



Volunteering Insight

UK Sports Volunteering Research Network

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Background and Context

- ▶ This presentation will highlight some the key findings of the Volunteering Insight research project conducted in 2014 for Sport England.
- ▶ The full report was structured into three key sections:
 1. Demographic analysis
 2. Systematic Review of the existing literature
 3. Qualitative examination of sports volunteering

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Aims

- ▶ Today I will focus on examples from three key area of the qualitative data:
 1. Motivations
 2. Barriers
 3. Drop Out

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Qualitative examination of sports volunteering: Motivations Overview

- ▶ The motivations to volunteer in sport uncovered in this report were:
 - ▶ For the love of sport
 - ▶ Giving back to sport
 - ▶ Child involvement
 - ▶ Volunteering linked to education and employment
 - ▶ Career aspirations
 - ▶ Social connection

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Motivations Examples:

Love of the Sport and Social Connection

- ▶ Well, I'm not really sure what to say, you do it for the love of cricket. That's the reason I do it, I do it for the love of cricket. **(Hamish, 40, Volunteer, East Sussex)**
- ▶ I enjoy the social side – the talking to people here and meeting new people, meeting different clubs that come along. But the essence is really why do I do it? It's just, you know, something from the social side that you get as well, away from the nature of the work I do currently. **(John, 52, Volunteer, East Sussex)**

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Motivations Examples:

Giving Back to the Sport

- ▶ But they have always been part of my life and all the coaches have coached me for free so I've said that I'd go back and coach just to give something back to the county squad, because I wouldn't have been as good if it wasn't for them. **(Laura, 21, Volunteer, Cheshire East)**
- ▶ For me personally, when I used to volunteer back to a club I played for when I was younger; at the time I used to enjoy kind of giving back, so kind of like a self-gratification feeling. But on top of that as an individual, that looks good on your CV. It's a cliché but it does, really. **(Kayode, 21, Ex-Volunteer, London Borough of Lewisham)**

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Motivations Examples: Child Involvement

- ▶ My main motivation was my kids, I used to take him and I was just stood at the sidelines and in the winter months if you're freezing and they said they wanted someone to help out so I volunteered and it just went from there really. **(Geoff, 41, Volunteer, East Riding of Yorkshire)**

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Motivations Examples: Career Aspirations

- ▶ I think a lot of the ones [opportunities] we're seeing now is the marketplace post-university, so the employment market. A lot of the graduate schemes are asking for volunteering. They clearly state that they want volunteering. And then I think a lot of the academic departments are becoming very good at pushing these graduate attributes and it's not just about having a degree anymore; it's about developing your employability skills, graduate attributes. **(Steve, 33, Manager/Recruiter, East Riding of Yorkshire)**

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Motivations Examples: Career Aspirations

- ▶ There's people who volunteer because they have to because it's either part of a course or a requirement of a qualification. **(Chris, 29, Manager/Recruiter, East Riding of Yorkshire)**
- ▶ From a young age I've always liked coaching and sports and I always wanted to get into PE teaching. And I started doing coaching badges and I was looking for jobs and then I realised that obviously they're looking for people with more experience. So the only way to get this experience maybe from my way was to go on the volunteering route. **(Jade, 28, Ex-Volunteer, East Riding of Yorkshire)**

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Motivations Examples: Change in Motivations

- ▶ Elliot has seen what he considers to be 'a significant change in the reasons for volunteering'. 'Whereas people used to 'do it because of the goodness of their hearts', over recent years volunteerism has, for Elliot, started to become more of a social requirement.

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Motivations Examples: Change in Motivations

- ▶ Broadly speaking he considers there to be two types of volunteers: those volunteers that 'want to give back – to do something for the community' and individuals that 'do it because they want to see something tangible at the end of it' as 'they want to get into employment'.

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Qualitative examination of sports volunteering: Barriers

- ▶ The barriers to volunteering in sport uncovered in this report were:
 - ▶ Time and Motivation
 - ▶ Financial constraints
 - ▶ Responsibility
 - ▶ Awareness
 - ▶ Lack of confidence and knowledge
 - ▶ Administration and bureaucracy
 - ▶ Professionalisation

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Barriers Examples: Time and Financial

- ▶ Time takes up everything with volunteering, I think. Like, if you haven't got the time or the passion about the sport, then you're not going to be able to volunteer. (**Geoff, 41, Volunteer, East Riding of Yorkshire**)
- ▶ Being paid is obviously important there but even things like expenses, getting to this opportunity may cost money and the students might not be able to commit financially to that and they may have jobs or childcare issues or other things that they are looking into as well. (**Phil, 36, Recruiter, Cheshire East**)

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Barriers Examples: Responsibility

- ▶ I think it is almost a fear of too much responsibility. You know, having been a chair of a club myself it's a lot of responsibility and it is a lot of work and I think people see how much work goes on and they are almost fearful. (**Alain, 21, Volunteer, Cheshire East**)
- ▶ Even though you're a volunteer, the moment that you volunteer to do a role, you're taking on responsibility. Whether that's just, you know, mowing the grass or carrying equipment, you're still taking on responsibility and I don't think people want to take that responsibility. People feel that once you actually put yourself forward that you've kind of got some responsibility and I think that kind of worries people. (**Ben, 24, Volunteer, Staffordshire**)

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Barriers Examples: Professionalisation

- ▶ The way things run now, the world has changed in the last 15 to 20 years, the sport by nature and the English public demand sport to be more professional. Everybody's looking at the same pot. At the same time people aren't really looking to fund and there's an awful lot of red tape in the way, so not necessarily red tape, but you've got to jump through an awful lot hoops to get involved with that now. (**Hamish, 40, Recruiter/Volunteer, East Sussex**)

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Qualitative examination of sports volunteering: Drop Out

- ▶ Factors that led to (or would lead to) dropping out from volunteering in sport included:
 - ▶ Personal circumstances
 - ▶ Organisational circumstances
 - ▶ Lack of enjoyment
 - ▶ Child dropout
 - ▶ Financial issues
 - ▶ Qualifications
 - ▶ Micro-political influences

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Drop Out Examples: Qualifications

- ▶ And I don't think it's going to get any easier, I think it's going to get harder and the cost of qualifications now is just going to be another barrier that's put in place. People won't want to get involved and volunteer for a club if they're forking out £320 for a level two qualification, 'how can you justify it?' (**Samantha, 27, Volunteer, Cheshire East**)

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Drop Out Example: Lack of Enjoyment

- ▶ People becoming a bit disillusioned with people keep putting pressure on them. I think after time you just, you get a bit tired of people taking and taking and not really giving. (**Alex, 30, Recruiter/Coordinator, Cheshire East**)

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Drop Out Example: Politics

- ▶ The environment that I worked in politically was quite a difficult environment, you always felt like there were people looking over your shoulder, commenting on and criticising what you did, looking down their nose at you, you know. (**Phil, 41, Ex-Volunteer, East Riding of Yorkshire**)

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Further Understanding Volunteering: A Future Research Agenda

- ▶ The volume and quality of the qualitative research that has considered volunteering as an activity are relatively limited.
- ▶ To help address such a shortfall we suggest the following:
- ▶ Further in-depth qualitative research is required to better understand the complex 'everyday realities' of people involved in volunteering in sport.

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Further Understanding Volunteering: A Future Research Agenda

- ▶ This would require longitudinal observational and interview-based research to understand the personal experiences and the interactions of key stakeholders, and the relationship between clubs, regions and national infrastructures involved in sport volunteering.

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▶ Thank you for your time!

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