



VOLUNTEERING EVALUATION TOOLKIT

GUIDANCE AND TOOLS TO EVALUATE YOUR VOLUNTEERING
PROJECT AND UNDERSTAND ITS IMPACT

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for organisations, working with volunteers, who want to undertake evaluation activities to understand more about their approach to volunteering and the benefit volunteering has on volunteers and the wider community.

This guidance focuses primarily on the approach used to evaluate our Volunteering Fund. Although this evaluation approach was designed for organisations that focus on sport and physical activity, the tools and approach are relevant to organisations working with volunteers in other settings and contexts.

It includes information about the methods used to evaluate our Volunteering Fund, the benefits of this approach, how to implement a similar evaluation, tips to encourage volunteers to engage in evaluation activities and how to analyse evaluation results.

The guide and associated tools are designed to be used flexibly and organisations are encouraged to think about their own evaluation aims and use the guidance and tools as they see fit. For further information about evaluation design, please refer to our Sport England Evaluation Framework [here](#). With thanks to [CFE Research](#) for their work to produce this guidance with Sport England and for sharing their experience and insight.



1. ABOUT THE VOLUNTEERING FUND

The Government's strategy for sport, [Sporting Future](#), placed a new emphasis on the benefits of volunteering to the individual and to the nation. In response to this, [Sport England's Volunteering Strategy](#) focuses more closely on the experience and benefits of volunteering – the social outcomes.

[Over six million people currently volunteer to support sport and physical activity but people from lower socio-economic groups and women are underrepresented.](#) We also know that many young people have a desire to get involved in volunteering but cannot find an opportunity that is right for them.

Volunteers who give their time to help make sport and physical activity happen in their community can experience many of the benefits associated with actually participating in sport and physical activity including: mental well-being, individual development, and social and community development. When someone provides their time, energy and expertise as a volunteer there is a dual benefit for the volunteer and the beneficiaries of the voluntary activity (e.g. players or community members).

Sport England's volunteering strategy aims to harness this dual benefit by increasing the number of people volunteering to support sport and physical activity and by increasing the diversity of volunteers.

In November 2017 we announced an investment of up to £6 million through a new Volunteering Fund to help us learn more about how to increase the diversity of people volunteering in sport and physical activity and to find new ways to reach underrepresented groups. We also wanted to learn more about the relationship between volunteering and the outcomes; to understand what types of volunteering may be more beneficial.

The fund itself is split into 2 strands, each focusing on a different target audience:

- > Opportunity Fund projects are focusing on engaging people aged 20 or over, from economically disadvantaged communities, to get into volunteering.
- > Potentials Fund projects are designed to help 10 to 20-year-olds get involved in volunteering. This is match funded by the [#iwill Fund](#), a partnership between DCMS and the #iwill Campaign to increase the number of young people engaging in youth social action. They seek to embed the 6 quality principles of youth social action by ensuring opportunities are: reflective, challenging, embedded, youth-led, progressive and socially impactful.

We adopted a 'test and learn' approach to invest in new ideas to bring the benefits of volunteering in sport and physical activity to new audiences. The projects we funded were diverse, both in terms of the range of models and approaches they are testing and the types of organisations delivering them.

We appointed [CFE Research](#) with their associate Dr Carolynne Mason to undertake the evaluation of the two funds. The evaluation is important for us to understand the factors required for success, measure the outcomes – in relation to both volunteers and the community – at a project and Fund level, and how these vary by approach.

With this evaluation we are testing new ideas that can bring volunteering to new people – so the learning generated by all projects is really important to us. Evidence of challenges and failure is just as important as evidence of success. We also wanted to build an

understanding of what works and take evidence from the evaluation to inform our future decisions about how we invest in volunteering to achieve our strategic objectives.

This guidance provides a consistent, shared approach to evaluation that can be used across the sector. This enables valuable comparison between projects, and can improve the collective quality of the evidence – helping us all to demonstrate the value and impact of volunteering more effectively.



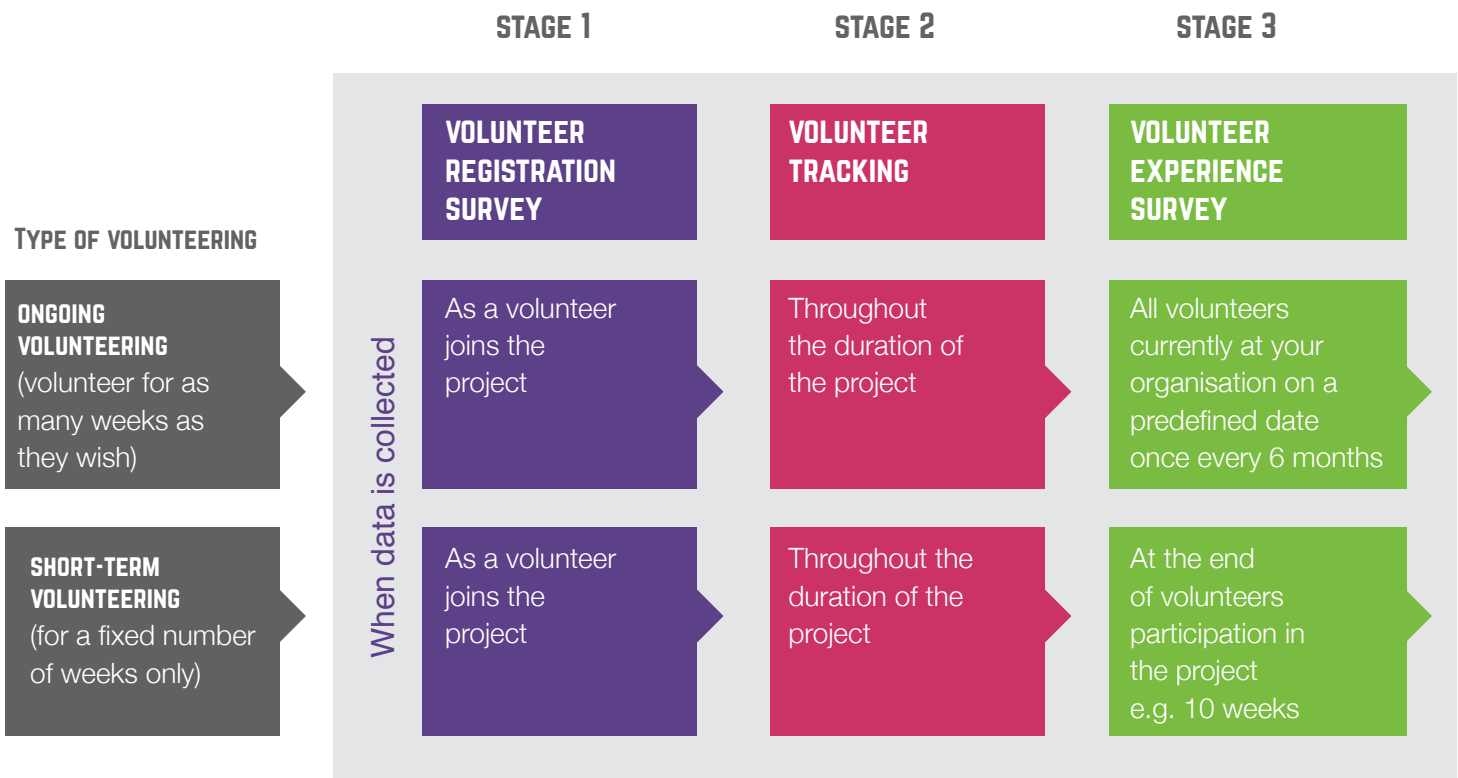
2. HOW THE VOLUNTEERING FUND IS BEING EVALUATED

Surveys are being used as the main tool in the Volunteering Fund evaluation. Full copies of the survey questions can be downloaded [here](#). Alongside this projects are also monitoring the amount of volunteering undertaken by individual volunteers. The evaluation activity is carried out in three main stages:

- **Stage 1 – Volunteer registration survey:** Volunteers are asked to complete a survey when they join the project.
- **Stage 2 – Volunteer tracking:** On an ongoing basis, a project records the number of volunteering hours and occasions that each volunteer undertakes.

- **Stage 3 – Volunteer experience survey:** Every six months a short survey is undertaken with all volunteers. If volunteers engage in a project for a long period of time they will complete the survey multiple times. If an individual only volunteers for a set number of weeks the survey is undertaken near to the end of their engagement in the project (e.g. during week 9 of a 10 week opportunity).

The following diagram outlines when data is collected and shows how this differs depending on the volunteering delivery model. All volunteers are invited to complete each survey to gain a broad view across volunteers.



The surveys and tracking data allow the evaluation (and individual projects) to answer the following questions:

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION SURVEY
WHO IS VOLUNTEERING? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic characteristics• Employment status and where they live• Previous experience of volunteering WHY HAVE THEY DECIDED TO VOLUNTEER? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How they heard about the project• Baseline measures of volunteering activity• Why they joined the project WHAT BENEFITS DOES VOLUNTEERING HAVE ON THEM? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start date (to track how long they stay volunteering for you)• Baseline measure of key outcomes
VOLUNTEER TRACKING
HOW MUCH VOLUNTEERING DO THEY DO? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total number of hours volunteered• Total number of occasions volunteered• Current status of volunteer and why they left (where known)
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY
WHY DO THEY KEEP VOLUNTEERING? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views on the activity (e.g. satisfaction, enjoyment)• Types of activities undertaken WHAT BENEFITS DOES VOLUNTEERING HAVE ON THEM? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measures of volunteering activity• Outcome measures and their views on attribution• Whether they have encouraged others to volunteer

Project delivery information is also submitted every 6 months providing the projects' perspective on:

- Key successes and challenges they are experiencing
- Priorities for the next 6 months

- What they think the impact of the project has been on volunteers and individuals in the community

This is important to allow the evaluation to understand what is happening in each local area to provide contextual information to the data that is being collected.

HOW DID WE DECIDE WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK?

The national evaluation was designed to measure outcomes that are common to most volunteering projects.

Most questions were based on those used within major national surveys or recognised evaluation tools. Other bespoke questions were developed

alongside these by the research team. Questions and answer options were either taken directly or adapted to reflect the specific aims of the Fund. The table below shows a summary of the outcomes and associated questions used within the evaluation surveys, what the questions are measuring and the original source of the question before it was altered (if applicable).

QUESTION	WHAT IS IT MEASURING?	SOURCE
Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	Personal well-being/ life satisfaction	Office for National Statistics
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	Personal well-being/ happiness	Office for National Statistics
Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (Adults only)	Personal well-being/anxiety	Office for National Statistics
Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	Personal well-being/aspects of life worthwhile	Office for National Statistics
I feel confident at having a go at things that are new to me	Confidence	Bespoke question developed by research team
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	Self-esteem	Rosenberg self-esteem scale
I can achieve most of the goals I set myself	Self-efficacy	Sport England Framework
If something goes wrong I am able to bounce back and carry on	Resilience	National Youth Agency Social Action Journey Fund Programme
I am able to motivate and influence other people	Leadership skills	Bespoke question developed by research team
I have skills and experience that are valued by employers	Employability skills	Bespoke question developed by research team
I think that most people in my local area can be trusted	Social trust	Sport England Framework
I feel that I strongly belong to my immediate neighbourhood (Please think of the area within a few minutes walking distance from your home)	Community belonging	Community Life Survey
In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate? <i>This may include sport, exercise and brisk walking or cycling for recreation or to get to and from places, but should not include housework or physical activity that is part of your job.</i>	Physical activity levels	Sport England Framework - Single Item Metric

Many of the questions were based on pre-existing questions that had already been tested but we undertook some further testing for some questions with volunteers aged 10-14 to ensure the question wording was understood.

These questions were asked in the registration and the experience survey to allow the evaluation to track how responses change for volunteers. This allows us to measure the ‘distance travelled’ by volunteers whilst undertaking the volunteering activity.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

In addition to the evaluation activities (listed above) that are undertaken with each project, which focuses on collecting quantitative data, interviews and case study research will also be undertaken with projects. This includes obtaining feedback from a range of key stakeholders including project staff, volunteers, community members and local partners. This is an important element of how we understand the impact on the community development outcomes and to build a more comprehensive picture of how the outcomes and impacts of the projects are achieved.

A volunteer follow-up survey for those who have left projects has also been designed for projects to use which will help us understand the longer-term impact on volunteers and what they do next.

A key premise of the Opportunity and Potentials Funds is to test new delivery approaches, assess how they work and learn from them e.g. testing new approaches to engaging and retaining volunteers. Each project has their own unique approach so, alongside

the national evaluation, projects are undertaking local evaluations to assess the outcome of project-specific activities at a local level to help inform future delivery. The local evaluations cover what is specific or unique to each project.

WHAT IS AN OUTCOME

The terms outcome and impact are often used in evaluation, but what is the difference? An **outcome** is something which happens as a direct result of any activity you are undertaking. For example: an outcome of a volunteering project could be increased physical activity (if the opportunity involves being active) or improved confidence.

An **impact** is usually defined as the longer-term effect of the outcome(s) being achieved. For example improved physical health (due to being more active) or securing a new job (due to being more confident).

3. WHAT IS EVALUATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Evaluation involves the systematic collection and analysis of information relating to an intervention or programme. It identifies what works, how, in what context and for whom.

The learning can help to inform, refine and improve future delivery.

The table opposite outlines some of the ways evaluation can support your organisation.



Volunteering Evaluation Toolkit

UNDERSTAND THE PROFILE OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS TO INFORM RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- How did volunteers hear about the project?
- What are the characteristics of your volunteers, how does this compare to that intended, and does this change throughout the lifetime of your project?
- Are certain groups under or over-represented?

DETERMINE YOUR SUCCESS IN ENGAGING THE 'USUAL SUSPECTS' AND REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What are the attitudes and motivations of your volunteers?
- What is their previous experience of volunteering, and approximately how much did they undertake at the outset of the project?

INFORM IMPROVEMENTS TO DELIVERY

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Are certain groups of volunteers more likely to drop out of the project?
- What are the barriers that stop people from getting involved or doing more volunteering?
- What do volunteers like (that you should build on) and what do they not like (that you might need to change)?

REPORTING ON TARGETS (IF A FUNDED PROJECT)

KEY QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- Has your project achieved the targets you set out to receive funding?
- What has been successful in helping you to achieve these targets? What has been a challenge?

IDENTIFY THE OUTCOMES YOUR PROJECT HAS ACHIEVED TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

KEY QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- Has your project achieved its short-term outcomes? How much volunteering are participants undertaking, and how does this benefit them?
- Are these outcomes sustained in the long-term, and approximately how long does it take for the benefits to be realised?
- Were there any unintended outcomes resulting from your intervention?
- How do these compare to other projects through comparison to other datasets?

USING THE INSIGHT YOU GATHER

Any insight gathered can be used to inform your approach to recruiting, managing and supporting your volunteers. It will help you identify areas for development alongside measuring the outcomes you have achieved.

These will help you: assess the achievement of strategic priorities, talk about your success, encourage others to volunteer for you, bid for future work or funding, and advocate on behalf of volunteering more broadly.

4. WHY USE THIS APPROACH?

Making use of the surveys in this toolkit offers a number of distinct advantages to your evaluation study. This will not only allow you to save time and money but – most importantly – ensures the rigour of the research that you undertake.

Our volunteering surveys have been designed to ensure adherence to the principles of reliability and validity. We applied existing, validated questions from national datasets alongside bespoke measures which were then tested prior to implementation. Therefore by drawing upon our volunteering surveys within your own studies, you can significantly enhance the robustness of the evaluation that you undertake. This will give you confidence in the results when presenting them to funders and the sector more broadly. You can also compare your results to those obtained within other studies; this will allow you to determine how the outcomes of your project relate to others to help inform design and implementation.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Social researchers talk about reliability and validity. Put simply **reliability** means consistency: if you ask volunteers the same question several times you get the same answer. **Validity** is how far something measures what it is supposed to. A study can be reliable without being valid, and vice versa, but a good study will be both. It will give you confidence that your results accurately answer your research questions and can be generalised beyond the sample surveyed to the wider population (that is, all volunteers in your project).



5. HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SIMILAR EVALUATION IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This section provides guidance that can help your organisation follow a similar approach to the one used by Sport England to evaluate the Volunteering Fund. It is designed to be used flexibly, as you see fit, so please do not feel constrained to follow the guidance rigidly.

This guide primarily focuses on the use of surveys to collect evaluation data, but there are a range of different methods and tools that you could use to collect evaluation data. For more support, guidance and resources about planning and conducting evaluation you may like to refer to our full Evaluation Framework – a universal tool for evaluating any sport and physical activity project which can be found [here](#).

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO EVALUATE AND WHY

Investing some time to think about **what** you want your evaluation to achieve and **why** will ensure that you focus your efforts on the things that will benefit your organisation the most. This will help you to design an evaluation approach that is appropriate for the scale and scope of your work.

The first step is to decide **what you want to evaluate**, then **what you will measure** followed by **how you will collect this data** to inform your evaluation. Please note that if you are working with partners or funders, it is important to engage them when planning your evaluation.

WHAT ARE YOUR EVALUATION AIMS?

In the first instance, it is useful to think about what questions you want your evaluation to answer. Being clear about what you want your evaluation to investigate from the outset makes it much easier to design an approach that will provide you with the information you need. You could consider how evaluation can help you to:

- > **Learn about your delivery:** You might want to get feedback on your current delivery to understand: what motivated your volunteers to volunteer in the first place and why they continue volunteering, how you could encourage more volunteers to join, what volunteers enjoy doing and what they like less, what volunteers think about how you communicate with them. Answers to such questions could help you to improve and refine elements of your delivery.
- > **Test a new approach:** You might be trialling a new approach to delivery that you have not previously used. This might be something that is unique to your organisation or it could be something that you have not tried before. In such instances you might want to find out what works well about this approach so you can decide if you should continue to use it or how the delivery could be improved.
- > **Show the benefits of your work:** The activity undertaken by your volunteers

is likely to have an impact on a range of different audiences. You might want to understand more about the benefits experienced by your volunteers, such as how volunteering impacts the development of their skills or improves their well-being. Alternatively, you could investigate how their volunteering benefits your organisation or the people involved in your organisation e.g. sport club players, service users or community members. This information will allow you to evidence the key outcomes of voluntary activity and allow you to consider if it is having the benefit you intended it to have.

You may decide that you want your evaluation to answer multiple questions (such as those listed above). To help refine your evaluation aims, it is a good idea to focus on filling gaps in your current knowledge so that you can prioritise your time and effort appropriately. Depending on how many evaluation questions you identify, you may decide that you cannot investigate them all. In this case think about:

- > The questions that are most important for you to answer.
- > Which outcomes you can reasonably expect to have the most influence on e.g. if you are likely to have an impact on your volunteers' physical health but less likely to impact on their employability, you may decide to focus on the former.

WHAT WILL YOUR EVALUATION MEASURE AND HOW WILL YOU COLLECT THIS INFORMATION?

Once you have decided what questions your evaluation will focus on, you then need to define what you will measure and how you will do this. Evaluation measures should be:

- > Directly related to the questions you are trying to answer.
- > Something that you can measure accurately through your chosen method of collection.

The table below outlines three evaluation categories, an example evaluation question for each, how the questions can be measured and methods that can be used to collect this information. You may decide to use a similar table to help you think about which measures you will use to answer your evaluation questions and what methods you will use to collect this information.

EVALUATION CATEGORY	EVALUATION QUESTION	MEASURE(S)	METHOD
Learn about your delivery	Are volunteers satisfied with the type of voluntary activities they have undertaken?	Number of volunteers who report that they are satisfied with the type of voluntary activities they have undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A volunteer survey Depth interviews with volunteers Focus groups with volunteers
Test a new approach	Do incentives encourage volunteers to do more hours of volunteering?	Number of volunteers who report undertaking more volunteering since the introduction of incentives Number of volunteers who state that the incentive encouraged them to undertake more volunteering Why have incentives encouraged volunteers to undertake more volunteering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A volunteer survey conducted prior to and following the use of incentives Depth interviews with volunteers Focus groups with volunteers
Show the impact of your work	What benefit does undertaking voluntary activity have on volunteers' confidence?	Number of volunteers who report that their confidence has increased since volunteering Number of volunteers who state that volunteering improved their confidence How has volunteering improved their confidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A volunteer survey conducted when a volunteer joins your organisation and then again after a specified amount of time volunteering (e.g. 6 months) Depth interviews with volunteers

As previously outlined, this guide focuses on the use of surveys, but the table above also highlights some of the other methods that can be used to collect evaluation data. There are lots of different ways you can collect data. You will need to choose the data collection methods and tools that are most suited to your requirements. Examples of data collection methods include surveys, interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Further information about evaluation measures and data collection methods can be found in our Sport England Evaluation Framework [here](#) and in our [information pack](#) which gives an introduction to the most commonly used data collection methods and tools, such as 'Interviews' and 'Focus Groups'.

HOW TO DESIGN A SURVEY FOR YOUR VOLUNTEERS

- Once you have decided that a survey is an appropriate method to collect your evaluation data, you need to think about designing your survey. Surveys should be easy to complete, make sense to follow and be as short as possible. When designing your survey it is important to **know your audience**, so consider:
- Question wording and answer options:** Will your volunteers understand the questions and the language you are using?
- Instructions:** Provide clear instructions so your volunteers know how to answer questions.
- Accessibility:** Will your volunteers be able to complete the survey unaided? If not, think about how you can support them to complete it (as referenced later in this guide).

- The length of your survey:** Ideally your survey should be as short as possible and only collect data that is essential. Prioritise questions that are of most interest to your evaluation.
- The format of your survey:** Will your volunteers prefer a paper or online survey? Will they prefer to complete it themselves or with support? Could you offer multiple formats?
- Gain volunteer input:** Involving your volunteers in the design process will help to ensure your survey is accessible for your volunteers and will help gain their buy-in. At this stage you could also explore what would encourage them to complete the survey.

DESIGNING SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey questions you develop should align to the evaluation measures that you have already identified to ensure that you are able to answer your evaluation questions. You may also want to include some questions about volunteers' characteristics, such as:

- Gender.
- Age.
- Ethnicity.

When designing your survey(s) it is worth considering survey length, because short surveys are more likely to be completed than long surveys. Therefore, if you are already collecting answers to questions elsewhere, such as in sign-up sheets, it is a good idea to exclude these from your evaluation survey.

As previously outlined, this toolkit includes a set of evaluation surveys that were designed for the evaluation of the Volunteering Funds. The registration survey is intended for volunteers to complete when they begin volunteering

and the experience survey is intended for volunteers to complete once they have experience with your project (e.g. at 6 monthly intervals). You can download paper copies of these surveys [here](#).

We recommend using these surveys as the basis for your evaluation. You can use them in their entirety or alternatively, you can use them flexibly by adding and removing questions as applicable to your specific evaluation aims.

DECIDING ON A SURVEY METHOD

Now that you have designed your survey questions, you will need to consider how you will get volunteers to complete your survey(s). There are a variety of options for you to consider:

- Printing paper copies of your survey and asking your volunteers to complete them at the beginning or end of a session.
- Emailing survey questions to your volunteers and asking them to respond via email.
- Telephoning your volunteers and asking them to complete surveys over the phone.
- You could also consider programming your survey questions into existing survey software or programmes you may have so that your volunteers can complete the survey electronically and the process is embedded within an existing survey(s) or evaluation process.

Whichever method you choose, you must ensure that you are obtaining appropriate consent and that you are upholding GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and data security regulations, as described in the following sections of this guide.

ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

When you are designing your survey you need to consider who is volunteering for you and whether they have any accessibility requirements you need to take account of. Accessibility requirements can relate to a wide range of factors including: sight, hearing, mobility, cognition, mental health, physical health, culture, language and age.

The different requirements your volunteers may have will influence the questions you ask and how you ask them. Some common things to consider when designing these include:

- The language(s) the survey is available in. If you translate your survey think about whether the questions accurately translate into another language. If not, consider how useful this will be and consider removing the question for this survey if more appropriate.
- The reading age of the survey and respondents, and whether pictures could aid question understanding.
- The format of the survey and whether you want to use a combination for different volunteers – for example you may want younger volunteers to complete a paper survey so their parents can support them to complete it at home whereas older volunteers could complete the survey themselves online.
- Whether the survey text is large enough to read for those with sight problems.
- If you are using online survey software is it screen reader compatible?

BRANDING

If your organisation has a logo it can be useful to use it on your survey. If your volunteers are familiar with your organisation, seeing the logo will help to make it clear that you are running the evaluation and that it is important to your organisation.

TEST YOUR SURVEY

Before you begin using your survey with your volunteers, it is a good idea to test it with a small group to ensure that they understand it. This will enable you to refine your survey before you use it with all of your volunteers.

THE USE OF UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS

If you are collecting evaluation information from a range of sources, such as volunteer sign-up sheets, surveys and tracking data (more information about this below); or if you are collecting survey data at multiple points in time you may consider assigning volunteers a unique identifier. This allows you to link together and keep track of all data related to each individual volunteer. If you do not do this, it may be difficult or even impossible to link together data for specific volunteers, which will make it much harder to make sense of the information you collect. By keeping a secure record of unique identifiers, it will also allow you to anonymise any data sets that contain sensitive information. This will help with data security. There is no prescribed method of creating unique identifiers; they can be numbers and/or text, as long as each one is unique. Therefore, it is a good idea to refrain from using names alone for unique identifiers, as these are not unique and they are also identifiable if names are used in full. If you are using

a database or other online system to track your volunteers a unique identifier may already be assigned to them by your software. Examples of unique identifiers are provided below:

- > Volunteer01, Volunteer02, Volunteer03, Volunteer04, Volunteer05
- > Bob01, Frankie01, Gemma01, Richard01, Jagdeep01
- > Martin01, Wells01, Litt01, Marks01, Singh01

TRACKING DATA

In addition to the data you collect through your survey, you may decide to collect information about when each volunteer joins and leaves your organisation, their current volunteering status, and the number of hours and occasions of volunteering they undertake. In addition to allowing you to track your volunteers' activity over time, this will allow you to assess how length and level of involvement in volunteering affects volunteers' survey responses. For example, you could understand whether those who are involved for longer have a different experience or experience different benefits than those who undertake short-term roles. Such tracking data can be collated in a simple spreadsheet. Below we have provided an example of what this might look like:

VOLUNTEER NAME	UNIQUE IDENTIFIER	DATE VOLUNTEER JOINED	CURRENT VOLUNTEERING STATUS	NUMBER OF HOURS OF VOLUNTEERING UNDERTAKEN	NUMBER OF OCCASIONS OF VOLUNTEERING UNDERTAKEN	DATE VOLUNTEER LEFT
Bob Martin	Volunteer01	05/11/2018	Ended	8	8	04/04/2019
Frankie Wells	Volunteer02	16/11/2018	Ongoing	10	10	
Gemma Litt	Volunteer03	012/12/2018	Ended	12	6	02/05/2019
Richard Marks	Volunteer04	05/01/2019	Ongoing	5	10	
Jagdeep Singh	Volunteer05	12/01/2019	Ongoing	8	4	

ETHICS

Ethics are important to consider before undertaking any evaluation activity. This includes:

- Only gathering data that you need and will use.
- Being open, honest, and transparent with your respondents at all times – they should be fully informed and be able to give their consent to take part.
- Being impartial in the collection and analysis of data.
- Adhering to the law at all times.
- Having concern for the safety and security of people doing the research.
- Allowing research respondents to participate voluntarily, not being harmed as a result of being involved, and no group being disadvantaged by being routinely excluded from consideration.

The [Social Research Association's Ethical Guidelines](#) are a good source of information and we would recommend you read this before designing your survey.

INFORMED AND PARENTAL CONSENT

Informed consent needs to be obtained from your volunteers for any evaluation activity (including surveys) that includes data collection to comply with research ethics and GDPR. All volunteers should be given the choice to not provide consent and, therefore, not complete evaluation surveys. For volunteers under the age of 16 this applies even when parental consent has been obtained.

Informed consent should be captured at the beginning of each survey as a volunteer has the right to complete a first survey (e.g. registration survey) and then opt out of completing any additional surveys. This is also a necessary condition for the processing of personal information as set out in the GDPR (summarised below).

The process to collect a volunteer's informed consent must specify:

- > The information that will be collected.
- > Who the information will be shared with.
- > How the information will be used.
- > How to withdraw consent and participation at any time.

For volunteers under the age of 16, you will also need to get the consent of their parents, guardians or carers for them to take part in evaluation activities. Parental consent is a process by which a parent or legal guardian provides consent for their child to participate in research or evaluation activity having been fully informed as to what it will involve so they can make an informed decision. Before you send a survey to anyone below 16, it is worth reading guidance from the [Market Research Society](#) on undertaking research with children and young people. Once a parent has provided you with consent you still need to get informed consent from the young person before they can complete the survey.

GDPR AND DATA SECURITY

The GDPR came into effect on 25th May 2018. Everyone is responsible for using personal data carefully and needs to follow strict rules or 'Data Protection Principles'. The requirements of the GDPR are encompassed in six Data Protection Principles stating that personal data shall be:

- Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner.
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes.
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary.
- Accurate and where necessary up to date.
- Kept in a form that allows identification of individuals for no longer than necessary.
- Processed in a manner that ensures the appropriate security of the personal data, including against unauthorised or unlawful processing.

To comply with GDPR requirements, it is important to ensure that:

- Volunteers' anonymity and confidentiality is protected.
- Volunteers can exercise their rights in relation to their personal data (to access, correct, withdraw or delete the data).
- Honest and complete information is provided to participants about what to expect during the research to avoid deceptive practices.
- You store personal data securely.

If you are using surveys that collect personal information, you should ensure that the appropriate safeguards are in place for the secure storage, transmission and disposal of participants' personal data in accordance with GDPR. This includes:

- > Storing completed paper surveys securely. Once these are inputted onto an electronic system (e.g. a spreadsheet) paper based surveys should be destroyed (shredded).
- > Data held electronically should be password protected and not stored on USB drives or other removable formats.
- > Access to data should only be available to authorised users. All files holding personal sensitive data should be password encrypted.

For more information about GDPR please visit the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

6. HOW TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERS TO COMPLETE YOUR SURVEYS

To enable you to successfully meet your evaluation aims, you need as many of your volunteers to complete your survey as possible. This section of the guidance provides you with hints and tips based on our experience to help encourage your volunteers to complete your survey. Further information on maximising the number of responses to your survey can also be found [here](#).

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

The way that you communicate with your volunteers about your survey is vitally important – this is your chance to sell the survey and convince people to take part. If you get this right, your volunteers will be more likely to complete the survey. You may want to think about the following:

- **Training your staff:** Ensure that your staff who are using the survey are clear about its purpose, understand its value and how to use it so they are able to clearly communicate with your volunteers.

- **Survey messaging:** Use positive language that communicates the value of the survey, rather than negative language that relates to it being a burden or problem.
- **Clearly defining the purpose of the survey:** Explain who the survey is for, why you are undertaking it, how volunteers' feedback will be used and how it could help your organisation to make improvements or gain additional funding.
- **Using social norms:** Language such as 'lots of volunteers have already completed our survey' can nudge more volunteers to complete it because they want to want to contribute to a wider movement.
- **Deadlines:** Ensure you clearly highlight when surveys should be completed and if there is a deadline.
- **Being thankful:** Remember to thank your volunteers for completing your survey – saying thank you goes a long way.

GET YOUR TIMING RIGHT

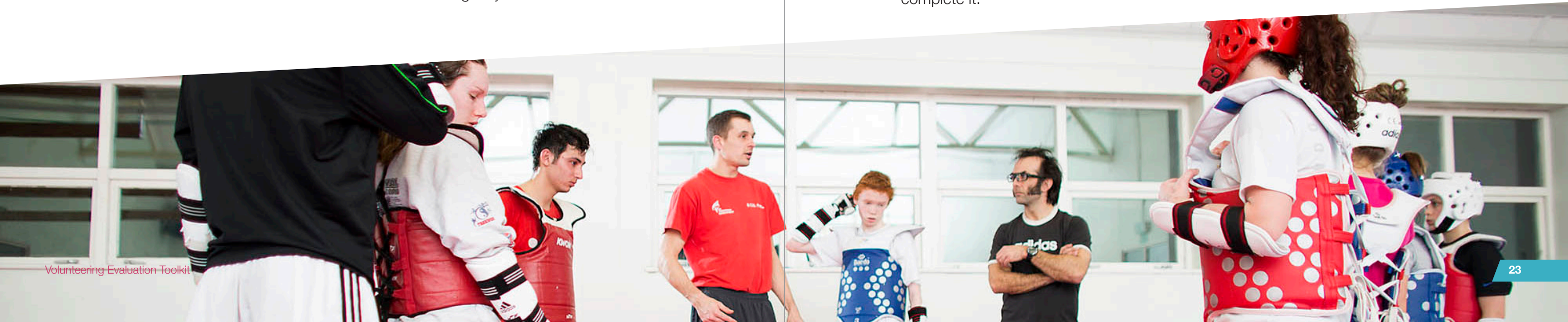
As with most things, timing is everything! You may want to consider the below factors:

- **Provide a settling in period:** If you intend to ask your volunteers to complete a survey when they join your organisation, you do not have to ask them to do it at the first session if you are concerned that this will put them off volunteering or you.
- **Avoid holiday periods:** Volunteers are more likely to be away during the summer and Christmas periods, so avoid running surveys during these times.
- **Survey format and volunteer receptiveness:** If you are using a paper survey, will your volunteers be more likely to complete it at the beginning or the end of a session? If you are using an online survey, send out an invitation when your volunteers are most likely to complete it.

- **Complete surveys in multiple sittings:** For example if you are using a paper survey, you could consider asking your volunteers to complete the survey over multiple sessions so that they do not have to answer all of the questions in one go.

TRY TO MAKE THE SURVEY FUN

Consider the setting you ask volunteers to complete a survey in. It does not have to be in a classroom or an office; it could be on a football pitch or in a social setting that may be more likely to create the right environment, atmosphere and context to help people engage. You can **be creative** as long as volunteers understand that it is their individual responses you are hoping to capture.



PROVIDE SUPPORT TO YOUR VOLUNTEERS

It is important that you are able to support your volunteers to complete your survey. Below are some tips you may want to think about especially if your volunteers have accessibility requirements:

- **Guidance materials:** Consider developing supporting guidance leaflets or visual aids to help explain how survey questions should be answered. This links to designing an accessible survey in the first instance.
- **Allow volunteers to ask questions:** Providing your volunteers with opportunities to ask what your survey questions mean and why they are being asked can be helpful, particularly if you are working with younger volunteers or those who have additional needs.
- **Aided survey completion:** A volunteer may be supported to complete a survey by a member of staff, another volunteer, a support worker, carer, family member or friend, as appropriate. Take care to ensure that individuals who are supporting try not to influence the answers that are given.

If your volunteers are still not sure how to answer a question, selecting 'don't know' or skipping the question entirely is valid and better than a volunteer guessing. For more information about accessible evaluation see our guidance [here](#).

REMIND PEOPLE

Reminding your volunteers to complete your survey is helpful. In addition to promoting it through social media, newsletters, websites, and meetings, you could make use of technology, such as using WhatsApp or Facebook if you have a group or messenger set up, to further promote survey completion. However, ensure you have permission to contact people using these methods and have parental consent where appropriate.

OFFER INCENTIVES

Incentives can help to increase the number of responses to your survey. However, engaging your volunteers early on in the process and ensuring they understand how they can benefit from the evaluation might mean that incentives are not needed.

If you decide to use incentives, check with your funder to see if their funding is eligible to be used to pay for incentives. Your organisation can choose to fund incentives yourselves. Alternatives to offering financial incentives can include offering training or access to a unique experience. You could also ask volunteers what might encourage them to take part.

SHARE YOUR EVALUATION FINDINGS

Remember to share evaluation findings with your volunteers. Seeing how their survey feedback shapes overall findings will help to encourage them to take part in future evaluation activities.



7. ANALYSING AND USING YOUR DATA

Once you have collected your survey data, you will need to think about how you use and interpret it so that you can answer your evaluation questions. This section provides you with guidance about how to collate your survey data, some of the checks you need to do before you carry out any analysis, what analysis can be done, and how you can interpret and use the findings from your survey.

COLLATING YOUR SURVEY DATA

If you are using a survey-based approach, then a good place to start is to collate your survey data. If you used an online survey it is likely that you will be able to export the data into a spreadsheet or data analysis software. If, however, you have used paper surveys or collected responses from your volunteers over email or telephone, you will need to collate/input this yourself. You can do this using a simple spreadsheet which contains columns for each of the survey questions and rows which represent each survey response.

If you are working with different venues, partners or organisations to help you collect data from your volunteers you may want to consider creating a template and code book so that everyone reports the data to you in the same way and uses the same answer options. This will make it much easier to collate your data. If not, individuals may collect and report data to you inconsistently. For example, if you are collecting answer options for gender, individuals could report female as: female, Female, girl, F, f – this causes a problem when analysing data and you would need to edit the data to make these all consistent.

WHAT CHECKS NEED TO BE RUN ON YOUR DATA?

Before you begin to analyse your survey data, it is important that you run a few basic checks to ensure that your data is accurate. These data checks are outlined below:

- **Delete duplicate survey responses:** You may discover that some of your volunteers have accidentally completed a survey more than once. Whilst you may intend for volunteers to complete surveys at different points in time to track change, at each specified time (e.g. on joining your organisation) you would not want them to complete a survey more than once. You will need to remove these duplicate responses so that they do not skew your findings. When deleting duplicate responses, you may decide to stick to a process of retaining the survey your volunteer completed first or alternatively you could check to see if one survey response has more questions answered than the other.
- **Check if volunteers have answered the correct survey questions:** Within your survey you may have questions that were only intended for volunteers who answered in a specific way to an earlier survey question. For example you may ask if a volunteer had volunteered previously and then if so, on how many occasions; you would not want volunteers who had not volunteered before to answer this question. Check to see if your data contains any inconsistencies like this and delete data, as appropriate.

- **Check open responses to survey questions:** Your survey may include questions which contain lists of possible responses; within this list there might be an option for a volunteer to select 'other'. Occasionally when people answer questions like this they do not see the appropriate option for their response and select 'other'; however, their open response may actually be one of the options on the

list. If your survey contains questions like this, it is worth checking through these open responses to see if this has happened. If this has occurred, you should delete their 'other' response and replace it with the option in the list. Using the example survey question below, the volunteer should have selected 'On social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)' instead of 'Other'.

6. Where did you find out about the opportunity to take part in the volunteering activity?

(Please select one option)

- ☐ On social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)
- ☐ On a leaflet or poster
- ☐ In a newspaper or magazine
- ☐ On a website
- ☐ At an event
- ☒ Other (Please Specify) On Facebook



WHAT ANALYSIS CAN BE DONE WITH YOUR SURVEY DATA?

Now that your survey data is collated and checked, you will be ready to analyse it. There are lots of different ways that you can analyse your data and below we describe some of the ways this can be done.

- **Summarise the way that volunteers respond to questions:** This might include counting the number of times a particular answer is given to a question (called a frequency) or working out the mean (average) score that volunteers have provided to a numerical question (e.g. how many hours of volunteering have volunteers undertaken).
- **Check for differences by volunteer characteristics:** For example, you might find that males and females answer questions differently.
- **Check for differences between survey points:** If you have surveyed your volunteers at two different points (such as at registration and then 6 months later) you could examine how answers to

key questions change over time. You can choose to analyse the responses across all your volunteers or look what changes occur for each volunteer. For example, if you have asked your volunteers ‘to what extent they are confident at having a go at things that are new to them’ on a scale of 0-10, you could examine the mean score at registration and then 6 months later (for the same group of volunteers) (see the table below). Alternatively you could calculate the difference in score for each volunteer by subtracting the registration score from the score provided 6 months later. This will either result in a positive number which indicates a positive change, a negative number which indicates a negative change or a zero which indicates no change. This will allow you to work out the number of people who have experienced an increase in confidence.

Further guidance about analysis including signposts to additional resources can be found in our Sport England Evaluation Framework [here](#).

	SCORE AT REGISTRATION	SCORE 6 MONTHS LATER	CHANGE IN SCORE
Volunteer 1	2	7	5
Volunteer 2	2	3	1
Volunteer 3	4	6	2
Volunteer 4	4	6	2
Volunteer 5	6	2	-4
Volunteer 6	6	6	0
Volunteer 7	8	8	0
Volunteer 8	8	8	0
Mean	5	5.75	

HOW TO INTERPRET AND USE YOUR FINDINGS

Now that you have analysed your survey data, think back to your original evaluation questions and consider what your findings tell you. Dependent on your evaluation aims, think about how you can use the findings from your survey. You may want to consider how your survey findings can:

- Inform volunteer recruitment or other communications and marketing activity for your project.
- Reach new audiences.
- Inform improvements to your delivery.
- Identify what impacts you are having on a range of audiences e.g. can you demonstrate any change in outcome scores for mental well-being or individual development?
- Help you to bid for future funding or influence key stakeholders within your organisation or make the case for volunteering externally.

Think about how you can best communicate and share your findings and you may want to tailor the content you include and the format depending on the audience for the findings. It may be helpful to write up your findings in the form of a report, a series of briefing documents/leaflets or include them in a presentation. Once you have done this, you can share these to celebrate your results and to help other individuals and organisations to benefit from your learning.

For further guidance about how you can interpret and use your survey findings, please refer to our Sport England Evaluation Framework [here](#).





Sport England
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF

[sportengland.org](https://www.sportengland.org)

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