

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a yellow high-visibility vest over a red and black top, is smiling and looking towards a child. The child is wearing a large, dark, furry gorilla costume. The background is a colorful, abstract mural with blue, pink, and green shapes.

VOLUNTEERING INSIGHT GUIDE

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES, REALISING POTENTIAL

FEBRUARY 2017

CONTENTS

Welcome and Introduction	2
Section 1: Social action and volunteering at the moment	4
Social action explained	
Who currently volunteers in sport?	
Increasing diversity	
Section 2: Motivations, benefits and barriers	12
Section 3: What makes a great volunteer experience?	18
Section 4: Spotlight on...	20
Recruitment	
Recognition	
Building networks	
Section 5: Top tips and resources	27

WELCOME

We believe in the power of volunteering to change lives. That’s why we want to invest and support your volunteering ideas.

This guide has been put together specifically for those who have an exceptional idea and are considering applying for either Sport England’s Potentials Fund or Opportunity Fund. Both funds have been developed with different audiences in mind. Please give careful consideration to which fund is most appropriate to your audience. The pack contains insight from national surveys on volunteering across all sectors, what we know about volunteering in sport specifically, as well as #iwill’s research into youth social action.

Throughout the guide we have highlighted important things to think about as you develop your idea further. However, please note that this is not an exhaustive or definitive list of things you should consider or the insight you should understand in order to develop a strong plan. The final page offers suggestions for further reading and insight on the subjects of volunteering and social action.

Good luck with your project and thank you for your interest in our volunteering funds.

For information about our two volunteering funds please see our [Volunteering Investment Guide](#).

INTRODUCTION

Millions of people in England freely give their time to help others; for some, it’s about giving something back to their community or making a difference to the people around them. For others, it’s a chance to develop new skills, gain experience or make new friends. In many cases, it’s both.

Equally, there are many young people taking part in social action - ‘practical action in the service of others that creates positive change that is of benefit to their community, as well as to the young person themselves’.

It’s about enabling young people who want to make a difference to realise this potential – whether that means supporting a homeless shelter, campaigning on causes they care about, teaching an older person IT or planting trees to improve the local environment.

Whatever the motivation, we know that volunteering can bring great benefits to both the individuals and the wider community. It is this dual benefit we want to invest in. Harnessing the power of volunteering, or youth social action, with sport and physical activity, to transform lives.

SECTION 1: SOCIAL ACTION & VOLUNTEERING AT THE MOMENT

SOCIAL ACTION EXPLAINED

Social action can be any kind of activity that benefits others and creates positive social change. Getting involved in mentoring, supporting people and improving your local area are all forms of social action already popular with young people.

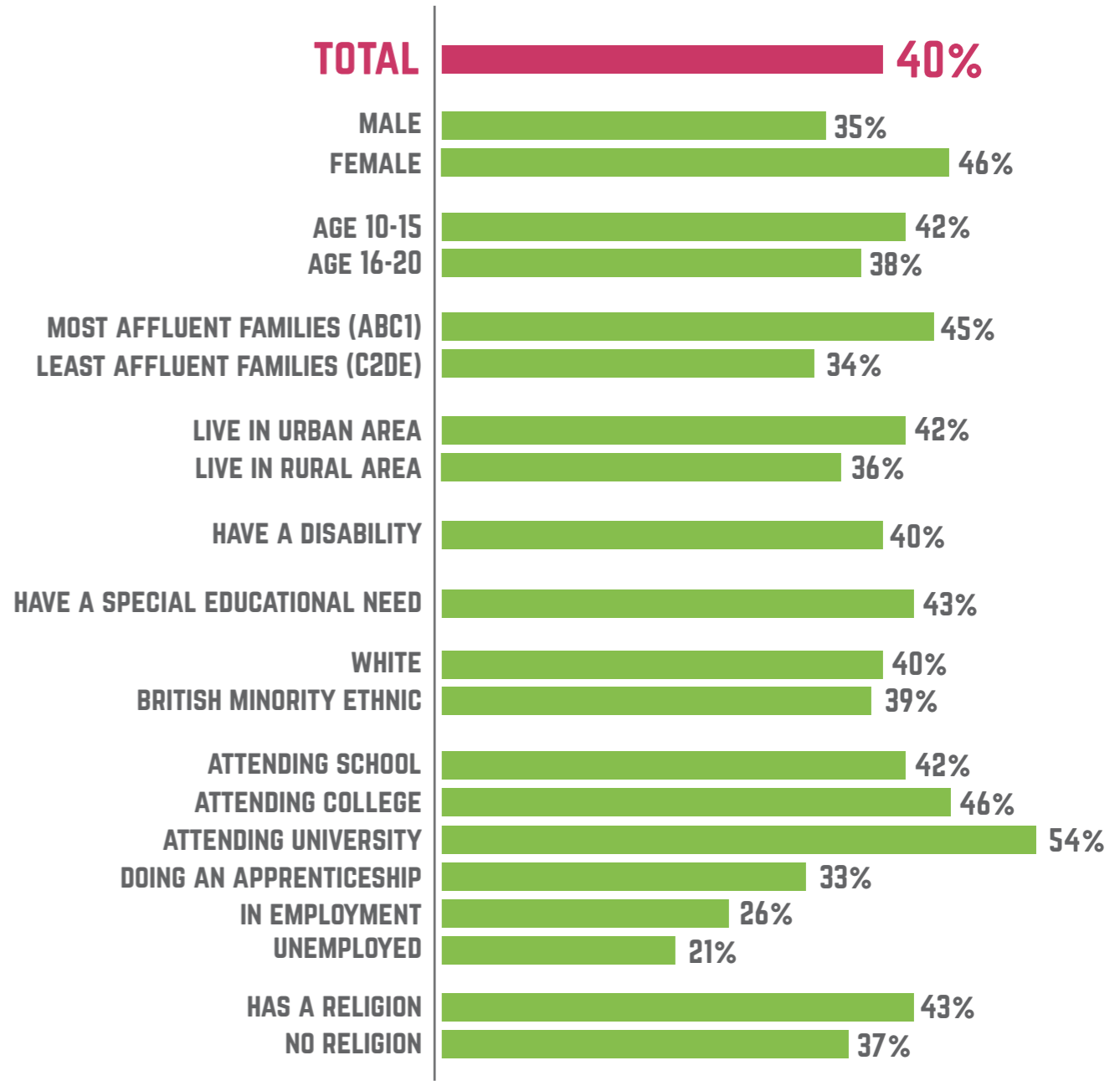
For the Potentials Fund we are interested in projects which want to empower young people to bring about positive change through sport and physical activity. This could mean changing people's behaviour by engaging a new audience into sport or physical activity who would otherwise be inactive. Or canoeists who want to improve the environment by clearing riverbanks of litter. It is not just about more of the same- its about making a difference.

With the Potentials Fund, we are proud to be acting as match funders for the #iwill fund, a UK wide campaign aiming to get 6 out of 10 young people involved in social action by 2020. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport, the #iwill fund aims to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities.

WHO CURRENTLY TAKES PART IN YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION?

- > Participation in social action is more widespread amongst girls than boys- this is the opposite to more traditional sports volunteering e.g. within a sports club, which is more male dominated (16+)
- > There is a significant socio-economic gap in participation in youth social action, with research suggesting that socio-economic background is one of the strongest influences on whether or not young people and adults participate in social action
- > Those aged 10-15 are more likely to take part in meaningful social action. This number declines as they get older (16-20 age group)
- > The participation gap between different ethnic backgrounds is significantly smaller in youth social action than we see in general volunteering
- > Those who aren't currently taking part are still keen to do so. The findings suggest that lack of opportunities (and low awareness of them) is the main barrier (see page 16).

% OF YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN MEANINGFUL SOCIAL ACTION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



Ipsos Mori- Youth Social Action Survey, 2014

SIX PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

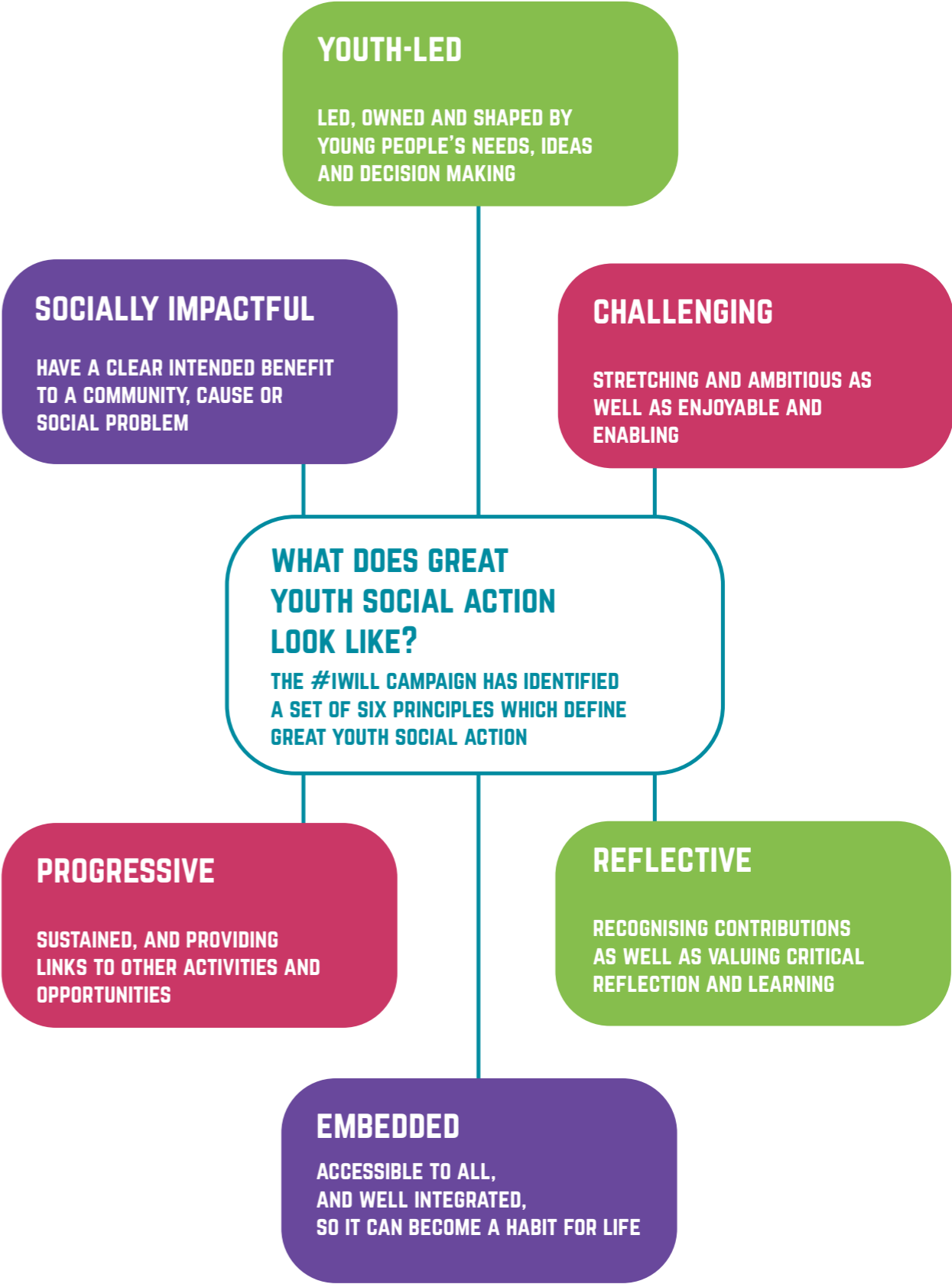
SPORT ENGLAND WANTS TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO USE SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO TAKE PART IN HIGH-QUALITY SOCIAL ACTION

We want all successful Potentials projects to be the best they can be. If your project is shortlisted, we'll support you during the formal application process to ensure your work meets the Six Principles of Youth Social Action.

The #iwill campaign has established an agreed set of six principles that underpin high-quality, meaningful youth social action. These principles also help promote inclusive practices so that all young people are able to participate and benefit. See diagram opposite or view the full report [here](#).



Successful youth social action projects in the Potentials Fund will demonstrate a clear double benefit – to the young person who takes part by improving their individual development and/or mental wellbeing as well as, to a community, cause or social problem.

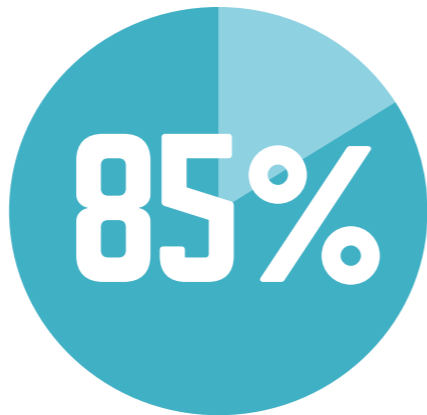


WHO CURRENTLY VOLUNTEERS IN SPORT?

People who currently volunteer in sports organisations are more likely to be:

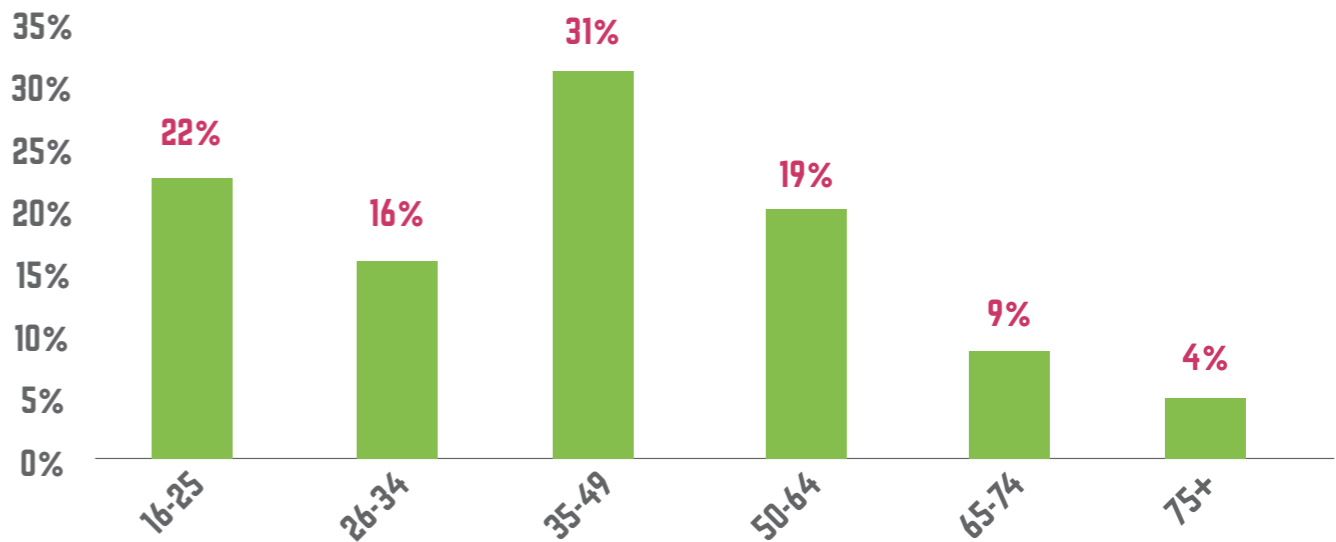
- Male
- White
- Live in more affluent areas
- Younger
- No long-term limiting disability

PERCENTAGE OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERS WHO STATE THEY HAVE A 'PASSION FOR SPORT'



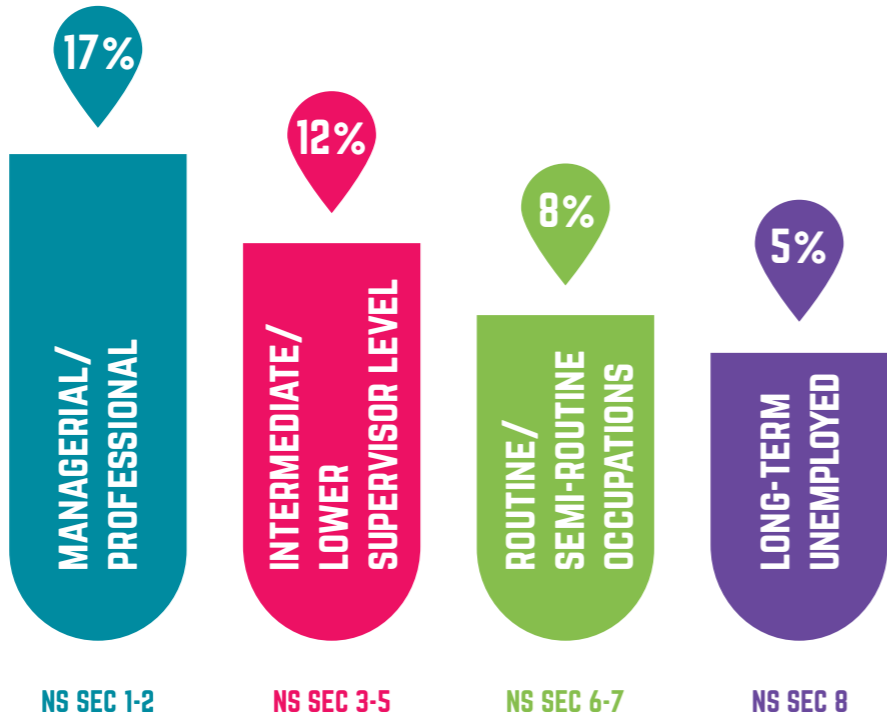
Source: BDRC Continental Research: Aug 2016

AGE OF CURRENT SPORTS VOLUNTEERS



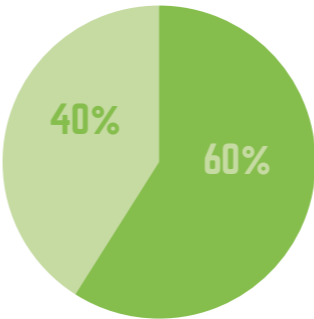
Source: Cabinet Office (2014-2015) Community Life survey

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS

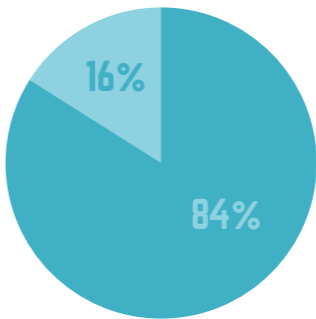


Source: Active People Survey 10 (Apr 2015 to Mar 2016)

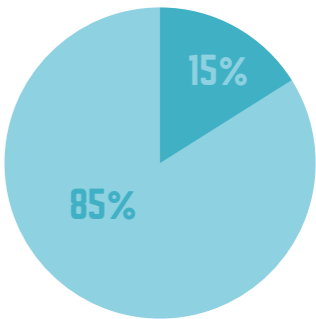
60% MALE



84% WHITE BRITISH



15% HAVE A DISABILITY



Source: Active People Survey 9 (Oct 2014 to Sept 2015)

INCREASING DIVERSITY

WE WANT VOLUNTEERS TO REFLECT OUR COMMUNITIES

Sport England wants to make volunteering in sport much more diverse. We will do this by attracting people from all kinds of backgrounds.

These two volunteering funds will support projects for groups where we have identified significant untapped potential. We know that those with lower household incomes, young people, women, people with a disability, and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities are currently less likely to volunteer in sport, yet they are often keen volunteers in other sectors such as religion or education.

We want to see how we can use sport or physical activity as a means to fulfil their motivations. In turn, communities will see an even greater benefit when there are more volunteers from their own neighbourhood.

There are many reasons why volunteering in sport is currently not representative of society. We want to change that. Here are some things you should think about to help ensure your project is appealing and accessible to all:



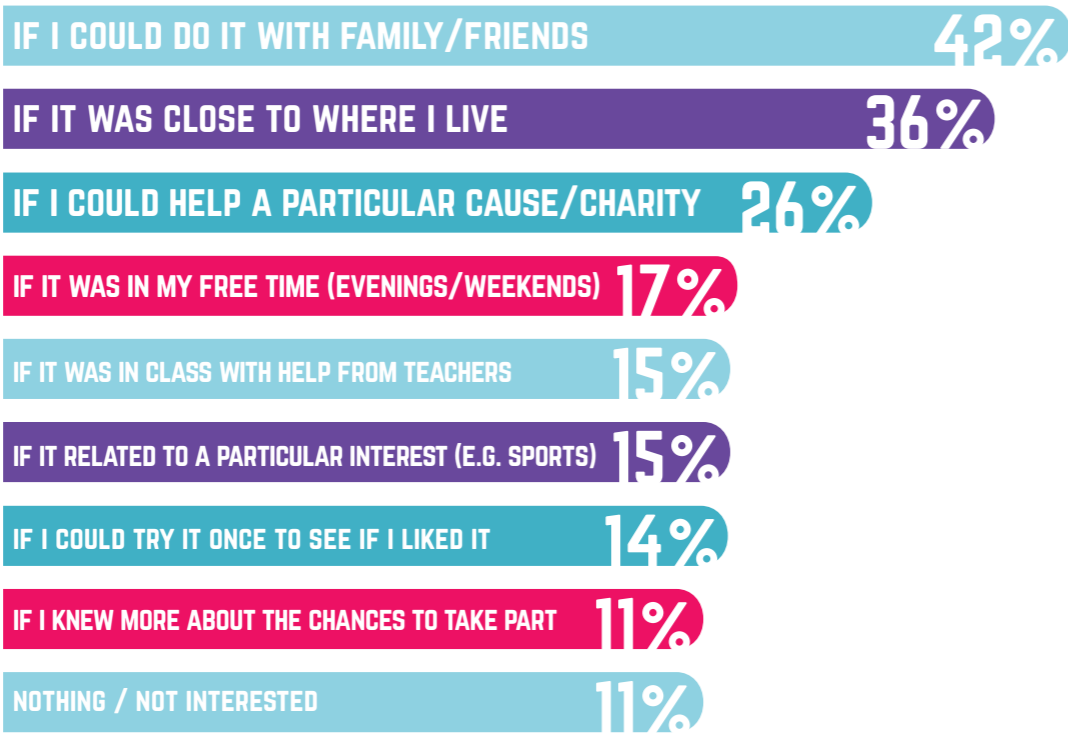
WHAT WE KNOW	THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
Organisations sometimes find it difficult to get a diverse range of recruits, partly due to the fact that the majority of volunteers are currently recruited through word of mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you reach the people you want to include?• What different communication channels can you use to attract a diverse audience?
Resources can also be an issue if there is a cost associated with providing additional equipment or adaptations. In some cases volunteers may require support from another member of staff or volunteer which can be challenging when resources are stretched	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have the right skill set to appropriately support the individuals you want to reach? If not, who could you work with to ensure their needs are met? Are there any resource or budget implications?
Many people are currently excluded from participating in volunteering or social action due to barriers to access and lack of opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you know who the excluded people are you want to engage in your project?• Do you know what barriers they may face to getting involved? How could you help overcome some of them?• Make sure the opportunities can be delivered in a location which is accessible to the individuals you are targeting• Making them aware of the opportunity is the first step to them getting involved

SECTION 2: MOTIVATIONS, BENEFITS & BARRIERS

MOTIVATIONS

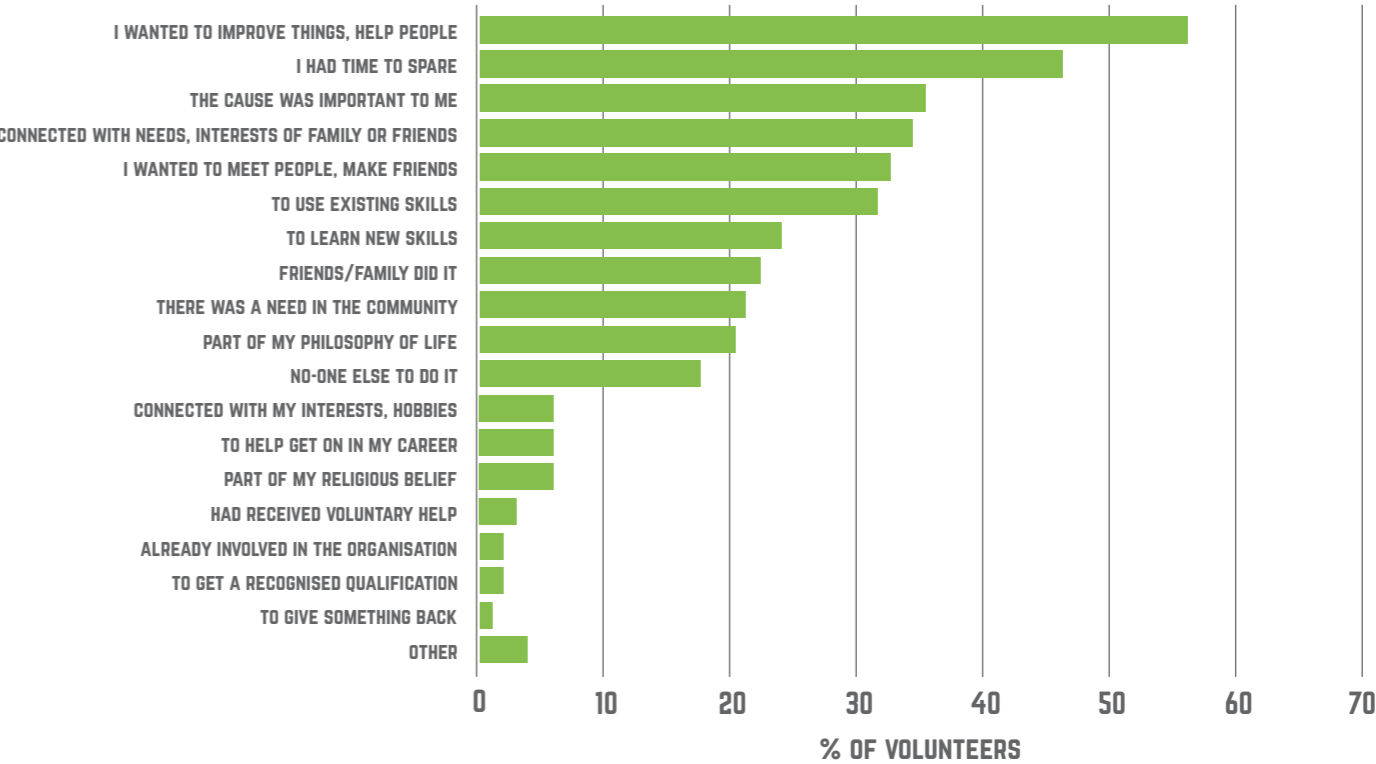
PEOPLE GET INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR MANY DIFFERENT REASONS. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS WILL DEPEND ON YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR MOTIVATIONS AND THE ABILITY OF YOUR PROJECT TO CONNECT WITH THEM

FACTORS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION IN THE FUTURE

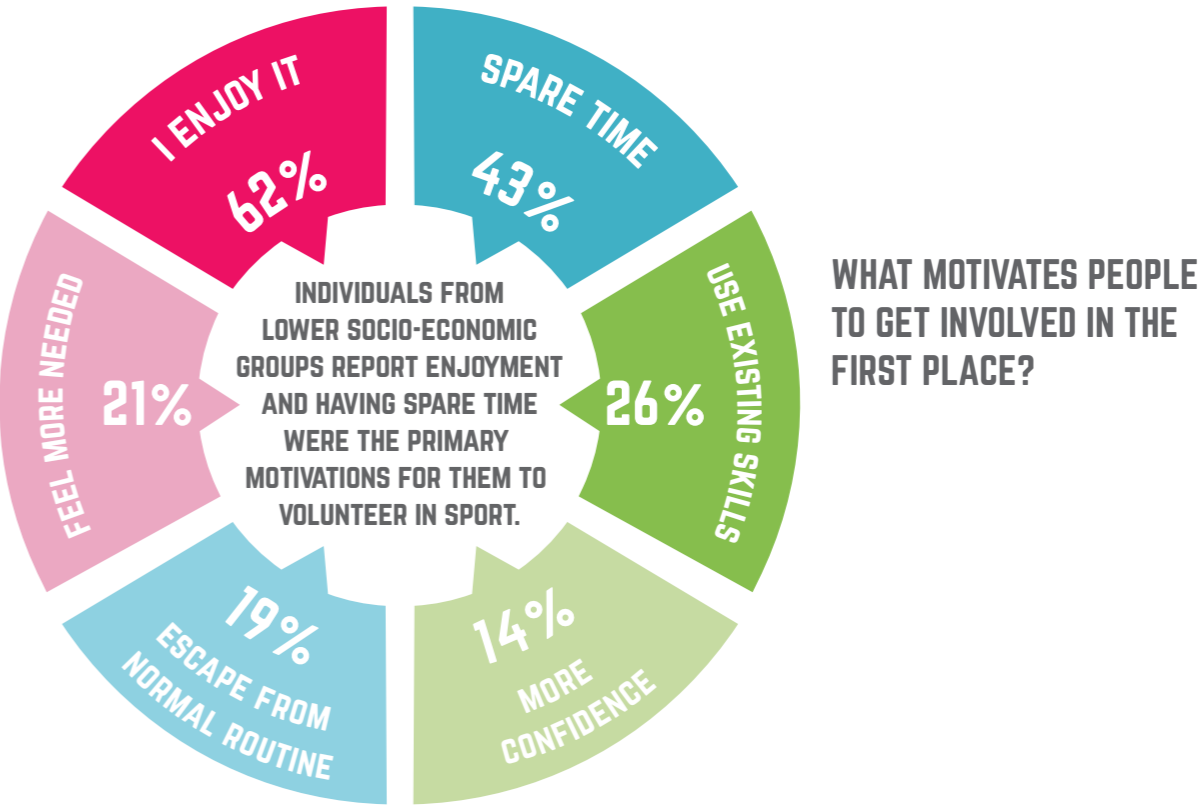


Ipsos Mori- Youth Social Action in the UK, 2014

MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERING (ALL SECTORS, 16+)



Source: Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving, 2007



Source: Join-In Survey, 2016

BENEFITS

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS PEOPLE GET FROM VOLUNTEERING OR TAKING PART IN SOCIAL ACTION. UNDERSTANDING WHAT PEOPLE GET OUT OF VOLUNTEERING WILL HELP ENABLE YOU TO DELIVER A GREAT VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE, AND HELP RECRUIT OTHERS INTO YOUR PROJECT

PERSONAL BENEFITS RECEIVED FROM VOLUNTEERING (ALL RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER)



*Formal volunteering (as defined by Helping Out) – Giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment at least once in the last 12 months (includes sport); Source: Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving 2007-08.

HOW PARTICIPANTS FELT THEY HAD BENEFITTED FROM YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION



Ipsos Mori- Youth Social Action survey, 2014

MOTIVATIONS AND BENEFITS- THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Understanding what would motivate your audience to volunteer and the benefits they could gain is vital to engaging them. Here are some things for you to think about:

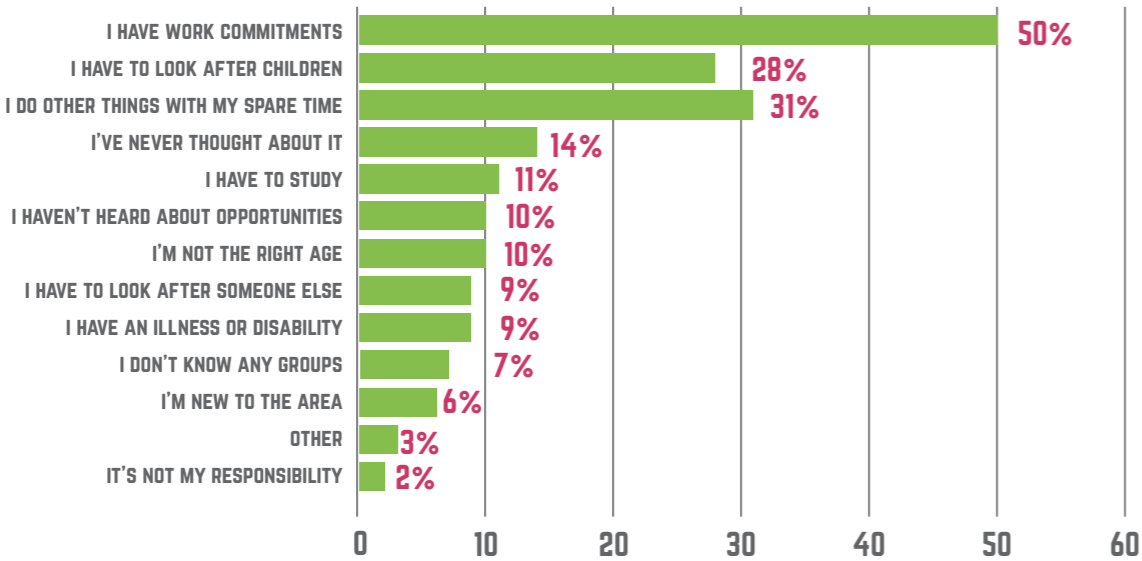
WHAT WE KNOW	THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
People are often motivated to give their time if their family or friends are involved, or there is a need in the community	Think about how you can appeal to these motivations. Can the volunteering or social action opportunity be done with friends? Can physical activity be used as a way of addressing the needs of the local neighborhood, such as reducing crime?
Promote the benefits, rather than the activity	Talk about what people will get out of the experience, rather than what they will be doing. Positioning the opportunity as a chance to have fun, make new friends, develop new skills or learn new things is more likely to appeal
People's motivations change and they can lose interest	Keep in touch with volunteers and understand their motivations so you can find ways to keep them motivated and engaged e.g. through offering development opportunities or chances to try new roles

BARRIERS

THERE ARE COMMON REASONS WHY PEOPLE DON'T VOLUNTEER OR TAKE PART IN SOCIAL ACTION

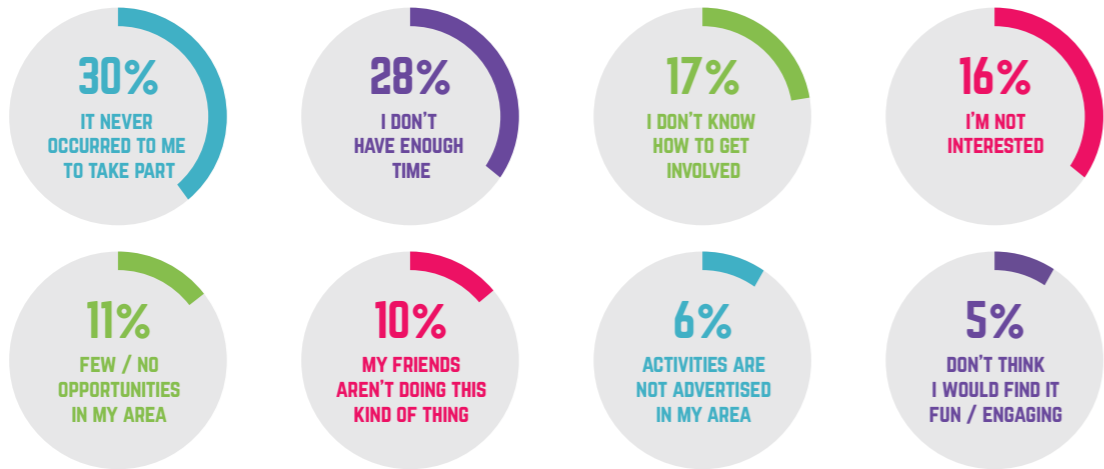
A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS IS 'NOT INTERESTED IN SPORT' - 29% V.S 23% OF HIGHER INCOME GROUPS

COMMON REASONS WHY PEOPLE DON'T VOLUNTEER



Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving, 2007

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE HAD NOT TAKEN PART IN SOCIAL ACTION



Source: Ipsos Mori - Youth Social Action Survey, 2014

Think about how you can design your project to help people overcome these barriers and address some of the

reasons why people don't engage in volunteering or social action.

WHAT WE KNOW	THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
Most people report a lack of time, or a perception that it's a big commitment, as a barrier to volunteering	Think about offering flexible or bite-sized volunteering opportunities that people can fit in around work and other commitments. Where possible, be flexible on timing and location. Can the volunteering opportunity be family-friendly, enabling children to take part as well?
Lack of awareness is a key reason why many don't volunteer	How can you maximise awareness of your project? Who will you work with to help reach your audience, and what communication channels will you use?
A proportion of people who don't volunteer in sport, say it is because they are not interested in sport	If you're audience isn't sporty, think about what else might motivate them. Consider the kind of environment or role that would be suitable
Poor health or old age can hold people back from joining in, but this doesn't have to be the case	Think about how you can adapt opportunities to accommodate your target audience and provide support for them to get involved
People often think you have to be sporty, fit and have certain skills or qualifications to volunteer in sport	Think about how you can change perceptions of sport volunteering. For example, making it clear that you don't need to be sporty or have a qualification. Perhaps frame the opportunity as a means to achieve their personal goals instead of using the sport to attract them

SECTION 3:

WHAT MAKES A GREAT VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE NEEDS AND WANTS IS CRUCIAL TO DEVELOPING A PROJECT THAT PEOPLE WANT TO ENGAGE WITH. ENSURING YOU HAVE DONE SOME PREPARATION ON THESE KEY AREAS BEFORE RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP ENSURE A GOOD VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

1. ONE-SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

- Understand your audience- find out about their lives, what's important to them and their motivations and barriers to volunteering. What would they want from the experience and how will it benefit them?
- Think about what type of volunteering activity is appropriate for each person. Public facing or behind-the-scenes? Unable to commit to regular times each week or do they prefer regular timetables? Offering flexible or bite-sized volunteering opportunities can help people fit volunteering around other commitments.
- Where possible you should engage with the individuals you want to reach to understand what type of volunteering activity they would enjoy, what their skills are, and continue to seek their input as the project evolves.

Matching the right role to the right volunteer is an absolutely essential part of getting it right.

- Ensure the opportunities you develop are meaningful and will have an impact. Think about the issue or need your project is trying to address and what contribution volunteers can make. Volunteers giving their time will want to know their time is well spent and they are doing something meaningful. Share case studies and examples of the difference volunteers have made.
- Use a range of communications – Whether this is social media; Facebook/WhatsApp groups etc, or a cup of tea after a session, help participants form friendships that motivate them to keep coming, and build rapport.

2. INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

- Think about how inclusive your roles are and how they may be adapted to make them more accessible and to meet volunteers' needs. If appropriate for your project consider developing a range of roles which will appeal and attract a wide range of people.
- A clear and simple recruitment process that is appropriate for the nature of the role is important as complex processes can be off-putting to potential volunteers.

3. SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

- Ensure volunteers feel supported in their role. Having a named point of contact can help them feel looked after, and you might consider if the role is more suited to informal chats or structured sessions. Ensure you have appropriately skilled people training and managing the volunteers, especially in the early stages.
- Provide induction and training where necessary to ensure volunteers have the information, skills and knowledge to do the role. Consider different formats, ie. formal and informal methods. Plan how you'll support the volunteer and make time to review progress and allow for their feedback.

4. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- To help provide a meaningful experience, there should be opportunities for volunteers to grow and progress, also known as 'pathways'. For instance, working towards a qualification or certificate, a new volunteering role with more responsibility, or gaining enough experience to transition into a paid role. This varies from person to person and it's a good idea to offer opportunities for people to try out different roles and see what they're interested in. Again, regular feedback from both sides will be really important.

DON'T FORGET, IF YOU ARE DEVELOPING A SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT FOR THE POTENTIALS FUND, TO USE THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION. SEE PAGE 7. THIS WILL ENSURE YOU ARE DELIVERING A GREAT SOCIAL ACTION EXPERIENCE

SECTION 4: SPOTLIGHT ON RECRUITMENT

WHAT WE KNOW

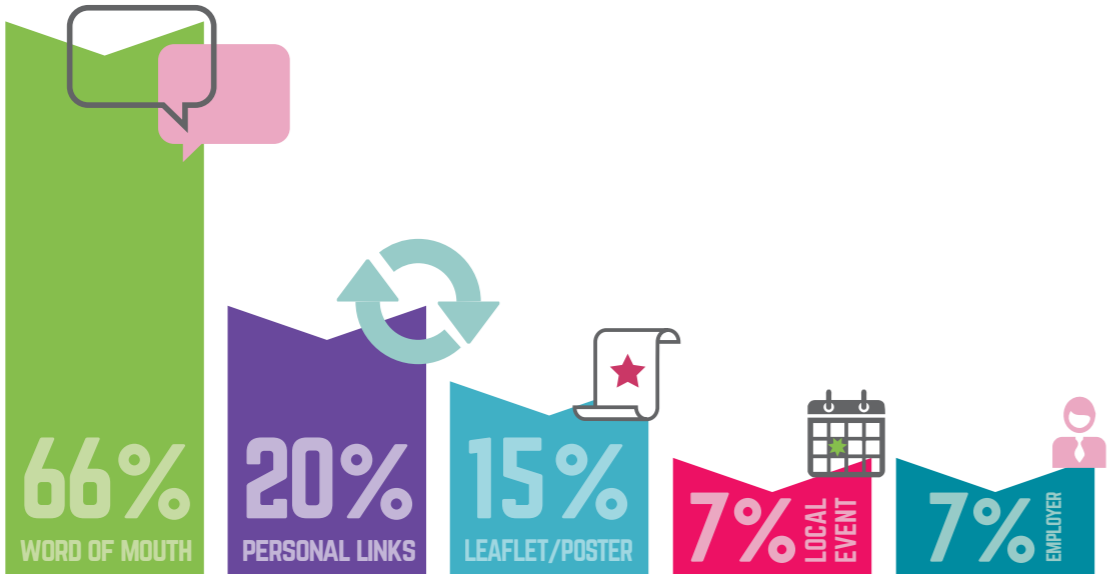
Word-of-mouth is historically the most common way current volunteers report having found out about volunteering but this can often lead to volunteers recruiting people like themselves and

contributes to the lack of diversity. You should consider reaching out to your audience via a range of channels. Or using the power of word-of-mouth, to go out and speak to new audiences.

Schools and colleges are an important way of engaging young people in social action. Families and friends also have a significant role to play-

they can be an important motivator and can contribute to the benefits of volunteering too.

HOW ARE OPPORTUNITIES CURRENTLY SPOTTED?



Source: Helping Out: 'A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving' 2007

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE BECAME INVOLVED IN MEANINGFUL SOCIAL ACTION



Source: Ipsos Mori- Youth Social Action Survey, 2014

SPOTLIGHT ON RECRUITMENT

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT



Make it easy for people to find out about the project– promote your project where people you want to involve usually go or look.



Think about what communication channels you can use to reach your audience. How could you use technology and social media to engage them? What individuals or organisations can reach and influence your audience e.g faith leaders, teachers, parents, friends, GPs, probation officers, etc?



Develop ‘someone like me’ approaches – use the right images and words in case studies, blogs and videos to make sure your audience know the offer is for people that are genuinely like them. Use people’s own social networks and create new ones that participants can identify with. By creating emotional connections, people can see the opportunities are for someone like them.

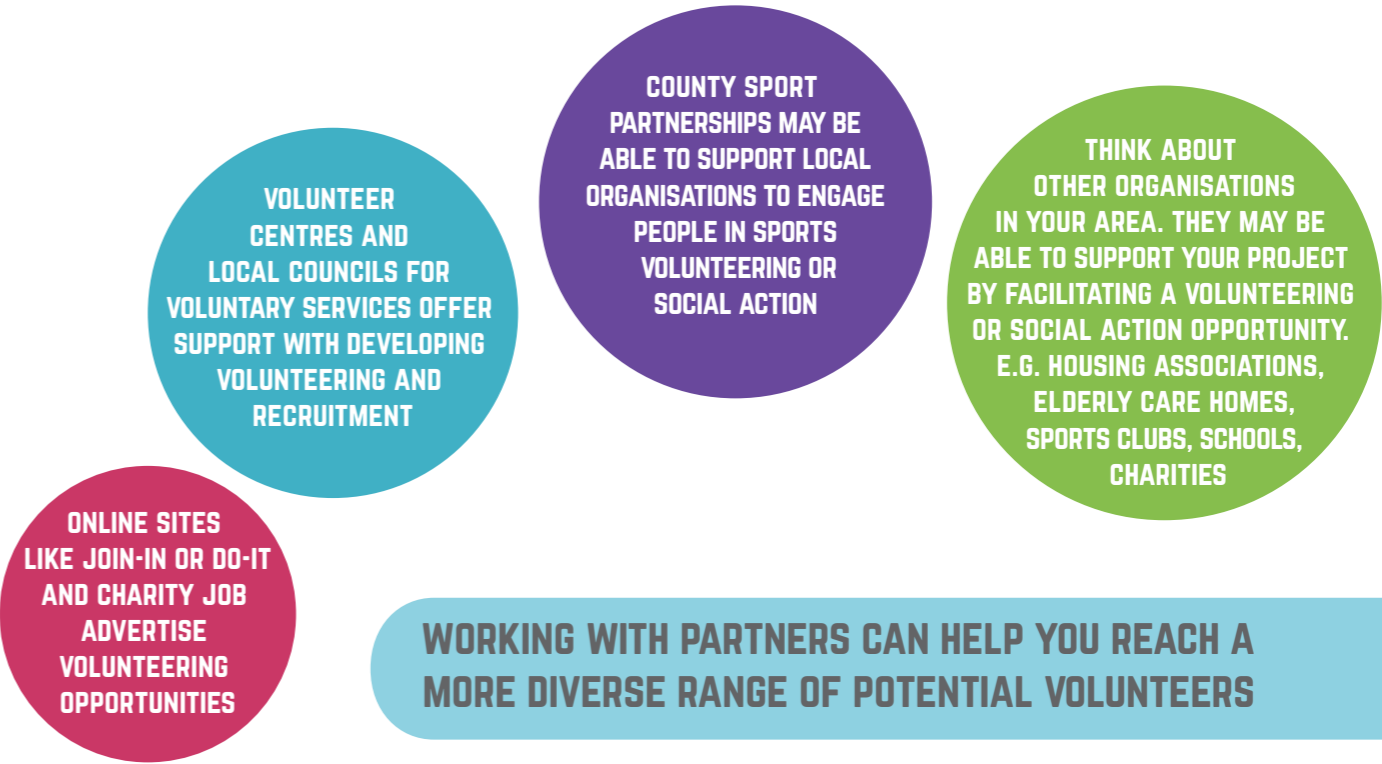


Use appropriate language. Depending on who you want to recruit, you may want to reframe the message- for some, the terms ‘sport’ or ‘volunteering’ are not words they connect with. Instead ‘helping out’ or ‘making friends’ may be more appealing. Think about whether sport is a driving motivator or should be a vehicle to achieving an outcome.



Consider how you can promote the experience, not just the specific activity or role. Attract people’s attention by promoting the benefits, for example learning something new, building confidence, developing new skills and having fun.

WHO CAN HELP RECRUIT NEW VOLUNTEERS?



WORKING WITH PARTNERS CAN HELP YOU REACH A MORE DIVERSE RANGE OF POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

READ MORE ABOUT BUILDING LOCAL NETWORKS ON PAGE 26

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOGNITION

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS IS GOOD PRACTICE AND CAN HELP TO RETAIN VOLUNTEERS' INVOLVEMENT AND CELEBRATE THE POSITIVE IMPACT THEY HAVE

USE DIFFERENT AND SUITABLE APPROACHES

You may need to adopt a range of approaches to retain and recognise volunteers, appreciating their different motivations and individual preferences.

- Organisations should consider how they can be inclusive and this often requires using a range of approaches.
- Informal forms of recognition are more popular amongst volunteers when asked what recognition they feel they should receive.
- Practical factors like how many volunteers you support and whether they are spread over a large area may also make a difference to the approach you take.



INFORMAL	FORMAL
Saying 'thank you' to volunteers. This could be through a newsletter, facebook, twitter or face-to-face	Volunteer events
Checking in regularly and providing opportunities for informal feedback	Certificates and awards
Involving volunteers in social events	Accreditation or qualifications
Consult volunteers informally about matters that affect them- value and seek their opinions	Involving volunteers in formal decision making or in governance roles
	Structures for ongoing support and supervision



SPOTLIGHT ON BUILDING NETWORKS

*PARTNERS ARE IMPORTANT NOT JUST TO ENSURE THE PROJECT HAS WIDE-SPREAD
COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN IT OVER THE LONGER-TERM*

- Go out and meet people, local stakeholders or community organisations – all of these can help strengthen your project and bring people in.
- Identify individuals and organisations that work with your audience that can refer or recommend to your project – build a relationship with and provide training to these partners so they understand how the project will benefit them too.
- Ask others to deliver your message – especially if they've already developed trust and rapport with the individuals you are working with.
- People may choose to take part in lots of different volunteering or social action opportunities – so establish links with other providers to support people in their journey.
- Seek your partners' views on how the project can deliver greatest impact on the audience - ask stakeholders to feed into the design stage so that it can have a positive benefit for them too.



SECTION 5: TOP TIPS & RESOURCES

TOP TIPS

- **Understand your audience** - who are they, what are their motivations and barriers, and how will you reach them?
- **Develop meaningful volunteering opportunities** - what type of role and pathway is appropriate for your audience? How will you ensure a quality experience?
- **Work in partnerships** - identify other organisations who share similar objectives or who can reach your audience
- **Support** - ensure you have the necessary resources to train, supervise and develop the individuals
- **Make it easy and fun** - minimise bureaucracy and make it rewarding and enjoyable

FURTHER RESOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[Cabinet Office \(2015\) Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation, London](#)

[NatCen \(2007\) Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving](#)

[NCVO, IVR & Involve \(2011\) Pathways through Participation, London](#)

[NCVO Institute for Volunteering Research, The Campaign for Youth Social Action, Cabinet Office and The Young Foundation \(2013\) Scoping a Quality Framework for Youth Social Action, London](#)

[Ipsos Mori \(2015\) Youth Social Action in the UK – 2015](#)

[#Iwill Youth Social Action Research](#)

[IVR \(2010\) A Rose by Any Other Name, London](#)

[IVR \(2010\) Valuing Volunteer Management Skills, London](#)

[Sport England \(2016\) Sport England: Towards an Active Nation, London](#)

[NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac](#)

WITH THANKS TO THE
NCVO INSTITUTE FOR
VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH
FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN
DEVELOPING THIS GUIDE



Sport England
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF

sportengland.org

Proudly supporting
youth social action



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport



LOTTERY FUNDED