



**SPORT  
ENGLAND**



# **VOLUNTEERING IN AN ACTIVE NATION**

Strategy 2017–2021



# WELCOME

Volunteers have always played a vital part in the sports and physical activity sector. Without them, most community sport and physical activity simply wouldn't happen. The Government's strategy for sport and physical activity, Sporting Future, is very clear on the benefits of volunteering to the individual and to the nation, and has encouraged Sport England to examine more closely the experience and benefits of volunteering.

Volunteers who give their time for sport and physical activity to happen in their community enjoy many of the benefits associated with actually participating in sport and physical activity. In some cases their experience fulfils all the [government's outcomes for sport](#): physical and mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development. So when someone provides their time, energy and expertise as a volunteer there's a double benefit - for those playing and for themselves.

With this new strategy for volunteering, we aim to harness and increase the dual benefit. It's a vital part of realising our wider commitment to grassroots sport and physical activity in England. You can read about why and how we're doing this in our 2016 strategy, [Towards An Active Nation](#).

## A VISION FOR VOLUNTEERING

Sport England's vision is as relevant for volunteers as for those taking part.

We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. We need a sport and physical activity sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers.

# SPORT ENGLAND'S STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEERING

Between 2017 and 2025 we will revolutionise volunteering by facilitating and creating great new opportunities for people who want to give time and improving the experience of those who already do.

From 2017 to 2021 we'll work together with community organisations, sports clubs, local authorities and volunteer groups amongst others, we will:

- Invest in improving the volunteer experience to make it more enjoyable and meaningful
- Inspire and recruit people from more diverse backgrounds
- Work with new partners as well as existing ones to get to a more diverse audience.

By investing in volunteering, measuring the benefits (to volunteers as well as the community), and using the knowledge we gain to fulfil volunteers' expectations, we'll be able to tap even more of the country's vast volunteering potential. From 2021 to 2025 our focus will expand to involving a larger proportion of the population in engaging and helping out in sport and physical activity.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

- > £26m investment into volunteering between 2017-21
- > £3m investment into the Opportunity Fund - targeting people from disadvantaged areas
- > Up to £3 million investment into the Potentials Fund
- > £3m set aside for club support in 2016/17
- > Continue to develop our insight and understanding of the needs, motivations and barriers to volunteering in sport and physical activity

### SCHOOL GAMES

The review of the School Games published in August 2016, recommended that volunteering 'pathways' are improved to enable children to continue volunteering after they leave school.

## THE VALUE OF GIVING TIME

5.6 million people volunteer every month in sport and physical activity in England. They're helping others and themselves in ways which support all of our objectives:

- **Helping the people who are least active become active**
- **Helping establish sport as a regular activity for millions more**
- **Enhancing the experience of people who are already in sport and physical activity**
- **Enhancing young people to explore sport and get into physical activity**

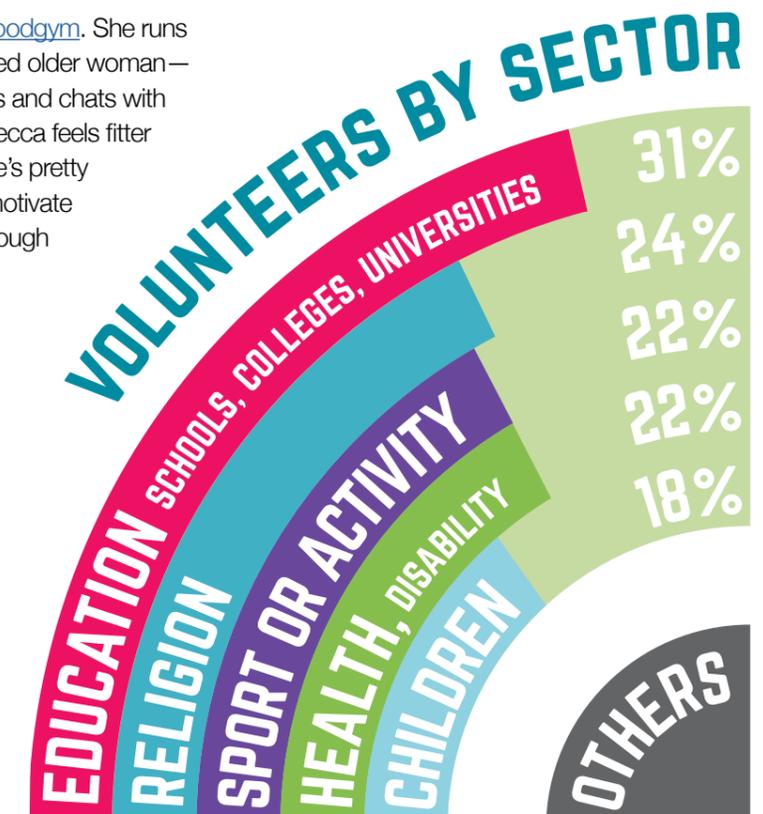
This selection of case studies demonstrates the breadth of contributions they make—and the rich mix of benefits they get as a result.

Rebecca is a volunteer with [Goodgym](#). She runs 3 miles to see Joan—an isolated older woman—every Monday night, then stays and chats with her before running home. Rebecca feels fitter and healthier, and she says she's pretty sure she wouldn't be able to motivate herself to go out running all through the winter if it wasn't for Joan.

Jon helps deaf children in his spare time. He saw that it could be difficult for them to take part in traditional sports like basketball, so he came up with a system of hand signals to help communicate on court. It works for other sports too. "Coaches can open up access to their sessions with just a few minor tweaks," he says.

Annie is a volunteer football coach. She says coaching has increased her confidence as well as her fitness. "I was a bit intimidated on my first day training with a male squad. But by the end of it they'd accepted me. I felt really good about it."

As well as the benefits for the individual and the community, there's a huge economic value to volunteering in sport and physical activity. The Office for National Statistics estimates that the time given for free is worth £24 billion, the equivalent of 1.5% of GDP.



Base: All current formal volunteers. Percentages sum to more than 100 as respondents often help more than one type of organisation. Don't know/refusal responses excluded.

# ENCOURAGING NEW VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering in sport and physical activity doesn't have to be the preserve of the 'fit' and 'sporty' and it doesn't have to take place in a traditional sports club environment. But barriers to volunteering still exist, in particular around perception of what a volunteer looks like: today a volunteer is most likely to be white, middle class and male.

We want to bring in more people from under-represented groups, for example those with a disability or from disadvantaged communities, to make volunteering in sport and physical activity more diverse. Communities will see even greater benefits when there are more volunteers from their own ranks.

We are investing in the creation of two funds designed to diversify audiences. In January 2017 we'll launch these funds to support projects for groups where we've identified significant untapped potential:

- the Opportunity Fund - targeting people from disadvantaged areas
- the Potentials Fund - targeting 10 to 20 year olds

We'll publish full details of who can apply and how in January 2017. The funds will be open in February.

## THE OPPORTUNITY FUND

In 2017 we'll invest £3 million in projects which focus on people facing disadvantage. Disadvantaged communities vary enormously in terms of factors such as location, population density and services available. We want to enable all kinds of communities and people from all backgrounds to volunteer in sport and physical activity.

There are huge gains to be made by encouraging more volunteers in these areas because of the dual benefit for the individual and the community. We want to mobilise a force that can contribute at many levels - personal, social and economic - and be the catalysts for transformation of their neighbourhood.

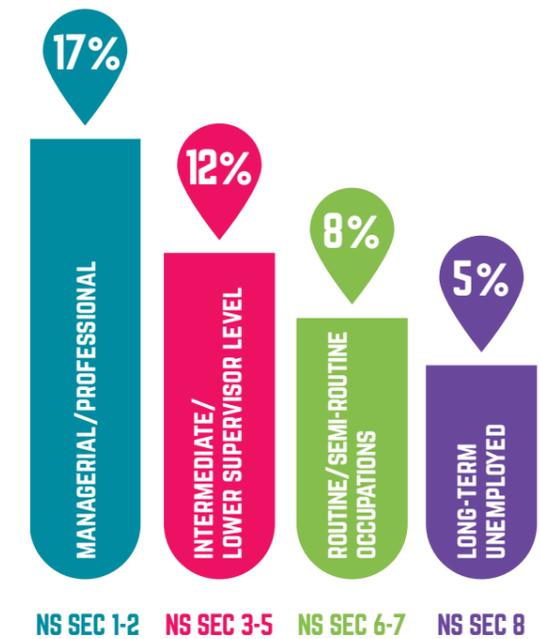
We're looking for partners who are trusted by people in the communities they serve and know what will motivate them. Successful projects will provide opportunities that help individuals achieve their own personal wellbeing and development goals. In turn, their contribution will help build cohesion in their community.

Our priority is to get more people from these communities excited about and engaged in volunteering, so we're happy to look at ideas which contain smaller elements of sport and physical activity.

We're impressed by the [Get Active For Good Cashpoint](#) from vInspired which is a good model for engagement and helps fund sport-related community projects.

To emphasise our commitment to reaching this new audience, we're aiming to award at least 50% of the fund for projects run by partners who are new to Sport England or even new to sport and physical activity.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS



Source: Active People Survey 10 Q2 (April 15/16) Ages 14+. Monthly volunteering in sport in England. Graph shows the percentage of people in each NS SEC group who volunteered in the last month.

## THE POTENTIALS FUND

Getting involved in mentoring, supporting people and improving your local area – a form of youth social action – is already popular with young people. But social action organisation Step Up To Serve has identified a large group they call ‘Potentials’ – young people who are interested in doing something for their community, but haven’t yet made a commitment. In fact [70% of 10- to 20-year-olds](#) say they want to do more social action in the next 12 months.

This group is a particularly interesting audience for us because many of them love sport and physical activity: Half of 16- to 24-year-olds would prefer to give their time in something sport-based.

We want to unleash this potential by funding projects which target young people who haven’t regularly volunteered in the past. We will be creating a funded programme to invest up to £3 million in projects which will benefit 10- to 20-year-olds and their communities, in support of the #iwill campaign. It’s also a long-term investment in those communities – according to the [Youth Social Action Survey 2015](#), people who start volunteering when they’re young are more likely to continue in later life.

We’ll be looking for projects which connect with the lives and aspirations of 10- to 20-year-olds. Sport and physical activity should be involved but it doesn’t have to be the sole focus. We’re looking for brilliant ideas.

## SOCIAL ACTION AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Source: Youth Social Action in the UK – 2015: A face to face survey of 10-20 year-olds in the UK. Youth Social Action is defined as young people doing activities that benefit others.





# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WHO ALREADY VOLUNTEER

Millions of people already provide time, effort and skills to help others enjoy sport and physical activity. They deserve to feel encouraged and valued.

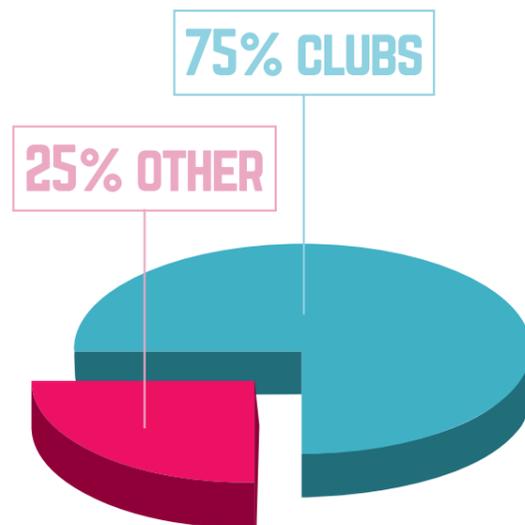
The highest concentration of volunteers is in sports clubs. According to the [Making Time report 2015](#), many sports club volunteers said they were dissatisfied. They were twice as likely as volunteers in other sectors to be thinking about cutting the time they gave or stopping altogether.

Our response is a special programme of training, information and support called Club Matters. It aims to make sports clubs more sustainable, successful and enjoyable for everyone involved. [Club Matters](#) offers information on every aspect of club administration, including how to recruit, manage and reward volunteers.

Since launching in April 2015, Club Matters has established itself as a useful, trustworthy resource. In 2016-17 we have

set aside £3 million to make sure that club administrators get the help they need and we've commissioned an external evaluation of the programme so we can continue to make improvements.

## WHERE PEOPLE VOLUNTEER



Source: Formal Sport Volunteering in England. Sport England/Portas analysis

## REWARDING VOLUNTEERS

We were asked by the Government to find a way for organisations to show appreciation for the people who contributed most by giving them access to major sporting events – known as Gold Ticket. We've worked with UK Sport and the National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) to make this a reality.

For example 6,000 volunteers known as 'The Pack' helped ensure the 2015 Rugby World Cup ran smoothly. Around two thirds of The Pack were recruited from local rugby clubs in England and Wales with every rugby club guaranteed one spot if they wanted it.

We'll continue to work with UK Sport's Major Events Funding Programme and the NGBs to offer Gold Ticket opportunities to the widest possible range of volunteers.

Megan, a volunteer at Spalding Cycling Club, was given a Gold Ticket for the UCI Track Cycling World Championships in 2016. She worked as a results runner which gave her the chance to go behind the scenes and meet other volunteers. She said, "It gave me an insight into how much work goes into one of these events. It was a huge privilege to be selected by British Cycling and I'm really proud of what we achieved."

# GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

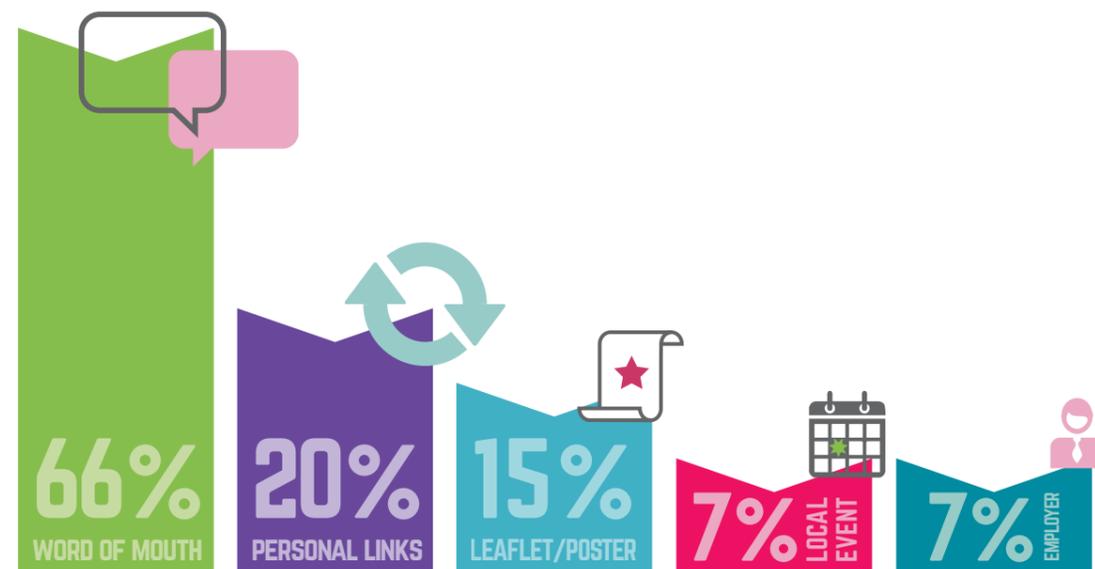
Around [two thirds of volunteers](#) get involved because they hear about an opportunity from a friend, family member or someone connected with the organisation. Because of this reliance on 'word of mouth' recruitment, it can be hard for organisations to get greater diversity among volunteers, and for those from diverse backgrounds to get the chance.

As part of our strategy to galvanise volunteering among a much wider audience, we'll be researching and testing ways to use digital technology in recruitment. Projects we invest in through the Opportunity Fund and Potentials Fund will form part of this digital testbed.

Part of our work with the #iwill campaign, run by Step Up To Serve, promotes youth social action opportunities to all young people. We will work in support of the #iwill campaign to promote the opportunity for young people to volunteer in sport and physical activity. We'll use this experience to help other partners develop creative ways to speak to hard-to-reach groups using the web and social media.

Research shows that there's a significant proportion of potential volunteers looking for information online, especially those interested in opportunities in sport and physical activity. We'll be exploring ways to meet this need through digital channels.

## HOW ARE OPPORTUNITIES SPOTTED?



Source: Helping Out: 'A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving'

## MEASURING THE DIFFERENCE OUR INVESTMENTS MAKE

We'll be tracking how many people are volunteering, and their diversity, using our new Active Lives survey. The survey will look at sport and physical activity in a sample of 190,000 people across England. We'll use census data and information from the Office for National Statistics to assess volunteering rates against the composition of the population as a whole.

We'll publish baseline figures for the number and diversity of volunteers in our Interim Active Lives Report in by August 2017.

In June 2017 we'll publish criteria for quality volunteering experiences, especially those backed by the new Opportunity Fund and Potentials Fund. We're working with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Institute for Volunteering Research to draw up the criteria.

## EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

Around 5% of employees in the UK get involved in employer-supported volunteering (ESV) at least once a month - 14% participate at least once a year.

The government intends to look at the future of ESV in 2017 and we'll be studying its findings to see whether there are opportunities for us and our partners.

## MATCHING SERVICE

We're working with the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) and its consortium partners to review its service which connects volunteers with sports organisations. The aim is to make it as easy as possible for people and clubs or groups which need volunteers to find each other. We also want to understand how we can encourage people who may not normally consider sports volunteering to get involved.

## IMPROVING VOLUNTEERING BEYOND 2017

Our new funds give us an opportunity to invest in the creation of volunteer opportunities for wider groups. They'll also allow us to build our understanding of what makes a rewarding experience for the volunteer. We'll use the insight from this first investment to inform our strategy further, and get even more people into actively supporting others.

# OPPORTUNITY AND YOUTH FUND TIMETABLE

## OUR COMMITMENT TIMETABLE

COMMITMENT	2017						
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
OPPORTUNITY FUND & YOUTH POTENTIALS FUND		Investment Guides published					
		Funds open					
					Final decisions		
						Awards	

## STEPPING UP

Turning our strategy into a reality will take creativity, courage, collaboration and leadership. That's why we're recruiting for new leadership of this area of work, and will be looking for new partners and ideas. Most of all it'll take you: your ability to understand your community; your experience working on the ground.

Together we have the skills and resources to shape great opportunities. Ones that even the people who don't see themselves as volunteers won't want to miss out on.

Engaging and rewarding experiences that bring a host of benefits: health, confidence and skills for the individual; cohesion, resilience and respect for the community.

Together, we can get everyone engaged in volunteering in an active nation.

## CONTACT US

You can email us at [volunteering@sportengland.org](mailto:volunteering@sportengland.org) if:

- you've already got an idea that'll grab the attention and the imagination of the people in your community
- you have a question for us
- you want a copy of the funding details sent to your email in January 2017.





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December 2016