Impact of COVID-19 on volunteer participation in Scotland

Summary presentation
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Structure

• Highlights

• Methodology & definitions

• Trend in volunteering participation – before, during and after COVID-19

• Characteristics of volunteering during COVID-19

• Expected volunteering participation after COVID-19
Highlights

Volunteering participation during COVID-19

- Volunteering participation in Scotland has increased by 26% due to COVID-19 (from 48% to 74%)

- Informal volunteering has much higher participation (35%) compared to mutual aid (16%) and formal volunteering (13%)

- Befriending (68%), food shopping (57%) and helping with household tasks (30%) have the highest volunteering participation

Volunteering participation after COVID-19

- Compared to the SHS 2018 data, all types of volunteering are expected to be higher after the COVID-19 crisis is over:
  - Formal volunteering – from 26% to 37%
  - Mutual aid – from 0% to 32% (not recorded in SHS)
  - Informal volunteering – from 36% to 47%
  - Total volunteering – from 48% to 59%

- The impact on volunteering participation is greater in encouraging more people to volunteer than increasing the amount of time they devote to volunteering.
Methodology

Ipsos-MORI omnibus survey

- Survey of 1,014 adults aged 16+ in Scotland
- Telephone interviews
- Conducted 22 – 29 June 2020
- Weighting to ensure representative sample: (by age, gender, tenure and Scottish Parliament region)

Volunteer Scotland design

- Questionnaire designed by Volunteer Scotland
- Focus on volunteering participation:
  - Before COVID-19 (March 2019 – Feb 2020)
  - During COVID-19 (March – June 2020)
  - After COVID-19 (once the crisis is over and we are no longer in a pandemic)
- Modelled on SHS participation question
- But split across three categories:
  - Formal volunteering
  - Mutual aid
  - Informal volunteering
Classification of volunteering

- **Formal volunteering** - *through a charity, formally organised group, club or an organisation* – the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided through formally constituted groups, including registered charities, employers, clubs and societies.

- **Mutual aid** - *through an informal group set up by people in your area to support and help others in your local community* – the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided through non-constituted groups without legal/charitable status. This category refers specifically to groups on Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. set up to support communities or issues in society.

- **Informal volunteering** - *as an individual to help other people outside your family, or to support your local community* – the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided directly by the individual to the beneficiary/local community/environment and not through any form of group.
Trend in volunteering participation
Before, during and after COVID-19
Volunteering participation rate’ is the proportion of adults who have volunteered at least once in the last year

- Formal volunteering rate = 26%
- Informal volunteering rate = 36%
- Total volunteering rate = 48%

Source: SHS 2018 n = 9,700
**Trend in total volunteering participation**
(formal, mutual aid and informal)

- Volunteering participation pre-COVID is comparable to SHS 2018 (45% vs. 48%)
- Major increase in volunteering participation during COVID-19 to 74% (Note: this rate is for 3 months compared to pre-COVID being 12 months)
- Expected volunteering participation post-COVID is 14% higher than pre-COVID (59% vs. 45%)

Sources: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020 and SHS 2018

n = 1,014
Characteristics of volunteering participation during COVID-19
Volunteering participation during COVID-19
(formal, mutual aid and informal – March to June 2020)

- Formal volunteering is only 13% reflecting the decline due to social distancing and lockdown measures
- Mutual aid at 16% has significant participation
- Informal volunteering has had the highest engagement at 35%
- ‘Non-assigned’ are respondents who did not identify with any of the above categories but undertook one or more volunteering activities (32%).

Source: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020  n = 1,014
Volunteering activities during COVID-19
(formal, mutual aid and informal)

Befriending or keeping in touch with someone who is at risk of being lonely: 68%
Doing food shopping: 57%
Helping with household tasks, such as cleaning and gardening: 30%
Collecting and delivering prescriptions: 23%
Providing food support (other than shopping): 23%
Helping at organisations which support people who face challenges: 15%
Providing administrative or IT support to organisations, charities or individuals: 13%
Helping at organisations which support people's physical and mental health: 12%
Walking dogs or providing other help with pets: 11%
Providing tutoring for children or adults: 10%
Providing transport to medical appointments or hospital: 9%
Collecting pensions/ benefits or organising bill payments on someone’s behalf: 8%
Making personal protective equipment such as face masks or hospital gowns: 7%
Helping to staff telephone or online support services: 4%
Doing something else: 22%

Source: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020
n = 742
Volunteering activities during COVID-19
(formal, mutual aid and informal)

• Befriending (68%), food shopping (57%) and helping with household tasks (30%) have the highest volunteering participation

• Hypothesis - a significant proportion of this support is likely to comprise informal volunteering and mutual aid

• Formal volunteering and mutual aid participation through organisations is lower:
  o 15% - helping at organisations which support people who face challenges such as poverty, disability or homelessness
  o 12% - helping at organisations which support people’s physical and mental health
  o 4% - helping to staff telephone or online support services
Volunteering participation during COVID-19
(formal, mutual aid and informal)

• The majority of volunteers (53%) are undertaking 3 or more volunteering activities

• For many volunteers this is likely to reflect combinations of informal volunteering, mutual aid and formal volunteering

Source: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020  
\(n = 724\)
Expected volunteering participation
After COVID-19
Volunteering participation after COVID-19
(formal, mutual aid and informal)

- 14% more people expect to be volunteering after COVID-19 than before (59% vs. 45%)

- Compared to SHS 2018 data, all types of volunteering have increased:
  - Formal volunteering – from 26% to 37%
  - Mutual aid – from 0% to 32% (not recorded in SHS)
  - Informal volunteering – from 35% to 47%
  - Total volunteering – from 48% to 59%

Source: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020
n = 1,014
Volunteering participation after COVID-19 (formal, mutual aid and informal)

- The majority of volunteers (62%) expect to be volunteering for about the same amount of time.
- 31% are expecting to devote more time, but for 24% this is only ‘a little more time’.
- Only 5% are expecting to devote less time.
- **Conclusion**: COVID-19 is expected to have a greater impact on the number of people volunteering than the amount of time they devote to volunteering once the crisis is over.

Source: Volunteer Scotland survey - June 2020

n = 599