

Volunteer
Scotland



Consultation Response

CEEAC Committee Inquiry into Scotland's Census

August 2022



About Us

Volunteer Scotland is Scotland's National Centre for Volunteering. We believe that volunteering should be an enjoyable, rewarding and fulfilling experience for the volunteer; that volunteers have the right to be safe and protected in delivering their volunteering roles; and that to derive health and well-being benefits from volunteering requires regular and meaningful contributions of time.

Should any queries arise from our response, please contact our Policy Officer by emailing **sarah.latto@volunteerscotland.org.uk**

Introduction

In response to the enquiry into Scotland's Census by the CEEAC Committee, we would like to see volunteering better reflected in future. This year's Census did not include questions or available answers to account for volunteering activity as a meaningful output. Questions also did not allow for recognition of volunteer management as a paid profession. We believe this should be addressed for the 2031 Census.

Volunteering activity is commonly referred to as either formal or informal. Formal volunteering is where individuals give their time on behalf of an organisation. Informal volunteering is where help is provided directly by an individual to somebody who is not a relative, most commonly to neighbours or other people within their local community.

The profile of volunteering rose during the pandemic when over 60% of Scotland's adult population gave their time for the benefit of their wider community – an increase of 16% from figures in 2018. Much of this additional voluntary activity was undertaken on an informal basis, with the participation rate for formal volunteering remaining relatively static at around 26% for the past few years. In 2018, formal and informal volunteers contributed 361 million hours of help, providing 5.5 billion to the Scottish economy. We believe that volunteering should feature as a specific answer in the 2031 Census so that we can better understand this extraordinary contribution to society.

Proposed Changes

We think that volunteering would be best included within questions 27 or 28, but we would be happy to support the development of a new question related specifically to volunteering or to unpaid work more broadly which takes many forms. Our suggested amendments are in brackets below:

27. In the last seven days, were you doing any of the following? Include casual, temporary [or unpaid voluntary] work, even if only for one hour

Tick all that apply

- Working as an employee
- Self-employed or freelance
- Temporarily away from work ill, on holiday or temporarily laid off
- On maternity or paternity leave
- Doing any other kind of paid work
- [Unpaid voluntary work]

- None of the above

28. Which of the following describes what you were doing in the last seven days?

Tick all that apply

- Retired (whether receiving a pension or not)
- Studying
- Looking after home or family
- Long-term sick or disabled
- [Unpaid voluntary work]
- Other

In addition to the above, we also believe that paid work to support volunteering is not adequately recognised in the drop-down options for questions about types of employment. Questions 36 and 38 specifically could have additional options detailed below, and a further question after 39 would also be preferable. Again, suggested additions are stated below in brackets:

36. What is (was) your full job title? [Volunteering Manager, Volunteering Officer, Volunteer Coordinator]

38. What is (was) the main activity of your organisation, business or freelance work? [Charity or Voluntary Sector], or more granular options such as [support, advice, campaigning, managing or coordinating volunteers].

[Additional Question after 39: Do (did) you supervise or oversee the work of volunteers on a day-to-day basis?]



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