Club Matters, Return to Sport/Activity Survey Findings

Volunteers Report

October 2020
Content

1. Introduction
   3

2. Executive Summary
   5

3. Overview of Responses Received
   9

4. Analysis of Responses
   - 4.1 Change in Volunteering Habits
   - 4.2 Anxiety Levels Among Volunteers
   - 4.3 Volunteers' Main Concerns
   - 4.4 Likelihood of Return Among Volunteers
   - 4.5 Barriers to Return Among Volunteers
   - 4.6 Characteristics of Returned Volunteers
   - 4.7 Characteristics of Volunteers 'At Risk' of Not Returning
   - 4.8 Information, Support and Reassurances to Encourage Volunteers
   - 4.9 What Volunteers were Most Looking Forward To
   - 4.10 Volunteer Satisfaction with Club/Group Communications
   - 4.11 Improving Communications

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
   44

Appendices
Appendix 1 – Summary of Responses by Question (Volunteers)
Appendix 2 – Copy of Survey Questions Asked (Volunteers)
Appendix 3 – Overview of Methodology and Timeline
Appendix 4 – Breakdown of Sports/Activities by Category
1. Introduction

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on all aspects of life, and sport and physical activity are no exception. This report explores the views of people who volunteered within a sports club/group before lockdown. It focusses on how their habits have changed, how they were feeling about returning to their club/group, whether they were likely to return and what they need to support their return. The report is based on an analysis of the Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Volunteer Survey which ran from July to August 2020.

It is anticipated that readers will focus on the findings set out in the Executive Summary and use the remainder of this document as a reference guide to enable them to access more detail on the findings that are of most relevance or of specific interest.

Ongoing Relevance during an Evolving Pandemic

Whilst the survey results provide a snapshot in time, this report will have ongoing relevance given the evolving nature of the pandemic and the fast-paced changes associated with spiking infection. This changing national and local picture means that 'return to play' is non-binary. The virus and associated control measures are likely to have an ongoing impact on behaviour, delivery and access to facilities. Volunteers, participants and members are therefore expected to continue to return, pause, and change their priorities as the situation continues to evolve.

The Importance of Sports Clubs/Groups

Across England, there are over 72,000 Governing Body affiliated sports clubs/groups (SIRC 2017). This number is likely to be doubled when unaffiliated and community clubs/groups are taken into account (SRA 2016). A quarter of all people aged 16+ are members of a sports club/group (Active Lives, England 2018/19). Clubs/groups exist to provide opportunities for people to socialise, learn new skills, take part and possibly even compete in their preferred sports/activities. Their smooth running often relies on the dedication and commitment of an army of volunteers who generously give up their time to support them. Sports clubs/groups and the volunteers that support them are often the lifeblood of grassroots sport in local communities.

The findings of this report suggest that a greater proportion of volunteers are at risk of not returning to their clubs/groups than participants/members. It is therefore important to use the findings and recommendations of this report to help support the return of as many volunteers as possible and build a pipeline of new volunteers.
Covid-19 Has Caused Major Disruption, Club Matters is Here to Help
Throughout the pandemic, participation and volunteering opportunities have suffered major disruption. The Club Matters Programme exists to provide free advice and guidance to clubs and organisations who deliver physical activity and sport and the workforce that support them. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic Club Matters has developed resources to assist clubs/organisations (and the professional workforce that that support them) to manage their emergency response, planning and reopening phases. Click here for more detail: Club Matters.

Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Surveys
The Club Matters team are committed to supplementing the insight and resources available to clubs/group to help them during this period of unprecedented uncertainty. Following a short consultation with Governing Bodies, Active Partnerships (APs) and wider sector partners, in July 2020, the team launched two national surveys. The surveys contained open and closed questions and were targeted at club/group members and volunteers over 16. They also captured the views of under 16s and vulnerable adults by enabling parents and carers to complete them on behalf of their children/those that they care for. Links to the surveys were sent to sector partners for distribution to their clubs/groups who in turn circulated them to their participants/members and volunteers. The surveys were also promoted directly by Sport England and the Club Matters Team. Full copies of the survey questions and a summary of the research methodology can be found in the Appendices. All survey data is solely owned by Sport England.

The insight and key findings from this research were specifically intended to identify key trends and issues and to inform the development of future resources via the Club Matters programme. This report is one of a series which also includes the ‘Club Matters, Return to Sport/Activity Survey Findings, Participants/Members Report’, 6 category reports and a number of sport specific reports.
2. Executive Summary

2.1 Background and Introduction

Sports clubs/groups and the volunteers that support them are often the lifeblood of grassroots sport in local communities. Across England there are over 72,000 Governing Body affiliated sports clubs/groups (SIRC 2017). This number is likely to be doubled when unaffiliated and community clubs/groups are taken into account (SRA 2016). A quarter of all people aged 16+ across England are members of a sports club/group (Active Lives 2018/19).

During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic clubs/groups, their participants/members and volunteers have suffered major disruption. Most faced long periods of closure and for some the future remains uncertain. Little research has been done to directly explore the views of club/group volunteers. This report seeks to address this gap by highlighting the views of those who volunteered at a club/group before lockdown. It focuses on how their habits have changed, how they were feeling about returning to their club/group, whether they were likely to return and what they need to support their return.

This report is based on an analysis of the data extracted from the Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Surveys which were carried out in July and August 2020. This Executive Summary highlights some of the notable results and themes that emerged from the analysis of the volunteers survey. The full details behind these findings are provided in Section 4. A number of associated reports also exist. These include the ‘Club Matters, Return to Sport/Activity Survey Findings, Participants/Members Report’ and a series of companion reports which explore the results and themes arising from both surveys across 6 different categories of sport/activity and a number of specific sports.

2.2 Survey Responses

Overall, 1,293 individuals completed the volunteers survey:

• Volunteers came from all over the country, including a mixture of urban, rural, coastal, deprived and more affluent areas.
• The majority were aged 16+ and completed the survey themselves. A very small proportion (1.6%) of respondents filled out the survey on behalf of their children or a vulnerable adult they care for.
• The age profile of volunteers was varied, however the majority of responses received were from people aged 45+ (72.8%).
• More males (57.1%) than females (41.5%) responded. 0.2% of respondents identified their gender in another way and 1.2% preferred not to say.
• Most respondents were White British or White Other (94.9%). Less than 3% of survey respondents were from BAME groups.
• 1 in 5 respondents (19.4%) reported having a disability or long-term health condition (LTHC).
• 71.4% of respondents had been involved in volunteering in a club/group environment for over 5 years.
• A significant proportion of respondents (81.3%) supported their club/group for 2+ hours per week including 38.5% who did so for 5+ hours a week.
• The majority of volunteers (63%) reported that they also took part in sport/activity at their club/group.
• Responses were received from volunteers who undertook a wide variety of roles, the largest proportions of whom were Board/Committee Members/Treasurers/Trustees/Fixtures Secretaries and Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders (74.2%).

It is important to note that the survey was open to all and therefore the sample is not considered to be statistically representative of the make-up of all sports club/group volunteers in England. When compared to the volunteer profile identified in Active Lives there are both similarities and differences.
2.3 Headline Findings from the Survey

71.3% of Volunteers Continued Throughout the Pandemic
The pandemic has demonstrated the commitment and value of volunteers. Those who traditionally gave significant amounts of time each week and/or had been volunteering for an extended timeframe responded positively and stepped up, not out, during the pandemic. 71.3% of survey respondents continued to volunteer in some capacity, even though clubs/groups were ‘closed’ or operating virtually during lockdown. Those who continued to volunteer were more likely to have been those who had been involved for 5+ years or who volunteered for 5+ hours per week.

Anxiety was a Key Factor Affecting Volunteers’ Return
13.5% of volunteers had significant levels of anxiety about returning. While a small proportion of this cohort have returned despite their anxiety, the majority are ‘at risk’ of not returning with 48.1% of this group being unsure about returning and a further 40% unlikely/very unlikely to return. Volunteers with a disability or LTHC were the most likely to have significant levels of anxiety. At the other end of the spectrum, 32.3% of volunteers were ‘Not At All Anxious’ about returning. These volunteers were more likely to come from Water Sports and Individual Outdoor Sports/Activities.

Volunteers’ Concerns for their Club/Group Overpowered their Personal Concerns
Volunteers’ concern for their club/group seemed to strongly overpower any personal concerns they had. Their most specific concerns were for the long-term viability of their club/group, the short-term logistics of operating within the evolving guidelines, and confusion over the guidelines themselves. These concerns are interlinked. Long-term viability relies on attracting and retaining enough fee-paying participants/members and the volunteers to support them. Short-term logistics of returning risk creating experiences that are less appealing (e.g. no competition) and can pose a bigger workload for volunteers. The findings suggested that if the guidelines couldn’t be applied and enforced consistently, volunteers and participants/members with health concerns were likely to stop coming back to the club/group.

14% of Volunteers were ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning
The vast majority of respondents said that they had already or were likely/very likely to return to their club/group (86%). More than 1 in 10 volunteers (14%), however, were at risk of not returning of which 6.1% were unsure, 2.3% (n=30) were unlikely and 5.6% were very unlikely to return. There is still an opportunity to influence those at risk, particularly those who were unsure about returning. By comparison, 7.4% of participants/members were ‘at risk’ of not returning, suggesting that the reliance on those volunteers that do return may increase even further to meet the demands of participants/members.

Certain Groups of Volunteers were More Likely to be ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning
Of all volunteers at risk of not returning, there was a higher proportion of those involved in direct delivery roles (Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders) than those involved in non-delivery roles. Commonalities amongst those at risk of not returning included those who; were concerned about health, had significant levels of anxiety, stopped/paused volunteering during lockdown, committed the least time each week, or were less satisfied with club/group communications during lockdown.
More than 1 in 3 Volunteers Expected their Time Commitment to Change

54.4% of volunteers expected to commit the same amount of time to volunteering as they did before the pandemic. However, 37.2% expected their commitment to change; 23.5% expected to commit more/a lot more time and 13.7% expected to spend less/a lot less time/stop volunteering. Those who were most anxious were more unsure about their return and more likely to stop or do less volunteering. There may be an untapped opportunity to increase the levels of engagement or swell the numbers of people who volunteered least each week before lockdown (who were also more likely to have stopped/paused). These people could possibly help share the overall workload by committing some more time each week.

Individual Indoor Sports/Activities Seem to have Been Hit Hardest

Individual Indoor Sports/Activities seem to have been worst affected by the lockdown. This category had the highest percentage of volunteers ‘at risk’ of not returning (19.7%). 47% of volunteers who supported Individual Indoor Sports/Activities stopped/paused during lockdown, which was only exceeded by Individual Outdoor Sports/Activities with 49%. While this is to be expected with some facilities closed, it makes it harder to re-engage these volunteers if their behaviour has changed throughout lockdown. For context, 70% of responses in the Individual Indoor Sports/Activities category came from Swimming, Gymnastics and Badminton.

Volunteers in Coach/Instructor/Session Leader roles were Likely to have Stopped/Paused over Lockdown

Of all volunteers with a Coach/Instructor/Session Leader role, 41.1% had stopped/paused their volunteering efforts throughout lockdown. 37.6% had already returned at the time of the survey. In comparison 7.7% of volunteers within a Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixtures Secretary role stopped/paused volunteering during lockdown and 60.2% had already returned. Of all volunteers that were ‘at risk’ of not returning in the future, 38.7% fulfilled a Coach/Instructor/Session Leader role and 32% volunteered in Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixtures Secretary roles.

Health Risks, the Appeal of Volunteering and Needing More Time for Other Aspects of Life were the Biggest Barriers

The top 3 recurring barriers to returning included; volunteer roles becoming less appealing, personal and family health risks and the possibility of needing more time for other aspects of their lives. 26.6% of all respondents said that health concerns could have a negative impact on their return to volunteering. The new guidelines are impacting how volunteers can perform their roles and, in many cases, increasing their workload or accountability. This has resulted in some volunteers questioning whether they want to continue. There is also a possibility that volunteers who want to continue may have to stop due to concerns about the health risks to themselves or their family, as well as a greater need to focus on their career or business. This could result in volunteers having to scale back or stop their volunteering at any time. The nature of the pandemic means these barriers can still impact already returned volunteers and is likely to continue to impact on volunteering habits for the foreseeable future.


Volunteers wanted more support with information around guidelines, more joined up working between Governing Bodies, wider partners and the Government and practical help with implementing new processes and requirements. Not only are guidelines constantly updated and changed, they are not always easy to understand or to implement consistently. The need to keep up with changes, and then to translate them into club/group specific actions, is time consuming for volunteers. Sharing best practice and practical templates (e.g. risk assessments) across the sector will support volunteers in implementing the new ways of working.
Volunteers were Most Looking Forward to Seeing Others and Supporting Participants

Lockdown left many people across the country craving more human interaction. Responses regarding this were all connected to people and included the opportunity to see friends and support participants/members and children. The top emotions exhibited in responses were ‘joy’ and ‘anticipation’. Even those unsure about returning still had positive things to say about the benefits of seeing other people at their club/group however, they referenced ‘members’ more often than ‘friends’ suggesting they perhaps felt less of a connection to their club/group.

Frequent, Accurate, Open and Honest, Available and Personalised Communication is Vital to Future Success

Communication remains vital to club/group success even after reopening. Keeping volunteers up to date with changes, and how they are being implemented, is central to managing anxiety levels about returning. 77.8% of volunteers had a high level of satisfaction with club/group communications during lockdown. Five characteristics of communications were highlighted as being valuable and can be applied by all clubs/groups. These characteristics were: informative; frequent and accurate; open and honest; available; and personalised. When clubs/groups get this right, they make people feel valued, excited and trusting. When they don’t consistently get it right, they make people feel hesitant, confused and worried.

2.4 Recommendations

The report raises some concerns about the 14% of volunteers who were at risk of dropping out, those who expected their habits to change, and the pressures facing those at risk of burnout. It unearths a number of key challenges and barriers that need to be addressed in order to retain and protect volunteers. Understanding and responding to the future needs, anxieties, concerns and preferences of volunteers will be of paramount importance moving forward. The report concludes with a number of detailed recommendations (see Section 5 for full detail) which have been designed to support clubs/groups with their continued efforts to re-engage and retain their volunteers including:

- Understanding and addressing the needs and concerns of BAME groups.
- Making a plan to drive effective, on-going communication to aid re-engagement, retention and reduce anxiety.
- Providing additional support and information to ensure the effective and efficient application of Covid-19 guidelines and other legislation.
- Taking steps to reduce volunteer burnout including through re-engaging existing volunteers and building a pipeline of new volunteers.
- Taking steps to monitor and manage anxiety amongst volunteers and keeping volunteer welfare top of mind.
- Encouraging clubs/groups to sustain and promote the social element of volunteering.
3. Overview of Responses Received

This section provides a breakdown of the respondents who took part in the Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Volunteers Survey. It covers:

- Overall numbers of responses.
- Age profile of respondents.
- Gender breakdown of respondents.
- Ethnicity of respondents.
- Respondents with a disability or LTHC.
- Time spent volunteering each week.
- Duration of involvement in volunteering in a club/group environment.
- Volunteers who also participated in sport/activity at their club/group.
- Volunteer roles held by respondents.
- Volunteering in specific sports/activities.
- Volunteering in sports/activities by category.
- Geographical spread of respondents.

It is important to note that the survey was open to all and therefore the sample is not considered to be statistically representative of the make-up of all sports club/group volunteers in England. When compared to the volunteer profile identified in Active Lives there are both similarities and differences.
3.1 Overall Number of Responses
In total, 1,293 individuals completed the volunteers survey. The majority, 98.4%, of respondents were aged 16+, 2.2% of responses reflected the views of under-16s and 0.7% responses were provided on behalf of vulnerable adults.

3.2 Age Profile of Respondents
The age profile of the volunteers who responded was varied and included: 2.2% of respondents under 16, 9.8% aged between 16-34, 63.1% aged between 35 and 64 and 23.8% aged 65+. A further 1% of volunteers opted not to disclose their ages. Across all of the age bands measured, responses from volunteers aged 45+ were the most prevalent and made up 72.8% of all respondents. Young volunteers (those under 25) accounted for only 4.9% of respondents. Throughout this report respondents aged under 16 have been included within the analysis for volunteers under the age of 35.

3.3 Gender Breakdown of Respondents
57.1% of survey respondents were male and 41.5% were female. 0.1% of respondents identified their gender in another way and 1.3% preferred not to say.

3.4 Ethnicity of Respondents
The vast majority of volunteers who responded to the survey were White British (91.8%). 3.2% of respondents were White Other, 1.1% were Asian or Asian British (excluding Chinese), 0.5% were Black or Black British, 0.3% were Chinese, 0.8% reported their ethnicity as other and 2.4% opted not to disclose their ethnicity.

Commentary on BAME groups is limited in this report due to the sample size. Given the low proportion of responses from volunteers from Black, Asian, Chinese and Other minority ethnic groups, for statistical reasons, where possible these groups have been grouped together in the analysis as ‘BAME’ groups. White British and White Other Groups have also been grouped together for reporting purposes. 94.9% of respondents were from White British or White Other groups, 2.7% were from BAME groups and 2.4% preferred not to say.

3.5 Respondents with a Disability or Long-Term Health Condition (LTHC)
19.4% of volunteers who responded to the survey stated that they had a disability or LTHC, 77.6% said they did not and a further 3% chose not to say. Of those who had a disability or LTHC, the majority (76.6%) stated that this affected their physical health, 7.9% stated that it affected their mental health and 10.7% selected other. 4.8% of respondents preferred not to say.

3.6 Time Spent Volunteering Each Week
Respondents were asked how many hours, on average, they volunteered to support their club/group in a typical week before the Covid-19 crisis. The responses indicated that a significant number of volunteers had a strong volunteering habit; 81% of volunteers were providing 2+ hours a week, and 38% were providing 5+ hours a week. 17.9% said that they volunteered for more than 10 hours a week, 20.6% said between 5-10 hours a week, 11.8% said between 4-5 hours per week, 14.4% said between 3-4 hours per week, 16.6% said 2-3 hours per week, 13.1% said 1-2 hours per week and only 5.6% stated that they volunteered for 1 hour or less each week.
3.7 Duration of Involvement in Volunteering in a Club/Group Environment
Most respondents (71.4%) reported that they had been volunteering in a club/group environment for over 5 years. 3.5% were relatively new to volunteering in this environment, having been involved for less than a year. 25.1% had been involved for between 1-5 years and a further 51.7% had been volunteering in a club/group environment for over 10 years. The responses provided suggest that most respondents had a strong and repetitive volunteering habit.

3.8 Volunteers Who Participated in Sport/Activity at their Club/Group
63% of volunteers who responded to the survey stated that they also participated in sport/activity at their club/group.

3.9 Volunteer Roles Held by Respondents
The volunteers who responded to the survey occupied a wide variety of roles. 39.4% were on the Committee/Board or were a Trustee, Treasurer or Fixtures Secretary. A further 34.8% were Coaches, Instructors or Session Leaders. These two categories of volunteers made up 74.2% of all respondents. A much smaller proportion of respondents occupied other roles including Umpire/Official (6.5%), Safeguarding/Welfare Officer (3.6%), Stewards/Marshals/Events (3%), Facilities/Maintenance/Groundskeepers (2.4%), Media/Marketing/Fundraising (1.7%), Team Captain/Vice-Captain, not on committee (1%), Catering/Bar Support (0.9%), First Aid / Health and Safety (0.7%) and Kit/Equipment (0.4%). The remaining 5.6% said ‘other’.

3.10 Volunteering in Specific Sports/Activities
The survey received responses from volunteers from a wide range of sports/activities, a full breakdown is included in the Appendix.

3.11 Volunteering in Sport/Activity by Category
For the purpose of this piece of work, each sport/activity was grouped into one or more categories based on its characteristics. A full list of the sports/activities is included in the Appendix. The largest number of responses were received from Outdoor Pitch/Court Sports/Activities, Individual Indoor Sports/Activities, Individual Outdoor Sports/Activities, Water Sports, Team Indoor Sports/Activities and Martial Arts, Combat and Target Sports. A series of 6 ‘category’ reports have been created to highlight the key findings across each of these categories. A small number of responses were also received from Adventure Sports and Dance/Group Exercise/Movement and Walking however, due to the low returns from these categories, separate category reports have not been produced.
3.12 Geographical Spread of Respondents

92% of respondents provided postcodes that could be geocoded.

Map 1 shows that there was a good geographical spread of volunteer respondents with larger clusters living in more densely populated areas.

Map 2 shows the geographical spread of volunteers in relation to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD). It indicates that survey respondents were drawn from a mixture of deprived (darker areas on the map) and more affluent areas (lighter areas on the map).
4. Analysis of Responses

This section of the report analyses the survey responses in a way that explores several leading research questions including:

• Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed volunteers’ behaviour?
• How anxious are volunteers feeling about returning to their club/group?
• What are their main concerns are about returning?
• How likely are volunteers to return to their club/group once restrictions are lifted?
• What are the barriers to volunteers returning?
• What are the characteristics of returned volunteers?
• What are the characteristics of volunteers that are at risk of not returning?
• What support/reassurances are needed to encourage people to continue volunteering?
• What are volunteers most looking forward to about returning to their club/group?
• How satisfied were volunteers with communications from their club/group?
• How could clubs/groups improve their communication with volunteers moving forwards?

It explores the overall responses of volunteers and, where possible, highlights any notable findings based on the characteristics of respondents.

Note on Sample Sizes
The analysis in this section focuses on trends across the main demographic groups, volunteer roles and behaviours where sufficient sample sizes were received.

In identifying the key themes and significant differences, an analysis of the responses to quantitative questions was undertaken for groups of responses that totalled 40 or more. Where responses were lower, no headline conclusions have been drawn. Where relevant the number of responses (n) has been referred to in the text for clarification. The approach adopted has been to share as much data as possible. The tables in this section are only greyed out where a response/cell was less than 10. This ensures that the patterns of responses across different options remain clear, even when the number of responses isn’t big enough to confidently draw conclusions from it.

Clubs/groups, Governing Bodies and wider partners may wish to carry out their own research to help supplement these findings and provide additional insight.

It is noted that there is likely to be a degree of under-reporting in relation to those that are unlikely to return as they may have been less likely to see the surveys or less inclined to have completed them.
4.1 Change in Volunteering Habits

Key Findings

27.8% stopped/paused during lockdown.

Most likely to have stopped / paused:
- Females.
- People with a disability or LTHC.
- Under 35s.
- Those who volunteer less (0-1hr pw).

71.3% of volunteers continued.

Those who volunteered the most pre-lockdown were more likely to continue.

21.3% took on additional roles.

Almost 1 in 3 Volunteers Stopped/Paused During Lockdown

27.8% of respondents stopped/paused volunteering during lockdown. However, there was a high level of continuity with 71.3% continuing to volunteer in some capacity, even though they may not have been able to physically attend their clubs/groups.

Volunteering Behaviour During Lockdown (%)

Most Volunteers that Stopped/Paused did so Because of Covid-19

Of all volunteers that stopped/paused their volunteering efforts throughout lockdown, the majority did so because of Covid-19 restrictions (24.4%). The remaining 3.4% stopped/paused for another reason, unrelated to Covid-19.

More than 1 in 5 Took on Additional Responsibilities

21.3% of volunteer respondents took on additional roles during lockdown. Volunteers that did this were most likely to be in roles related to media / marketing, committees, health and safety or safeguarding. A small proportion (4.6%) continued in a new or different role.
Female Volunteers were More Likely to Have Stopped/Paused
Females (32%) were more likely to have stopped or paused their volunteering efforts than males (24.6%).

Younger Volunteers were More Likely to Have Stopped/Paused
Those aged under 35 were more likely to have stopped/paused volunteering (32%) compared to those aged 35-64 (26.8%) and those aged 65+ (27.5%). The main volunteering roles undertaken by volunteers aged under 35 were Coach/Instructor/Session Leaders (55.1%). The cessation of activities during lockdown and the ongoing Covid-19 related restrictions are likely to have impacted on these results.

Volunteers with a Disability or LTHC were More Likely to Have Stopped/Paused
More than 1 in 3 volunteers with a disability or LTHC had stopped/paused (35.1%) their volunteering efforts in comparison to approximately 1 in 4 of those without a disability or LTHC (26%). A range of different issues, from shielding to additional caring responsibilities, are likely to have impacted on their volunteering habits throughout lockdown and beyond.

Respondents who Volunteered Frequently or for a Longer Duration were More Likely to Have Continued
Those who volunteered least each week before lockdown (0-1 hours) were more likely to have stopped/paused during lockdown (52.8%), in contrast to those who volunteered for more than 5 hours per week (17.1%). There was a similar trend for those new to volunteering (less than 1 year) with 40% of this group having stopped/paused their efforts compared to 26.4% of those who had been volunteers for more than 5 years. This illustrates both the value of and the reliance on volunteers who either gave the most time each week and/or had been volunteering for an extended timeframe at their club/group.

Respondents in Coach/Instructor/Session Leader roles were Likely to have Stopped/Paused over Lockdown
41.1% of volunteers who held a Coach/Instructor/Session Leader role stopped/paused their volunteering during lockdown. In comparison, 7.7% of volunteers within a Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixtures Secretary role stopped/paused during lockdown. These two groups of volunteering roles made up the bulk of all responses. It is of note that many people in Coach/Instructor/Session Leader roles would have had no way to continue running sessions during lockdown which is likely to account for the drop off. At the time of the survey, clubs/groups had started to return and opportunities for frontline volunteers were starting to increase.

Summary
The pandemic has reiterated the commitment and value of volunteers to grassroots sport/activity. Volunteers responded positively to the challenge faced by lockdown with over 70% having continued in some capacity. This suggests a flexibility and willingness amongst existing volunteers to continue to engage with their club/group as well as take on new roles and provide additional time as required. This seemingly corresponds with the national effort/willingness of the general public to volunteer to support the nation’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, building a pipeline of new volunteers as part of club/group succession planning is key to ensuring that volunteers who don’t return are replaced to help reduce the burden on existing volunteers and avoid vacancies. This is particularly important given the added responsibility for clubs/groups to meet the requirements set out by Governing Bodies, wider partners and the Government as they return to play.
4.2 Anxiety Levels Among Volunteers

Most Volunteers Felt Some Level of Anxiety About Returning to their Club/Group
Volunteers were asked to rate their personal anxiety levels about returning to their club/group using a 5-point scale from 1 (‘Not At All Anxious’) to 5 (‘Extremely Anxious’). While 67.6% had some level of anxiety (rating themselves at least 2 on the scale), 13.5% rated themselves as 4 or 5 (showing more significant levels of anxiety). Approximately 1 in 3 volunteers had no anxiety about returning.

Key Findings
67.6% had some level of anxiety about returning. Almost one third had no anxiety at all.
13.5% had significant levels of anxiety.
People with a disability or LTHC were more likely to feel significantly anxious.
Anxiety levels strongly influence volunteering behaviours.

Anxiety Ratings of Respondents Based on a Scale of 1 to 5

Volunteers with a Disability or LTHC were More Likely to be Very/Extremely Anxious
23.1% of respondents with a disability or LTHC rated themselves as 4 or 5 on the anxiety scale, compared to 10.8% of respondents without a disability or LTHC. Additionally, those without a disability or LTHC were more likely to rate themselves as ‘Not At All Anxious’ (35.1%) compared to those with a disability or LTHC (21.9%).

Those ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning Showed the Highest Anxiety Levels
39.4% of those ‘at risk’ of not returning showed significant anxiety, rating their anxiety at 4 or 5 on the scale. In comparison, 13.5% of those that considered themselves likely or very likely to return and 6.2% of those that had already returned said the same. Respondents that listed themselves as ‘Very Unlikely’ to return were the most likely to be ‘Not At All Anxious’ (along with those who have already returned), which points to wider factors impacting on this group’s decision-making regarding return.

Anxiety Levels by Likelihood to Return %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Rating</th>
<th>1 – Not At All Anxious</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 – Moderately Anxious</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 – Extremely Anxious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already Returned</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>n&lt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
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<td>n&lt;10</td>
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<td>27.9%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
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<td>n&lt;10</td>
<td>n&lt;10</td>
<td>n&lt;10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>n&lt;10</td>
<td>n&lt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: where less than 10 people gave a specific response, the corresponding box in the table has been greyed out to avoid conclusions being drawn from too small a sample size.
There was Limited Variance in Anxiety Levels Between Genders
The percentage of respondents that answered against each anxiety rating was very similar for males and females. The biggest difference was between male (21.1%) and female (23.7%) volunteers that were moderately anxious (anxiety rating 3).

There were Slight Variations in the Anxiety Levels of Volunteers Across Different Age Groups
Volunteers under the age of 35 exhibited slightly lower anxiety levels about returning to their club/group, with 68.6% of this group rating themselves as 1 or 2 on the scale, compared to 63.2% of those aged 35-64 and 64.9% of those aged 65+. Volunteers aged 35-64 were the least likely to report being ‘Not At All Anxious’ (31%). Significant levels of anxiety regarding volunteering were evenly spread across the age groups, with no significant differences in those rating themselves as a 4 or 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety Levels of Volunteers Under 35 (%)</th>
<th>Anxiety Levels of Volunteers Aged 35-64 (%)</th>
<th>Anxiety Levels of Volunteers Aged 65+ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
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<td>30.1%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4%</td>
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<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1 = Not At All Anxious, 3 = Moderately Anxious and 5 = Extremely Anxious)

Volunteers that Expected to Commit the Same or More Time to Volunteering in the Future were Least Likely to be Anxious
37.7% (n=26) of those that expected to commit ‘a lot more time’, 30.2% of those that expected to commit ‘more time’ and 36.2% of those that expected to do the same were ‘Not At All Anxious’ about returning. Respondents who expected to volunteer less/a lot less time in the future were more likely to rate their anxiety as 4 or 5, as were those who were ‘Not Yet Sure’.
Respondents who had been Volunteering for Longer Appeared to be More Anxious

Respondents who had been volunteering for 5 years or less were somewhat more likely to consider themselves ‘Not At All Anxious’ (35.9%) compared to those who had volunteered for more than 5 years (30.9%). Volunteers that had been involved for 10+ years were the most likely to consider themselves significantly anxious with 15.4% of this group rating their anxiety at 4 or 5 compared to 11.6% of volunteers that had been involved for less than 10 years.

Summary

The majority of volunteers exhibited some level of anxiety about returning to their club/group. Increased levels of anxiety appeared to influence future volunteering behaviours with volunteers at risk of not returning to their role exhibiting higher levels of anxiety. Approximately 1 in 7 volunteers were significantly anxious about returning so it will be important that clubs/groups consider what actions and processes they can put in place to help alleviate these high levels of anxiety.

To help ensure that volunteers feel comfortable about returning, it would be beneficial for clubs/groups to take time to understand any anxieties about returning and any specific needs so that measures can be implemented to alleviate these. As volunteers’ behaviour may be continually affected by further restrictions and individual situations, clubs/groups should consider ongoing monitoring of their anxiety levels. Changes to levels of anxiety can then be captured any additional reassurances or processed to continually support their return can be implemented.
4.3 Volunteers’ Main Concerns

Respondents were not asked a specific question about their main concerns. However, in answering open questions about the challenges facing their return and the support they needed, three key concerns have been identified which were universal across all demographic groups and volunteer types. These are shown in the key findings diagram.

**Key Findings**

- **Long-Term Viability**
  - Fewer members = reduce revenues
  - New guidelines = extra cost
  - New guidelines = need more volunteers
  - Increased legal responsibilities
  - Facility access
  - Volunteer burn-out
  - Attractiveness of adapted experience
  - Lack of clarity from NGBs &/or Government
  - Different interpretations by members

**Impact of Return Rates and Guidelines on Costs**

- “We were struggling for volunteers before the lockdown and I anticipate this will only be more challenging in future.”
- “Fewer members and no way of fundraising means once our buffer funds run out that will be it for us.”
- “I don’t have a choice whether to volunteer or not - we have to take all the precautions we can and restart, otherwise we will probably go out of business.”
- “The longer judo clubs are closed - the less likely members will return once the[y] open the clubs again - as such we will likely be faced with building the club up again from scratch - not an easy task to repeat.”

**Legal Responsibilities**

- “The responsibilities for everyone’s safety has increased as a trustee/volunteer”.
- “I do often worry about club members suing the club due to things like GDPR, which is very stressful, and now with Covid-19 I wonder about people using it as a further opportunity to sue even though we are doing everything we can to return to sport safely.”

Volunteers were Worried about the Long-Term Viability of their Clubs/Groups

Regardless of their role, volunteers were concerned about the future viability of their club/group. There were concerns that clubs/groups won’t be able to survive a rise in costs, a fall in revenues and a shortfall of volunteers. For the clubs/groups that couldn’t open as early as other sports/activities, an additional concern related to losing participants/members to other sports/activities or commitments. Concerns relating to the future sustainability of clubs/groups seemed to override volunteers’ concerns for their own safety.
The Short-Term Logistics of Delivering Activities Within the Current Guidelines are Challenging

Some categories of sport/activity, particularly Individual Indoor and Team Indoor Sports/Activities, have had limited access to their previous training facilities. This means they can’t support or deliver to as many participants/members as they once could, which in turn risks participants/members leaving.

With volunteers facing additional work and protocols to fulfil their role, there is concern that more will burnout or dropout. Respondents linked the human and financial impact of this together.

- “Leaders are now doing extra more than before lockdown to meet members needs.”
- “This is going to massively increase the pressure on our coaches and leaders to offer more events which could lead to burn-out or losing club members due to insufficient opportunities to get on the water.”

There is concern that the adaptations to activity delivery, whilst necessary for health and safety reasons, will make the club/group experience less attractive for participants/members. From a volunteer’s perspective, this also means having to manage participant/member expectations and frustrations.

- “The challenge now is to engage the (significant) number of club members who are resistant to change and are expecting ‘normal service’ to resume.”

Facility Access

Volunteers were concerned that the guidelines from Governing Bodies, wider partners and the Government are unclear or too onerous. Volunteers also had specific concerns around the clarity of guidelines, how well they were being communicated to them and whether participants/members understood them.

There was Confusion About New Guidelines

Unclear Guidelines

Volunteers were concerned that the guidelines from Governing Bodies, wider partners and the Government are unclear or too onerous. Volunteers also had specific concerns around the clarity of guidelines, how well they were being communicated to them and whether participants/members understood them.

Changes / Lack of Clarity

Some volunteers felt there was confusion about what clubs/groups are required to do. They highlighted the role of Governing Bodies, wider partners and the Government in providing greater clarity and consistency. In some cases, clubs/groups still felt in the dark about what to do. Some volunteers felt they were being asked to meet guidelines that constantly change, which is causing frustration.

- “We are trying to plan for reopening but we need our governing body to come out with guidance first.”
- “It seems that Government guidelines change from week to week (e.g. 2m, then 1m, then 1m plus or numbers of people that can be in a group at any one time).”
- “All the ridiculous rules and guidelines that are being dreamed up by gov/scientists/leagues.”

Interpreting Guidance

Where guidelines are being communicated, it doesn’t mean they are being consistently understood and applied. There is worry that some don’t understand or choose not to follow the rules.

- “Lack of understanding by some of the NGB guidelines.”
- “My only concern is that there will be a few people who will not follow the rules and guidelines set out, therefore putting people at more risk.”
Summary
Volunteers were concerned about the long-term viability of their club/group and the impact of the short-term changes on how their sport/activity is delivered. From the comments, many clubs/groups don’t appear to have the financial reserves to cope with a long period of closure. Even if subscriptions/memberships have already been paid, clubs/groups have been losing revenue from incremental spend such as fundraising events and refreshments. Whilst it is not unique to the sport and physical activity sector, with the economy struggling, fundraising has become tougher at the same time as club/group reserves have declined.

Adapted experiences, and the curtailment of competitive seasons, has made club/group activity much less compelling for some participants/members. If this results in reduced numbers, it may add to the financial concerns of volunteers.

New guidelines have also impacted on how volunteers work and deliver activities, particularly if there is a lack of clear guidance to support volunteers. Whilst many seemed happy to adapt to these changes and do what needs to be done, lockdown has given others the chance to reflect on previous commitment levels and consider whether they really wanted to return, especially when their roles were likely to demand more time or responsibility.

To address this clubs/groups may want to consider how volunteer roles could be reorganised. Re-allocating workloads and breaking down roles into tasks, whether to new or existing volunteers, can help to avoid volunteer fatigue and burnout and could make the difference between keeping and losing some existing volunteers.

Clubs/groups could also explore whether technology can be used to help improve the efficiency of how they are run. Throughout lockdown many clubs/groups used digital platforms to continue to deliver and manage different aspects of their organisation. This is supported by responses from some volunteers, one of whom stated that; “Lockdown has meant some people have embraced technology and learnt how many opportunities it presents to involve more people/engage members more easily/run the club more efficiently”.

4.4 Likelihood of Return Among Volunteers

14% of volunteers were ‘at risk’ of not returning.

86% of volunteers had or were likely to return.

Those in direct delivery roles were more ‘at risk’ of not returning than those in Committee/Board etc. roles.

37.2% expected the time they put in to change:
• 13.7% expected to give less time or stop.
• 23.5% expected to give more.

If less volunteers return, there is more risk of burnout.

1 in 7 Volunteer Respondents were ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning
14% of volunteers were ‘at risk’ of not returning to their club/group (those who stated they were unsure, unlikely or very unlikely to return). This figure rose slightly to 15.6% of all Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders but was lower for all respondents in Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixtures Secretary roles (11.3%). Almost half of all ‘at risk’ volunteers (6.1%) were ‘unsure’ about whether they would return.

Considering the characteristics and trends present in ‘at risk’ volunteers may help to identify actions for clubs/groups to reduce the risk of these volunteers not coming back to their roles. Section 4.7 looks at these groups in more detail.

46.4% of respondents said they had already returned and a further 39.6% said they were likely or very likely to return. This suggests clubs/groups will see at least 86% of their volunteers return.

Key Findings

14% of volunteers were ‘at risk’ of not returning.

86% of volunteers had or were likely to return.

Those in direct delivery roles were more ‘at risk’ of not returning than those in Committee/Board etc. roles.

37.2% expected the time they put in to change:
• 13.7% expected to give less time or stop.
• 23.5% expected to give more.

If less volunteers return, there is more risk of burnout.
1 in 3 Volunteers Expected their Future Time Commitment to their Club/Group to Change

Volunteers were asked how much time they expected to be volunteering once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. It should be noted that this is their expected future workload, not necessarily the amount of time they wanted to be volunteering in the future. Across all respondents, 54.4% said they expected to have the same time commitments as before lockdown. 37.2% expected their input to change in the future which could ultimately be disruptive for clubs/groups. In particular, 13.7% said they expected to commit less or a lot less time or stop volunteering altogether. A further 2.9% (n=37) were undecided. This potential decline in volunteering frequency could however be offset by the fact that 23.5% of volunteers expected to give more or a lot more time. However, given the concerns regarding volunteer burnout raised in this report, without recruiting additional volunteers there is the risk that additional responsibilities could fall to a smaller pool of existing volunteers.

Looking at specific roles, 16.2% of Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders expected to do less/a lot less or no volunteering in the future. Meanwhile, 10.4% of Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixture Secretary related volunteers said the same. This suggests any shortfall in volunteering resources is more likely to be within delivery focused roles, which is concerning given the fact that the majority of sports/activities are having to deliver more sessions to fewer people to adhere to social distancing guidance and new sport specific regulations.

### Time Volunteers Expect to be Volunteering Post Lockdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Expected</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More time</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same as before</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less time</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot less time</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will stop volunteering</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will stop volunteering</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.7% Less / A Lot Less Time / Will Stop
23.5% More / A Lot More Time
54.4% Same as Before
4.5 Barriers to Returning

All volunteer respondents were asked an open text question about the concerns or challenges that have/might affect their future volunteering at their club/group. As such, three key barriers have been identified which were universal across all demographics and volunteer types. They are summarised in the diagram.

Volunteer respondents who reported that they were ‘unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’ to return focused more on the impact of their role, whereas those ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to return focused more on the risks and health concerns. Similarly, volunteers who were ‘Not At All Anxious’ focused more on the impact of the role whereas those with high levels of anxiety (4 or 5 on the anxiety scale) focused more on the risks associated with returning to their club/group.

In comparison to participants/members, volunteers were less likely to see social distancing as a barrier. The exceptions to this were volunteers under the age of 35 and volunteers with a disability or LTHC.

Key Findings

The main barriers to returning were:
• Additional requirements of volunteer role.
• Health risks.
• Additional time needed for other activities.

The Need to Spend Time on Other Activities Could Prevent Volunteers from Returning

Some volunteers specifically noted the impact of lockdown on their careers and businesses. Some may have to prioritise their personal income, which may mean reducing their volunteering efforts within clubs/groups to focus on other aspects of their lives. The uncertainty across the economy and changes to work patterns may also result in a reduction in the amount of time volunteers can dedicate to their club/group.

- “I run my own business and volunteering at the swim club takes up a lot of my time and I will need focus of keeping my business running.”
- “My work structure may have to change therefore I may not have the time I did before to volunteer, everything is very uncertain at the moment though!”
- “We don’t know what’s coming next, and hence don’t want to over-commit.”
The New Requirements Could Make Volunteering Less Appealing
Regardless of the volunteer role there are additional guidelines and protocols that volunteers will be expected to follow. For some respondents, these seemed onerous and a potential barrier to them returning. Volunteers saw their workload increasing but couldn’t see how their club/group could get additional volunteers to share the load. The additional requirements are likely to impact upon more than just a volunteer’s workload. In many cases they will also increase the level of responsibility and accountability that volunteers are feeling:

• “During normal times, the amount of admin etc that goes with volunteering will now be doubled due to the safety concerns and issues regarding the pandemic.”

• “Also the responsibilities that come with volunteering are getting greater all the time and again Covid-19 just adds to this responsibility.”

• “Having responsibility for the risk assessments etc for return to play. Having responsibility for all the players and volunteers. Being in a position where I feel forced to return before I am ready to return.”

The risk that these new requirements become a barrier has been amplified by some volunteers being able to take a break during lockdown. Some volunteer respondents appeared to feel refreshed and ready to return, whilst others questioned whether they want added responsibilities or were prepared to offer the same level of commitment as they did prior to lockdown. Some also realised that they might want to make a change going forward:

• “I’m concerned that I may not find the same level of energy and drive again due to having these five months off after volunteering for 10 years.”

• “Volunteering takes a lot of my time and it has been nice to have a break, I worry that the stress of being secretary of the club will return and will be more, due to keeping up with current Health and Safety regulations.”

The Health-Related Risks to Volunteers and Their Families were a Barrier for Some
For some volunteers, the focus was on their own health and personal safety. Older volunteers were more likely to feel they were high risk but even for those who not categorised as such, the risks were a key consideration ahead of return.

• “As I am in a high-risk group, age and health, I am unlikely to resume involvement until there is a vaccine or very effective treatment.”

• “I will only return to volunteering as a technical swimming official if the Club / competition organiser can convince me that the correct safety procedures are in place with regards to distancing and sanitising.”

For other volunteers, the concern with returning to their role was the potential risk to their family or friends. Although some volunteers would be happy to return, their family circumstances may make returning difficult.

• “My wife (who also volunteers at the same club) and I look after her 90-year-old at risk mother.”

Some volunteers felt they were being rushed back into roles they’re not comfortable doing. This links to the views of some that returning to activity within a club/group environment is too risky for everyone.

• “The risks are not getting less and until there is a vaccine, I don’t think we should be returning.”
1 in 4 Volunteers who had Not Returned Noted Health Concerns as a Significant Barrier

Volunteer respondents that had not yet returned to their club/group were asked about the extent to which four specific factors would have a negative impact on their return. Three of these factors – time spent elsewhere, involvement with friends and family and having less available time – didn’t appear to be significant. In each case, less than 10% of respondents rated their negative influence on return as high (rating them 4 or 5 on the scale, where 1 is ‘Not At All’ and 5 is ‘Extremely Likely’). The most significant factor was health concerns, which had a very different profile of responses. It is noted that there was no significant difference across age and gender.

Percentage of Respondents Rating Factors at 4 or 5

- Health Concerns: 26.6%
- Less Time Available: 6.8%
- Time Spent Elsewhere: 5.6%
- Family/Friends Involvement: 3.7%

The Perceived Impact of Health Concerns was Strongly Linked to Anxiety

Among volunteers with higher levels of anxiety (rating themselves at 4 or 5 on the anxiety scale), 89.1% felt health concerns would have a significant negative impact on their return. Conversely, only 5.1% of those who showed no or low levels of anxiety (rating themselves at 1 or 2 on the scale) felt that health concerns would have a significant negative influence on their return.

Volunteers with a Disability or LTHC were More Likely to See Health Concerns as a Barrier

Health concerns were the only factor with a notable difference in negative impact scores between volunteers with and without a disability or LTHC. 39.8% of those with a disability or LTHC felt health concerns would have a significant negative impact on their return compared to 22.6% of those without.

All Concerns were More Significant for those Less Likely to Return but Health Concerns Still Dominated

Amongst volunteers ‘at risk’ of not returning, all four factors were reported as likely to have a more significant negative impact. The percentage of ‘at risk’ volunteers who reported that a factor would have a negative impact (4 or 5 out of 5) was 42% for health concerns, 17.7% (n=32) for time spent elsewhere, 11.6% (n=21) for less available time and 7.8% (n=14) for family/friends involvement. Health concerns dominated, but proportionally time spent elsewhere saw the biggest jump in comparison to the overall national figures shown above.
Summary
There were three overarching reasons noted by volunteers as to why they may not return to their club/group including; health concerns, the anticipated/actual increase in their workload and other commitments requiring more time. Clubs/groups, and by extension Governing Bodies and wider partners, have some control of the workload barriers. There is no doubt that volunteers are being asked to do more, with all sports/activities facing additional processes or protocols. There are however opportunities to make volunteering easier and less time consuming through the provision of clear guidelines and practical templates (e.g. risk assessments) that are easy to understand and that avoid different interpretations. This support will not only reduce the workload of volunteers but also aid those whose volunteering frequency is likely to be impacted upon by other commitments.

Some aspects of volunteers’ health concerns are outside of a club/group’s control. The barriers that come from shielding family members, or concerns about personal safety, are mainly influenced by Government, the media and personal feelings and decisions. However, clubs/groups can ensure that they demonstrate that volunteers’ health is important to them. This can be achieved through:

• Regular communications about the rules and regulations that the club/group have in place and the impact they are having. These can be supported by sharing the stories of others who were concerned but have come back.
• Changes to the physical environment, such as those to support social distancing and increased hygiene. This will demonstrate that the club/group is doing something different to protect the health of participants/members and volunteers. While the changes can be disruptive for some, they also provide reassurance for the majority.
• Finding ways to adapt volunteer roles, rather than running the risk of losing volunteers completely. Clubs/groups should consider how they can continue to engage with volunteers that can’t or are not yet ready to return. For example, they could continue to run committee meetings virtually, even if some volunteers gather in one place, to avoid excluding those who are not yet ready to return. Clubs/groups may also want to consider whether some roles can be broken down into more bite sized tasks so that responsibilities can be re-allocated/shared.

It should be noted that volunteer churn is likely to have occurred even without the pandemic, meaning that some would have stopped volunteering throughout the lockdown period even if club/group activity continued to run. It is therefore unrealistic to expect a 100% volunteer return rate. One respondent said: “My intention is to retire from volunteering and return more to participation (I am now 73 years of age and need a break)”.

27
4.6 Characteristics of Returned Volunteers

Just Under Half of Volunteers had Returned to their Club/Group
At the time of the survey, 46.4% of volunteers surveyed had returned to volunteering at their club/group.

Females were Less Likely to Have Returned
50.8% of male volunteers had already returned compared to 40.5% of females. However, this gap is somewhat accounted for by the fact that 45% of females considered themselves very likely or likely to return, compared to 35.9% of males.

Volunteers with a Disability or LTHC were Less Likely to Have Returned
39% of volunteers who said they had a disability or LTHC had returned compared to 48.4% of volunteers without a disability or LTHC. Conversely, a higher proportion of volunteers with a disability or LTHC considered themselves very likely or likely to return (45.4%) compared to 38.2% of volunteers without a disability or LTHC.

Volunteers Over 65 were More Likely to Have Returned
50.3% of volunteers aged 65+ had already returned, compared to 46.8% of volunteers aged 35-64 and 37.2% of under-35s. However, 44.2% of volunteers under the age of 35 considered themselves very likely or likely to return compared to 39.1% of volunteers aged 35-64 and 38.3% of those aged 65+. Some of this age difference is likely to be due to different volunteering roles. 19.1% of Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders were under 35, compared to 7% of Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixture Secretary volunteers.

Volunteers who Also Participated at Their Club/Group were Slightly More Likely to have Returned
48.2% of volunteers who also participated at their club had already returned compared to 43.3% of those who don’t. Conversely, a higher proportion of volunteers that were not participants/members at their club/group were very likely or likely to return (44%) compared to those who also participated (37%).

Most Volunteers that had Returned Continued in the Same Roles as Before Lockdown
63.2% of volunteers that had returned continued to volunteer during lockdown in the same role. However, almost a third of already returned volunteers (32.3%) had also taken on additional responsibilities. 45.7% of those that had not returned, but considered themselves likely to, stopped/paused volunteering during lockdown. A further 30.9% of this group continued in the same role and 11.3% took on new responsibilities in addition to their existing role.
1 in 3 Returned Volunteers Expected to Commit More Time in Future
35.7% of volunteers that had already returned expected to commit more time to their club/group in the future. 58.7% expected their volunteering levels to stay the same as pre-lockdown.

Volunteers in a Delivery Role were Less Likely to Have Returned
51.2% of returned volunteers held a Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixture Secretary position. Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders accounted for the second largest proportion of all returned respondents (28.2%). The lower return rate amongst volunteers within direct delivery roles may be linked to the fact that most club/group-based activity ceased during lockdown. At the time of the survey, clubs/groups had started to return and hence opportunities for frontline volunteers were starting to increase.

Volunteers that had Already Returned were Less Likely to Feel Anxious About Returning
40% of those that had returned rated themselves as ‘Not At All Anxious’. A further 36% rated their anxiety as low (2 on the 5-point scale). Anxiety amongst volunteers who had not returned, but expected to, was more evenly spread. Interestingly, those that considered themselves ‘Likely’ to return had a significantly different anxiety profile to those that said they were ‘Very Likely’ to go back.
Returned Volunteers were Likely to Have Spent More Time Volunteering Each Week Prior to Lockdown
59.7% of those who volunteered for 10+ hours per week had already returned to their role, compared to 31.8% of those who gave 2 hours or less per week. Those who had been volunteering for 1 hour or less per week before lockdown had the greatest intention to return, with 58.3% stating that they were likely or very likely to return to their role.

Volunteers that had Already Returned were More Likely to Have Been Volunteering for More than 10 Years
49.3% of those who had been volunteering for 10+ years within a club/group environment had returned to their role, compared to 37% of those that had been volunteering for 2 years or less. With regards to intention to return, those that had been volunteering for 2 years or less were most likely to consider themselves ‘Likely’ or ‘Very Likely’ to return (48.1%) to their volunteering role.

Volunteers from Outdoor Pitch/Court Sports/Activities were More Likely to Have Returned
60% of respondents in this category stated that they had already returned, with a further 28.7% likely to do so. Volunteers from the Team Indoor Category considered themselves most likely to return in future, with 67.4% of volunteers reporting that they were ‘Likely’ or ‘Very Likely’ to return. These trends are likely to be largely driven by indoor and team sports being unable to resume play as quickly as some outdoor and individual sports/activities.

Returned Volunteers were More Likely to be Satisfied with Their Club/Group’s Communications During Lockdown
85% of returned volunteers ranked their satisfaction with comms from their club/group as 4 or 5 on the scale (1=’Not At All Satisfied’; 5=’Extremely Satisfied’). In comparison, 74.4% of those that had not yet returned but were likely to do so rated their satisfaction at 4 or 5.

Summary
Overall, there were some demographic differences between volunteers that had and hadn’t returned. The data suggested that males, people without a disability or LTHC and older volunteers were more likely to have returned than their counterparts. However, it is important to note that this does not necessarily reflect a lack of willingness on the side of those that have not returned – female volunteers, people with a disability or LTHC and younger volunteers were all more likely to consider themselves ‘Likely’ or ‘Very Likely’ to return. This suggests that there could be barriers impeding their return that do not apply to other demographic groups. The most significant disparities in returning volunteers seemed to occur between age bands. Exploring and identifying ways to encourage younger volunteers to return to clubs/groups would be a valuable action, especially given the value of retaining them within the volunteer workforce from a succession planning perspective.

The same principle can be applied to volunteering habits, as those that had already returned were more likely to have volunteered more often and for longer prior to lockdown. However, a higher proportion of respondents who had volunteered less often or for a shorter duration said they were likely to return. Respondents who held Committee/Board, Trustee, Treasurer or Fixtures related roles were also more likely to have returned. Additionally, almost one third of all respondents who had or were likely to return cited that they had taken on further responsibilities compared to before lockdown. Combined, these factors may be indicative of the future workload that volunteers face in terms of readying their club/group to return in line with guidance, necessitating the return of key volunteers and the attribution of extra responsibilities. It is therefore important that returned/returning volunteers do not become overwhelmed and overburdened with additional roles and responsibilities. Exploring ways to encourage more volunteers back and breaking roles down into smaller tasks should help to lessen the burden on the available workforce.
4.7 Characteristics of Volunteers ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning

14% of Volunteers were ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning
14% of the 1,293 volunteers surveyed can be categorised as ‘at risk’ of not returning to their club/group. 7.9% of all respondents rated themselves ‘Very Unlikely’ or ‘Unlikely’ to return to their club/group, and 6.1% were ‘Unsure’ about returning.

There was Limited Variance across Demographic Groups of Volunteers Classed as ‘At Risk’
Similarities were evident across gender, age, those with and without a disability or LTHC and those that do and do not also participate at their club/group. As such, the differing demographics of volunteers did not appear to impact upon the reasons why respondents were at risk of not returning to their volunteering role. Of all demographic factors, those who don’t participate at their club/group were least likely to be ‘At Risk’, whereas respondents under the age of 35 (n=29) were the most likely to be.

Volunteers Categorised as ‘At Risk’ – Demographic Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>With Disability/ LTHC %</th>
<th>Without Disability/ LTHC %</th>
<th>Under 35 %</th>
<th>35-64 %</th>
<th>65+ %</th>
<th>Also a Participant %</th>
<th>Not a Participant %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsure of Return</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>(n&lt;10)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely/Very Unlikely to Return</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Total At Risk</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: where less than 10 respondents gave a specific response, the corresponding box in the table has been greyed out to avoid conclusions being drawn from too small a sample size.

‘Unsure’ Volunteers were More Likely to have Stopped/Paused Volunteering over Lockdown
68.3% of volunteers that were unsure about returning stopped/paused their volunteering efforts over lockdown, of which 58% stopped/paused due to Covid-19 restrictions. In addition, 42.1% of volunteers that were unlikely/very unlikely to return also reported that they had stopped/paused volunteering. In comparison, only 23.5% of volunteers that were likely to return, or had already, stopped/paused volunteering during lockdown.
‘At Risk’ Volunteers Displayed More Significant Anxiety Levels

More volunteer respondents that were ‘at risk’ rated their anxiety as 4 or 5 (on a 5 point scale from 1 - Not At All Anxious' to 5 - ‘Extremely Anxious’) compared to those that had or were likely to return. Those ‘unsure’ about returning were most likely to be anxious, with 48.1% (n=38) reporting significant levels of anxiety (4 or 5). 30.4% (n=31) of those who were unlikely/very unlikely to go back said the same. In comparison, only 9.5% of those that have or will return showed significant anxiety levels. However, it is noted that a similar proportion of those who were unlikely to go back said they were ‘Not At All Anxious’ compared to those that had or expected to return.

Volunteers who Committed Less Time Each Week Prior to Lockdown were More Likely to be ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning

20.2% of respondents who volunteered for 2 hours or less each week were at risk of not returning, compared to 11.9% of those doing more than 4 hours per week. Volunteers who had been volunteering for less than 5 years were slightly more likely to be at risk of not returning (14.6%) compared to 13.8% of those who had been volunteering for more than 5 years.

Coach/Instructor/Session Leaders were More Likely to be ‘At Risk’ than Committee/Board Members

Of all respondents classed as ‘at risk’ of not returning, similar proportions were Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders (38.7%) and those in Committee/Board, Trustee, Treasurer or Fixtures Secretary roles (32%). It should however be noted that these two groups of volunteering roles made up the bulk of all volunteer responses (74.2%).
‘Unsure’ Volunteers were More Likely to be Dissatisfied with Their Club/Group’s Communications Throughout Lockdown
Volunteers who classed themselves as ‘Unsure’ about returning had the lowest level of satisfaction with communications (comms). 53.1% showed significant satisfaction levels and rated themselves at 4 or 5 on the scale (where 1 is ‘Not At All Satisfied’ and 5 is ‘Extremely Satisfied’). In comparison, 85% of returned volunteers and 74.4% of those likely to return rated their satisfaction with their clubs/group’s comms as 4 or 5. However, it is noted that a high proportion of those who were unlikely/very unlikely to return were still very satisfied with their club/group’s comms, with 71.5% rating their satisfaction at 4 or 5.

‘At Risk’ Volunteers were More Likely to Rate Specific Factors as a Significant Negative Influence on Their Return
When asked to rate how four specified factors (health concerns, time spent elsewhere, friends/family involvement and less time available) might negatively impact their return to volunteering, those classed as ‘at risk’ of not returning were more likely to rate each as having the potential to significantly negatively impact their return. For example, 42% of ‘at risk’ volunteers rated ‘Health Concerns’ as a significant negative influence on their return, rating it at 4 or 5 on the scale (where 1 is ‘Not At All’ and 5 is ‘Extremely’), in comparison to 26.6% of overall respondents.

Volunteers From Individual Indoor Sports/Activities were Most Likely to be ‘At Risk’ of Not Returning
Compared to other categories of sports/activities, volunteers from Individual Indoor Sports/Activities appeared to be most ‘at risk’ of not returning. 19.7% of volunteer respondents from this category reported that they were unsure, unlikely or very unlikely to return.
Summary

It is important for clubs/groups to consider what they can do to encourage volunteers ‘at risk’ of not returning back to their club/group. Despite the majority of volunteers ‘at risk’ reporting that they had stopped/paused volunteering throughout lockdown, there is an opportunity for clubs/groups to encourage and support the return of these volunteers following their emergence from lockdown.

Volunteers ‘at risk’ of not returning were more likely to report significant anxiety levels (4 or 5) than those who were planning to return or had already done so. Finding ways to alleviate anxiety amongst volunteers is seen as an important action to help encourage return. Whilst anxiety may not impact all non-returners, this focus could contribute to the return of those who are ‘Unsure’, who were the most anxious.

Volunteers who were unsure about returning to their club/group were less likely to be satisfied with their club/group’s communications and efforts to stay connected with them over lockdown. Whilst this cannot be addressed retrospectively, improving communications in line with suggestions from volunteers could help to prevent those at risk of not returning from dropping out.

‘At Risk’ volunteers were the most likely to rate ‘health concerns’ as the most significant negative influence affecting their return. It is recommended that clubs/groups explore ways to help volunteers feel more comfortable about returning from a health perspective, which could include; adapting roles, having tasks that can be completed virtually or explaining the benefits of the safety protocols that are in place.
4.8 Information, Support and Reassurances to Encourage Volunteers

Respondents were asked what information, help or guidance would support or encourage them to continue volunteering in the coming weeks and months while Covid-19 restrictions remain. Three key themes emerged across all demographic groups and types of volunteer which related to the guidelines, actions by Government and Governing Bodies and managing risks, summarised in the diagram.

**Key Findings**

Volunteers Wanted Help Making Guidelines Easier to Keep Up With
Volunteers have many new rules and guidelines that they need to follow themselves and implement for the participants/members they support to ensure safe working practices at their club/group. They therefore need support with both keeping up with the changing situation and being able to quickly understand what is required of them.

Volunteers wanted to be kept updated about changes to Government and Governing Body guidelines. It is important that the provision of these guidelines is not a one-off exercise. As restrictions are ever changing it is important that they are updated and so the provision of any guidelines will need to be ongoing and done in a way that clubs/groups can digest and implement efficiently and effectively.

- “Very clear guidelines on what we can and can’t do.”
- “Clear guidance from [the] NGB.”

While passing on the guidelines and information does help volunteers in the first instance, the provision of practical, user friendly information and resources will further support volunteers.

- “Clear bullet point summary of the guidance [with] real examples.”
- “Support interpreting what changing guidelines mean in practical terms.”

Greater Alignment and More Clarity on Implementing Guidance Is Required
More clarity from Government, as well as Governing Bodies, was a popular request. The issue of guidelines being open to interpretation is important, as there is a need for rules to be consistently adhered to and enforced.

- “It’s about clear advice not vague guidelines that can be interpreted any number of ways.”
- “I feel the guidelines have been very grey so far and can be interpreted differently”.
- “Clear guidance and support regarding guidelines, officials i.e. county FA carrying out spot checks at club venues to ensure adherence.”
To help with the consistency, some volunteers called for greater alignment between the guidelines and announcements made by Government and the Governing Bodies.

- “Guidance from our governing body is lacking and follows behind government announcements by a significant delay.”
- “Joined up thinking between government announcements and sporting bodies.”

More Information on Managing Covid-19 Related Risks is Required
Volunteer requests for clear guidelines were partially driven by the need for robust risk management. As such, volunteers also asked for more information on the risks to both themselves and participants/members, as well as practical help with risk assessments.

- “Up to date information and the ability to cancel if the risks get too high.”
- “Having enough information about the risks available.”
- “Risk analysis and management (practical tips not just reiterating rules that we already know).”
- “Up to date guidance and templates for any risk assessments etc.”

Summary
Much of the support that volunteers asked for can be summarised under improved communication. However, the issues that many volunteers cited were not with the volume of information received but the ability to quickly understand what is important and what to do with it. Providing this clarity, in a timely manner, is hard when the clubs/groups are waiting on Governing Bodies who in turn are waiting on Government. However, any opportunities to share successful communications and best practice across clubs/groups, different sports and the wider sports sector is likely to be helpful and well received. While each club/group is different, benefits could be achieved from sharing resources and creating templates. For example, many of the requested “practical tips” were around risk assessments, which would be applicable to multiple sports/activities and clubs/groups.
4.9 What Volunteers were Most Looking Forward To

Unless volunteers answered that they would not return or were ‘Very Unlikely’ to, they were asked an open question about what they were most looking forward to when their club/group reopened. The responses all related to people and the opportunity to see friends and support participants/members and children.

Volunteers were Most Looking Forward to Seeing Other Volunteers and Participants/Members at Their Club/Group Again

This was a combination of being able to see their friends again and being able to see participants/members enjoying their sport/activity again. This is understandable given that more than half (51.6%) of respondents have been volunteering for 10+ years.

- “Being with friends again.”
- “The social aspect - seeing other people who you have been volunteering with for years and who have become good friends”
- “Meeting friends, [and] organising fixtures”.

Not surprisingly, comments reflected the emotions of joy and anticipation. Some volunteers reflected on seeing the enjoyment of their participants/members. Others, who were also participants/members of their club/group, reflected on the shared love and enjoyment for the sport/activity that they undertake.

- “Being able to see our players returning and playing matches again and seeing big smiles and some happiness!”
- “See all my fellow club members enjoying the sport we all love - NETBALL!”

Looking forward to seeing people was the dominant theme across all demographics and volunteer types.

Key Findings

The ‘people’ aspect of volunteering was a key part of what respondents were most looking forward to.

Volunteers were most looking forward to:
- Seeing friends and other volunteers.
- Supporting members and children to participate.

What Volunteers are Looking Forward to (Top 5 Topics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging out</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 5 Emotions About Return

Number of mentions

Key Findings

The ‘people’ aspect of volunteering was a key part of what respondents were most looking forward to.

Volunteers were most looking forward to:
- Seeing friends and other volunteers.
- Supporting members and children to participate.
Volunteers who were Unsure About Returning were Also Motivated by Seeing Other People Again

Volunteers who were unsure about returning did highlight elements of club/group activity which they were looking forward to. Seeing others was again the driving motivation, though this cohort talked about participants/members more often than friends. This suggests they may feel slightly less engaged with or connected to their club/group.

- “Seeing other club members.”

Unfortunately, those who were unlikely to return could find nothing positive to say, apart from “looking forward to throwing in the towel”.

Summary

Lockdown left many people across the country craving more human interaction. Clubs/groups can use this to their advantage, “selling” the social benefits of returning to those who are still unsure. However, this may only work in settings where socialising is possible. If clubhouses are closed or unavailable, or groups are training at different times, locations or in reduced numbers, then volunteers at risk of not returning may struggle to find a compelling reason to return. As such, having an online or virtual social offer could continue to be of value for clubs/groups going forward.
4.10 Volunteer Satisfaction with Club/Group Communications

**Key Findings**

- 7.8% of volunteers were dissatisfied with comms from their club/group.
- 77.8% were extremely satisfied with their club/group’s comms.
- Those ‘at risk’ of not returning were less likely to be satisfied with comms from their club/group.
- Good communications can aid return and retention by:
  - Helping to alleviate anxiety.
  - Keeping people connected.

**Most Volunteers Displayed High Satisfaction Levels with Their Club/Group’s Communications**

77.8% of volunteer respondents rated their satisfaction with the communications from their club/group throughout lockdown as 4 or 5 on the scale given (where 1 is ‘Not At All Satisfied’ and 5 is ‘Extremely Satisfied’). Only 7.8% reported themselves as dissatisfied, rating their satisfaction at 1 or 2 on the scale.

**Older Volunteers were More Likely to Display High Levels of Satisfaction**

Volunteers aged 65+ were the most satisfied with their club/group’s communications throughout lockdown, with 86.7% rating their satisfaction at 4 or 5 on the scale. The proportion of volunteers under 35 and aged between 35-64 that gave the same rating were similar to each other but lower than the 65+ group. 74.4% of under 35s and 75.5% of those aged 35-64 rated their satisfaction with their club/group’s communications at 4 or 5.
Some Demographic Characteristics and Volunteering Habits had Little Effect on Satisfaction
It is noted that there were no significant differences in satisfaction based on:
• Respondents’ gender.
• Whether respondents had a disability or LTHC.
• How long respondents had been volunteering for prior to lockdown.
• How often respondents volunteered each week prior to lockdown.

Volunteers that had Already or were Likely to Return Showed Higher Satisfaction Levels
80.1% of respondents that had already returned, or were very likely or likely to, rated their satisfaction with their club/group’s communication at 4 or 5 on the scale, compared to 63.6% of volunteers who were ‘at risk’ of not returning.

Volunteers’ Satisfaction Levels Based on Likelihood of Return (%)

(1 = ‘Not At All Satisfied’ and 5 = ‘Extremely Satisfied’)

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40
Some Categories of Sport/Activity Showed Higher Satisfaction Rates Amongst Volunteers

Respondents who volunteered in sports/activities from within the Outdoor Pitch/Court and Individual Outdoor categories demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction with communications from their clubs/groups throughout lockdown in comparison to volunteers from other categories. It should be noted that the higher levels of satisfaction from volunteers within these categories may, in part, have been a reflection of the more positive communication content given these categories were likely to have returned before other club/group based sports/activities.

Summary

Although the survey did not explore details around types of communication, the findings indicated that clubs/groups had been regularly engaging and communicating with volunteers to ensure they are up-to-date with the latest developments on returning to activity. Volunteers also noted that they had received more generalised communications to encourage activity and take part in social events to help ensure that they remained engaged throughout lockdown.

The frequency of communication seems to have helped clubs/groups to achieve high levels of satisfaction from the majority of volunteers, with no significant differences across different demographics and types of volunteers (including frequency and longevity of their involvement). The biggest difference in satisfaction levels was between volunteers that have already or were likely to return to their role in comparison to the satisfaction of volunteers at risk of not returning. As may be expected, volunteers who had returned recorded higher levels of satisfaction with the communications received from their club/group, when compared to those at risk of not returning.

To ensure that volunteers at risk of not coming back are provided with information, guidance and assurances to alleviate any fears that they may have regarding their return to activity, clubs/groups are encouraged to increase their communication with these volunteers. Increased communications can be used to outline all of the process and procedures that have been put in place to ensure safe working environments for these volunteers.
4.11 Improving Communications

Key Elements of Effective Communication
An analysis of the responses from volunteers about what could be done to improve communications indicated that the key elements of effective communication include:

- **Informative**
The main factor of effective communication to club/group volunteers is information. This was consistent across all demographic groups and sports/activities. Information relating to the current position of a club/group in terms of their reopening, proposed timelines for reopening and being clear about what steps are being taking to ensure a safe return for all were frequently cited requests for information.

- **Frequent and Accurate**
There was an expectation amongst volunteers that their club/group will communicate with them at least weekly, via email or newsletter updates in addition to more story-based social media posting. Volunteers also suggested that accurate information needs to be regularly updated on their club/group’s website, as this remains the first port of call for many.

- **Open and Honest**
Clubs/groups should ensure that all volunteers get the same information at the same time to avoid the filtering of inaccurate information.

- **Personalised**
Communications sent out to volunteers should be personalised if at all possible.

- **Available on a Range of Platforms**
All communications should be made on a range of different platforms including the official club/group website as well as via emails, in newsletters and on other digital platforms (e.g. social media channels, WhatsApp etc.). Individual volunteers will have their own preferences on how they like to receive information, so it is important not to assume that all subscribe to any one method.
Volunteers Displayed Different Emotions About Club/Group Communications

Further analysis of the qualitative responses captured a range of emotions relating to the communications received by volunteers from their club/group throughout lockdown. Emotions captured from volunteers were both positive and negative and included:

- Valued, grateful, satisfied, optimistic, excited, happy, trusted and expectant.
- Hesitant, nervous, confused, worried and neglected.

The negative emotions associated with communications received by volunteers are likely to have a direct impact on their propensity to return. It is therefore important for clubs/groups to consider the key elements of effective communication outlined by volunteers to safeguard against the negative emotions that have been apparent for some.

Summary

Overall, responses showed that clubs/groups have been largely successful in communicating with their volunteers throughout lockdown. Volunteers outlined a number of key elements that can help to improve club/group communications in the future. Through the adoption of these improvements, clubs/groups can also seek to reduce the negative emotions that some volunteers associated with communications throughout lockdown. In turn, this could help to reduce some of the barriers and concerns that volunteers had about returning.
5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion
Sports clubs/groups continue to play a vital role in the delivery of grassroots sport in local communities and their value must not be overlooked. They provide opportunities for people to volunteer, socialise and learn new skills whilst also taking part in their preferred activities. Clubs/groups can and do play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of their local communities but also provide the opportunity for volunteers to give something back and build their transferrable skills.

Throughout the pandemic, volunteers have been at the heart of keeping their clubs/groups going. Most clubs/groups have faced unprecedented challenges including stopping their activities, securing their premises, juggling their finances, making things digital and reimagining their offer at speed in order to keep in touch with their participants/members. Some have gone even further, redoubling their efforts to support not just their own participants/members/volunteers but relief efforts in their local area. When lockdown restrictions began to ease, volunteers faced the additional challenges of reopening/re-accessing facilities, assessing and addressing Covid-19 related risks, kick starting their activities, adapting to social distancing, increasing cleaning/hygiene protocols, meeting other Governing Body, wider partner and Government guidance and enticing participants/members and indeed other volunteers back to activity. The scale of these challenges show no signs of reducing anytime soon but the grit, determination, commitment and passion of the sector’s volunteer workforce continues to shine through.

Clubs/groups will continue to rely on volunteers to survive and thrive. The pandemic has helped to re-emphasise the value, contribution and commitment of volunteers to grassroots sports and activities.

The findings of this report show that the majority of volunteers, if they had not done so already, expected to return to their club/group following the easing of lockdown restrictions. However, the report also raises some concerns about a proportion of volunteers at risk of dropping out, those who expected their habits to change and the pressures faced by those who do the most would therefore be at risk of burnout. It has unearthed a number of key challenges and barriers that need to be addressed in order to retain and protect volunteers throughout the current period of change and uncertainty. Understanding and responding to the future needs, anxieties, concerns and preferences of volunteers will be of paramount importance moving forward. Ensuring appropriate and regular forms of communication with volunteers is central to this. Restrictions are likely to remain for many more months. As a result, the findings within this report will continue to provide an important reference point for Governing Bodies, wider partners and clubs/groups as local sports delivery continues to adapt.
5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to be a starting point. They reflect tangible actions that can be taken to address some of the recurring themes highlighted within this research. Some Governing Bodies, wider partners and clubs/groups may already be implementing some, if not all, of these processes and priorities. Whilst the recommendations outlined within this report should be reviewed and actioned in the short term to support the return of volunteers, they should not be considered as standalone, one-off recommendations. During the last few months, clubs/groups and wider partners have learned lessons that should also be applied to ‘business as usual’. As clubs/groups, their participants/members and volunteers continue to live with Covid-19 in the longer term these recommendations should be continually reviewed, addressed and adapted to better support volunteers.

Responses to this survey from BAME groups were extremely low. In striving to tackle under-representation and provide opportunities for all, it is important for clubs/groups to not only offer inclusive opportunities but work proactively to ensure the needs and concerns of BAME groups are fully understood and addressed. It is recommended that further research is undertaken by clubs/groups, their Governing Bodies and wider partners on how Covid-19 has and is likely to continue to impact on people from BAME groups.

The majority of volunteers were satisfied with the communications that they received from their club/group throughout lockdown, particularly those that had already returned. Effective on-going communications will be vital, not only to re-engage those that were yet to return or at risk of not returning, but also to alleviate anxieties, reduce concerns and maintain the engagement of those who continued or returned. Club/group communication has a crucial role to play in managing any concerns relating to health and safety, the implementation of new practices and procedures and how to apply and enforce guidelines. Different volunteers will have different preferences in relation to how they are communicated with and the channels they like to use. Clubs/groups are recommended to make a plan to drive their communications moving forward. It is suggested that this plan includes:

- **Information people need** including facts and reassurance on implementing and enforcing guidance in order to keep people safe.
- **The format and timings of communications.** When it comes to communications, one size does not fit all. It is recommended that key messages are repeated consistently and across multiple channels including online, telephone, text and messaging services like WhatsApp. Considering the timing and format of communications is a vital component of developing a Communications Plan. Club Matters is committed to developing further advice and guidance on the different techniques clubs/groups can use.
- **Catering for the needs of different groups.** Some demographic groups, such as females and those with a disability or LTHC, were more at risk of not returning. Checking that these groups don’t feel excluded by current forms of communication and updating the approach if needed is recommended. Building and maintaining a diverse pool of volunteers is encouraged to enhance clubs/groups.
- **Using appropriate messaging to remind people what they love about volunteering** by referencing the things they are most looking forward to about returning. Promoting the social benefits alongside the fact that volunteers will be able to see participants/members taking part and enjoying sport/activity again are likely to be powerful hooks for re-engaging volunteers, particularly those unsure about returning. Maintaining a focus on this as well as helping to allay people's concerns is an important balance to achieve.
- **Showcasing good news stories** through photos and quotes from returned volunteers, participants/members.
- **Regularly saying thank you** to volunteers to remind them that they are appreciated.
The top request from volunteers when asked about their support requirements was better information about Government and Governing Body guidelines and how they should be applied. Due to the ever-changing nature of Covid-19 and the regular changes to Government advice, clubs/group are required to regularly update the procedures that they may have implemented. To ensure consistency, help ensure safe working practices and the effective and efficient application of new guidelines, volunteers wanted support to keep up to date with changing guidelines and be able to quickly understand what is required of them. This includes helping them with more onerous risk management processes, so they don’t feel exposed if something goes wrong.

In order to support volunteers with this, the provision of practical template documents, simple checklists, user friendly information and resources would be helpful. Covering existing areas of legislation around GDPR and health and safety would also be beneficial and may help to alleviate concerns around liability. Governing Bodies, wider partners and Club Matters have already produced resources designed to support clubs/groups, which should be expanded and revised as needed. The sharing of best practice for club/group volunteers (e.g. templates, guidelines and practical resources) across different clubs/groups, sports and sector partners is also encouraged.

It is evident that the most committed volunteers pre-lockdown were the ones that continued to contribute throughout lockdown and were more likely to have taken on additional roles. There was concern among volunteers about the additional workload required to implement Covid-19 related guidelines and the impact that these will have on their ability to deliver activities, keep things running smoothly and meet the needs/expectations of their participants/members. Respondents recognised that this will demand more time and lead to increased levels of responsibility. Whilst many volunteers seemed happy to work with the changes and do what needs to be done, this may lead to volunteer burnout. There is therefore the need to:

• **Involve and secure input from as many existing volunteers as possible** to enable the breaking up of roles/tasks, so these can be spread to help avoid burnout.
• **Continue to embrace technology and encourage remote working** as a more flexible way for volunteers to contribute and create efficiencies within the workload of volunteers.
• **Re-engage volunteers who haven’t returned yet** (including ad-hoc and infrequent volunteers) to ensure the workload can be spread across more people. This will require being flexible about how people return, and how roles can be adapted to enable them to contribute. For example, moving them into roles that don’t require as much face-to-face contact, or ensuring they can contribute from home can support return. This will also require strong on-going communications.
• **Build a pipeline of new volunteers** to fill any gaps and allow for wider sharing of workloads. Identifying potential new volunteers as part of a club/group’s succession planning process will provide short and long-term cover for vacant volunteering roles. The high proportion of volunteers that also participate at their club/group suggests that recruitment can come from within and outside of the participant/membership base. When recruiting new people it is advisable to sell the benefits of volunteering including; skills development, meeting new people and the opportunity to help the local community. Volunteering can help to provide valuable, CV enhancing opportunities which are likely to have even greater appeal in such an uncertain economic climate. The Club Matters team are committed to working with Sport England’s Volunteering Team and wider partners to boost the advice and resources available to clubs/groups in this area.
Monitor and manage anxiety amongst volunteers and keep volunteer welfare top of mind.

Whilst the majority of volunteers continued to volunteer throughout lockdown, clubs/groups cannot afford to assume that just because volunteers continued or resumed they will not be anxious about the risks of return or those associated with their ongoing involvement. 13.5% of volunteers rated their anxiety as significant and anxiety was a leading factor affecting return. Whilst wider societal factors and changes are likely to significantly impact on volunteer anxiety levels, clubs/groups can play an important role in managing anxiety amongst their volunteer workforce.

It is important that clubs/groups make efforts to monitor and understand what is making their volunteers feel anxious and identify ways to address this through their operations and communications. This includes monitoring which volunteers appear more anxious, and/or are returning in fewer numbers. For example, coaches/instructors in some sports felt they need to be close to participants to support them with learning new techniques. This could make them more anxious about returning than a committee member who can continue their role remotely. Likewise, those in roles where they feel liable for any breakdown in the Covid-19 safety procedures may have greater levels of anxiety. Club Matters will continue to work with relevant partners with a view to promoting resources to help clubs/groups manage anxiety and keep the welfare of their volunteers top of mind.

Encourage clubs/groups to sustain and promote the social element of volunteering.

Both volunteers and participants/members were strongly looking forward to getting back to the club/group environment so that they could see others again. Clubs/groups are much more than just a place to volunteer time or participate. They play an important role in keeping people connected, building relationships and establishing friendships that continue beyond the club/group. With a focus on social distancing, and the need to restrict gatherings before/after sessions, there is a risk that the club/group environment loses the heart of what makes it special. This role has become even more important, with the isolating effect of lockdown having a negative impact on mental health and the ability to socialise.

While formal social events may not be possible in the short-term, clubs/groups and local partners need to try and find ways to help people stay connected. This could be through ensuring volunteers that are more comfortable with face-to-face interactions aren’t getting ‘stuck’ in roles where they don’t see people, or through continuing the online social offer and events (quizzes, small group conversations, social media challenges) that enabled volunteers to stay engaged with each other and participants/members.
APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION (VOLUNTEERS)
Please tell us which age category you are in:

**Age Distribution (% of responses)**

- Under 16: 2.2%
- 16-24 years: 3.1%
- 25-34 years: 4.1%
- 35-44 years: 14.2%
- 45-54 years: 26.3%
- 55-64 years: 26.1%
- 65-74 years: 18.2%
- 75-84 years: 6.5%
- 85+ years: 1.9%
- Prefer not to say: 0%

Do you have a disability or long-term health condition?

**Disability or long-term health condition (%)**

- No: 77.6%
- Yes: 19.4%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

**Disability or long-term health condition (#)**

- No: 1
- Yes: 251
- Prefer not to say: 29

Please tell us if your condition or illness affects you in any of the following ways?

**Disability or long-term health condition - Detail (%)**

- Physical health condition or illness: 14.6%
- Mental health condition or illness: 7.3%
- Other: 16.7%
- Prefer not to say: 4.8%

**Disability or long-term health condition - Detail (#)**

- Physical health condition or illness: 119
- Mental health condition or illness: 20
- Other: 27
- Prefer not to say: 12

Total Responses: 1,293k
Volunteers Survey Responses

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, were you involved in taking part in a sport or physical activity as part of a formal or informal club or group?

Which of the following best reflects your ethnic group or background:
Volunteers Survey Responses

In relation to your gender, please tell us how you identify:

Gender (% of responses)

- 61.5% As female
- 37.4% As male
- 0.9% In another way
- 0.2% Prefer not to say

Gender (# of responses)

- 536 As female
- 732 As male
- 0 In another way
- 0 Prefer not to say

Which sport or physical activity are you most involved with at your club/group?

Main Sport (% of responses)

- 14.4% Football
- 14.2% Cricket
- 9.3% Rugby Union (including touch)
- 8.8% Running / Athletics / Jogging
- 8.3% Badminton
- 5.3% Squash / Racquetball
- 4.6% American Football
- 4.3% Netball (indoor)
- 4.2% Tennis (indoor)
- 4% Table Tennis
- 3.4% Archery
- 2.1% Gymnastics / Trampolining
- 1.8% Croquet
- 1.4% Handball
- 1.3% Water Skiing / Wakeboarding
- 1.2% Swimming (indoor) / Diving / Wa
- 1% Futsal / Football (indoor)
- 0.8% Netball (outdoor)
- 0.7% Rowing
- 0.6% Skiing / Snowboarding
- 0.5% Table Tennis
- 0.5% Handball
- 0.5% Basketball
- 0.3% Badminton
- 0.2% Basketball
- 0.2% Netball (outdoor)
- 0.2% Rowing
- 0.1% Skiing / Snowboarding
- 0.1% Wakeboarding
- 0.1% Wakeboarding
- 0.1% Rowing

Main Sport (# of responses)

- 118 Football
- 116 Cricket
- 93 Rugby Union (including touch)
- 86 Running / Athletics / Jogging
- 81 Badminton
- 65 Squash / Racquetball
- 57 American Football
- 50 Tennis (indoor)
- 47 Table Tennis
- 46 Gymnastics / Trampolining
- 42 Swimming (indoor) / Diving / Wa
- 38 Croquet
- 36 Water Skiing / Wakeboarding
- 35 Netball (indoor)
- 34 Archery
- 31 Reading / Athletics / Jogging
- 29 Rowing
- 28 Swimming (indoor) / Diving / Wa
- 28 Gymnastics / Trampolining
- 27 Badminton
- 25 Equestrian Sports / Horse Riding
- 25 Equestrian Sports / Horse Riding
- 22 Futsal / Football (indoor)
- 22 Water Skiing / Wakeboarding / X
- 21 Basketball
- 20 Futsal / Football (indoor)
- 19 Badminton
Volunteers Survey Responses

On average, in a typical week before the Covid-19 pandemic, how many hours did you spend volunteering in this role?

**Time Spent Each Week (%) of responses**

- 0 to 1 hour: 5.6%
- 1+ to 2 hours: 12.1%
- 2+ to 3 hours: 18.6%
- 3+ to 4 hours: 16.4%
- 4+ to 5 hours: 11.6%
- 5+ to 10 hours: 20.4%
- More than 10 hours: 17.8%

**Volunteers that also Participate**

- #15 (36.6%)
- #16 (30.9%)
- #17 (10.8%)

**Time Spent Each Week (# of responses)**

- 0 to 1 hour: 72
- 1+ to 2 hours: 173
- 2+ to 3 hours: 215
- 3+ to 4 hours: 166
- 4+ to 5 hours: 152
- 5+ to 10 hours: 286
- More than 10 hours: 221

Do you also participate at the club/group where you volunteer?

**Longevity of Volunteering (%) of responses**

- 0 to 1 year: 3.0%
- 1+ to 2 years: 4.3%
- 2+ to 3 years: 6.5%
- 3+ to 5 years: 12.3%
- 5+ to 10 years: 19.7%
- More than 10 years: 51.7%

**Longevity of Volunteering (# of responses)**

- 0 to 1 year: 46
- 1+ to 2 years: 63
- 2+ to 3 years: 84
- 3+ to 5 years: 159
- 5+ to 10 years: 261
- More than 10 years: 688
Volunteers Survey Responses

Which of the following best describes your main volunteer role?

**Role Held (% of responses)**

- Committee / Board / Trustee / Treasurer / Fixtures: 36.6%
- Committee / Board / Trustee / Treasurer / Fixtures: 36.6%
- Coach / Instructor / Session Leader: 6.3%
- Umpire / Official: 5.6%
- Safeguarding / Welfare Officer: 4.6%
- Other: 2.9%
- Facilities / Maintenance / Groundskeeper: 2.6%
- Media / Marketing / Fundraising: 1.7%
- Team captain / Vice-captain (not on committee): 1%
- Catering / Bar Support: 0.9%
- First Aid / Health and Safety: 0.7%
- Kit / Equipment: 0.4%

**Role Held (# of responses)**

- Committee / Board / Trustee / Treasurer / Fixtures: 519
- Committee / Board / Trustee / Treasurer / Fixtures: 450
- Coach / Instructor / Session Leader: 66
- Umpire / Official: 32
- Safeguarding / Welfare Officer: 47
- Other: 38
- Facilities / Maintenance / Groundskeeper: 21
- Media / Marketing / Fundraising: 22
- Team captain / Vice-captain (not on committee): 13
- Catering / Bar Support: 12
- First Aid / Health and Safety: 9
- Kit / Equipment: 5
Volunteers Survey Responses

As a volunteer within sport and physical activity, which of the following statements best describes your current situation?

Volunteering behaviour during lockdown (% of responses)

- 46.4% I am currently volunteering in the same role(s) as before lockdown
- 4.6% I am currently volunteering in a new or different role before lockdown
- 24.4% I have currently stopped or paused volunteering for another reason with Covid-19 restrictions
- 8.4% I have stopped or paused volunteering for another reason
- 0.8% None of the above

Volunteering behaviour during lockdown (# of responses)

- 418 I am currently volunteering in the same role(s) as before lockdown
- 416 I have currently stopped or paused volunteering for another reason with Covid-19 restrictions
- 266 I am currently volunteering in a new or different role before lockdown
- 11 I am currently volunteering in the same role(s) as before the lockdown, and have taken on... roles
- 46 None of the above

On a scale of 1-5, how anxious do/did you feel about returning to your club or group?

Anxiety about Returning [1=Not at All, 5=Extremely] (% of responses)

- 32.8% 1
- 21.7% 2
- 22.4% 3
- 8.8% 4
- 6.7% 5

Anxiety about Returning [1=Not at All, 5=Extremely] (# of responses)

- 418 1
- 416 2
- 266 3
- 114 4
- 61 5
Volunteers Survey Responses

likelihood to return to volunteering in sport and physical activity once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted?

Likelihood to Return (% of responses)

Amount of time they expect to be volunteering post-lockdown (% of responses)

Compared to before lockdown, how much time are you or do you expect to be volunteering in sport and physical activity once restrictions are lifted?

Amount of time they expect to be volunteering post-lockdown (# of responses)

Compared to before lockdown, how much time are you or do you expect to be volunteering in sport and physical activity once restrictions are lifted?
Volunteers Survey Responses

To what extent will each of these factors have a negative impact on your return to volunteering?
Volunteers Survey Responses

How likely are these factors to have an impact on your future levels of volunteering?

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<th>Likelihood</th>
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<td>Feelings About Your Health &amp; Safety (%)</td>
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<td>On-going Involvement of Friends (%)</td>
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Volunteers Survey Responses

How likely are these factors to have an impact on your future levels of volunteering?

**Time - Supporting Family (%)**

- 1: 18.1%
- 2: 27.8%
- 3: 27.8%
- 4: 13.3%
- 5: 1.4%
- 6: 1%
- 7: 1%
- 8: 1%
- 9: 0%
- 10: 0%

**Time - Working/Commuting/Studying (%)**

- 1: 16.6%
- 2: 26.1%
- 3: 18%
- 4: 10.5%
- 5: 6.3%
- 6: 6%
- 7: 6%
- 8: 4%
- 9: 4%
- 10: 0%

**Time - Supporting Another Cause (%)**

- 1: 22.1%
- 2: 21%
- 3: 10.5%
- 4: 7.8%
- 5: 2%
- 6: 8%
- 7: 4%
- 8: 4%
- 9: 3%
- 10: 0%

**Time - Supporting Family (#)**

- 1: 112
- 2: 96.7
- 3: 14.4
- 4: 74
- 5: 34
- 6: 18
- 7: 14
- 8: 7
- 9: 4
- 10: 0

**Time - Working/Commuting/Studying (#)**

- 1: 216
- 2: 197
- 3: 98
- 4: 63
- 5: 37
- 6: 20
- 7: 14
- 8: 7
- 9: 4
- 10: 0

**Time - Supporting Another Cause (#)**

- 1: 243
- 2: 217
- 3: 84
- 4: 47
- 5: 18
- 6: 14
- 7: 7
- 8: 4
- 9: 2
- 10: 0
On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with how your club or group kept you engaged during lockdown?

Volunteers Survey Responses

Satisfaction with efforts to maintain engagement (% of Responses)

Satisfaction with efforts to maintain engagement (# of Responses)
APPENDIX 2
COPY OF SURVEY QUESTIONS ASKED (VOLUNTEERS)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q #</th>
<th>Question (Volunteers)</th>
<th>Answer Format/Options</th>
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</table>
| 1.  | Before the Covid-19 pandemic, did you volunteer in sport or physical activity, as part of a formal or informal club or group? | • Yes - a participant.  
• Yes – responding on behalf of my child under the age of 16.  
• Yes – responding on behalf of a vulnerable adult.  
• No. |
| 2.  | Which sport or physical activity are you most involved with at your club/group?        | Dropdown list of Sport England funded sports + gym membership – respondents choose one or answer ‘Other’ (please specify). |
| 3.  | Which of the following best describes your main volunteer role? (select the role you do most often). | Respondents tick one of the following:  
• Coach/Instructor/Session Leader.  
• Umpire/Official.  
• Committee/Board/Trustee/Treasurer/Fixtures Secretary.  
• Team Captain/ Vice Captain (not on committee).  
• Facilities/Maintenance/Groundskeeper.  
• Safeguarding/Welfare Officer.  
• Stewards or Marshals/Events.  
• First Aid/ Health and Safety.  
• Kit/Equipment.  
• Media/Marketing/Fundraising.  
• Catering/Bar Support.  
• Other (please specify). |
| 4.  | On average, in a typical week before the Covid-19 pandemic, how many hours did you spend volunteering in this role? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
• 0 – 1 hours.  
• 1+ - 2 hours.  
• 2+ - 3 hours.  
• 3+ - 4 hours.  
• 4+ - 5 hours.  
• 5+ - 10 hours.  
• More than 10 hours. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q #</th>
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<th>Answer Format/Options</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 5.  | How long have you been volunteering in sport and physical activity for? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
  - 0 to 1 year.  
  - 1+ - 2 years.  
  - 2+ - 3 years.  
  - 3+ - 5 years.  
  - 5+ - 10 years.  
  - More than 10 years. |
| 6.  | As a volunteer within sport and physical activity, which of the following statement best describes your current situation? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
  - I am currently volunteer in the same role(s) as before lockdown.  
  - I am currently volunteering in the same role(s) as before lockdown, and have taken on additional roles.  
  - I am currently volunteering, but ins a new or different role(s) to before lockdown.  
  - I have stopped or paused my volunteering because of Covid-19 restrictions.  
  - I have stopped or paused my volunteer for another reason not to do with Covid-19 restrictions.  
  - None of the above. |
| 7.  | On a scale of 1-5, how anxious do/did you feel about returning to your club/group? | 5-pt sliding scale; 1 = not at all anxious – 5 = extremely anxious. |
| 8.  | How likely are you to return to volunteering in sport and physical activity once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
  - Very unlikely.  
  - Unlikely.  
  - Unsure.  
  - Likely.  
  - Very Likely.  
  - I have already returned. |
| 9.  | How Likely are these factors to have an impact on your return to volunteer?  
  - The time you will spend supporting your family.  
  - The time you will spend working/commuting/studying.  
  - The time you will spend volunteering to support another cause or organisation.  
  - Concerns about your health and/or safety.  
  - Whether your child/partner continue to participate at the club/group.  
  - Whether your friends continue to be involved with the club/group. | Respondents tick one of the following (5-pt sliding scale):  
  - 1 – Definitely not.  
  - 2 – Probably not.  
  - 3 – Possibly.  
  - 4 – Probably.  
  - 5 – Definitely. |
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<tr>
<th>Q #</th>
<th>Question (Volunteers)</th>
<th>Answer Format/Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tell us about any concerns or challenges that have/might affect your return to volunteering.</td>
<td>Text Response.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>What are/were you most looking forward to about returning to volunteering at your club/group?</td>
<td>Text Response.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 12  | Compared to before lockdown, how much time are/do you anticipate volunteering in sport and physical activity once restrictions are lifted? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
• I will stop volunteering.  
• A lot less time.  
• Less time.  
• The same amount of time.  
• More time.  
• A lot more time.  
• Not sure. |
| 13  | Please tell us which age category you are in:                                       | Respondents tick one of the following:  
• Under 16.  
• 16-24 years.  
• 25-34 years.  
• 35-44 years.  
• 45-54 years.  
• 55-64 years.  
• 65-74 years.  
• 75-84 years.  
• 85+ years.  
• Prefer not to say. |
| 14  | In relation to your gender, please tell us how you identify:                        | Respondents tick one of the following:  
As female / As male / In another way / Prefer not to say.                              |
<p>| 15  | Do you have a disability or long-term health condition?                             | Yes / No / Prefer Not To Say.                                                         |</p>
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| 15a | Please tell us what type of disability or condition you have? | Respondents tick all that apply:  
- Physical health condition or illness.  
- Mental health condition or illness.  
- Other.  
- Prefer not to say. |
| 16. | Which of these best reflects your ethnic group or background? | Respondents tick one of the following:  
- Asian or Asian British (excluding Chinese).  
- Black or Black British.  
- Chinese.  
- White British.  
- White Other.  
- Other Ethnic Group.  
- Prefer not to say. |
| 17. | What is your home postcode? | Text Response. |
| 18. | What is the name of your club or group? | Text Response. |
Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Surveys – Methodology and Timeline

Consultation with Governing Bodies, Active Partnerships (APs) and others:
Sport England’s Clubs and Volunteering teams consult with organisations to gauge interest in potential insight from national surveys, determine whether organisations had produced anything similar for their own sport/area and understand their willingness to promote the surveys to the clubs/groups they work with.

Survey Design and Approval:
Questions and structure designed with input from Sport England’s Clubs, Volunteering and Insight teams. Sport England’s Data Protection team provide input regarding language around securing consent to use the data gathered. Surveys are then approved.

Questions Used:
Questions designed are a mix of open and closed questions. Closed questions (e.g. Likert Scales) are used to gather quantifiable data on issues like anxiety levels and open questions used to elicit feelings and attitudes that can be explored through textual analysis tools.

Communications Plan:
Communications plan detailing promotion of the surveys is developed. This has two strands shown below.

Sport England and Club Matters carry out the following:
- Surveys promoted and shared through Club Matters stakeholder engagement.
- Sport England share aims and format of the surveys, benefits of participation and other details with organisations through launch email.
- Surveys launched through Club Matters stakeholder update and newsletter.
- Surveys are promoted on Sport England's social media channels and on the Club Matters website.
- Surveys are continually promoted in Club Matters stakeholder engagement activities.

Governing Bodies, APs and Partners are asked to support promotion by sharing:
- A template email is produced for organisations to send to individual clubs and groups, explaining scope of the surveys and encouraging participation.
- Example social media posts are provided.
- An editable newsletter article is provided.
- A chaser email template is provided to send to individual clubs/groups reminding them to take part.

Data Collection:
Response rate monitored by the Club Matters team and promotional efforts adjusted as needed.

Phase 1 Development
June – July 2020

Phase 2 Implementation
July - Aug 2020

Phase 3 Analysis
Aug – Oct 2020

Data Analysis:
Club Matters team reviews, explores and analyses the data gathered using the tools available to answer the agreed research questions.

Reporting:
Overview reports for participants/members and volunteers, category reports and sport specific reports submitted to Sport England. Key findings shared with Governing Bodies, APs and Partners to promote as appropriate.
APPENDIX 4
BREAKDOWN OF SPORTS/ACTIVITIES BY CATEGORY
Individual Indoor Sports/Activities
- Badminton.
- Boccia.
- Bowls (indoor).
- Gymnastics / Trampolining.
- Short Track Speed Skating.
- Squash / Racketball.
- Swimming (indoor) / Diving / Water Polo / Synchronised Swimming.
- Table Tennis.
- Tennis (indoor).
- Weightlifting / Powerlifting.

Team Indoor Sports/Activities
- Basketball.
- Futsal / Football (indoor).
- Goalball.
- Handball.
- Netball (indoor).
- Volleyball (indoor).
- Wheelchair Basketball.
- Wheelchair Rugby.

Martial Arts, Combat and Target Sports/Activities
- Archery.
- Boxing.
- Fencing.
- Judo.
- Shooting.
- Taekwondo.
- Wrestling.
- Karate and Martial Arts (other).

Water Sports
- Angling.
- Canoeing / Kayaking / Rafting / Stand Up Paddle Boarding.
- Rowing.
- Sailing / Jet Skiing / Windsurfing / Yachting / Motor Cruising / Powerboating.
- Swimming (outdoors).
- Water Skiing / Wakeboarding / Kneeboarding.

Individual Outdoor Sports/Activities
- Cycling / Mountain Biking / BMX / Cyclo-cross / Bicycle Polo.
- Equestrian Sports / Horse Riding.
- Golf.
- Modern Pentathlon.
- Running / Athletics / Jogging and Triathlon / Aquathlon / Duathlon.

Outdoor Pitch/Court Sports/Activities
- American Football.
- Baseball / Softball.
- Bowls (outdoor).
- Cricket.
- Football.
- Hockey.
- Lacrosse.
- Netball (outdoors).
- Rounders.
- Rugby League (including touch rugby).
- Rugby Union (including touch rugby).
- Tennis (outdoor).
- Volleyball (beach).

Adventure Sports/Activities
- Parkour.
- Skateboarding.
- Skiing/Snowboarding.
- Mountaineering/Climbing.
- Orienteering.

Other
- Exercise/Movement/Dance.
- Walking.