

We're the go-to people  
for **volunteering** in the  
London Borough of Sutton.



Volunteer Centre  
Sutton

# TIME WELL SPENT

A NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE  
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE



Ncvo100

NCVO Report Published  
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## Objectives:

- Rounder view of different ways people volunteer
- How volunteering fits into people's lives
- The experience of the "Volunteer Journey"
- Impact of volunteering on volunteers
- How to better engage volunteers



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# True or False?

- Over 65's are least likely to have volunteered in the last year?
  - False they are the most likely
- 8 in 10 people give time in their own neighbourhood?
  - True
- Employer volunteering is on the rise?
  - False
- Employability ranks highest amongst a range of benefits volunteers feel they get out of volunteering?
  - False

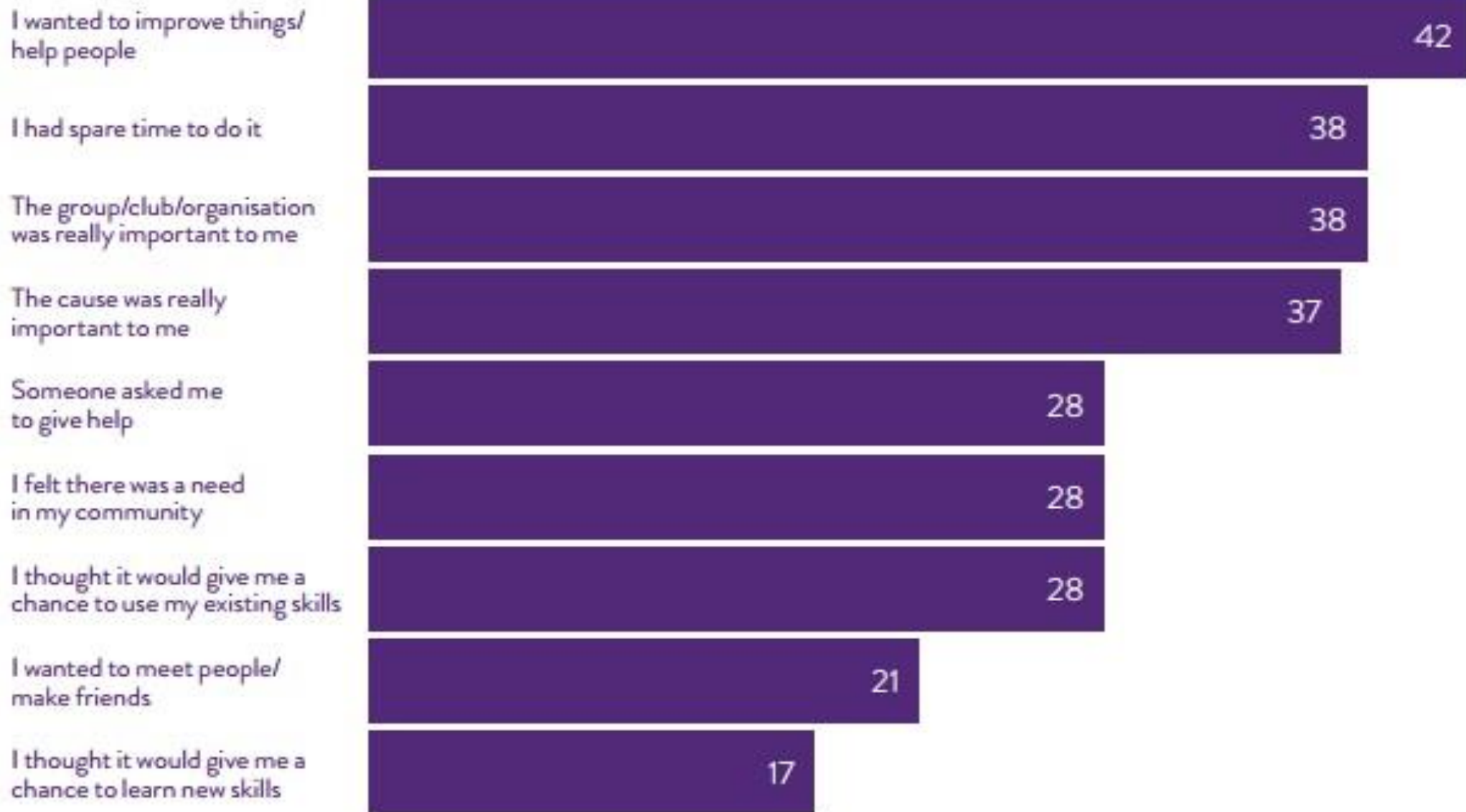
# Participation

- Over 65's more likely to have volunteered recently
- Least likely 25-34yrs
- 9% of adult population accounts for 51% of all volunteering hours

## Challenges

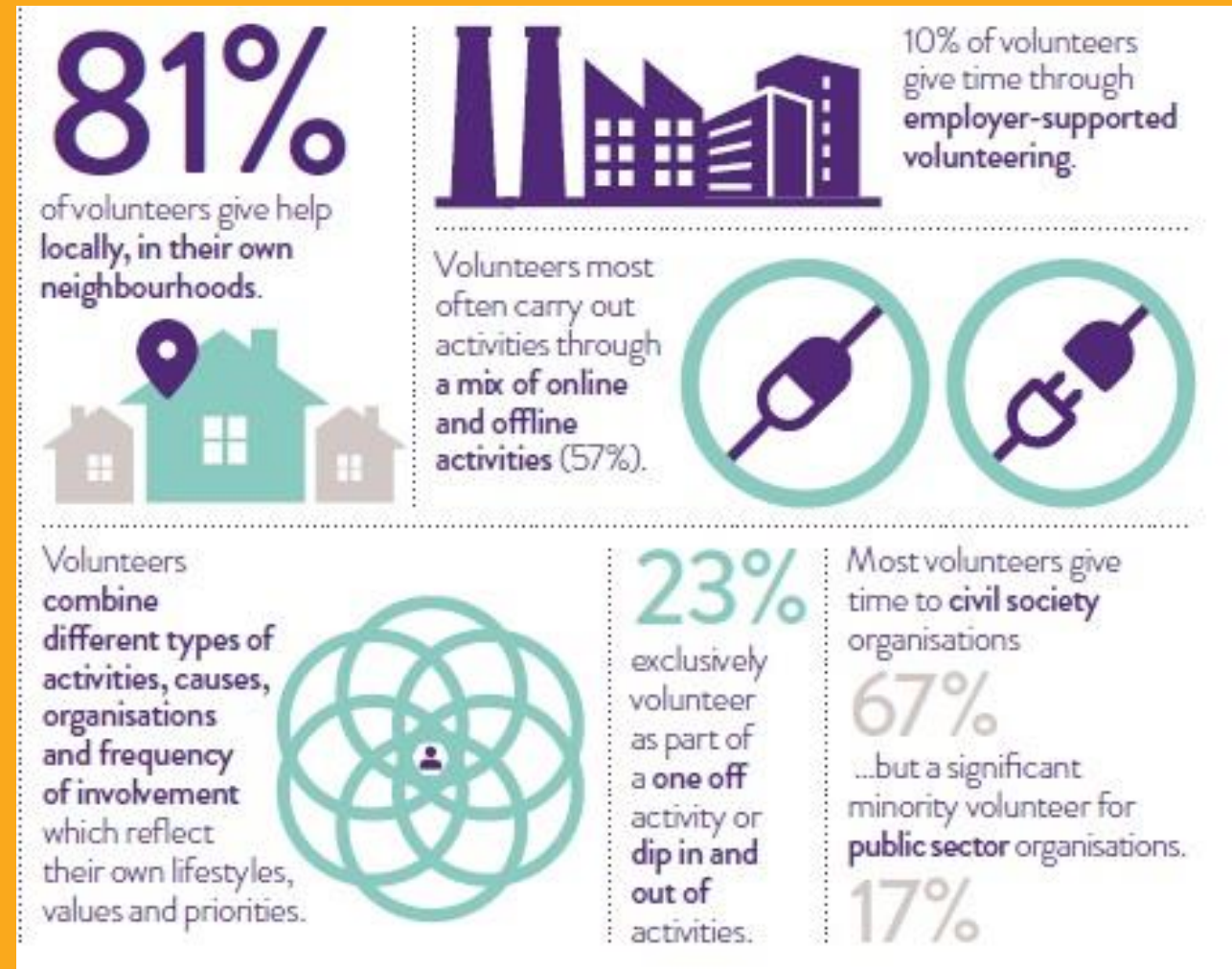
- How do we break down barriers to encourage those from lower socio-economic groups to volunteer
- How do we encourage more regular volunteering
- How do we widen the pool of volunteers – more diversity





# How are they volunteering

- 39% volunteered at events
- Women less involved in a representative role
- 42% of recent vols with main organisation for 5 years – but its leisure related
- Alongside others
- 23% one off
- Challenges
- How to turn one off volunteers into regular
- Keep engaged (younger volunteers) – lifetime journey



# Volunteer Impact

- A sense of connection
- Feeling part of something
- Enjoyment
- Personal sense of achievement
- Helped their mental health
  
- Enjoyment is not linked to FUN – but a feeling of satisfaction of having helped someone

Enjoyment ranks highest among a range of benefits that volunteers feel they get out of volunteering.



Few volunteers report having **negative experiences**.

The most common negative experiences include **too much time being taken up**, being out of pocket and being pressured to do more.



**90%**

of volunteers feel they **make a difference** through their volunteering – most commonly to an individual's life.



The age groups most likely to agree that their volunteering **helped them feel less isolated** are **18–24 year-olds (77%)** and **25–34 year olds (76%)**.

# Volunteer Retention

Volunteers who feel **pressured to do more** or that **too much of their time is taken up** are less likely to carry on volunteering.



The majority of recent volunteers say they are **likely to continue volunteering** over the next 12 months.



Among recent volunteers unlikely to continue volunteering in the next 12 months, the most common reason given is **changing circumstances**.

The factors particularly strongly associated with recent volunteers continuing to volunteer include:

- enjoyment, making a difference,**
- not feeling pressured** and
- not having too much of their time taken up.**



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# Engaging Volunteers for the future

Among those interested in future ways of getting involved, those which appeal most are:



**50%**  
Opportunities which look fun and enjoyable to be part of



**44%**  
Opportunities to combine volunteering with existing hobbies or interests

**52%**  
Opportunities to make use of existing skills or experience



Among those interested in giving time over the next 12 months, a higher proportion are interested in dipping in and out of activities or getting involved in one-off events than giving time on a regular basis.

(Note, respondents could choose more than one)

**53%**  
Dip in and out of activities



**30%**  
Giving time on a regular basis



**49%**  
One-off activity or event



Small group discussion on 3 key challenges



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# VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Section 5 explores in detail the experience of recent volunteers across the volunteer journey, focusing on their *main* organisation. It looks at how their experience varies by different types of volunteers and volunteering, and whether and how volunteers' experiences are meeting their needs and expectations.



96%

say they are very or fairly satisfied with their volunteering.

Whilst overall perceptions are very positive, some volunteers tend to have less positive views about some aspects of their experience, including **younger volunteers**, **disabled volunteers**, those **volunteering through employers** and **public sector volunteers**.



7 in 10

say they have **already or would recommend their volunteering** to a friend or family member.



Over **1/3** agree things could be **much better organised**.



VS

10%

**Public sector volunteers** are twice as likely to agree that their volunteering is 'too structured or formalised' than **civil society volunteers**.

83%

agree they feel **well supported**.

Key aspects of the volunteer experience most strongly associated with satisfaction include **feelings of support, recognition and belonging**.



1 in 5

volunteers feel their volunteering is becoming **too much like paid work**.



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# Key findings

- Positive

- Culture of respect and trust
- Feeling of being well supported
- Recognition and belonging

- Negative

- Could be better organised
- Too much bureaucracy
- Too much time
- Too much like paid work
- Younger & disabled volunteers
- Public sector volunteering

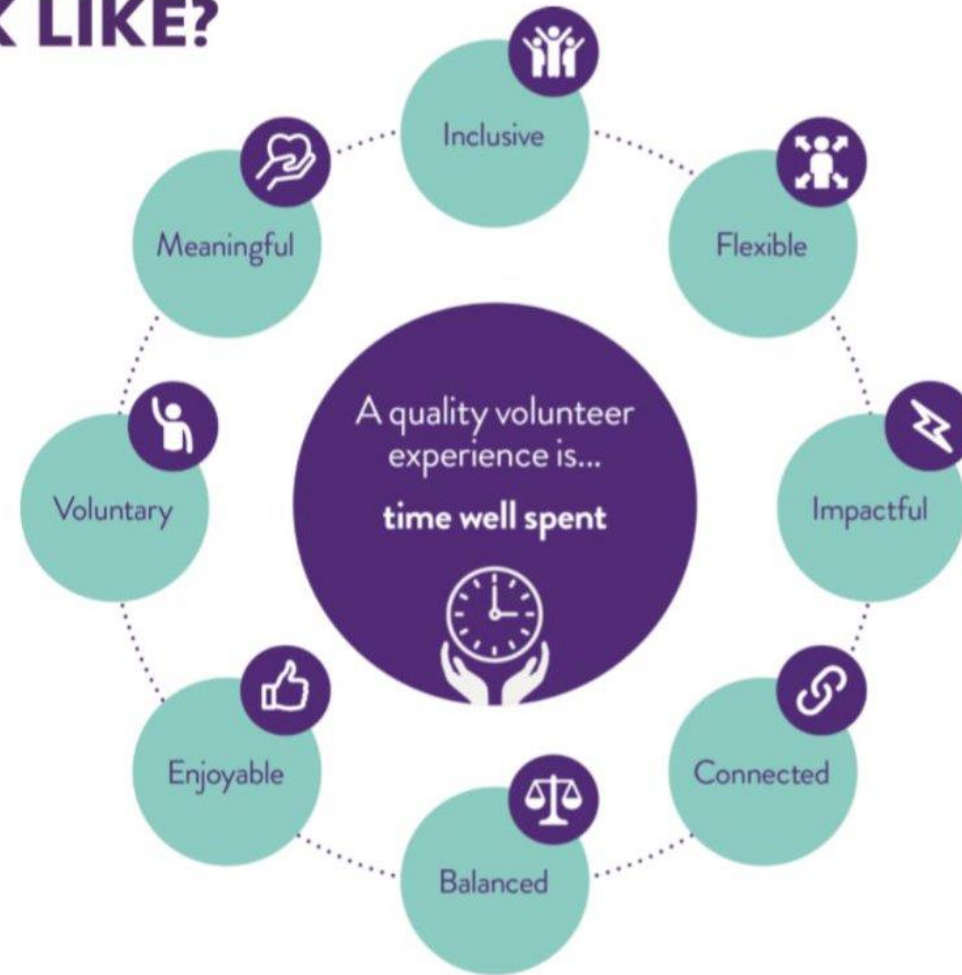


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What does this mean in practice?

## WHAT MIGHT A QUALITY EXPERIENCE LOOK LIKE?



# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT WHAT A QUALITY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE LOOKS LIKE?

The research suggests a number of key features that make up a quality experience for volunteers. Different journeys and context mean that some of these elements will be more relevant than others.



## Inclusive

It is welcoming and accessible to all



## Connected

It gives people a sense of connection to others, a cause and/or an organisation



## Voluntary

It is the volunteer who has freely chosen to do it



## Flexible

It takes into account how people who volunteer can give their time and fits around their circumstances



## Balanced

It doesn't overburden those who volunteer with unnecessary processes



## Meaningful

It resonates with people's lives, interests and priorities



## Impactful

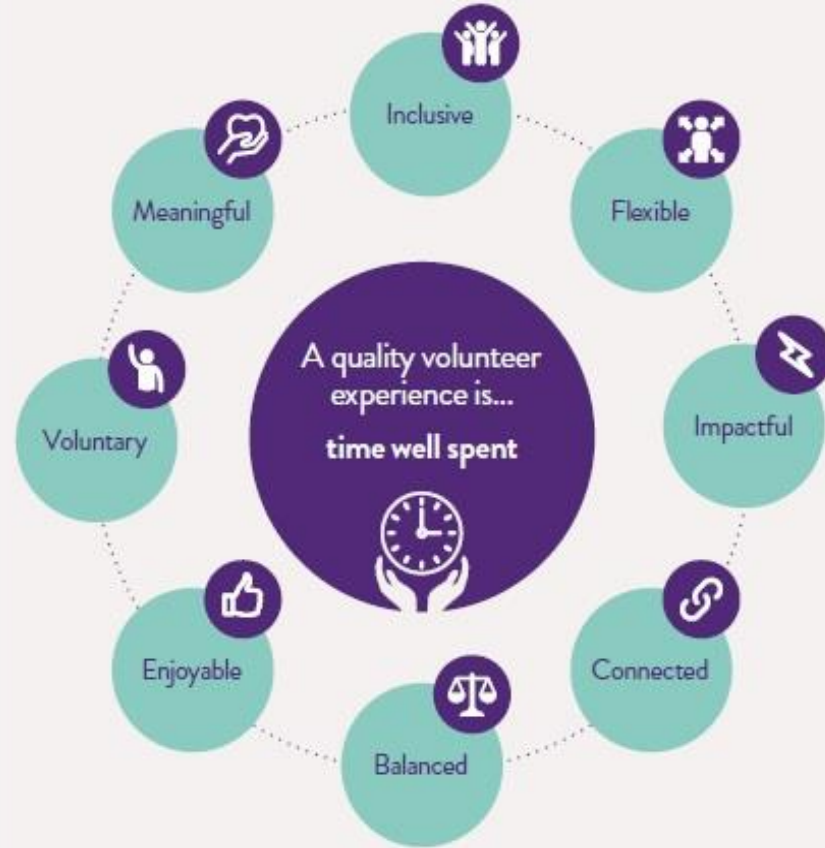
It makes a positive difference



## Enjoyable

It provides enjoyment and people feel good about what they are doing

Across these different features, our overall conclusion is that, at its best, volunteering is time well spent. It is positive that most people who volunteer seem to agree, and more can be done to reassure potential volunteers that their time will be well spent.



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# Summary

- A need for more flexible volunteering
- More short-term and one-off opportunities
- Less dependence on regular volunteers
- Developing more meaningful opportunities
- Developing more FUN opportunities
- Promoting volunteering as fun and enjoyable



# Resources and further reading

- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy/research/time-well-spent>
- Summary report
- [https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy\\_and\\_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Summary.pdf)





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