Volunteering Journeys

Growing the youth volunteering generation

Institute for Community Studies, 2022

Authorship

Tania Carregha, Zoë Wilkins, Katriya Bulutoglu, Dorine Mwesiga, Samanthi Theminimuelle, Nora Zia, Emily Morrison, Richard Harries, Dr William Dunn, Kenza Kamal, Olivia Kershaw (Institute for Community Studies), Dr Andy Mycock (University of Huddersfield) and Professor Matthew Flinders (University of Sheffield).

Contents

Executive Summary

Key Findings

- Volunteering among young people is not as tied to formal institutional structures as in previous generations, young people tend to define volunteering more flexibly, including informal and formal routes of volunteering, social action. Consequently, existing definitions of volunteering may not be capturing all of the types of volunteering being done by young people.
- Young people have different priorities when considering what volunteering opportunities to take part in, they are more likely to be drawn to opportunities that feel like they are generating social change than opportunities that feel like they are a small part of an institution (i.e. volunteering at a charity shop).
- The background and circumstances of each young person is critical in influencing attitudes to and frequency of volunteering; and creating more even provision that overcomes barriers but is not solely delivered through educational pathways.
- There is a significant opportunity to grow the youth volunteering base through shaping opportunities which are delivered in local places and closely connected to local issues; and furthermore, messaging and framing that responds to young peoples' interest in serving their community.
- There is a need to address the impact of the triple burden of work, family life and mental health on volunteering.

1.Introducing the Volunteering Journey

The Volunteering Journey final report examines how young people perceive and experience the current volunteering 'offer', and how it could be reshaped to strengthen and sustain their life-long participation. The project is rooted in a shared belief that young people's emergent civic power through volunteering can inspire sustained engagement in social action, innovation, and entrepreneurship across all life stages. It aims to enhance how place-specific support structures might be better connected to broaden volunteering opportunities for all during youth transitions to adulthood.

It is published at an important political and social juncture in our country's history. Research indicates that the Covid-19 pandemic has proven generationally transformative, impacting significantly on the educational, health (particularly mental health), socio-economic, and life prospects of children and young people (Beatfreeks, 2020; Leavey et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2021). And yet, the pandemic has emphasised the distinctive resilience of 'Generation Covid', particularly their ability to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and their willingness to participate at home, their places of education, in their communities, and online (DCMS 2020; Percy-Smith, 2022). Young climate activists also highlighted the importance of volunteering in the fight against climate change at events across COP26 in Glasgow.

Volunteering is a driver for change and provides significant opportunities for young people to powerfully reshape the present and future, while inspiring a sense of belonging, pride in place, social responsibility, and reciprocity (House of Lords, 2018). It can provide a powerful counterweight to increasing social fragmentation and isolation experienced by many young people during the pandemic (Millar et al., 2020; Mental Health Foundation, 2021), thus strengthening 'the ties that bind' communities and the country together.

The Volunteering Journey supports the UK Government's delivery of a *National Youth Guarantee,* identified in the recent 'Levelling Up' white paper (DCMS, 2022), which aims to offer every young person opportunity to volunteer and help 'rebuild social capital and self-reliance' across the country by 2025. It also supports the growth of youth volunteering at national, regional, and local levels, such as the delivery of the Scottish Government's *Young Person's Guarantee*. In this report, we define the concept of the Volunteering Journey considering how existent evidence and data has identified this gap in how young peoples' transitions through 'youth-hood' and relationship with systems are understood and supported - or not. The report then presents the results of a co-produced, participatory research process undertaken with over 650 young people between the ages of 11-30 from different regions of the UK; guided by a Youth Advisory Board and informed by iterative workshops with stakeholders working to support youth volunteering across multiple sectors. Finally, we offer conclusions and recommendations for how the system of support for young people can be better shaped in order to empower, extend and sustain young peoples' access to, and participation in, volunteering.

1.1   Defining the 'Volunteering Journey'

We understand the 'Volunteering Journey' as encapsulating the spectrum of activities, experiences and engagement available to young people at different stages of their transitions to adulthood. Volunteering is one part of a wider process of young peoples' socialisation both as *being and becoming* active citizens, which we call the 'Civic Journey'. This wider concept focuses on supporting, inspiring and empowering young people by encouraging understanding of and participation in formal and informal volunteering, civic institutions and systems, democratic engagement and community activism through a continuous ecosystem of support for children and young peoples' different pathways.

The Volunteering Journey can be understood as linear in that children and young people experience ongoing development as they age during their transitions from childhood to adolescence and then early adulthood (Sawyer et al., 2018). For the vast majority, their transitions are also framed by universal pathways in education (primary, secondary, and further education) and by the collective acquisition of rights and responsibilities as they reach certain ages. The Volunteering Journey is also non-linear as young people biologically and socially mature at different rates, depending on a range of variables including gender, sexuality, socio-economic, class, ethnic and/or racial background, and parental arrangements. Their experiences of education and employment can differ significantly, particularly when they reach the age of 18. Independent living, marriage, parental and other caring responsibilities can also impact on the potential and preparedness to volunteer.

The value of adopting a 'Journey' approach in understanding how young people engage with volunteering and how the *volunteering system* could better serve young people is twofold. Firstly, it places a strong value on appreciating young peoples' *experiences* in shaping their engagement in volunteering, particularly the diversity of entry, exit, and transition points. Secondly, it provides the opportunity to take a 'whole system' look at how the system can be changed or adapted to better serve young people's volunteering requirements and aspirations.

The Volunteering Journey provides a timely response to policy challenges to 'level up' opportunities for young people recognised in different ways by governments across the UK by offering a minimum 'guarantee' or offer to support them during their transitions to adulthood. It also engages with the 'citizenship challenge' identified by the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement (2018) to create volunteer opportunities for all young people to inspire a sense of belonging, pride in place, social responsibility, and reciprocity.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has further emphasised the urgent need to better coordinate civic engagement opportunities for young people (House of Lords, 2022). Volunteering has been identified as providing a powerful counterweight to increasing social fragmentation and isolation experienced by many young people during the pandemic (Mental Health Foundation, 2021), thus strengthening 'the ties that bind' communities and the country together.

The concept of the Volunteering Journey thus seeks to cast a fresh solution-orientated light on perennial and emergent challenges. The benefits of the 'journey' concept are that it seeks to address fragmentation in relation to both social change and policy-making in order to facilitate joined-up thinking and connectivity between different age groups, opportunities and forms of volunteering. It seeks to reveal the existence of gaps or where provision is particularly threadbare and encourages working with young people to co-design a more attractive, youth-centred 'volunteering offer'.

It also helps in identifying the existence of key transition points, particularly the impact of changes in young people's educational and social environments on volunteering, and how the volunteering system for young people might be reimagined by better understanding the 'entry', 'exit', and 're-entry' points of participation. As such, it seeks to increase efficiency, catalyse innovation, and avoid duplication in support for young people and the provision of opportunities for them to volunteer.

1.2   Why look at the Volunteering Journey for young people now?

The mobilisation of volunteers was a crucial part of the pandemic response, with young people playing an essential role due to their lower health risk. Shifts in the scale and nature of volunteering were observed during the pandemic, particularly increases in informal volunteering associated with community support and mutual aid across all age cohorts (DCMS, 2020; DCMS 2021). A shift towards younger volunteers was though observed, attributed to older volunteers needing to shield and the growing resonance of digital volunteering (Saxton, 2020; Norrlander et al. 2021).

Research indicates that this upsurge in young people volunteering is not entirely new, but rather an existing trend that becomes more marked, visible, and acknowledged (Paine, 2000; Roche, 2000). Such trends provide important clues about how, when and where young people want to volunteer. This poses the question: what can we learn from the pandemic to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of youth volunteering going forward?

The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the existence and implications of deeply embedded structural inequalities within society and further exacerbated their 'scarring effects' (Mulgan et al, 2022). Factors relating to housing, occupational risk and access to healthcare which made certain communities far more vulnerable than others in both economic and health terms. Young people either in education, not yet in employment, or living in precarious tenant-based housing or space and resource-poor environments, suffered disproportionately both during the pandemic and in terms of its effects on their future lives (British Academy, 2021). The impact of the pandemic has been realised in the safety and mental health of young people (Children's Society, 2021; Young Minds, 2021). This noted, they continued to demonstrate outstanding forms of agency in supporting others, resilience, and optimism in their generation's agency to change the future for the better (Prince's Trust, 2021).

Social and spatial inequalities within the UK also impacted on volunteering opportunities for young people - including gaining access to volunteering as a gateway to other social,

economic and cultural opportunities. This – in part – highlights that reductions in local government funding over the past decade or so have a significant impact on the provision of youth services. Research suggests that funding by local authorities has declined by 60% or more, with some regions and localities experiencing average reductions of over 70% and some having funding pulled completely (YMCA, 2022). The National Youth Agency (2021) reports that for every £16 of reductions to local services, £1 has fallen on youth work.

This noted, funding cuts have disproportionately impacted on services for young people in the most deprived areas of the country (Atkins and Hoddinott, 2022), meaning annual spending ranges from just £250 to only £25 per head of population across local authorities in England (based on 11–19-year-olds) (National Youth Agency, 2021). Locality is also influential, with the average net expenditure on youth services reported to be £62 per head on average in urban areas compared to just £47 per head in rural areas. A 'postcode lottery' now exists whereby the place young people grow up in powerfully determines if and how they are supported to volunteer. The existence of funding 'hotspots' and 'coldspots' brings into relief the challenges of both 'levelling up' the country and providing a universal national minimum offer of support for young people as they grow up to learn about and experience volunteering.

The pandemic has further exacerbated existing local and regional differences in resourcing infrastructure for youth volunteering (UK Youth, 2021), reducing further access to traditional formal routes to volunteering for young people, especially during the periods of lockdown (McGarvey et al., 2021). Furthermore, schools and colleges were often overloaded with responsibilities, meaning education-based pathways to volunteering were limited or absent completely. As we are (hopefully) moving on from the pandemic, evidence suggests that the volunteering journey offers a distinctive lens to develop understanding of the distribution of funding and interventions throughout different age groups and locations to better synchronise and interconnect opportunities in a structured and coherent manner during transitions to adulthood.

Such inequalities have an impact on different systems and policies and how they operate at local level, requiring us to look at more integrated models of volunteering support that can address those experiencing multiple and complex needs. We propose that by adopting a youth-centred approach to volunteering, we can better understand the lived experience of the barriers and incentives from young peoples' perspective. The ambition of our work is to identify the diversity of volunteer entry points to understand how Volunteering Journeys can be better supported and organised so that there is greater equality of opportunity in the towns, villages, and cities where young people grow up.

There is emergent evidence that as the UK emerges from a decade of austerity, the implications of job-market changes due to Brexit and now following two years of the pandemic that the trend towards the 'blurring' of roles between informal, formal volunteers and paid staff has become more prevalent (see Rochester, 2021; Casseldine and Pickard, 2015). The impact of reductions in public funding and community resources has led some to argue that the emergence of a 'mixed economy of welfare' has encouraged a fragmentation of the traditional roles of 'volunteer', 'community leader', 'public service worker' and even 'entrepreneur' (Baines and Wilson, 2011). Changes in how the role of the 'volunteer' in

society is viewed raises a number of questions about the 'value' or 'meaning' of volunteering *to* society in the post-pandemic landscape. It also highlights the need to reconsider incentives and reward models for youth volunteering at different stages of their transitions to adulthood, and at what point does 'volunteering' become hybridised with 'work'.

Adopting a 'Volunteering Journey' approach raises the potential to identify and connect strategic intervention points where funding might have the greatest impact, including making the most of funding mechanisms such as match funding. Mapping programmes and interventions along the trajectory of young people's transitions to adulthood can help government and other funding stakeholders better identify the strategic resourcing and impactful distribution of resources through transitions to adulthood. This would help address concerns raised about the need to amplify the quality and impact of youth work by better coordination and intentional spending across government (APPG on Youth Affairs (2021).

We believe the pandemic recovery offers significant opportunities to establish a 'Volunteer Journey' model that is as ambitious and agile as it is integrated and inclusive. It would offer equal opportunities to learn about and gain experience of volunteering to support youth transitions to adulthood, and nurture lifelong active citizenship. The increased participation in informal volunteering during the pandemic offers new evidence about what works in incentivising and rewarding young people to be active citizens, and how to keep this momentum building. The emergence of new, powerful networks of volunteering organisations, such as Shaping the Future with Volunteering and Vision for Volunteering, combined with existing initiatives like #iwill, Project Scotland, or #PowerofYouth in Wales, offer significant opportunities to learn and develop partnership-based approaches to designing and delivering youth programmes.

Beyond the value added to communities, there is also an opportunity to develop knowledge about how and when volunteering might play a role in the wellbeing of young people. As noted in the recent 'Kruger Report' (2020), volunteering has the potential to build resilience, pride, and opportunities in communities across the UK as part of broader efforts to 'level up' the country. Most importantly, volunteering can empower young people themselves to learn about and affirm their agency and their potential to be essential participants and shapers in the future of their communities.

1.3.   Understanding the Volunteering Journey

Over the past decade or so, understanding of youth volunteering and the wider social action landscape has been illuminated by extensive research commissioned and published by a range of governmental, civil society, and academic actors. This important work has enhanced knowledge about the motivations, opportunities, and barriers to youth volunteering, and 'what works' in terms of supporting young people to build social capital while enhancing their educational and employability prospects, resilience, and wellbeing.

Two significant themes are evident from existing research which can be understood both in terms of policy making and provision of opportunities for young people to volunteer:

1) Young people are increasingly interested in volunteering, but how they conceive it can differ somewhat from traditional definitions. This has implications for how they are supported in their participation and recognition of their contribution. A significant number of those who say they are interested in volunteering often experience barriers which limits their involvement, and around one-quarter of young people consistently say they do not wish to volunteer.
2) The potential to grow the volunteer base and support young people to participate as they grow up is strongly influenced by place, within which we understand there are diverse circumstances related to social inequalities, and health and wellbeing that mediate this relationship.

Our Rapid Evidence Review seeks to draw on but not replicate this work. Our final report aims to make a distinctive contribution to knowledge by engaging challenges identified in previous research which persistently limit the appeal and scale of youth volunteering. We have adopted innovative evidence-led *and* policy-orientated approaches founded in a belief that youth volunteering can create positive social change in communities which benefits all of society while helping address some of the biggest challenges of today.

We have adopted an innovative mixed-methods, seven-stage research design underpinned by Participatory Action Research (PAR) to ensure our research was inquiry-based, collaborative, youth-centred, innovative, comprehensive, and transformative in that it sought to make original contributions knowledge and inform future policymaking and practices. Youth-centred approaches have sought to better understand how young people conceive volunteering, their motivations and expectations, and how personal circumstances might impede their participation at different points in their transitions from childhood to early adulthood.

The findings from our research have highlighted three interconnected cross-cutting themes which we explore across different age cohorts from childhood to early adulthood:

- **Establishing a common language for youth volunteering** that reflects its hybrid, changing and adaptive nature.
- **Supporting volunteer literacy for all young people** so they can understand, navigate, and participate in the increasingly complex volunteering ecosystem.
- **Enhancing youth-centred pathways in the Volunteering Journey** to grow the youth volunteer base**,** recognising the background and circumstances of each young person is critical in influencing attitudes to and frequency of volunteering.

In addition, findings reveal two key dimensions that present an opportunity and a possible barrier to realising a stronger volunteering journey. These are:

- The potential of local communities and of 'community service' as an entry point, site of sustained volunteering and as a support system for youth volunteering.
- The barrier presented by the experience of mental health challenges for this generation, particularly in early adulthood (between 18-24 years).

At present, the multitude of volunteering programmes, initiatives, and schemes available to young people are often impactful, they lack sufficient thematic or structural integration. This means the 'Volunteering Journey' for many can prove fragmented and disjointed as they grow up. Mapping programmes and interventions along the trajectory of young people's volunteering journeys could help national and local government and other funding stakeholders better identify the strategic resourcing and impactful distribution of resources through transitions to adulthood.

Adopting a volunteering journey approach also raises the potential to identify and connect strategic intervention points where funding might have the greatest impact, including making the most of funding mechanisms such as match funding. This would help address concerns raised about the need to amplify the quality and impact of youth work by better coordination and intentional spending across government (APPG on Youth Affairs (2021). Encouraging a systemic approach to the mapping of existing and potential interventions could ensure that every young person is offered a minimum level of support and opportunities to volunteer – regardless of where they live or their background – and feel supported and empowered to become the active citizens of today *and* tomorrow.

The Volunteering Journey Project Research Methodologies

The Volunteering Journey project team adopted an innovative mixed-methods, seven-stage design underpinned by Participatory Action Research (PAR) to ensure our research was inquiry-based, collaborative, youth-centred, innovative, comprehensive, and transformative in that it sought to make original contributions knowledge and inform future policymaking and practices.

Young people were embedded as co-researchers, influencing, and shaping all stages of the research design, data collection and analysis throughout the project. The involvement of researchers from diverse backgrounds encouraged an iterative, emergent series of research activities. The integration of mixed methods at multiple points in the research process through data collection and analysis to facilitate the iterative development of the study.

The seven research stages were:

1. Rapid Evidence Review

An integrative approach was adopted with the aim to assess, critique, and synthesise existing peer-reviewed academic literature as well as government, civil society, and practitioner reports and evaluation outputs on youth volunteering to enable new perspectives to emerge. A rapid review of existing evidence was undertaken to identify gaps and opportunities in the volunteering ecosystem, and examine the potential efficacy of interventions. The evidence review sought to frame and refine research questions in

subsequent stages of the project, while also identifying gaps or weak areas in the literature. Forward and backward 'snowball' sampling techniques were adopted, utilising a range of online search engines, with over 150 research articles and reports reviewed to provide context and develop the thematic foundations of the project (though only research cited has been included in the bibliography).

2. Stakeholder Workshops

Two facilitated online workshops were held engaging with over 20 key stakeholders from the volunteering ecosystem. The first workshop, held on December 8th 2021, focused on defining the lines of enquiry for the evidence review and subsequent research phases. Participants were invited to share their learning and insights about what volunteering is, who volunteers, where, why and how they find out about volunteering opportunities. A provocation paper was shared with participants ahead of the session, posing questions about volunteering patterns during the pandemic and what they indicate about how young people may want to volunteer generally. On March 8th 2022, a second stakeholder workshop was held online focusing on the findings emerging from the project research and challenges for the sector in supporting 'Volunteering Journeys' for all young people, and to identify where volunteering provision could be adapted or changed.

3. Youth Volunteering and Social Action Survey

Working with our Youth Advisory Board and YouGov, we surveyed 2514 young people aged 16- to 30 across the UK, including a boosted sample of 505 from regions targeted by the UK government for 'levelling up'. Our Youth Advisory Board took part in facilitated co-production workshops with researchers from the Institute of Community Studies to develop a series of questions as part of the quantitative survey.

4. Data Re-analysis and Regressions

We undertook extensive re-analysis of four large-scale social surveys to better understand the factors associated with various aspects of youth volunteering, social action, and civic engagement:

- The Taking Part Survey - an England-wide survey designed to estimate the number of people taking part in leisure, cultural and sporting activities. Data collected from a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of adults (16+), youths (aged 11-15) and children (aged 5-10). The datasets available divide respondents into five-year age bands and two samples were available for analysis: 16-19 and 20-24 year olds (children under 16 are not asked about their voluntary activity).

- The Community Life Survey - an England-wide survey that provides Official Statistics on issues that are key to encouraging social action and empowering communities, including volunteering, charitable giving, community engagement, well-being and loneliness. Like the Taking Part Survey, the safeguarded datasets available on the UK Data Archive group respondents into five-year age bands and so two samples were available: 16-19 and 20-24 year olds. However, unlike the Taking Part Survey, the Community Life Survey divides volunteering into 'formal volunteering' and 'informal help'.
- The Understanding Society Survey is a UK-wide longitudinal household panel study. Questions about voluntary or community work are asked every other year and the size of the survey means that data are available for individual age points. However, the Understanding Society Survey does not divide volunteering into 'formal volunteering' and 'informal help'.
- The National Youth Social Action Survey is a UK-wide survey focussed on young people aged 10-20 years old, exploring the types of voluntary activity they become involved in, their routes into volunteering, the benefits to young volunteers and those their activities impacted upon.

The core method in each case was to combine multiple annual survey waves to create large enough datasets to draw robust inferences about young people in the age range 10-24. While the four surveys examine the type and/or frequency of volunteering, the definitions, variables and parameters of volunteering vary. This noted, the findings from the re-analysis of four large-scale data sets provide the macro trends and results about the way place mediates youth volunteering opportunity, aspiration, and participation. In particular, a re-analysis was conducted to unearth new insights about where and when young people are volunteering. This was identified as an evidence gap, especially at the level of ONS regions or Government Office Regions. The Taking Part Survey, Community Life Survey, Understanding Society Survey, and National Youth Social Action Survey are safeguarded datasets available on the UK Data Archive.

5.   Peer Interviews

30 peer researchers were trained by the Volunteering Journey project team, who then undertook two co-design sessions to create the interview script, focusing on what felt most important to them about volunteering, and building on their diverse experiences to shape questions tailored for other young people. Eighty-one semi-structured interviews with young people from diverse backgrounds and places across the UK were undertaken by our peer researchers, delving into the role of volunteering in the lives of 16–30-year-olds and the changing journey of their relationship with volunteering throughout their lives. Two co-analysis sessions were conducted

13

with the peer researchers which employed qualitative thematic analysis to co-create a coding framework with the peer researchers, enabling young people to take an active part in sense-making and analysis of the data, whilst maintaining quality assurance by the Volunteering Journey research team. This was then used to code the data to identify key themes, as well as key challenges and opportunities, and shape the final outputs.

6. Digital Qualitative Research

To better understand the Volunteering Journey, we adopted innovative peer research approaches to better understand the lived experience of a diverse range of young people. We generated insightful, rich stories from young people, utilising a digital autobiographical arts-based mapping methodology called 'River of Life' (Participedia, 2020; Denov & Shevell, 2021). This is an exercise where participants use digitally visual and interactive prompts to articulate how, when, through what mediums, and how far volunteering has impacted on their life (social, education and employment) pathways – and what positive and negative associations and relationships volunteering experiences have in their life (Freeman, 2007). River of life is an arts-based visual mapping tool which encourages participants to take the lead in telling their story as they express a narrative through drawing. Alongside their drawings participants were asked to note down captions, explaining key details and emotions at each point. 46 young people aged 16 to 30 from across the UK were recruited from across the UK in February 2022 to complete this phase of the project.
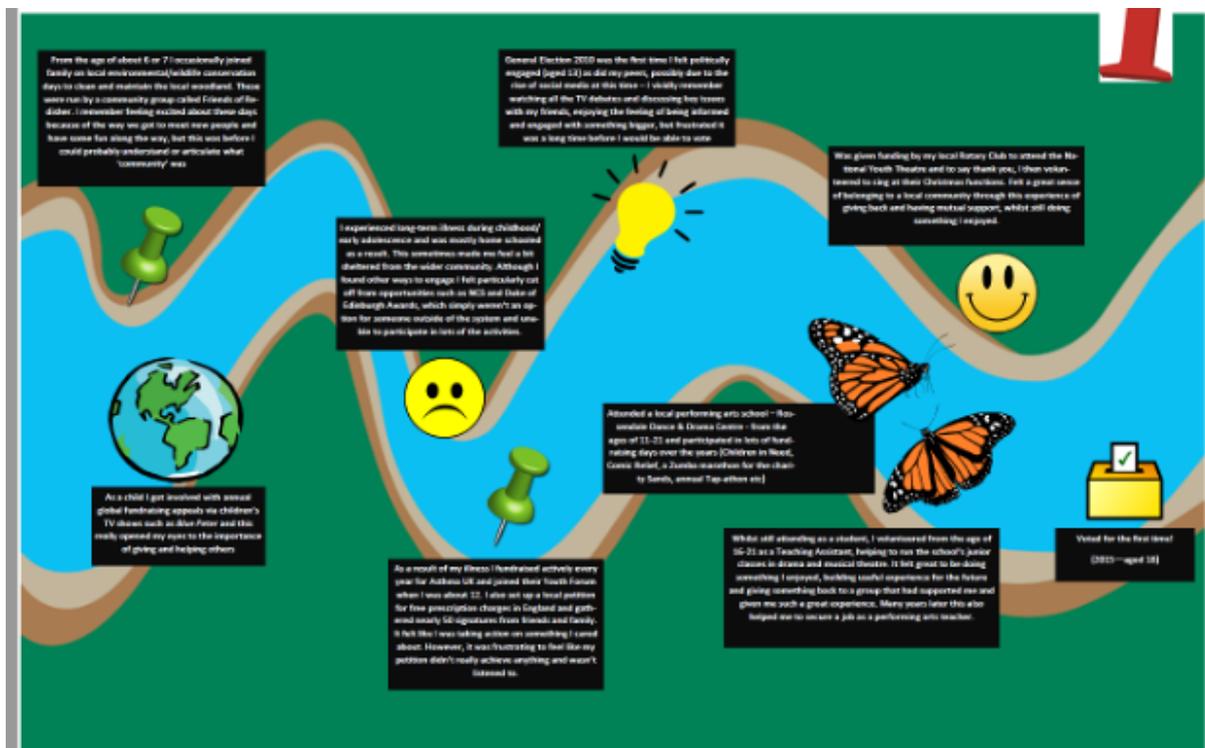
An example of a completed digital 'River of Life' exercise with accompanying narrative text explaining choice of symbols and the meaning attributed to them by the young person.

7. Participatory Workshops

Throughout February 2022, a series of participatory workshops were carried out in eight rural and urban locations across the country to investigate the attitudes of young people ages 11-15 years old towards volunteering. The workshops engaged a total of 330 individuals ages 11-15 years old and 30 individuals ages 16-18 with complex needs. The core activity of the workshop was a participatory activity, combining visual and storytelling elements. Young people were asked to design the "ideal volunteering experience" and create an advert for it. They had the option of creating an advert in visual format (e.g., poster or flyer), audio format (e.g., radio advert or skit) or combined visual and audio (e.g., acting or videos), whilst narrating the reasons behind their choices, and the definitions, incentives and sense of impact they felt this would achieve.

Jedburgh Grammar School
Jedburgh, Scotland
205 participants

The Zone
Leeds, England
13 participants

BSix Sixth Form College
Clapton, London, England
30 participants

Gladesmore Community School
Tottenham, London, England
13 participants

St Andrews C of E School
Hove, England
90 participants

Rapid Evidence Review: Shaping the Volunteering Journey

We undertook a rapid review of existing evidence to develop our understanding of the current 'Volunteering Journey' available to and experienced by young people. As noted in the introduction to this report, this evidence review helped identify three core themes which have shaped our research methodologies and project conclusions:

Theme 1 - Establishing a common language for youth volunteering

Youth volunteering is widely understood as any activity which involves young people freely giving time to help a cause, group, or community, this often being planned rather than spontaneous, usually unpaid, and altruistic in that those who benefit tend to not be related to the volunteer. Formal volunteering occurs within structured, organisational environments, whereas informal (or semi-formal) volunteering involves activities supporting friends, neighbours, and communities independently from a third-party organisation (Buckingham, 2012). The relationship between formal and informal volunteering is complex and fluid in terms of how different activities are categorised and in what ways they intersect.

Definitions of what is – or is not - volunteering are also somewhat ambiguous, disputed, and liable to change over time (Paine et al., 2010, 10). Changes in government can have a significant impact in terms of the framing and development of youth volunteering. For example, during Labour's period in office, youth volunteering was initially connected with 'civil renewal' through the encouragement of active citizenship (Jochum et al., 2005), but increasingly focused on concerns about strengthening communities and British identity (Milner, 2008). Since 2010, Conservative-led governments have sought to encourage youth social action which understood to differ from volunteering in that it is youth-led, challenging, socially impactful, progressive, and activist in nature (Ockenden et al., 2013, 6), driven by the notion of self- and community efficacy (Spencer and Lucas, 2018, 10).

How youth social action differs from volunteering has proven a matter both of emphasis and the form and cost of participation and its outcomes and benefits to young people and society (Centre for Youth Impact, 2019a). Advocates note that youth social action differs in that it involves activities not typically associated with volunteering (Birdwell et al., 2013, 3). Critics argue young people appear to be compelled to engage in 'directed' volunteering as part of their education as they grow up to 'get on in life' in ways which compromise altruistic motivations and diminishes their enjoyment of the volunteer experience (Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014, 205). Other criticisms have centred on promotion of 'public service volunteering' whereby young people are encouraged to volunteer in response to reductions in government spending (Buddery, 2015, 10).

The focus of youth social action on campaigning and activism indicates a merging of 'volunteerism and political participation' (Marzana et al., 2012, 497), highlighting its potential politicisation (Amnå, 2012, 613) and divisiveness for young people in intentions and outcomes (Centre for Youth Impact, 2021a). The ambiguous and porous boundaries between social and political participation have led some led some to distinguish between youth social action, blending campaigning, volunteering and service to others, and youth social change, whereby young people seek to challenge power and disrupt contemporary socio-economic conditions that cause injustice and inequality (Simpson et al, 2020, 14).

Evidence indicates that some actors within the youth sector – and young people themselves – are uncertain as to what youth social action is and how it differs from volunteering in England (Centre for Youth Impact, 2021b). Divergence of language, policy, provision, and evaluation of volunteering in different parts of the UK have also been observed (Davies, 2017; McGarvey et al., 2021). The APPG on Youth Affairs (2021) recently noted that this has had implications in terms of shaping and realising shared outcomes for youth volunteering that reach across all levels of government across the UK.

This situation has also impacted on the potential to develop evidenced-based approaches to policymaking and practice, particularly in terms of building longitudinal data. Our re-analyses of the four large-scale social surveys indicate there is some annual aggregation of longitudinal data of youth volunteering as part of a wider survey of community participation. They are diverse in their research design (particularly how they define volunteering), methodologies, and evaluation of data, and, and often overlook those under the age of 16. Furthermore, large-scale social surveys for volunteering do not map consistently on to evaluations of individual youth volunteering programmes. There thus remains a paucity of evidence about 'what works' beyond short term measures, encouraging circular arguments about levels of funding and evidence of long term impact (APPG on Youth Affairs, 2021).

This situation raises significant questions about the validity of many conclusions about the benefits of youth volunteering and social action (Fox, 2019, 5). Current approaches to capturing and evaluating participation are often focused on self-reporting, meaning young people focus on formal volunteering and underestimate informal volunteer action. The extent youth volunteering is 'meaningful' is often framed by frequency of activity and/or its reported effects on the attitudes and potential future behaviours of young volunteers. These measurements are helpful but often overlook how volunteering might positively contribute to or change society or the organisations they volunteer with. This can encourage young people to view volunteering in individualistic and instrumental terms (Dean, 2014), limiting the potential for them, the communities they live in, and institutions they volunteer with to fully recognise the value of their contributions.

There is though agreement in government, the youth work sector, and academia of the need to invest in longitudinal cohort-based studies of youth volunteering to enhance policymaking and improve outcomes for young people (see, for example, UK Gov, 2022; McGarvey et al., 2021, Williams, 2018; Arthur et al, 2017, 34). It is important that such work seeks to capture the impact and value of both formal and informal voluntary action and involves young people as part of the research process as active, empowered partners and not subjects peer-led

research to capture their daily experiences across all public and private spheres, including the digital world (Amnå, 2012, 623).

New approaches to measurement and evaluation must capture the shifting and adaptive nature of youth volunteering, rather than attempting to categorise or distinguish what is and isn't volunteering. Although overall levels of youth volunteering have remained largely stable over the past twenty years, trends in formal and informal youth volunteering have fluctuated over the same period (see, for example, Rochester, 2006; Lim and Laurence, 2015). Interestingly, recent research indicates that levels of formal volunteering fell during the Covid-19 pandemic, while informal volunteering rose to a record high (DCMS, 2021). A shift towards younger volunteers was also observed during the pandemic due to the need for them to take on roles that older, clinically vulnerable people were previously performing(Norrlander et al., 2021). Interestingly, forms of youth volunteering changed during different phases of the pandemic. During periods of lockdown young people adopted largely informal modes, followed by a return to more formal volunteering during periods where they were allowed more freedom.

This indicates that young people engage in adaptive forms of volunteering, which are fluid in response to changing circumstances as they grow up (Natale, 2021). While formal volunteering remains at the base of youth activity, particularly in building the skills and structures needed by young people to volunteer, pathways into volunteering reflect different levels of formality (McGarvey et al., 2019, 83). 'People-powered' volunteering is often supported but not led by volunteering organisations, indicating a shift to a more 'bottom up' approach whereby informal volunteering leads to more formal activities. It also reflects that the binary of volunteer-beneficiary proved more fluid during the pandemic for many, with roles shifting constantly as people became infected with Covid-19.

Young people are also increasingly fluid in how they volunteer (McGarvey et al., 2019, 31). Many young people are prepared to commit to a sustained relationship with an organisation, which provides support and opportunities for them to volunteer, at certain points as they grow up. However, there has been a growth in episodic volunteering which allows young people to get involved on a more ad-hoc basis, offering more flexibility in where, who with, and how they volunteer. Volunteering is thus adaptive to the life circumstances of young people, particularly during periods where they have examinations, employment commitments, or when their interest and engagement with a particular issue resonates strongly.

The Covid-19 pandemic also highlighted a growing hybridity in youth volunteering. Digital volunteering enhanced accessibility and inclusion, enabling the participation of young people who may be geographically isolated or have limited mobility (McGarvey et al., 2019, 84). It has also allowed some young people to volunteer in multiple ways within an organisation or group and/or with more than one at the same time. Evidence suggests digital volunteering has increased the agency of some young people, particularly those less reliant on formal structures and who can self-organise through digital channels. It has also led to innovations in volunteering both in terms of its structure and form. Online volunteering is especially relevant to young people, who often present high levels of digital literacy and can reduce

racial and ethnic discrimination which may be faced in an embodied setting (Seddighi and Salmani, 2018).

Nonetheless, there is a risk of leaving behind those young people who have lower digital literacy skills or reduced access to the internet, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Concerns have also been raised as limitations in benefits of face-to-face volunteering when it is transferred online, such as creating new social ties and gaining satisfaction from seeing the impact of their actions. Indeed, online volunteering has been identified as being less engaging or satisfying than embodied volunteering opportunities for some (Ackermann and Manatschal, 2018).

Theme 2 - Supporting volunteer literacy for all young people

The importance of socialisation of young volunteers to empower them to volunteer is a critical element shaping their Volunteering Journeys. Volunteer literacy has however often proven peripheral in policy and analysis of youth citizenship, particularly when compared to the role of political literacy to support democratic participation. Evidence suggests this oversight has had significant implications. Many young people report that they lack appropriate opportunities to acquire the requisite knowledge, skills, and experiences to successfully navigate an increasingly complex volunteering landscape, and to source and take up opportunities to volunteer.

Volunteer literacy should ensure all young people through classroom-based and experiential learning have the knowledge to understand the terminology and acquire the requisite skills to undertake volunteer action. It should set expectations about volunteering activities and enable young people to verbalise how, when, and where they would like to volunteer. Volunteer literacy should also ensure that young people learn how to locate and undertake volunteer action in their schools, communities, and online, and be able to transition from initial participation to a life-long volunteering journey. Lack of information about volunteering can be a 'social barrier' for young people but navigating the complex ecosystem of opportunities can overwhelm even those keen to volunteer (Davies, 2017, p. 43). Finally, volunteer literacy should raise awareness of the connections between volunteering and other aspects of active citizenship, particularly democratic engagement and participation, while also realising the value of volunteer action to enhance educational, employability, and health and well-being pathways.

Research indicates that policymakers, teachers, youth work practitioners, volunteering organisations and young people consider schools and colleges the most important location to learn about and undertake volunteering (Centre for Youth Impact, 2019b; #iwill, 2019; Brodie et al, 2011, 29). School-based citizenship education, community service programmes or national schemes (such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award) are identified as common points of entry to participation (Alma Economics, 2021, 10). Attending a school that promotes volunteering or has civic-mindedness as part of its identity is proven to enhance pupils' chances of volunteering (Ballard et al., 2015; Dean, 2016).Importantly, schools provide a significant compensatory effect in terms of encouraging volunteering for young

people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds where family-based social capital and activism is often lower (Hogg and De Vries, 2018).

The impact of participating in education-based volunteer action is proven to significantly help develop understanding of the context, purpose, and outcomes of volunteering and also developing a sense of empowerment, belonging, and of community (Torres-Harding et al., 2018). Schools are also an important factor in facilitating relationships between young people and volunteering organisations which extend beyond the formal period of education (British Youth Council, 2009). Young people's experiences at school can have a lasting impact on attitudes and behaviours with regards to volunteering into early adulthood and beyond (Davies, 2017, 45; Fox, 2019), while also enhancing personal, skills and task-based competencies to support their educational progression and transitions to employment (Ellis Paine et al., 2013; NCVO, 2013; Kirkman et al., 2015; Williams, 2017, Hoskins et al., 2020).

This noted, inequalities exist in opportunities to learn about and take part in volunteering exist across all levels of education (Tejani and Breeze, 2021). Citizenship education in primary schools is not statutory, and less than one-quarter (23%) offer volunteering opportunities to their pupils (Department for Education, 2019, 13). Volunteering at this age typically focuses on fundraising activities, meaning it is framed as transactional but rarely educates or critically engages children in the reasons behind their voluntary action or the political or social causes or issues of charities involved (Body et al., 2017).
Support for young people to develop their volunteer literacy during their secondary education is more substantial, and many report their first experiences during this period of their transitions to adulthood (Owens, 2015). Volunteer literacy is provided as a subject component, during 'in-house' volunteering, and by extending the curriculum through working with external partners (Ofsted, 2011). Classroom-based teaching is often delivered through *Citizenship*, a statutory subject in the National Curriculum since 2002, where young people are encouraged to volunteer by acquiring the 'knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society' (Department for Education, 2013, 1). *Citizenship* continues to suffer from a lack of timetable space, resources, status within the curriculum, lack of trained teachers, and political support for the subject (Weinberg et al., 2021). Moreover, 'academy' schools and colleges in England are not compelled to teach *Citizenship* or offer its GCSE, and volunteering – if taught at all– is now delivered via a range of subjects including Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, or Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

The lack of equal opportunities to develop volunteer literacy has seen a 'participation gap' emerge, particularly where young people's relationships with schools are challenged by poor academic performance and external social circumstances (Davies, 2017, 45). Disparities have also been identified in extra-curricular volunteering provision whereby some secondary schools, particularly those in deprived areas, lack appropriate resources, capacity, institutional support, and connections with external providers (Alma Economics 2021; #iWill, 2021). Young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to participate in school-based volunteering when encouraging participation is left to external organisations and formal groups (Hogg and Vries, 2018). Place-based disparities in opportunities to volunteer also exist, with schools and colleges in rural communities facing challenges in

encouraging meaningful participation that builds a sense of connection and belonging to community (National Youth Agency, 2021, 8).

Overall, how schools and colleges support and deliver volunteer literacy is often not embedded in everyday school life due to a lack of connected, integrated provision between classroom-based volunteer literacy, 'in house' volunteering, and opportunities provided by external providers. According to the latest pre-Covid data on secondary schools, only three-quarters (74%) provide volunteering opportunities for their students (Department for Education, 2019, 13), with the most disadvantaged schools offering fewest opportunities (Sutton Trust, 2017). Furthermore, there is a significant decline in opportunities to participate during Key Stage 4 as schools and young people focus on examinations and educational progression (Hogg and Vries, 2018).

Youth-focused and other civil society organisations, regional youth work units, and local authorities, as well as programmes such as National Citizen Service and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, also offer valuable volunteer literacy programmes delivered outside of formal education settings. These typically focus on experiential learning but can also involve the delivery of structured resources and instruction to support young volunteers. National and local youth representation organisations also offer peer-to-peer initiatives where young people share and develop knowledge of volunteering. The connectivity between such interventions is limited though, as is the availability and reach of non-school based volunteer and youth social action programmes (#iwill, 2019; APPG on Youth Affairs, 2021). A 'postcode lottery' therefore exists whereby the potential for young people to develop their volunteer literacy is strongly influenced by where they go to school and the places they live.

Volunteering opportunities are typically provided on an ad-hoc and inconsistent basis in further education institutions too. *Citizenship* is not a statutory subject for further education, meaning the numbers taking the subject are small and often not extended to vocational courses. While research suggests that many young people (57%) report they volunteer, this is principally to develop skills and enhance employability (Owens, 2015). Inequalities in quality and provision of volunteer opportunities are related to a lack of resources, trained staff, and curriculum capacity. Participation in volunteering programmes undertaken during secondary education are often not maintained and developed for young people who move to a new college. Similarly, non-school volunteering programmes such National Citizen Service have limited follow-on pathways into further (and higher) education (Mills and Waite, 2017).

Those who had been through higher education also report mixed experiences in terms of volunteering. For some, going to university provides significant opportunities to volunteer because of access to course-based activities in some subjects (including work placements) and via their Students' Unions. Activities such as volunteering have been evidenced to improve student performance and outcomes, particularly for those with a predisposition for lower achievement (Kerrigan and Manktelow, 2021), and employability (Barton et al., 2017). Evidence suggests though that institutional support for and delivery of volunteering is 'patchy' across the sector, with a lack of trained lecturers and support services to develop volunteer literacy and help identify opportunities to participate. This means that many students who were not volunteering in secondary or further education, and for some who were active but whose studies and socialising take precedence over formal participatory

activities, do not volunteer during their degrees (Brodie et al., 2011, 29). Going to university can thus either develop or disrupt young people's Volunteering Journey (Arthur et al, 2017).

Young people who study at university are more likely to volunteer than those in full-time employment (McGarvey et al., 2019). For those who do not go to university, participation is typically promoted in the workplace through Employee Supported Volunteering (ESV) or corporate volunteering programmes across the public, third, and private sectors (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2013; Improvement Service, 2018). Employees can also volunteer through membership of trade unions and other representative organisations, helping them function, campaign, recruit members, and raise funds. Volunteering is seen to add value to both employees and the organisations they work in, enhancing productivity, skills, self-esteem, and wellbeing at work (Percy and Rogers, 2021; Latter and Rippon, 2021). There is however limited evidence that it develops volunteer literacy in a coherent, structured and critical manner (Percy and Rogers, 2021, 3).

There have been calls to enhance support for businesses and young people in work to volunteer (see, for example, Morgan Inquiry, 2008; ACEVO, 2012; McGarvey et al., 2019). There are however several distinctive challenges for young people, particularly for those working long and/or irregular hours, on precarious or fixed-term contracts, or who must commute long distances (Donahue et al., 2020; Mantovan et al., 2021). For many young people who have left home and have other responsibilities, volunteering is particularly difficult as they often lack the financial resilience to take unpaid leave to take part in ESV programmes. Volunteering for young employees is not typically accredited in terms of rewards or promotion, or acknowledged in Human Resources or personal development programmes. As such, volunteering is typically framed as helping young gain employment rather than progress once a job has been secure.

Job satisfaction, security, and rates of pay thus play an important role in motivating employees to volunteer, with happy and more financially secure workers more likely to participate (Lup and Booth, 2018). While successive governments have supported the formalisation of ESV by encouraging businesses to allocate paid time for employees to volunteer, thus far, no legislation has been passed (McGarvey et al., 2019, 7). Work-based support for transitions to further volunteering is also limited if provided at all. The 'double burden' of work and homelife (including caring responsibilities) is also seen to impact the willingness of some young volunteers, particularly young women, to volunteer (DCMS, 2020; Downward et al., 2020). This may well explain a decline in formal volunteering for those aged 25-34 when compared to the younger 16-24 cohort, and an increase in informal volunteering.

Theme 3 - Enhancing youth-centred pathways in the Volunteering Journey

Recent research suggests that just over half of young people in England volunteer, with just over a third regularly participating (Bratsa et al., 2020). Rates of engagement in youth

voluntary activity vary by race, ethnicity, gender, age, region, education and family, income levels. Young volunteers are more likely to be girls than boys, to be white, and from affluent social backgrounds who have access to significant resources of social capital. Those who chose to volunteer are more likely to have higher levels of social capital and were likely to generate more social capital because of their volunteering and thus maintain or increase disparities (Fox, 2019, 3). Young people with high levels of social and cultural capital, evidenced through parental activism and religious or community affiliation, are particularly likely to volunteer (Bennett and Parameshwaran, 2013). The profile of young volunteers can change depending on the type of programme evaluated. For example, National Citizen Service typically attracts an over-representation of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds (Kantar, 2020). The type of volunteering can also have an impact, with sport-based volunteering more appealing to young men whereas arts volunteering appeals more young women (D'Souza et al., 2011).

The principal enablers of volunteering in sourcing and supporting participation are young people's families, friends and peer networks, and their places of education and/or employment (see, for example, Russell, 2005; Brown et al., 2014; UK Youth, 2019, McGarvey et al., 2021). Proposals to further grow the youth volunteer base have often focused on enhancing the process of volunteering, including using youth-friendly language, improving the messaging about volunteering, making it easier to sign-up, and ensuring opportunities are close to where young people live. Some argue there is a need to increase the capacity of young people to volunteer, creating time for volunteering by ensuring it fits in with school, work, and family life(Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008). The experience of volunteering is also seen as important, in terms of its value and benefits to young people, while ensuring it is seen as fun and enhances their social networks and capital (Birdwell et al., 2015).

While families can positively influence, motivate, and enable young people to volunteer, their socio-economic status, structures, and functioning in terms of happiness or distress can impact on pathways to volunteering (Stuart et al., 2020). Impactful peer networks can prove bespoke and also reproduce inequalities based on place, social capital, deprivation, and resources (Donahue, 2020). Pathways to volunteering at all stages of young people's transitions to adulthood are also strongly shaped by the density or absence of opportunities and support from youth organisations and educational institutions, access to relevant information, and their spatial mobility (Davies, 2018).

Youth transitions to adulthood are shaped and influenced by a range of experiences and milestones that can potentially inform and determine their individual and collective pathways to volunteering. The challenge is to develop understanding as to how and in what ways these pathways to volunteering are understood and experienced, and in what ways they can be thematically and chronologically mapped, interconnected and realised to inform current and future policymaking and practice. Policymakers and other stakeholders have over the past two decades displayed an awareness of the challenges and opportunities of developing systemic approaches to the scheduling and provision of opportunities to volunteer during transitions to adulthood (see, for example, Russell Commission, 2005; Youth Citizenship Commission, 2009; Cleverdon and Jordan, 2012; Arthur et al., 2017; House of Lords, 2018; Sport England, 2021). As noted, aspirations to enhance support and opportunities for

volunteering have yet to evolve into clearly defined and integrated pathways which reflect the diversity of circumstances, experiences, and interests of young people.

How opportunities cohere and integrate can have a profound effect on the structure, coherence, and impacts of pathways supporting volunteering. The impacts of volunteering are often understood in cognitive terms, with children and young people acquiring the appropriate knowledge, skills, and behaviours for lifelong active citizenship incrementally. This noted, opportunities to volunteer are strongly influenced by the extent of provision by a range of providers in different parts of the country, educational institutions, national and local government, volunteering charities and organisations, community groups, online, and within peer and family networks (McGarvey et al., 2019). Volunteering programmes available also cover a range of age periods that vary across programmes, including 11-18, 14-21, 16-24, and 18-30, establishing age-limitations which restrict the engagement across age cohorts and educational stages.

This means that although children and young people may undertake volunteering at certain points as they grow up, this is most often not sustained. The impact of the various transition points which they experience as they grow up (including educational, social, familial, legal etc) can affect and impair their pathways to volunteering significantly. For example, levels of volunteering decline after key transitions from secondary school to further education, and after age 18 (#iwill/IPSOS Mori, 2018). How the entry, exit and transition points to both formal and informal volunteering are – or are not - signposted and navigated can strongly influence participation and non-participation, particularly for those less certain about volunteering (Williams, 2017, 16).

At present, most volunteering policymaking, funding, and provision focuses on the secondary stage of formal education, and the transition period after GCSE exams. Research indicates however that those who first get involved in volunteering and other forms of youth social action aged under 10 have been found to be more than two times more likely to have formed a 'volunteer habit' than if they started in during secondary or further education (Arthur et al. 2017, 5). This has led calls to expand opportunities to volunteer for younger ages through primary schools and youth groups (particularly within school curriculum), and integrate programmes with secondary schools (Brown et al., 2014).

Williams (2017, 18) notes that there is also a need to consider how support might be improved for young people before, during, and after they have first volunteered and as they continue to participate. An enhanced understanding of how volunteering fits into the flow of the academic year in relation to periods where young people feel they have capacity to engage and participate is important. As with older volunteers, levels of volunteering undertaken vary over time as young people as they grow up (Spencer and Lucas, 2018, 31), due to changes in the periods of time available to volunteer (Ellis Paine et al., 2010). This can have an impact on the type of volunteering and its intensity at different periods of the year and ages. To help this approach, young people should be provided opportunities to learn how to reflect on their journeys, and be able to record, evaluate and feedback on their progress (UK Youth, 2019, 11).

Young people's volunteering journeys fragment significantly in the post-GCSE period of formal education, and when the statutory period of education comes to an end. While there are important opportunities to participate in programmes such as National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award, alumni networks, and opportunities to keep volunteering are often limited (Mills and Waite, 2017). Opportunities to volunteer can thus be impactful in the short term but have a 'sheep dip' effect that limits their legacy over time. Moreover, the absence of consistent support for young people to volunteer as they continue their further and higher education means that those who have high levels of social capital and are experienced volunteers are considerably more likely to continue to volunteer. Of more concern, there is an absence of pathways to support the volunteering for those young people who do not go to university (Percy and Martin, 2021).

The role of young people in shaping pathways to volunteering have also been recognised as a critical driver of volunteer engagement and participation. 'Youth-led' approaches have become increasingly common in schools and across youth work sectors, providing young people with an active role in the design, delivery, and evaluation of formal volunteer programmes (Brown et al., 2014). Youth-led programmes can have considerable positive personal benefits and are also important in mobilising and connecting young people to address personal or social issues that shape their lives, effect positive change, and enhance the possibility of future volunteering (Kahn et al., 2009; Ockenden and Stuart, 2014). Youth-led approaches can however prove challenging for some young people, especially those who are less confident and/or lack understanding and prior experience of volunteering. For those who feel they lack the capacity or resources to volunteer, the demands and pressures of leadership can be seen to be too much responsibility. Indeed, some might be put off by youth-led volunteering, meaning it is predominantly those who are already active and possess high-levels of volunteer literacy and social capital adopt leadership roles. Youth-led approaches must therefore be underpinned with appropriate practical and emotional support (Birdwell et al., 2013, p. 5).

The motivations of young people who volunteer, and the triggers that facilitate participation, are complex, varied, and are inextricably linked to their individual and collective circumstances as they grow up. Youth volunteering is also driven by and influential in enhancing young people's identities and values, while also shaping a sense of belonging, community, pride, and pro-social attitudes for future volunteering (Crocetti et al., 2012). For example, a growing number of young volunteers' report being motivated to participate in response to reductions in public services, particularly in their communities, the perceived need to support the NHS, and rises in visible homelessness (Davis-Smith et al., 2019, 15). The influence of family in motivating young people to volunteer is often seen as critical (Bennett and Parameshwaran, 2013), as are a range of actors outside of the family home, including teachers, sports coaches, and volunteers in uniformed and non-uniformed youth organisations (Bradford et al., 2016). This is particularly important for young people who do not receive support from parents or family members, as volunteering provides opportunities for positive contact with teachers, youth workers and other adult mentors (Davies, 2018).

When asked, most young people report that they view volunteering in positive terms, and express altruistic views about participation in their communities. Holding such views does

not necessarily translate into regular volunteering though. Furthermore, about one-quarter of young people consistently state that they are not interested in volunteering (Bratsa et al., 2020), with many unable to see any active reasons why they should volunteer (Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008). Youth volunteering would, it appears, still largely be the preserve of a 'civic core' of young people likely to live in more affluent parts of the country similar characteristics that are responsible for a large percentage of voluntary action, charitable giving, and civic participation in the country (Mohan and Bulloch, 2012; Dean, 2016, 95).

Young people frequently note that they lack sufficient time, access to information, awareness, and confidence to volunteer (see, for example, Rochester et al., 2010; Ockenden and Stuart, 2014; Davies, 2017, Alma Economics, 2021). Negative peer pressure is also important, particularly stereotypes that volunteers are 'do-gooders' and volunteering as 'boring'. The term 'volunteering' has itself been identified as problematic, as it is seen as 'exclusive' and difficult to relate to in everyday life as it is the preserve of older, middle-class people (Gaskin, 2004, 10).

Young people from the poorest backgrounds are the least likely to access structured volunteering opportunities (Holliday, 2018, p. 2), and are five times less likely to volunteer or participate in youth social action (APPG on Youth Affairs, 2021). Those from poorer backgrounds often lack role models at home or in their communities, and view volunteering as an activity where the costs outweigh the benefits which compete with other demands on time such as the need for paid work (Davies, 2017, 44). This noted, young people from poorer backgrounds often participate but outside the formal definitions of volunteering capturing activity in mainstream surveys (Tonge et al., 2012, 590) Existing data indicates that informal volunteering plays a larger role in the lives of those traditionally excluded or socially discriminated against groups such as women, disabled people, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and those who are income poor (Donahue et al., 2020).

Data around the mental health of young volunteers indicates that there are potential health and wellbeing benefits associated with volunteering, both in terms of their individual and social development (Lawton et al., 2020). This noted, younger volunteers tend to express more self-oriented reasons for volunteering (McGarvey et al, 2019). Young people with better mental wellbeing are more likely to choose to volunteer (Fox, 2019; Mantovan et al., 2021). Health and wellbeing are thus critical motivating factor for volunteering, creating increased participation for some while limiting opportunities for those young people who struggle with anxiety and depression (NCVO, 2018; Downward et al., 2020).

Summary

This rapid evidence review argues that the 'Volunteering Journey' provides a new way of thinking about children and young people's participation in volunteering, with an emphasis on young people's agency in shaping their own volunteering pathways. There is however a need to acknowledge that the changing face of volunteering has had significant implications for volunteers of all ages, meaning shifts in policy and practice have been acutely experienced by young people during their transitions to adulthood. Embracing an adaptive

understanding of volunteering that incorporates fluidity and hybridity is essential to ensure it does not quickly become outdated. It is critical that the understanding and experiences of as many young people as possible, and to develop policies and support frameworks will help them to make the most of their volunteering experiences, and to maximise benefit to society. Furthermore, children and young people must be provided with consistent and substantial opportunities to develop their volunteer literacy to ensure they are equipped to understand, chart, and navigate their individual volunteering journeys.

The adoption of an integrated approach to youth volunteering highlights the importance of initial experiences as catalysers of further participation and providing easy transitions from one opportunity to the next. It also facilitates the identification of current 'gaps or traps' where young people may disengage due to the lack of supported transitions. Adopting a 'Volunteering Journey' approach from childhood to early adulthood offers an opportunity to increase the impact of each volunteering experience and their longitudinal development by better linking programmes and initiatives with each other, and explicitly thinking about the flows or transitions between them. This requires better planning to encourage integration of the volunteering journey across the full course of transitions to adulthood.

Participation is though first and foremost personal and must be viewed from the perspective of the individuals taking part. Stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem and policymakers need to embrace full 'youth-centred' approaches, whereby there is an active acknowledgement of current circumstances, locations, and commitments of each young volunteer, and an appreciation of issues of identity, values, and social responsibility. Such thinking is not new, and 'youth-centred' approaches have been proven to increase involvement in volunteering activities, higher civic efficacy, and build stronger aspirations amongst young people to volunteer (Crocetti et al., 2012).

The Volunteering Journey: The Importance of Place

Our rapid evidence review highlighted that a sense of place and community matters to young people, underpinning their motivations to volunteering, and in strengthening a sense of belonging, inclusion, and cohesion (Ramsey, 2012;Brown et al., 2014). An enhanced sense of group membership in communities for young people is seen to enhance wellbeing, including mental health (Miller et al., 2017). Conversely, not feeling part of a community can act as a barrier to volunteering and can encourage isolation and disengagement (Boulianne and Brailey, 2014). Young people in disadvantaged or geographically isolated communities are more likely to note that they have few or no opportunities to volunteer (Bratsa et al., 2020, 14). Equally, those living in rural areas report they are more likely to volunteer than those living in urban areas (Fox, 2019, 63; National Youth Agency, 2021). While young people strongly relate a sense of place to the education institutions and communities they grow up in, they increasingly also refer to online spaces (#iwill, 2019). This suggests that place and community are complex terms which can be descriptive, normative, and instrumental for young people, but are not static or given, and can be overlapping, multiple, and contested (Ramsey, 2012).

Our re-analysis of the existing large-scale surveys revealed significant place-based disparities in the uptake of volunteering amongst young people in England – and some inconsistencies in the data due to differing methodologies and research agendas. Regional disparities were evident in the Taking Part survey, with young people living in the South are more likely than their counterparts in the North to do voluntary work.[1] The National Youth Social Action survey returned similar findings, with young people in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East and North West of England less likely to be volunteering.

While this generally reflects the so-called 'North-South divide', and preconceptions about the South having increased access to opportunities and infrastructure, other regional disparities were also evident. The Taking Part survey shows for example, 63% of 16–19-year-olds living in South West England undertook voluntary work in the last 12 months, compared to 28% in the North East. While the National Youth Social Action survey indicated a much smaller disparity between North East and South West, there was a relatively low number of young people volunteering in the East of England and Greater London, and a relatively high number in the East Midlands.

When comparing urban and rural trends, both the Taking Part and National Youth Social Action surveys indicated young people living in rural places are more likely than their urban counterparts to volunteer across all age groups and frequencies of activity.[2] The Community Life survey paints a similar picture, with 51% of 16–19-year-olds in inner cities volunteered formally and informally in the last 12 months, compared to 65% of those not in inner cities.

All surveys identify various place-specific factors that might influence how and why people undertake volunteering. Taking Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) as the measure, both the Taking Part and Community Life survey show higher levels of volunteering in the least deprived places. The Taking Part survey shows 20% of 16–19-year-olds living in IMD1 areas have done voluntary work in the last 12 months, compared to 50% in IMD9 areas and 69% in IMD10 areas. The Community Life survey shows 12% of 20–24-year-olds in the 20% most

deprived places volunteered formally monthly, compared to 24% of those in the 20% least deprived places.[3] Similarly, the National Youth Social Action survey suggests that young people volunteering decreases steadily with each social grade, where 71% of respondents in social grade A volunteer, compared to just 45% of young people in social grade E.[4]

While applying these different place framings demonstrates relatively consistent trends across the four surveys, an analysis at the hyperlocal level conducted using a multilevel regression model built by the Institute for Community Studies (see Box 1) highlights some inconsistencies both within the Taking Part survey and across the other datasets. Looking at the predicted levels of volunteering at the hyperlocal level, the model confirms the proposition that the 'North-South divide' matters. Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (62%, 61.6% and 60.9% respectively), followed by the City of Bristol (59.3%) show the highest levels of predicted volunteering to be in the South; the lowest ten places in rates of predicted volunteering to all be located in the North East, with the lowest levels presenting in County Durham (41%). However, this contradicts findings from the Taking Part survey that suggest young people volunteer more in rural places, and Community Life Survey findings that people volunteer less in inner city places.

Box 1 - Predicting Volunteering

Using micro-data (i.e. individual responses), we adopted the use of multilevel regression with post-stratification on the Taking Part and the Community Life surveys to help build a more accurate picture of youth volunteering at local authority district level or below. In the absence of micro-data, we built a multilevel regression model using a bespoke dataset constructed for the purpose, from the Taking Part survey. Looking across factors including happiness, anxiousness and deprivation, the model sought to predict the distribution of voluntary work at local authority level, correctly classifying 66% of respondents' volunteering behaviour.[5]

The two maps below show the distribution of voluntary work at Government Office Region level (left-hand side, as recorded in the Taking Part Survey) and the distribution of voluntary work at local authority district level (right-hand side, as estimated by the model).

In predicting the distribution of voluntary work at the local authority district level, the model partly replicates the strong regional effect in the survey dataset but moderates the extremes in the South West and North East. It also identifies potential clusters of activity in other places, such as Manchester, Nottingham and inner London that are otherwise swamped by larger regional effects.
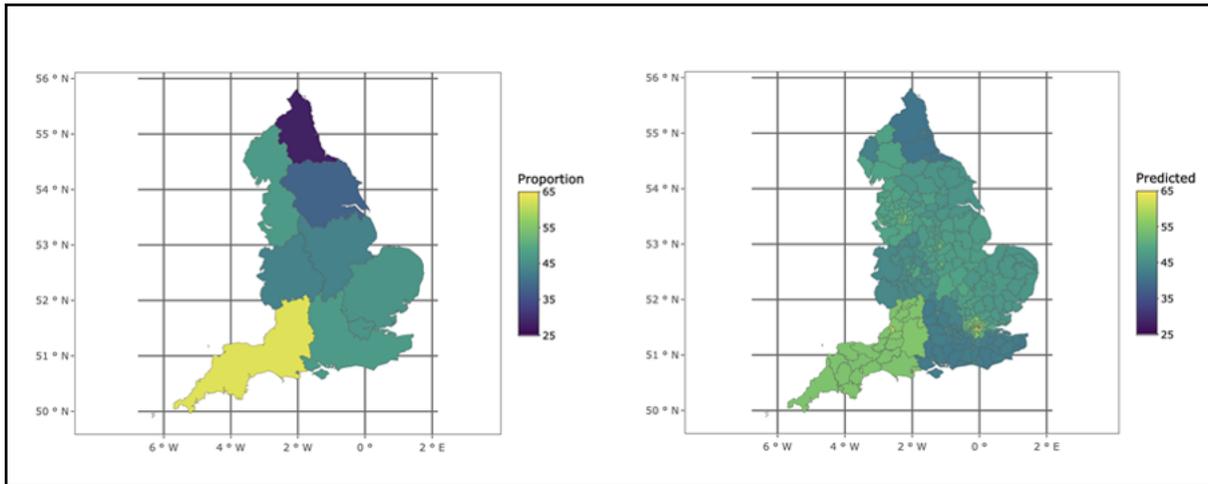
Place-based provision and routes into volunteering

Our re-analysis of past National Youth Social Action surveys explored the type and route into volunteering that young people take, particularly the role of institutions, services and infrastructure in different places (in this case, regions) in influencing how and why young people volunteer. In support of the rapid evidence review findings, educational institutions consistent across all regions play a key route into volunteering, with 70-85% of 10–17-year-olds reporting this is how they access volunteering. For 16–20-year-olds, the role of college and university is supplemented by employment-based routes into volunteering. Interestingly the importance of local community as a route into volunteering grows consistently in the older age groups, coming into prominence between 16-20 years.

% Volunteering:

Volunteering by age

However, strong regional differences apply to the role of places of worship and (uniformed) clubs, sports and hobbies as routes into volunteering. In the Midlands, Yorkshire, the Humber and in Scotland, uniformed groups - such as the Scouts - support 9-11% of voluntary activity compared to just 3% in Greater London. On the other hand, places of worship are an important route into volunteering for 13% of young people in London, compared to 1-7% for the rest of the country. This might point towards regional disparities in availability of these institutions to support pathways into volunteering. Clubs and Sports activities account for over 20% of routes into volunteering for young people in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. Interestingly, less than 6% of entry routes to volunteering in every region of the UK were attributed to programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award or the Princes Trust.

The Understanding Society survey (which focuses on 11–15-year-olds) highlights a possible relationship between how young people spend their time and to pathways to volunteering, while also raising questions about how the disparity in provision or access to leisure or social infrastructure might impede or supporting a strong volunteering system. For example, 65% of 11–15-year-olds who go to a youth club also volunteer, rising to 72% of those who attend most days. Those who go less – or who do not have the opportunities to attend – volunteer less frequently too. 63% of those who spend less than an hour using a computer at home for playing games on a normal school day do voluntary and community work, compared to 32% of those who do so for between 4 to 6 hours a day.

The Institute for Community Studies/Yougov nationally representative survey (ICS/Yougov survey) further developed our understanding of differing attitudes to youth volunteering and social action activity amongst 16-30 year olds. It explored the forms of participation young people would be most likely to do to change society, routes into and frequency of volunteering, as well as other unpaid and voluntary activities that young people might have undertaken in the last 12 months. It also explores aspirations and attitudes of young people towards social action, volunteering and making change - detailed in following sections of the report.

An analysis of the data through a place-based lens highlighted regional differences in how young people might like to volunteer. When asked to rank preference of how to participate, 19-21% young people in North East, East and South East England and Scotland chose 'volunteering through an organisation' as one of their top three choices, compared to just 10% in North West England and 13% in Wales. In North East England, Yorkshire and Northern Ireland, young people indicated a keenness to engage online, with 19-22% keen in "raising awareness online or via social media" (19-22%) compared to 11-13% in East and South East England and Wales.

Notably, the ICS survey data, including a focus on regions identified as levelling up priority areas, supported findings from the re-analyses of large-scale survey datasets that those falling into social class ABC1 were more likely to have volunteered than those in C2DE. Interestingly, when asked about communities they belong to, 23% of young people living in priority areas compared to 17% of young people living in other parts of the UK were likely to feel like they belonged in a city.

Summary

Mirroring the findings of the rapid evidence review, there are various challenges associated with inconsistent terminology and data collection framing, which is well-noted in existing literature. Nonetheless, taking the re-analysis of these four large-scale survey datasets together provides a large, multi-year dataset from which to draw robust inferences about young people and how they volunteer across England and the UK. The findings from the re-analysis support some of the existing evidence base, for example in highlighting the role of educational institutions. It also reinforces gaps in the evidence base, such as the role of online communities and social media in young people's volunteer journey. The ICS/Yougov survey begins to explore such gaps, explored in this section and in later sections understanding young people's motivations and pathways.

Place also emerged as a *motivating factor* for volunteering with increasing prominence with the older age groups within the youth bracket; those who selected that they had become involved in volunteering due to *wanting to change an issue in my local neighbourhood* had an uptake of 17% by the younger generation (16-24 yrs) vs the older generation (25-30 yrs). Interestingly there was a reverse decline by age in those who preferred to take action through being inspired by social movement: 30% of 16-24 year olds stated social movements inspired their social action versus 21% of 25-30 year olds; showing a shift from campaign or politicised motivations for volunteering (Amna, 2012; Centre for Youth Impact, 2021) towards local and community-orientated motivations for volunteering. However, class (if considered as a proxy for income/deprivation in this case) does intercede slightly in how far young people feel they can create change locally; those from middle and upper classes were more likely to agree they could create change on the issues that mattered to them locally than those from lower and working classes (39% ABC1 versus 32% C2DE).

Finally, the role of local organisations as routes to create change was found to have greater prominence for young people than national organisations or development schemes; 44% of young people agreed that they felt they could make change through local organisations; compared to 31% who felt they could create change through a national organisation (and 44% disagreed with national organisations as routes to create change). This highlights the potential for local organisations as gateways, entry points and important anchors for youth volunteering in the post-pandemic landscape.

The re-analysis of the existing datasets highlights various regional differences in routes into volunteering and types of volunteering undertaken. However, the ICS/Yougov survey shows no significant differences in trends and attitudes towards volunteering between 'levelling up' priority areas and the general survey population. Following the evidence, the findings may thus suggest that rather than what has been called a poverty of aspiration around volunteering existing for young people in 'levelling up' areas, it may in fact be poor logistical conditions (infrastructure, transport), challenges of variable provision, and/or wider social conditions of poverty or precarity that are affecting the engagement with volunteering for young people in poorer and deprived parts of the UK. These - and other barriers - are also found to have a strong impact on 'Volunteering Journeys' for poorer young people in the next section discussing the findings from peer and digital research with young people.

The model predicting volunteering by using a multilevel regression model suggests that micro-data would help to identify potential clusters of activity within places, that are otherwise swamped by larger regional effects. Data to this effect would also help us to better infer relationships between place-based trends and place-based provision, to help understand what supports or impedes a flourishing volunteering system. However, the ICS/Yougov survey found a strong correlation between the *sense of community* in building participation in volunteering. This is unexpected when we look at the disparate relationships and considerations about community in relation to volunteering in the existing evidence review.

Findings: Understanding the Volunteering Journey

This section presents the findings from the primary research stages of the co-produced participatory action research, which engaged over 600 young people between the ages of 11-30 years. The co-production approach whereby a Youth Advisory Board of individuals aged 16-30 years co-designed the terminology, methodology and research instruments resulted in a unique qualitative research approach being taken with each different age group.

Participatory workshops drawing on creative methods were co-designed to engage with young people aged 11-15 years in order to understand and empower young people to articulate their experiences and visions for volunteering through an accessible, experiential learning approach that also raised their awareness. This drew on insights from the evidence base about the uneven provision of volunteering for younger age groups - meaning the method needed to be sensitive to varying levels of knowledge of the issue, and to raise awareness of what volunteering *is,* alongside addressing a gap in the evidence of qualitative research to support understanding young people aged 11-15 years attitudes to and experience of volunteering.

Peer research, and a digital research methodology of the *River of Life*, were selected for use with young people aged 16-30 years because of their ability to maximise participation by those who would not usually take part in research studies, through being sensitive to different time constraints and normative participation routes for young people (for example asynchronous online engagement, and peer-to-peer engagement via phone, whats app call or in person). The methods also enable deep participation through using storytelling approaches, which is sensitive to gaining research insights on lived experience, conceptualisations, barriers, motivations and pathways - all crucial to understanding the 'volunteering journey' for young people once they leave formal educational settings.

Our research has five main findings, three of which align with and stretch what was found from the evidence review; and two further findings which emerged from the research with young people:

- The need for establishing a common language for youth volunteering which reflects its hybrid and adaptive nature, coupled with more consistent but flexible entry points to volunteering that align with this language by facilitating formal and informal first experiences of volunteering in a more concerted and visible way.
- The need to support volunteer literacy for all young people, and for the system of volunteering provision to be responsive in shaping volunteering opportunities that speak to young peoples' social values and their need to see meaningful change.
- The need to develop a youth-centred approach to volunteering and to organise the volunteering system to be youth-centred in order to sustain young peoples' participation as volunteers. In other words, the need to recognise that the background and circumstances of each young person is critical in influencing attitudes to and frequency of volunteering; and creating more even provision that overcomes barriers but is not solely delivered through educational pathways.

- The need to build and capitalise on the importance of social scaffolding in youth pathways, specifically the role of family and community, in growing participation in, and in maximising social and wellbeing returns from, volunteering. There is a significant opportunity to grow the youth volunteering base through shaping opportunities which are delivered in local places and closely connected to local issues; and furthermore messaging and framing that responds to young peoples' interest in serving their community.
- The need to address the triple burden for the 16+ age group in particular of the impact of anxiety and mental health on volunteering, through the importance of wider structures of support including mental health services and mentoring, into the volunteering offer.

Each of these will be discussed in turn, drawing on the data from the different stages of the qualitative methods as they relate to findings with different age groups.

Finding 1.

Establishing a common language for youth volunteering that reflects its hybrid, changing and adaptive nature - and more consistent but flexible entry points and support structures.

Most adults report their first experiences of volunteering during secondary education (Owens, 2015). Furthermore, the rapid evidence review found early experiences of volunteering can have a lifelong impact on volunteering attitudes and behaviours, although more longitudinal evidence is required on how this operates. In this section, we first examine the need for a common language and entry points for the youngest age group involved in the research (11-15 years); and then for post-16 age groups.

This research identified two key entry points to the volunteering journey, which act as connectors between 11-15-year-olds and early volunteering experiences. The first is schools, which represent the most common entry point for this age group. Young people who had participated in volunteering had done it through their schools, and those who had never done so pointed to their school or tutors as a route to finding their first volunteering opportunity. Furthermore, the schools that were engaged in the research expressed an interest in promoting volunteering in their students, acknowledging the potential to play a role in building volunteering behaviours.

These findings are backed by the existing evidence base, which indicates that the majority of young people identify their school or college as the primary factor in facilitating volunteering for the first time (Brodie et al, 2011, 29). School-based citizenship education, community service programmes or national schemes (such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award) are identified as common points of entry to participation (Alma Economics, 2021, 10). Young people themselves see the potential of schools as a key touchpoint, expressing a desire for schools to integrate volunteering within their education and learning (#iWill, 2014, 35). Schools are also an important factor in facilitating relationships between young people and

volunteering organisations which extend beyond the formal period of education (British Youth Council, 2012).

However, for post-16, the dominance of school-based and formal routes to volunteering was not as strong as the evidence suggested. As indicated in the rapid evidence review, volunteering pathways across all stages are limited by resource constraints, density of youth organisations, restrictions on spatial mobilities, difficulties in accessing information, and a lack of support from schools, which emerged as a major pathway for many young people. Around a quarter (19) of the peer research participants and over a third (17) of the 'River of Life' digital research participants referenced formal structures, entry points and models of volunteering. When we consider that only 6 of the 125 combined participants who took part said they had never volunteered, this suggests that the majority of young people are volunteering though informal structures and fluid models of volunteering that fall outside of those offered through education and institutional routes and opportunities.

As demonstrated during the pandemic, informal volunteering remains important both as a way to respond to community needs and to ensure young people are able to participate in volunteering when formal structures fall through. During the pandemic, for instance, access to formal routes to volunteering for young people was significantly reduced, especially during lockdowns and for regions with low resourcing for youth infrastructure, increasing existing spatial inequalities (UK Youth, 2021).Volunteering literacy must therefore consider not only formal volunteering, but also build knowledge of informal volunteering and how to organise or access it.

As discussed in the methodology, the Youth Advisory Board determined that the most effective way to present 'volunteering' to young people that would resonate with them, was through the terminology 'social action', which peer researchers explained to participants encompassed both formal, informal, fluid and regular models of volunteering. When using this broader definition, our research found the majority of young people had engaged in a volunteering activity at some point in their life.

Despite this, engagement with formal structures and models of volunteering remained a prominent part of how young people *first* experienced volunteering, particularly for those from the most deprived backgrounds (here defined through the governments' levelling up categorisation of areas as 'priority 1' areas). Post-16 education, in particular, as a formal pathway into volunteering was the most recurring factor spoken about by young people during both the peer-to-peer interviews and the 'River of Life' maps. As mentioned in the rapid evidence review, for the 16-21 year old age groups, volunteering is increasingly being framed as part of the 'student experience' at university, which is mirrored in how those participants who had experienced university categorised and had experienced volunteering. This is also reflected in the fact that *all* the peer research participants who had never volunteered had had more limited further and higher education opportunities, if any.

This is not to say volunteering through school does not have the potential to be a significant pathway into continued volunteering engagement. For the younger age groups (11-15, and 16-18 years) our research demonstrates that a more regular, service model could be a

significant opportunity to grow the volunteer base who continue to volunteer into later life, and to even out the opportunities for young people. Several participants who had experienced education systems outside the UK described the impact a more regular volunteering experience had had on their volunteering capital in later life: *"at high school, around 16, I was required to complete 50 hours of community service. [..] It started out as a requirement, but it never felt like one - I continued well after my 50 hours are up. Still, this was only just the beginning"* (25 years old).

During the co-analysis phase, the wider group of thirty-five peer researchers reflected on this distinction between community service and more 'patchy' volunteering provision, and concluded that an approach which incorporates volunteering directly into the curriculum – whilst importantly allowing young people the time, space, and flexibility to seek out their personal interests - may be a more appropriate model in boosting young people's desire to continue engagement post the one off in-school opportunity.

This was also reflected in a number of the peer research interviews with ages 21-30, reflecting on what would have better supported their volunteering journey at secondary school but also in sustaining this involvement through tertiary education.

"It would be good to have basically an agreement with university for there to be some time just left out where someone could possibly engage in voluntary work if they wanted to. My college encouraged that in particular where on one of our courses, we had to do at least 30 hours of voluntary work. That encouragement allowed a lot of people to go off and basically learn about the world in the ways that they haven't learned about before and obviously, same goes for me. It would be good if that was a thing as well." (Female, 21)

Addressing deprivation

In line with evidence drawn out in the review, our research showed school as a disconnected and uneven pathway according to spatial and social inequalities. Building on the evidence which suggests a correlation between low socioeconomic status and limited scaffolding available to support volunteering pathways, our data shows the particular importance of hybrid models that work through education but provide additional support to young people through partnership with informal organisations, and the importance this can play in boosting pathways for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to volunteer.

"For instance, I currently am part of a charity that provides mentorship to 16 to 25-year-olds in my local community, and mentorship to people who would otherwise not have some type of networks that their peers and their counterparts would have, that definitely help them attain education and in their career. I want to even that playing field." (Female, 22)

Participants in the 18+ age groups frequently mentioned the potential emotional drain from volunteering and the need for balance and flexibility. The peer research and river of life exercises both demonstrated that having ownership over the extent and nature of their volunteering commitment and the frequency and intensity of their involvement were important factors for young people. This can be seen as young people from 16 upwards

expressing a preference for fluid volunteering, where rather than a 'service' driven model which requires consistent or regular hours, they are seeking a high impact but very flexible role and terms of engagement. This may be difficult to deliver consistently within resource-limited environments and speaks more to what could be called a 'social action +' model where volunteering delivers deep societal benefit, often on a 'justice-based' issue, that is also often personal to the lived experience or values of the young volunteer.

Finding 2.

Supporting volunteer literacy for all young people so they can understand, navigate, and participate in the increasingly complex volunteering ecosystem - and creating volunteering opportunities that speak young peoples' language around social value and connect closer to local places.

Volunteering literacy is taken to mean the sense of awareness young people have - or not - of volunteering. At secondary school, and in the crucial transition points in finishing formal education (16-18 years) and in commencing work, the research found that as well as a need to build volunteering literacy amongst young people, there was also a strong need for volunteering provision to be cognisant to, and reflective of, the language and causes that young people are passionate about. Furthermore, our findings reflected an opportunity for volunteering provision to engage young people through taking them closer to the local.

Age, social and spatial disparities in literacy

To understand youth perceptions of volunteering, a series of participatory action workshops with a total of 300 individuals aged between 11-15 years old and 30 ESOL students between 16-19 years old were carried out in six locations across the country. The workshops highlighted a general lack of volunteer literacy, with participants across all contexts demonstrating little familiarity with the volunteering offer and the types of opportunities that might be available to them. This was most clear in the lack of concreteness when participants talked about the volunteering they might potentially be interested in. Although participants were passionate about specific causes and seemingly eager to do something about them, they had vague or ill-informed ideas about how they might actually get involved.

"*We'll be talking about the rainforest and the help they definitely need. We need your help. Here's an example of what you can do to help the animals in danger: we could do CPR for animals and we could help plant trees and stuff. The rainforest is dying and we need to help save it*." (11 year old)

During the workshops, participants were asked to provide their own definition of volunteering, rather than providing a predetermined definition. The most common element featured in young participants' definitions was the idea of "helping". This is linked to the intent of volunteering, creating a wide range of possibilities for the actual activities that fit

within the definition. In some cases, identical activities were identified as volunteering or non-volunteering based purely on the intent to help. Another element that featured in most of this age groups' definitions was volition; the idea that volunteering is something done willingly or by choice.

"Help poor people, homeless, orphans, children. Why? Because they are human." (16 year old)

The desire to "help" was underpinned by sympathy towards those who are perceived as "worse off" or in need. Sympathy is an emotion that responds to "an apparent threat or obstacle to an individual's good or wellbeing", and involves concern for the sake of the other (Darwall, 1997). It differs from empathy in that it does not necessarily consider or mirror the feelings or emotions of the person in need, but is rather driven by concern, pity or compassion for the other. The specific object of sympathy changed from context to context, with younger children featuring often in all settings. Urban settings (London and Leeds) tended to identify people as needy- mainly those living in poverty, younger children, older adults or those without homes, while rural or coastal settings (Jedburgh, Brighton) had a more diffuse definition which included animals in need and the environment.

In the more affluent settings where workshops were held with 11-15 year olds, notably Jedburgh and Hove, a high proportion of participants' "ideal" volunteering experiences were related to existing organisations, with participants having awareness of different organisations, either locally or nationally and internationally. For instance, participants in Jedburgh, a rural setting, had high awareness of local organisations, including the charity Stable Life (equine therapy) and Arthurshiels (animal rescue). Participants in Hove demonstrated knowledge of local organisations including "Ride the Tide", "Sea Rescue", local sports centres, and national organisations "Dog Trust", "Team Trees" and "Cancer Research".

Participants in Gladesmore (London) also had frequent mentions of existing organisations. This group was similar to the group engaged in Hove, in that participants were younger (10-11 years old), and located in the South East of England. The location of these settings in South East England makes it more likely that local organisations and formal opportunities may have appropriate funding and infrastructure. Although funding of youth infrastructure has declined significantly in the entire country in the last decade, the South East has been amongst the areas least affected by this and might be seen as a winner in the "postcode lottery" (McGarvey et al., 2021). These findings indicate a higher volunteering literacy in more affluent contexts, which corroborates with the evidence review, on the lines of not solely social inequalities but also spatial inequalities, with the poorer and more peripheral locations we visited having less high volunteering literacy and less sense of opportunity for the 11-15 year old groups.

Causes that resonate

To understand how and where young people in this age group would like to volunteer, participants were asked to think of and represent their "ideal" volunteering experience in an

advert. This participatory approach highlights the importance of the voice of young participants, conveying the message that their voices "[matter] so much that they would be worthy of broadcasting" (Kleine, et.al., 2016). The resulting adverts provide insights into the types of volunteering that this age group is interested in doing, as well as the causes that they care about.

The causes that 11-15-year-olds chose for their "ideal" volunteering experiences varied significantly across contexts. On one hand, contexts that were more connected to nature (e.g. semi-rural Jedburgh and coastal town Hove) had a greater frequency of volunteering experiences related to animals, such as animal shelters and saving animals at risk of extinction. These same settings had more mentions of environmental causes, such as beach cleaning, tree planting and litter picking. This shows that increased access to or contact with nature may make young people more interested in environmental causes, including helping animals. On the other hand, contexts that were more urban (e.g. London and Leeds) tended towards volunteering experiences related to social causes, such as helping families in need or people who are homeless. The social causes that were of interest in these contexts were related to observed needs (e.g. helping the homeless or running a soup kitchen) as well as causes of personal significance (e.g. helping refugees for individuals who were migrants, and helping LGBTQ+ for individuals who identified as such). This reflects the increased exposure of young people in urban settings to societal issues, as well as the connection between lived experience and the causes that individuals are passionate about.

The differences between the volunteering preferences of young people across settings demonstrates a propensity to be passionate about causes that are more visible in each context through the lived experience of being part of a local community; or through social and visual media (many referenced social media or television in why they selected their causes). This highlighted that young people's identities today are more fluid due to internet connectivity and social media, navigating between being both global and local citizens. Stakeholders from the volunteering system engaged in feedback workshops had also observed this dual identity in their beneficiaries, and felt it was exacerbated by increased digital volunteering during the pandemic.

To grow the volunteering base it is important to ensure that young people have the opportunity to engage in both local and global causes, regardless of their location. The co-analysis with the Advisory Board who considered the workshop data found the challenge to be twofold: on one hand, it is crucial to ensure a diversity of societal themes and volunteering opportunities are present in places where they may not be as visible, such as places that are less dense or relatively affluent, in order to grow aspiration for what young people can engage in. On the other hand, it is important to support young people who may be constantly exposed to societal issues (for instance, those in urban contexts), to ensure they are able to engage positively and do not experience burnout or apathy through overexposure or overburden. Even in communities with acute need, the Advisory Board stressed that young people should have the opportunity to choose what causes to engage with. Choice ensures that engagement is sustained, and it increases equality across contexts, expanding the realm of possibilities beyond local causes. This ties back to building

volunteer literacy, as there is an opportunity to ensure that young people are aware of the opportunity to engage with a range of causes that transcend their lived experience.

Support for developing volunteer literacy during secondary education has the potential to be transformative by enabling young people to seek out and participate in volunteering experiences that are meaningful to them. Our workshops confirmed however that there are currently deep inequalities in opportunities to learn about and take part in volunteering across all levels of education. They drew attention to the limited capacity of some schools to provide volunteering opportunities and accompanying literacy. Reliance on schools as the place where the 'Volunteering Journey' of young people begins may actually exacerbate inequalities, giving a head start to those students who attend schools that are better resourced and civically oriented.

Volunteering Literacy post-16 years

"The way that we are taught that volunteering is such isn't actually what it actually is about. It feels like the word volunteer is just like your brain instantly jumps to unpaid work basically, which seems quite negative for people. It seems like people don't have space for that. I guess people volunteer constantly." (25 years)

The post 16 years age groups engaged in this study were quick to challenge the way volunteering had been defined and conceptualised during their formal education and through formal routes. Comparing responses across the different ages engaged in the peer research process, we found that the younger bracket of 16-18 were still more dominantly referencing formal routes of charitable organisations, through part-time work or through local community organisations. Post-18 participation in volunteering appeared to become more hybrid and then for post 25 year olds, it was extremely fluid and hard to identify common anchor points that keep young people involved.

Despite school being the most common entry point for young people into engagement in volunteering, it was said to rarely boost volunteering literacy in the 16-18 age groups. Just one young person across the 'River of Life' digital and peer research methodology explained that school volunteering exposed them to future opportunities or with knowledge of a route into the volunteering system; *"school was a huge part of my journey, as they encouraged us to volunteer and help people in the community" (20 years old).* Instead, for many, school volunteering illustrated just one instance of volunteering activity occurring in isolation from other forms of engagement, which they felt rarely highlighted alternative pathways for making change or organisations where they could seek similar opportunities.

The post-16 landscape was additionally where the concept of what constituted volunteering became increasingly contested by young people. The work-place as a route into volunteering was a particularly undervalued space in terms of being seen as part of a volunteering pathway. In fact, participants frequently questioned whether volunteering as part of their part-time or full-time work constituted 'true' volunteering - and often discounted it entirely as a meaningful volunteering experience.

"Interviewee: I don't know if it's volunteer work more than just unpaid work, but with Spoons we did like beer festivals on days off where we could just assist with–

Interviewer: What was that for?

Interviewee: It was just a beer festival that happened every year…Wasn't paid, so once it was, I suppose, volunteering, but didn't do it to make a difference or help. I just did it because my mates are doing it and it was fun." (Male, 21)

Our findings raise a disconnect between how volunteering opportunities are presented for all age groups and young people's understanding of the importance and motivations to volunteer. The highly altruistic motivations of the younger age group (aged 11-15) to volunteer was succeeded by the most common motivator amongst 16-25 years old being a desire to 'make a difference'. Through the peer research methodology, 39 participants cited a desire to make a difference as a key motivator for their engagement in volunteering, and our research indicated that self-interested reasons were rarely the sole or primary reason young people engaged in volunteering activities. This is a departure from the existing evidence base which has frequently highlighted the dominant driver as being 'instrumental' use of volunteering to gain skills, access higher education and employability. Our research showed this was only true for the 16-21 age groups seeking to access university or employment; and then only for the minority and typically in tandem with wanting to make a wider societal impact.

Our project sought to understand the impact of significant education, social, political, and life transition points on the 'Volunteering Journey' of young people after secondary school through drawing on a range of peer research and digital methodologies with 16-30 year olds. Through the use of participatory action research and peer research methods, we sought to empower young people as co-producers of knowledge and evaluation of fieldwork data to explore the diverse pathways to volunteering experienced by young people as their lives and pathways began to diversify after leaving formal education.

This research has highlighted that conditions of place and deprivation as well as the uneven landscape of school provision mean certain young people, particularly the poorest, lack consistent opportunities in their early secondary years (11-15 years). If the volunteering base is to be grown, the volunteering system needs to go further to 'even out' the gaps and to recognise other sites of socialisation, such as the importance of family and peer models, that could support young people to engage in volunteering. These findings strongly emphasise the need to take a youth-centred approach that recognises these different age-transitions and shapes volunteering provision and support to more closely respond to the challenges young people are experiencing in their lives.

Finding 3.

Developing a youth-centred approach to volunteering in order to sustain young peoples' participation

As noted in our rapid evidence review, initiatives to grow youth volunteering have often focused on enhancing educational and employability prospects, thus indicating that the primary motivation of young people to participate is largely instrumental. This research has identified a range of other motivations for young people, which change throughout their transition to adulthood. The journey of young volunteers was shown through our research to be non-linear. Although differential early engagement impacted perceptions and routes into volunteering for almost all the young people we spoke to, their perception of volunteering now was different to the one they held during their initial phase of engagement. Transitioning life stages were key in the shifting patterns and the prioritisation young people gave to volunteering.This highlights the importance of adopting youth-centred approaches to understanding how young people conceive volunteering and what motivates them to participate in it. This section describes some of the drivers that were identified in different age groups, which drive young people to start volunteering or sustain their participation.

Drivers and motivators: 11-15 year olds

Our workshops with 11-15 year-olds, we identified clear motivators for volunteering which differ from the existing evidence base. Participants created adverts to represent their "ideal volunteering experience" in whatever medium they selected. The results were telling of the drivers behind volunteering for this age group, as well as the specific causes and activities that interested them, which were often linked to place. The volunteering adverts created by participants frequently included appeals to sympathy, often highly emotional. A large proportion of all adverts (nearly three quarters), appealed to sympathy, stating the needs of beneficiaries dramatically and emotionally.

This is a strong indicator that the motivation to volunteer for these participants was the desire to help, driven by both sympathy and heroism. This diverges notably from the way youth volunteering is often understood and framed- as instrumental. It points to the importance of taking a youth-centred approach to understanding and framing volunteering, which would enable the volunteering system to better engage with young people and speak to their motivations.

Although there is uniformity in the drivers of volunteering across different contexts, greater variation was observed between the groups engaged in the workshop in terms of both the volunteering activities selected and the related causes. This points to an influence of place and context on the volunteering preferences of participants. Factors such as affluence, available infrastructure and relative visibility of causes in a place all had an effect on the preferences of participants. It is essential to build a deeper, youth-centred understanding of how young people want to volunteer, and how this might be shaped by factors of place.

It is important to note that engagement with causes both local and global was not political, but rather motivated by a desire to create positive social change. The line between volunteerism and political participation has become increasingly blurred with the proliferation of campaigning and activism, conceptualised as 'youth social action' (Marzana et al., 2012, 497). Yet, this age group expressed a desire to become involved in the causes they care about in ways that are apolitical. Their interest was driven by altruism and the desire to benefit their community, aligning more closely with definitions of 'meaningful social action' (Spencer and Lucas, 2018, 10). This challenges the notion that youth engagement with global causes and societal themes is inherently political, shedding light on the alternative, apolitical ways that young people can become involved in causes they care about.

Sustaining volunteering: 16-30 year olds

Research with participants over 16 years old highlighted the motivations for sustained volunteering, which may change as young people transition to adulthood. The desire to make a difference was the primary motivating factor for young people's sustained engagement with volunteering. Although this was particularly distinctive for the youngest age cohort (11-15) and 21-24 year olds, it was reflected in the research with every age group.

Participants in the peer research and digital research described the importance of seeing the impact of their volunteering on others. This may be even more important than being embedded in the local community, if the impact is not apparent. A participant in the peer research explained that despite being embedded in the community volunteering in a shop, the immediate impact of supporting call centres felt more satisfying for her:
"I think for me personally I like it when I can see a direct impact of what I'm doing, so for example like working in the charity shop was like, it didn't feel - maybe I'm just being selfish here - for me it's like I need to feel like I'm getting something out of it so I can feel better about myself because I've helped someone… like with the charity shop it's like at the end of the day it is a charity shop but you're working in a shop and you don't really feel that [charity aspect], like, it was Samaritans [and] I really love that charity, but I think I would have felt better working in the Samaritans call centre rather than Samaritans charity shop because then at least I'm like actually, like people are calling me for help rather than me just like essentially actually just working in a shop" (22 years old).

This suggests young peoples' gain from and experience of volunteering is not solely instrumental, and has a greater resonance and impact than just the 'tick box' exercise which stakeholders (and the evidence review) suggest may have come to dominate the discussion of 'meaningfulness' in terms of volunteering. The peer research findings particularly suggest what other sense of 'meaning' may be produced for young people from engaging in volunteering, in terms of mutual wellbeing gain and impact on the community.

Interviewee: "I used to volunteer in a Welsh children's youth club. So I used to look after children, children from the age of I believe it was 11 to 13. It was quite fun. Actually."

Interviewer: "So would you say that was a positive experience for you?"

Interviewee: "Oh, definitely. Yeah, it was something that I really enjoyed doing. Well, just to see the effect of doing little workshops with these young people. Just the effect that that had on their happiness and their well-being and stuff like that." (25 years old)

On the other hand, older cohorts expressed scepticism that their volunteering could have a real impact on the issues they care about. The digital River of Life methodology illustrated a shift in motivations, with older people sharing the perception that volunteering had limited impact in making a difference. Yet, some participants were motivated by the opportunity to build skills and confidence that could then be used to create social change.

"I think having done volunteering experiences and gaining those leadership skills does definitely set you up for the future. It gives you the confidence as well, not necessarily to be a leader, but to stand up when you know something isn't right, per se." (16 years old)

Our reanalysis of the Community Life Survey shows a decline in volunteering for older age groups, alongside increase in engagement in activism. This could be illustrative of a shift for young people in where best to put their energy to make a difference, including to their wider community. Our research found young people passionate about creating change on many local to global societal issues; however a consistent number of young people discussed that they felt volunteering has limited impact on changing all or many of these issues. This may also connect to why some evidence indicates young people increasingly volunteer for self-motivated reasons as they get older; our evidence shows this may not, in fact, be due to a reduced desire to make a difference - but may be due to a shift in perception of the impact volunteering has. If young people believe stronger altruistic benefits can be achieved through other forms of engagement, then those who continue to volunteer appear to have more personal reasons or relationships that drive this.

The perception of a disempowered medium that young people appear to hold about volunteering raises interesting questions around how to encourage young people to remain engaged in volunteering as their journey progresses; which messaging and benefits to emphasise and what further conversation may be needed about whether volunteering is considered as an empowered role in society, and how far a youth-centred model could help reposition it as empowering.

In older age cohorts, university engagement was generally discussed as something in line with wider interests, motivations and beliefs using language and tone which indicated a stronger sense of passion and drive for the work. Through the 'River of Life' digital methodology, one twenty-three-year-old from London described herself at university through the butterfly symbol explaining *"this represents me being at university. I began to really find my interests and flourish into someone better. I started volunteering for the Nottingham Refugee Forum, I was a part of the local Christian community in providing aid and it was the first time I felt like I was making a difference in society." (23 years old).* Another explained *"I think you know when you're in uni, I think that's like the prime-time people volunteer, that's what I feel" (24 years old).* In total, university was spoken about as a critical reference point in engagement with volunteering across 13 of the peer research interviews and 11 of the digital 'River of Life' maps.

Although evidence indicates young people's volunteering journeys fragment significantly in the post-GCSE period of formal education, and when the statutory period of education comes to an end, our evidence indicates that those that continue with volunteering engagement tend to move into a period of far richer and deeper engagement with volunteering than they did during the in-school period. University attendance is a critical reference point in this journey. Yet, given 50% of young people choose not to attend university, reliance on universities as an entry point for volunteering exacerbates inequalities.

Finding 4.

The importance of social scaffolding in youth pathways, specifically the role of family and community, in growing participation in, and in maximising social and wellbeing returns from, volunteering.

As explained in the previous section, a youth-centred approach to volunteering has the potential to grow youth participation in volunteering while creating experiences that are meaningful to young people and maximise their wellbeing. This research has highlighted the potential role of family and community in 'scaffolding' the volunteering journey, providing entry points and support for young people that sustain their participation in volunteering. 'Scaffolding' encompasses the holistic systems and institutions, peer and intergenerational relationships, and community and family assets and resources that a young person has access to (Flinders, 2022). Some people will start their volunteering journey with little scaffolding at all, while others will have the benefit of an extensively built and well-constructed scaffold system. How scaffolding can be expanded, built on, and changed becomes the important question in building a more equitable volunteering journey.

Family and peers

Family and peers have the potential to model volunteering behaviours and connect children and young people with early volunteering experiences. Both family and friends are an important entry point to volunteering, with the latter increasing in importance with the passage of time. Our re-analysis of past National Youth Social Action Surveys indicate that at 10 years old, family is the main route to volunteering for about 10% of young people, while friends are important for about 5%. By the time young people turn 19 years of age, the proportions become inverted, with friends representing a more common route into volunteering.

In workshops with the youngest age groups (11-15 years), participants demonstrated a strong influence of family and peers in their volunteering preferences. For instance, participants who observed or participated in volunteering at home were likely to express a preference for the same cause or activity. This reaffirms the findings of the Community Life Survey, which has shown that parental volunteering is a predictor of volunteering amongst young people, and is an important route into volunteering, especially amongst the upper-middle class.

"I am volunteering for Sea Rescue because my mum does it, and its really fun. And we get to learn so much about the sea." (11 years old)

Participants aged 11-15 years also shared a general preference toward group activities, including group beach cleans, sports activities and social roles. This importance of peer relationships is consistent with the characteristic milestones of puberty, which include the development of personal identity in parallel to the growing importance of peer relationships, sometimes in subcultural groups (reinsert reference). Young people did not necessarily identify group volunteering models as the solution themselves, but they did identify that peer models were important in overcoming confidence, motivation and mental health barriers for young people particularly in the teenage years.

"I don't think there's necessarily any barriers physically, really, in getting us out and into the community to volunteer. I think perhaps there is just a mentality of the teenager to want to not really do anything social sometimes. I wouldn't say there's any physical barriers. I would just say it's a case of having the motivation between me and my peers to actually get up, go out, and take an active role." (16 years old)

Our research found that young peoples' pathways to volunteer and motivations for it significantly deviate and become disparate in the 16-18 and particularly the 21-24 age groups. There is also a drop off post 25, where a small number of young people continue to volunteer and become, perhaps more deeply engaged, whilst many others struggle to continue to volunteer due to logistical constraints of what has been seen as a 'double burden' of work and family responsibilities alongside volunteering. However, family and 'group models' of volunteering remained popular within older age groups engaged in this study. Participants in the 16-18 and 18-21 age groups in particular were frequently interested in volunteering related to sports, such as volunteering as coaches or teaching younger children. This may be due to lived experience of similar opportunities, as many described having been involved in sports themselves and recalled the positive role of older volunteers. This highlights the importance of young role models in volunteering, though care must be taken to avoid the tokenization of youth volunteers.

Spark moments and social scaffolding

For the post-16 age groups, over half young people referenced a 'spark moment' that shifted their view of volunteering and sent them on a pathway into engagement. This took many forms, did not always have consistent terminology - and took place at many different stages of a young person's life; but it commonly included a moment where the person was exposed to information about a topic that they felt they could either relate to, or were angered by and wanted to change. As indicated, for one or two this came through school, for several it came through university exposure, but for the majority this stemmed from informal and familial sites that exposed them to novel perspectives and topics.

The analysis of the results of the 'River of Life' digital methodology revealed several spark moments which came from social scaffolding in place within their life. Many highlighted the influence of interests of their family members, *"during the general election my sister lived at home, so I was able to get involved and volunteer, campaigning in the election" (17years old*) or conversations had within their home environment as generating that initial moment. This particular quoted example also illustrates a blurring of political participation and volunteering;

which is of interest given the wider context of the Civic Journey study which considers youth participation in all pillars of civic engagement, from democratic engagement to youth activism.

Reference was made by several participants to the influence of political movements as a spark. In the river of life, reference to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was made by 7 young people, noted as a trigger for their initial or renewed engagement with civic activities. This supports the data found in the nationally representative survey which showed 30% of 16-24 year olds were inspired to volunteer by social movements such as BLM or extinction rebellion.

For others the spark moment came from an informal conversation with a teacher or an exposure to an issue through a club or extra-curricular activity. Tracing back to her experiences at school one twenty-three-year-old used the fire symbol in the digital method to explain "*I had an English Literature teacher who introduced me to Maya Angelou's work, it ignited my passion for poetry, women's rights, and intersectional feminism. It was from this point I recognised my intense passion for women's rights".* In this example, the possibility for social scaffolding to be supplemented by education to make up for a lack of it perhaps to start off with becomes clear demonstrating the lasting impact young people's experience at school can have on attitudes and behaviours with regards to volunteering into early adulthood and beyond (Davies, 2017). Yet this example further highlights the lack of uniformity across education highlighting a lottery within volunteering literacy dependent on individual school policy and teacher actions.

Much less frequently referenced was the role of social media in creating 'spark' moments or influencing participation in volunteering. Where it was referenced, it was typically on the basis of awareness raising - with young people actually taking the decision to participate because of a 'real life' encounter, organisation or opportunity that provided the opportunity to volunteer closer to home or in further education. No young people involved in either the peer research or digital methodologies described finding and accessing a volunteering opportunity exclusively through online channels.

"It's very much social media engagement and just seeing things, seeing events that are designed to raise awareness and then following through with that. Like I found out about Hope Rescue just from advertisements in my local town, and then I just thought, "If I've got the time, I would like to engage and help with these people," and that's what I did. It's the same with the environmental group. The environmental group advertised themselves in my college, and then I decided to take that opportunity." (22 years old)

Across all 125 responses from the two methods just one person mentioned citizenship education. Using the 'explosion' symbol he explained *"my citizenship GCSE project prompted me to think about what I cared about and allowed me to get involved. I raised a donation fund of toiletries for the homeless and temporarily housed young people at the YMCA".* The negligible reference to citizenship education as a 'spark moment' for young peoples' volunteering engagement suggests it is vital to reconsider the efficacy of the current citizenship education models in inspiring active participation in volunteering and equalising

the education opportunity so each young person has the opportunity for a 'spark' to be ignited.

The awareness of 'spark moments' within local communities and the wider social system that young people experience in their journeys through age-transitions raises the question of what a better connected system of provision outside of formal education and between different organisations and parts of the social system, including families, could look like, and what it could deliver in terms of levelling out opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering. This challenge is more prominent in young people experiencing poverty or challenges within the social and educational system. As one young person who is a care leaver explained, *"I lived in care for a bit OK so yeah and um I've had the experience with like youth offending team you know what I mean so I sort of know the help that the system can give but like, when it's not in place it's sort of hard to get these opportunities" (20 years old*). If a young person is not within a supportive family environment in terms of civic socialisation, it raises the question of what provision is available from institutions they connect with at other points in their development. Herein lies the importance of 'scaffolding', the systems and institutions, relationships, assets and resources that young people have access to, which support them throughout their transition to adulthood (Flinders, 2022).

Community

Connection to community emerged as a significant motivator in volunteering activity, showing as the second highest motivator, appearing in 21 of the peer research interviews. Across both peer research and the ICS/Yougov survey, a pattern emerged between those who feel they belong to a community, and those who are more likely to undertake volunteering. For example, the ICS/Yougov survey indicated that 63% who have been involved in volunteering felt they belonged to a place-based community compared to 44% of those who have never been involved. Similarly, those who felt a sense of belonging to identity-based communities were three times more likely to engage than those who do not. Our 'River of Life' digital research also saw a pattern emerge in which young people were exposed to and began engaging with a new community which then sparked a volunteering engagement. For example, for 7 young people becoming part of the LGBTQ+ community inspired volunteering activity to support their peers and make a difference to the challenges facing their community.

Hence, the distinction between the two motivators is not always clear cut. Community was often the site of where young people felt they were making a difference, and part of the impact or benefit narrative from the volunteering experience:

"When it comes to volunteering, I think 'What can I do to help somebody?', and 'Who is in a different situation to myself?' and I suppose you would get an element of community out of it. You meet lots of different people and also develop your self-identity, develop your understanding of other peers and [all this] makes you feel like you [belong] within that specific community" (22 years old).

Seeing the impact of their volunteering reflected back from the community was also a key driver for a large proportion of the older participants (post 21 years) engaged in the study.

"(Volunteering) just helped me connect and realise that my ideas can be put into form and actually into community rather than, I don't know. It was the first time that I'd actually made something that actually had an outcome and was actually positive. There was tangible experiences for people. It wasn't just my abstract ideas. It was like, I've got an idea. I'm actually going to make it. People were involved and there was actually collaboration and outcome. Yes. It was measurable." (25 years)

Captured through the 'River of Life' digital methodology, one young person detailed her community volunteering writing long explanations on volunteering through her Temple, swimming club and local nature society before briefly noting; *"I should also mention the countless bake sales and charity events I ran as part of school council at secondary school, as well as the charity events we are currently planning as the student leadership team at my sixth form." (17 years old).*

Although community was a strong motivator for some, others explained volunteering was practical and although it made them "feel good" it was rarely linked to personal identity or wider social desires.

Finding 5

Addressing the role of mental health with a 'triple burden' on volunteers

The way global and national events were affecting confidence and emotional security for young people, particularly in the older, post 18 years age groups, was striking. In total 17 of the young people we spoke to across both methods referred to mental health as a factor affecting their engagement in volunteering. This was referenced across all life stages, with the past two years of the covid-19 pandemic exacerbating impact for many.

"It feels like there's an impending sense of doom on the world. If it's not the pandemic, it's certainly the Russian-Ukraine conflict or something. It feels like every other day there's something that just throws my inner self into turmoil. Like, I remember in 2020, I think it was 2020 when there was the Black Lives Matter movement after I think it was George Floyd was killed. Yes, seeing the Twitter coverage of that and the news was heavy on me. It felt like there was no point to my actions, and I sometimes feel like that every now and then, with the pandemic and the conflict…it feels like the world is really going to end soon, or it feels like maybe I shouldn't be doing what I'm doing, and be focused on other stuff. I guess that's a barrier sometimes to volunteering for me because I'm always going to be wondering if I should be doing something else." (25 years)

In the rivers of life produced by young people, mental health was attributed as a factor reducing or preventing their engagement. Employing the 'rain' symbol to illustrate their

experience one young person added the caption "one of the biggest barriers to engagement in my case is definitely mental health", another explained that during *"second year [of university] I suffered badly with depression and anxiety. This caused me to withdraw from [...] activities and I distanced myself from friends and my community." (19 years old)*

The findings concerning the relationship between mental health and volunteering indicate that in comparison to the 'double burden' frequently noted as a barrier for older volunteers (Community Life Survey, 2019), a 'triple burden' exists for the younger age group: namely balancing volunteering with their work, family life and mental health.

Amongst those who said they regularly volunteered (more than once every few weeks) burnout was mentioned by 22% of young people across the peer research and river of life methodologies. This was particularly the case when the volunteering activity was closely linked to issues of personal identity and the desire to make a difference. Represented by a watercan symbol one young person marked a point in their river as where they were *"working to heal from feeling burned out by so many experiences of trying to change things"* another person used a negative face symbol to say, *"burnout had a detrimental impact on my physical and mental health, happiness, relationship"* This followed directly after starting a local community organisation where they volunteered to support newly arrived refugees.

Even amongst those who did not regularly volunteer, the idea of burnout caused by awareness of social issues and feelings of helplessness acted as a barrier. Citing an *"overexposure to different issues through online platforms"* one young person went as far as to say *"you can feel compassion fatigue before you even decide which cause you want to volunteer with" (24 years old).* Coupled with burnout is a level of guilt that can occur with volunteering - particularly if you're overwhelmed due to other factors in your life and despite wanting to volunteer are unable to. For example, one participant explained that *"I think if you sign up for something and then aren't able to you feel quite bad and guilty about that" (20 years old)* – or not feeling as though you had done enough.

Conclusion

Our research has found young people far from disengaged from either awareness or manifesting taking action in their communities. However, the framing of volunteering was found to be a concept that young people see as too limited - or even problematic - in driving and sustaining the engagement they are seeking to have in their communities. Concurring with what is suggested in the existing evidence review, young people identified with adaptive and hybrid forms of volunteering, with the 16-18 age group particularly drawn to fluid and adaptive approaches and not to formal pathways.

During the 18-21 years, and particularly for young people at university, how volunteering as it is defined and conceptualised in the evidence base is arguably closer to how young people told us they experience and recognise its value. For the post-25 years age group, young people were more reflective on formal versus non-formal routes and showed a turn back towards formal pathways, mainly due to constraints of time and logistics meaning contained activities were more feasible alongside work, family and other social pressures.

However, strong differences exist in how young people conceive of the parameters of what *'meaningful'* volunteering experiences are. Models of weekly and recurrent volunteering were not seen as providing as much value - either to the volunteer or to society - as 'social action', 'public service driven' or 'youth-led' models, focused on addressing critical societal themes. The need to see direct impact - both personal, and for the communities the volunteers were working with; and furthermore volunteering providing a developmental and positive wellbeing benefit to the volunteer; was a clear driver of whether the volunteering was a positive or negative experience. Furthermore, the *experience* of volunteering was the main driver for whether young people continued with their volunteering journey - or not.

This extends to what sustains young peoples' involvement in volunteering: when young people compare different forms of volunteering it was most frequently the activities that show more transformative impact on the community that they prioritised or said were more positive. This can be conceptualised as a **triple benefit**, founded on the strong driver community has for young people. This is a new contribution to what we understand about volunteering from the existing evidence base and more limited survey and quantitative methodologies that have explored this topic.

Our research has found a clear connection between the sense and strength of belonging to a community, in providing *entry points, motivations for,* and a *powerful sense of impact from* and *for* young people from volunteering. This moves beyond the dominant evidence base which has been said to be 'end goal' driven, encouraging young people to view volunteering in individualistic and instrumental terms (Dean, 2014), towards an understanding that this generation of young people are driven not solely by how volunteering may support their individual employment or educational goals but by collective and external facing benefit beyond themselves to local communities - particularly those most vulnerable. This finding is interesting for what it may suggest as a value shift; it is observable that even those young

people who were highly aware (often anxiously accepting) of the *need* for volunteering to support their routes into paid employment, the potential community benefit and engagement in the community was the greater value and often - enjoyment - gained from the experience.

Limited evidence in the last decade found that feeling part of a community can though act as a barrier to volunteering, particularly for disadvantaged youth (Boulianne & Brailey, 2014), and this research appears to confirm that the reverse - strong belonging, driving strong voluntary action - appears to be the case for this generation of youth, even within deprived regions of the UK.

The impact of youth volunteering thus extends well beyond the traditional framing of a 'double benefit' (Hayes, 2017) to the volunteers with discernible positive impacts for government, public services, civil society, and the economy; to demonstrate what can be seen as a **'triple benefit'** to volunteers, public services and government - and to communities. The community part of this 'triple benefit' can be seen as including service to local causes, entry routes and connection to local organisations, and a strength of local social relations between a young person and the community(ies) to which they feel a sense of belonging to.

However, the opportunity to capitalise on this triple benefit is put at risk due to the **triple burden** faced by this generation in terms of precarious work, family responsibilities and experience of the mental health crisis. This goes beyond the 'double burden' hitherto identified (DCMS, 2019 – CLS) of work and family responsibilities which has been shown to cause a drop off in young volunteers, particularly between age 25-30 years. The three elements of the triple burden were found to intercede most in the sustaining and positive impact of young peoples' volunteering journeys; with mental health being the most recurrently intervening factor for the 16-18 years and 21-24 age groups affecting whether or not they continued to volunteer.

"I think people obviously are - and I guess rightfully so in some ways - focusing on their own mental health and their own stuff at the minute so maybe volunteering to help other people is a bit on the back burner" (25 years old)

The emergence of a triple burden and triple benefit model, as barriers and drivers for volunteering respectively, and the recognition of the different ways young people are conceiving of the reciprocal benefit of their role as volunteers and the community, leads us to reinforce the need for youth-centred models in volunteering provision. A youth-centred approach has the potential to overcome the tokenism and instrumentalism of youth volunteering, focusing instead on young people's motivations and the barriers they face to volunteering.

Recommendations:

Building volunteering journeys

There is a need, expressed in both the peer research interviews and by stakeholders, to transform the quality of logistical support for volunteers *and* the provision of volunteering opportunities by local organisations, particularly in deprived places. This includes the need for better infrastructure for volunteers to attend and travel; and the need to consider funding or structural models that can enable larger civic organisations to support the *local* smaller organisations with building their volunteer base. This may include funding, administrative support and specialist help to cut through the increased bureaucracy of safeguarding; GDPR and recently Covid-19 provision; it was also said to include support for how small organisations could access and build in models of volunteer support and wellbeing.

There is a need to re-consider volunteering models that appeal more closely to how young people are motivated and the terms under which they want - and need - engage. The trend towards adaptive volunteering was found to be popular with young people - but fluid and informal models were not exclusively sought. In fact, both the under 15 data and the 16-30 year old data showed there is interest in volunteering through formal organisations and for young people to take what could be called 'high impact' roles in organisations and centres supporting some of the most vulnerable in society. There is also a need to consider what could be effective in 'demand' also meeting 'need' - not just 'supply' in terms of the types of provision and the volunteering offer.

A youth-centred approach to volunteering

In order to overcome the triple burden of volunteering, this research has highlighted the potential of a youth-centred approach to support young people on their volunteering journeys. The evidence review identified a trend towards volunteer-centred approaches to provision, which can be adapted into a novel **youth-centred approach.** This has similar components to the wider volunteer-centred approach, but responds to what young people felt they needed to overcome barriers to start - and continue - engaging in volunteering journeys. This is comprised of:

o **Flexibility** of structuring volunteering opportunities across the 'volunteering journey' that can work round and respond to the pressures and varying time/logistical/developmental burdens young people have at different points in their journey to adulthood.

o **Group models** which provide greater peer benefit, socialisation, support and 'fun' - and drive positive, ongoing engagement with volunteering.

o **'Scaffolding' or support** that accompanies the volunteering offer, to help overcome challenges to participation:

o **Mental health support** to help young people overcome the **triple burden;**

o **Transportation and infrastructure**, particularly in rural or deprived areas;

o **Mentorship** - where negative experiences can be counteracted and positive experiences shared as inspiration;

o **Addressing the volunteer's own development needs** - as opposed to their education and employment needs

Alongside the youth-centred approach that this research points to, different models may increase the volunteering base and support stronger participation for different age groups. In summary, these are:

- **A community-anchored youth-centred model** with the offer delivered through local organisations; this is characterised by team volunteering models and group dynamics; where volunteering is consistent (not one-off) but supported by a strong connection to social purpose and local community benefit. This was viewed as attractive for all age groups engaged, but for youngest (under 14) and oldest (25-30) youth volunteers, this may also be characterised by a family volunteering model in place of the 'team' or 'group' model.

- **A 'social action + model'** that appeals to young people, particularly in the 18-24 years bracket. This is characterised by youth-led design, focused on social and often complex causes which the individual may or may not have lived experience of; peer to peer support and a high sense of impact. This is typically individual-led and often focused on flexible engagement. This can be seen as a 'social action +' model, recognising that youth social action has included a 'blend or hybrid of campaigning, volunteering and service to others' (Simpson et al, 2020, 14); this model continues the service and volunteering elements but is motivated by peer vulnerability, heroism through altruism, or issues closer to the individuals' experience or in local proximity - rather than a politicised campaign model.

- The potential for a new, **service-driven model** that has greater regularity and long term commitment for those aged 16-18 years, focused not on playing a small role in a system or service (such as volunteering in a charity shop or library), but on slow-burn change and future facing themes that appeal to young people. This responds to the 'need' of the volunteering sector to drive greater engagement by young people with weekly or daily models of volunteering to fill roles which older volunteers had vacated during Covid or due to burnout since (Roche 2021, Norrlander et al 2021).

  These could be delivered through educational settings, youth settings or service organisations dependent on resourcing and curriculum; this research confirms the findings of other studies suggesting motivating themes would include:

  ○ Environment and climate change

- Solving vulnerabilities / food, fuel and childhood poverty

- Supporting homeless, those using drug or substance abuse, or discriminated against groups

- Peer support (young people helping other young people)

- Place development or preservation.

Connected to the above, there is a need to build **volunteering literacy,** given the low and limited levels of volunteering literacy found in particularly younger age groups and young people in local areas of deprivation, within this study.

However, this is not simply a 'one way' transaction where young peoples' awareness must be simply raised: there was a strong recognition by both young people and stakeholders that the system of provision needs to consider and adopt terminology that appeals to, and resonates with, young people, in how volunteering is presented and how the commitment required and benefit from volunteering is communicated.

Given the connection made between local organisations and community-driven models of volunteering, there would be value in locally shaped, locally sensitive and locally accessible signposting to raise awareness and access to volunteering opportunities.

Appendix: References and Bibliography

Introduction and Evidence Review References

ACEVO (2012) The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment - Youth unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford, (London: ACEVO).

Ackermann K, and Manatschal A. (2018) 'Online volunteering as a means to overcome unequal participation? The profiles of online and offline volunteers compared', New Media & Society, 20, 12, 4453-4472.

Alma Economics (2021) Youth Social Action: Rapid Evidence Assessment (London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport).

Amnå, E. (2012) 'How is Civic Engagement Developed Over Time? Emerging answers from a multidisciplinary field', Journal of Adolescence, 35, 3, 611-627.

APPG on Youth Affairs (2021) APPG Publishes Final Report on Youth Work, 17th December. Available at: http://www.youthappg.org.uk/appg-publishes-final-report-on-youth-work/

Arthur, J., Harrison, T., Taylor-Collins, E., and Moller, F. (2017) A Habit of Service: The factors that sustain service in young people, (Birmingham: The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues).

Association for Citizenship Teaching (2021) 'GCSE Citizenship results highlight the resilience of pupils and teachers', 11th August. Available at: https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/news/11082021-1805/gcse-citizenship-results-highlight-resilience-pupils-and-teachers

Ballard, P. J., Caccavale, L., & Buchanan, C. M. (2015) 'Civic orientation in cultures of privilege: What role do schools play?', Youth & Society, 47, 1, 70–94.

Barton, E., Bates, E.A. and O'Donovan, R. (2019) ''That extra sparkle': students' experiences of volunteering and the impact on satisfaction and employability in higher education', Journal of Further and Higher Education, 43, 4, 453-466.

Beatfreeks (2020) Take the temperature: a national youth trends report understanding the impact of Coronavirus on young people in the UK. Available at: https://beatfreeksyouthtrends.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BF-NYT-Take-the-Temperature-Report.pdf

Bennet, M. and Parameshwaran, M. (2013) What factors predict volunteering among youths in the UK? Briefing Paper 102, (Birmingham: Third Sector Research Sector).

Birdwell, J., Birnie, R., and Mehan, R. (2013). The State of the Nation: Youth social action in the UK, (London: Demos).

Birdwell, J., Scott, R. and Reynolds, L. (2015). Service Nation 2020. London: Demos.

Body, A., E Hogg., and K Holman (2017) 'To Bridge the Gap? Voluntary Action in Primary Schools', Voluntary Sector Review, 8, 3, 251– 71.

Boulaianne, S. and Brailey, M. (2014) 'Attachment to Community and Civic and Political Engagement: A Case Study of Students', Canadian Review of Sociology, 51, 4, 375-388.

Bradford, S., Hills, L. and Johnston, C. (2016) 'Unintended volunteers: the volunteering pathways of working class young people in community sport', International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 8,2, 231–244.

British Youth Council (2009) A British Youth Council Report: "Recognise and Respect Us": Overcoming barriers to youth volunteering, (London: British Youth Council).

Brodie, E., Hughes, T., Jochum, V., Miller, S., Ockenden, N., & Warburton, D. (2011) Pathways Through Participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship? (London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Institute for Volunteering Research).

Bratsa, Y., Mollidor, C., and Stevens, J. (2020) National Youth Social Action Survey 2019: Summary Report, (London: #iwill/Ipsos Mori).

Brown, H., Harflett, N., and Gitsham, N. (2014) Embedding Inclusive practices in opportunities for youth social action. Available at: https://pearsfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/iwill_NDTi.pdf

Buckingham, H. (2012) Third Sector Futures Dialogues Big Picture Paper 2: No longer a 'voluntary' sector? (Birmingham, Third Sector Research Centre). Available at: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/tsrc/reports/futures-dialogues-docs/bpp2-nolongeravoluntarysector.pdf

Buddery, P. (2015) Volunteering and Public Services: Where co-production meets localism, (London: RSA Action and Research Centre).

Cabinet Office (2013) The Youth Social Action Journey Fund – Call for Ideas. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253379/Youth_Social_Action_Journey_Fund_call_for_ideas_FINAL.pdf

Centre for Youth Impact (2019) Towards a Typology of Youth Social Action. Available at: https://www.youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/iwill_fund_learning_hub_-_evidence_workstream_-_typology_paper_1.pdf

Centre for Youth Impact (2019b) Increasing Youth Social Action in Education. Available at: https://www.youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/iwill-fund-learning-hub-systems-education-full-report-1.pdf

Centre for Youth Impact (2021a) Report on the fourth and fifth #iwill Fund Learning Hub Labstorms. Available at:

https://www.youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/iwill%20Fund%20Learning%20Hub%20LabStorm%204%205%20FINAL.pdf

Centre for Youth Impact (2021b) Data Review 6: What is Youth Social Action. Available at: https://www.youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/iwill%20Fund%20Learning%20Hub%20Data%20Review%206.pdf

Chapman, T., Rich, S., Wilson, H., & Crowther, A. (2015) Evaluation Report: National Youth Agency Youth Social Action Journey Fund Programme, (Durham, Durham University).

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2013) Youth Social Action and Transitions into Work: What Role for Employers?, (London: CIPD).

Children's Commissioner (2021) The Big Ask: The Big Answer, (London: Children's Commissioner for England).

Children's Society (2021) The Impact of Covid-19 on Children and Young People. Available at:
https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-children-and-young-people-briefing.pdf

Cleverdon, J., and Jordan, A. (2012) 'In the Service of Others: A vision for youth social action by 2020'. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211937/In_the_Service_of_Others_-_A_vision_for_youth_social_action_by_2020.pdf

Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008) Report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering and Manifesto for Change (London: Volunteering England).

Crocetti, E., Jahromi, P., and Meeus, W. (2012) 'Identity and civic engagement in adolescence', Journal of Adolescence, 35, 3, 521-532.

Cullinane, C. and Montacute, R. (2017) Life Lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people, (London: Sutton Trust).

D'Souza, J., Low, N., Lee. L., Morrell, G., and Hall, J. (2011) Understanding the drivers of volunteering in culture and sport: analysis of the Taking Part Survey, (London: National Centre for Social Research).

Davis-Smith, J., Ockenden, N., and Timbrell, H. (2019) Kickstarting a new volunteer revolution, (Cardiff, Royal Voluntary Service).

Davies, J. (2017) Young People & Volunteering: A literature review, (University of Strathclyde. Volunteer Scotland).

Davies, J. (2018) 'Voluteerin' actually has helped me: Young People's Views on the Benefits of Volunteering in Areas of Multiple Deprivation, (Strathclyde: Volunteer Scotland).

Dean, J. (2014) 'How structural factors promote instrumental motivations within youth volunteering: a qualitative analysis of volunteer brokerage'. Voluntary Sector Review, 5(2), 231–47.

Dean J. (2016) 'Class Diversity and Youth Volunteering in the United Kingdom: Applying Bourdieu's Habitus and Cultural Capital', Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 45, 1, 95-113.

Dean, J. (2021) 'Informal Volunteering, Inequality, and Illegitimacy', Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, early view online.

Department for Education (2013) Citizenship programmes of study: key stages 3 and 4 National curriculum in England, (London: DfE). Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_dat
a/file/908347/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Citizenship.pdf

Department for Education (2015) Citizenship: Key Stage 1 and 2. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_dat
a/file/402173/Programme_of_Study_KS1_and_2.pdf

Department for Education (2017) National Citizen Service: Guidance for Schools and Colleges. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_dat
a/file/657812/National_Citizen_Service-Guidance_for_Schools_and_Colleges_.pdf

Department for Education (2019) The School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2018: Research report. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_dat
a/file/907005/The_School_Snapshot_Survey-Winter-2018.pdf

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2020) Community Life COVID-19 Re-contact Survey 2020. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-covid-19-re-contact-survey-2020-m
ain-report

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021) Community Life Survey 2020/2021, 29th July. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202021

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2022) Government outlines ambitious plans to level up activities for young people, 1st February. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-ambitious-plans-to-level-up-activit
ies-for-young-people

Donahue, K. (2020) Literature Review: Volunteering as an Intervention to Increase Life Chances, (London: Royal Voluntary Services).

Donahue, K., McGarvey, A., Rooney, K., and Jochum, V. (2020) Time Well Spent: Diversity and Volunteering, (London, National Council for Volunteering Organisations).

Downward P., Hallmann K., and Rasciute S. (2020) 'Volunteering and Leisure Activity in the United Kingdom: A Longitudinal Analysis of Males and Females', Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 49, 4, 757-775.

Ellis Paine, A., Hill, M., and Rochester, C. (2010) 'A rose by any other name ...' Revisiting the question: 'what exactly is volunteering?' (London: Institute for Volunteering Research).

Ellis Paine., A, McKay, S., and Moro, D. (2013) 'Does volunteering improve employability? Insights from the British Household Panel Survey and beyond', Voluntary Sector Review 9, 4, 355–376.

Ellis Paine, A. (2020) Rapid review Covid-19: Volunteering through crisis and beyond: Starting, stopping and shifting, (Birmingham: Third Sector Research Centre).

Fox, S. (2019) Volunteering and its Effects on Social Capital and Wellbeing in the UK: Insights from the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study, (Cardiff: Wiserd).

Gaskin, K. (2004) Young People, Volunteering and Civic Service: A review of the literature, (London: Institute for Volunteering Research).

Goldstar (2008) Good practice handbook: Promoting good practice in managing volunteers from socially excluded groups. Available at: http://www.localeconomysolutions.co.uk/documents/GoldStarGoodPractice_Handbook.pdf

Goodall, C. (2021). What can we learn from England's volunteering policy response to Covid-19? 30th November. Available at: https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2021/11/30/what-can-we-learn-from-englands-volunteering-policy-response-to-covid-19/

Hill, M., Russell, J., & Brewis, G. (2009) Young people volunteering and youth projects: A rapid review of recent evidence, (London: V).

Hogg, E, and R De Vries (2018) 'Different Class? Exploring the Relationship between Socio-economic Advantage and Volunteering during Adolescence'. Available at: www.iwill.org.uk/relationship-between-socio-economic- advantage-and-volunteering

Holdsworth, C. and Brewis, G. (2014) 'Volunteering, choice, and control: a case of higher education student volunteering', Journal of Youth Studies, 17, 2, 204-219.

Holliday, S. (2018) Independent review of Full-Time Social Action, (London, DCMS). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679078/The_Steve_Holliday_Report.pdf

HM Treasury (2007) Aiming high for young people: A ten-year strategy for positive activities. (London: HM Treasury and the Department for Children, Schools and Families).

HM Government (2012) Positive for Youth: Executive Summary (London, HMSO).

HM Government (2018) Civil Society Strategy, (London: Cabinet Office). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_dat a/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf

Hunt, Y., with Kusama, Y. and King, I. (2016) Evaluation Report: Enhancing Youth Volunteering Opportunities in Health and Care and Widening Participation, (London: Volunteering Matters). Available at: https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/report/evaluation-report-enhancing-youth-volunteering-opp ortunities-health-social-care/

#iwill/IPSOS Mori (2018) National Youth Social Action Survey 2017, (London: DCMS). Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/national-youth-social-action-survey-2017

#iwill (2019) Youth Social Action in Education. Available at: https://www.iwill.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Youth-Social-Action-in-Education-20190 9_compressed.pdf

Jardim C, and da Silva S.M. (2018) 'Young People Engaging in Volunteering: Questioning a Generational Trend in an Individualized Society', Societies. 8, 1, 1-11.

Jochum, V., Pratten, B., and Wilding, K. (2005) Civil renewal and active citizenship a guide to the debate, (London, National Council for Voluntary Organisations).

Kahn, L., Hewes, S., and Ali, R. (2009) Taking the lead: Youth leadership in theory and practice, (London: The Young Foundation).

Kantar (2020) In the mix with NCS (London: National Citizen Service)

Keating, A., Kerr, D., Benton, T., Mundy, E. and Lopes, J. (2010) Citizenship education in England 2001-2010: young people's practices and prospects for the future: the eighth and final report from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS), (London: National Foundation for Educational Research).

Kerrigan, M. and Manktelow, A. (2021) 'Extra-curricular activities in higher education: enhancing the student experience', Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 23, 1, 123-147.

Kirkman, E., Sanders, M., and Emanuel, N. (2015). Evaluating Youth Social Action, An Interim Report: Does participating in social action boost the skills young people need to succeed in adult life? (London: Behavioural Insights Team, The Cabinet Office Centre for Social Action).

Kruger, D. (2020) Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant. Available at: https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/files/2020-09/Levelling%20Up%20Our%20Communities-Da nny%20Kruger.pdf

Hoskins B, Leonard P, and Wilde R. (2020) 'How Effective Is Youth Volunteering as an Employment Strategy? A Mixed Methods Study of England', Sociology, 54, 4, 763-781.

House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement (2018) Report of Session 2017–19: The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century, (London: HL Paper 118).

Improvement Service (2018) Volunteering in Local Government, (Livingston: Improvement Service).

Lawton, R.N., Gramatki, J., Watt, W., and Fujiwara, D. (2021) 'Does Volunteering Make Us Happier, or Are Happier People More Likely to Volunteer? Addressing the Problem

of Reverse Causality When Estimating the Wellbeing Impacts of Volunteering', Journal of Happiness Studies, 22, 599–624

Latter, A.T., and Rippon, T. (2021) Volunteering: How volunteering brings benefits to the lives of individuals and businesses, (London: Career Ready).

Leavey, C., McNeill, O., Kane, M., and Aiden, H. (2020) 'The impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on young people's health and wellbeing: How are family relationships and emotional support being affected? Youth Voice Journal, 10, 41-56.

Lim, C., and Laurence, J. (2015) 'Doing good when times are bad: volunteering behaviour in economic hard times', British Journal of Sociology, 66, 2, 319-344.

Lindsey, R., Mohan, J., Bulloch, S., and Metcalfe, E. (2018) Continuity and change in voluntary action: Patterns, trends and understandings, (Bristol, Policy Press).

Lup, D. and Booth, J.E. (2019) 'Work and Volunteering: Longitudinal Relationships between Work‑Related Experiences and Volunteering Behaviour', British Journal of Industrial Relations, 57, 3, 599-623.

McGarvey, A., Jochum, V., Davies, J., Dobbs., J and Hornung, L. (2019) Time Well Spent: A National Survey on the Volunteer Experience, (London: National Council for Volunteering Organisations).

McGarvey, A., Goodall, C., and Stuart, J. (2021) Volunteering in England during Covid-19: The Policy Response and its Impact, (London, National Council for Volunteering Organisations).

Mantovan, N., Sauer, R.M., Wilson, J. (2021) The Effect of Work Schedule Control on Volunteering among Early Career Employees, IZA Discussion Papers, No. 14723, (Bonn: Institute of Labor Economics).

Marzana, D., Marta, E., and Pozzi, M. (2012) 'Social action in young adults: Voluntary and political engagement', Journal of Adolescence, 35, 3, 497-507.

Millar, R. Quinn, N. Cameron, J. Colson, A. (2020) Considering the evidence of the impacts of lockdown on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people within the context of the individual, the family, and education, (Glasgow: Mental Health Foundation).

Miller, K., Wakefield, J.R.H., and Sani, F., (2017) 'On the reciprocal effects between multiple group identifications and mental health: A longitudinal study of Scottish adolescents', British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 56, 4, 357-371.

Mills, S. and Waite, C. (2017) National Citizen Service: A Geographical Approach, (Loughborough: Loughborough University).

Milner, S. (2008) A Review of the Civil Renewal and Active Citizenship Debate (London: National Council for Volunteering Organisations).

Mohan, J. and Bulloch, S.L. (2012) The idea of a 'civic core': what are the overlaps between charitable giving, volunteering, and civic participation in England and Wales?, (Birmingham: Third Sector Research Centre).

Morgan, S. (2008) The Morgan Inquiry: an independent inquiry into young adult volunteering in the UK. Available at: www.morganinquiry.org.uk

Mycock, A. (2021) It is time to connect the 'Civic Journey' for our 'Resilient Generation', 29th July, Available at:
https://icstudies.org.uk/insights/blog/it-time-connect-civic-journey-our-resilient-generation

Natale, K. (2021) Adaptive, inclusive volunteering - what we've learned from our volunteering funds, 4th June. Available at:
https://www.sportengland.org/blogs/adaptive-inclusive-volunteering-what-weve-learned-our-volunteering-funds

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2009) Synthesis: Student Volunteering - background, policy and context, (Bristol, NCCPE)

National Council for Volunteering Organisations (2013) Volunteering: a valuable pathway to employability. Available at:
https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/practical_support/volunteering/vsc-policy-final.pdf

National Council for Volunteering Organisations (2018) Impactful Volunteering: Understanding the impact of volunteering on volunteers. Available at:
https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/Impactful-volunteering-understanding-the-impact-of-volunteering-on-volunteers.pdf

National Youth Agency (2021) Overlooked: Young People and Rural Youth Services, (Leicester: NYA).

Newton, B., Oakley, J., and Pollard, E. (2012) Volunteering: Supporting Transitions, (London: National Young Volunteers Service).

Norrlander, A., Meghjee, W., Sisya, K., Litchfield, A., Jones, R., Thelwall, S., and Thornton, A. (2021) Valuing the contribution of volunteers to community businesses supported by the Community Business Fund, (London: Power to Change).

O'Higgins, N. (2020) Volunteer work and its links to the labour market experiences of young people, (Online: United Nations). Available at: https://knowledge.unv.org/system/files/2020-12/ILO%20paper_EN_Final_21Dec2020.pdf

Oasis Community Learning (2021) 'How the Personal Development Curriculum prepares children for their futures and develops them as individuals', 2nd Dec. Available at: https://www.oasiscommunitylearning.org/archive-old-pages/news-media/the-circle-ocl-blog/blog-post-details/~board/the-circle/post/how-the-personal-development-curriculum-prepares-children-for-their-futures-and-develops-them-as-individuals

Ockenden, N., Unell, J., Donahue, K., and Mguni, N. (2013). Scoping a Quality Framework For Youth Social Action, (London: The Campaign for Youth Social Action).

Ockenden, N. and Stuart, J. (2014) Review of evidence on the outcomes of youth volunteering, social action and leadership, (London, National Council for Volunteering Organisations/Institute for Volunteering Research).

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (2020) GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Citizenship Studies, (London: OFQAL). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932712/GCSE_Subject_Level_Conditions_and_Requirements_for_Citizenship_Studies__2021_.pdf

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011) Choosing to Volunteer, (London: Ofsted). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417529/Choosing_to_volunteer.pdf

Owens, J. (2015) Volunteering amongst further education and sixth form students. Association of Colleges/ National Union of Students. Available at: https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Volunteering%20amongst%20FE%20and%20Sixth%20Form%20students.pdf

Percy, C. and Rogers, M. (2018) The Value of Volunteering: Volunteering in Education and Productivity at Work, (London: Education and Employers). Available at: https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Value-of-Volunteering-final-8th-Jan-2021-1.pdf

Percy-Smith, B. (2022) 18 months Lost and Found: Reflections from a transnational participatory action research project exploring young people's lived experiences of the COVID-19 crisis, (Ecorys/Huddersfield)n

Prince's Trust (2021) The Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index 2021. Available at: https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/youth-index-2021

Project Scotland (2019) Insight: Youth Volunteering Innovation Project, (Edinburgh: Project Scotland).

Ramsey, N. (2012) Understanding how volunteering creates stronger communities – A literature review, (London: Institute for Volunteering Research).

Roche, M (2020) Are young people replacing older people as the key volunteering group? 5th August. Available at:
https://nfpsynergy.net/blog/are-young-people-replacing-older-people-key-volunteering-group

Rochester, C. (2006) Making Sense of Volunteering: A Literature Review, (London: Volunteering England).

Rochester, C., Ellis Paine, A., and Howlett, S. (2010). Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Russell, I. (2005) A national framework for youth action and engagement: The Russell Commission (London, Home Office).

Sawyer S.M., Azzopardi P.S., Wickremarathne, D, Patton G.C. (2018) The age of adolescence. Lancet Child Adolescent Health, 2, 3, 223-228.

Saxton, J. (2020) The big trend: Are young people replacing older people as the key volunteering group? (London: nfpSynergy). Available at:
https://nfpsynergy.net/blog/are-young-people-replacing-older-people-key-volunteering-group

Seddighi, H. and Salmani, I. (2019) 'Online Volunteering, A Way to Reduce Health Inequalities: A Review Study', Journal of Community Health Research, 7, 4, 256-264.

Simpson, R., Aitken, M., Leeper, J., and McNeil, B. (2020) Act for Change Fund: Youth social action for social change. End of Phase One Report. Available at:
https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Act-for-Change-Fund-Youth-social-action-for-social-change.pdf

Southby, K., South, J. and Bagnall, AM. (2019) 'A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities', Voluntas, 30, 907–920

Spencer, E., and Lucas, B. (2018) Understanding the role of creative self- efficacy in youth social action: A Literature Review, (Winchester, Centre for Real-World Learning/RSA).

Sport England (2021) Sport England Volunteering Fund Evaluation: 2nd Interim Report, (London: CFE Research).

Stuart, J., Kamerāde, D., Connolly, S., Ellis Paine, A., Nichols, G., and Grotz, J. (2020) The Impacts of Volunteering on the Subjective Wellbeing of Volunteers: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. Available at:
https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Volunteer-wellbeing-technical-report-Oct2020-a.pdf

Tejani, M. and Breeze, H. (2021) Citizens of now: High-quality youth social action in primary schools, (London, Royal Society of Arts).

Tilly, A., Morris, D., and Yusuf, H. (2021) Generation Covid: The Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Young People in the United Kingdom (London: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs).

Tonge, J,. Mycock, A,. and Jeffery, B. (2012)' Does Citizenship Education Make Young People Better-Engaged Citizens?' Political Studies. 60, 3, 578-602.

Torres-Harding, S., Baber, A., Hilvers, J., Hobbs N., and Maly, M. (2018) Children as agents of social and community change: Enhancing youth empowerment through participation in a school-based social activism project. Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 13, 1, 3-18.

UK Youth (2019) Youth Social Action: Creating Positive Change. Available at: https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WJ3951_UKY_Youth_Social_Action_Clickable_PDF_4.pdf

UK Youth (2021) The Impact of Covid-19 on Young People and the Youth Sector. Available at: https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf

UNICEF (2020) Averting a lost COVID generation, (New York, UNICEF)

United Nations (2014) The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet, 4th December. Available at: https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

United Youth (2015) Youth Social Action Journey Fund Evaluation Report of Research Results, (Radlett: Family, Kids and Youth).

UPP Foundation (2022) A Student Futures Manifesto: UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission, (London: UPP Foundation)

Volunteer Scotland (2021) The Road to Recovery: Lessons learned from Scotland's volunteering response to Covid-19. Available at: https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/1771556/road_to_recovery_-_full_report.pdf

Weinberg, J. (2021) The Missing Link: an updated evaluation of the provision, practice and politics of democratic education in English secondary schools. Project Report for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Political Literacy, (London: United Kingdom). Available at: https://www.shoutoutuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Missing-Link-Report-Digital-APPG-on-Political-Literacy-Report-Shout-Out-UK-Dr-James-Weinberg.pdf

Williams, J. (2017) Involving Young People in Volunteering: What Works?, (London: The Careers & Enterprise Company).

Williams, S. (2018) Longitudinal perspective on the impact of youth provision: easier said than done? 7th November. Available at: https://www.youthimpact.uk/latest/news/longitudinal-perspective-impact-youth-provision-easier-said-done

YMCA (2022) Devalued: A decade of cuts to youth services. Available at: https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ymca-devalued-2022-1.pdf

Young Minds (2021) Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs: Survey 4 [Available online]

Youth Citizenship Commission (2009) Making the connection: Youth citizenship in the UK (London: Ministry of Justice). Available at: https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/politics/documents/YCC_Final_Report.pdf

11-15 Workshop References

(where not included in the evidence review)

Bhconnected.org.uk. 2021. *Brighton & Hove JSNA summary December 2021 Population*. [online] http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/brighton-and-hove-population-jsna-dec-2021.pdf

Brighton & Hove City Council, 2021. *Our diverse city*. [online] Brighton & Hove City Council. https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/becoming-anti-racist-city/our-diverse-city

Brighton and Hove connected, 2021. *Ethnicity*. [online] Bhconnected.org.uk. http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/4.2.2%20Ethnicity%20JSNA%202016.pdf

BSix Sixth Form College, 2022. *ESOL - BSix Sixth Form College*. [online] BSix Sixth Form College. https://www.bsix.ac.uk/subjects/esol-2-2/

Dawson, C., Baker, P. and Dowell, D., 2019. Getting into the 'Giving Habit': The Dynamics of Volunteering in the UK. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 30(5), pp.1006-1021. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00133-4

Department for Education, 2019. *St Andrew's CofE (Aided) Primary School - GOV.UK - Find and compare schools in England*. [online] gov.uk. https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/114556/st-andrew's-cofe-(aided)-primary-school/primary

Gladesmore Community School, n.d. *About us*. [online] Gladesmore Community School. https://www.gladesmore.com/about-us

Gov.scot. 2020. *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot*. [online] https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020

Hackney Council, 2020. *Hackney-Profile.pdf*. [online] Google Docs. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JZLZFzNUSO40l7-vCA_dy9Dk08e6jXa_/view

Haringey Council, 2011. *Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 Headline report for Haringey*. [online] Haringey.gov.uk. https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/indices_of_deprivation_2010.pdf

Haringey Council, 2013. *Haringey Census Statistics | Haringey Council*. [online] Haringey.gov.uk.

https://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/about-council/state-borough/haringey-census-statistics

Haringey Council, 2013. *Tottenham Hale Ward Key statistics*. [online] Haringey.gov.uk. https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/census11_tottenham_hale_ward_profile.pdf

Hecht, T. (1998). At home in the street: Street children of Northeast Brazil. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Kleine, D., Pearson, G. and Poveda Villalba, S., 2016. *Participatory methods: engaging children's voices and experiences in research - White Rose Research Online*. [online] Eprints.whiterose.ac.uk. https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/123087

Kolb, D. A. (1984*). Experiential Learning: Experience As The Source of Learning and Development.* New Jersey: Prentice Hal, Inc.

Leeds City Council, 2013. *2011 Census Comparing the results across Leeds*. [online] Democracy.leeds.gov.uk. https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s97849/sources

Leeds City Council, 2019. Leeds Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019. [online]

Leeds Council, n.d. *Leeds Observatory – Population*. [online] Observatory.leeds.gov.uk. https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/population/#/view-report/c4ad9cf7177e46f68ae79f18ea66b8c9/___iaFirstFeature

Nrscotland.gov.uk. 2020. *Time Series Data | National Records of Scotland*. [online] https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/small-area-population-estimates-2011-data-zone-based/time-series

Nrscotland.gov.uk. 2020. *Time Series Data | National Records of Scotland*. [online] Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/small-area-population-estimates-2011-data-zone-based/time-series

Nrscotland.gov.uk. 2021. *Scottish Borders Council Area Profile*. [online] Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/scottish-borders-council-profile.html#table_pop_est_sex_age.

OFSTED, 2015. *Gladesmore Community School report*. [online] Files.ofsted.gov.uk. Available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2319243

Ofsted, 2015. *St Andrew's CofE (Aided) Primary School Report*. [online] ofsted.gov.uk. Available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2472054

OFSTED, 2021. *Inspection of The Brooke House Sixth Form College*. [online] Files.ofsted.gov.uk. Available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50172942

ONS, 2013. *2011 Census - Office for National Statistics*. [online] Ons.gov.uk. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census

Remschmidt, H., 1994. Psychosocial Milestones in Normal Puberty and Adolescence. *Hormone Research*, [online] 41(2), pp.19-29. https://www.karger.com/Article/Abstract/183955 .

The Zone Organisation, n.d. *About Us | The Zone*. [online] 1zone.org.uk. Available at: https://www.1zone.org.uk/Zone/

UK Government, 2018. *Regional ethnic diversity*. [online] Ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk. Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest#areas-of-england-and-wales-by-ethnicity