Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Surveys

Headline Findings

Club and Group Volunteers

www.sportenglandclubmatters.com
Introduction

The impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent national lockdown on sport clubs and community organisations, was significant, with many facing major financial challenges, concerns about retaining members and volunteers and the changes they will have to make to be able to support them when they re-open.

In July and August 2020, Continuum Leisure undertook a survey, on behalf of Club Matters, with volunteers and participants from clubs and community groups to explore their feelings around returning to activity.

This report explores how habits have changed, how they are feeling about returning to their club/group, how soon they are likely to return and what they need to support their return.

This headline report is one of a series which also includes the full reports, 6 category reports and a number of sport specific reports.

For further insights and recommendations, please click here.

Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic Club Matters has developed resources to assist clubs/organisations to manage their emergency response, planning and reopening phases. For more details, please visit the Club Matters website.
1,293 Volunteers Responded
Volunteering Habits Changed During Lockdown...

71% continued to volunteer in some capacity

More likely to have continued:
• Those who have been involved for >5 years.
• Those who volunteer the most (>10 hrs).

21% took on additional roles.

24% stopped/paused due to Covid-19

More likely to have stopped/paused:
• Women.
• People with a disability or LTHC.
• Under 35s.
• Those that volunteer least (<1hr pw).

41% of Coaches/Instructors/Session Leaders stopped/paused.
Anxiety Levels have a Strong Link to Volunteering Behaviours

- People with a disability or LTHC are twice as likely to feel significantly anxious (23% compared to 11%).
- Those who have significant levels of anxiety are likely to be more unsure / unlikely to return.
- Anxiety doesn’t disappear on return and should be monitored on an ongoing basis.
Volunteers are Most Concerned About.... Their Club/Group Rather than Themselves.

Long-Term Viability
- Fewer members = reduce revenues
- New guidelines = extra cost
- New guidelines = need more volunteers
- Increased legal responsibilities

Concerns
- Short-term logistics
  - Facility access
  - Volunteer burn-out
  - Attractiveness of adapted experience
- Guideline confusion
  - Lack of clarity from NGBs &/or Government
  - Different interpretations by members

“…”

“I don’t have a choice whether to volunteer or not - we have to take all of the precautions we can and restart, otherwise we will probably go out of business…”

“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…”

“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…”
Most Volunteers are Likely to Return but... 14% are ‘At Risk’

86% likely to Return

46% Already returned
40% Very likely / likely to return

6% Unsure

14% ‘At Risk’

2% Unlikely to return
6% Very unlikely to return

In comparison... 8% of participants/members ‘at risk’

There is still an opportunity to re-engage those who are at risk...
More than 1 in 3 Expect the Time they Give to Change...

78% expect same/bigger commitment
- 24% Expect to do more/a lot more
- 54% Expect to do the same
- 3% Undecided

19% expect a smaller commitment
- 13% Expect to do less/a lot less
- 6% Will stop

Key risk is volunteer burnout....

16% of coaches/leaders
10% of committee/board roles
Three Main Barriers to Returning

- Workload
- Responsibilities
- Existing Health
- Risk to Health
- Protect family
- Need more time elsewhere
- Need more time for career/business

"The responsibilities that come with volunteering are getting greater all the time and again Covid just adds to this responsibility"

"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"

"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!"
Characteristics of Returned Volunteers

46% had returned to their clubs/groups in August.

Most likely to have returned:
- Males.
- People without a disability or LTHC.
- Over 65s.
- Volunteers in non-direct delivery roles.
- People with lower anxiety levels.
- Those who gave >1 Hr a week.
Characteristics of ‘At Risk’ Volunteers

14% of volunteers are at risk of not returning.

More likely to be ‘at risk’:
- People concerned about health – theirs or others’.
- Those with significant levels of anxiety.
- People who stopped/paused during lockdown.
- Those who usually commit the least time.
- People who were dissatisfied with club/group communications during lockdown.
- Individual indoor sports have the highest proportion of volunteers at risk (20%).
Health Concerns are the Most Likely to Negatively Impact on Return

Among those ‘at risk’ of not returning, the health concerns remain the most significant.

40% for people with disability or LTHC

(% rating each factor as 4 or 5 out of 5 with 1 = not at all likely and 5 = extremely likely)
What do Volunteers Need to Encourage their Return?

Support Required

- Guidelines
  - Provide regular updates
  - Practical & user-friendly
- Action by Government
  - Clarity on guidelines
  - Alignment with NGB
- Risks
  - Information on risks
  - Help with Risk Assessments
  - Reassurance

"PRACTICAL tips not just reiterating rules that we already know."

"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."

"Up to date guidance and templates for any risk assessments etc."
Volunteers are Most Looking Forward to… Seeing friends and supporting others to take part.

What Volunteers are Looking Forward to (Top 5 Topics)

- Friends: 138
- Members: 99
- Children: 68
- Coach: 26
- Hanging out: 21

Top 5 Emotions About Return

- Joy: 154
- Anticipation: 36
- Trust: 13
- Fear: 8
- Anger: 7

- Those unsure about returning are also motivated by seeing ‘members’.
- Lockdown left many people craving more human interaction. Clubs/groups can use this to their advantage.
Satisfaction with Communications from their Club/Group?

- **8%** Dissatisfied
- **14%** Moderately Satisfied
- **78%** Very / Extremely Satisfied

- 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.
Effective Communication is Crucial for Return & Retention

When clubs/groups get their comms wrong or they’re inconsistent volunteers feel:
Hesitant, nervous, confused, worried and neglected.

When they get comms right it makes volunteers feel:
Valued, grateful, satisfied, optimistic, excited, happy, trusted and expectant.

Volunteers told us the key elements of effective communication include:

- Frequent & Accurate (at least weekly)
- Available (on a range of different platforms)
- Open & Honest (everyone has access to the same information)
- Informative (reflective of the current status)
- Personalised (where possible)
Recommendations

- **BAME.** Understand and address the needs and concerns of BAME groups.

- **On-going Communications.** Make sure clubs/groups have a plan to drive effective, on-going communication to aid re-engagement, retention and reduce anxiety.

- **Stay Social.** Encourage clubs/groups to sustain and promote the social element of volunteering.

- **Guidelines Support.** Provide additional support and information to ensure the effective and efficient application of Covid-19 guidelines and other legislation.

- **Volunteer Pipeline.** Take steps to reduce volunteer burnout through re-engaging existing volunteers and building a pipeline of new volunteers.

- **Monitor Anxiety.** Monitor and manage anxiety amongst volunteers and keep volunteer welfare top of mind.