

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS



Annual Impact Report 2024/25

This report demonstrates how our work in 2024/25 is delivering against our 2025–2030 strategy to create connected, inclusive communities where everyone can thrive.

Forewords

“

I chose to volunteer with Family Mentors as part of my social work BA programme. I also saw it as an opportunity to gain meaningful experience and to help families in a positive way.

Supporting families experiencing various levels of risk and challenge provided me with first-hand insight into how meaningful it can be to simply offer our time, consistency and care. Through weekly visits, active listening, and practical support, I noticed that families genuinely looked forward to each session. Over time I saw how these interactions contributed to building confidence, reducing isolation and improving overall wellbeing. Witnessing those positive changes reinforced how impactful volunteer support can be in helping families move forward.

Volunteering has had a significant impact on my personal and professional growth. It has helped shape me into a more empathetic and self-aware person, strengthened my interpersonal skills and reinforced my values.

Volunteering helps you to uncover strengths and qualities you may not have realised you had. If anyone is considering volunteering, I wholeheartedly encourage them to take the step, it can be rewarding for you and truly impactful for the people you support. I have even encouraged two friends to get involved.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who fund Volunteering Matters and Family Mentors. Your funding has significantly impacted families facing serious challenges. The support you provide leads to real, positive changes in their lives.



Fola Afolabi
Volunteer at
Family Mentors,
Greenwich

“

For the past five years I've been a volunteer on the Welcome Friends Project in Rhondda Cynon Taf, South Wales. It provides befriending through home visits and telephone calls and in doing so, reduces social isolation and improves well-being. I started because I've been known to talk to anyone and I wanted to give something back.

Initially, lonely people are always glad to see or speak to you. After a while, building up trust, they begin to open-up and then you really get to know them. Sometimes you can help in more practical ways too. I was able to advise on who to contact regarding some drainage issues for example. Though often the people I see already have help for specific issues and they just want a much-needed good sit down and natter.

I enjoy making a difference to people's lives. It's a privilege to be part of their routine. Prior to retirement I had to deal with people from all walks of life, from people in trenches to Chief Executives of multi-national companies and I did miss that initially.

To other people thinking of volunteering, just do it. There are so many types of volunteering and different projects I really think there is something for most people. You always get more out than you put in but you must be in the right mindset e.g. you need to know when not to interfere or unduly influence.

My experience with Welcome Friends is that many people suffer from loneliness and simply need one-to-one human contact. Although there are dedicated volunteers willing to help, there are still not enough to meet the need. Effective management is essential to recruit and train volunteers and ensure safeguarding and other vital responsibilities are properly handled. I think that a properly funded organisation, led by competent staff, is crucial so that volunteers can carry out their roles confidently, knowing there is always support and backup available whenever it is needed.



Bob Hinton

Volunteer at Welcome Friends,
Rhondda Cynon Taf, Wales

Contents

What's inside the report

About us	05
Our strategy	06
Our ecosystem of volunteering and five areas of change	06
Our impact	08
Examples of our impact in England	10
Examples of our impact in Scotland	22
Examples of our impact in Wales	28
Examples of our impact UK-wide	32
Afterwords	42



“

I didn't realise how much I missed just being present in the world... It was only an hour a week, but it brought back part of the life she thought she'd lost.

Welcome Friends Befriender

About Volunteering Matters

Volunteering Matters is a nationwide charity that exists to create stronger communities through the power of volunteering. We work with local partners to develop impactful programmes that support individuals and communities across the UK.

Since 1962, we've used our influence to champion volunteering to build a thriving, resilient society. Our projects are co-created with the people and communities we work alongside: an approach that encourages participants to become future volunteers and leaders, not just beneficiaries.

We understand the pressures of day-to-day life and create flexible, inclusive opportunities for people at all stages of life. And beyond delivering projects on the ground, we use our voice to shape policy and practice – ensuring volunteering stays recognised, supported and sustainable for generations to come.

Our mission directly supports our strategy by ensuring volunteering is accessible, flexible and community-led.

The stories in this report reflect our strategy in action

Our strategy

2025-2030

In 2025, we launched our new 5-Year Strategy. Find out more about where we are now, our plans and how you can partner with us [here >](#)

Our ecosystem of volunteering

There's no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to volunteering. People come to it with different motivations, life experiences and levels of confidence – and their engagement often fluctuates and changes over time.

Our ecosystem of volunteering recognises this. It identifies the diverse ways in which people contribute to society. Every approach is valuable. Together they represent a dynamic ecosystem of social action that reflects and respects people's lives, skills and passions.



Our five areas of change

Our vision is of connected, inclusive communities where everyone can thrive through the transformative power of volunteering, in all its forms.



Combat loneliness

No one should feel alone. Volunteering builds friendships and belonging.

Improve health and wellbeing

Good health starts with community. Volunteering supports everyone's wellbeing.



Break down barriers

Talent is everywhere but opportunity is not. Volunteering opens doors.



Equip and enable communities

Communities know best what they need. We work with them, not for them.



Create social cohesion

Volunteering unites people. Many who are helped go on to help others.



Look for these icons which will feature on our projects later in the report

Our Impact a snapshot

These figures reflect our strategy in action — addressing loneliness, improving wellbeing and dismantling barriers to volunteering.

12,643

people volunteered their time to support people and communities across 87 projects

Our impact on others

11,303

People benefitted from our projects

This included:

1,710

Older people

3,570

Young people

231

People with disabilities

361

Families / family members

3,317

People from a mixture of these groups

2,114

Additional individuals



England

4,930 volunteers supported
supported **6,893** people
through **43** projects.



Scotland

442 volunteers supported
supported **1,271** people
through **28** projects.



Wales

431 volunteers supported
supported **2,632** people
through **14** projects.

+ 4,001 volunteers helped
transform Scotland's biodiversity
through community projects

Nationwide

2,839

People volunteered in two
projects with nationwide reach

Through-out this report, individual names have been changed where necessary
to protect people's identities.

Examples of our impact in

England



Match and Mentor

Norfolk

Match and Mentor provides personalised activities for people with a learning disability or additional support needs. Our aim is to help each person reach their full potential by fostering independence, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging. We do this through three key strands of support:

- Group activities within the centre – including crafts, learning sessions, and other structured activities led by staff and volunteers.
- Group activities in the community – such as visits to local museums, bowling, and specially organised nightclub events.
- Volunteering opportunities for participants – with some individuals volunteering independently or others participating as part of a group.



Volunteers



**Volunteer hours
completed**



People supported



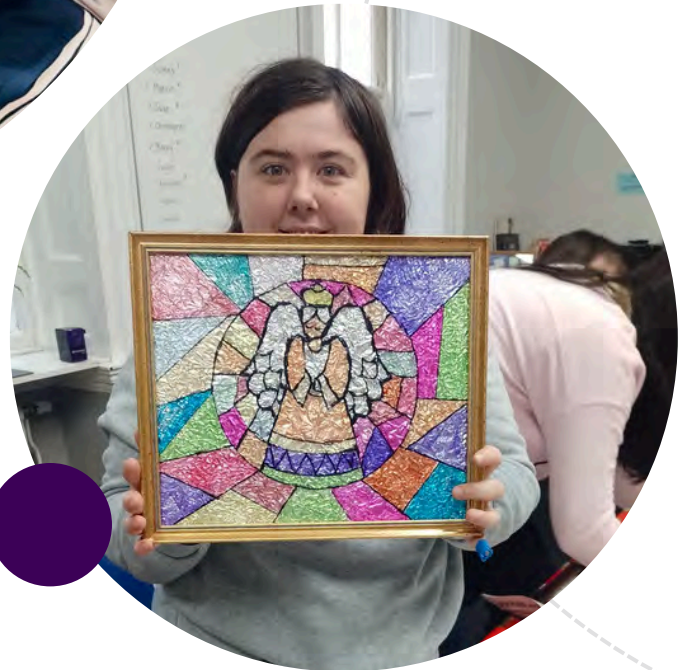
**Types of
activities**



**Of people using the
service are regularly
volunteering**

Volunteers sit at the heart of Match and Mentor, and the high number of volunteering hours comes from the contribution of three distinct volunteer groups:

- Local volunteers who support service users either in their volunteering placements or during group activities in the day service environment.
- Full-time international volunteers who volunteer in the centre, offering one-to-one or group support.
- Participants volunteering in their local community with support.



W is an absolute gem to work with – thank you for all that you do for the food hub
– North Lynn food hub



I am part of a safe and unique community
– Participant on Match and Mentor



Lifelines

Brighton and Hove

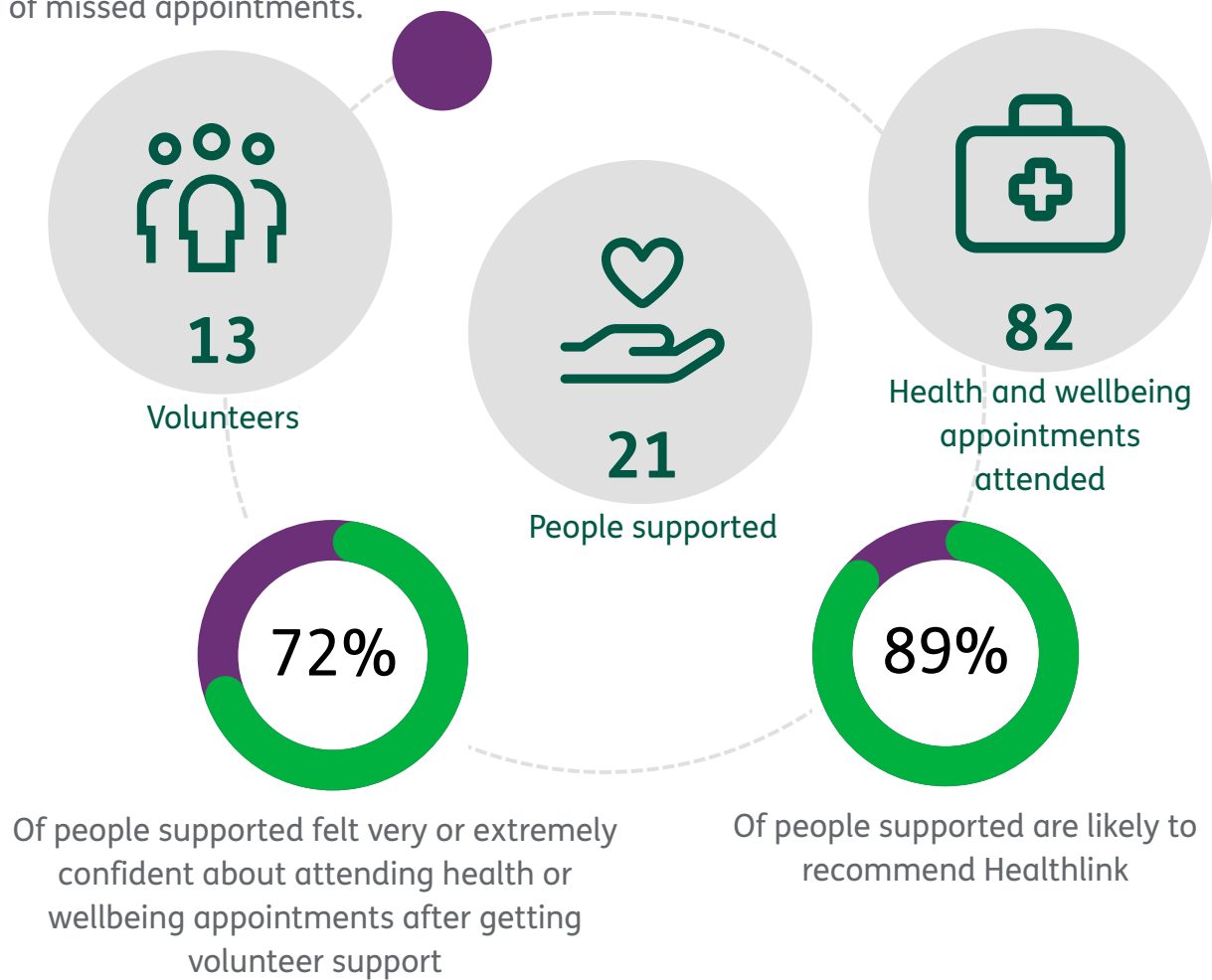
Through Lifelines, volunteers have been supporting people aged over 50 in Brighton and Hove since 2007. A city full of energy, diversity and heart - our work here is all about supporting people to live healthier more connected lives, helping to tackle loneliness and isolation. We recruit, train and support volunteers to start and run groups that bring people together to exercise, create, try new things and get together - focussing on social connections, health and having fun.

Many older people miss connecting with young people and are curious about different cultures. The project brings together residents and international volunteers for cultural exchange and social connection.

Since 2024 there have been:



Healthlink volunteers meet people at home and accompany them to their appointment. They wait outside during the visit or go in to remind people of questions they want to ask - and they can take notes to leave with them after they return home. This service helps people attend more of their health appointments and helps to reduce the impact of missed appointments.



I have family that live further away from me and can't always be there to help with appointments....since I have trouble with speech, mobility and confidence since my stroke. The volunteers have been a huge help to me and also put my family's minds at rest that I have someone there.



Healthlink is an invaluable service, which has made a big difference to me. Volunteers are friendly, helpful and capable. They are punctual and sometimes go beyond the call of duty. If it was not for this service, I would not be able to attend important health appointments. Thank you Healthlink!





Youth Social Action

Suffolk

In Ipswich, a Town of Youth Social Action, young people use their voice towards shaping a fairer society. This includes participation in Hackathons which bring together young people, community partners, and facilitators for intensive idea-generation workshops. The aim is to co-create solutions to local challenges and enable young people to design practical interventions.



624

Volunteers



2,230

People supported



To keep children or young people safe, they should have a safe place where they feel accepted and seen.

- Shannyn, Crucial Crew Volunteer

Ipswich Crucial Crew is a safety education initiative for pupils in primary schools in Ipswich, Suffolk. Through interactive scenarios and workshops, the project equips children with the knowledge and confidence to stay safe as they transition to secondary school and greater independence – including focusing on healthy relationships, substance abuse and criminal exploitation. Volunteering Matters Youth Social Action Team work alongside the fire and rescue service, police and other local partners.

The project involved 1,265 year 6 pupils from 26 Primary schools.

Thrive Fest in Bury St Edmunds is a youth-led cultural festival, co-designed and organised by young volunteers. It combines arts, music, and social action, making volunteering visible, accessible and celebratory. The festival attracted around 350 young people from local schools and colleges, breaking down barriers between young people and the wider community. It creates a positive platform for youth to showcase talent and address issues like mental health, inclusion, and belonging and strengthens local identity and intergenerational connection.



It wasn't just a festival - it showed that young people can run something big and meaningful for the whole town.

- ThriveFest volunteer organiser



Bloom

Nuneaton

Bloom is a volunteer-led support network for mostly Syrian and Arabic-speaking women in Nuneaton. It reduces isolation, improves access to services, and provides community insight that supports more effective local policy and service design.

The group started with two people and now has around 25 regular participants. Although often described as a coffee morning, Bloom is a vital community network that reduces isolation, promotes wellbeing and helps women navigate UK systems such as housing, education, health and legal processes. Bloom also supports public sector agencies by providing insight into barriers and enabling improvements in policy and service design.

Women engaged with Bloom interact more confidently with local services, experience reduced isolation and develop strong social networks that support their wellbeing.

Bloom offers lived-experience insight that helps public agencies identify barriers, improve communication, and design more culturally responsive services. This feedback strengthens trust and ensures policies and processes reflect real community needs.



“

My work with Bloom has transcended volunteering. It has been a profound personal transformation.

Having recently obtained British citizenship, I now consider the UK my second country — a nation that embraced me and provided security. This experience has deepened my commitment, making it my duty to serve and contribute to its continued strength and success.

The group successfully helps women navigate tradition, address immediate challenges, and deeply understand local life. The greatest reward is the shift from feeling isolated to being part of a strong, loving "chosen family" in the UK, mirroring the bond I share with my family in Syria.

Nahed Alhamwi

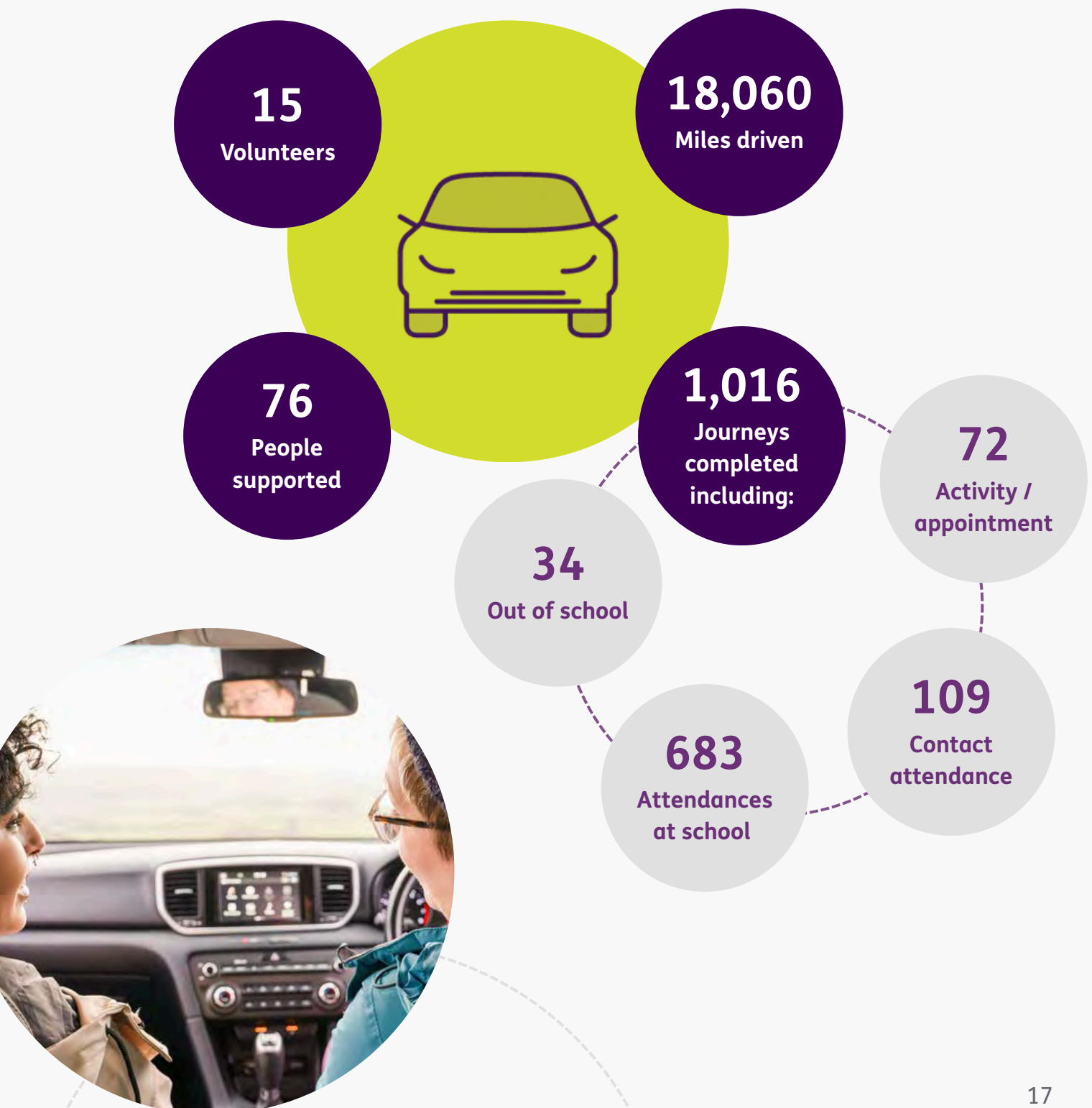
Founder of Bloom



Milton Keynes Driver Service

Milton Keynes

The Milton Keynes Volunteer Drivers Service supports children, young people, and their families by providing safe, reliable transport to school, medical appointments, and key activities. The service ensures they can access the support they need, in a way that is sensitive to their individual circumstances.



Spotlight on Sophie

When Sophie was referred to the Milton Keynes Volunteer Drivers Service, she was experiencing severe anxiety and depression. As a parent, she was finding it increasingly difficult to travel long distances alone to attend vital contact sessions with her children, who were in foster care over two and a half hours away.

Public transport wasn't a realistic option, and without support, Sophie risked missing those sessions, and with them, valuable time with her children. That's when one of our Volunteer Drivers stepped in.

Each week, the volunteer collected Sophie from her home in Milton Keynes, drove her to the contact centre, waited nearby while she spent time with her children, and brought her safely back home.

For Sophie, the service meant far more than just transport. It offered stability, reassurance, and the comfort of not having to face a difficult journey alone. It helped her stay connected to her children and gave her the space to focus on her mental health and recovery.

Stockton-on-Tees Driver Service

Stockton-on-Tees

Through this service, volunteers provide transport for individuals unable to use public or patient transport due to disability, financial constraints, or isolation. The service improves access to health and social services, combats loneliness, and enhances wellbeing.



18

Volunteers



872

Hours
completed



150

People
supported

Award winning

The Stockton Volunteer Driving Service won the Community Partnership Star Award at the Stockton-on-Tees Community Star Awards





Sporting Chance

Stockton-on-Tees

Sporting Chance is a project for men aged 50+ in the borough of Stockton on Tees. It offers both physical activity and group sessions with health messaging in a non-clinical environment. In doing so, the project supports older men to improve their overall health and wellbeing and decrease loneliness and isolation. Men taking part report a sense of belonging and become volunteers themselves to support and steer the project towards long term sustainability.



I sometimes don't think you realise how much you have changed the landscape when it comes to the health and wellbeing of men over the age of 50. Sporting Chance is a truly remarkable programme that creates real positive change for all of the fellas.

- Programme Manger 'Shape the Play', North Riding County Football Association

Spotlight on Steve

Steve, aged 63, joined Sporting Chance in February 2023 through a Social Prescriber referral due to medical concerns. Steve now attends the groups two or three times weekly and has signed up for the 10-week gym programme in partnership with Durham University.

Steve reports that he has lost over 2 stone, and his blood sugar levels are much improved. He also finds movement and pain levels much better. Overall, he feels much healthier. Steve is now very much part of the Sporting Chance Family. He really enjoys the camaraderie from the other men and enjoys the chat after the exercise. 'It is a great group of lovely people who all look out for one another'



Volunteer Centre

Newcastle

Through our work at the Volunteer Centre, we help to support and celebrate volunteering across Newcastle upon Tyne. The centre supports over 1200 charities, organisations and groups across Newcastle, around all things volunteering. We also support hundreds of members of the public each year, to find suitable volunteering roles across the city.

Volunteer Centre Newcastle exists to increase the quality, quantity, and impact of volunteering across our city. We support individuals and organisations alike to ensure volunteering remains a powerful force for community change.

Over the last 12 months we have supported organisations with role development and advertising, delivering organisational volunteering health checks, offering individual advice to people looking to volunteer and running community drop-in sessions so that people can find out about volunteering in a location accessible to them.



1,210

**Active
organisations**



71

**New organisations
in 2025**



46

**Corporate
organisations
supported through
the centre**



514

**Volunteering
opportunities
advertised**



Just wanted to send a big thank you for your help with getting our volunteering opportunity online. We've had so much interest, and have met with and trained up some absolutely lovely people, and it's going to be positive & refreshing working with them moving forward. Appreciate your help.

– Newcastle City Council



I just want to let you know we've had a bit of a flurry of enquiries about volunteering for Telephone Support, after seeing adverts on your site. So thank you very much!!

– Royal Voluntary Service

Volunteer Passport Scheme (VPS)

The Volunteer Passport Scheme is a forward-thinking and innovative solution to the challenges that some volunteers, and volunteer involving organisations, face in Newcastle. By signing up as a Passport Scheme Volunteer, people can volunteer in a wide range of distinct roles suited to their availability, skillset, and interests. The scheme supports organisations by freeing up time and capacity for volunteer onboarding, cost savings, and the direct reimbursement of volunteer travel costs.



Examples of our impact in

Scotland



Click here to find out more about our impact in Scotland in our Scotland Impact Report



Action Earth

Through Action Earth, voluntary groups engage in environmental and conservation efforts utilising small grants, advice, and networks for support. Volunteers transform areas across Scotland – to support and sustain unique biodiversity through ambitious and innovative methods. By improving local environments and strengthening community wellbeing, we support people on their social action journey, leading on the decisions that are made about the place that they call home.



4,001
Volunteers



142
Projects delivered



36,211
Volunteering hours



Thank you for your help and support, it's great seeing the woodland and volunteers' health improve!

- Cassiltoun Housing Association





North Lanarkshire Befriending

North Lanarkshire

This project provides invaluable emotional, practical and social support for Young Carers aged 8-18. We recruit, train and support Befrienders (aged 18+) who choose to invest time in the community supporting children and young people to take a break from their challenging home lives.

Throughout 2024/2025 in North Lanarkshire:



15

Volunteer
befrienders



18

Young people
supported



1,200

Hours of
volunteering

“

Many of our young people are very isolated and I believe that this isolation contributes to their mental health presentation. The befriending service matches the young people with a befriender and every young person who has accessed the service has given nothing but positive feedback.

- CAMHS Nurse, North Lanarkshire



Supported Volunteering

Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, and Dundee

Supported Volunteering enables people with barriers to community participation take active steps towards their goals. Our staff enable confidence to develop, help to recognise existing strengths and support development of new skills. This leads to a tailored volunteering placement that encourages practical skill use and relevant experience. People may also be matched with a Volunteer Mentor, and we can access additional support such as clothing, laptops, driving lessons and training courses to assist their journey.

100%

of mentees would recommend our support to others



I have a client who has been in mental health services for years and is now undertaking a volunteering role... her sense of accomplishment in reaching this point means she is able to consider a reduction of input and support from the CMHT as she continues to gain confidence!

- Dundee Community Mental Health Team



311

People supported across 3 regions



100+

Charity partners across 3 regions



42

Volunteer mentors in Dundee

Spotlight on Ryan

Ryan was referred for additional support as he has multiple barriers such as self-diagnosed additional support needs, ARFID, and intense rurality. Ryan began working with us to increase his confidence and source employment opportunities. It was clear that volunteering would be a helpful way to overcome some of his social anxiety while supported towards self-employment through his incredible paintings.

By offering this wrap-around support, there has been a huge transformation in Ryan! He is now very focused on what he needs to do. He has done so much research and is currently putting together a list of equipment to allow him to start testing the process of applying his art to mugs... I am really pleased with his progress.

- Ryan's South of Scotland Enterprise Coach

We were able to source Ryan a volunteering placement with Oxfam where he built his confidence but also gained cash experience and became increasingly comfortable with speaking to members of the public. It is partly down to this experience which has now given him the push to move forward with his own business ideas.



Training and Support for Employers / Corporates

We work with organisations across Scotland to help them understand how to unlock the potential within their multigenerational workforce. Supporting employers by providing training, solutions, and consultancy services that support best practice in creating purposeful working environments which work for all colleagues. This training is widely used across youth and employer networks and their skills and knowledge are vital for employers looking to support their next generation of staff.



31

Training
sessions



17

Different
employers



800+

Participants





We are the lead delivery partner of YouthVIP, a Scottish Government funded national initiative, co-designed and led by young people (aged 16-30) across Scotland to improve and scale access to volunteering for young people. Our support enables young people to improve their own life chances, lead policy change and drive sector-wide improvements.



We have received enormous value from our partnership with Youth VIP. Not only have their training significantly improved how our own staff engage with young people, but it has also helped our staff to support the wider sector to improve their learning and understanding.

– Fife Voluntary Action

Engaging young volunteers: Turning interest into impact.

These workshop events were exceptionally well attended and with incredible feedback:



Thank you for allowing me to come along and be part of this great training. It's great to know others are asking (about supporting young people in Volunteering) and can get lots of help!



A brilliant session! Lots to think about and really great to know there are other people out there with similar hurdles.



Youth Consultation Research Report

It is essential that we get volunteering right for young people so that they and society can gain the benefits of their volunteering, now and in the future. In 2024-2025 we undertook a research project to create a picture of current youth volunteering in Scotland and what can be done to make volunteering opportunities more inclusive, appealing and rewarding for all.

Our research approach, collaboratively developed and always supported by the #YouthVIP panel, employed both surveys and focus groups to gather in-depth qualitative and quantitative data. The report lays the groundwork for action aimed at increasing participation and inclusivity in youth volunteering across Scotland.

Examples of our impact in

Wales





Sexual Awareness for Everyone (SAFE)

Through facilitated workshops SAFE supports 16-35-year-olds with additional learning needs to lead conversations around relationships, consent, internet safety and sexual health. Volunteers with additional learning needs develop, produce and co-deliver workshops in schools, colleges and youth centres across Gwent.

This project has increased the autonomy of participants by giving people the knowledge they need around sex and relationships, recognising that they share the same aspirations for loving relationships as anyone else.

Delivering programmes like SAFE with trusted community partners helps reduce risks while enabling young people to lead fulfilling, enjoyable lives.



My understanding of consent and relationships has been a great learning experience for me to understand the different types of friendships/relationships and be able to understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is.

3 workshop areas:



Relationships and consent



Healthy relationships and internet safety



Sexual health



11

Volunteers



106

People
supported



Welcome Friends

Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr

Volunteers provide befriending support for residents aged over 50 in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr. This helps to reduce loneliness and isolation both at home and over the telephone through friendly conversation. The project often links people with other support in the local community, promoting good mental health through connection.



One cup at a time in Merthyr

When I signed up with Volunteering Matters in Merthyr as a befriender, I thought it would just be a weekly chat, maybe a coffee or a walk. I was matched with a woman whose health had declined and whose family were working full time.

On our first outing to the M&S café, we sat by the window with tea and cake. From then on, I showed up every week, and she'd be at the door with her coat on. We tried new places, walked, talked, and laughed.

One afternoon, she looked up and said, "You've given me something to look forward to. I didn't realise how much I missed just being present in the world." That moment stuck with me.

It was only an hour a week, but it brought back part of the life she thought she'd lost. Her mood lifted, and after I offered to go with her, she joined a community group she now attends regularly.

I've learned that you don't have to do something big to make a big difference. Sometimes it's just showing up, sharing a laugh or a slice of cake.

In a place like Merthyr, where community matters, it turned into more than volunteering. It became a friendship that mattered to both of us.



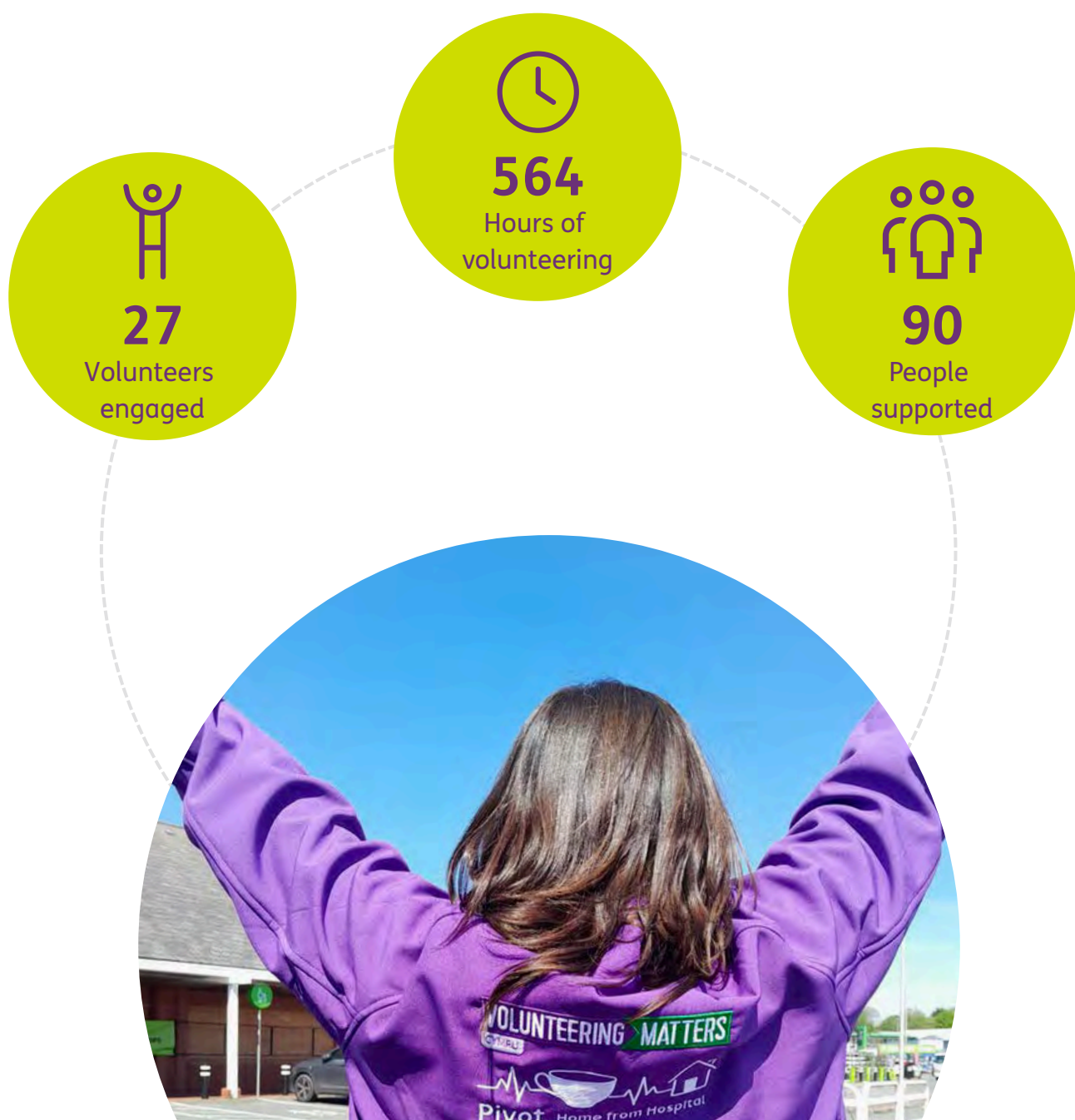


PIVOT

Pembrokeshire

Through the PIVOT project, volunteers supported the health service to enable a reduced length of stay in hospital. Volunteers support patients without a local support network to be discharged from hospital. Volunteers provide company and help with practical tasks to enable people to stay in their own home. This also prevents readmission into hospital. Having a volunteer check in regularly enables problems to be spotted early, and for referrals to be made to other agencies if needed. Loneliness and isolation are eased, and confidence built to allow people to live independently again.

Support lasts up to 6 weeks and in 2024/2025



Examples of our impact

UK-wide





For more information on the impact of Grandmentors, click [here](#) to see our Grandmentors impact report

Grandmentors

Our Grandmentors programme connects care experienced young people with volunteer mentors aged 50 and over, offering emotional and practical support as they navigate life after care. These trained volunteers help build trusted relationships that encourage young people to recognise their strengths and shape their own futures.

Working at the young person's pace, Grandmentors support goals around education, employment, housing, wellbeing and more. They meet regularly and explore activities that build confidence and broaden horizons. Rooted in local communities, the programme helps both mentors and mentees become more active and connected in their area.

395 older people provided friendship and support to **225** care-experienced young people thanks to our **16** Grandmentors programmes.

During 2024/25 there were Grandmentors projects in the following areas:

Brent, Camden, Greenwich, Hounslow, Islington, Lewisham, Merton, Midlothian, Milton Keynes, Perth & Kinross, Southend, Suffolk, Surrey, Telford & Wrekin, Warwickshire and Wolverhampton

The Grandmentors programme tracks the progress of mentees through an interactive impact tracker in four categories.

When looking at the 2024/25 data it shows that:



63% of young people were independent or stable in their overall access to education, employment and training, an increase from 60% at the start of their mentorship.



83% of young people were independent or stable in their overall health and wellbeing, an increase from 75% at the start of their mentorship.



88% of young people were independent or stable in their housing and finance circumstances, an increase from 82% at the start of their mentorship.



80% of young people were independent or stable in their overall life skills, an increase from 46% at the start of their mentorship.



Spotlight on KK

I was referred to Grandmentors when I was trying to research routes to pursue my dreams of being a dentist. I don't have the common required qualifications most people have for the course, so I felt like I didn't have a chance. But then I met the lovely Farzana at Volunteering Matters, who matched me with Peter.

Grandmentors has been a game changer for me. My mentor, Peter, has helped in more ways than I imagined. He helped me to find a perfect course and sketch up a timeline and compare university courses. We meet every other week, as a debrief and to refocus on the future. I am now enrolled on an access to higher education course in medicine/dentistry alongside retaking my GCSE's.

When I moved house, Peter helped me with websites and apps where I could get furniture. I also had some arrears to pay off which meant I had to create a budget plan. This is when I realised that having a mentor like Peter was so much more than a career advisor. I'd always recommend Grandmentors. This programme is life-changing, unique and so profound.

“

I think it's a brilliant programme that benefits both young people who have left care and older people who want to learn from new experiences. It's an absolutely incredible programme, and I've been privileged to be able to listen to mentors and mentees to learn more about it.

**- Ellie Reeves
MP, Lewisham West and East Dulwich**

“

Volunteering as a Grandmentor has been a truly transformative experience. The impact of this work is profound - helping young people gain confidence, achieve their goals; and develop skills for independence. It is a privilege to be part of a program that makes such a tangible difference in young people's lives.

- Rav, Mentor



Family Mentors / Family Supporters

Southend, Greenwich, Edinburgh

Across Southend, Greenwich, and Edinburgh, 113 volunteers provided practical and emotional support to 238 individuals and families through our Family Mentors and Family Supporters programmes.

86

**Families supported
in Southend and
Edinburgh**

550

**Volunteer hours
completed in
Southend alone**

These dedicated volunteers work with families to build confidence, reduce isolation, and create lasting change. From budgeting and parenting advice to improving wellbeing and accessing community support, volunteers empower families to take the next step forward. Together, they create communities where families feel understood, supported, and hopeful about the future.



Volunteering not only changed the lives of families but also mine
– Volunteer



Being a volunteer gives me a lot of satisfaction because I can help families solve small daily problems
– Volunteer



Don't wait for everything to be perfect – the world needs us to act as changemakers
– Volunteer

Spotlight on a family in Southend

A family of four was referred to Family Mentors by Social Care, struggling with domestic conflict and Dad's recent medical diagnosis. Both parents felt isolated and overwhelmed, and Dad, having moved to the UK from abroad, initially found it hard to trust services.

They were matched with a volunteer originally from Brazil, a professional psychologist with lived experience of adapting to a new country. Through regular meetings, the volunteer helped the couple rebuild communication, manage conflict, and express emotions more positively.

With this support, Mum focused on self-care, Dad engaged community support services, and the family connected with programmes such as Caring Dads. Social Care has since closed their case, and the family continue to see their volunteer as a trusted presence.

“

I could not have asked for a better match. To feel supported with no judgement is so empowering

- Mum

Spotlight on a family in Edinburgh

“

Even though I have family and my ex-partner, I feel like no one hears me. But when I talk to the volunteer, I feel like I am finally heard

- Sarah

Sarah, a single mother of three including a child with a disability, was matched with Lizzie, a volunteer who also has experience supporting a child with additional needs. Lizzie's understanding and guidance helped Sarah access community resources, find support for her children, and manage daily challenges.

Through their time together, Sarah's mental health and confidence improved, and she felt less isolated.

“

It is amazing how good a match this was. Maybe it was meant to be

- Lizzie

The Edinburgh project has seen:

63%

Improvement in financial independence

71%

Improvement in accessing further education

70%

Improvement in self-care

76%

Improvement in mental health

RSVP



The Retired and Senior Volunteers programme (RSVP) operates in multiple locations across England, Scotland and Wales.

RSVP offers people aged 50+ the opportunity to use their skills, experience, and enthusiasm to support others, reduce social isolation, and strengthen communities. RSVP volunteers contribute in many ways. The impact is far-reaching — not only for those who receive support but for the volunteers themselves, who benefit from improved health, wellbeing, and social connections.

3,725

Volunteers led change in their local community through RSVP – all while improving their own wellbeing.

RSVP projects include:

- ✓ Befriending
- ✓ Community focused action
- ✓ Driving schemes
- ✓ Handyperson support
- ✓ Hospital volunteering
- ✓ Knitting and sewing
- ✓ Lay assessors of care provision
- ✓ School volunteering
- ✓ Walking for health and wellbeing





Employee volunteering

Our Employee Volunteering Team delivers collaborative and impactful employee volunteering projects and programmes to businesses across the UK. They help employers, and their workforce to use their skills, energy, and time to create lasting impact across the UK.



2,769

Volunteers



1,776

Volunteer hours

Spotlight on Centre 404

This has included volunteering at Centre 404, which is working towards a world where people with learning disabilities, autism and their families have the support they need to enjoy the same rights, freedom, responsibilities and choices of all people within the community.

Volunteers play a key role in supporting Centre 404 mission through practical and interactive volunteering days participating in activities such as gardening to maintain a tidy and hazard-free environment for service users, improving the environment of the centre and organising creative workshops that offer fun and engaging sessions.

Spotlight on the Ramsden Centre

At the Ramsden Centre, part of the Brandon Trust, National Grid employees joined a one-day volunteering project through Volunteering Matters. They refreshed the garden spaces and redecorated the sensory room with calming colours and textures. A highlight was taking part in a music session with service users. Guided by centre staff, the day created meaningful connections and more opportunities are planned for the year ahead.



#iWill Movement

The #iWill Movement aims to make participation in social action such as volunteering, fundraising, mentoring and campaigning the norm for young people aged 10 to 25 years old. In doing so, #iWill amplifies young voices to take an active role in transforming their communities. Volunteering Matters and UK Youth have a partnership to coordinate #iWill.

As the #iWill Movement, we collectively invest in young people's passions, talents and skills and they in turn, lead innovation through their social action, challenge systems and encourage traditional decision makers to share power. The #iWill Movement has an impact both within communities and within the young people themselves.

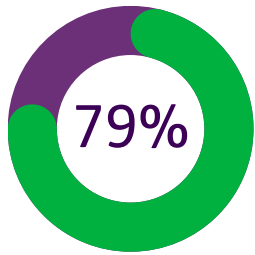
Highlights include:

- ✓ Up to 1,000 social action opportunities for Ambassadors every year
- ✓ 70 actively engaged volunteers with 163 hours in 2024

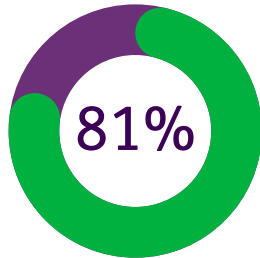
Between January and June 2025

- + 78 new Ambassadors across the UK
- + 43 organisations signed the Power of Youth Charter – 14 based in Blackpool and 6 in Ipswich, #iWill Towns of social action
- + 9 Ambassadors attended the European Youth Event held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg
- + Ambassadors co-hosted the UK roundtable for the development of the Reykjavik principles for Democracy, in partnership with the Council of Europe. 18 ambassadors participated

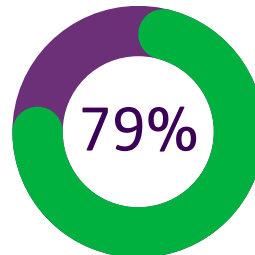
From the Ambassadors that completed the annual Ambassadors' Spring Survey



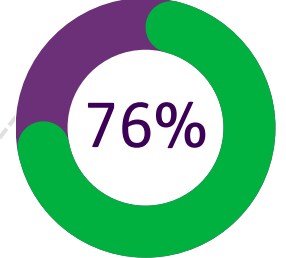
Said they had developed skills that allow pursuing of personal, academic and professional goals



Said they had developed leadership skills



Said they had developed communication skills



Said they had developed problem solving skills

Informing the National Youth Strategy

As part of a consortium with My Life My Say and Savanta, the iWill Movement drove the consultation for the development of the National Youth Strategy. #iwill Ambassadors from across England co-designed and co-led creative and engaging research, consultation and the communications campaign “Deliver You” to bring the National Youth Strategy consultation to the nation.

In addition to a brilliant and successful youth driven communications campaign, we also led on the delivery of 6 hack events. Hosted by #iWill Ambassadors, alongside regional partners, hundreds of young people attended these events to start to shape the solutions to the priorities emerging through the survey consultation.



Through the consortium, there were:

✓ 14 focus groups / Democracy Cafés and a national survey

✓ Over 14,000 young people across England had their views heard and helped inform the Government's National Youth Strategy.

Afterwords

“ Within a climate of economic pressure and widening inequality, our commitment to the power of volunteering has remained unwavering. We have seen first-hand it's impact to connect people, strengthen wellbeing and drive social change.

More than 12,000 volunteers contributed this year, offering their leadership, skills and lived experience across mentoring, befriending, campaigning and community action. We prioritised inclusion, co-creating opportunities with communities and widening access for disabled people and those furthest from opportunity. Our corporate partnerships also grew, grounded in meaningful, community-led activity.

Nationally, we continued shaping the future of volunteering through key roles in sector-wide initiatives and policy discussions. We remain committed to championing volunteering as essential social infrastructure, which is vital to wellbeing, democracy and local power.

With the launch of our new organisational strategy, shaped by volunteers, staff, partners and communities, our mission feels more relevant than ever. My sincere thanks go to everyone who has contributed this year. Your commitment makes everything we achieve possible. Volunteering Matters will continue to stand for dignity, inclusion and community-led change in the years ahead.

As we enter the first year of our 2025–2030 strategy, we are beginning a transition in how we understand, measure and communicate impact. Future reports will show not only what we delivered, but how volunteering is transforming lives, places and systems — capturing both quantitative outcomes and the lived-experience stories at the heart of our work across our 5 Areas of Change and 4 Strategic Goals.



Amanda Naylor OBE
Chief Executive Officer
Volunteering Matters

“ This has been a year of purpose and progress, as we continue to harness the power of volunteering to build stronger, fairer communities across the UK.

Our belief that volunteering should be inclusive, transformative and community-led has guided everything we do. Thousands of volunteers have contributed their time and leadership this year, enabling us to support more beneficiaries and deepen our impact through both flagship programmes and locally rooted initiatives.

Our partnerships across the sector remain vital, including our role in shaping the National Youth Strategy and championing the voice of young people in national policy.

I want to thank our Chief Executive, Amanda Naylor OBE, the executive team, our staff, volunteers, partners and fellow Trustees for their dedication and leadership throughout this period of change.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building an inclusive, equitable volunteering ecosystem and to championing the people and communities who bring positive change to life every day.



Peta Foxall CBE
Chair of Trustees
Volunteering Matters



Thank you

**Our strategy would not be
delivered without committed
partners**

A special **thank you**

We want to give a special thank you to the players of People's Postcode Lottery, who have been supporting us since 2016. That's nearly ten years of partnership and impact.

Thanks to their continued generosity, here is what we've been able to achieve together:



£7,000,000

Investment by players of People's Postcode Lottery



44

Every £100 invested by players of People's Postcode Lottery has supported over 44 people



18,085,200

Volunteer hours since 2016



£164,064,812

The total value of volunteer contributions since 2016, calculated at national minimum wage for 200 hours annually

Since 2016 we have:

- Recorded 90,429 volunteer participations across our programmes. Many individuals have volunteered in more than one year.
- Supported 309,954 people across our programmes.

The real Social Return on Investment is likely 3–5x the original investment, based on avoided costs to the NHS and social services

For every £1 invested by players of People's Postcode Lottery, £23.44 in volunteer value was generated*

* Calculated as UK minimum wage x 200 volunteer hours p/a

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

A special thank you

for the support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, awarding funds from Postcode Support Trust, which has supported our work across England, Scotland and Wales

