

GOODFORM

RESEARCHING MAJOR EVENT VOLUNTEERING

Final report

September 2019





GOODFORM

Always collaborating...

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Project Aims

To explore the appetite and feasibility for major sport event volunteers (and unsuccessful event applicants) to successfully transition from the event to community-level opportunities

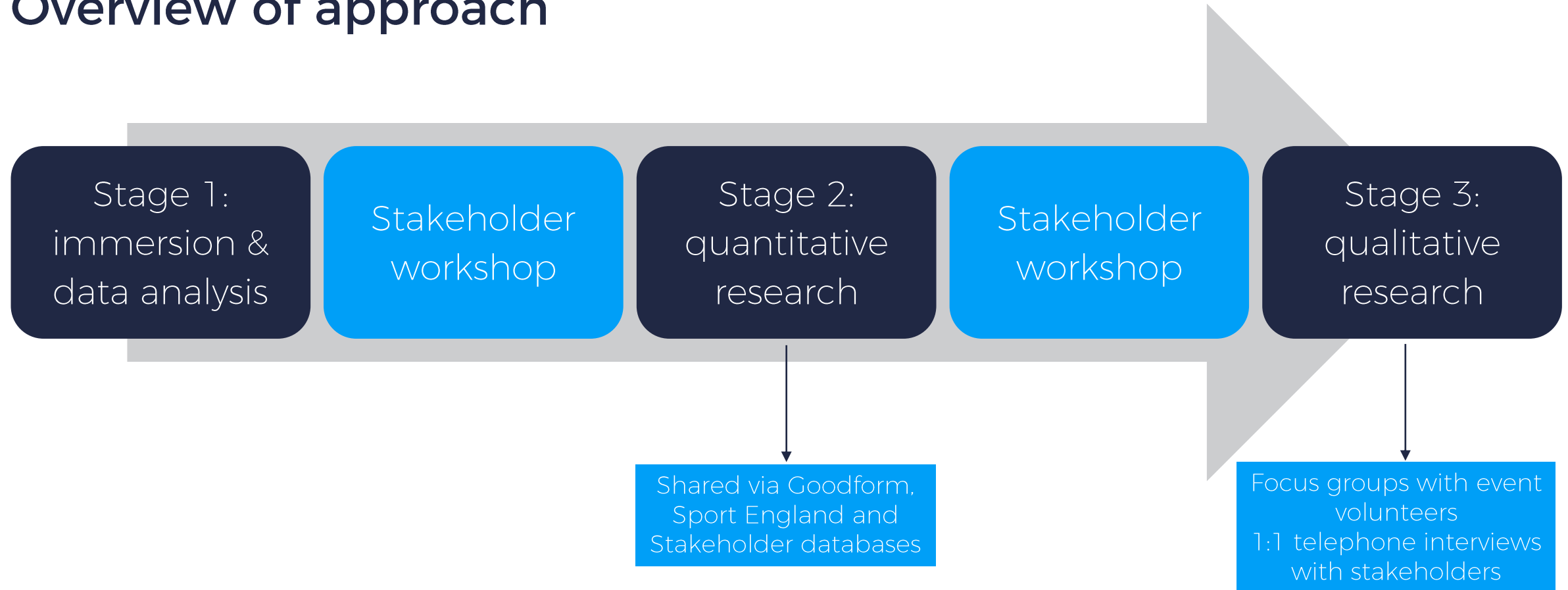
Culminating in a report & best practice recommendations on how to maximise volunteer retention / pathways into community sport

We know that:

- There is a strong appetite to volunteer at major sports events, which are often heavily oversubscribed.
- Major events offer a fantastic opportunity to showcase sports volunteering & have the potential to engage new audiences
- Insight from major event hosts indicate that the quality of experience for volunteers is generally good, with high satisfaction with the experience
- Enthusiasm to do more volunteering after an event is often high

But there have been few studies to understand whether initial enthusiasm translates into action, and if not, why not

Overview of approach



A group of approximately 15 volunteers, mostly young adults, are posing for a photo on a grassy area. They are wearing matching red and white jackets with dark trousers. In the center of the group is a large, green, spiky-haired mascot character. The background features a large, ornate stone building with many windows. The image is partially covered by a dark blue diagonal overlay on the left side, which contains the text.

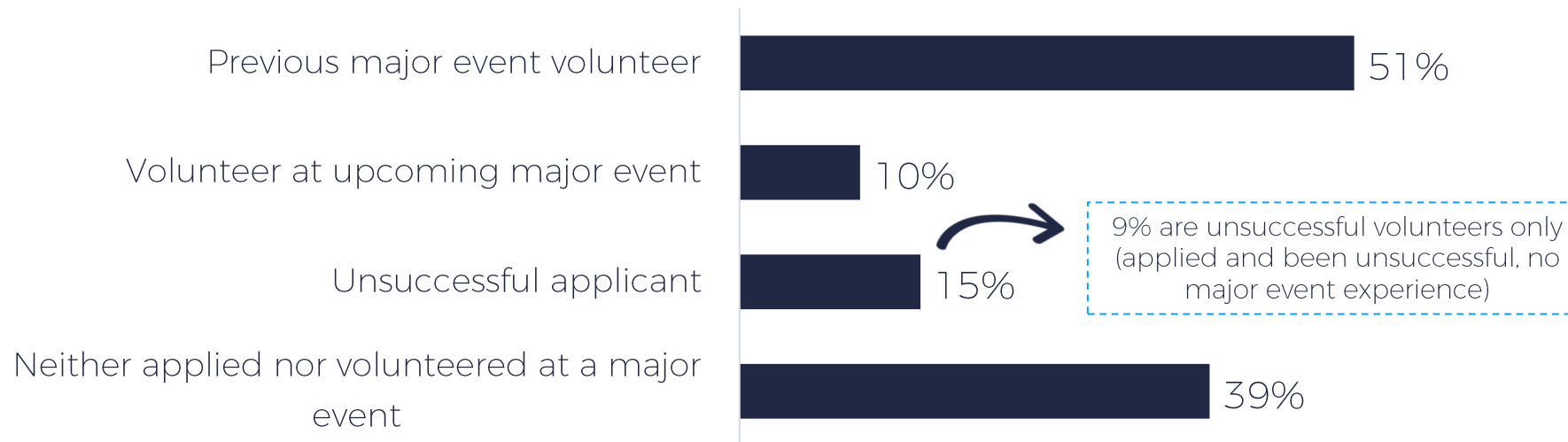
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UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIENCE:

WHAT DOES A MAJOR EVENT
VOLUNTEER LOOK LIKE?
- DEMOGRAPHICS & EXPERIENCE

Out of 3470 survey respondents, just over half previously volunteered at a major sporting event:

Current major events volunteering status:



The majority (86%) of those who were volunteering in an upcoming event (at the time of the survey) had already volunteered in a previous major event

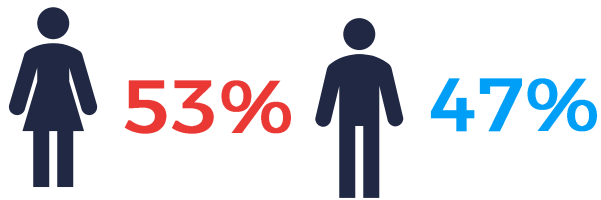
Throughout the report, the focus is on the previous major event volunteers unless otherwise stated

What are the demographics of major event volunteers?

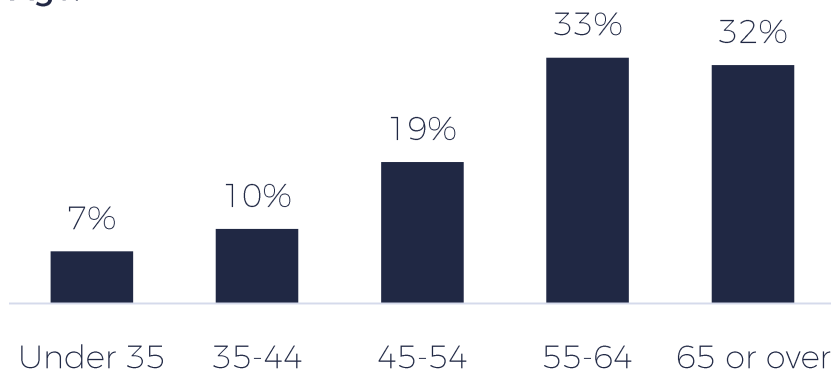
Demographics from 1757 survey respondents who have volunteered at major events

See appendix for demographic breakdown of all survey respondents

Gender:



Age:



UK residents

89% are White or White British

91% do not consider themselves to have a disability

Employment status:

38% working full time



36% retired



12% working part time

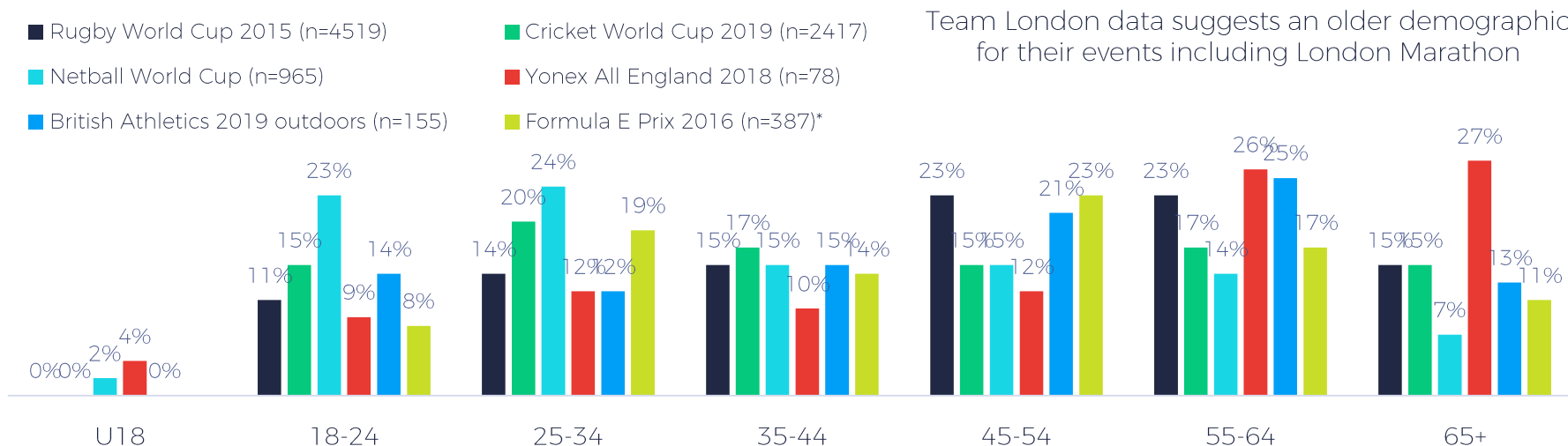


8% semi-retired



What are the demographics of major event volunteers?

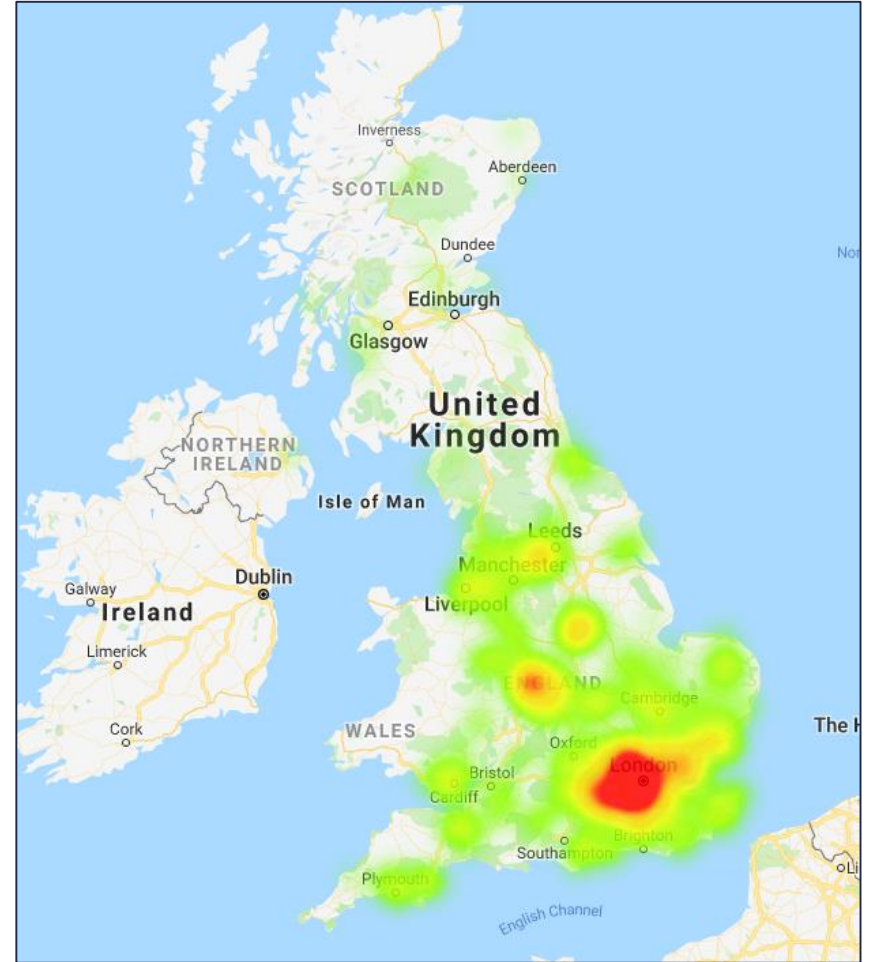
The above demographics may be reflective not purely of the major event volunteer as a whole, but of those whom we were able to reach with the survey, and who were willing to complete the survey. Due to very disparate data sets, many of which no longer exist due to GDPR, it is difficult to pull together an overall picture of major event volunteers in the UK. Additionally, the lack of demographic information collected by some organisations is also a barrier. In the first phase of the project, we explored the basic demographics in the volunteer data sets for some major events. The breakdown of age is shown below. NB varying base sizes for each event. It is a known trend within market research that the older demographic are more likely to participate in research, so we would expect some skew in the sample towards this group.



The gender balance varied across events (CWC2019: 75% male; RWC2016: 64% male; British Athletics 35% male) suggesting that the overall gender split in our survey sample is representative

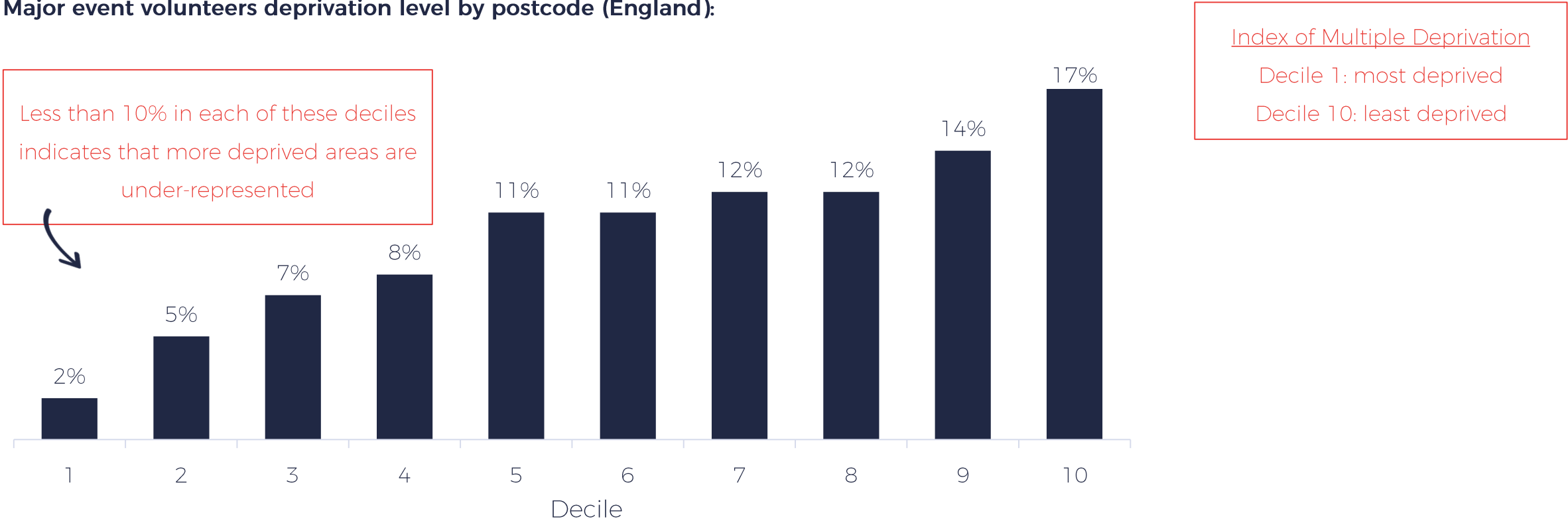
There is a high concentration of major event volunteers living in London, followed by Birmingham & Manchester areas

Major event volunteers:



Lower socio-economic groups are under-represented based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation

Major event volunteers deprivation level by postcode (England):



Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – 7 metrics (income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing & services; living environment)
Please enter your postcode. n=1501 previous major event volunteers living in England with a valid postcode

Major events attract a proportion of volunteers who are not fans of that particular sport



70%

of those who volunteered at Rugby World Cup 2015 are Rugby Union fans

35% were current or previous Rugby Union participants



70%

of those who volunteered at ICC Champions Trophy 2017 are cricket fans

42% were current or previous cricket participants



66%

of those who volunteered at IAAF World Athletics Championships 2017 are athletics fans

28% were current or previous athletics participants



47%

of those who volunteered at Rugby League World Cup 2013 are Rugby League fans

14% were Rugby League coaches

"I'm not sporty at all. I mean I don't participate in any sport. But this is the way I get involved in sport, you know."
Focus group participant; London

"I don't know much about water polo and diving and I wanted to find out the behind the scenes and the intricacies ... I'd never thought about it before!"
Focus group participant; London

Over half have volunteered at more than one event



69%



20%



**RUGBY
WORLD CUP
2015**

14%



12%



10%



7%

51%

Volunteered at more than 1 major event (including Olympics)

10% have volunteered at two or more events EXCLUDING the Olympics

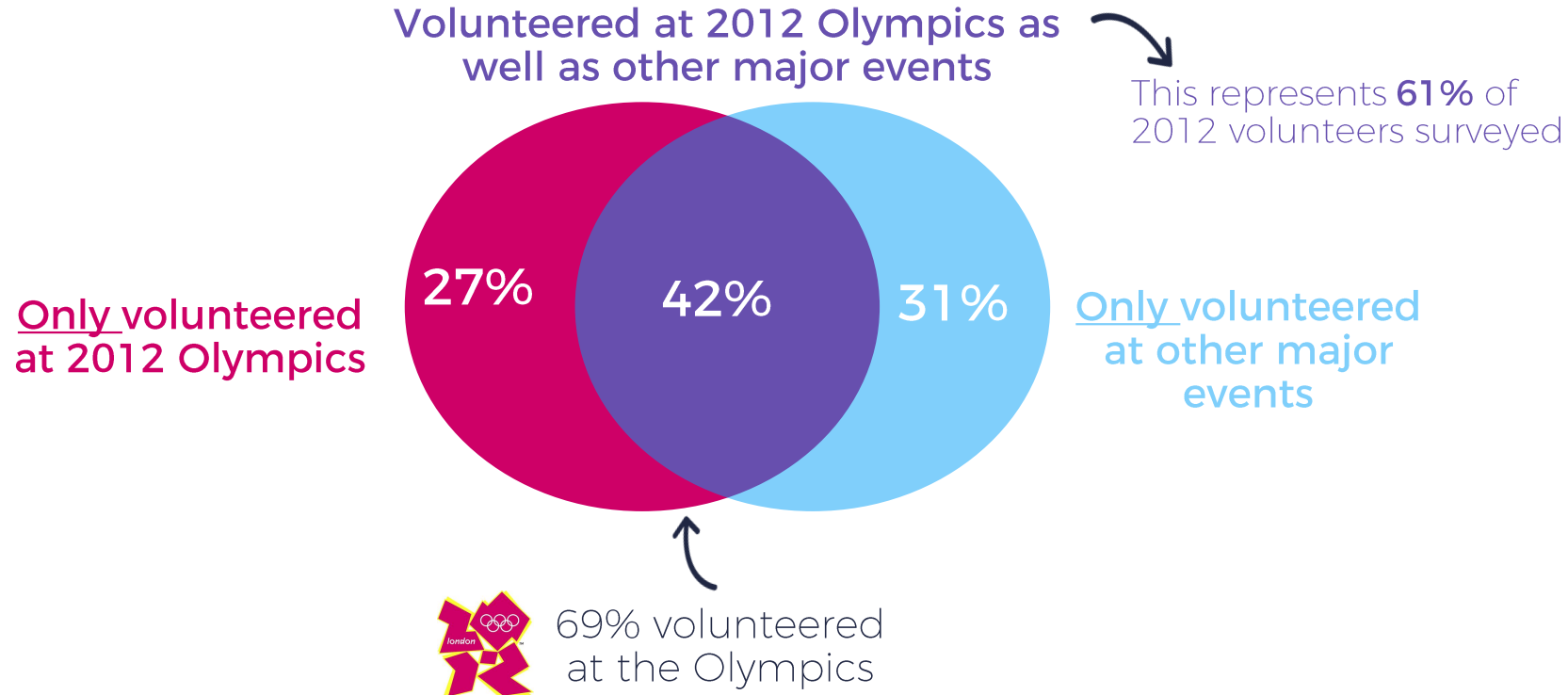
Average number of events volunteered at:

2.03

Other events include:

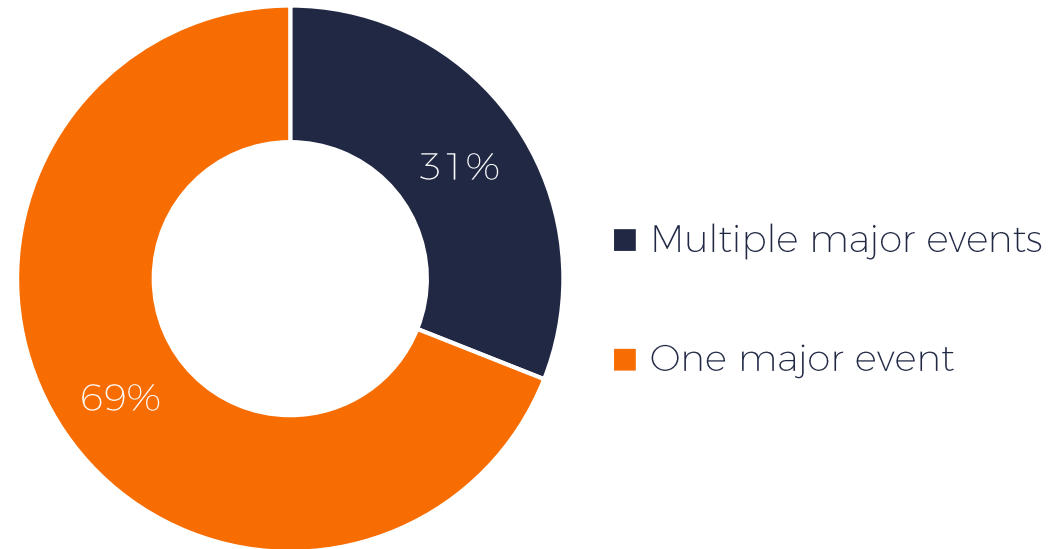
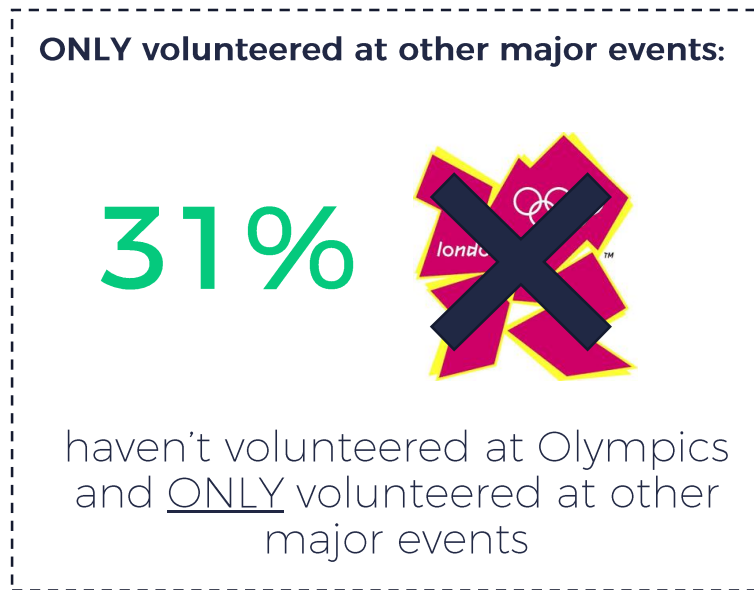
- Ride London (7%)
- ICC Champions Trophy 2017 (6%)
- Hockey Women's World Cup 2018 (6%)
- Cycling event e.g. Tour de France (5%)
- Other Athletics events (5%)

27% of major events volunteers surveyed only volunteered at the Olympics – but the majority of Olympic volunteers have gone on to volunteer at other events



Which of these major events have you previously volunteered at? n=1757 previous major events volunteers

More than 2 in 3 of those who didn't volunteer at the Olympics have volunteered at only one major event



A group of volunteers, mostly women, are wearing blue long-sleeved shirts and white headbands. They are outdoors at what appears to be a large event or festival, with a modern building in the background. Some volunteers are holding a large white sign that is partially visible. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is split diagonally, with the top-left portion being a dark blue overlay containing text.

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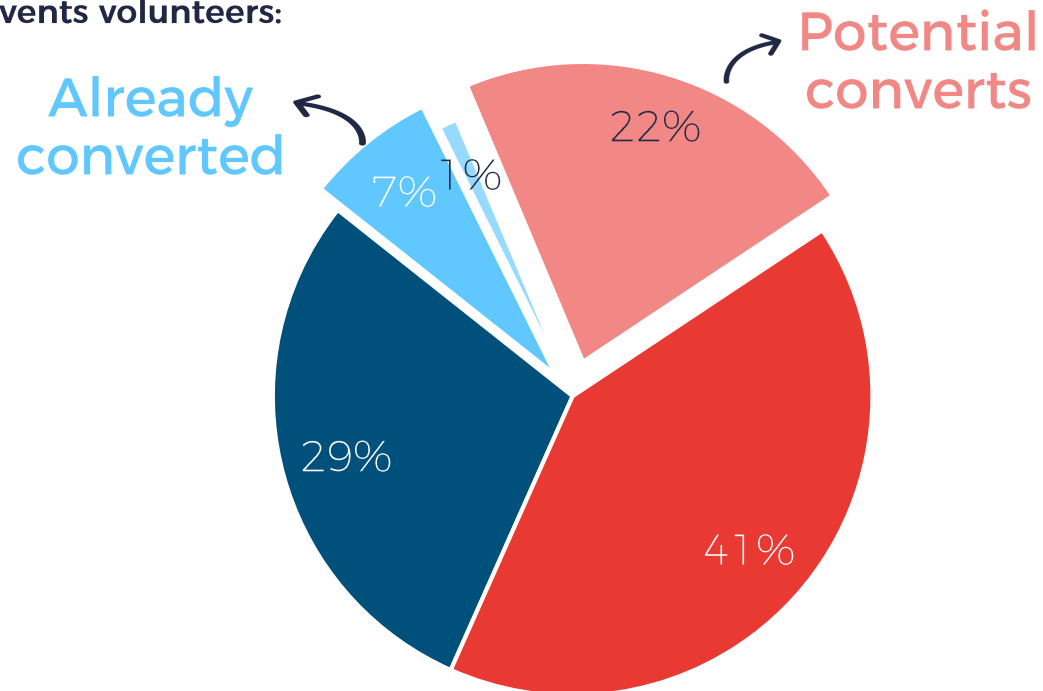
ASSESSING THE OPPORTUNITY:

CAN WE CONVERT MAJOR
EVENT VOLUNTEERS TO
GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERING?

22% of major event volunteers who do not currently volunteer at grassroots level would consider doing so

Grassroots sport volunteering amongst major events volunteers:

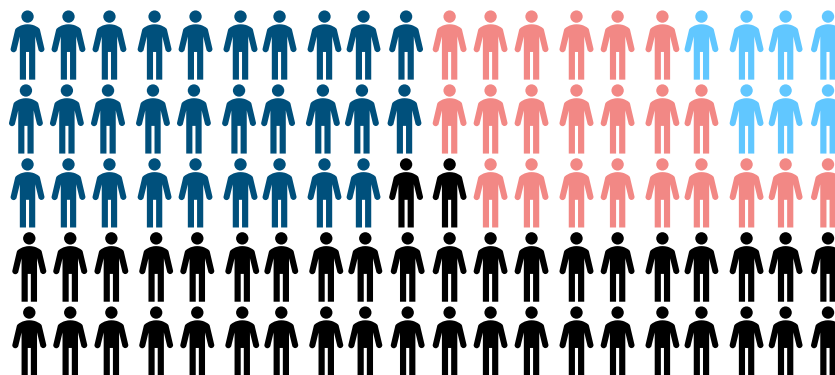
- I currently volunteer - started before major event
- I currently volunteer - started after major event
- I currently volunteer - unsure when I started
- Do not volunteer and would consider
- Do not volunteer and do not wish to



Which of the following best applies to you currently? Is the volunteering that you [do/did/are considering] in sport, or another area? n=1757 previous major event volunteers, n=389 who would consider volunteering

For a future major event, you might expect that for every 100 volunteers...

29 will be existing grassroots volunteers



7 will go on to become grassroots volunteers

22 will consider volunteering in grassroots sport but not go on to do so

So the size of the opportunity centres around maximising conversions amongst this group

Only 9% of the potential pool are currently converting, but a further 35% would consider it

Grassroots sport volunteering amongst major events volunteers:



Which of the following best applies to you currently? Is the volunteering that you [do/did/are considering] in sport, or another area? n=1757 previous major event volunteers

In short – there is currently limited transition from major events to grassroots volunteering

KEY STAT

70%

of major event volunteers did not volunteer in grassroots sport at the time they first volunteered at a major event

And of these,

9%

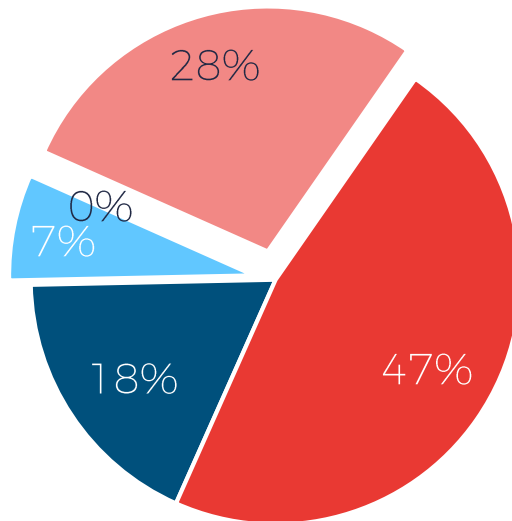
went on to volunteer in grassroots following their major event experience

This highlights that major events are already playing a role in attracting volunteers to grassroots sport – but that they could contribute more

When we exclude Olympic volunteers, we see a greater pre-existing level of involvement in grassroots sport – but a similar level of consideration amongst those not involved

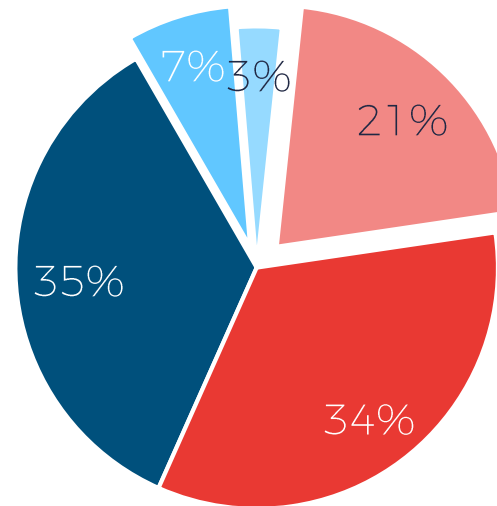
- I currently volunteer - started before major event
- I currently volunteer - started after major event
- I currently volunteer - unsure when I started
- Do not volunteer and would consider
- Do not volunteer and do not wish to

2012 Olympics ONLY



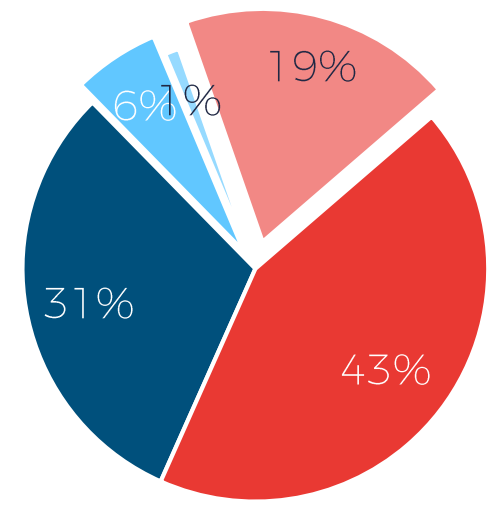
38%
of those who don't
volunteer within grassroots
sport would consider it

Other events only



39%
of those who don't
volunteer within grassroots
sport would consider it

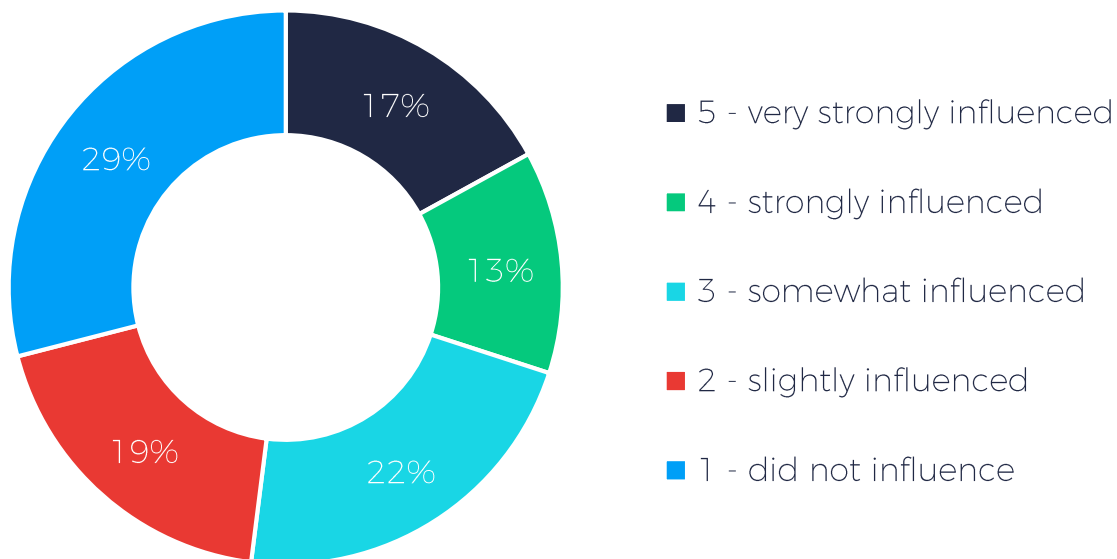
Olympics and other events



30%
of those who don't volunteer within
grassroots sport would consider it

Nearly 70% who began volunteering in grassroots after volunteering at a major event said that the major event had some influence on their decision

Extent to which the major event volunteering influenced the decision to get involved in grassroots sport:



Drivers to get involved in grassroots sport – after volunteering at major event:

71%

To support the sport
(23% selected as the main reason)

54%

I have enjoyed previous volunteering
(19% selected as the main reason)

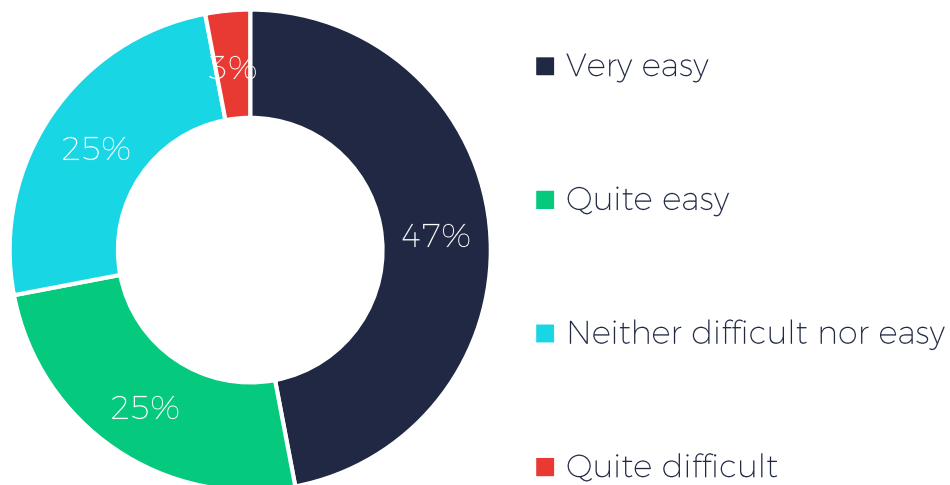
40%

Wanting to improve things / help people
(10% selected as the main reason)

To what extent did your experience volunteering at [major event] influence your decision to give more of your time to community or grassroots sport? n=114 who made the transition
Which of the following, if any, encouraged you to consider volunteering in grassroots sport? / And which of the reasons you selected was the biggest driver in encouraging you to give more of your time to community or grassroots sport? n=114 filtered on those who made the transition

...with 72% of those who made the transition finding it easy

How easy was the transition:



Reasons for the transition to be easy one:



But this is likely a self-fulfilling prophecy: those who do not find it easy are unlikely to successfully transition

How easy did you find it to transition from being a volunteer at a major event into volunteering in grassroots sport? n=114 who began volunteering at grassroots after volunteering at a major event. Which of the following, if any, meant that the transition from major event volunteering to grassroots volunteering was an easy one? n=82 who found the transition easy

...and many consider getting involved in grassroots sport after volunteering at a major event, but do not go on to do so

KEY STAT

36%

of those who volunteered at a major event but didn't go on to volunteer in grassroots sport stated that they had considered doing so

with a further 34% unsure whether they did or not

31%

of those volunteering at an upcoming event who do not currently volunteer in grassroots sport say that they will consider doing so afterwards – with a 36% currently unsure

This level of consideration highlights that there's appetite for grassroots volunteering amongst this group – so what are the barriers to actually getting involved, and how can they be overcome?

Having volunteered at [major event], did you/will you consider volunteering in grassroots sport? n=667 previous major events volunteers, n=116 volunteers at upcoming major event

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EXPANDING THE POOL:

IS THERE ALSO APPETITE
AMONGST UNSUCCESSFUL
VOLUNTEERS?



Identifying a missed opportunity: unsuccessful volunteers

15%

of those surveyed reported being unsuccessful in at least one application to volunteer at a major event

See appendix for full breakdown of events

DISAPPOINTMENT

is the primary emotion upon receiving news of an unsuccessful application

1 in 5

of these report that they were never even contacted about their application



Notification by email is the most common way to hear about unsuccessful applications

"I went up to Glasgow, paid to go up there, had the interview and never heard another thing."
Focus group participant; Leamington

"It's the fact that you've sent something into a black hole and you never hear again."
Focus group participant; London

However, stakeholders report that all unsuccessful volunteer applicants are notified, usually via email

These unsuccessful applicants are not currently signposted anywhere – but have not been put off getting involved by being unsuccessful

Information received when unsuccessful:



"It is just a generic letter, isn't it, that is sent out."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

"I don't know what the reason was for them saying you're not suitable. Never get that feedback."

Focus group participant; London

17%

of unsuccessful applicants said that it made them more likely to consider volunteering in grassroots sport – and for a further 69%, it had no effect

See appendix for full breakdown

Therefore unsuccessful volunteers should also be considered as a potential group to encourage towards grassroots volunteering

Which of the following, if any, did you receive as part of informing you that your application was unsuccessful? n=417 unsuccessful applicants who were contacted



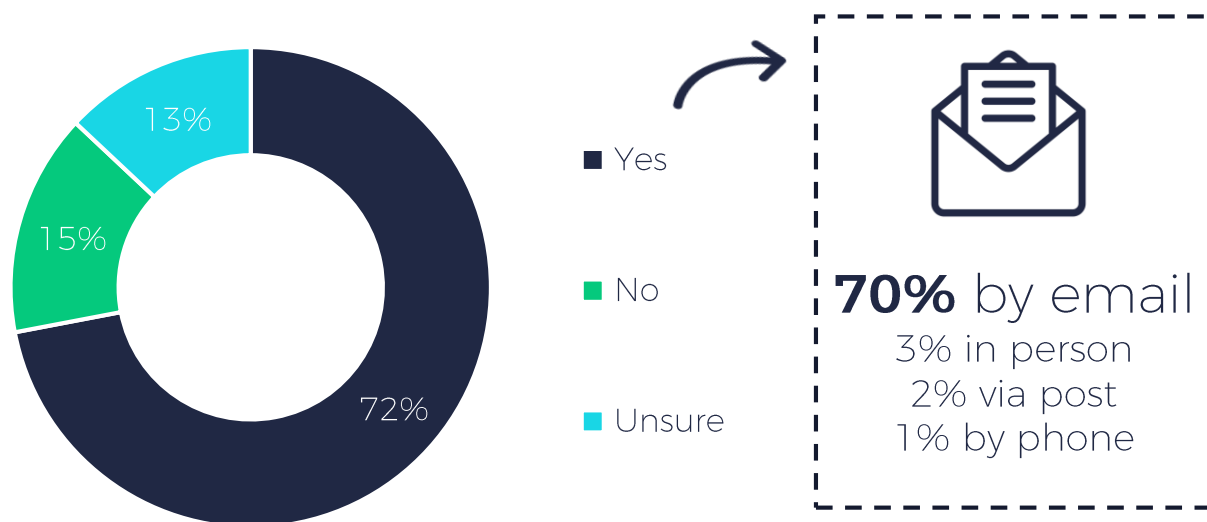
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CAPITALISING ON THE OPPORTUNITY:

HOW DO WE BUILD PATHWAYS BETWEEN MAJOR EVENT & GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERING?

Currently, some information is being shared to encourage major event volunteers to become involved in grassroots sport

Receipt of information about ongoing volunteering opportunities:



Most focus group participants recall receiving info about further opportunities – signposting towards other major events (local as well as national), but very few received any information about involvement at grassroots level.

"Be inspired tends to be volunteering at national level."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

*"In general anyone that helped with the Commonwealth Games got all the information for years from MEV."**

Focus group participant;
Manchester

"I was never once asked in that process, did I want to volunteer at any local clubs?"

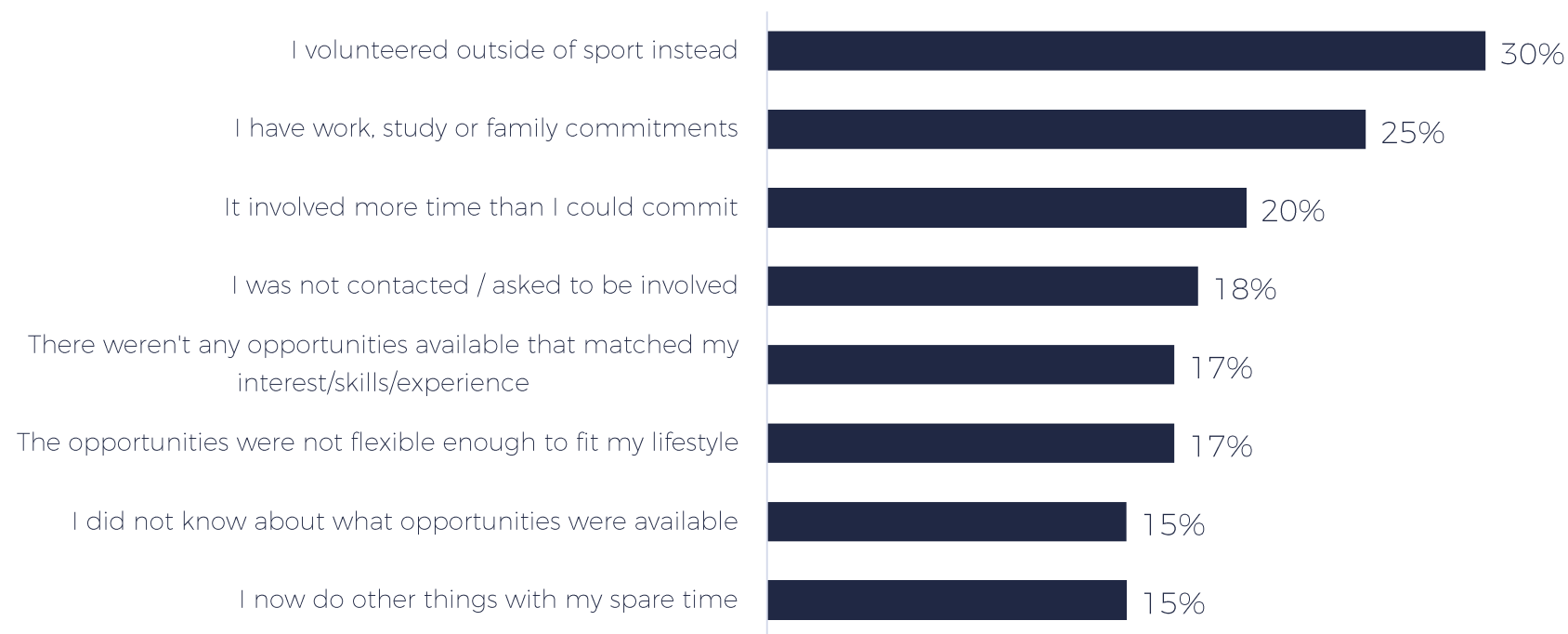
Focus group participant; Leamington

After volunteering at [major event], did you receive information about ongoing volunteering opportunities within the sport? n=1757 major events volunteers

*Manchester Event Volunteers

A range of barriers prevented this cohort from making the transition – with opting to volunteer outside of sport common

Reasons that prevented those who were considering getting involved in grassroots volunteering:



"I do some volunteering at home for like dog charities and local hospices and things like that. So my time is taken up quite a lot really."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

"I wouldn't mind doing them but it's finding the time being in full-time work to be able to do them."

Focus group participant; London

Having considered volunteering in sport on a more regular basis, what prevented you from doing so? n=239 previous major events volunteers who considered volunteering in grassroots sport

Similar barriers to grassroots volunteering are clear amongst those who have not previously considered it

Reasons preventing getting involved in grassroots volunteering:



KEY STAT

Only

11%

of the cohort who didn't even consider getting involved in grassroots sport stated that they are only interested in volunteering at major events – again highlighting the opportunity

Which of these reasons, if any, currently prevent you from volunteering in grassroots sport? n=2098 not currently volunteering and not considering volunteering in grassroots sport

NOTE: Showing top 6 most selected

However, when we look at the motivations for volunteering in each, there is some clear overlap

Major events

1. To feel part of something (2)
2. To feel good/get satisfaction from being able to help (3)
3. For an exciting experience (8)
4. For a once in a lifetime experience (1)
5. I love sport generally (5)
6. To give something back to that sport (4)
7. I love that particular sport (6)
8. To meet people / make new friends (11)

Grassroots

1. To support the sport (1)
2. Wanting to improve things/help people (2)
3. I have enjoyed previous volunteering (3)
4. Having the spare time to do it (4)
5. For the chance to use existing skills (9)
6. Someone asked me to give help (8)
7. I felt there was need in my community (7)
8. To meet people / make new friends (11)

Tapping into these overlapping motivations may encourage more major event volunteers to get involved at grassroots

(xx) in brackets indicates single most important factor

What were the main reasons you chose to apply to volunteer at a major event? And which was the single most important reason? n=2102 previous, future and unsuccessful major events volunteers
Which of the following, if any, encouraged you to consider volunteering in grassroots sport? And which was the biggest driver? n=1,133 current grassroots sport volunteers

But motivations in grassroots sport also tend to lean more towards a love of the sport, wanting to give something back and to keep the sport running

Major events

"There is something really satisfying and fulfilling about making sure that your team are all right and they are all happy and that they are helping people and you can come in and help people and I just found that really satisfying."

[Federation Cup]

Focus group participant; London

"I thought you know what that's a once in a lifetime thing I can do."

[2012 Olympics]
Focus group participant; London

"You kind of thought it was an opportunity that it was too good to miss. I like being either close to or inside the ropes at these events you know. It's a nice feeling. You feel as though you're a bit privileged."

[Tour de France]

Focus group participant; Manchester

Grassroots

"I mean I love cheering people on as well so I like both; I like participating and I also like cheering people on and marshalling."

[Park Run]

Focus group participant; London

"Because of having a lot of extensive time off and it is nice to be around people and I like sport, you know, like watching sport even though I can't really take part in sport I do, you know, enjoy that. So I thought, well why not give this a go."

[grassroots sport]

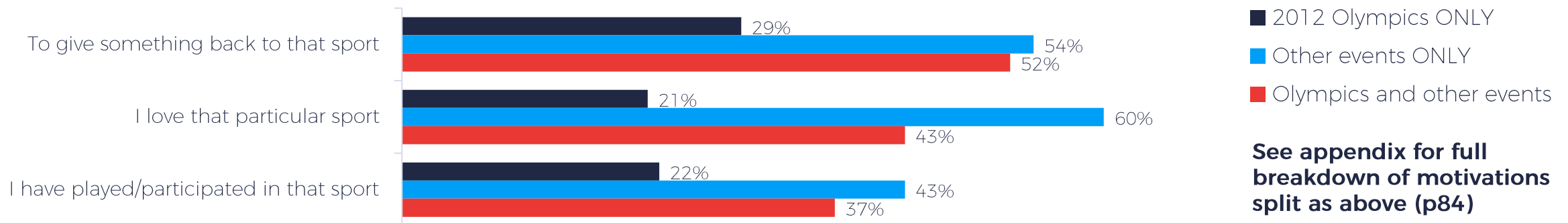
Focus group participant; Leamington

"If you are a parent whose child is participating in the sport that is why you volunteer and then when their child moves on you are doing something for you, that you enjoy and that is your volunteering experience for your own personal benefit."

[grassroots sport]
Focus group participant; Leamington

We see these factors featuring more prominently for major event volunteering if we exclude the 'mega event' of 2012

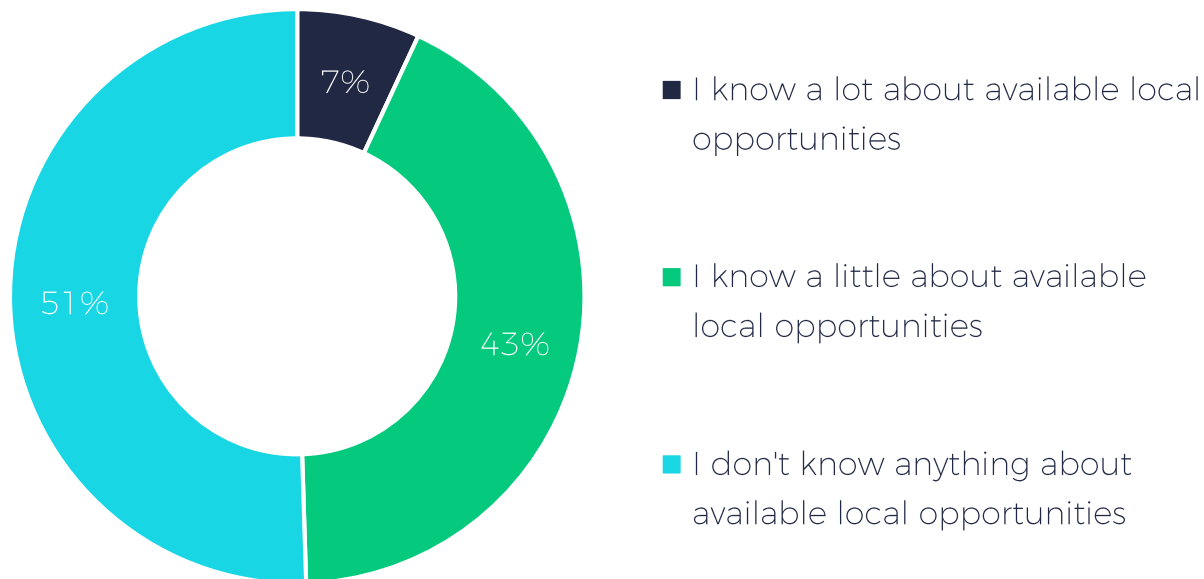
Motivations to volunteer at major events:



This indicates that those volunteering outside of London 2012 in major events are a more likely target audience for conversion to grassroots volunteering, based on a more similar profile of motivating factors between major event volunteering and grassroots.

There is a lack of awareness around available opportunities in grassroots sport

Knowledge of the opportunities available within grassroots sport locally:



"So, is there a shortage of volunteers at grassroots level, then?"
Focus group participant;
London

"But there is no way for someone like me to find out what's available in my area. I've got time available. I'd like to give something back to sport. What do I do?"
Focus group participant;
London

How would you describe your level of knowledge of the opportunities available within grassroots sport locally? n=2337
not currently volunteering in grassroots sport

Plugging this information gap would drive consideration

Ways to encourage considering volunteering in grassroots sport:



Which of the following, if any, would encourage you to consider volunteering in grassroots sport? n=2337 not currently volunteering in grassroots sport

Clearly definition of roles and time commitment involved is vital – and part of the appeal of major events!

"There are so many roles that, and I think sometimes the roles are not advertised, and only some people are aware that there are those roles."

Focus group participant; Leamington

"The kind of volunteer roles that you get at major events they're not the kind of volunteer roles that you get in clubs."

Focus group participant; Manchester

"One point I would like to make is I'm not always sure that local events are aware of the skill sets that volunteers can bring."

Focus group participant; London

"I certainly didn't know that one could volunteer for instance at the local Tennis Club; I didn't know you could volunteer. Was thinking, I would like to do something and get more involved but I didn't know that actually that was a route."

Focus group participant; London

"I certainly know the football club that I'm involved with there's a big barrier that people don't want to commit because they think they're going to have to commit a lot of time each week"

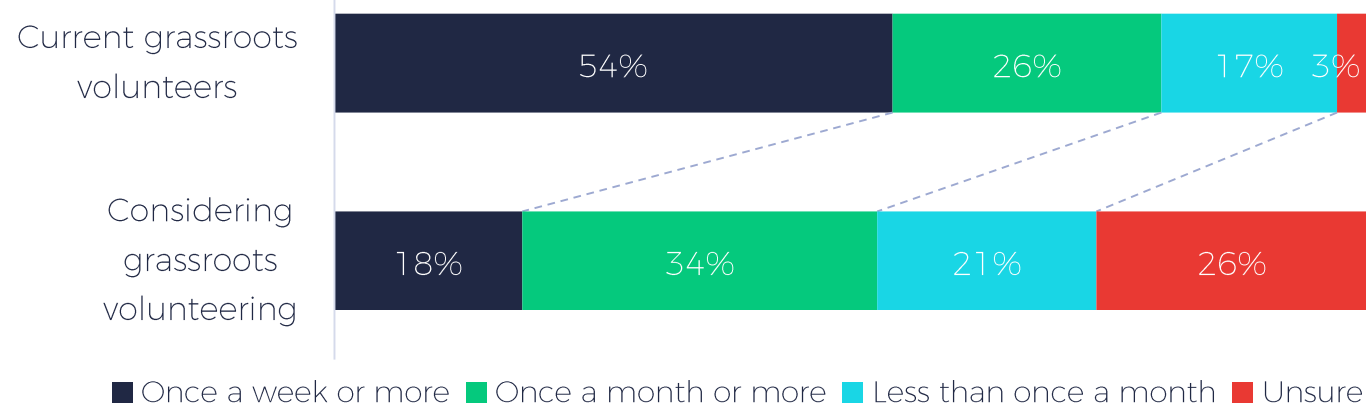
Focus group participant; London

"I always think volunteering at a grass roots level is you would have to be good at the sport to do coaching or stuff like that; that is what I would think. I don't think they necessarily want people to be standing there with cups of water."

Focus group participant; London

Those considering getting involved would like to volunteer less frequently compared to current grassroots volunteers

Frequency of grassroots sport volunteering:



of grassroots volunteers report having been involved for 6 or more years – consider how to avoid this longevity being a potential turn-off for major events volunteers, who enjoy the defined time period of a major event volunteering role

This highlights a need to reduce the workload associated with some roles, or for flexible approaches, in order to broaden the potential pool of volunteers and attract major event volunteers to grassroots

Directly linking potential volunteers with the organisation where the opportunity is would play the biggest role

Ways of communicating further volunteering opportunities in sport:



"At major sporting events you would give the volunteers an opportunity to sign up to a national website rather than the Team London one. And then you would find, Sport England would find vehicles locally to transmit this information and then they can get on with communicating to people locally."

Focus group participant; London

"Or here is a list of clubs across the country that are looking for volunteers. And for each of those clubs this is the name of the volunteer co-ordinator or this is the person in each club who's put themselves forward to be the point of contact for new volunteers."

Focus group participant; Manchester

"It could be local information that may have been given by local sports groups or something or it could be just an information leaflet saying where you can go from here to volunteer at a local level if you are interested. And they could give you some email addresses or some websites to go on."

Focus group participant; London

How would you want opportunities for further volunteering in sport to be communicated to you? n=2337 not currently volunteering in grassroots sport

...and may help overcome the potential barrier of individuals without a connection to a grassroots organisation not feeling welcome there as a volunteer

"It is really difficult to get people without that sort of link. It is hard enough just to get parents of kids who are already there and you would think would be easy for them to say I am coming along every week. But you can't even get those people so it is very difficult."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

"Unless you knew someone; you didn't necessarily have to know about the sport to be part of the sport but if you knew people that were involved in the sport and they say, why don't you come along one day or something."

Focus group participant; London



"Wouldn't dream of rocking up at any of my local sports clubs unless I was personally asked by somebody I knew already and was there and I was invited. I wouldn't dream of just rocking up. Even though that be inspired where they put on local clubs who want people. I don't know anybody there. I imagine it would be quite cliquey and everybody would know everybody and it is all the parents who know everybody. There is no way I am going to."

Focus group participant;
Leamington



GOODFORM

TAKING THE 360° APPROACH:

WHAT ARE THE VIEWS OF THOSE
WORKING WITHIN
STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS?

Stakeholder views: transitioning major event volunteers into grassroots volunteering

The majority believe that there is an opportunity to transition more major event volunteers into grassroots opportunity, but the caveat that **the opportunity is likely to lie with a specific minority of volunteers**. This is due to:

- The time specific nature of major event volunteering being one of its big appeals – grassroots volunteering being ongoing / less defined will therefore be a barrier for many
- Many major event volunteers being attracted to it because it's a big event, rather than because of a love of a particular sport – which is perceived to be a driver to become involved in the grassroots.

Stakeholder views: transitioning major event volunteers into grassroots volunteering

There is also a perception amongst most that they do look to signpost major event volunteers to other opportunities, but that this is something that could be done better. Barriers to doing so currently include:

Internal resource limitations

Silos between event organisers (focused on operational delivery of event) vs NGB staff (longer term focus)

GDPR / other concerns around data privacy & ongoing communications

Difficulty understanding to what extent any investment in supporting the transition would deliver ROI

In some cases, a lack of planning around volunteer legacy ahead of the event itself

For some smaller events, the majority of volunteers may already be recruited from within the grassroots

Stakeholder views: transitioning major event volunteers into grassroots volunteering

Many stakeholders also expressed concern around the ability of clubs / grassroots organisations to willingly accept or cater for new volunteers, despite being in need of extra volunteer support. These concerns include:

- Gatekeepers on committees & at local level being reluctant to relinquish responsibilities or elements of their role
- Scepticism around the motivations or utility of someone from outside the sport / club environment getting involved
- Lack of clarity on what support is required (and in some cases, a reluctance to use support materials, e.g. role definitions, provided by NGB)

Stakeholder views: transitioning major event volunteers into grassroots volunteering

With the above, and existing resources that are in place, the support that would be most welcomed from stakeholders centres specifically around processes and best practice for major event volunteers (rather than recruiting to grassroots more generally).

Volunteer Recruitment

- How the volunteer base can be expanded beyond those already involved in the sport, or on the volunteering 'circuit'
- Effective signposting of unsuccessful volunteers

Data & Systems

- Guidance on what permissions should be captured, and when
- What platforms can assist in presenting targeted opportunities to volunteers, to remove any manual or case-by-case approaches?

Engagement

- Examples of best-practice engagement to maximise uptake (e.g. in-event, post-event etc)
- Guidance on post-event communications & follow up; e.g. suggested survey wording to understand opportunity & identify individuals to target

Collaboration

- Given the importance of locality to encourage involvement, how can organisations (inc local councils) be more collaborative to ensure that ME volunteers become a potential resource for local opportunities across multiple sports?

GOODFORM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS



There is a clear opportunity to convert more major event volunteers into volunteering at grassroots sport

The majority of major event volunteers currently do not go on to volunteer in sport on a more regular basis at local level, despite a really positive experience. Whilst there is clearly a minority who are only interested in volunteering at major events, this is not the case across the board.

Evidence collected across all stages of this project suggests that with increased awareness of local / grassroots opportunities, and a tailoring of these opportunities to the needs of those who may be interested, there is certainly a cohort of major event volunteers who could be encouraged to get involved in the grassroots.

"We've reached a bit of a thing of treating major event volunteers very differently to grassroots volunteers – but I think that's a bit of a lazy option."

Stakeholder

3,470 SURVEY RESPONSES

MAJOR EVENT VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

- 51% Previous major event volunteer
- 10% Volunteer at upcoming major event
- 15% Unsuccessful applicant
- 39% Neither applied nor volunteered at a major event

TOP 3 MAJOR EVENTS PREVIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED AT



TOP REASONS FOR ENJOYMENT

- 1 Being a part of the action
- 2 Part of an important moment in sporting history
- 3 Getting on well with fellow volunteers
- 4 Felt good being able to help people

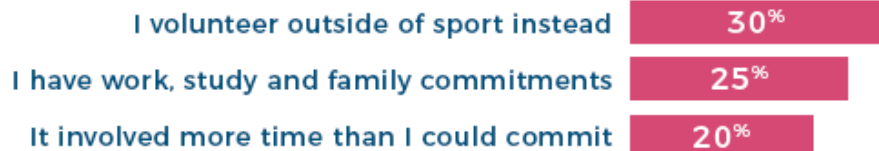
AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITIES IS KEY:

51% of those who don't volunteer in grassroots sport know nothing about available local opportunities

70% of major event volunteers were not involved in grassroots sport at the time of their major event

Only 9% of these went on to get involved in grassroots sport volunteering afterwards

BARRIERS TO TRANSITIONING FROM MAJOR EVENTS TO GRASSROOTS SPORT VOLUNTEERING



MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER

MAJOR EVENTS

- 1 To feel part of something
- 2 To feel good / get satisfaction from being able to help
- 3 For an exciting experience
- 4 For a once in a lifetime experience
- 5 I love sport generally

GRASS ROOTS

- 1 To support the sport
- 2 Wanting to improve things / help people
- 3 I have enjoyed previous volunteering
- 4 Having the spare time to do it
- 5 For the chance to use existing skills

ENCOURAGING THE TRANSITION



Clear information on roles available and time commitment involved



Being aware of the opportunities that are available



A range of options in the local area



Quick & clear communication from the grassroots organisation



Help in identifying opportunities that match my skillset

Recommendation: improve transparency and follow up for unsuccessful volunteers

At the moment, little attention is given to follow up with unsuccessful volunteers, and the potential to encourage them into other volunteering opportunities.

When volunteers are unsuccessful, notification via email is understandably the most efficient way to follow up. However, some unsuccessful volunteers report not being notified at all. This is at odds with feedback from those working for major events, NGBs etc, who state that unsuccessful volunteers are always notified. Have they missed an email?

- Can organisations send a second email to those who do not open the first, to ensure that a higher proportion of potential volunteers are aware that their application has been acknowledged?

Some unsuccessful volunteers reported being asked to apply again in the future, but organisations should consider signposting towards grassroots volunteering opportunities, as well as future major events.

This is particularly important given that the majority report that being unsuccessful has in no way put them off volunteering in sport (grassroots or major events) in the future.

"I don't know what the reason was for them saying you're not suitable. Never get that feedback."
Focus group participant;
London

"You just think, if they are over subscribed they must have to have some criteria. I mean there are always rumours that go around that they want you to say a specific word."
Focus group
participant; London

Recommendation: create time-specific, finite opportunities for local volunteering

One of the big appeals of major event volunteering is that it is the time commitment is clearly defined, and it's for a finite period. In contrast, major event volunteers often view grassroots sport as something that they need to be able to commit to twice a week, on an ongoing basis, and that may spread into a larger role than they first anticipated.

Consider using smaller, local events as a 'transition' to the grassroots, for example a one-off schools event that requires extra pairs of hands, or opportunities such as Parkrun. For someone without a personal connection to any particular sports club or even particular sport, these may well prove to be a springboard to further involvement.

Ahead of the conclusion of a major event, organisations should be encouraged to reach out to local sporting organisations to understand what small scale events will be held in the upcoming weeks and months, and distribute targeted information about how to get involved in these (see successful LTA example on the right).

"To think that someone's going to go from a major event straight to a committee role – it's too much of an ask. But domestic or local events would be of more interest to this group – major events to local events seems less of a leap."

Stakeholder

EXAMPLE

The LTA recently recruited a number of volunteers for a grassroots/community event at Queens at short notice, by going out to those who had volunteered at a major event earlier in the summer. The uptake was positive with many expressing interest in being invited to volunteer at small, local events more often.

Recommendation: clearly defining volunteer roles is key

Those working for NGBs repeatedly reported that often clubs and organisations know that they need volunteers, but they struggle to identify what they actually require volunteers to do. Many already provide clubs with role descriptions, etc that they can use, but it's unclear how widely they are employed.

By considering what available roles are best suited to the 'major event volunteer', and devising short and simple explanations of these roles, that could be shared with major event volunteers after the event, there would be an opportunity to highlight the variety of roles available, and challenge a perception held by some that grassroots volunteering is all about coaching or refereeing/umpiring.

There is clearly a trend in grassroots sport for a small minority to do the majority of the leg work – with many taking on several roles. Encouraging organisations to split roles into more manageable chunks would support in the recruitment of more volunteers.

"We've written role descriptions and shared them with clubs and counties – but lots wouldn't, and don't, use them."

Stakeholder

"I love being in the kitchen and I could cook food for them; I would really enjoy that and I love baking so I bring cakes in for breaks or whatever. But if I was able to do that I would get as much out of doing that as standing on a touch line."

Focus group participant; London

Recommendation: raise awareness of the shortage of grassroots volunteers amongst major events volunteers, and where opportunities can be found

Many focus group participants, who were often actively involved in local communities and were volunteers in capacities other than at major events, were surprised to learn that there was a shortage of volunteers in grassroots sport.

There was also a low level of knowledge of platforms that were already out there to find opportunities, e.g. many not being aware of Team London (if they weren't already a part of it!); low awareness of doit.org, etc. Stakeholders also reported anecdotal evidence of grassroots clubs etc having limited success when advertising for volunteers on doit.org previously, with one possible reason for this being a lack of the critical volume of site visitors required to effectively signpost people towards positions.

In light of this, could Sport England and the SRA work more closely with major event organisers and NGBs to recommend doit.org or a similar platform, as something that they should a) encourage major event volunteers to look at and b) encourage grassroots organisations to advertise on, with the timing to coincide with the end of an event when enthusiasm is high? It is also worth considering ways that event organisers could push the message that grassroots sport needs help too, at the end of an event, to ensure the shortage is clearly communicated.

"it could be local information that may have been given by local sports groups or something or it could be just an information leaflet saying where you can go from here to volunteer at a local level if you are interested. And they could give you some email addresses or some websites to go on.."

Focus group participant; London

Recommendation: ensure that volunteer strategy and recruitment process has ongoing opportunity in mind

Whilst the above approach of signposting people to opportunities is a cost-effective, easily implemented methodology to drive some increased awareness, the evidence suggests that presenting people with tailored opportunities directly would have more cut-through. There are therefore two key considerations for organising bodies when recruiting volunteers:

- The 'legacy' of volunteer data should be considered from the offset. With volunteers having a preference for direct contact from the organisation where the opportunity is, or at least from the event organiser, ensure that appropriate data permissions are collected at the start of the recruitment process for event volunteers to ensure GDPR compliance for future communications.
- NGBs should ensure a joined up approach internally between their event teams and their volunteer/ club teams to support the transition opportunity. This is particularly pertinent for large-scale events (e.g. Cricket World Cup; Rugby World Cup) where separate organising committees are appointed and the risk of a siloed approach therefore increases.

The following slide suggests ways in which specific opportunities could be tailored to individual preferences in this way.

Recommendation: understand preferences and signpost appropriately

Whilst some signposting currently happens, there is a lack of targeting with regards to what is shared with whom. Some reported previously receiving large amounts of information via channels such as BeInspired, but finding that none of it was relevant to them in terms of location, skill set etc – which leads to disengagement.

Post-event surveys for volunteers tend to be sent out as standard, but the focus is largely on operational elements of the volunteer experience – feedback on training, refreshments, the roles themselves, volunteer leaders, etc. Sport England should consider developing a suite of survey questions around interest in grassroots volunteering opportunities, and guidelines on how the information collected via these should be used, in order to encourage events to focus on understanding volunteer preference, and taking a more tailored approach to signposting individuals to relevant opportunities.

At scale, this will involve collecting necessary opt ins and doing more targeted email sends and data work; for smaller organisations, this may provide opportunities for individual area managers or similar to follow up directly.

"I enjoy playing tennis. I've not seen any encouragement to volunteer in the field of tennis. I mean I don't know what opportunities there are."

Focus group participant;
London

"if you get an email that is targeted about local events, you know nine out of ten will most likely go oh no but the one out of ten person will look at it and think, oh yeah I'm free that day."

Focus group participant;
Manchester

Recommendation: facilitate direct contact where possible

There is understandable reticence around direct approaches from potential volunteers to clubs or organisations locally where they have no connection, and do not know whether there will be opportunity. Stakeholders also recognise, anecdotally, that in some cases a lack of direct contact or warm welcomes from the organisation requiring volunteers can be a barrier.

Being asked directly to 'help out' is often an entry point to involvement at local level. How can the success of this approach be replicated amongst those who do not have a link with the club?

Consider utilising volunteer events - from recruitment days, to at the event itself (e.g. if volunteers have a room for their breaks etc), to after the event 'thank-yous' and similar to encourage local clubs and organisations to send representatives to meet with the major event volunteers.

Consider also 'ambassador' programmes at major events, whereby those volunteers already volunteering in grassroots sports are encouraged to promote this to fellow volunteers and potentially introduce those who are interested to other organisations locally.

"After a major event, there's a bit of a vacuum. People go back to their normal lives, and unless someone is going to hold their hand and take them to the opportunity...it may not happen."

Stakeholder

"I wouldn't dream of rocking up at any of my local sports clubs unless I was personally asked by somebody I knew already and was there and I was invited. [...] I don't know anybody there. I imagine it would be quite cliquey and everybody would know everybody."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

APPENDIX





GOODFORM

THE MAJOR EVENT
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Upcoming major event volunteering



36%



BRITISH
ATHLETICS

13%



13%



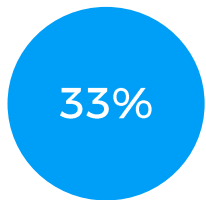
Vitality
NETBALL
WORLD CUP
LIVERPOOL 2019

8%

Other events include:

- MLB London
- Eventing (e.g. Blenheim Horse Trials)

Some are also volunteering in several upcoming major events:



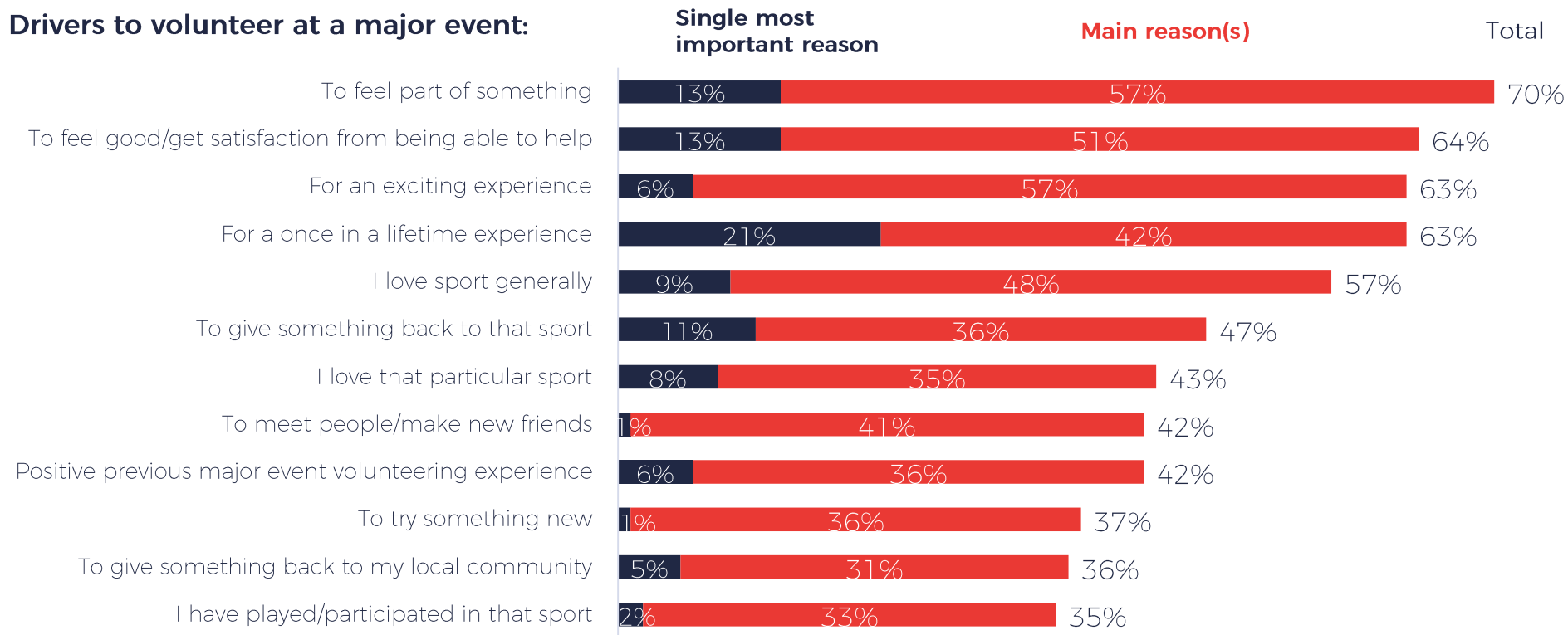
of those who will volunteer at the
Netball World Cup will also volunteer
at the **Cricket World Cup**

Average number
of events selected:
1.27

Which upcoming major sporting event(s) have you been selected to volunteer at? n=360 volunteers at upcoming major event

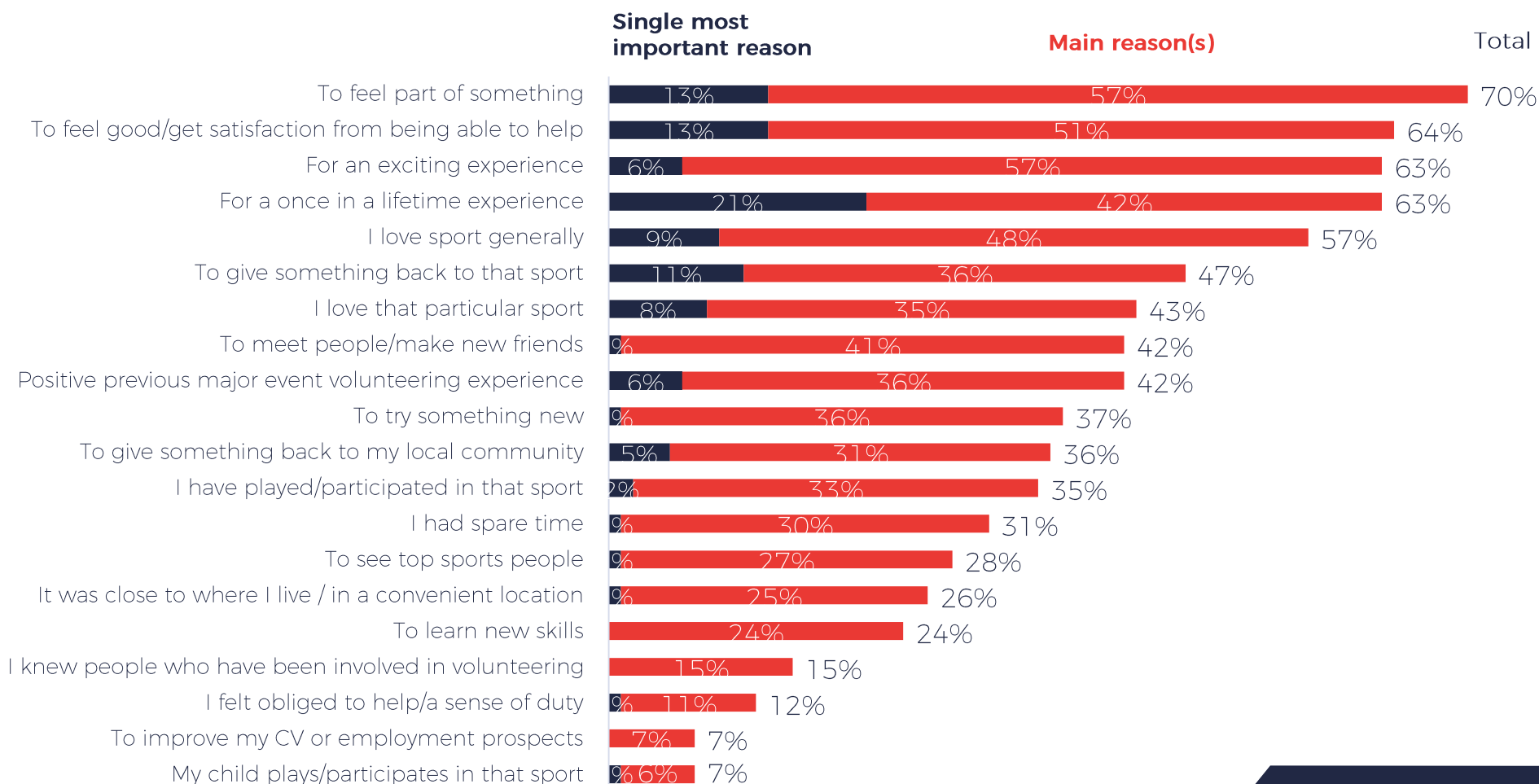
To feel part of something is the most commonly mentioned driver to volunteering at a major event

Drivers to volunteer at a major event:



What were the main reasons you chose to apply to volunteer at a major event? / And of these reasons you selected, which do you think was the single most important reason why you decided to apply to volunteer? n=2102 previous, future and unsuccessful major events volunteers

Drivers to volunteer at a major event: full breakdown



What were the main reasons you chose to apply to volunteer at a major event? / And of these reasons you selected, which do you think was the single most important reason why you decided to apply to volunteer? n=2102 previous, future and unsuccessful major events volunteers

Feeling good about doing a good job, meeting new people and participate in a event of the sport they participated in were other driver mentioned by focus group participants

"You get a lot of enthusiasm out of it; and when you have done it you have killed yourself for two or three hours but at the end of the day you think actually I have done a good job."

Focus group participant;
London

"I think for me in my childish dreams I would always have wanted to compete at the very highest level but knew that that was never ever going to happen. So in some ways it was the closest that you were going to get to actually physically be a part of the whole event. You know something substantial. Like a seat on the outside rather than just purely spectating. And that was definitely the kind of motivator for me to go for this kind of event."

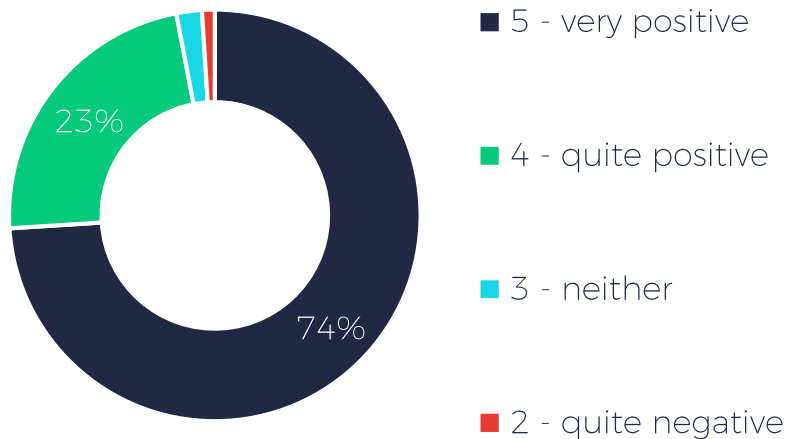
Focus group participant; Manchester

"I have met people that I would never have met in any other circumstance because they are from a completely different background and way of thinking to me. But because you have that thing about volunteering in common that brings you together. I have met some really nice people that I would never have met otherwise."

Focus group participant;
Leamington

The experience of volunteering at major events is overwhelmingly positive – for multiple reasons

Rating of the major event(s) volunteering experience:



Reasons for a positive major event(s) volunteering experience:



4.6
reasons
selected on
average by
each person

Overall, how would you rate your major event(s) volunteering experience on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=very negative and 5=very positive? n=1757 previous major events volunteers
Which of these reason(s) best describe why you have found your experience volunteering at major events a positive one? n=1706 previous major events volunteers who rated the experience positively

Volunteering at major events fulfils the initial motivations

Percentage who selected each motivation and said that the event went on to meet it:

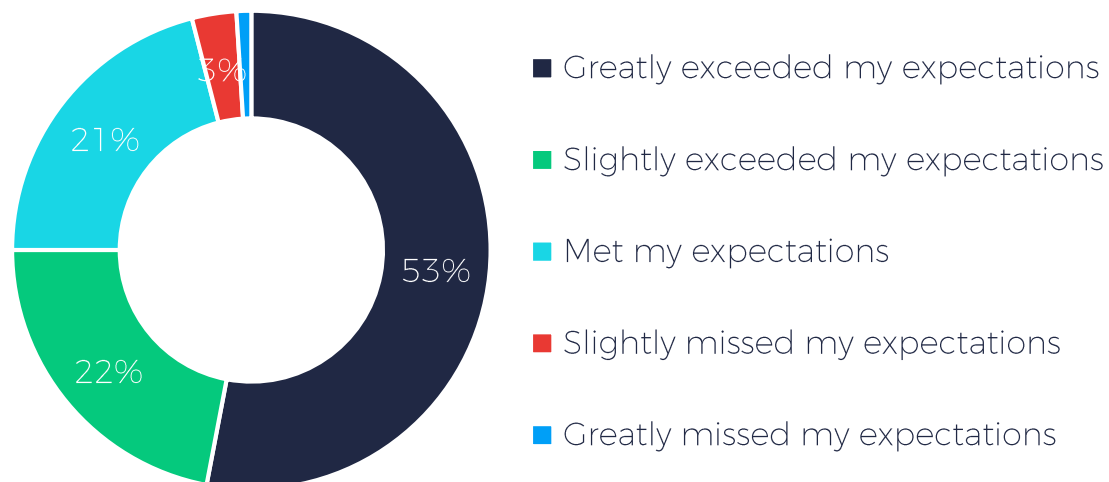


Only 1%
felt none of
their
motivations
were
fulfilled

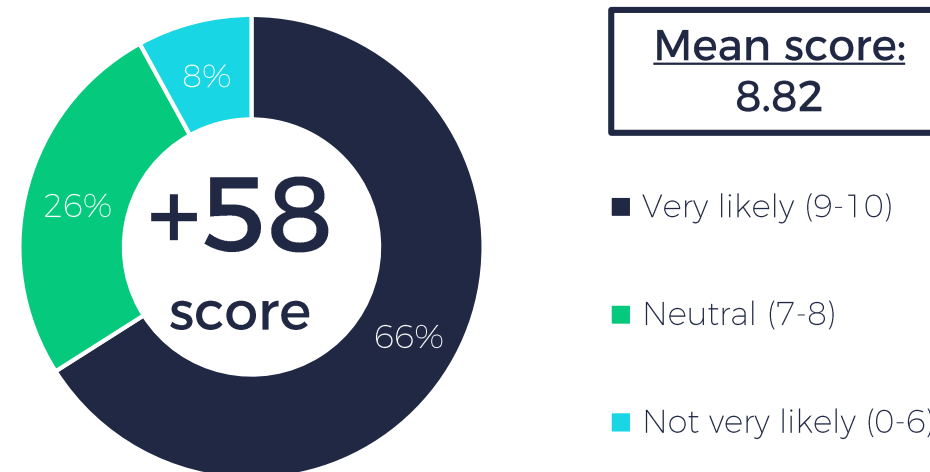
Thinking about your original motivations to volunteer, which of them did your volunteering go on to fulfil?

For the majority the experience volunteering at major event exceeded their expectations and they would recommend it

Expectations of major event volunteering:



Likelihood to recommend major event volunteering (NPS):



To what extent did your experience volunteering meet your expectations? / How likely are you to recommend volunteering in sport to a friend, family member or colleague on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0=not at all likely and 10=extremely likely? – At a major event n=1757 previous major events volunteers

Support with a travel and accommodation costs would help improving their major event volunteering experience

Improving the major event volunteering experience



Only a very small number of attendees (n=15) said that their experience of volunteering at major event was negative.

Main reason cited:

- Did not feel valued as a volunteer
- Poor organisation of volunteers
- Didn't feel as though they were making a difference

What, if anything, would you have liked to improve about your experiences to date of volunteering at major events?

n=803 who answered

Which of these reason(s) best describe why you have found your experience of volunteering at major events a negative one? n=15 previous major events volunteers who rated the experience negatively

Unsuccessful major sporting event applications



37%



20%



RUGBY
WORLD CUP
2015

18%



12%



BRITISH
ATHLETICS

11%



10%



9%

33%

applied unsuccessfully to
more than 1 event

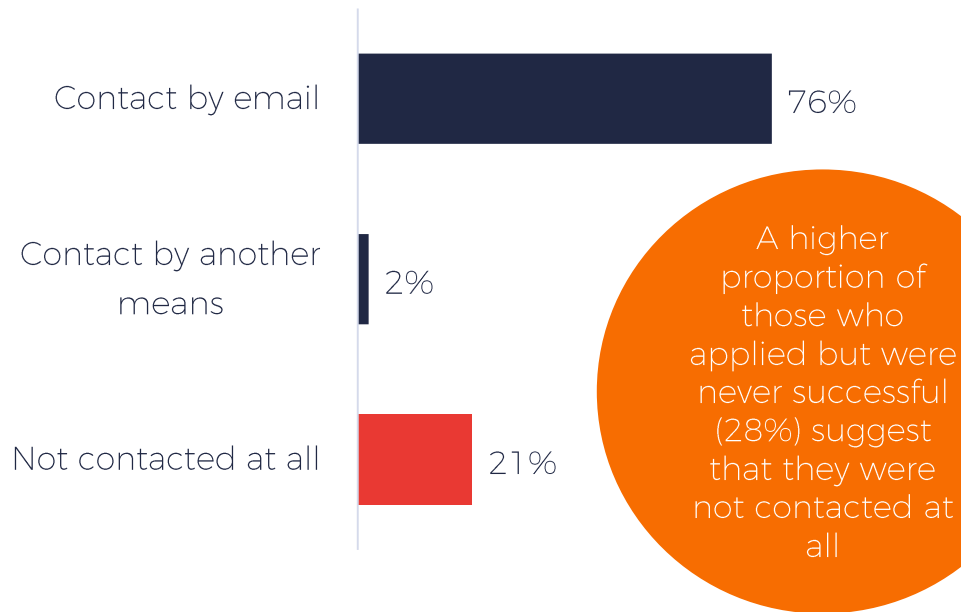
Other events include:

- London Marathon, World Indoor Athletics Championships Birmingham 2018, Rugby League World Cup 2013, various tennis tournaments, various golf tournaments, Commonwealth Games outside of the UK, ...

Which event(s) have you previously applied to volunteer at but been unsuccessful? n=530 unsuccessful applicants

1 in 5 unsuccessful volunteers were not contacted about their application

Ways to be contacted if unsuccessful:



However, stakeholders report that all unsuccessful volunteer applicants are notified, usually via email

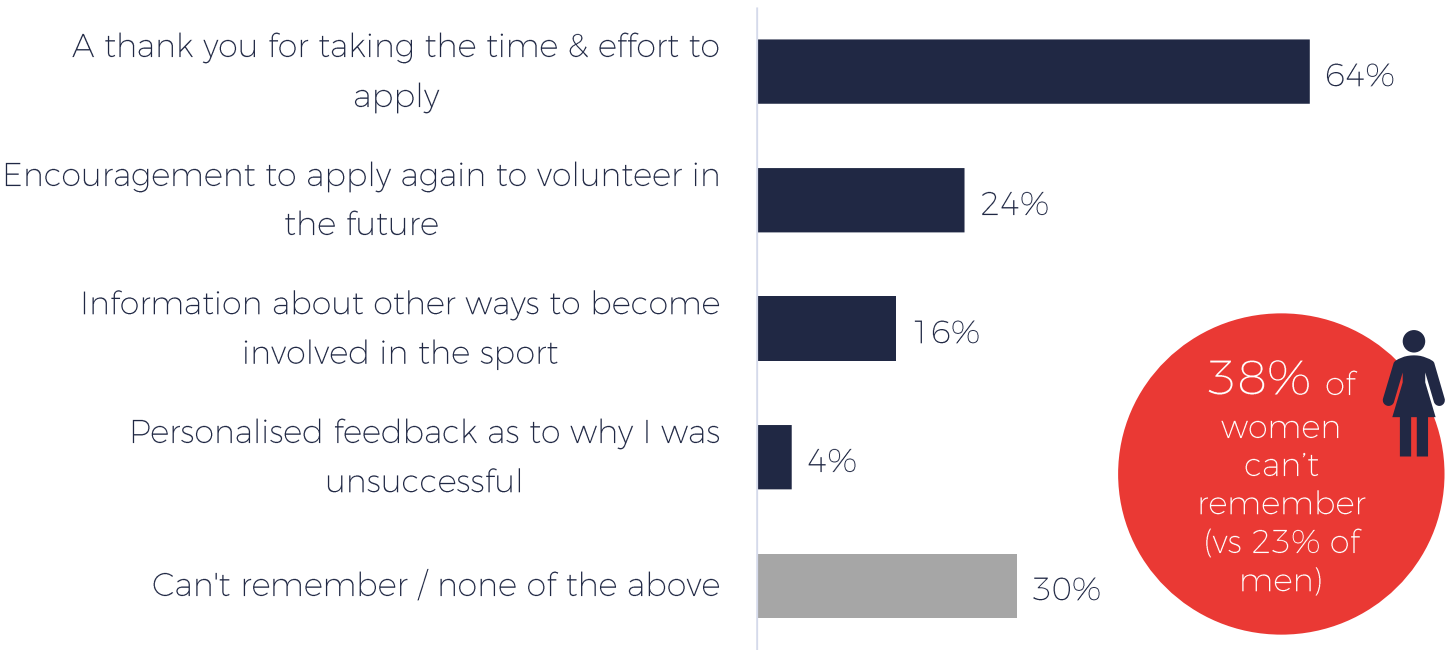
"I went up to Glasgow, paid to go up there, had the interview and never heard another thing."
Focus group participant;
Leamington

"But it's the fact that you've sent something into a black hole and you never hear again."
Focus group participant;
London

How were you informed that your application to volunteer had been unsuccessful? n=530 unsuccessful applicants

Mostly people only received a ‘thank you for applying’, with only 16% signposted to other ways to become involved

Information received when unsuccessful:



Focus groups participants couldn't recall receiving any information or reason why they were unsuccessful

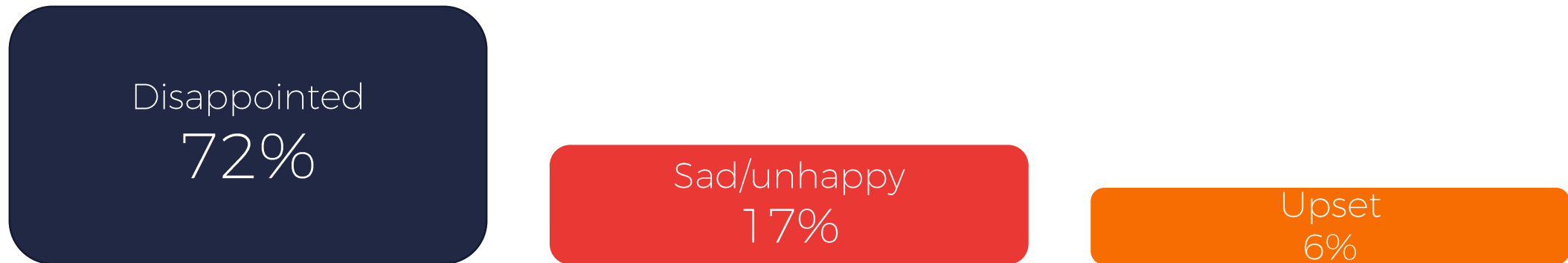
"It is just a generic letter, isn't it, that is sent out."
Focus group participant; Leamington

"I don't know what the reason was for them saying you're not suitable. Never get that feedback."
Focus group participant; London

Which of the following, if any, did you receive as part of informing you that your application was unsuccessful? n=417 unsuccessful applicants who were contacted

Disappointed is the most commonly mentioned feeling when told their application was unsuccessful

Three words to describe feelings when unsuccessful:



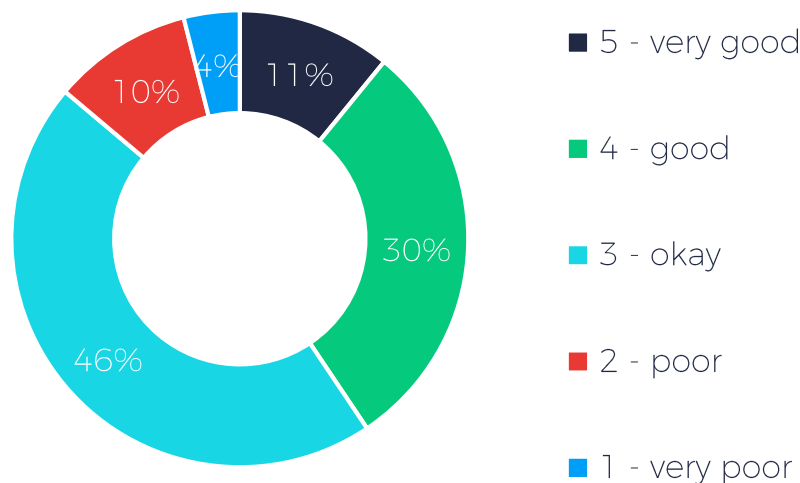
Other words mentioned:

- Annoyed (5%)
- Frustrated (5%)
- Surprised (4%)
- Rejected (4%)
- Guttled (4%)
- Guttled (4%)

Please describe how you felt when you were told your application was unsuccessful, using up to three words. n=530 unsuccessful applicants

Fewer than half of unsuccessful volunteers stated that their experience of applying was 'good'

Overall experience throughout the application process:



Those who volunteered or are about to volunteer (both 49%) at major event were slightly more positive about the process (rating 4 or 5) compared with those who have never been successful (35%)

The majority of focus group participants considered the process to be fine. They suggested that the application forms are similar and therefore they know what to expect as questions repeat. Few mentioned a slight issue around repeated DBS checks/H&S training that are not transferable and cause extra work/spend.

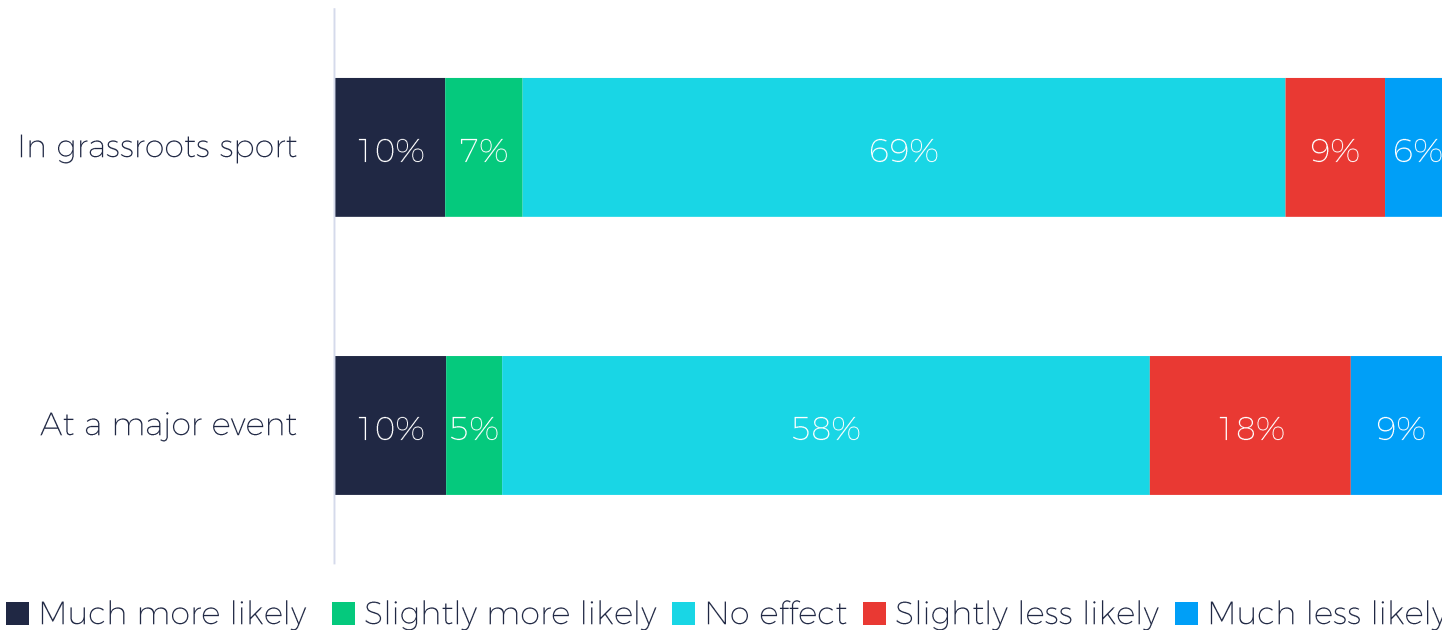
"Same sort of questions [...] Yes, you just cut and paste it from a Word document."
Focus group participant; London

"Even though they say that they have streamlined it. I have a DBS for this. I have a DBS for that. At one time I think I had seven."
Focus group participant; Leamington

Despite the outcome, how would you describe the overall experience you received throughout the process of applying to be a major event volunteer? n=530 unsuccessful applicants

But most are not put off volunteering at a major event or in grassroots sport in the future

Impact of unsuccessful application on future volunteering:



32% of women are less likely to volunteer at a future major event (vs 20% of men)



Those who have only been unsuccessful are less likely to volunteer at future major events and in grassroots compared with those who volunteered at major event before

To what extent did your unsuccessful application change how likely you are to volunteer in the future, either at a major event or in grassroots sport? n=530 unsuccessful applicants

Unsuccessful application did not put off focus group participants to apply and volunteer at future major events

But it's worth noting that these are people who had experienced volunteering at few major events (the majority more than one), so seemed prepared to take rejections with the successes, and put it down to events being oversubscribed



"I mean in a way, I know on the Cricket World Cup they alleged that they wanted to introduce more people into cricket and therefore experienced cricket volunteers perhaps was a slight disadvantage. That was the excuse."
Focus group participant; London

"Didn't put me off. I mean the World Indoor Athletics at Birmingham both my husband and I applied because we thought oh we'll go up for it together sort of thing and he got it and I didn't."
Focus group participant; London

"Oh no because you just think, if they are over subscribed they must have to have some criteria. I mean there are always rumours that go around that they want you to say a specific word."
Focus group participant; London

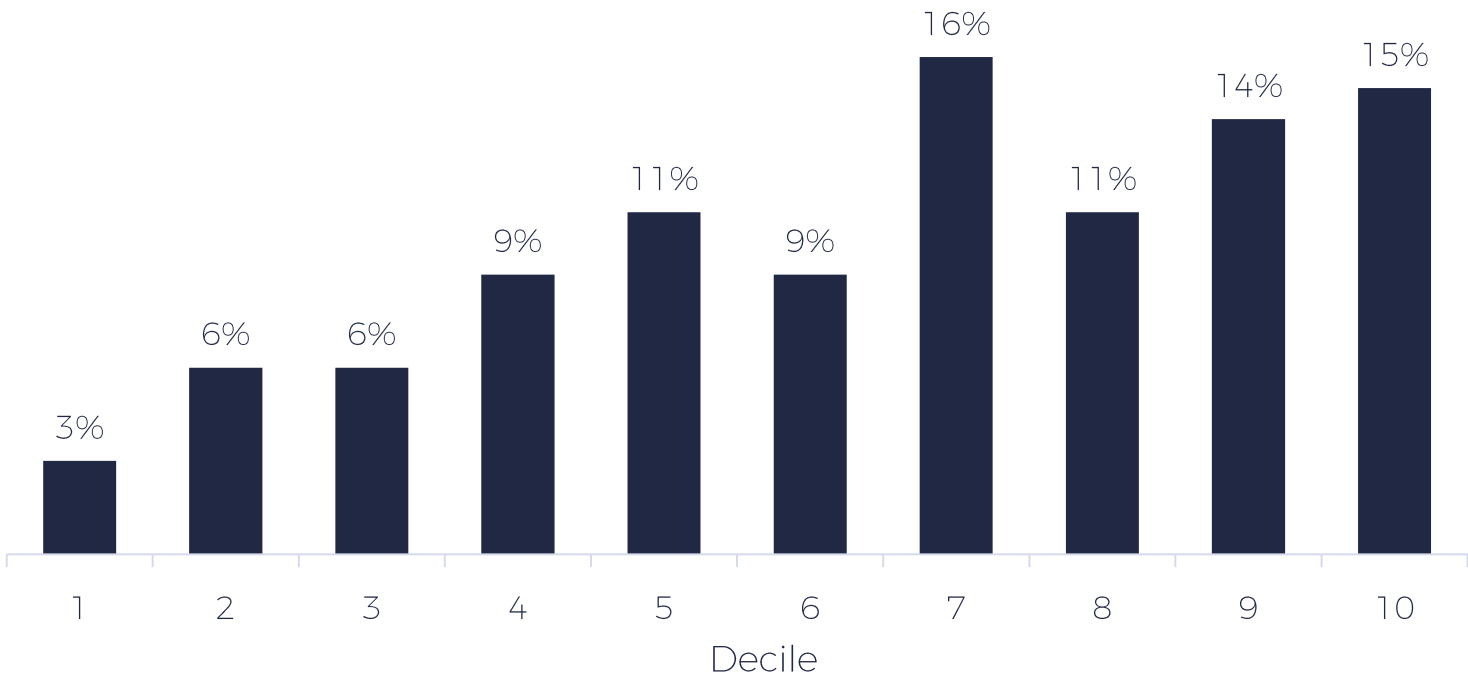
GOODFORM

THE GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE



Major event volunteers who get involved in grassroots sport also live in less deprived areas overall

Major event volunteers who volunteer in grassroots sport deprivation level by postcode (England):



Index of Multiple Deprivation
Decile 1: most deprived
Decile 10: least deprived

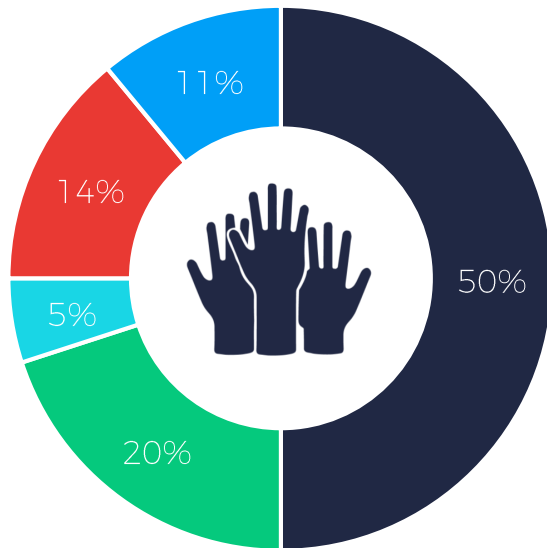
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – 7 metrics (income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing & services; living environment)

Please enter your postcode. n=552 previous major event volunteers who volunteer in grassroots sport

Around two thirds of those who currently volunteer do that within grassroots / community sport

NB reference information only: feedback based on total sample – including those who have never volunteered at a major event

Current volunteering status (not only within sport; excluding major events):



- I currently volunteer →
- I used to volunteer and would consider doing it again
- I used to volunteer but can't see myself doing it again
- I've never volunteered but am considering doing so in the future
- I've never volunteered and can't see myself ever doing it

65% of current volunteers volunteer within grassroots sport (33% of overall sample)
56% volunteer in another sector

Other areas include volunteering with:

- Various charities
- In education (e.g. school governor)
- Local community/village/council
- Church
- Girl Guiding/Scouting

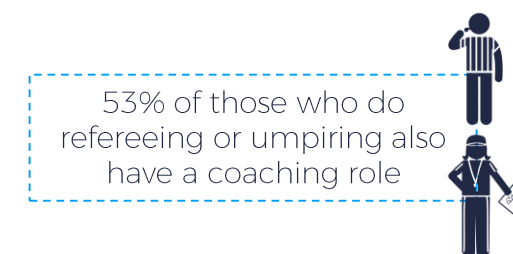
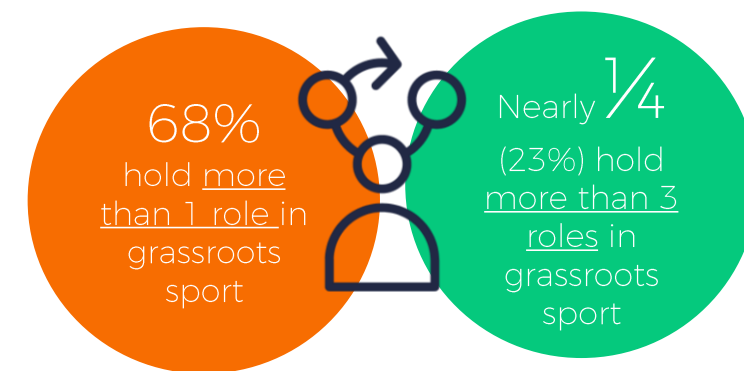
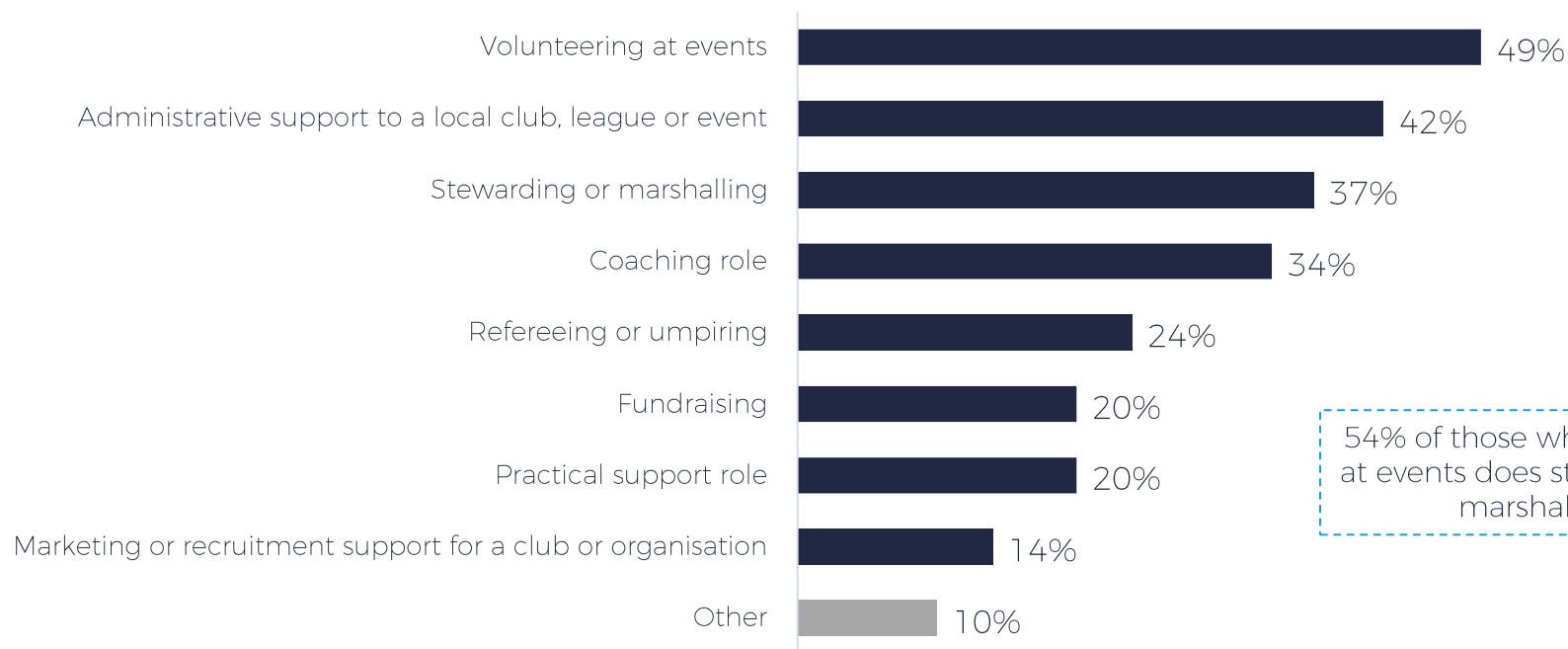
55% of non-volunteers would consider doing so in the future

80% of previous volunteers would consider doing so again

Which of the following best applies to you currently? n=3470 total respondents
Is the volunteering that you [do/did/are considering] in sport, or another area? n=3091 current, previous and those who consider grassroots volunteering

Around half of those currently volunteering in grassroots sport volunteer at events, and over 2 in 5 hold an administrative roles like club secretary or treasurer

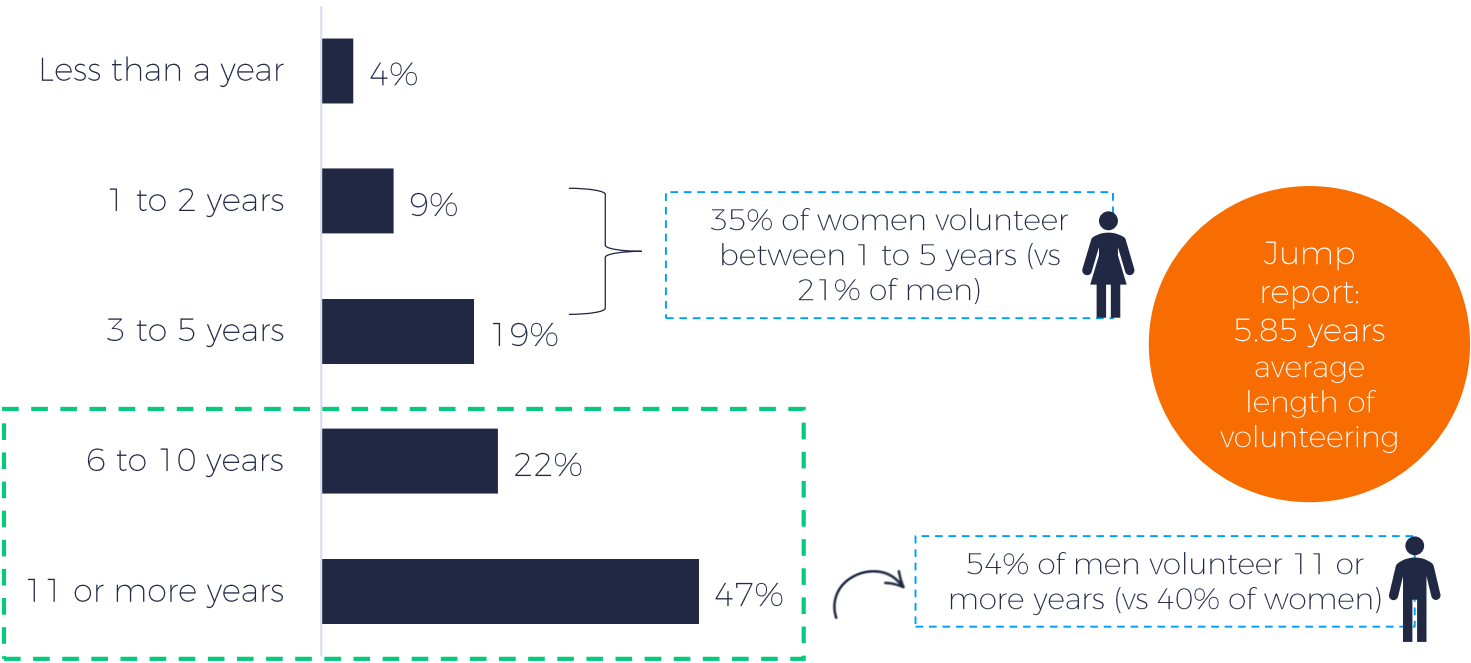
Roles within grassroots / community sport:



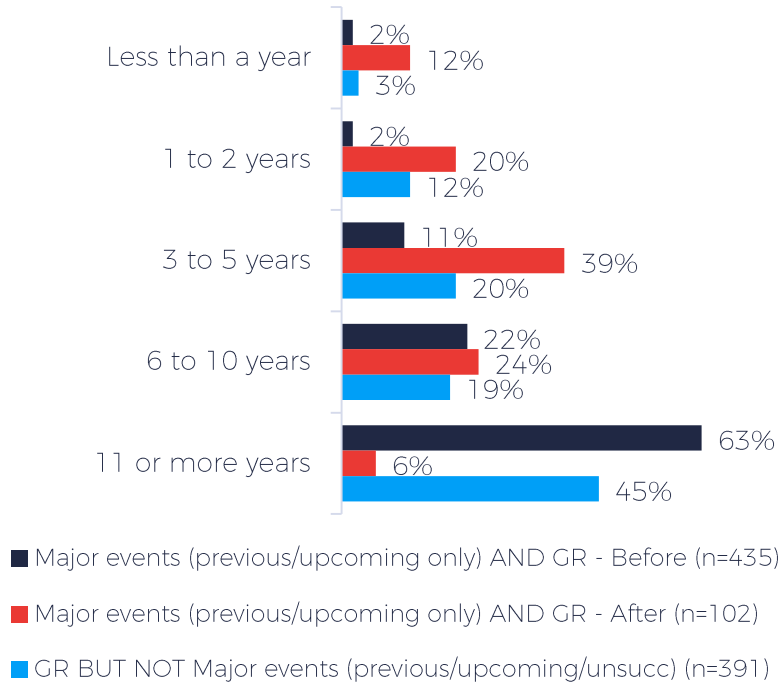
Which of the following best describes your role in grassroots / community sport? n=1 133 current grassroots sport volunteers

Most volunteer in grassroots sport for more than 5 years

Length of grassroots sport volunteering:



Length of grassroots sport volunteering by type of volunteering:



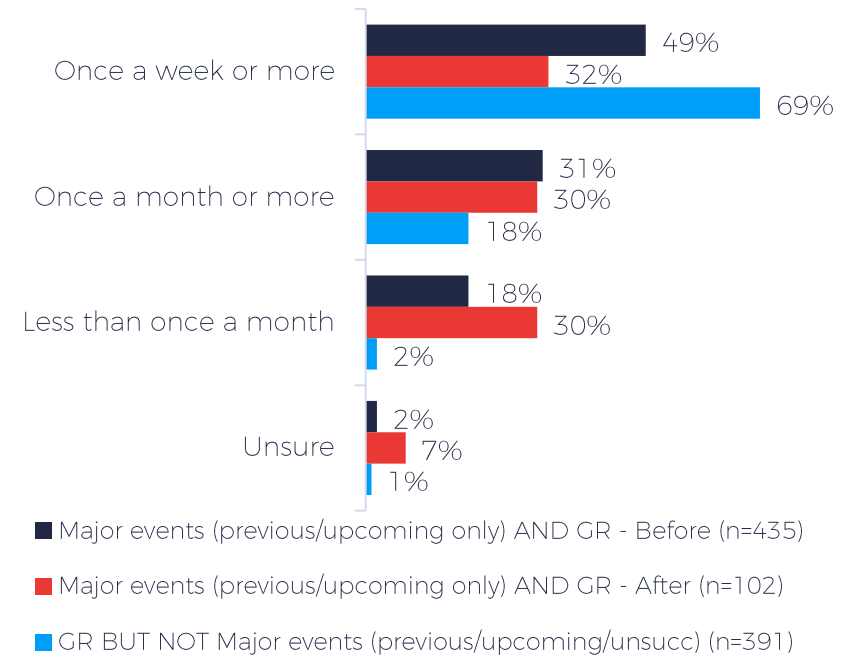
For how many years have you volunteered in grassroots sport? n=1133 current grassroots sport volunteers

Over half volunteer once a week or more

Frequency of grassroots sport volunteering:



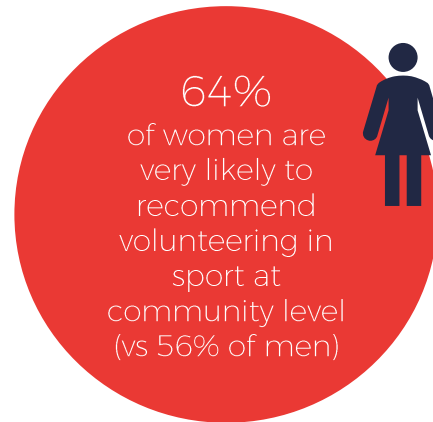
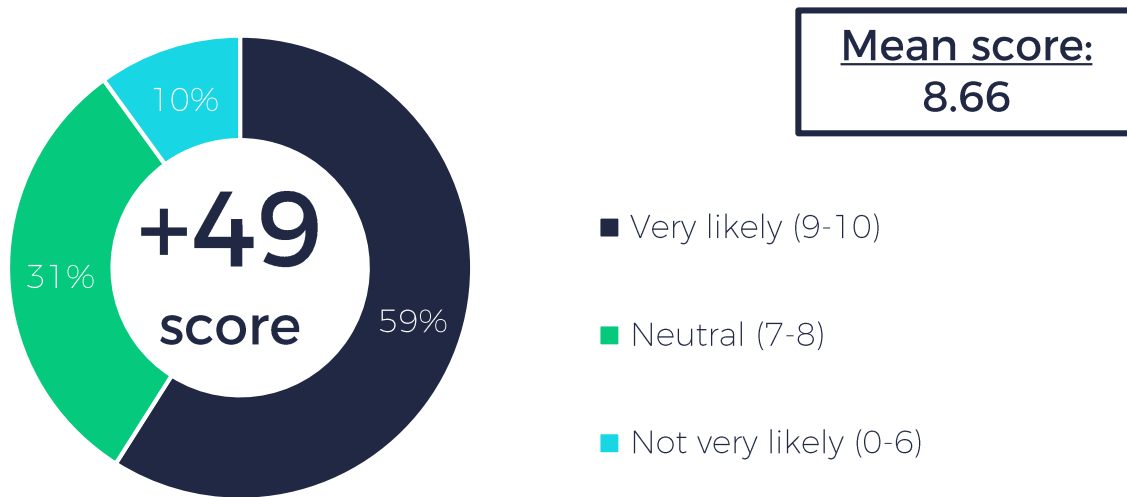
Frequency of grassroots sport volunteering by type of volunteering:



Which of these best summaries how often you volunteer in grassroots / community sport? n=1133 current grassroots sport volunteers

Those who volunteer in grassroots sport are very positive about the experience, giving it a high Net Promoter Score

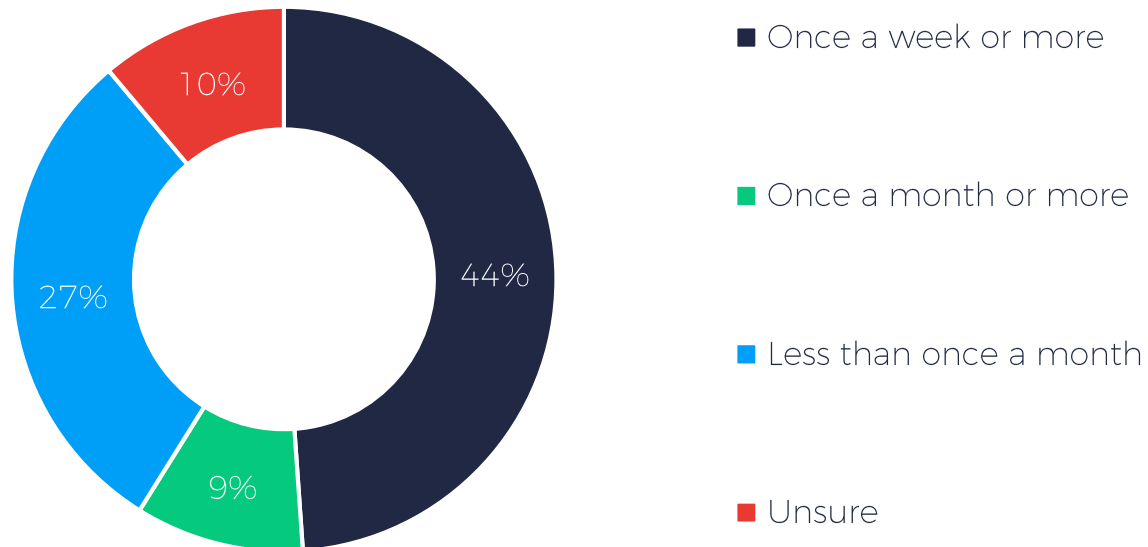
Likelihood to recommend volunteering in sport at community level on an ongoing basis (NPS):



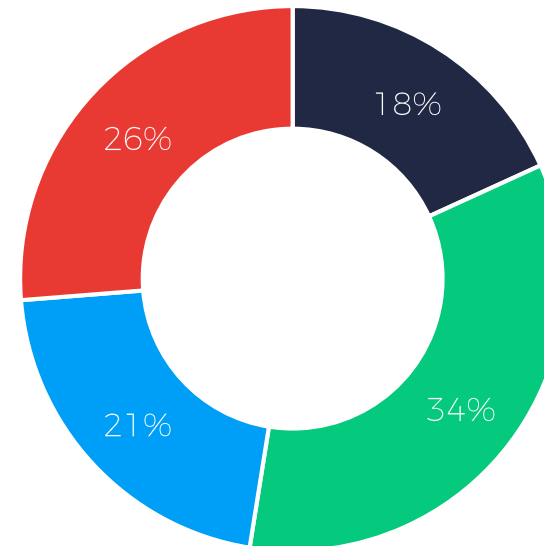
How likely are you to recommend volunteering in sport to a friend, family member or colleague on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0=not at all likely and 10=extremely likely? – On an ongoing bases at community level n=1 133 current grassroots sport volunteers

More than 2 in five used to volunteer once a week or more. Over half of those considering it would like to volunteer once a month or more often

Frequency of previous grassroots sport volunteering:



Frequency of considered grassroots sport volunteering in the future:

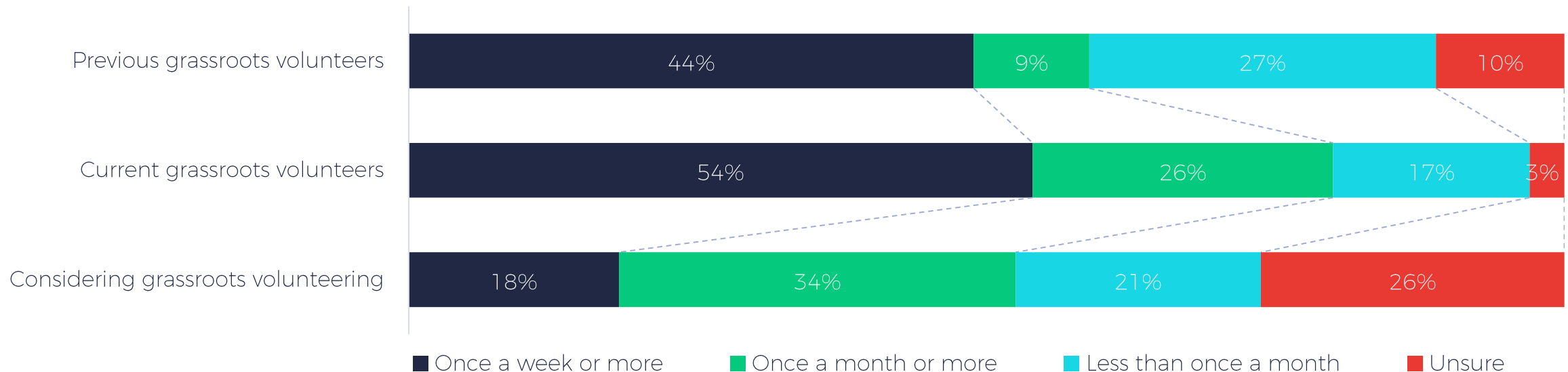


A higher proportion (31%) of those aged u35 years old would like to volunteer less than once a month

Which of these best summaries how often you volunteered in grassroots / community sport? n=635 previous grassroots sport volunteers
When considering volunteering in the future, how often would you like to volunteer? n=401 of those considering grassroots volunteering in future

Those who consider volunteering would like to volunteer considerably less often (not weekly) when compared with current and previous volunteers

Frequency of grassroots sport volunteering:



Which of these best summaries how often you volunteer in grassroots / community sport? n=1133 current grassroots sport volunteers

Which of these best summaries how often you volunteered in grassroots / community sport? n=635 previous grassroots sport volunteers

When considering volunteering in the future, how often would you like to volunteer? n=401 of those considering grassroots volunteering in future

Encouraging grassroots volunteering: full list

Ways to encourage considering volunteering in grassroots sport:



Which of the following, if any, would encourage you to consider volunteering in grassroots sport? n=2337 not currently volunteering in grassroots sport



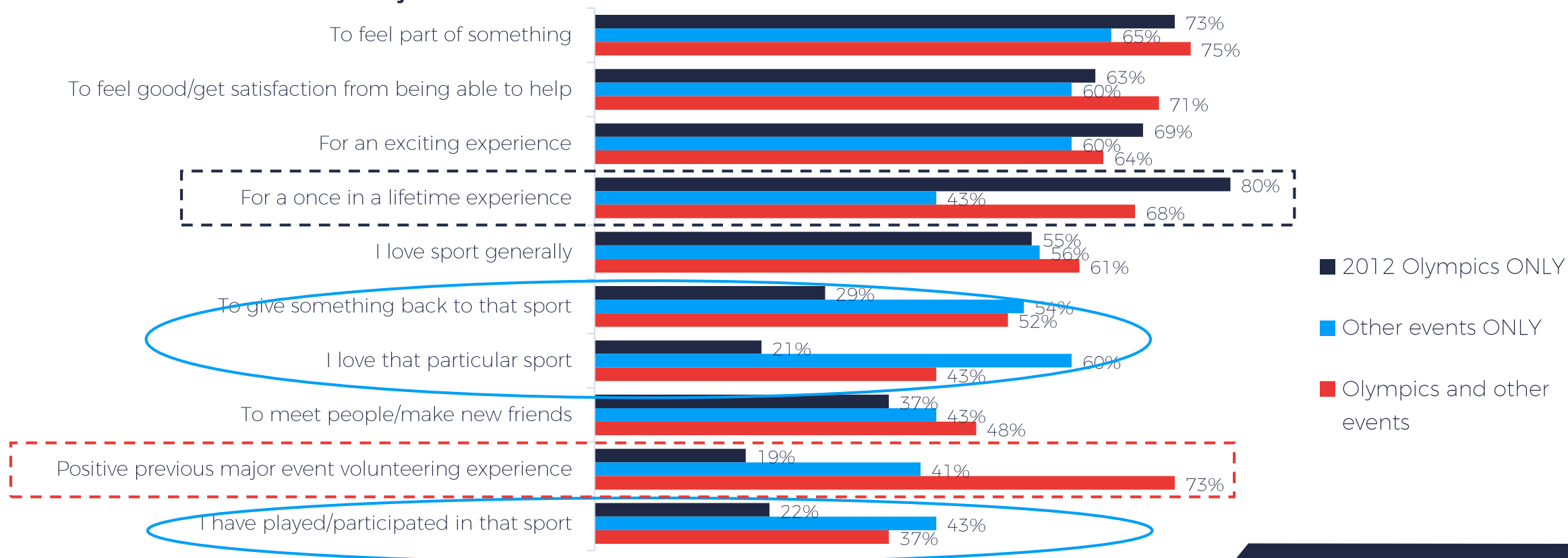
GOODFORM

APPENDIX:

ADDITIONAL LONDON 2012
ANALYSIS

There are differences in motivations to volunteer at Olympics or other major sport events...

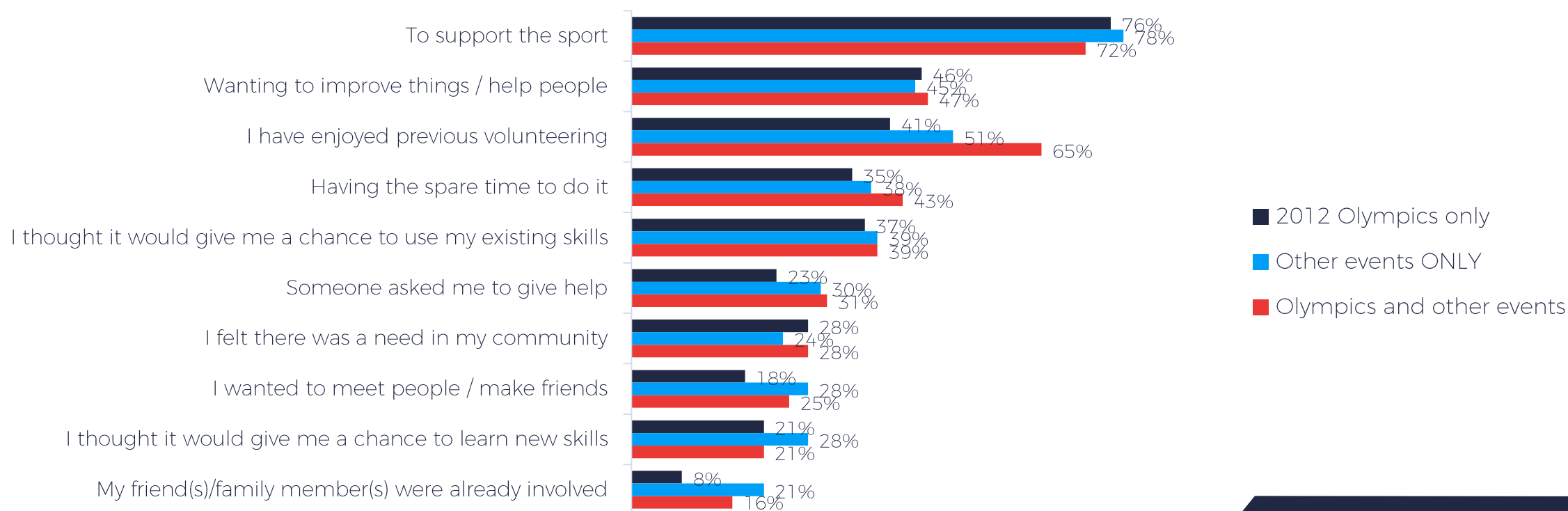
Motivations to volunteer at major events:



What were the main reasons you chose to apply to volunteer at a major event? n=474 London Olympics ONLY volunteers, n=551 Other events ONLY volunteers, n=732 Olympics and other events

...but when it comes to reasons to volunteer in sport at grassroots level, the motivations are not dissimilar amongst those who volunteered at Olympics and those who didn't

Motivations to volunteer at grassroots sport:

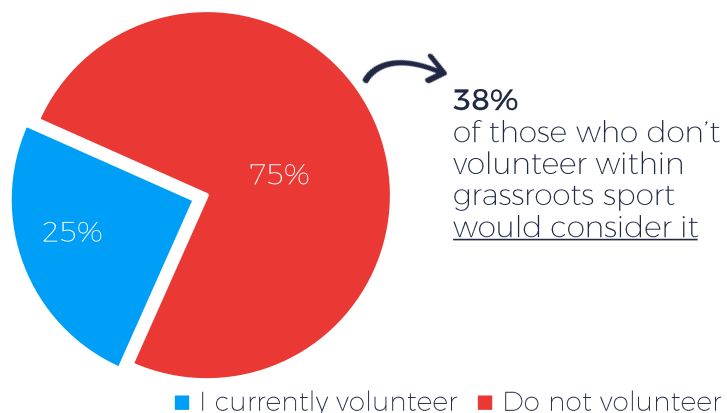


Which of the following, if any, encouraged you to consider volunteering in grassroots sport? n=120 London Olympics ONLY volunteers, n=248 Other events ONLY, n=276 Olympics and other events volunteers who volunteer at grassroots sport

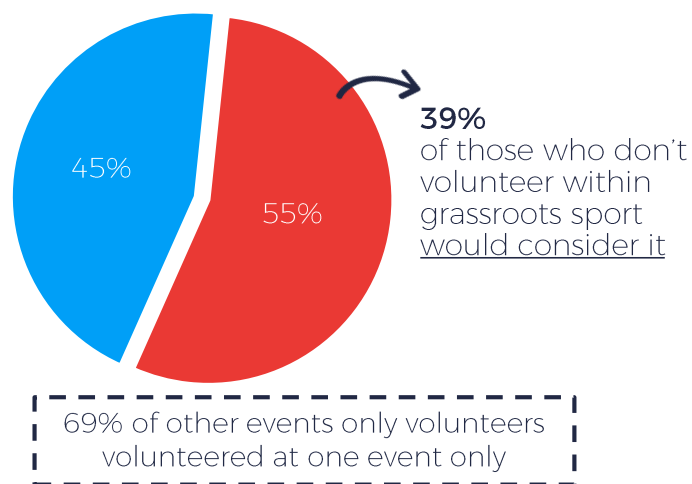
A higher proportion of those who volunteered only at other major sport events or in combination with Olympics already volunteer at grassroots sport. However the appetite to consider volunteering is similar for those who volunteered only at Olympics or other events...

Grassroots sport volunteering amongst major events volunteers:

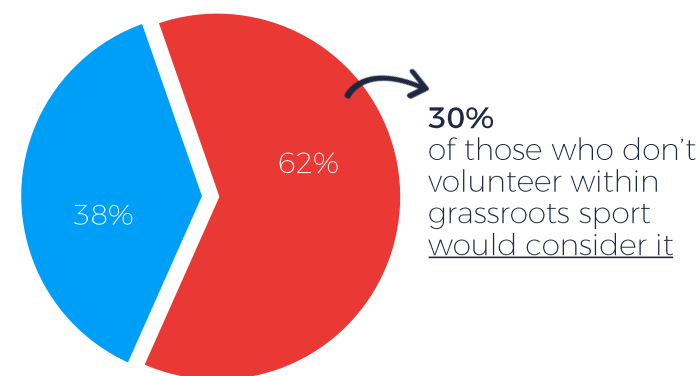
2012 Olympics ONLY



Other events only



Olympics and other events

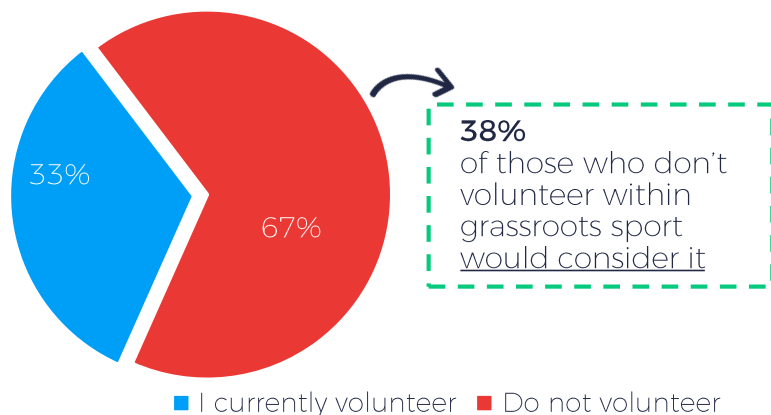


Which of the following best applies to you currently? Is the volunteering that you [do/did/are considering] in sport, or another area? n=474 London Olympics ONLY, n=551 Other events ONLY, n=732 Olympics and other events

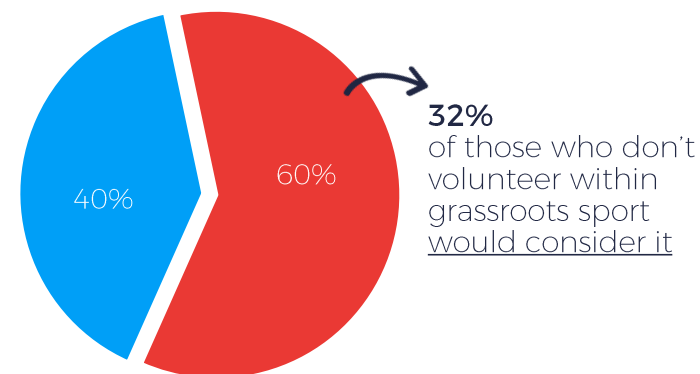
...it is rather the extent of major events experience – if volunteered once or multiple times that suggests to have a bigger impact on consideration of grassroots sport volunteering on those who don't do currently

Grassroots sport volunteering amongst major events volunteers:

One major event



Multiple major events



Which of the following best applies to you currently? Is the volunteering that you [do/did/are considering] in sport, or another area? n=902 multiple major events, n=855 one major event

GOODFORM

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY



Online survey methodology

- Online survey live from 6th June 2019 to 1st July 2019
- Distributed via the following channels:

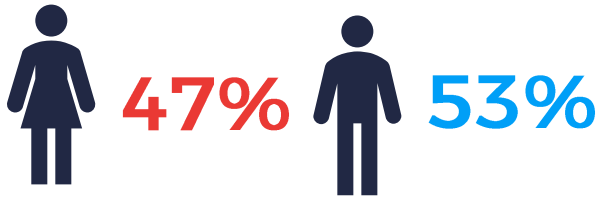


- Total of 3470 responses received
- Incentivised via a prize draw of 5x £100 Amazon vouchers

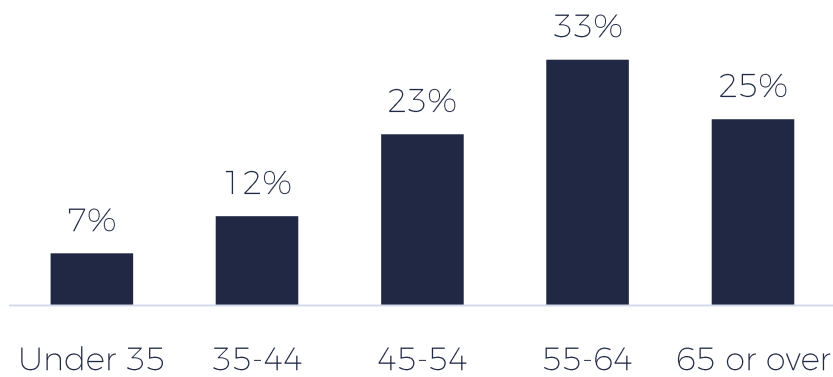
Who responded to the survey?

3470 responses

Gender:



Age:



90% are White or White British

89% do not consider themselves to have a disability

Employment status:

44% Working full time

30% Retired

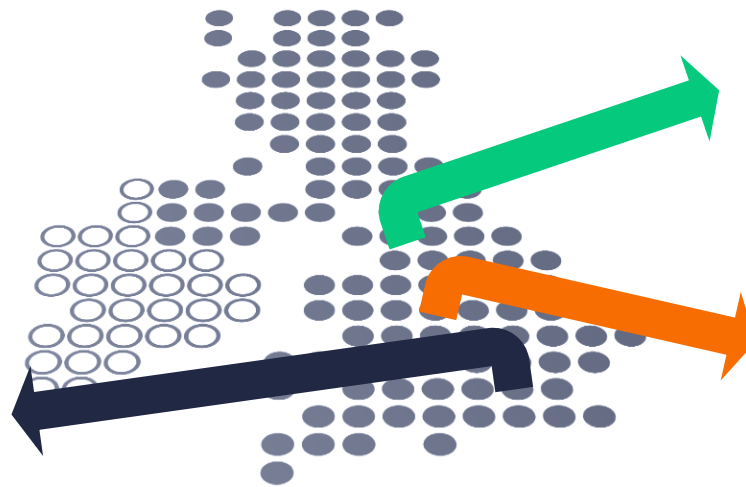
13% Working part time

6% semi-retired

Qualitative research methodology

- 11x focus groups with 79 volunteers recruited from online survey
- The groups were a mix of audience – major event volunteers (some unsuccessful applicants) some with grassroots sport experience and some not
- Took place in 3 locations (Leamington Spa, Manchester and London) between 16th July and 1st August
- 90 minutes in length
- Incentivised with £30 in cash

London
6x focus groups run in Sport England offices
47 participants



Manchester
2x focus groups run in the National Squash Centre
14 participants

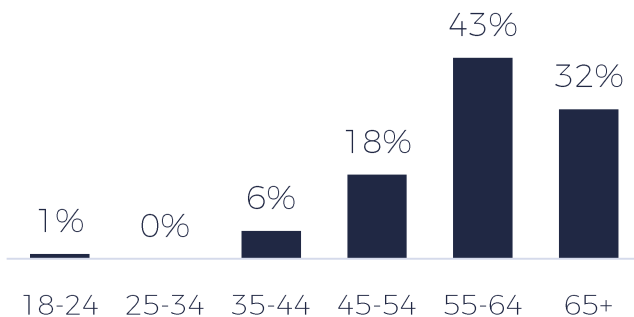
Leamington Spa
3x focus groups run in Goodform offices
18 participants

Who took part in the focus groups?

Gender:

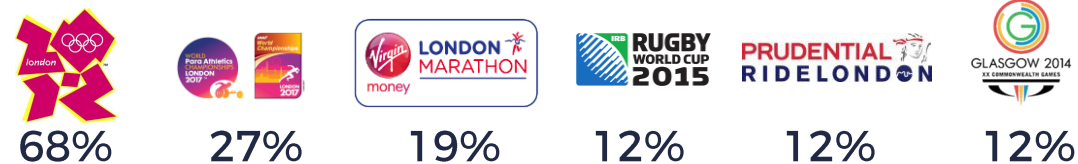


Age:



Major event volunteering experience:

97% Previous major event volunteers



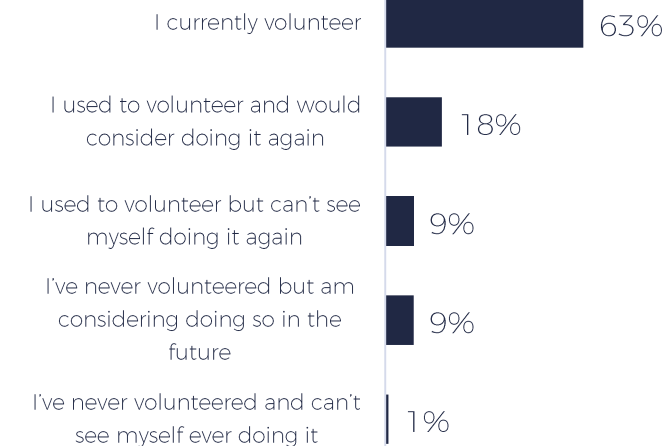
22% Volunteers at upcoming event



23% Unsuccessful applicants



Grassroot volunteering:



59% do not currently volunteer in grassroots/ community sport

Please select your gender/ Please select your age range/ Which of the following best describes you?/ Which if these major events have you previously volunteered at?/ Which of the following best applies to you currently? n=79

Stakeholder interviews

Following the online survey and focus groups, calls were undertaken with stakeholders at each of the following organisations*:

The logo for the Sport+Recreation Alliance, featuring the text "SPORT+RECREATION ALLIANCE" in green, with a plus sign between "SPORT" and "RECREATION".The logo for the LTA Tennis for Britain, featuring a blue stylized "LTA" above the text "TENNIS FOR BRITAIN" in blue and green.The logo for Team London, consisting of a blue circle with the text "TEAM LONDON" in white.The logo for Badminton England, featuring a red stylized shuttlecock above the text "BADMINTON ENGLAND" in black and red.The logo for the Rugby Football League, featuring a stylized white oval with a black outline and the text "RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE" in black.The logo for England netball, featuring a red stylized netball above the text "England netball" in red.The logo for England Rugby, featuring a red rose above the text "England Rugby" in black.The logo for British Canoeing, featuring a stylized Union Jack above the text "BRITISH CANOEING" in blue and red.The logo for the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board), featuring a blue crown above three blue lions and the text "ECB" in blue.

Calls were c. 30 minutes in length with a view to getting 360° input on the project, allowing us to discuss potential recommendations, experiences to date and hypotheses that emerged from the focus groups with stakeholders. They also allowed us to understand in more depth some of the challenges faced by organisations in attracting and retaining volunteers, and in particular in transitioning volunteers from major events into grassroots volunteering.

*As of 22nd August 2019

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Always collaborating...