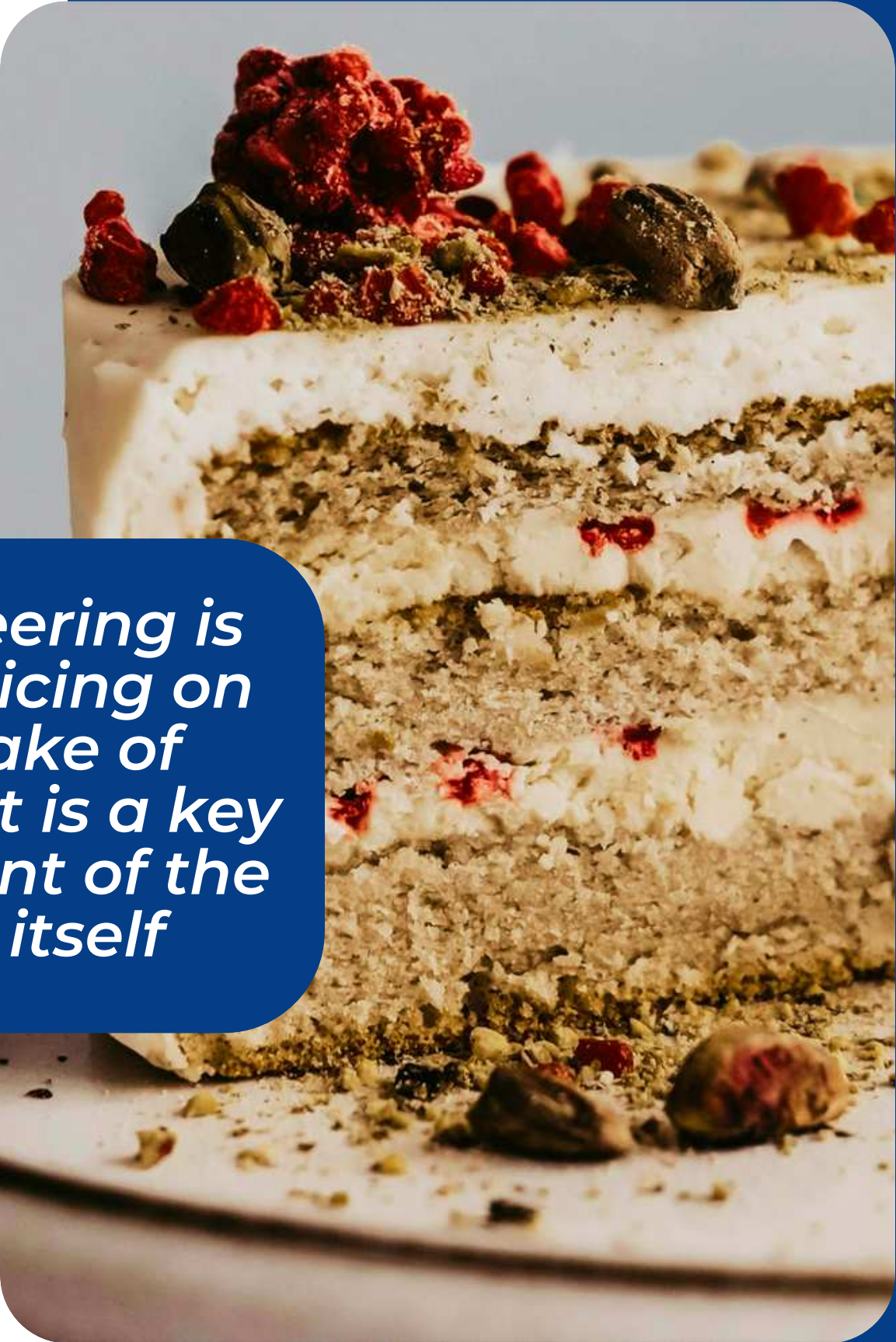
It is commonplace that when people think of the word ‘volunteer’ that they think about a formal role within a charity, however, volunteering is deeply embedded and critical to many parts of society:

Sports	Health & Care	Emergency response/ Community resilience
Arts & Culture	Education	Law & Justice
Defence/Military	Communities	Faith/Religion
Young People	Environment	Politics

*Volunteering is not the icing on the cake of society, it is a key ingredient of the cake itself*

The way volunteering is often perceived seems to be a ‘nice to have’ that implies it is not really necessary or essential, just like the icing on a cake. You take away the icing and there is still a perfectly good cake, but not quite as delicious. In reality, volunteering is not the icing on the cake of society, it is a key ingredient of the cake itself.

Therefore, if this analogy is correct, if all volunteers stopped volunteering our society would crumble, but just what would happen to our society if everyone stopped volunteering? This report does not attempt a comprehensive answer to this question, this requires welcomed deeper analysis, but nevertheless, gives a substantial response with clear insights into what would happen and just how important volunteering is to the functioning of our society.







## Hear from the experts

To help understand the impact of volunteering in the many different spheres of our society and what would happen if volunteers stopped volunteering, we have asked experts from across the UK. As well as our own analysis in this report you can read 34 independent contributions from a wide mix of different stakeholders representing local, regional, national and specialist expertise in a range of fields. In each area you will discover or further understand the critical role volunteers play in the functioning of that specific realm.

## Reframing how we perceive volunteering

This report aims to help those who may not have considered deeply the role of volunteering in the UK to reframe their perception to embrace the reality of how our society functions. How or why we have got to this position is not covered and it may be an uncomfortable reality for some that the UK relies on volunteers so deeply. However, this vulnerability can also be a strength. Volunteering is an essential and integral part of how Britain operates and if this were recognised and the impact of reduced volunteering understood by decision makers, it could not only be reversed but actually developed to reap further the many social and economic benefits of volunteering.

## Report preparation

***‘What if everyone stops volunteering?’*** is a BIG question and I would like to give huge and enormous thanks to all the contributors to this report who gave up their precious time to help us all understand the critical role volunteers play in the many aspects of our society.

Whether you are unfamiliar with this topic or a volunteering expert, I hope you find this report of interest.

Dominic Pinkney  
Works4U CEO



Dominic Pinkney



# Report Contributors

## Contributors' Brief

All the kind and generous organisations and individuals who have contributed to this report were given the same brief, to answer the question '***What would happen if everyone stopped volunteering?***' in up to 300 words based on the experience of their organisation or work. They were not paid nor given any other instructions or steer on what to say and have not seen the contributions of others, nor the arguments or text prepared by Works4U.

## Contributors

Carers UK  
Cats Protection  
Citizens Advice  
Community CVS  
Community Impact Bucks  
Derbyshire Constabulary  
Girlguiding London and South East England  
Helpforce  
Heritage Volunteering Group  
Jewish Volunteering Network  
Law Centres Network  
LawWorks

Local Governance Association (LGA)  
London Plus  
London Resilience (Mayor of London)  
Metropolitan Police  
Nourish Hub  
Penny Wilson  
Rose Abrehart  
Royal Voluntary Service  
Scouts  
Sea Cadets  
Spark Somerset

University College London Hospitals  
Ulysses Trust  
Voluntary Norfolk  
Volunteer Centre Camden  
Volunteer Centre Newcastle  
Volunteer NOW  
Volunteer Scotland  
WCVA  
YOU London  
Youth United Derbyshire  
Youth United Hertfordshire





# Executive Summary

***‘This report is a timely reminder: volunteering is not optional, it is essential. We must invest in it, champion it, and ensure it thrives.’***

Rebecca Wilkinson  
CEO, LawWorks



# Executive Summary

## ‘What if everyone stopped volunteering?’

Do not panic, there is not a likelihood of all volunteers stopping, however, this report examines this question of what would happen if everyone did stop to assess how embedded volunteering is into the normal every day functioning of our society. This question is relevant and apposite as we have experienced a sustained reduction in formal traditional volunteering in recent years mainly due to the fact that the fundamental nature of how people want to volunteer has changed ([see page 18](#)).

‘What if everyone stopped volunteering?’ is a BIG question that requires a BIG answer.

The 80+ pages of this report attempts to highlight key areas of society that would be impacted, outside of the traditional charity capacity perspective, but does not attempt to be all encompassing. Nevertheless the message of this report is loud and clear. In every single section it shows how important volunteering is and then when you add all these areas together you cannot escape the conclusion that volunteering is an integral part of how the UK society functions. If we do not come together to recognise this fact, we are keeping a vulnerability hidden rather than exposing and supporting a strength.

One of the most common responses in the completely independent answers to this question provided by the expert contributors, from across the different fields, is that if volunteering stopped it would have an ‘**immediate**’ and ‘**profound**’ impact. The conclusion from these responses is that volunteering in the UK is societal glue hidden in plain sight, overlooked and undervalued.

The purpose of this report is not to encourage future policy to be less or more reliant on volunteers, although that is a worthy and useful discussion, the aim of this report is to recognise how reliant, in societal, economic and political terms, we are on volunteers **right now**. This is far more pressing as volunteering is changing and if we do not support it now we are vulnerable to huge problems that come with equally large costs.

In no particular order, this report examines the impact of volunteers stopping in a variety of societal areas with perhaps a few being unexpected or surprising to some readers.

## Volunteer Infrastructure ([Section 2](#))

The volunteering infrastructure experts at a local, regional and national level give a clear consistent message, based on their experience of working with volunteer involving organisations every day, with Bethany Sikes from Volunteer Scotland succinctly putting it, ‘*there is no community without volunteers*’. Lindsay Cordery-Bruce from WCVA states the clear result from everyone stopping volunteering is that ‘*our Nation would fail*.’





# Executive Summary

## **Trustees** ([Section 3](#))

The 170,000 people who volunteer to be trustees are simply essential for the charity sector to function and provide an estimated £33.17bn worth of free support every year. *‘A world without trustees is a world without charities’* states trustee expert Penny Wilson.

## **Health & Care** ([Section 4](#))

Contributions from Helpforce, Carers UK, University College London Hospitals and Community CVS all highlight how without volunteers health and care would have a significant negative effect. The conclusion is that volunteers play such a critical role in health and care that if they all stopped volunteering, immediate and expensive action would need to take place to ensure the welfare of the population was maintained.

## **Law & Justice** ([Section 5](#))

The fact that volunteers are so involved in the functioning of UK law and justice may be a surprise to some, but contributions from the Metropolitan Police, Law Centres Network, LawWorks and Derbyshire Constabulary make the importance of volunteering very clear. Rebecca Pritchard from the Metropolitan Police states, *‘volunteering is not a ‘nice to have’ it is part of the backbone of policing in London. Without it, the Met, and the communities we serve, would feel the loss instantly’*. Rebecca Wilkinson from LawWorks, the Solicitors Pro Bono charity highlights the hidden but critical role of volunteering, that it is *‘the quiet infrastructure that binds our communities together. Its absence would expose the fragility of systems that rely on civic duty and goodwill.’*

## **Education & Young People** ([Section 6](#))

One of the biggest negative impacts of all volunteers stopping in the immediate, medium and longer terms would be for young people. Insightful contributions from the Scouts, Girlguiding, YOU London, Youth United Foundation, Sea Cadets, Ulysses Trust and the National Governance Association (NGA) all demonstrate that the loss of volunteers would have a devastating impact on young people and their future, which would have serious longer term societal and economic consequences. Debbie Wilkinson from YOU London states, *‘the absence of volunteers would erode the intergenerational and community bonds that make these organisations so powerful. Volunteers often serve as role models, offering stability, encouragement and a sense of belonging. Their departure would weaken the civic fabric that these groups help weave - reducing opportunities for leadership development, community service and social cohesion.’*





# Executive Summary

## **Environment** ([Section 7](#))

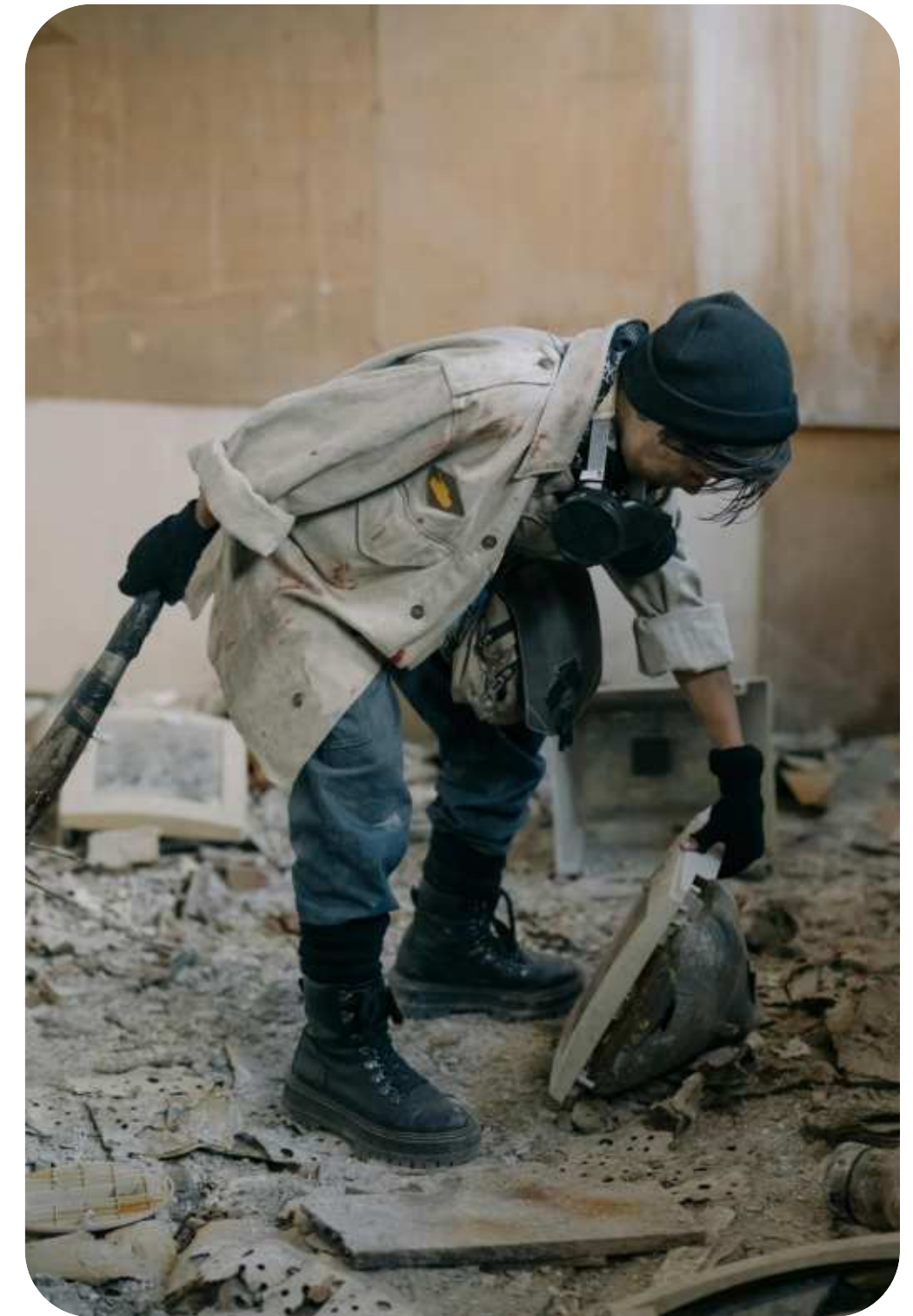
This section looks at the key role that volunteers play in the area of animal protection and welfare, natural resources conservation, wildlife preservation and protection. There are 3,600 environmental charities in the UK, representing just over 2% of all registered charities. To this must be added potentially thousands of community groups, volunteer-run, who act to support animals, wildlife and the environment. If all the volunteers stopped in these charities and groups we would see the impact immediately, in our towns, cities as well as our countryside. Rivers, wildlife and animals would all suffer. Without volunteers the impact on the UK environment and wildlife would be immediate, deeply felt and will quickly escalate to catastrophic levels.

## **Communities** ([Section 8](#))

People giving up their free time to support others is an essential component for communities and neighbourhoods to be cohesive and resilient. Volunteering is an essential part of *social cohesion* and the interconnectedness it provides creates more resilient and healthier communities, better equipped to overcome challenges, experience higher economic growth, and promote the well-being of all members. Without volunteering *social isolation* will increase and this incurs significant costs, including higher demands on healthcare, social care, and policing services due to associated physical and mental health issues like depression and cardiovascular disease. Economically, it results in lost productivity and work days, with one report estimating the annual cost to UK employers at £2.5 billion. The 2020 [Loneliness Monetisation Report](#) estimates the wellbeing cost of severe loneliness to be the equivalent to £9,537 per person per year. Therefore, if all volunteers stopped volunteering, the social and economic impact on our communities would be devastating and in the medium and longer term would be crippling for our economy trying to deal with the fallout.

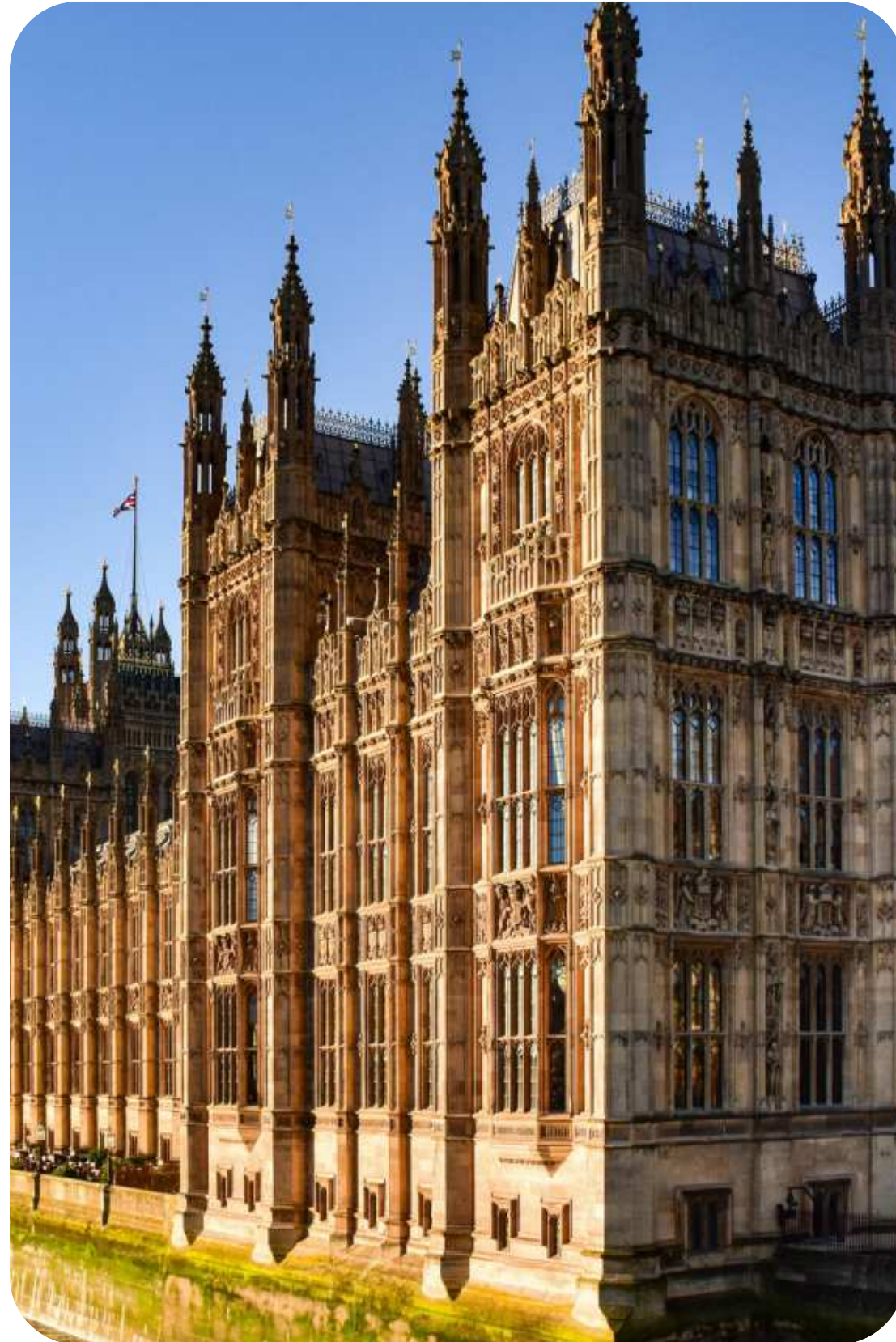
## **Community Resilience/Emergency Response** ([Section 9](#))

Cliff Fleming from London Resilience states, '*volunteering and mutual aid support has been a backbone of society's, and Londoners', reaction to emergencies*'. For a community to be resilient, then it needs to have already established social connections and trusted networks. If all volunteers stopped volunteering then community resilience could practically disappear as these social connections and trust between people and organisations would no longer exist. If a community is not resilient then it is harder hit by disruptions which inevitably lead to further costs and drawing upon public resources.





# Executive Summary



## **Democracy** (Section 10)

This is another area that might surprise some how vital volunteers are. Without volunteers the functioning of the current UK political system would simply fall apart. The functioning of political parties, along with the 10,000 parish and town councils in England governed by the 100,000 volunteer Councillors all rely on volunteering. Volunteers are so integral to the functioning of democracy that without them we would move to a system where the parties and campaigns with the most money would have the advantage. Those without financial means would be unable to get their messages, ideas and arguments across for people to consider. In short, the UK would not be a proper democracy any more.

## **Heritage** (Section 11)

The Heritage Volunteering Group, whose membership spans across the country, provides insight into just how important volunteers are for the heritage sector to function. Vanessa Theed states, *'volunteers are not just a resource — they are the soul of the heritage sector. Protecting, supporting, and celebrating their contributions is essential for preserving our cultural heritage for the future'*. She describes the question of this report as a *'wake-up call for the sector'*, writing, *'if volunteers were suddenly unavailable, it would be a stark reminder of how much the heritage sector depends on them. Organisations might be forced to reprioritise budgets and staffing, but the reality is that the unique passion and commitment volunteers bring cannot be replaced.'*

## **Employee Volunteering** (Section 12)

Although we are nowhere near close to maximising employee volunteering in the UK, it is growing and delivers huge positive impact to our communities. We can estimate that just over an equivalent of £1 billion of value was provided by employee volunteers in the past year. If all employee volunteering were to stop this would be an enormous blow to community organisations and the environment who would lose out on vital support. It will also be damaging to businesses where employee volunteering has become an integral and effective employee engagement mechanism, enabling businesses to build and embed values that enable them to be more successful.



# Executive Summary

## **Economic Impact** ([Page 18](#))

The nature of calculating the value of volunteering and its economic impact is challenging but different studies suggest it is in the range of £25-400 billion per year. Even using the most conservative of these estimates would result in a huge social and economic loss if everyone stopped volunteering.

## **Blueprint for Developing Volunteering** ([Section 13](#))

The 36 practical and strategic recommendations of the *London Vision for Volunteering* Report (March 2025) together act as blueprint for developing volunteering not just in London but across the UK. The production of this report is a direct follow on from the *London Vision for Volunteering* report and this section lists its priority actions to tackle first with minor amendments to be applicable for all of the UK.

## **Conclusion** ([Section 14](#))

If everyone stopped volunteering and no corrective action was taken then UK society would quickly descend into a dystopian state. This is no exaggeration when you consider the consequences outlined in this report, which must be noted are not exhaustive: increase in social isolation, reduced health and wellbeing of the population, decreased social cohesion, lower community resilience, more unequal and unjust society, increase in social disorder, support and education of young people would drop significantly, end of or heavily weakened democracy and productivity of the nation would fall and its descent would quicken.

We would not let this stark and bleak outcome take place, of course, but without volunteers this would come at a crippling cost and so the need to support and develop volunteering is essential for the UK. Implementing the recommendations of the *London Vision for Volunteering* Report are a great place to start.

The conclusion of this report is to ask for more investment in volunteering at a time of great economic challenges, but given the far greater financial consequences outlined within, ***it's not a question of whether the country can afford to support volunteering more, but can the country afford not to?***





# 1. Setting the Scene

*“Never have we needed volunteering more as individuals, charities and communities. We must harness the willingness of ordinary people to step forward to give their time, skills and experiences to build a better Britain”*

Catherine Johnstone CBE  
Royal Voluntary Service





# Volunteering Economic Impact

*'The power of making someone feel valued and worthwhile through giving them a volunteer role added to the help they are giving in the community is incalculable.'*

Kate Lee, Community CVS

*'Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.'*

Sherry Anderson

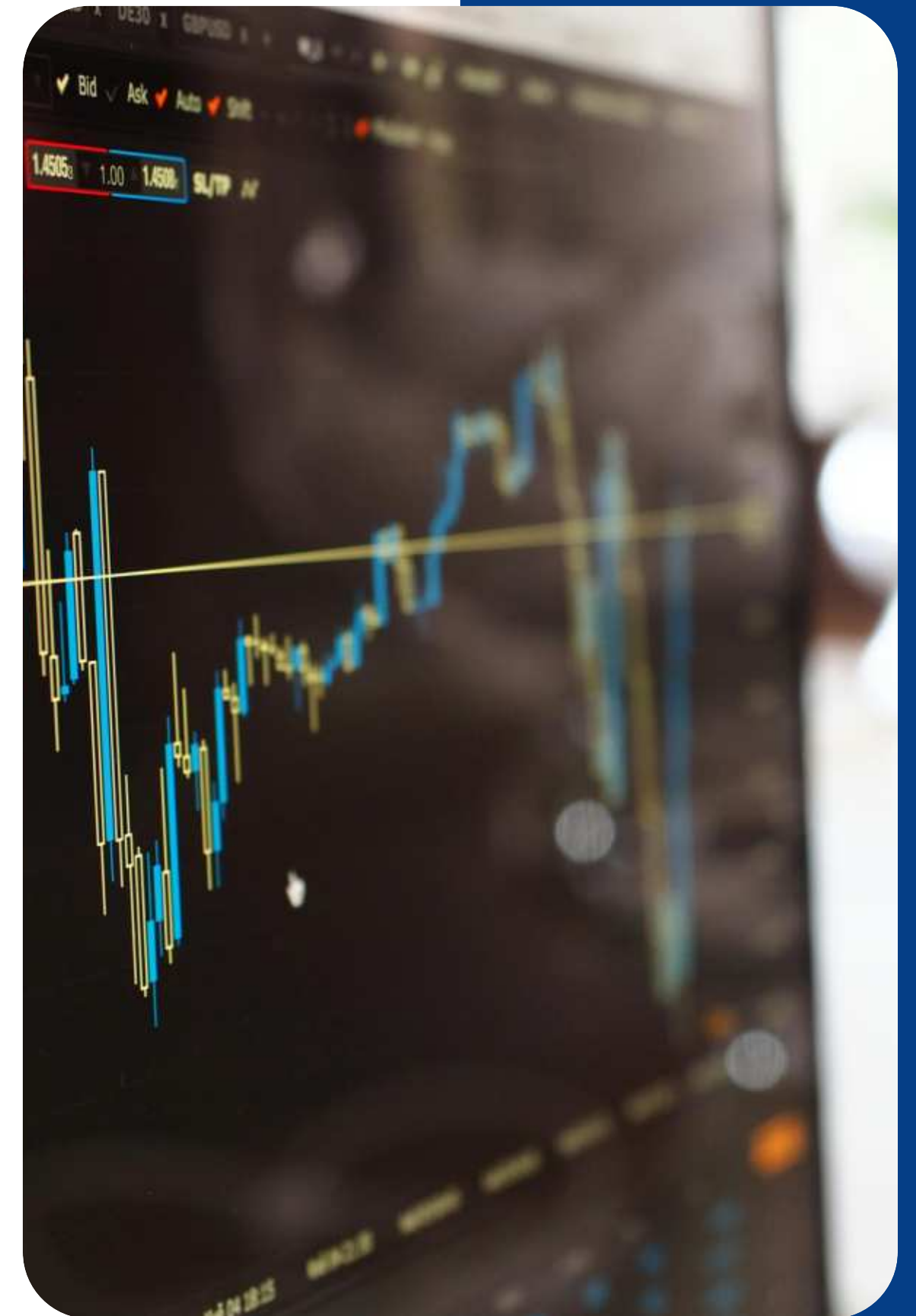
The great quotes above highlight that volunteering is so important and impactful that it is difficult to measure. However, not having these measurements of monetary value and economic impact holds back the investment in volunteering. In tough economic times decision-makers will inevitably rely on data to make difficult choices, not on sentiment, as they need to understand the return on expenditure.

The impact of volunteering on our society, as this report demonstrates, is enormous but due the nature of volunteering it is difficult to estimate accurately an economic value. Firstly, for any given volunteer role you need to find an equivalent paid role to estimate its value and then more difficultly, as the [volunteering multiplier section](#) describes, you need to estimate the impact this role has on the volunteer, the organisation the volunteering takes place for and, most importantly, the impact on society of the volunteering. The complexity of these calculations leads to very, and some would argue overly, conservative estimates of volunteering.

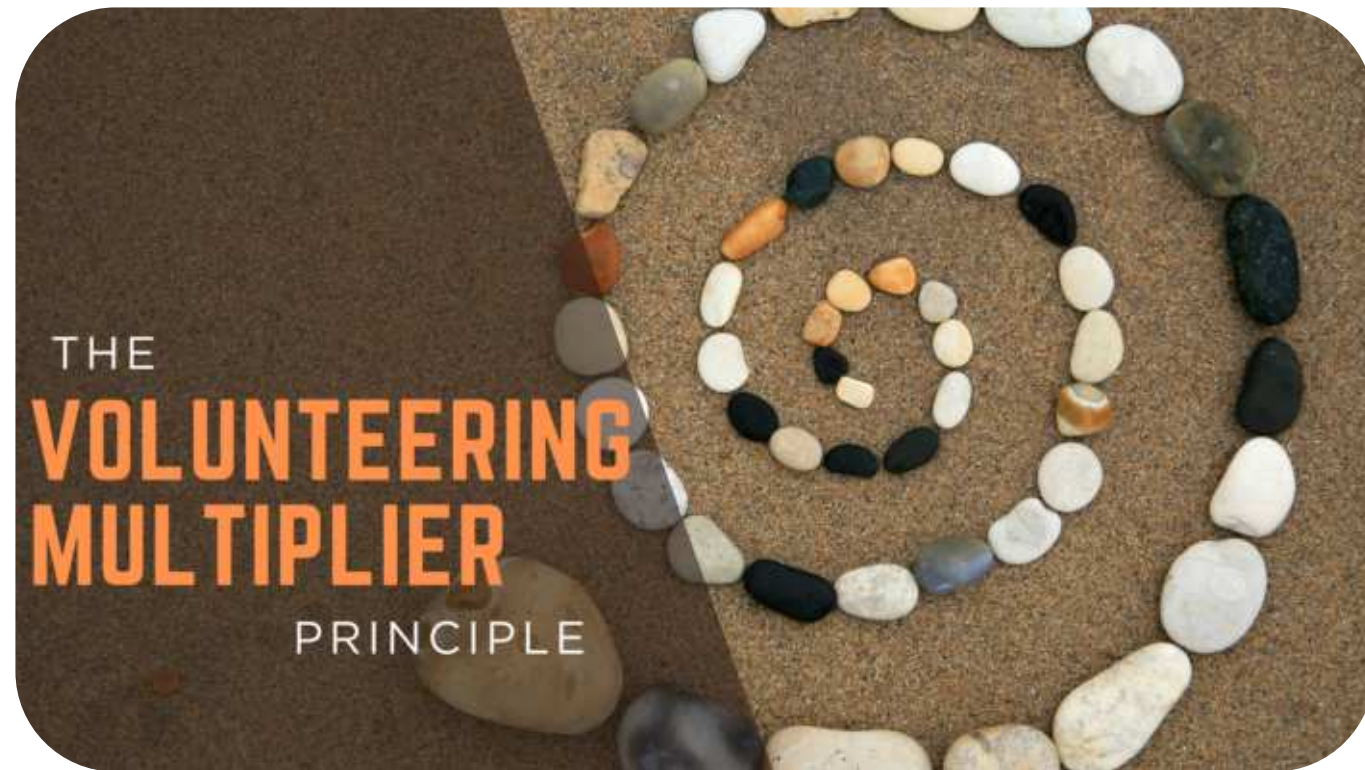
A recent conservative estimate from a study commissioned by the government concluded, *'the total economic impact of formal volunteering activity in England in 2021/22, based on the replacement cost and wellbeing benefits of volunteering, was estimated at £24.69 billion'*.<sup>1</sup> Whereas Works4U's 2023 [Monetary Value of Trustees](#) Report argues that studies undervalue volunteering in their calculations, often using minimum wage levels or less, and instead estimate the monetary value of volunteering, not including its economic benefits, at £324 billion for that year. With economic benefit included this would be around a staggering £400 billion per year.

If everyone stopped volunteering, the UK would lose, therefore, somewhere between £25-400 billion of economic and social benefit per year.

1. [Estimating the economic and social value of volunteering](#) (2025)







# Volunteering Multiplier

The **Volunteering Multiplier Principle** states that changes to the overall level of volunteering lead to a much more significant change for society and the economy. For example, if the general level of volunteering for the UK increased by 1% the knock-on multiplier effect would lead to a much larger boost to communities and wider society in ways that also benefit the economy. In contrast a 1% decrease would lead to a bigger negative impact on communities, wider society and worsen the economy.

**When an individual volunteers**, several effects will occur:

- (i) the volunteering act benefits a person, community or environment
- (ii) the volunteering benefits a community group, charity or other organisation who organised the volunteering, e.g. it helps them to do something they could not otherwise do or do more of something that benefits others
- (iii) the act of volunteering benefits the person doing the volunteering, whether it is physical or mental health, improving social and professional networks etc.

Therefore, the volunteering multiplier is achieved from the volunteering effects of (ii) and (iii).

When **assessing the general level of volunteering**, i.e. all the individuals who volunteer in a country or region, you get the same outcomes listed above. If this general level of volunteering drops then:

- (a) there is a drop in support for the community or environment taking place
- (b) community groups, charities and other organisations are less supported and so can do less or have to stop doing things they want to do to help people, i.e. their capacity drops
- (c) fewer people are getting the physical and mental health benefits from volunteering and more people are socially isolated. This has obvious knock-on negative effects with increased demand on health services as well as lower employment and productivity.

However, if the general level of volunteering increases you get the same multiplier effects of (b) and (c) but with a positive impact.



# Volunteering has Changed

Data shows that rates of formal volunteering have been declining across the UK for a few years now, but does this actually mean the desire to volunteer is declining? The short answer is no. Volunteering is not declining but the culture of volunteering has fundamentally and permanently changed.

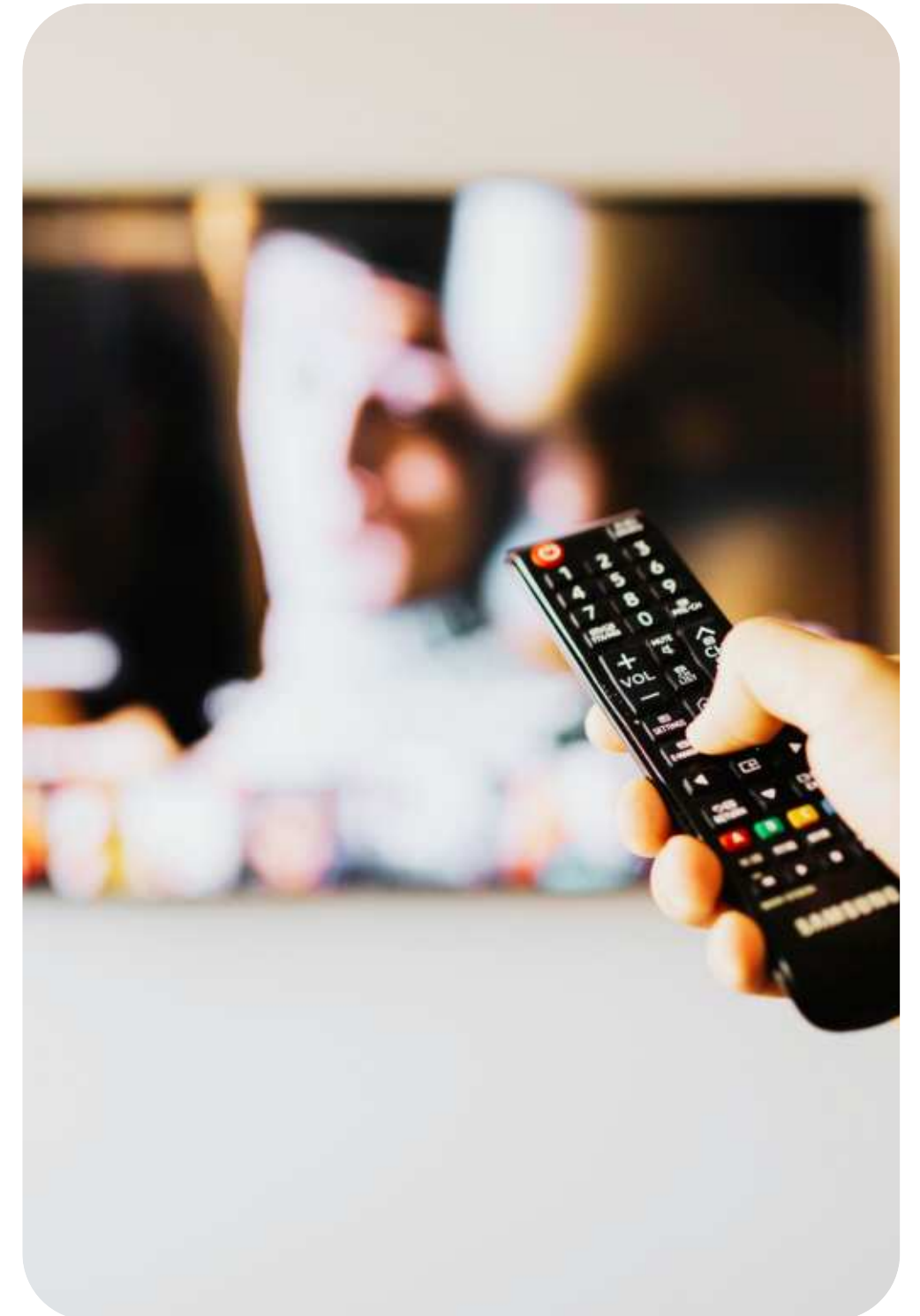
The simplest comparison to help explain is looking at the viewing figures of broadcast television. These have been in heavy decline for more than a decade now. Does this mean television is in decline? No, the way people watch television has changed and some may argue that this has increased the desire to watch television output, just not on traditional television broadcast channels.

Just as television is not in decline, it has just changed, similar is happening with volunteering. The days of a charity asking for someone to volunteer a day a week for the rest of their life are gone. People still have the strong desire to volunteer but they want to do it when it suits them, to meet their more complicated and diverse personal schedules.

People do not want to wait weeks or months to start volunteering, they want to begin straight away. Unfortunately, the voluntary and community sector is not ready, generally, for this at the moment and many volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) have moved in the opposite direction, being more safeguarding conscious and requiring longer onboarding periods for new volunteers. The result is a decline in formal traditional volunteering.

This behavioural demand for flexible volunteering is not new and started more than ten years ago, grew slowly and then accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent cost-of-living crisis. This change is here to stay and the sector has a long way to go to adapt fully. It must be noted that many organisations have adapted or are trying to adapt and are getting great results, but it is not a one-size-fits-all approach and each individual organisations needs to adapt in a way that is right for them and the resources they have (or don't have).

Looking at volunteering overall, it is not in decline, volunteering has just changed and the sector is still trying to adapt during an economically very challenging era.







## What would happen if everyone stopped volunteering?

Our national wellbeing would decline, and our economic outlook would look even more uncertain. When I was asked to answer this question, I started to reflect on our nation's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, when an impressive 12.4 million people volunteered in the first 10 months.<sup>1</sup>

In October 2021, Sajid Jarvis, the then Secretary of State for Health stated that volunteers were critical to our Covid response and recovery: 'we simply could not have managed without volunteers'. I couldn't agree more. Having run the NHS & Care Volunteer Responders programme, with NHS England and GoodSam (digital app), the programme (2020-2025) inspired 650k to step forward, 2.7 million tasks were completed and just under 220,000 clients were supported.<sup>2</sup> It delivered vital support to the NHS and the nation at a challenging time.

In 'peace time' volunteering is critical, it is not just a nice to have. Volunteers play an essential part in supporting our public services, the charity (and wider civil society) sector, and are catalysts for change; volunteering brings people together creating more cohesive less polarised communities and builds TRUST – we certainly need more of this.

But, worryingly national trends in the decline of volunteering gives us some insight into the negative impact on society; declines in volunteering rates have created at least a £38.5 bn gap over the past five years, and volunteering hours have fallen by around 400m per year (since 2019).<sup>3</sup> This sadly is against a backdrop of a rise in demand for charitable services.<sup>4</sup>

Never have we needed volunteering more as individuals, charities and communities. We must harness the willingness of ordinary people to step forward to give their time, skills and experiences to build a better Britain . To do so we must work together and make volunteering easier to access, frictionless and above all else joyous. The essentialness of volunteering in society is the driving force behind the development of our new digital volunteering platform, GoVo launching on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October. Please come join us.

Catherine Johnstone CBE  
CEO (and co-chair of Shaping the Future with Volunteering)

**Royal Voluntary Service**



1. British Future 'Our chance to reconnect' Talk/together report

2. RVS - NHS and Care Volunteer Responders

3. PBE - Civil society and volunteering: a force for growth?

4. Nottingham Trent University - 'Paying the Price' VCSE Barometer Wave 9 Report (2025).





### If everyone stopped volunteering?

Here in the UK, we have 'state services', 'private sector' and 'voluntary sector'. The state service provides public services, the private sector makes profit in its business, and the voluntary sector works not for profit but social good. All three to some extent support the others, but the voluntary sector is fundamental to the other two who would not be able to operate efficiently or effectively without the input of volunteers.

**Volunteers often deliver essential services.** Without them, these are likely to be reduced, delayed, possibly disappear. Volunteers work unpaid but often extremely effectively and efficiently due to their motivation to make a difference. Volunteers also often bring skills, perspective and enthusiasm to roles that support staff in their work. Without them these benefits would be lost.

**Paid staff** would probably have to cover the work done by volunteers leading to over work and poor morale. Or organisations would potentially have to recruit additional paid staff increasing their operational costs which could lead to closure and loss of their service completely.

**Importantly in crisis situations** such as disaster relief support would not happen. Fundraising for those situations would be severely impacted.

**Essential services** for those most in need such as food banks would be curtailed. More importantly the absence of volunteers would also impact on social connection, reduction in skill development and community cohesion. It would also impact in areas where relationships can be improved when 'professional' intervention can be difficult for service users. This is particularly relevant in areas such as addiction, criminal justice and education.

**The lack of volunteer opportunities** would impact on the wellbeing of those people who benefit socially and emotionally from volunteering, impacting on society and communities.

If volunteering was not available the impact on people, society and communities could be catastrophic.

#### Rose Abrehart

Rose has many years' experience as both a volunteer and volunteer manager, including working with peer support groups and other volunteers with small, local charities and large national ones. Here she draws on her experience to imagine a life without volunteers.





## 2. Volunteer Infrastructure

*“volunteering keeps people healthier, happier and more socially connected, so without it we would have a more lonely, isolated community. A community without volunteers would end up inventing volunteering because no one would want to live in a place like that!”*

Denise Hayward, Volunteer NOW





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Scotland?

In Scotland we are already grappling with the impact of people no longer volunteering. Between 2019 and 2023, over 335,000 people have stopped volunteering formally and our formal volunteer participation rate is at the lowest since records began (18%).<sup>1</sup> Working age adults are one of the main groups in Scotland that are stopping their volunteer activities.

At the same time, almost two thirds of Scottish third sector organisations are experiencing an increase in demand for core services – not only are there hundreds of thousands fewer volunteers to draw upon, but all these people are also no longer deriving the many varied benefits of volunteering. Volunteer recruitment and retention are consistently in the most reported issues that volunteer-involving organisations report in SCVO's Third Sector Tracker.<sup>2</sup>

If volunteer participation decreases further in Scotland, or stopped altogether, Scotland's communities would struggle to thrive. Volunteers support a range of vital activities across Scotland every single day. They provide companionship and emotional support to people who are isolated or lonely. They help us to understand and act against the many impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. They ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in society receive crucial advice and support. They provide culture, heritage and arts activities which promote creativity and connection. They lead clubs and groups which enrich the lives of our children and young people. They also support the delivery of vital public services, including responding to emergencies at sea or in our great mountain ranges.

The loss of this historically longstanding foundational behaviour would undermine progress towards a Scotland where everyone and every community can thrive. There is no community without volunteers.

Bethany Sikes

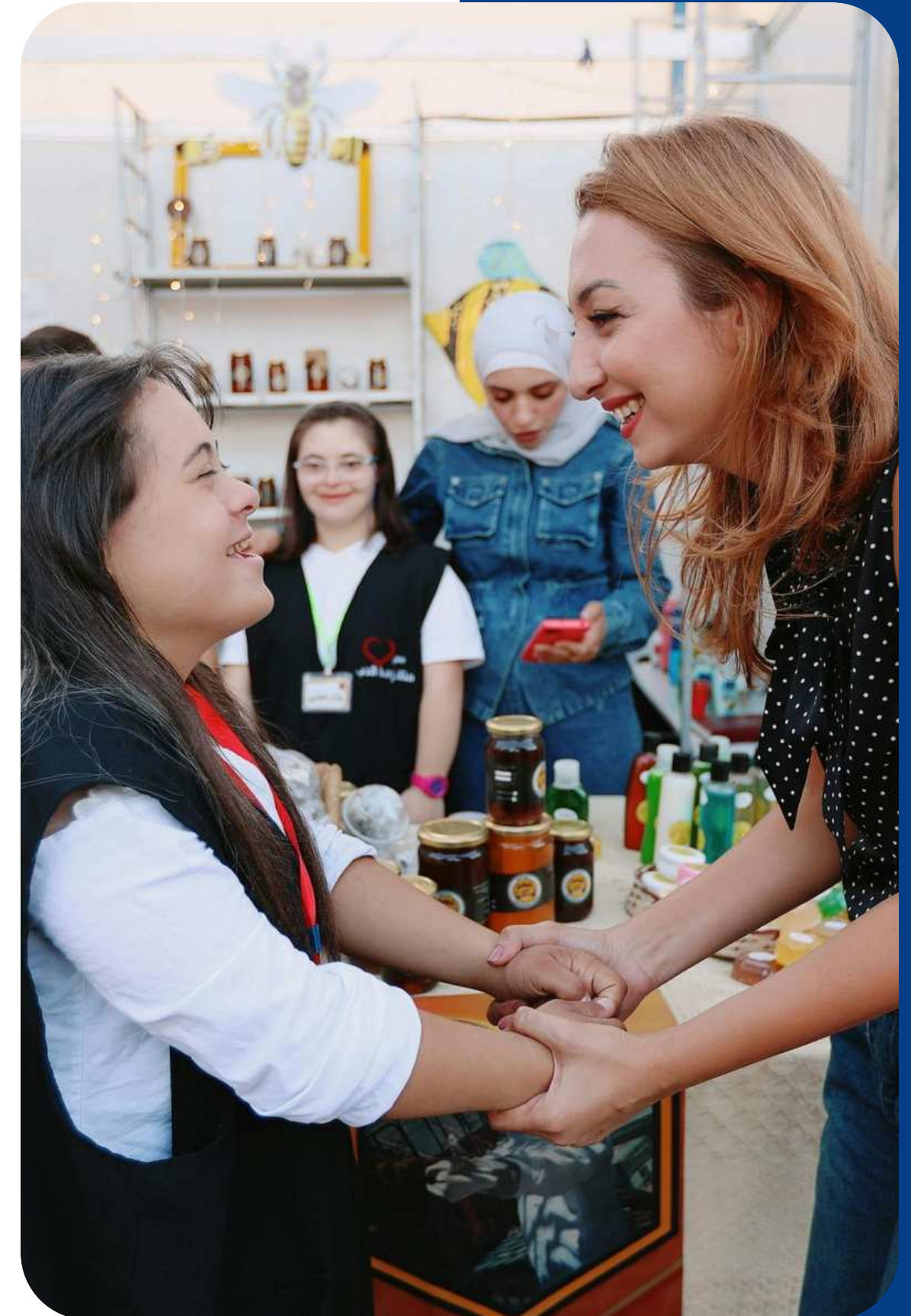
Research and Policy Manager

**Volunteer Scotland**

Further reading: 'The Current state of Scottish Volunteering'

1. Volunteering in 2023, Volunteer Scotland (2025)

2. The Cost of Living and Wellbeing Crisis: Quarterly Bulletins, Volunteer Scotland







### If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Northern Ireland?

Volunteer Now is the lead organisation for promoting and supporting volunteering across Northern Ireland. We build recognition for volunteering and celebrate the contribution volunteers make. We provide access to opportunities and encourage people to volunteer. We are a resource for volunteer involving organisations providing support on involving volunteers, governance and safeguarding.

It would not be a safe, happy, or caring place to live. Much of the richness of our life comes from volunteers.

- Volunteers are in every part of our community life, 47% of people here volunteer formally or informally
- In N Ireland 94% of youth work is done by volunteers, so without volunteers there would be no provision for young people
- Over 30,000 people are charity trustees and without these volunteers there would be no charities at all
- Churches depend on volunteers with 10% of all volunteers supporting faith-based organisations, so most church based activities would stop
- Sports organisations also rely on volunteers for coaching, leadership, organisation etc. so there would be no grass roots sport of any kind
- Mountain rescue and RNLI would stop, there would be no charity shops, services for people with disabilities would be reduced, helplines such as Childline and Samaritans would stop
- Arts and cultural activities would be massively reduced
- Events such as the North West 200, local festivals and agricultural shows would not go ahead
- The basic acts of human care such as making a meal for a sick friend or helping with catering for a wake when someone has suffered a bereavement would cease

We also know that volunteering keeps people healthier, happier and more socially connected, so without it we would have a more lonely, isolated community. A community without volunteers would end up inventing volunteering because no one would want to live in a place like that!

Denise Hayward  
Chief Executive Officer

**Volunteer NOW**





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Wales?

In Wales volunteering is at the heart of our communities and part of the Welsh identity. It always has been. We look after each other here.

If all volunteering stopped, the impact would be catastrophic. To try and answer this question, I went to the smallest borough in Wales and asked leaders what the impact would be. The data was truly eye opening.

The main finding was that over stretched statutory services would be absolutely inundated and unable to meet demand without voluntary sector partners. Sometimes it is perceived that the voluntary sector 'fills the gaps' in statutory systems. It's not like that in Wales. We deliver services and systems together as cohesive partners. Our contribution is pivotal, not a 'nice to have'.

It's not just about volunteering. Our sector employs 10% of the people in Wales. There would be widespread economic impacts as well as social ones.

In a world of increasing political uncertainty and division, volunteering and voluntary organisations are the glue that holds Welsh communities together. From people helping recover from floods and disasters, through to the promotion of positive masculinity through grassroots sport.

If all volunteering stopped, our Nation would fail. Thousands of calls for help would be left unanswered, people wouldn't be able to get to lifesaving cancer treatment, children would go hungry, loneliness and isolation would be rife, our precious Welsh language would be lost, species of plants and animals would be gone forever. It really doesn't bear thinking about.

Lindsay Cordery-Bruce  
Chief Executive

**WCVA**





## If everyone stopped volunteering in London?

At London Plus we are in the privileged position to see how London's volunteers are at the heart of the city. The value of volunteering in London is estimated to be £35.9 billion annually<sup>1</sup> and volunteers play a key role in delivering services across London and in contributing to a warm, welcoming inclusive London.

London's volunteers can be found throughout the ecosystem of voluntary and community organisations in the City, with over 24,000 registered charities - as well as in the Health and care sector where over 14,000 volunteers support the NHS across the capital<sup>2</sup>; the Metropolitan Police which includes 1570 volunteers<sup>3</sup> and in the numerous "under the radar" groups and informal support networks provided in local neighbourhoods or places of faith.

If we include those who wouldn't necessarily think of themselves as "volunteers" but who step up in moments of crisis the effects of ceasing would be even more profound. These informal helpers are the very first "first responders". The recent report from the group Survivors Against Terror included moving testimony from those who provided support, aid and comfort in the most unimaginable of circumstances on the day of the 7<sup>th</sup> July Bombings – their trauma often unrecognised during the aftermath. More recently during the COVID crisis in London our report "*Tales of Covid*" highlighted that volunteers were quite literally a lifeline for vulnerable residents. An example in the report includes Bexley residents who printed and distributed 130,000 leaflets to reach those who needed help. One elderly resident told a volunteer that: "If you hadn't put that leaflet through my door, I would have starved to death."<sup>4</sup> Through our role in building London's resilience we seek to improve how volunteers are engaged and supported during times of crisis.

What would happen if everyone in London stopped volunteering? There's no doubt that essential services would suffer but beyond that our city would be left poorer in every way.

Geethika Jayatilaka

Chief Executive

**London Plus**

1. Just Published, October 2023: The Monetary Value of Trustees - Volunteer Centre Camden

2. London home to the most NHS volunteers in the UK - NHS England

3. Written questions and answers - UK Parliament

4. Tales of Covid - London Plus

## Tales of Covid

By Simon Petherick  
for London Plus

### About London Plus

London Plus champions London's charities and community groups contributing to a united, thriving and resilient London. London Plus convenes and hosts a London-wide network for Volunteer Centres and also convenes the London Volunteering Strategy Group.





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Newcastle?

If all volunteering - both formal and informal - were to cease tomorrow and remain halted indefinitely, the consequences would be vast and deeply disruptive across nearly every sector of society.

Statutory services would be significantly affected, as charities would no longer be able to meet the needs of the communities they support. Without volunteers, VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) organisations would struggle to deliver services, and existing funding would be insufficient to bridge the gap.

It is important to recognise that VCSE groups are not merely part of a "third sector" - they are a vital component of our social infrastructure.

The absence of volunteers would lead to:

- Increased social isolation and a decline in community cohesion
- Fewer cultural and recreational opportunities
- Erosion of civic trust and engagement
- A rise in food poverty and food waste
- Greater pressure on homelessness and welfare services

These challenges would place an unsustainable burden on government services, many of which may not be equipped—or willing—to absorb the additional demand.

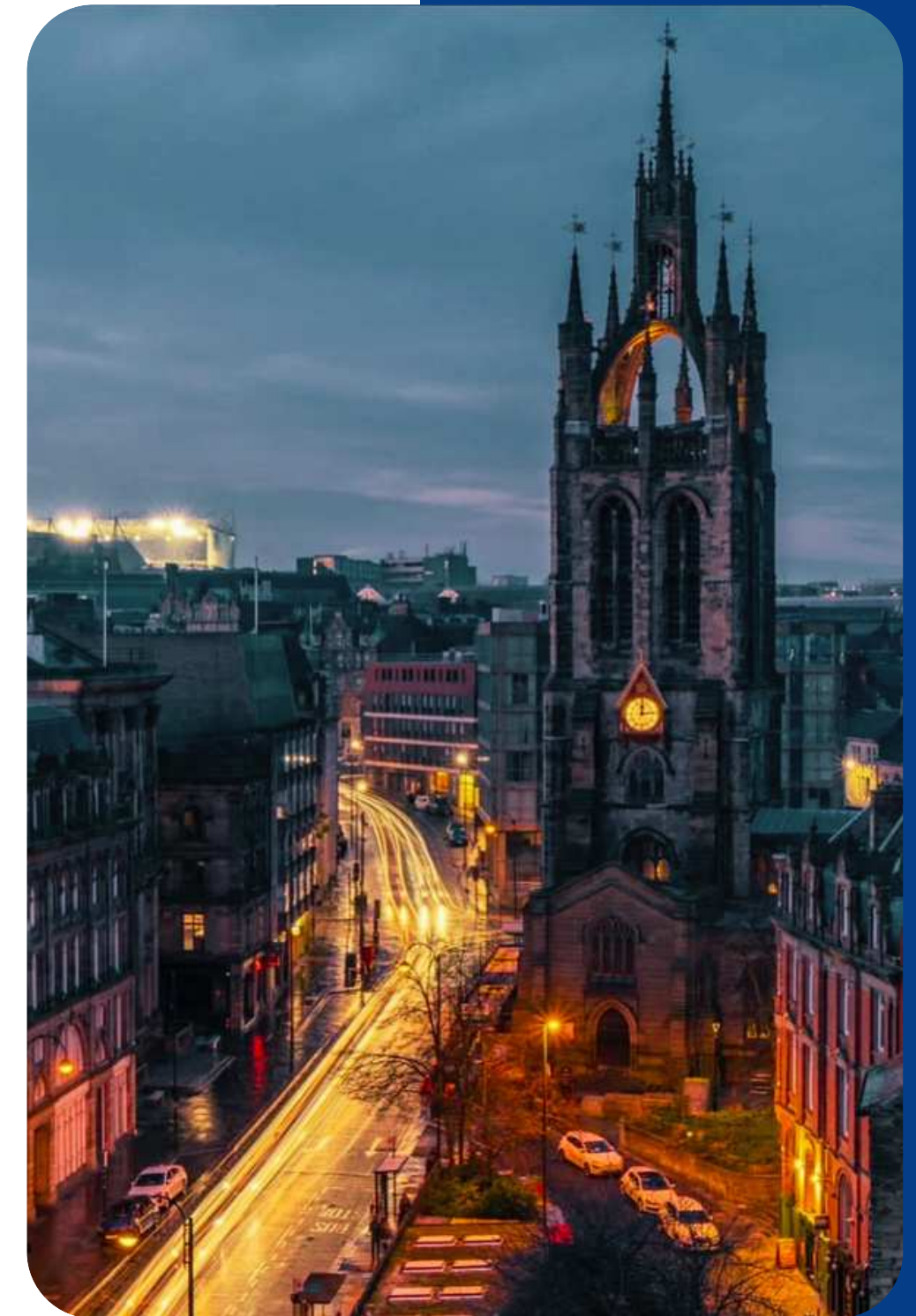
Marginalised communities, including asylum seekers, would be particularly affected. The loss of language support, wellbeing services, and community integration efforts would likely result in increased pressure on the NHS and other public health services.

Strategic staff within charities and public services would face burnout, as they lack the capacity to absorb the increased workload caused by the absence of volunteers.

The domino effect would be catastrophic. The role of charities in society cannot be underestimated, and while volunteers may be unpaid, their contribution is invaluable and irreplaceable.

Karen Watson

**Volunteer Centre Newcastle**



Credit: [Lang Shot Photography](#)



**Spark Somerset** are an infrastructure charity, supporting and championing local voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities.

They do this through the provision of information and advice, training, and forums, and by sharing expertise, building partnerships, inspiring social action, and advocating on the sector's behalf at local and national level.

They are proud to be one of just 15 areas in the country to be awarded Volunteering for Health funding. This has enabled them to invest in volunteering as a key part of the health and social care landscape in Somerset. While some organisations may not consider health as their core mission, almost every volunteer-involving group contributes to the wellbeing of their communities.

At the heart of this initiative, they are currently developing a Somerset Vision for Volunteering. Working alongside voluntary organisations, local councils, the NHS, and volunteers, their goal is to make volunteering easier to access, truly valued and accessible to all.

## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Somerset?

If all volunteering in Somerset were to stop tomorrow - both formal and informal - the consequences would be immediate and deeply felt across every part of the community.

Volunteers are the heart of many voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, yet 69% of organisations in the county already report not having enough.<sup>1</sup> They support a wide range of activities, from health and social care to education, community cohesion, awareness-raising, and fundraising. Without volunteers, many groups and charities would struggle to operate.

In the health and social care sectors, volunteers play a particularly vital role: supporting patients, easing pressure on staff, and helping people transition safely back into their communities. A loss of volunteers would place additional strain on already overstretched statutory services and could lead to increased isolation and poorer outcomes for vulnerable individuals.

The human cost would also be significant. For many, volunteering provides an important sense of purpose, wellbeing and connection. In recent research, we spoke with individuals about what volunteering means to them. Adam, who found meaning and recovery after illness, and Jane, who used volunteering to build confidence and return to paid work, illustrate how central volunteering is to personal health and development. Removing these opportunities would undermine wellbeing, increase social isolation, and reduce chances to develop life and employment skills.

Beyond formal settings, informal volunteering such as neighbours checking in on each other, running errands, or helping a local community event is essential. Its disappearance would leave many people, especially in rural areas, without support. Schools, libraries, food banks, and community centres would also feel the loss, as many depend on volunteers to function effectively.

The impact wouldn't just be social. Volunteering contributes significant value to the local economy, not only by delivering services but by improving wellbeing, building skills, and strengthening community ties. Its absence would create gaps that public services and paid staff couldn't fill.

If volunteering stopped, Somerset would feel it everywhere—from hospital wards to village halls—and the effects would be long-lasting.

### **Spark Somerset**

1. Wonder Insight, 2025. Spark Somerset Scoping Research: Volunteering in Somerset Research Findings



## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Norfolk?

Everyday life without volunteering would be almost unrecognisable!

Without ushers, 'friends groups', and helpers many arts and cultural organisations would reduce their activities or close down.

Without coaches and referees most sporting activities would cease.

Hospitals would be soulless places with no one to welcome or direct visitors, provide refreshments, friendly visits or hospital radio, and without volunteer drivers many people would struggle to get to appointments.

The justice system would collapse without magistrates and court volunteers.

Schools could become the fiefdoms of head teachers without governors to oversee activities, and without PTA groups, voluntary reading schemes and out of school clubs, schools would be characterless institutions limiting the rounded education of children.

Without befrienders, hospice helpers, neighbourhood groups, and Watch schemes the elderly, unwell and vulnerable would become more isolated, scared and lonely.

And without trustees, board members, management committee members and fundraising groups all Norfolk's 3000+ charities, hundreds of social enterprises and thousands of grassroots community organisations would have to pack up. Village halls, community centres, churches and mosques, food banks and social supermarkets would be forced to close down.

The impact on the quality of life and the delivery of services to the entire community would be enormous. In monetary terms this voluntary contribution of time and expertise equates to well over £100 million each year in Norfolk.

At Voluntary Norfolk we work every day to support and encourage volunteering – not only because it benefits communities, participants and service users but because it also improves the health and wellbeing of those who volunteer. Through [www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk) we bring together the organisations that need volunteers with those who want to volunteer – since it launched three years ago over 10,000 people have registered to become a volunteer. In the last 12 months that number increased by 79% and applications for volunteering opportunities almost doubled. But the need grows, too, as rising costs impact in so many ways and VCSEs face unprecedented challenges.

Nicky Stainton

Joint Head of VCSE Sector Support (Volunteering)

**Voluntary Norfolk**

**VOLUNTARY  
NORFOLK**





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Camden?

Volunteering is the glue that holds everything together in Camden.

There is no voluntary sector without volunteers. It sounds obvious but is often forgotten and it means without volunteers these organisations would only be able to deliver a small proportion of their services. Most voluntary sector organisations have far more volunteers than staff who carry out a multitude of activities and tasks which otherwise would not be available. No volunteers would mean far fewer service users and beneficiaries in Camden would not be supported.

It's not only service users who benefit from volunteering but also wildlife, nature etc. are improved from volunteer engagement. In addition, without volunteering people would have less of an opportunity to play a part in their local community, gain new skills, meet new people and contribute to something that feels purposeful. If people take a smaller role in their community, the community often loses some of the social glue that holds it together. Here are just a few practical examples:

- **Fewer services get provided** – things like food banks, tutoring programmes, park clean-ups, and local events may shrink or disappear without volunteer contribution
- **Weaker social bonds** – volunteering is often how neighbours meet and build trust; without it, people can feel less connected and more isolated
- **More pressure on paid staff and local authority** – if volunteers aren't there, organisations either have to hire more people (which costs money) or cut back on programmes
- **Reduced local pride and engagement** – without shared community projects, people may feel less ownership over local issues and less likely to get involved in decision-making
- **Vulnerability during crises** – in emergencies like the Chalcots estate evacuation or Covid-19, volunteer networks are often first to mobilise; without them, recovery can be slower and more difficult

As the lead volunteering organisation for the London Borough of Camden, our role is instrumental in making sure that volunteering in Camden is accessible, promoted and celebrated. Through a range of services we enable and support volunteer involving organisations to maximise their capacity and to be able to work effectively with volunteers. We make sure that people who want to volunteer in Camden can find the right volunteering role for them.

Shafia Begam and Sheila Norris

**Volunteer Centre Camden**



One of Volunteer Centre Camden's regular Volunteer Fairs





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in Buckinghamshire?

It's hard to imagine a world without volunteers. Our society is upheld by the altruism of volunteering, often unseen and taken for granted. Volunteer impact is interwoven across every corner of society; from neighbours helping each other, running grassroots sports clubs and youth work, driving environmental action, keeping our green spaces clean, governing our schools, supporting our justice system, to delivering vital services like dementia and mental health support.

Buckinghamshire's 47,000 volunteers contribute 3.4million hours - the equivalent of £58.8million - to the local economy.<sup>1</sup> In reality this figure is significantly higher when accounting for the depth and responsibility of volunteer roles, such as charity chairs and trustees; and the hundreds of volunteers working in education, schools, the NHS and public sector not currently captured.

Volunteers play a crucial role in strong communities, improving social connection and wellbeing, empowering people to be part of community life, and are a lifeline to our most vulnerable.

Many charities in Buckinghamshire rely on volunteers to deliver services and support their organisations to operate.

If everyone stopped volunteering, our charities and volunteer run groups would struggle to exist. There would be additional strain on public sector services like our NHS, libraries and waste services who rely on volunteers for additional capacity. Demand for already stretched health and social care services would increase as the impact to people's health and access to community support reduces. Groups, support and social activities that keep people connected, build additional skills and improve health and wellbeing wouldn't exist and there would be a negative impact on skills and pathways to employment.

Buckinghamshire would lose not just manpower, but heart, resilience, and the glue that binds its communities together.

That's why Community Impact Bucks is championing volunteering through Volunteer Bucks, a National Lottery funded inclusive volunteering programme. Our ambition is big but simple - to make volunteering easier, more inclusive, and more rewarding for everyone in Bucks regardless of background or experience to keep our society thriving.

Kate Walker

Chief Executive

**Community Impact Bucks**

<sup>1</sup> BOB VCSE Health Alliance - The contribution of the VCSE sector to health and social wellbeing in Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, June 2023.





## 3. Trustees

***'A world without trustees is a world without charities'***

Penny Wilson







# Trustees

The role of the charity trustee is quite simply essential for the charity sector to function. The roughly 170,000 charities in the United Kingdom are simply not be able to function without a working board of volunteer directors.

Charity trustees are legally responsible for governing and managing a charity. They set the charity's strategic direction, ensure it's well-run, and make sure it achieves its goals within the legal and regulatory framework. Essentially, they act as the guardians of the charity's purpose and assets.

Despite their critical role to the functioning of the sector, the societal and economic importance and contribution of these roughly one million individuals are often undervalued.

Works4U's pioneering 2023 report '*Monetary Value of Trustees*' gives a realistic monetary value for the role of trustees. Through finding an appropriate equivalent paid role it estimates the monetary value of trustees in England and Wales to be £33.17 billion. Therefore, without any volunteers the charity sector would lose over £33bn of support, roughly equal to 1.7% of GDP.





## What if there were no trustees?

In the UK, around a million people volunteer their time as charity trustees. These volunteers work together on boards of trustees to lead charities and decide how they are run.

The efforts of trustees are mostly unsung and certainly under-appreciated. Yet without them, the charity sector as we know it simply wouldn't exist.

At the heart of every charity lies a principle: that a group of volunteers, with no expectation of personal gain, takes responsibility for ensuring the charity serves its beneficiaries. In actual fact, being a trustee is one of the most fulfilling things someone can do with their time. But we do it for love, not money.

A world without trustees is a world without charities. That would mean that most food banks, theatres, animal rescue homes, village halls, lunch clubs, health research projects, befriending groups, safety campaigns, nature reserves, historic buildings and thousands of other projects wouldn't exist. Society as we know it, where people care deeply for each other and our wider environment, would unravel.

That's not a world I want to live in.

Penny Wilson

Penny's recommended further reading and useful links:

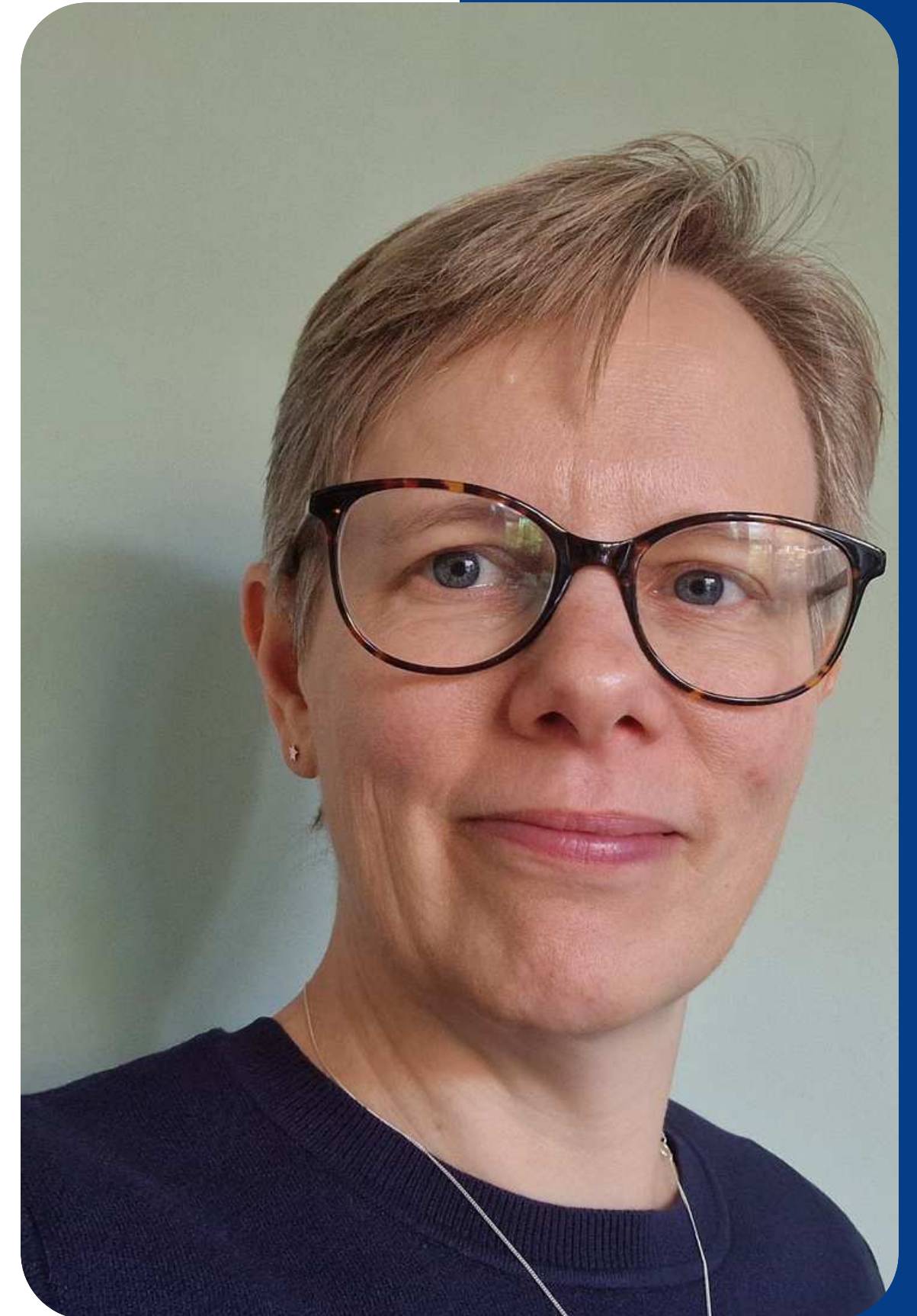
[Board Racial Diversity UK](#)

[Young Trustees Movement](#)

[Reach Volunteering](#)

[Association of Chairs](#)

[Eastside People Festival of Trusteeship 2025](#)





## 4. Health & Care

***“For both unpaid carers and those they care for, it would be catastrophic if volunteering stopped tomorrow”***

Helen Walker, Carers UK







## Health & Care

An estimated 100,000 volunteers contribute to NHS organisations and thousands more support through the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.<sup>1</sup>

If all volunteers stopped volunteering there would be an immediate and significant effect to health and care across the country. As Clive Pankhurt from University College London Hospitals comments in this section, *‘stopping volunteering would bring about an immediate decline in our patient experience.’*

Helpforce report their evaluations show *‘87% of healthcare staff agree that volunteer support improves the quality of care they are able to provide’*. CEO Amerjit Chohan states, *‘without healthcare volunteering programmes hospital waiting lists over the past three years would inevitably have been even longer, hospital re-admission rates would have been higher, and morale among the healthcare workforce would have been lower.’*

Volunteers carry out significant roles in health and care outside of formal medical setting and if they were to stop it would have a huge negative impact. Helen Walker from Carers UK comments, *‘for both unpaid carers and those they care for, it would be catastrophic if volunteering stopped tomorrow’* and that Carers UK volunteers *‘are improving lives significantly by raising awareness of caring, connecting carers with practical, financial and emotional support – including guidance in the workplace - and supporting carers directly.’*

In both formal and informal action, volunteers play such a critical role in health and care that if they all stopped volunteering, immediate and expensive action would need to take place to ensure the welfare of the population was maintained.

<sup>1</sup> NHS England - [Future Developments in NHS Volunteering](#)





## If all volunteers stopped volunteering in health?

**Helpforce** has amassed a wealth of evidence, from its work with over 100 NHS and community organisations, demonstrating the measurable impact that volunteers from all walks of life have on patients and staff. And we mustn't forget the positive benefits felt by volunteers themselves – whether it's overcoming isolation, learning fresh skills, or opening up potential new career opportunities.

Our evaluations show that:

- 87% of healthcare staff agree that volunteer support improves the quality of care they are able to provide
- 78% of staff agree that volunteers improve their working lives
- When volunteers support nurses and healthcare assistants, patients can be discharged 44 minutes sooner on average

Without healthcare volunteering programmes hospital waiting lists over the past three years would inevitably have been even longer, hospital re-admission rates would have been higher, and morale among the healthcare workforce would have been lower.

There's also the economic benefit of volunteering to consider. Helpforce's Volunteer to Career programme helps people transition from volunteering roles to permanent healthcare careers or training. With around 107,000 NHS secondary care roles in England currently vacant and the annual cost of using agency and bank staff - who do additional shifts at their own or a nearby hospital to earn extra money - having risen to more than £10 billion, investment in these kinds of initiatives is a no-brainer.

Helpforce is delighted to see the vital role of volunteers recognised in the Government's new NHS 10-Year Health Plan – an important indication that healthcare volunteering has shifted from being seen as a 'nice to have' to a strategic imperative.

Amerjit Chohan

CEO

**Helpforce**

### About Helpforce

Transforming healthcare volunteering - Guided by its vision of a nation where volunteering is integral to healthcare at its very best, it partners with hundreds of UK healthcare organisations – unleashing the power of volunteers to deliver measurable benefits for patients, staff, and service users.



# University College London Hospitals

## What if everyone stopped volunteering in hospitals?

Stopping volunteering would bring about an immediate decline in our patient experience.

Whilst our clinical care would remain excellent, it would be harder for many people to access our services, especially those who need extra help. Volunteers have the gift of time which is becoming increasingly stretched within healthcare. It is also often the human bits that make or break someone's healthcare experience, the friendly person who meets you and helps you check in, the volunteer who has a chat at the bedside. Increasingly people do not have any visitors, and that volunteer may be the only non-clinical person someone talks with that day.

Then there would be an increase in social problems as a result of people who were volunteering stopping. Volunteering is a two-way exchange and a central part of many people's lives.

Many people volunteer for reasons such as increasing their social networks or reducing isolation, having some structure in their week or just getting out the house. Others use it to build skills, improve their communication skills or build confidence. Many people use volunteering as a stepping stone into paid work. Younger volunteers may be wanting to see if they want a career in the NHS and getting experience for med school applications. This would all stop, creating many problems that would be expensive for the state to fix!

Clive Pankhurst

Trust Lead for Volunteer Services

**University College London Hospitals**

**UCLH**

750 people volunteered  
at UCLH during 2024-25







## If everyone stopped volunteering?

Community CVS is an infrastructure organisation and the voluntary sector lead for Blackburn with Darwen and we would like to give a perspective on people with lived experience.

For the last ten years, we have been delivering a commissioned service via our local council public health department to develop volunteering opportunities for people in drug and alcohol treatment and those leaving prison.

The Fast 4WD project was started using evidence from our research that many people who were in drug and alcohol treatment wanted to volunteer but were being blocked by institutional and personal barriers. Over the last ten years, we have enabled over 600 people in treatment and people leaving prison to be volunteering in their community.

The overwhelming message we get about the importance of volunteering for them is that for the first time in their lives, they are treated as someone who is valuable to society rather than being passed from pillar to post and continuously seen as a problem and worthless as an individual. Without volunteering, many of these people said they would have been close to taking their own lives, have deteriorating mental health, would go back into using and likely further offending in relation to this.

I can honestly say that these people have been the very best of our volunteers who have gone above and beyond what you would expect of an individual. Moreover, this has created strong ripple effects through the creation of our large cohort of 'recovery support volunteers'— these are people with lived experience of drug and alcohol issues or with offending histories who go on to support others into volunteering.

So the power of making someone feel valued and worthwhile through giving them a volunteer role added to the help they are giving in the community is incalculable.

Kate Lee

Strategic Volunteering Lead

**Community CVS (Blackburn with Darwen)**



## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

For both unpaid carers and those they care for, it would be catastrophic if volunteering stopped tomorrow. While unpaid caring itself isn't volunteering, Carers UK volunteers are improving lives significantly by raising awareness of caring, connecting carers with practical, financial and emotional support – including guidance in the workplace - and supporting carers directly.

Carers UK currently has 550 volunteers in a range of community, workplace and online roles. The majority of our volunteers are unpaid carers themselves and use their expertise and experience to help achieve our vision of a society that recognises, values and supports carers. In doing this, some volunteers contribute to our research and partnerships, and get involved in campaigning for better rights for carers. They also help shape public services by sharing their lived experience.

If volunteering stopped tomorrow, all these efforts would collapse, social inequality would grow and access to employment would be at risk. Many carers would not be able to access the support they need, and we would see an increase in isolation and loneliness, as well as more carers experiencing mental and physical health problems.

There is plenty of research around the increase in life satisfaction for those who volunteer, including finding a sense of belonging and fulfilment. In the 2023 Carers UK volunteer engagement survey, one volunteer said: *“I have found it empowering, healing and rewarding to be able to share my caring story and experience with others. I have enjoyed being able to give back and hopefully help other carers.”*

In April 2025, Carers UK was delighted to receive the Investing in Volunteers accreditation which highlighted how our volunteers are so passionate about making life better for carers and find their roles so rewarding.

Helen Walker  
Chief Executive

### **Carers UK**

For more information about volunteering with Carers UK please visit: **Volunteer with us**

### **Unpaid Carers & Volunteers**

Although both volunteers and unpaid carers give their time without financial compensation, unpaid carers are not considered to be volunteers. Volunteering is an act of free will, whereas many unpaid carers, often friends and family, do not have a choice about the care they provide. This is despite the Care Act 2014 making clear that carers should have a choice about the care they are willing and able to provide, following a Carer's Assessment.





## 5. Law & Justice

*“Volunteers keep justice alive in places where it is needed most. It’s important that they do: only together can we build a just and equal society where everyone’s rights are protected.”*

Law Centres Network







## Law & Justice

When people think of volunteering, law and justice is not an area that often comes to mind, yet volunteers play a key role in how law and justice operates in the UK. Without these volunteers our justice system would very quickly grind to a halt and those without financial means would not have fair access.

Rebecca Wilkinson of LawWorks explains how *‘pro bono legal support can be life-changing; not only for individuals facing housing disputes, employment challenges, family breakdowns, or barriers to accessing welfare, but also for the not-for-profit organisations that form the backbone of civil society’*.

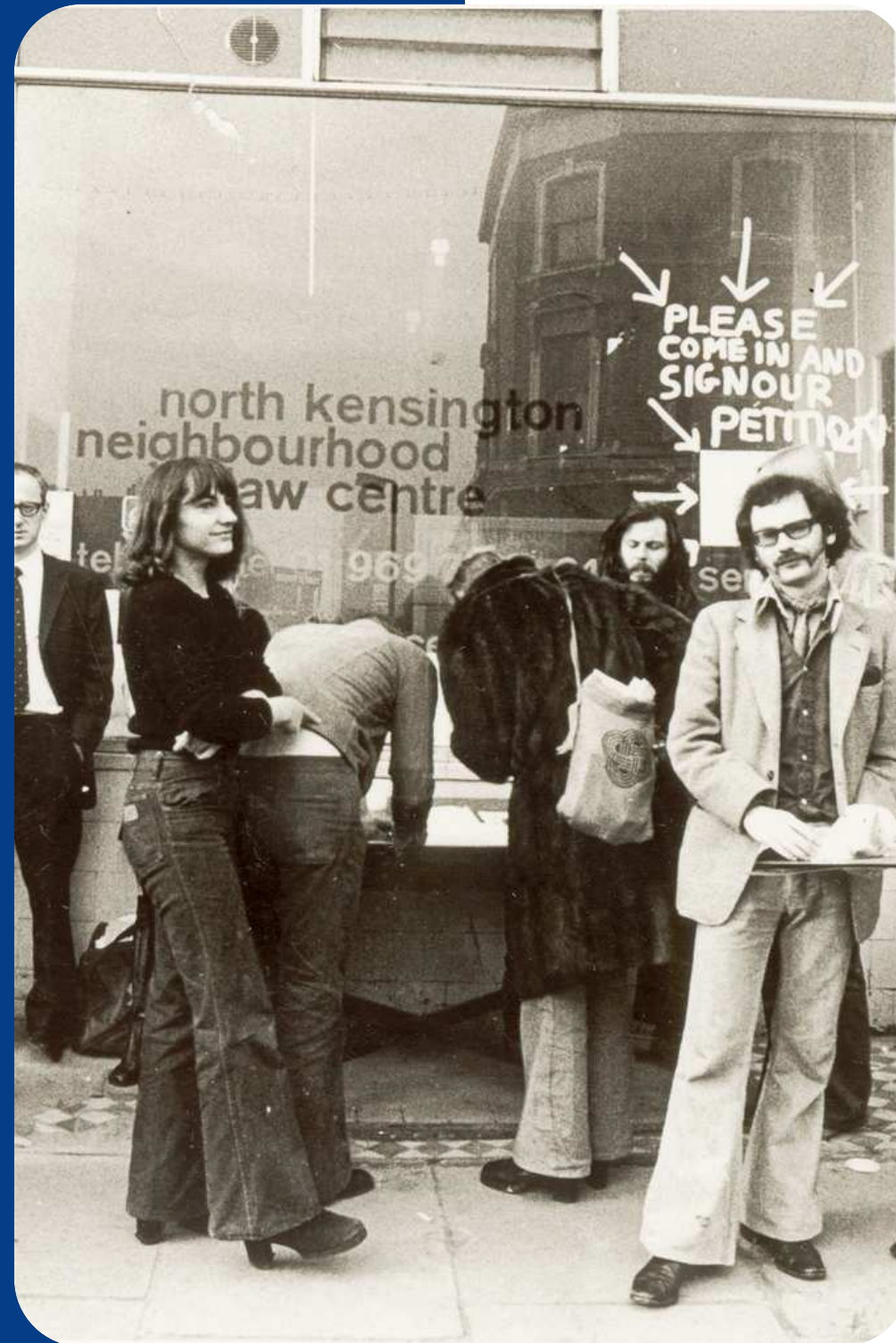
The Law Centres Network states, *‘if everyone volunteering in Law Centres were to stop, the engine driving justice in the community would stall. Before Law Centres, justice was out of reach for most people who could not afford a lawyer.’*

As of April 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 there were 14,636 Magistrates (also known as Justices of the Peace) in England and Wales, all volunteers, providing a total of least 190,269 days of volunteering, to hear a variety of cases in our courts. Magistrates sit in the Magistrates’ courts, dealing with criminal and civil proceedings, or the Family Court, or both.

Volunteers play a key role in the police and Rebecca Pritchard from the Met Police explains, *‘Volunteering is not a ‘nice to have’ it is part of the backbone of policing in London. Without it, the Met, and the communities we serve, would feel the loss instantly.’*

Without volunteers carrying out their role in law and justice the enormous scale of negative consequences and their inevitable knock on impacts for society are difficult to imagine, but it is easy to see how significant they would be. The government would need to step in immediately at huge costs to ensure we retain law, order and justice.





Credit: Law Centres Network

### If all volunteers stopped volunteering?

If everyone volunteering in Law Centres were to stop, the engine driving justice in the community would stall.

Before Law Centres, justice was out of reach for most people who could not afford a lawyer. In the 1970s, supported by volunteers, the first Law Centre lawyers took a bold step by bringing law into the community.

Today, volunteers are central to how Law Centres operate. They help them run smoothly by performing a variety of roles, from triaging cases to providing admin support. Volunteer lawyers expand Law Centres' capacity through pro bono legal clinics: enabling Law Centres to help more people over longer hours, and in more locations. Law Centre trustees, whose role is voluntary, too, offer oversight, community representation and bring a diverse range of expertise.

But more than that, volunteers help the Law Centres movement to grow. Many Law Centre staff members started out as volunteers. Some still volunteer to set up new Law Centres while working in others.

If everyone volunteering in Law Centres were to stop, our movement would lose a key component. Volunteers keep justice alive in places where it is needed most. It's important that they do: only together can we build a just and equal society where everyone's rights are protected.

See how you can [get involved](#).

### Law Centres Network





## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

Volunteers are not a “nice to have” – they are vital to the way the Met serves London. If every volunteer stopped tomorrow, the impact would be immediate, visible, and costly.

Take the **Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC)** – 1,100 volunteer police officers, the size of a small police force in their own right. In 2024, they gave over 329,000 hours of policing; saving the Met the equivalent of £15.4 million. They operate to high professional standards supported centrally by just three staff working alongside the all-volunteer Chief Officer Group. Without them, vast areas of operational policing would lose critical capacity overnight.

Then there are our **Community Based Volunteers (CBVs)** and **Police Support Volunteers (PSVs)**, who follow the Commissioner’s ‘New Met for London’ vision, working side-by-side with uniformed officers in the communities we serve. They break down barriers, engaging with people who might avoid a police uniform but feel comfortable approaching a CBV. They reflect the diversity of London, from 18-year-old students to 80-year-old retirees, including pilots, legal professionals, business owners, medics, and former CEOs. Nearly 50 languages are spoken among them, allowing bespoke deployments that increase confidence, reduce crime, and build trust in targeted communities. Their contribution is so valued it now features on university course curriculums across London.

Beyond this, around 5,000 other adult volunteers deliver 70,000 hours each year, worth £1.7 million in savings. They represent the Met in neighbourhoods, Royal Parks, Counter Terrorism operations, cybercrime units, and frontline policing. They provide a non-uniformed face to the public, offering crime prevention advice, supporting reassurance patrols, conducting weapons sweeps, and even “stooging” for training – creating realistic scenarios without pulling officers away from duty. Many bring specialist skills, particularly in cybercrime, that the Met would otherwise have to buy in at significant cost.

If all these volunteers walked away, London would lose hundreds of officer-equivalents in capacity, specialist expertise would vanish, community confidence would drop, and the Met would face tens of millions in extra costs.

Volunteering is not a ‘nice to have’ it is part of the backbone of policing in London. Without it, the Met, and the communities we serve, would feel the loss instantly.

Rebecca Pritchard

Head of Volunteering and The London Safety Centre

**Metropolitan Police** - Find out more about the many volunteer roles at the Metropolitan Police [here](#).



Credit: [Met Police](#)





## If everyone stopped volunteering in our justice system?

If volunteering stopped tomorrow, the consequences would be profound and deeply felt across our justice system.

At LawWorks, the Solicitors Pro Bono Charity, we've spent the past 28 years witnessing how pro bono legal support can be life-changing; not only for individuals facing housing disputes, employment challenges, family breakdowns, or barriers to accessing welfare, but also for the not-for-profit organisations that form the backbone of civil society.

Each year, through LawWorks, volunteer solicitors support over 300 charities and community groups, helping them navigate legal complexities so they can focus on delivering vital services, as well as supporting a network of 300 pro bono legal clinics across England & Wales. Without this support, thousands of individuals and not-for-profits would be left without recourse to justice.

We deeply value the solicitors who generously give up their time to volunteer and their expertise and compassion is at the heart of our work. We all recognise that pro bono is not a replacement for legal aid, but it fills critical gaps where public provision falls short. It is a lifeline for those who cannot afford legal representation and yet face life-altering legal challenges. If all volunteering ceased, the ripple effects would extend far beyond law, seeping into health, housing, education, and community resilience. Vulnerable individuals would be left isolated, and injustices would go unchallenged.

Volunteering is the quiet infrastructure that binds our communities together. Its absence would expose the fragility of systems that rely on civic duty and goodwill.

This report is a timely reminder: volunteering is not optional, it is essential. We must invest in it, champion it, and ensure it thrives.

Rebecca Wilkinson  
CEO

**LawWorks**



## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

Headline figures are that, collectively all our volunteers which include the Special Constabulary, Police Support Volunteers (PSV's) – cadet leaders, chaplains, and everything in between – have provided over 27,500 hrs to us as an organisation in the last year (01/08/2024 – 31/07/2025).

But as I led with, these figures are only the headlines. Behind these fantastic numbers are deeper breakdowns – such as 2,800hrs of cadet leader support, the benefit of such means that we can run a fantastic police cadet programme investing care, time and experience into young adults that would otherwise not have this level of support and opportunity.

1,300 hrs of chaplaincy time, supporting staff and officers, quietly and without fuss, helping us with the wellbeing of our workforce who can be in some very trauma heavy and stressful roles.

Our PSV's assist with roles as varied as digital investigation, child exploitation, missing persons, vehicle inventory and casualty reduction with this list being by no means exhaustive.

The Special Constabulary has been in existence for over 175 years, warranted officers who have the same powers as paid ones – so a resource that any force would not want to be without. Over 19,800 hours have been volunteered for us in the last year by them – with response policing being over a third of that.

Obviously, hours are something that are quantitative and can quickly represent what Derbyshire Constabulary would lose. From a qualitative perspective though, the additional and transferable skills and different perspectives people from non-policing background bring, make us a much more well-rounded force and these viewpoints and experience cannot be underestimated.

If we lost all the above – we would HAVE to carry on because we are a public service, but the impact to our community which we serve, would be immeasurable.

Sarah Robbins

Citizens in Policing Support & Development

**Derbyshire Constabulary** - Find out more about Derbyshire Police Support Volunteers and other roles [here](#)



Credit: [Derbyshire Constabulary](#).



## 6. Education & Young People

*‘the absence of volunteers would erode the intergenerational and community bonds that make these organisations so powerful. Volunteers often serve as role models, offering stability, encouragement and a sense of belonging. Their departure would weaken the civic fabric that these groups help weave - reducing opportunities for leadership development, community service and social cohesion.’*

Debbie Wilkinson, YOU London











Credit: The Scouts

# Education & Young People

One of the most impacted areas, as a result of everyone stopping volunteering, is the support provided to millions of young people across the country. In one of the more extensive sections of this report, it demonstrates just some of the many ways young people will suffer if everyone stopped volunteering:

- *‘If all governors and trustees stopped volunteering tomorrow, the impact on schools, trusts – and on children’s lives – would be immediate and profound.’* All of the approximately 200,000 school governors and trustees are volunteers and they play a critical role in directing the school and holding the headteacher to account
- No more volunteers *‘would lead to a significant increase in negative outcomes for young people and society. It could result in rise in crime rates, particularly among vulnerable young people and a decrease in educational attainment and social mobility. Furthermore, it could negatively impact young people’s mental health and wellbeing and limit their opportunities for personal and social development. So on top of the personal impact to young people, the above would also increase the demand on all our public services.’*
- *‘If adult volunteers disappeared from UK Scouts, the loss to young people and society would be devastating’* as it would mean the loss of 140,000 dedicated volunteers giving over 50 million hours, enabling 445,000 young people to access life-changing opportunities
- *‘Take our volunteers out of Girlguiding and quite simply there is no Girlguiding in the capital. ... Without them girls around the capital would not have the opportunity for life enriching experiences, to grow in confidence about their future and form strong and supportive friendship groups in an increasingly challenging world.’*
- *‘In London alone, over 78,000 young people are members of these organisations, supported by some 20,000 adult volunteers. If these volunteers didn’t turn up, there would be no youth activities.’*

As the contributions in this section clearly show, there would be an immediate devastating impact for young people that would be significantly compounded in the medium and longer term, leading to huge societal and economic issues.



### What if everyone stopped volunteering?

YOU London is a partnership of Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU) working together to maximise opportunities for young people in London. The 12 main partner organisations are the Army Cadet Force, Boys' Brigade, Combined Cadet Force, Fire Cadets, Girls' Brigade, Girlguiding, Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Sea Cadet Corps, Scouts, St. John Ambulance Cadets and Volunteer Police Cadets, but YOU also includes other smaller groups at borough level. Each organisation provides positive, structured activities for young people in a safe space, delivered by trusted adult volunteers. All offer something slightly different, but their aims are the same: to help young people reach their full potential.

In London alone, over 78,000 young people are members of these organisations, supported by some 20,000 adult volunteers. If these volunteers didn't turn up, there would be no youth activities.

All of the organisations listed have a central team of paid staff who might write delivery programmes, manage safeguarding, recruitment processes and Health and Safety compliance, but all face to face activities and local governance is delivered by volunteers.

If volunteers were to stop volunteering with uniformed youth groups across London, the impact would be immediate and deeply felt across communities. These groups rely entirely on the dedication of adult volunteers to run weekly meetings, organise activities, deliver skills training and provide mentorship. Without them, units would be forced to close, leaving thousands of young people without access to structured, character-building experiences. The loss would be especially acute in areas where these groups offer a safe, inclusive space for young people who may not otherwise have access to extracurricular enrichment.

Beyond the logistical disruption, the absence of volunteers would erode the intergenerational and community bonds that make these organisations so powerful. Volunteers often serve as role models, offering stability, encouragement and a sense of belonging. Their departure would weaken the civic fabric that these groups help weave - reducing opportunities for leadership development, community service and social cohesion. In a city as diverse and dynamic as London, uniformed youth groups play a quiet but vital role in nurturing resilience, teamwork and civic pride. Without volunteers, that legacy would falter, and the ripple effects would be felt far beyond the local community hall.

Debbie Wilkinson

**YOU London**







### If everyone stopped volunteering?

If adult volunteers disappeared from UK Scouts, the loss to young people and society would be devastating. Each year, 140,000 dedicated volunteers give over 50 million hours, enabling 445,000 young people to access life-changing opportunities. They don't just plan activities - they create safe, supportive spaces where confidence, resilience and skills grow. Without them, many would lose the only place they truly belong.

Just look at Dwayne Fields, the UK Chief Scout. Dwayne grew up in inner-city Hackney exposed to youth violence, but Scouts gave him his first taste of the outdoors, a place to belong, and leaders who believed in him. They set him on a journey of self-belief helping him to become the first Black Briton to walk to the North Pole.

For Hannah, a 15-year-old Explorer Scout with anxiety, Scouts is a sanctuary. While everyday tasks can trigger panic, her group is familiar and empowering. It gives her courage to take on challenges, as she knows her leaders are behind her.

Michael, a young Squirrel Scout (Scouts for 4-6 year olds) with complex needs and a history of trauma, found in Scouts a team who understood him. With their support, he learned to regulate emotions, celebrate wins, and take pride in achievements. His jumper, covered in hard-earned badges, tells a story of belonging made possible by compassionate leadership.

Scouts doesn't just create memories: it shapes futures. Young people in Scouts volunteer three times more than non-Scouts, contributing nearly 4 million hours annually, worth over £160 million. Without volunteers, youth social action – which evidence shows leads to future civic involvement - would vanish and with it a generation of changemakers.

Scouts changes lives, but only because volunteers make it happen. Without them, stories like Dwayne's, Hannah's and Michael's could have been so different.

We need more volunteers to step forward, so more young people can gain the skills for life.

Katie Jackson  
Head of Policy and Public Affairs

**The Scouts**



Credit: The Scouts





## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

### Powered by Volunteers

Every week or so over 17,000 girls of all ages across London spend a few hours with individuals who are dedicated to helping girls and young women build their confidence, make lifelong friends and learn that girls can do anything. And there is more – day trips to interesting and fun places, camping trips and overseas trips all feature in the Girlguiding experience – an experience that has enhanced the lives of thousands of girls led by these dedicated individuals - our volunteers - and there are around 3,500 of them in the capital. These are the wonderful people who give their time to girls and young women at evenings, weekends and weeks away, to bring them all the fun and learning of today's Girlguiding.

Take our volunteers out of Girlguiding and quite simply there is no Girlguiding in the capital. No one to implement and develop our region's activity programme, no one to come up with great ideas for activities and interests, and, at grass roots level no one to open up venues for weekly group meetings. At these meetings our girls are offered a wide range of activities designed to broaden their experiences and drive the movement's 'girls can do anything' mission.

Girlguiding's latest research (Girls Attitude Survey 2024) shows that girls are experiencing a crisis of confidence in many areas of their lives. The pressures and expectations of being a girl are increasingly being felt by the younger generation. And it's concerning to see that girls feel less confident about themselves and their futures.

Girlguiding is powered by our volunteers. Without them girls around the capital would not have the opportunity for life enriching experiences, to grow in confidence about their future and form strong and supportive friendship groups in an increasingly challenging world.

Hannah Roberts

Assistant Chief Commissioner for Inclusion and Impact

**Girlguiding London and South East Region**





**If everyone stopped volunteering?****Youth United Hertfordshire**

If volunteering in Hertfordshire Youth Groups ceased tomorrow, the impact would be immediate and widespread across the county and the UK. Youth United Hertfordshire - a Lieutenancy initiative - unites nine uniformed organisations including the Sea Cadets, Army Cadet Force, Royal Air Force Air Cadets, Police Cadets, Fire Cadets, St John Ambulance, Scouts, Girlguiding and Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade. All of which are reliant on volunteers to deliver safe, structured programmes that build confidence, resilience, and leadership.

Without volunteers, young people would miss out on fantastic experiences like the King's Birthday Parade in London and local Remembrance Day events. These are more than ceremonial—they foster personal growth and civic engagement. It would erode the culture of service, weakening community bonds and the pipeline of future volunteers and leaders.

Katie Neville

**Youth United Foundation** exists to improve outcomes for young people, regardless of background, by expanding access to uniformed youth groups.

**Youth United Derbyshire**

The Scouts, who in Derbyshire alone, have 7,471 youth members which is only made possible by 2,799 volunteers. It is obvious to see that without volunteers, over 7,000 youth members would not have the ability to attend Scouts and gain all the valuable experiences and support mentioned previously.

The impact would be the same for Police cadets if volunteering just stopped. With no volunteers, county and nationwide, all youth provision, of which there is precious little in term of youth clubs anymore, would cease.

The cessation of which would lead to a significant increase in negative outcomes for young people and society. It could result in rise in crime rates, particularly among vulnerable young people and a decrease in educational attainment and social mobility.

Furthermore, it could negatively impact young people's mental health and wellbeing and limit their opportunities for personal and social development. So on top of the personal impact to young people, the above would also increase the demand on all our public services.

Sarah Robbins



Credit: [Youth United Foundation Instagram](#)



## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

Nationally 14,500 cadets, 9,000 volunteers – that's us. There are 1,500 cadets guided by 900 volunteers in the London Area alone, and countless thousands more through our 160-year history.

Countless thousands of young people (many from sub-optimal socio-economic backgrounds) to whom volunteers have and continue to provide a sense of belonging, a moral compass, a family in cases where the young person's own is absent.

Volunteers are carers, mentors, life coaches, qualified teachers/instructors, councillors, advisors, safe guardians, guides, role models, inspirations, life changers - providing interventions when young peoples' lives are subject to abuse, neglect, bullying - noticing and supporting by signposting and reporting.

Volunteers give young people confidence, helping them to feel more in charge of themselves. They make cadets leaders that people want to follow, comfortable speakers, brilliant team players. They give them skills (with qualifications to prove it), positive habits and thinking. They help young people to become adaptable, motivated and have purpose.

Cadets find school gets better, employment gets easier and their work aspirations rise, they can overcome challenges more confidently and they're valued in the community where they live. Hundreds have gone on to employment that, prior to cadets, they could not have dreamed of.

Volunteers make all this possible, whilst at the same time gaining skills that change their own lives.

Can any other role in society claim all of this? And it all stops if volunteering as a choice, as a vocation, ceases.

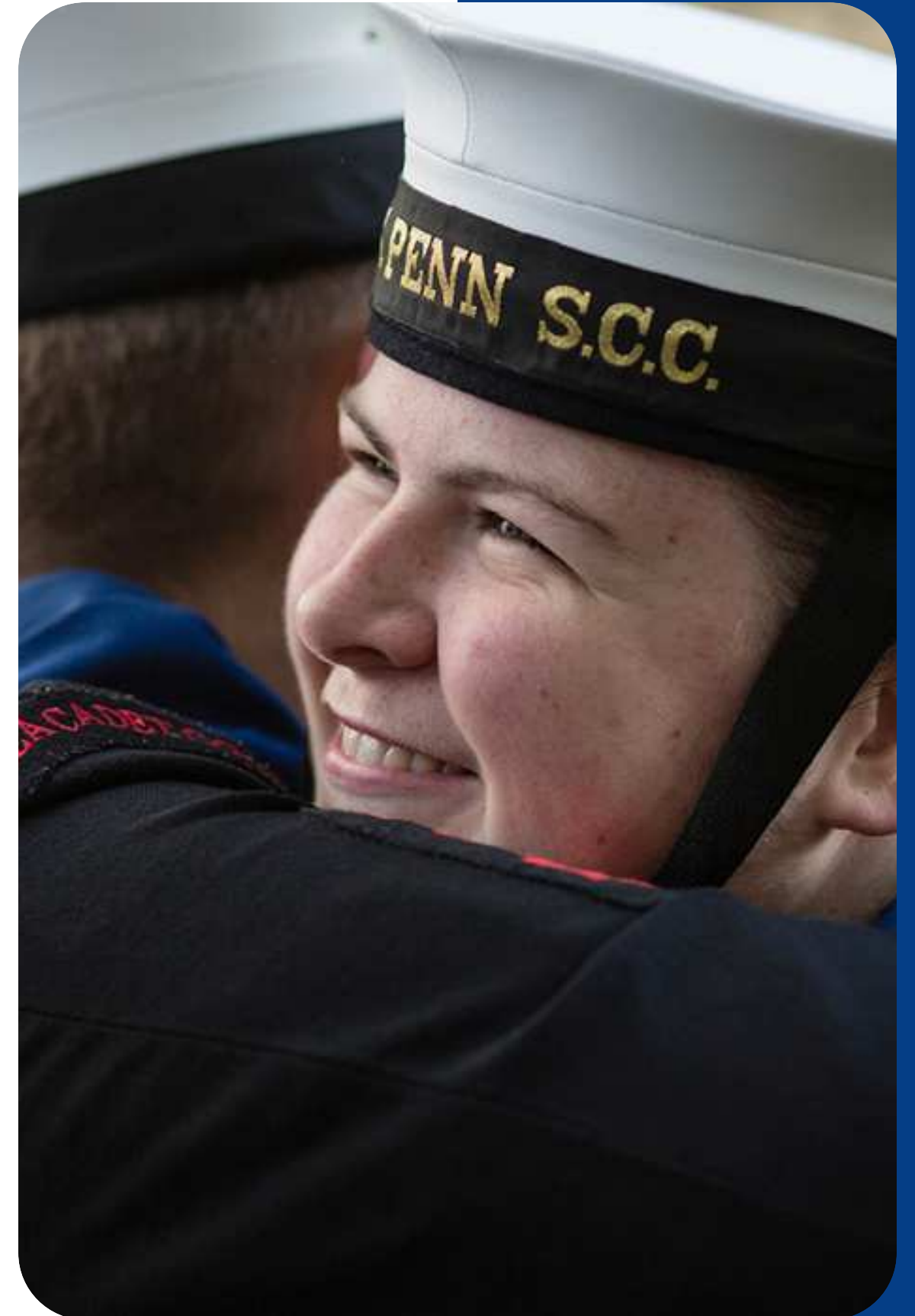
Our governing charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, employs 200 people who depend entirely on the volunteer workforce to deliver our product and keep them in employment. That's 200 people looking for alternative employment if volunteering stops!

Lt Cdr (SCC) Cliff Lewis RNR  
Training Manager

**Sea Cadets**

Want to know more about how the Sea Cadets do what they do, and the impact it has been shown to have? Take a look at:

- [The Difference the Sea Cadets Make](#)
- [Sea Cadets Impact Reports](#)



Credit: Sea Cadets



### If everyone stopped volunteering?

The impact of everyone stopping volunteering for The Ulysses Trust would be catastrophic to those we support, their families, their units - and to society at a local, regional and national level.

We ensured that 105 expeditions took place last year and enabled hundreds of young people to take part - social value and social mobility is key outcome. That number will almost double that this year as demand rises. That's a lot of young people who would otherwise never have the opportunity to take part in these life changing experiences - and society would lose the outcomes that come with such experience and opportunity.

Read about the hugely positive impact we have on thousands of cadets and reserves in our society every year - specifically the personal development (self-awareness and values such as courage, respect integrity, as well as life skills development (resourcefulness, risk-awareness and sound judgment under pressure), mental health and wellbeing, and the additional benefits to units in terms of recruitment, retention and morale - and to society at large in terms of creating confident, resilient employable young people. The problems that are so prevalent in society are enormously supported by the huge amount of volunteers that support organisations like The Ulysses Trust.

The financial support and opportunities that we give to cadets (and the adults volunteers who are the backbone of those organisations) - is enormous. As is the benefit to society, the environment, families, schools .... and to the NHS via the huge benefit to mental health and wellbeing that getting outdoors in the natural world, taking on challenge and going on adventures, is proven to provide - especially beneficial through reduced anxiety and depression (which is epidemic in our youth due to screen-based childhoods rather than play-based, and society's risk-adverse nature since covid lockdowns in particular).

Cadet forces (and all uniformed youth organisation I would suggest) as a wider organisation is proven to support young peoples education - attendance, attainment and achievement all increase - support for reduction of crime - and increased revenue for society via HMRC due to increased earnings and employability of people ... is beyond measure.

Polly Marsh DL

**Ulysses Trust**



Credit: Ulysses Trust



### What if everyone stopped volunteering?

If all governors and trustees stopped volunteering tomorrow, the impact on schools, trusts – and on children’s lives – would be immediate and profound. Right now, over 200,000 people across England give their time freely to govern. They are parents, local business owners, retired teachers, students and community leaders. They come from all walks of life, united by a shared belief: that every child deserves the best possible start.

Governors and trustees make big decisions that shape children’s education. They set the vision for the school/trust, support and hold the headteacher to account, agree budgets and ensure every penny is spent well for pupils’ benefit. They ask the difficult but important questions: How children are learning and progressing, is every child included? Is the school keeping them safe?

Governing boards are the first line of accountability in our education system. They exist in every state-funded school in England because the law requires it – a recognition by government that no school can function effectively without independent oversight. This oversight ensures that leaders are answerable for how public money is spent, how well pupils are learning, and how the school fulfils its statutory duties, from safeguarding to equality.

If volunteer governors and trustees disappeared, the gap they leave would be impossible to fill without huge cost and disruption. The government would need to replace over 200,000 skilled volunteers with paid professionals, adding hundreds of millions of pounds a year to the education budget. Local authorities – already managing stretched statutory duties – would face a dramatic increase in direct oversight responsibilities, needing to recruit, train and deploy staff to provide the scrutiny and decision-making that boards currently deliver for free.

Central government would face the challenge of creating alternative accountability structures, likely resulting in more bureaucracy, slower decision-making, and reduced local responsiveness.

Without them, and our schools would lose not just skilled decision makers but dedicated local champions who work behind the scenes. They are the unsung guardians of our education system, and without them, that system would simply not function.

**National Governance Association (NGA)**



Credit: NGA

YouTube Video: Role of Governors and Trustees





## 7. Environment

*‘Without volunteers the impact on the UK environment and wildlife would be immediate, deeply felt and will quickly escalate’*

Dominic Pinkney











# Environment

**(Animal protection and welfare, natural resources conservation, wildlife preservation and protection)**

At national, regional and local levels, charities and community groups, all need volunteers to support and protect our environment, wildlife and animals.

There are 3,600 environmental charities in the UK,<sup>1</sup> representing just over 2% of all registered charities. To this must be added potentially thousands of community groups, volunteer-run, who act to support animals, wildlife and the environment. If all the volunteers stopped in these charities and groups we would see the impact immediately, in our towns, cities as well as our countryside. Rivers, wildlife and animals would all suffer.

From practical conservation work through to campaigning, volunteers carry out a huge range of different formal and informal roles in protecting our environment, wildlife and animals. Due to the mix of different volunteering, from participating in a litter pick to a formal volunteer role within a charity, it is difficult to produce accurate numbers but it is estimated, hundreds of thousands, perhaps more, volunteer each year in this area. Charities such as the Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and National Parks alone report a total of around 50,000 volunteers supporting their great work.

The UK is an animal loving country and pets play an important societal role for their human guardians. Pets significantly support mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, alleviating depression, increasing physical activity, and fostering a sense of purpose and routine through daily care. John May, CEO of Cats Protection, states '*without volunteers ... the UK would be a poorer, lonelier and far less compassionate place for both cats and people.*'

Without volunteers the impact on the UK environment and wildlife would be immediate, deeply felt and will quickly escalate to catastrophic levels.

1. According to UK Charity Classification's tagging system as of early 2024



### **If everyone stopped volunteering?**

If volunteering at Cats Protection stopped tomorrow, the impact would be felt immediately – by cats, by people, and by whole communities.

The charity's work simply couldn't function without its volunteers. More than 9,000 of them give their time, skills and compassion to help tens of thousands of cats every year. They are the backbone of everything we do.

Volunteers foster cats in their homes, work in our centres and run our branches, carry out trap-neuter-return programmes for feral colonies, deliver talks in schools and community groups, and raise the funds that keep our services going. They are often the first friendly face someone meets when they turn to us for help, offering reassurance as well as practical support. Their local knowledge and connections mean Cats Protection can be truly UK-wide – from Cardiff to Coleraine, from the Highlands to Cornwall – while remaining deeply rooted in communities.

Without them, cats in need would face longer waits for help or, worse, no help at all. Abandonment and suffering would rise. Our ability to prevent problems before they start, through neutering, education and early intervention, would be severely reduced. Campaigning for better animal welfare laws, too, would be harder without the credibility and evidence that come from the daily work of volunteers on the ground.

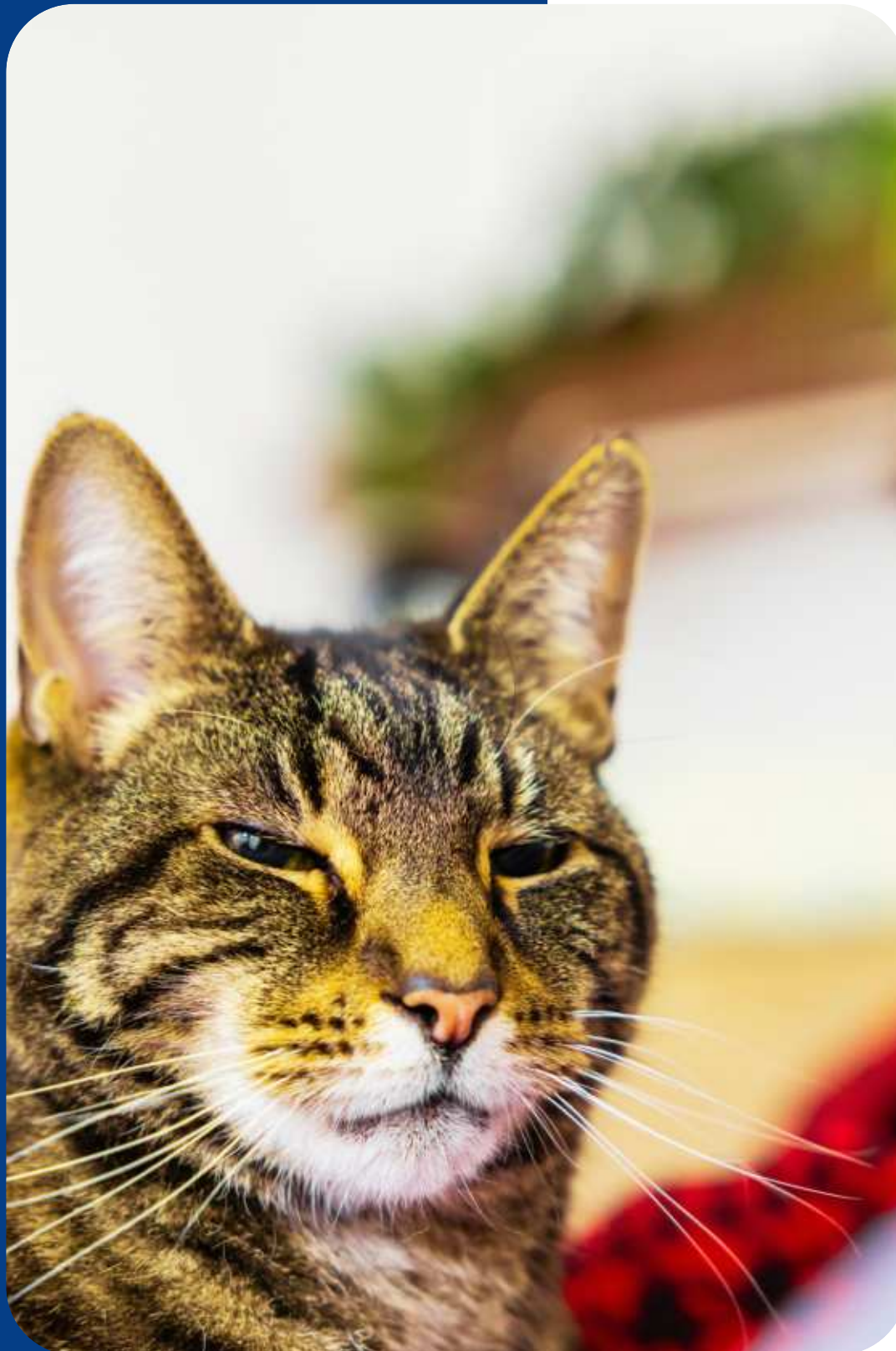
The impact would also be deeply felt by people. Cats offer companionship, comfort and a proven boost to mental wellbeing. Every cat rehomed or reunited with an owner changes a life – sometimes becoming a lifeline for someone who is lonely, grieving or struggling with their health. Without our volunteers, countless people would lose that source of joy, comfort and connection.

Cats Protection without volunteers wouldn't be the same charity – and the UK would be a poorer, lonelier and far less compassionate place for both cats and people.

John May CVO OBE DL

Chief Executive

**Cats Protection**



Credit: Cats Protection







## 8. Communities

*‘If volunteering comes from the heart, then when it stops, so do we. It is the invisible infrastructure that allows us to evolve and thrive.’*

Rachelle Lazarus, JVN





# Communities

People giving up their free time to support others is an essential component for communities and neighbourhoods to be cohesive and resilient. Often this type of community volunteering is often not seen as volunteering as it is informal such as time given up to help a local event, club or community group.

Although not something that can be directly observed or measured, *social cohesion* is important because it acts as the "glue" that binds societies together, fostering trust, shared values, and a sense of belonging among people. This interconnectedness creates more resilient and healthier communities, better equipped to overcome challenges, experience higher economic growth, and promote the well-being of all members. Social cohesion also works to fight exclusion and marginalisation, offering more equitable opportunities for all members of society.

Technically referred to as unincorporated charitable associations, but more commonly known as community groups and clubs, there are approximately 100,000 of these small volunteer run organisations in the UK. As these organisations are unregistered we do not know the exact number. However, if we estimate each of the groups involves ten volunteers on average, that means roughly one million people volunteer for community groups. If they all stopped volunteering all their activities that benefit the community would immediately stop.

The negative impact of 100,000 community groups ending their work would be immediate, substantial and would increase significantly over time. As well as the complete loss of the positive work of these groups, one inevitable result would be an increase in *social isolation*.

Social isolation incurs significant costs, including higher demands on healthcare, social care, and policing services due to associated physical and mental health issues like depression and cardiovascular disease. Economically, it results in lost productivity and work days, with one report estimating the annual cost to UK employers at £2.5 billion. The government commissioned the 2020 Loneliness Monetisation Report which estimates the wellbeing cost of severe loneliness (equivalent to £9,537 per person per year), reflecting the clear case for investment by all in society.

Therefore, if all volunteers stopped volunteering, the social and economic impact on our communities would be devastating and in the medium and longer term would be crippling for our economy trying to deal with the fallout.





## If everyone stopped volunteering?

Imagine if, tomorrow, all volunteering across the London Jewish community, both formal charity roles and informal acts like checking in on a neighbour, suddenly stopped. The impact would be immediate and profound.

In the first days, essential services would stall. Many charities rely on volunteers to deliver food, run the Jewish ambulance service, make befriending calls, provide educational support, and carry out welfare visits. Without them, older people, Holocaust survivors, and those living alone would face increased isolation. Events from Purim carnivals to festival meals would be cancelled. Even synagogue life, from Torah readings to kiddush preparation, would be disrupted.

Within days, the strain on staff would become unsustainable. Youth programmes, religion classes, cultural events, and volunteer-led security provision would disappear. Grassroots initiatives such as meal rotas, hospital visits, and informal fundraising would vanish, eroding the shared responsibility that holds our community together.

Thankfully, that scenario will never happen, because people, regardless of faith, age, or background, instinctively step up to help. A 17-year-old recently told our Volunteer Broker: *“Volunteering is something you do from your heart.”*

During Covid, I ran a service for Holocaust survivors, many in their 90s. Most lived in areas with a strong network of volunteers and support. But one lady lived in a place where we had no contacts or infrastructure. I phoned her in a panic, anxious about who would be looking after her. She simply laughed and said: *“If I stand in my garden and say I need toilet roll, the neighbours from eight gardens will rush to lob rolls over the wall.”*

Volunteering will never end, but it must adapt. The world has changed. Governments and society must go beyond praising volunteering and actively support charities to grow and sustain their volunteer teams. Why are most corporate volunteering hours limited to weekdays? Why not evenings or weekends? In Israel, volunteering is compulsory in schools and universities, creating a culture of care from an early age.

If volunteering comes from the heart, then when it stops, so do we. It is the invisible infrastructure that allows us to evolve and thrive.

Rachelle Lazarus  
Charity Engagement & Volunteer Manager  
**Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN)**







## What if everyone stopped volunteering?

If all volunteering were to stop tomorrow and continue indefinitely, the impact on community initiatives like Nourish Hub would be devastating. At Nourish Hub, volunteers are the lifeblood of our mission to tackle food insecurity, reduce waste, and provide education and support to vulnerable individuals and families. Our team of up to 200 volunteers enables us to rescue surplus food from local supermarkets and suppliers, prepare and distribute hundreds of nutritious meals each week, run vital workshops on cooking, nutrition, and budgeting, raise awareness of the work we do, support at community and cultural events and more.

Volunteers take on diverse and essential roles - from food rescuers who collect surplus produce, to kitchen assistants preparing meals, NourishEd education facilitators empowering people with new skills, frontline volunteers welcoming and supporting visitors at the Hub during our community hours, lunch or other community events, reader leaders running shared reading or book club sessions and much more.

For example, one volunteer, Kayliegh, who initially engaged with us by attending a cookery course for adults, has become a trusted member of the team, supporting our Education Coordinator with teaching families how to cook healthy, affordable meals or taking the lead in managing front of house and mentoring new volunteers or supporting in the kitchen. Her dedication not only helps reduce food waste but also builds confidence and independence among community members.

Without volunteers like Kayliegh and many others, these crucial services would grind to a halt, surplus food would go to waste, people struggling with hunger would lose access to nutritious meals, and the educational programmes that empower community members would disappear. Beyond service delivery, volunteers create a welcoming environment, fostering connection, dignity, and hope.

In short, the absence of volunteering would not only disrupt food support but would also unravel the social bonds and empowerment that Nourish Hub strives to build. Volunteering is truly the heartbeat of our work and the communities we serve.

Andreea Rizea  
Deputy Manager  
**Nourish Hub**

*"Volunteers are the heartbeat of Nourish Hub. Without their commitment and passion, our work to tackle food insecurity and empower our community simply wouldn't be possible."*



Credit: Nourish Hub



## If everyone stopped volunteering?

Citizens Advice was created during the Second World War. Volunteers ran the service, helping people with issues relating to the loss of ration books, homelessness and evacuation. Fast forward 85 years and volunteers remain a crucial part of our charity. Last year our service saw unprecedented demand, supporting 2.71 million people via the provision of free, confidential and impartial advice. Without our 14,000 volunteers we simply couldn't deliver this level of service and many people would miss out on the help they need to move forwards in their lives.

In 2024 we published the largest piece of research into volunteering at Citizens Advice for 10 years. The research, which was carried out by the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School and Sonnet Advisory & Impact, found that the accumulated hours of volunteering time given by our volunteers was worth nearly £77 million in 2024. It also demonstrated the importance of volunteers in improving our service delivery by bringing in different backgrounds, outlooks and experiences and improving our ability to reach new clients, including those from marginalised communities.

There were also significant benefits to the wider economy as a result of Citizens Advice volunteers entering paid employment sooner or attracting a higher wage due to the skills they'd developed in their volunteering role. Volunteers' health and wellbeing was also positively impacted with 9 in 10 volunteers saying that volunteering at Citizens Advice has given them a sense of purpose and 42% saying it boosts their confidence and mental health. The researchers estimated the value of increased life satisfaction and improved mental health for volunteers at over £20 million, including £5.5 million savings for the NHS as a result of reduction or prevention in need for treatment for anxiety and depression.

If all volunteering at Citizens Advice stopped, we'd lose vital capacity at a time when our services are never more needed. But we'd also lose out on the myriad of other ways volunteers bring value to our teams, the quality of our services and our ability to reach those who most need them. As our research evidences, the wider benefits to communities and UK society would also be lost.

Jennie Smith  
Head of Volunteering  
**Citizens Advice**





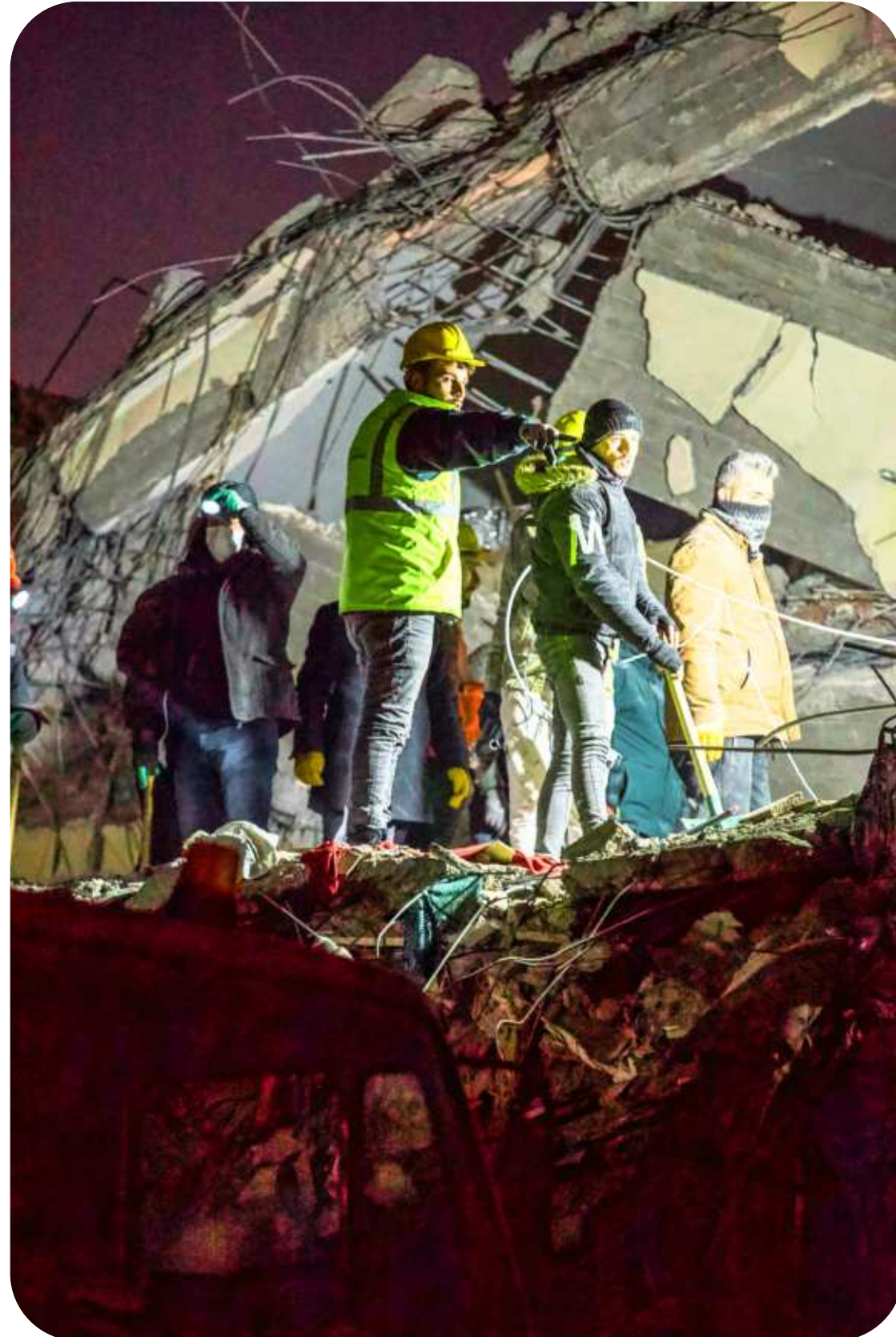


## 9. Community Resilience/ Emergency Response

*'Volunteering and mutual aid support has been a backbone of society's ... reaction to emergencies.'*

Cliff Fleming, Resilience Manager





# Community Resilience/ Emergency Response

It is hard to imagine people not volunteering to help those in an emergency, but what if people did not step forward to offer assistance?

There are both logistical as well as societal factors to consider in pondering this question, but the simple conclusion is that those affected by emergencies would suffer more and their trauma would be more severe.

For a community to be resilient, then it needs to have already established social connections and trusted networks. If all volunteers stopped volunteering then community resilience could practically disappear as these social connections and trust between people and organisations would no longer exist. If a community is not resilient then it is harder hit by disruptions which inevitably lead to further costs and drawing upon public resources.

## Difference between Community Resilience & Emergency Response

**Community resilience** is a proactive, long-term capacity of a community to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from various disruptions by leveraging local resources and networks.

In contrast, **emergency response** is the reactive, short-term action taken during an emergency to control the situation, save lives, and mitigate damage, complementing the overall resilience efforts. Resilience focuses on building community strength before an event, while emergency response is the crucial intervention during an event, working in partnership with the community's resilience efforts.



# LONDON RESILIENCE

## If everyone stopped volunteering?

Throughout history and across the globe, individuals and communities have come together in times of crisis. People have gone out of their way to rescue, feed, clothe and house their neighbours, colleagues - and even strangers. Humanity's altruism has always outweighed those few who have sought to cause division. Volunteering and mutual aid support has been a backbone of society's, and Londoners', reaction to emergencies.

So, what if this propensity to support one another ended, what if volunteering in crises stopped altogether? It is likely this would lead to much more harm and fragmentation in society. Would it be the end of communality? It would absolutely affect the emotional bonds and connections in our neighbourhoods. It would hurt the process of learning and recovery from disasters. Emergency services alone cannot be a replacement for mutual support, especially over longer periods of time.

However, I believe it is wholly unlikely that all support for one another, all volunteering ends during and after crises. In the words of Rebecca Solnit from her book 'A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster':

*"We have, most of us, a deep desire for this democratic public life, for a voice, for membership, for purpose and meaning that cannot be only personal. We want larger selves and a larger world."*

Cliff Fleming

Resilience Manager – Communities

**LONDON RESILIENCE**



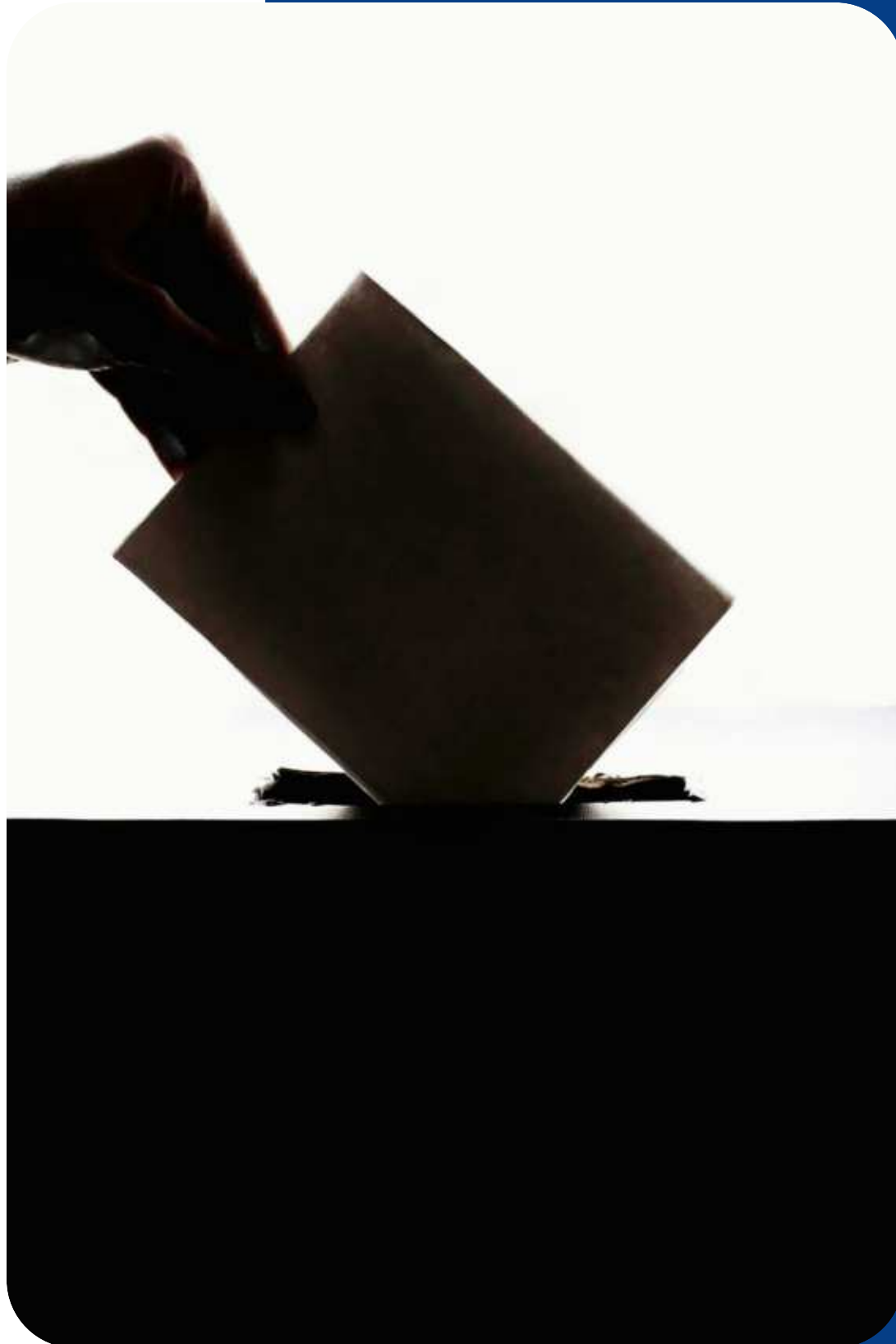
Credit: British Red Cross



## 10. Democracy

***'Without volunteers the functioning of the UK political system would simply fall apart.'***

Dominic Pinkney







Credit: Marie Jacquemin/Greenpeace

# Democracy

Without volunteers the functioning of the UK political system would simply fall apart.

## Political Parties

Many people will not realise that the functioning of the UK political parties is only possible through volunteers. The major political parties are divided up into local branches all run by volunteers. The overwhelming majority of leaflets delivered and knocks on doors by canvassers are volunteers, passionate about the party or cause they believe in. Political parties would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to engage with the electorate without volunteers.

## Parish & Town Councils

According to [NALC](#) there are 10,000 parish and town councils in England and the 100,000 councillors serving in these councils are volunteers. Parish and town councillors make a massive difference to local people's quality of life. They are passionate about their communities and seek to make a change to help improve their residents' lives. Without them how would democratic decisions get made locally and who would provide oversight and scrutiny of the work of the parish/town council?

## Mayors

In addition to volunteer Councillors many town councils also appoint a Mayor who carry out engagements in the community. These additional duties are also carried out as a volunteer. As an often overlooked role, this report would like to give a special shout out and thank you to all those people who give up their time to carry out mayoral duties.

Volunteers are so integral to the functioning of democracy that without them we would move to a system where the parties and campaigns with the most money would have the advantage. Those without financial means would be unable to get their messages, ideas and arguments across for people to consider. In short, the UK would not be a proper democracy any more.



# 11. Heritage

***'Volunteers are not just a resource - they are the soul of the heritage sector. Protecting, supporting, and celebrating their contributions is essential for preserving our cultural heritage for the future.'***

Vanessa Theed, Heritage Volunteering Group





## If everyone stopped volunteering in the heritage sector?

### The Irreplaceable Role of Volunteers

In the heritage sector, volunteers are the heartbeat of countless organisations. For many smaller, volunteer-led sites, opening their doors to the public simply wouldn't be possible without them. Even larger institutions would feel the loss — having to cut back activities, close certain areas, or cancel special events that rely heavily on volunteer support.

### What Would Disappear Without Volunteers?

Without the dedication of volunteers, many extra services and experiences would vanish. These include:

- **Family event days** and interactive storytelling sessions
- **School visits** and educational workshops
- **Museum late openings**, retail shops, and tearooms
- **Guided tours**, gallery talks, and heritage walks
- **Gardening** and caring for animals in historic settings
- **Costume creation** for reenactments and exhibitions
- **Scientific research**, transcribing, and cataloguing collections
- **Fundraising initiatives** to restore historic buildings or grow collections

Every one of these activities enhances the visitor experience, fuels community engagement, and keeps history alive.

### More Than Just Helping Hands

Volunteers don't just fill gaps — they bring passion, knowledge, and a personal touch that transforms heritage sites from static displays into living experiences. They often serve as trustees, helping shape the strategic vision of organisations. Without them, vital leadership skills and future workforce pipelines would suffer, limiting opportunities for people to gain industry-specific experience.







## If everyone stopped volunteering in the heritage sector? (continued)

### The Impact on Communities and Wellbeing

Removing volunteer opportunities would not only harm heritage organisations — it would affect society as a whole. Many people rely on volunteering for a sense of purpose, community connection, and mental wellbeing. It reduces isolation, supports skill-sharing between generations, and keeps traditional knowledge alive.

Universities and colleges often require students to complete volunteer hours, giving them practical experience and fostering a lifelong appreciation for cultural preservation. Without these opportunities, future generations would lose a powerful connection to history and community.

### A Wake-Up Call for the Sector

If volunteers were suddenly unavailable, it would be a stark reminder of how much the heritage sector depends on them. Organisations might be forced to reprioritise budgets and staffing, but the reality is that the unique passion and commitment volunteers bring cannot be replaced.

Volunteers are not just a resource — they are the soul of the heritage sector. Protecting, supporting, and celebrating their contributions is essential for preserving our cultural heritage for the future.

Vanessa Theed

Vice Chair

**Heritage Volunteering Group**









## 11. Employee Volunteering

*'Although we are nowhere near close to maximising employee volunteering in the UK, it delivers more than £1billion of benefit to our communities and is growing.'*

Dominic Pinkney, Works4U CEO







# Employee Volunteering

Employee volunteering is on the up, both in terms of numbers and the impact it makes.

The [\*UK Employee Volunteering 2022-23\*](#) Report demonstrates that employee volunteering bounced back very strongly after Covid-19 and quickly and significantly exceeded pre-pandemic levels with employees now very much seeing it as the norm for employers to not just provide paid leave for volunteering but also to help enable this volunteering to happen.

[\*CAF Corporate Giving 2025\*](#) Report states that ‘70% of employees nationally say that it is important their employer addresses social inequalities, injustices, and other social challenges— pointing to a disconnect between employers and employees about what constitutes responsible business practice.’

Although we are nowhere near close to maximising employee volunteering in the UK, it is growing and delivers huge positive impact to our communities. We can estimate that just over an equivalent of £1 billion of value<sup>1</sup> is provided by employee volunteers in the past year.

*“Volunteering is about more than time - it’s about sharing valuable skills and knowledge that strengthen the communities where we live and work.”*, Natalie Gregoire-Skeete Head of Sustainability and Societal Purpose for HSBC UK.<sup>2</sup>

[\*Works4U\*](#) (not-for-profit social enterprise) works with business and community organisations on a daily basis to deliver impactful and transformative employee volunteering programmes and they have seen the growth in impact and sophistication of this work in the past 10-15 years. The days of the apocryphal story of teams of employee volunteers painting the same fence or wall every few months are now long gone as both employee volunteers and community organisations want to carry out impactful and transformative projects.

If all employee volunteering were to stop this would be an enormous blow to community organisations and the environment who would lose out on vital support. It will also be damaging to businesses where employee volunteering has become an integral and effective employee engagement mechanism, enabling businesses to build and embed values that support them to be more successful.

1 - ‘[\*Untapped Impact:unlocking the 140 million hour opportunity\*](#)’ report from RVS estimates over 49.9 million employee volunteering hours per year and using an hourly rate of £20.51 (FTE £40k per year) gives a total value of £1,023,599,502.

2 - [\*CAF Corporate Giving Report 2025\*](#), p.20









## 13. Blueprint for developing volunteering

*'It has long been a holy grail to find a way to tap the wisdom, experience, knowledge and willingness of millions of people out there who would like to volunteer in a sector in which they are confident to offer help, while making sure that this is achieved with safety, appropriate vetting, oversight and so on. This [London Vision for Volunteering] report is an important step to keep the conversation alive and move towards structures and processes that can square that circle and really make a difference.'*

Sir Stephen Fry on *London Vision for Volunteering* Report (Mar 2025)



# Blueprint for developing volunteering

The March 2025 report '*London Vision for Volunteering*' makes 36 strategic and practical recommendations that together form a blueprint for developing volunteering, not just for London but for all of the UK.

Funded by the Greater London Authority, this highly collaborative piece of work, led by Works4U and produced using the London Lifelines branding, was created by getting input from volunteer stakeholders from every single London borough as well as expert guidance from the London Volunteering Strategy Group.

The production of this '*What if everyone stopped volunteering?*' report is a follow on from the *London Vision for Volunteering* report which states, '*volunteers are the lifeblood of not just the voluntary and community sector but play a key part in how London and British society functions. If all people who volunteer, in whatever way, formally or informally, stopped giving their time, London's society would very quickly grind to a halt:*'

The report has been well received across sectors with Andy Haldane, former Chief Economist at the Bank of England stating, '*this excellent report makes some ambitious but practical recommendations for unlocking more of the deep untapped lake of potential in volunteering.*'

The report acknowledges the slow decline in formal volunteering and the need to create a plan to support and develop volunteering. From its 36 recommendations it identifies the following as ones as priority to tackle first:

## Disclosure & Barring System (DBS)

**1) Detailed and clear online DBS guidance for eligibility for volunteers**

**2) Greater promotion of and user guidance for DBS Update Service**

**(b) A more proactive DBS Update Service**

Having similar DBS guidance for volunteers as exists for employees will make a significant difference, reduce confusion and help speed up the onboarding process. We are certain voluntary and community sector organisations will be able to help DBS, if needed, to produce this guidance. Many volunteer managers were unaware of the DBS Update Service and greater promotion of it will lead to efficiencies in volunteer management.

## Funding & Investment

**5) Funders to reevaluate their support for volunteering costs, from volunteer expenses to salaries of volunteer management, recognising it as a proper profession**

**19) Funders to consider core infrastructure services as part of their grant making**

This will help volunteer involving organisations to have properly resourced volunteer programmes and for volunteer managers to be remunerated in a way that recognises their role as a profession. Through funders enabling core infrastructure services to be eligible to apply for it would help make volunteer infrastructure organisations more financially secure.





# Priority Recommendations

## Value and Impact of Volunteering

### **8) Create a quick and easy to use best practice tool to calculate the monetary/economic value of volunteering**

This relatively simple and quick action could make one of the biggest differences of all the recommendations in the *London Vision for Volunteering* report. The key for this to be successful is to get endorsements from funders and local/regional authorities that the tool created is an acceptable way of calculating the monetary/economic value of volunteering. With an accepted tool, this will quickly lead to a huge growth of this data across the UK which will help enable other recommendations and investment to move forward.

## Flexible Volunteering

### **13) Volunteer involving organisations to continue to adapt to be able to involve more flexible volunteer roles**

### **14) Focus and funding to enable volunteer infrastructure organisations to help volunteer involving organisations adapt to flexible volunteering**

There is not a one-size-fits all approach for flexible volunteering, with different organisations having to adapt on their own to meet their requirements. Therefore, due to the individual nature of adapting to flexible volunteering, volunteer infrastructure organisations will continue to need to play a key support role for charities and groups.

## Employee Volunteering

### **20) Produce and promote best practice guidance for employee volunteering**

### **23) Create an infrastructure for employee volunteering**

For both charities/groups and businesses, best practice guidance for carrying out employee volunteering will help increase the impact of this activity. Creating an infrastructure for employee volunteering would need to be planned and thought through carefully to ensure it enhances and brings together current provision. If done right, this has the potential to create an enormous step change in the levels and impact of employee volunteering.

## Trustees

### **24) Charities to recruit trustees through formal and open methods to help create more diverse and representative boards**

### **25) More free to low cost training for trustee boards, creating a framework of trustee training**

### **26) More support networks for trustees (local and regional)**

### **27) More promotion of the trustee role**

Stakeholders recognised that charities can do more to have open recruitment methods to find new trustees. More free/low cost training will help trustees to be more effective and impactful in their role which leads to more effective charities that better help people and communities. Creating support networks for trustees needs to be increased to at least the level of support for volunteer managers. Peer networking for example, at a local and/or regional level will enable trustees to share knowledge and experience to help them run charities better. Stakeholders stated very strongly that much more needs to be done to raise the profile of the trustee role and helping people to understand what it actually is and entails will make a dramatic difference in the level and diversity of trustees.



# Priority Recommendations

## Health Volunteering

- 29) NHS England to work with volunteer infrastructure to see how their new national brokerage platform can connect with established brokerage platforms and websites**
- 30) NHS system areas supported by the Volunteering for Health funded programme (2024-27) to share learning**

Joining up volunteer brokerage platforms and related work makes it easier for Londoners to find volunteer roles, but will also be a win:win for both NHS and volunteer infrastructure organisations to work together and cross promote volunteering.

## Volunteer Involving Organisations

- 16) Volunteer involving organisations to look at their recruitment processes to ensure timely responses with accessible and flexible application processes**
- 17) Support and guidance for organisations with a surplus or waiting list of volunteers to encourage and connect with other volunteering**
- 35) Volunteer involving organisations to be aware of use of terminology and language when referring to and promoting volunteering opportunities and within the recruitment process**

Those interested in volunteering reported that slow responses by volunteer involving organisations was a real turn off and that quick responses, even if to just say ‘we are busy but thank you for your interest and we will get back to you soon’ were appreciated. Having standardised and best practice messages for organisations with a surplus or waiting list of volunteers will help direct them to other opportunities that may be of interest. The message is also clear that volunteer involving organisations need to pay more attention to language and terminology when recruiting.



## 14. Conclusion

***'It's not a question of whether the country can afford to support volunteering more, but can the country afford not to?'***

Dominic Pinkney, Works4U





# Conclusion

Each individual section of this report describes the devastating impact the complete loss of volunteers would bring in a specific societal area. The environment and young people, to choose just two example areas, would lead to horrific, long-lasting effects for our society and economy necessitating immediate and costly input from the government. When considering all the areas covered in this report, which does not pretend to be exhaustive, the inescapable conclusion is that volunteering is not just embedded into how our society functions, but it is essential.

If everyone stopped volunteering and no corrective action was taken then UK society would quickly descend into a dystopian state. This is no exaggeration when you consider the consequences outlined in this report: increase in social isolation, reduced health and wellbeing of the population, decreased social cohesion, lower community resilience, more unequal and unjust society, increase in social disorder, support and education of young people would drop significantly, end of or heavily weakened democracy and productivity of the nation would fall and its descent would quicken.

The aim of this report is not to advocate for more or less reliance on volunteering in the future, although a worthy and useful discussion, the aim is to create awareness of the level or reliance we have right now and the multiplier effects of reduced levels of volunteering. The realisation that the UK is so reliant on the free choice of its citizens giving up their time may be an uncomfortable reality for some, but this perceived vulnerability is also a strength when volunteering is properly supported.

The nature of how people want to volunteer has changed and rates of traditional formal volunteering are in decline but there is no evidence the desire to volunteer has declined, only that people want to volunteer differently, more flexibly. Volunteering in the UK needs support, at all levels, whereas investment in volunteering in either real or relative terms has significantly reduced in the last ten to fifteen years.

To avoid any of the negative and costly impacts outlined in this report, it is essential to support and develop volunteering across the UK. To achieve this, implementing the 36 practical and strategic recommendations of the ‘*London Vision for Volunteering*’ report would be a great way to start as together these offer a blueprint for developing volunteering for the UK.

The conclusion of this report is to ask for more investment in volunteering at a time of great economic challenges, but given the by far greater financial consequences outlined here, it’s not a question of whether the country can afford to support volunteering more, but can the country afford not to?

***It’s not a question of whether  
the country can afford to  
support volunteering more, but  
can the country afford not to?***

Dominic Pinkney  
CEO, **Works4U**

Find Dominic on [LinkedIn](#)  
Dominic’s [Volunteering Blog](#)



# About Works4U

Works4U is an award-winning internationally recognised not-for-profit social enterprise specialising in employee volunteering.

It was founded in 2009 and since then has organised thousands of employee volunteers to carry out impactful and transformational community projects that meet both social priorities and social responsibility goals.

Works4U services and work includes:

- Find, match and deliver employee volunteering projects - from ad hoc events, global days of volunteering through to full partnerships. Includes all volunteering from practical to skills-based, but always delivering impact.
- Employee volunteering consulting - supporting employers to set up or develop their programme to maximise impact within available budget and resources
- Run national employer supported volunteering network
- Produce pioneering volunteering research on volunteering:
  - London Vision for Volunteering Report
  - UK Employee Volunteering 2022-23 Report
  - Monetary Value of Trustees Report
- Manages 2 volunteering related quality standards for businesses and volunteer infrastructure organisations
- Delivers Board Ready programme - high impact leadership programme that matches and supports employees to board of trustees' positions within charities





# Quality Standards

Works4U has recently launched one quality standard relating to volunteering and is about to launch another.



The **Lead Volunteering Organisation (LVO)** quality standard is a robust and value for money accreditation for volunteer infrastructure organisations. It helps them to show funders, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries the leading role they play in their area.

Click [here](#) to find out more information.

The **Employee Volunteering Accreditation (EVA)** quality standard is the world's first dedicated employee volunteering quality standard. For businesses committed to employee volunteering who want to demonstrate to their staff, potential staff, partners, clients, investors and stakeholders they walk the talk regarding ESG, CSR and social impact. More information can be found at the dedicated [EVA website](#).





# Award Winning

Not-for-profit social enterprise Works4U is proud to have won multiple awards in the past two years.

This is great recognition of our work to step up and lead employee volunteering in the UK.

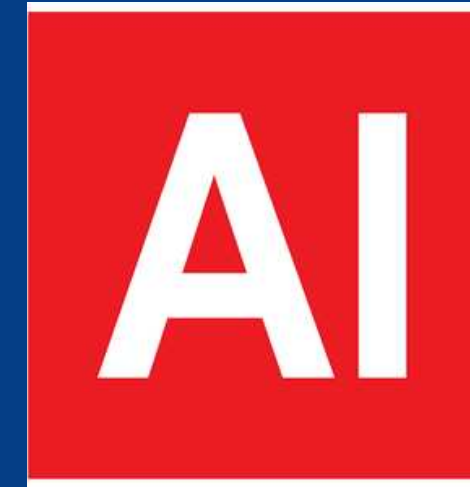
Works4U has also had the honour and privilege of representing the UK at the United Nations on several occasions to help lead and facilitate discussions on how volunteering can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



**(2025) Most Impactful UK Employee Volunteering Non Profit Organisation - Global Excellence Awards**



**(2024) Best Employee Volunteering Social Enterprise 2024 (UK) - Wealth & Finance International Management Consulting Awards**



**(2024) Non-Profit Organisation Awards Winner: Most Empowering Employee Volunteering NPO 2024 (UK)**



**(2024) Community Volunteering Organisation of the Year - 2024/25 GLOBAL Awards**



**(2023) Best Business Support Volunteering Non-Profit Organisation 2023 - UK - Management Consulting Awards**







# What if everyone stopped volunteering?

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