



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Canal & River Trust: Youth Volunteering Survey

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Background, objectives & methodology

In this section we include a brief overview of the background to this research, the objectives and the methodology used.



Background objectives
& methodology





Background

The Trust is working with volunteers and communities to transform canals and rivers into spaces where local people want to spend time and feel better. Linked to this, the Trust is looking to further develop their youth engagement programme, with the aim of 1 million children and young people engaging per year by 2025, ½ million developing skills per year by 2025, and 500,000 youth social action hours per year by 2025.

They recognise that the current Trust volunteer base is heavily weighted to older white males. Therefore, the overarching aim of this study is to consult with young people to better understand their interests, concerns, aspirations, motivations and attitudes towards volunteering, nature and the environment, waterways and the Trust specifically. The insights will be used to better engage with young people by adapting the volunteering opportunities on offer and effectively marketing them.



Objectives



Understand the concerns and issues affecting young people

Discover the motivations and barriers to volunteering

Explore the connection young people have towards the outdoors, nature and their community

Explore young people's recognition and understanding of the Trust

Investigate how young people search and access information on volunteering



Methodology

An online panel was used to source a nationally representative sample of young people aged 16-24 across England and Wales, with the target base size agreed at 2,000 complete surveys.

To ensure the responses were representative of the communities served by the Trust, quotas were set to achieve a proportionate spread of young people aged 16-24 by gender and socio-economic group within each of the Trust's six regions (based on the latest ONS population estimates).

A total of **2,001 surveys** were completed across three weeks of fieldwork.

The data has been weighted by gender and socio-economic group within each region to account for any slight under- or over-representation of responses across the profile groups.



Profile of the sample (n=2,001)



Gender

*Weighted by region



51%



49%

SEG

*Weighted by region

ABC1: **53%**

C2DE: **47%**

Disability



78% None

13% Limited a little

6% Limited a lot

18% NET: Yes

Ethnicity



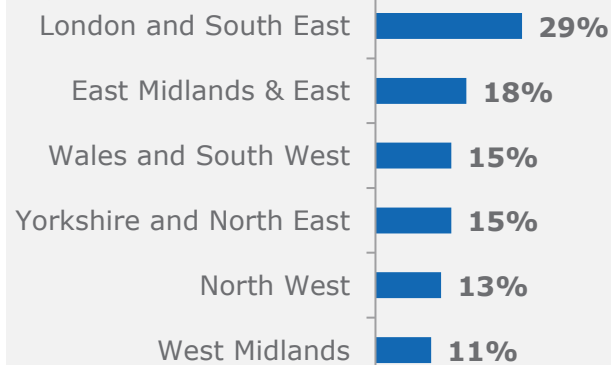
White British:
72%



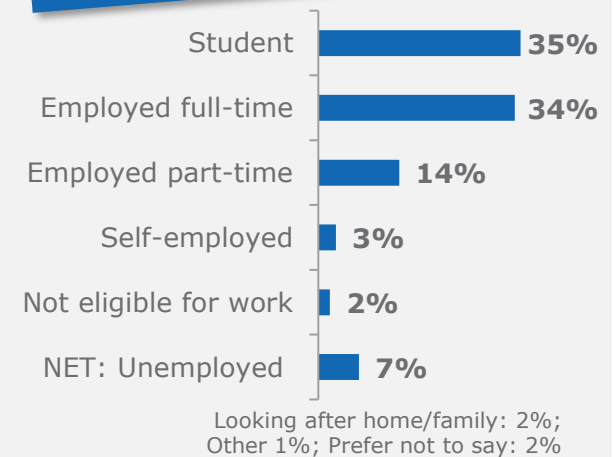
BME:
26%

Asian: 11%; White - other: 7%;
Black: 4%; Mixed: 4%

Region of residence



Employment





Key insights

Increase awareness and knowledge of the Trust to attract more young volunteers

- Awareness of the Trust amongst young people isn't particularly high. Results show that those with more knowledge of the Trust are more likely to show interest in volunteering, so raise awareness/knowledge of what the Trust is and what it does amongst young people in order to raise the likelihood of them signing up to volunteer.

Young people who volunteer regularly are more satisfied with their life

- With rising mental health amongst young people the issue they care about the most, the finding that those who volunteer regularly are more likely to rate their satisfaction with life a 9 or 10 (out of 10) should not be overlooked. High satisfaction with life is also greater for those who feel a sense of belonging to their local area, and those who have volunteered in their local area are far more likely to feel they belong!

Young people enjoy nature and care about the environment

- Environmental issues are of great concern to young people and their number one wish is for a solution to be found. They enjoy all aspects of nature, but almost half don't feel connected to it - volunteering with the Trust could simultaneously contribute towards making this connection whilst giving time to an organisation that works to solve, prevent and reduce environmental issues.

Environmental organisations are one of the most popular for young people who currently volunteer

- There is interest from a large proportion of young people in volunteering for the Trust and those who do volunteer are most likely to do so regularly, they are mostly taking part in organised events and activities or contributing towards practical activities.

The preferred volunteering opportunity for young people would look something like:

- Attending weekly, pre-organised events at weekends.
- A range of different types of activity, with a focus on fun.
- Something that can contribute towards career development and employability and that gives back to the local area and the community.
- A thank you or a simple certificate as recognition would be appreciated, as would some food and drink to keep them going.

Youth Volunteering Survey

DJS Research conducted 2,001 online surveys with a nationally representative sample of young people aged 16-24, 25% of which had volunteered in the last 12 months

28%

of young people who volunteer regularly rate satisfaction with their life at least a 9 out of 10.

...compared with just 14% of the total population rating 9-10!

75%

of young people who know a lot about the Trust, would be interested in volunteering for it.

Top 5!

Mental health, global and local environmental issues take the 1st, 2nd and 4th spots for issues that young people care most about.

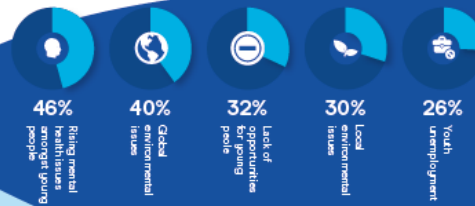
70%

of young people who volunteer locally feel a strong sense of belonging to their area.

Youth volunteering: waterways & well-being

What do young people care about most? How can volunteering and engagement with the Trust help? What options can the Trust provide to the youth of today? The results below show what was found from a research study with a representative sample of 2,000 young people aged 16-24 across England and Wales.

The top five concerns affecting young people



What one thing would you change or wish for with the world or your own well-being today?



Young people who volunteer feel more connected to their local community and have higher life satisfaction.

Young people who participate in volunteering activities on a regular basis are twice as likely to be very satisfied with their lives.



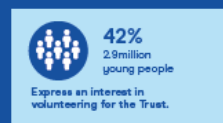
Young people who have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood are more satisfied with the area in which they live, and this sense of belonging is much greater for those who volunteer in their local area.



...for those with a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood



...for those who have volunteered in their local area



Most often, young people say they find out about volunteering opportunities through friends and family or online.



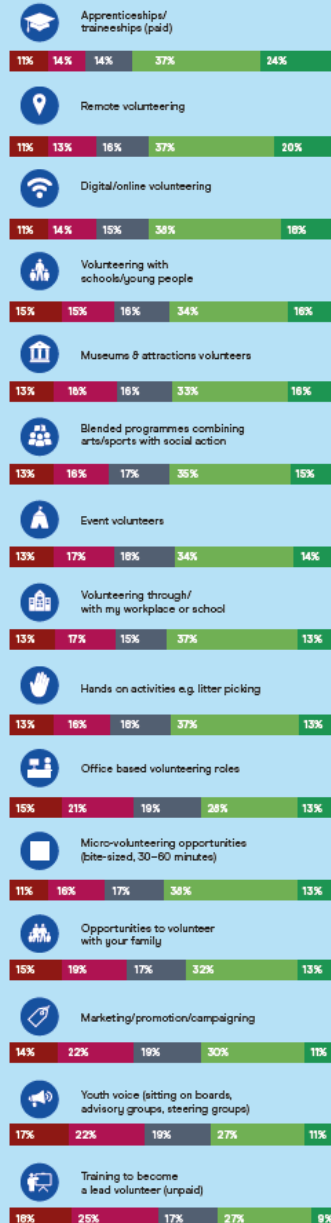
Greater knowledge = greater interest:

48% have heard of The Trust to some degree, although just 3% (210,000 young people) know a lot about it. 75% of those who know a lot (157,000 young people) would be interested in volunteering for it.



The types of activities young people would be most interested in doing with us:

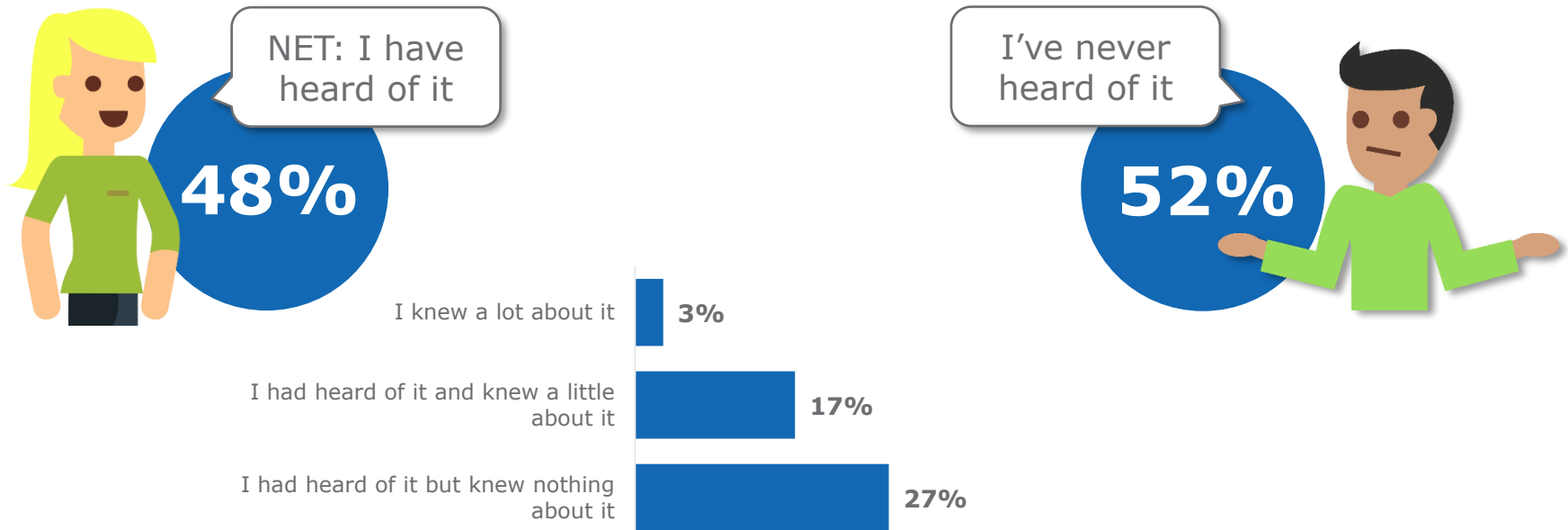
● Not interested at all ● 2-3 not that interested ● 4 neutral ● 5 interested to some extent ● 7: very interested





Prior to taking part in the survey, almost half had heard of the Trust

Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about the Canal & River Trust?

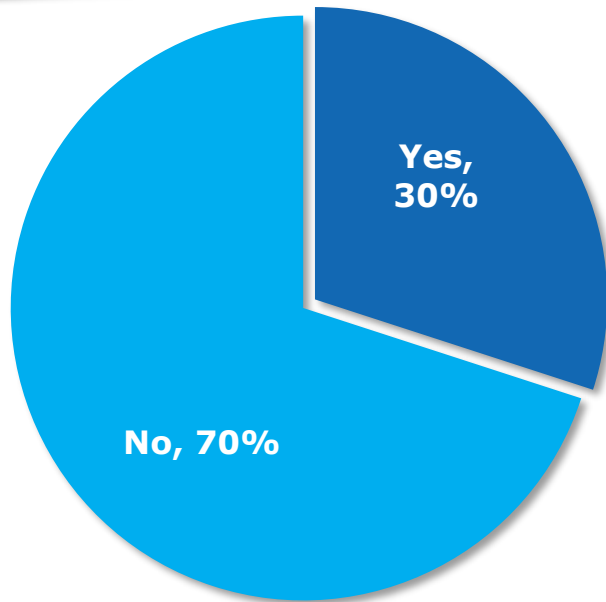




Around a third of young people had seen the Trust logo before taking the survey

Awareness of the Trust logo rises steeply the more a person knows about the Trust; 71% of those who had heard of the Trust and knew a little about it had seen the logo and this rises to 96% for those who knew a lot about the Trust. Young people who have volunteered in the last 12 months are also more likely to have seen the logo (41% cf. 23% non-volunteers).

Before today, had you seen this logo?



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Awareness of the Trust logo is significantly higher in the **West Midlands** at **42%**, compared with between 25%-32% in other regions

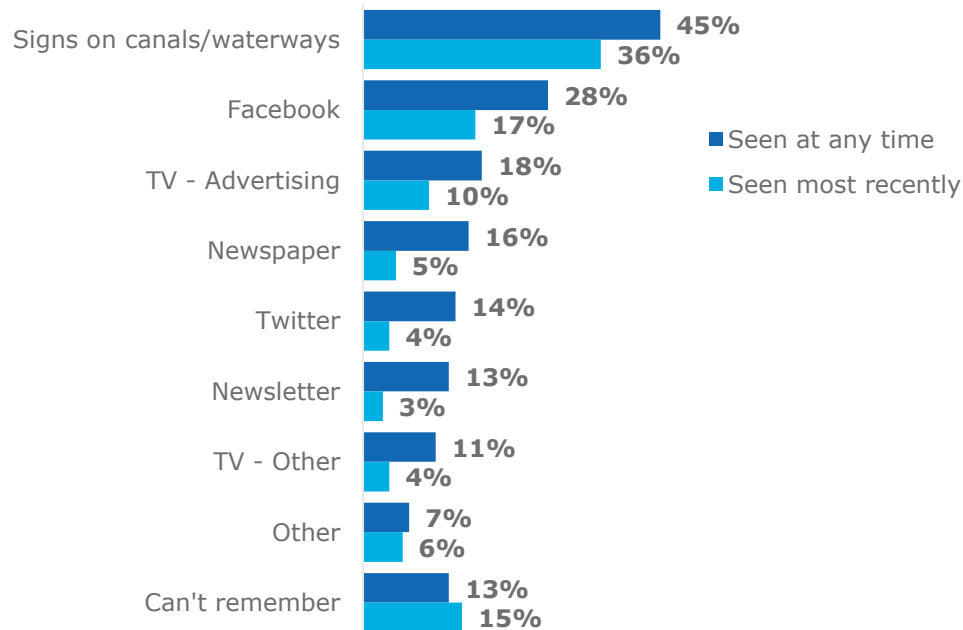




The Trust logo is seen across a range of platforms, with signage most common

Relatively speaking, the logo has not been seen much recently in more traditional methods such as newspapers and newsletters – if not seeing the signs whilst out on the waterways, it is social media and TV where the logo is seen the most.

Where have you seen this logo?



In the West Midlands, **60% of young people saw the Trust logo on signs** along canals and/or waterways. This is perhaps a reflection of the larger coverage of Trust waterways in this region.

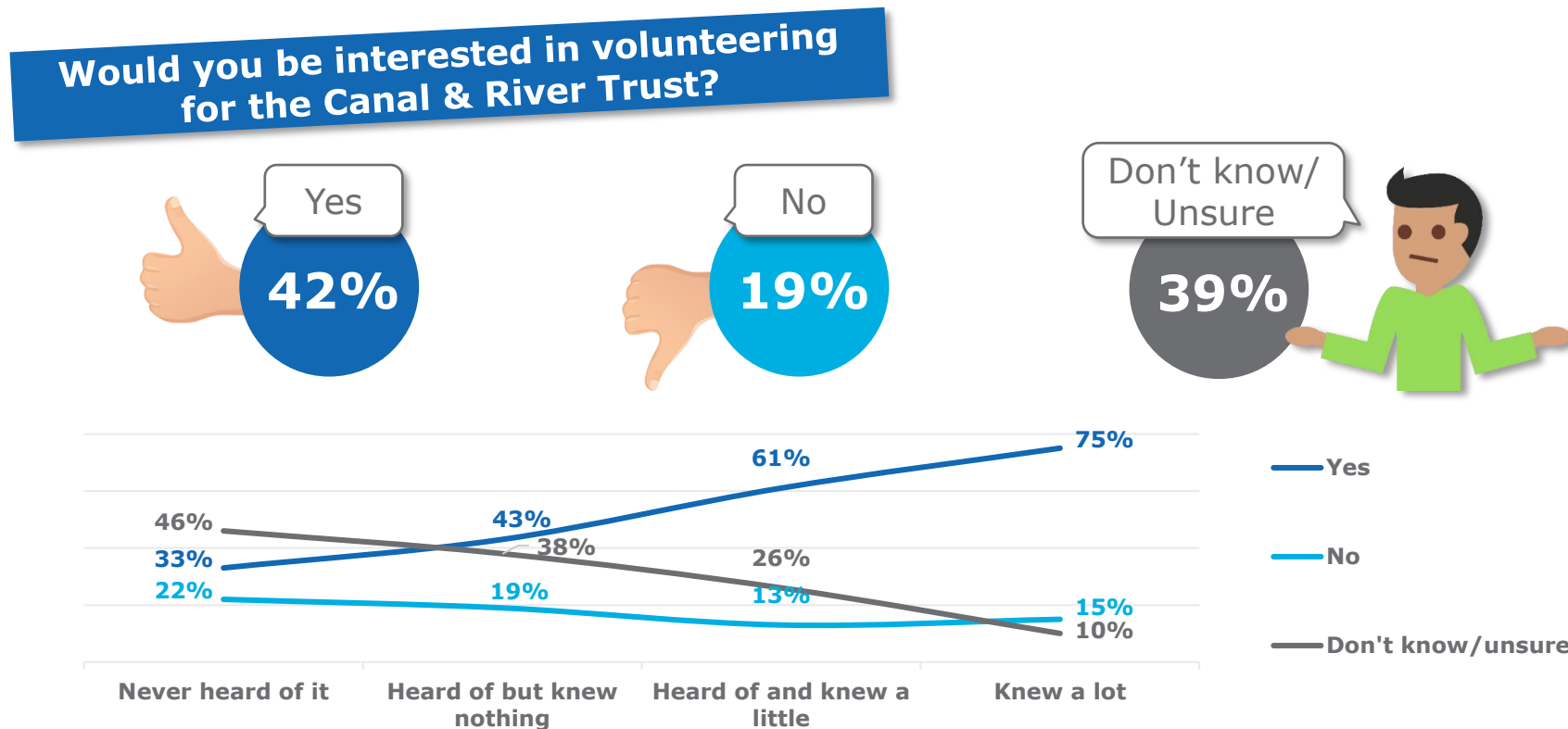
Q07a. Where have you seen this logo? Base: All who have seen the Trust logo (n=607).

Q07b. And where was the last place you saw this logo? Base: All who have seen the Trust logo (n=607).



Two fifths of young people would be interested in volunteering for the Trust, with a similar proportion unsure

Interest in volunteering directly scales with knowledge of the Trust, as shown in the chart below. By educating and raising awareness of who the Trust is and what it does, the 39% sitting on the fence could be persuaded to start volunteering.





Stand out figures for the 42% interested in volunteering for the Trust:

	Interested in volunteering for the Trust (n=839)	Total sample (n=2001)
Volunteered within the last 12 months	30%	25%
Volunteering was self-organised/via an online campaign	35%	30%
Volunteered in their local area/neighbourhood	68%	64%
Very strong feeling of belonging to local area/neighbourhood	18%	13%
Male	46%	51%
Female	54%	49%
Greater interest in the following activities:		
Wildlife habitat improvement	42%	35%
Surveying/research (e.g. hedgerow surveys, water quality testing, wildlife recording etc)	28%	24%
Litter picking	28%	23%
Gardening/planting	27%	23%
Blended programmes (e.g. combination of sports or arts with practical task-based activities)	25%	21%

Q34. Based on what you have seen and heard about the Canal & River Trust, would you be interested in volunteering for them? Base: All respondents (n=2001).

16

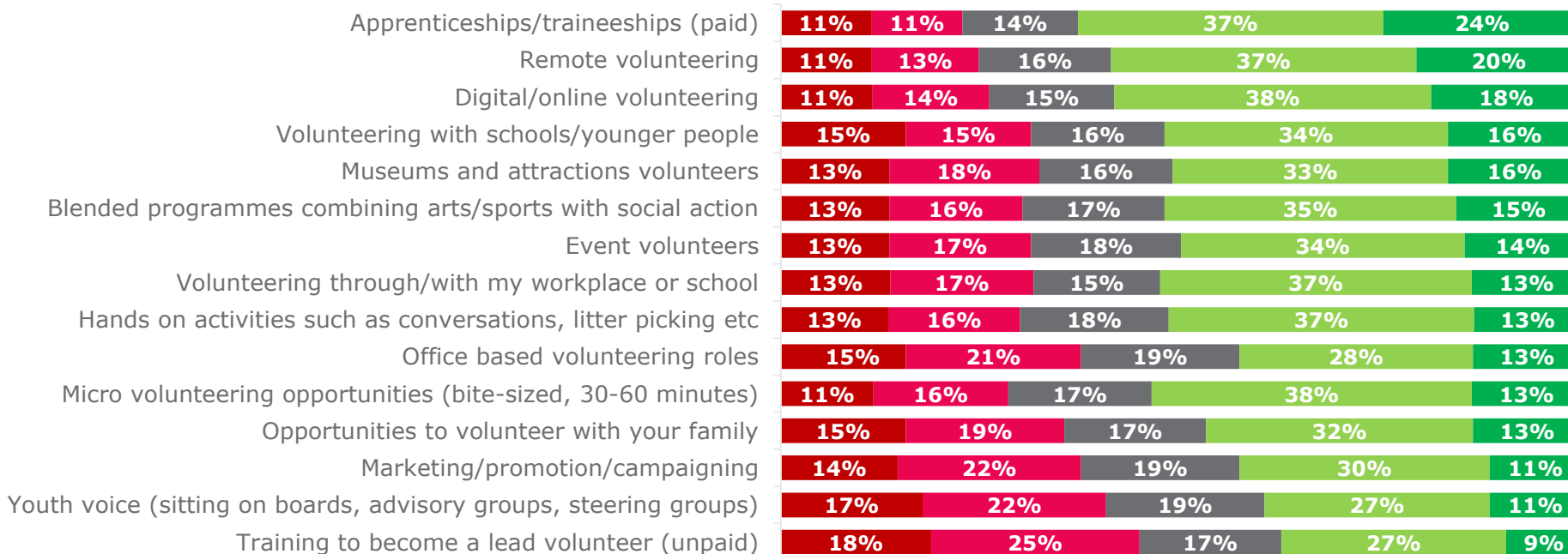
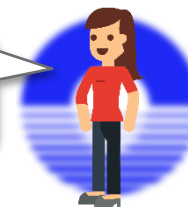
Significant differences vs. total: Sig higher Sig lower

The most appealing unpaid opportunities are based around working digitally/remotely

Actively promoting remote and digital/online volunteering to young people would likely be successful in attracting them to volunteer with the Trust.

How interested would you be in the following opportunities for the Trust?

Females have significantly higher 'very interested' scores than males for all of these opportunities



■ 1 - Not interested at all ■ 2-3 - Not that interested ■ 4 - Neutral ■ 5-6 - Interested to some extent ■ 7 - Very interested

Q25. On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is not at all interested and 7 is very interested, how interested would you be in undertaking the following types of volunteer opportunities for the Canal & River Trust? Base: All respondents (n=2001).



Regional variations

Awareness of the Trust in the West Midlands

In the West Midlands:

- Significantly **less** young people had never heard of the Trust
- Significantly **more** young people had seen the Trust logo
- More specifically, significantly **more** young people had seen the Trust logo on signs along canals/waterways

40% compared with between 49%-58% in other regions

42% compared with between 25%-32% in other regions

60% compared with between 37%-47% in other regions

Perhaps due to the larger concentration of Trust waterways in this region

Volunteering in London and South East

In the London and South East:

- Significantly **less** young people have ever volunteered/taken social action
- Significantly **less** young people find an opportunity to support the Trust to be extremely important

31% compared with between 37%-46% in other regions

7% compared with between 11%-12% in other regions



Young people and their views on the world

This section looks into aspects such as life satisfaction, prominent issues and concerns, environmental attitudes and ideas for change.



Young people and
their views on the world

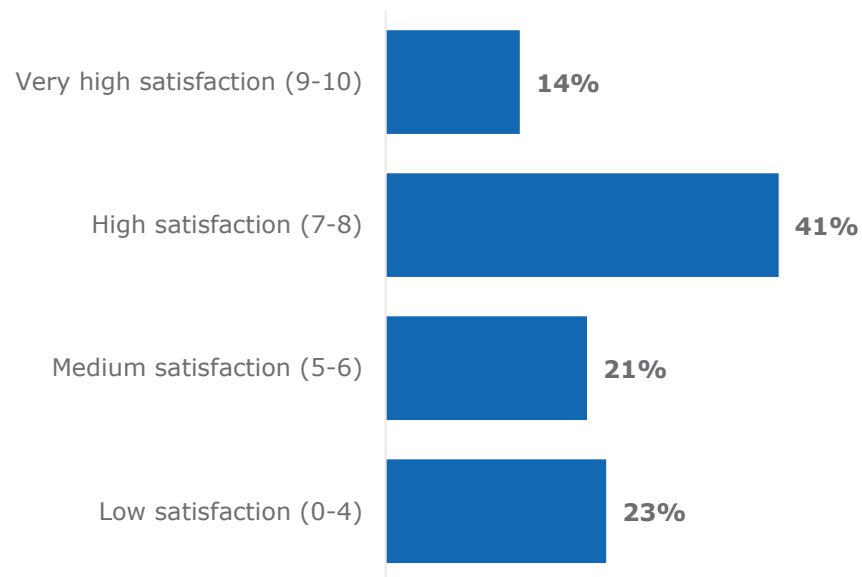


The majority of young people rate their life satisfaction at least a 7 out of 10 (56%)



Volunteering and a sense of belonging are connected to increased ratings for life satisfaction.

Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?



'Very high' life satisfaction is greater amongst those who:

- Participate in volunteering activities on a regular basis (**28%**)
- Have volunteered within the last 12 months (**18%**)
- Feel a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (**18%**)



Young people who volunteer in their local area are more likely to strongly feel a sense of belonging to it

Satisfaction with the area they live also contributes towards this sense of belonging.

Sense of belonging to, and satisfaction with local area/neighborhood

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?



How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighborhood?



	Strong sense of belonging to neighbourhood (n=1025)	Total sample (n=2001)
NET: Satisfied	73%	62%

	Volunteered in local area (n=327)	Total sample (n=2001)
NET: Strongly	70%	51%

Q12. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? Base: All respondents (n=2001).

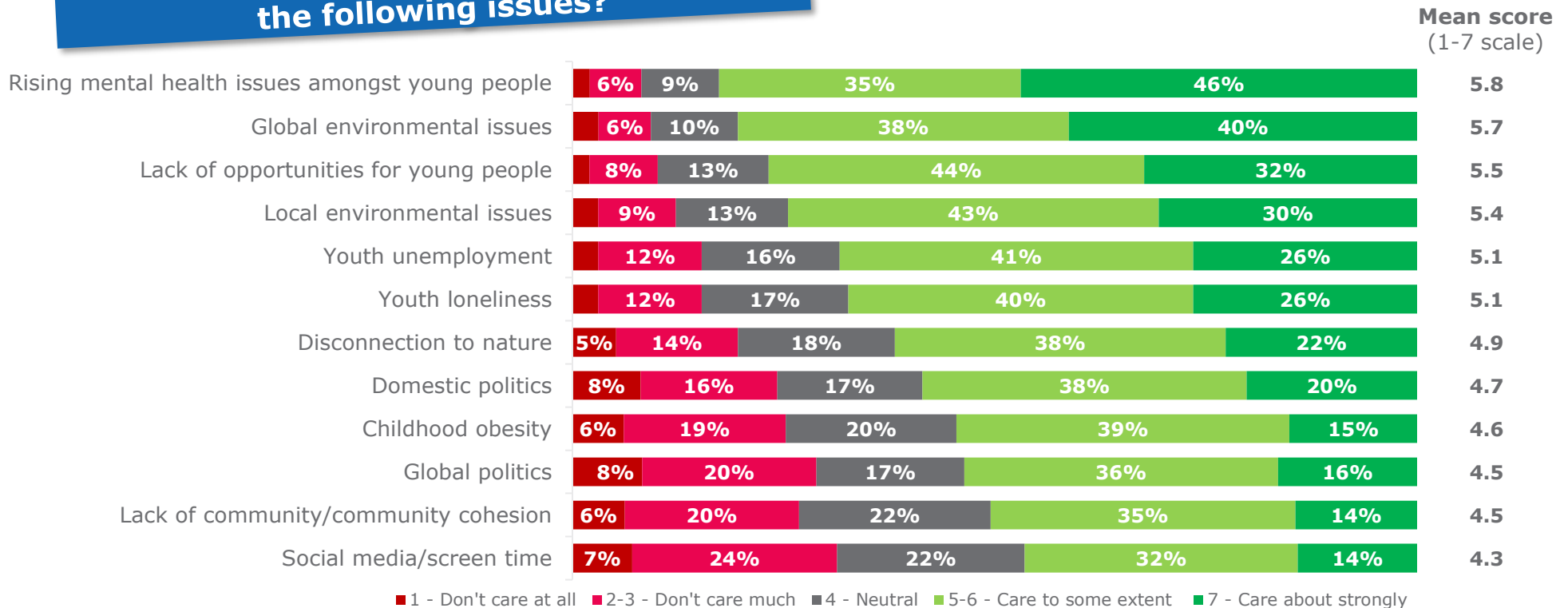
Q11. How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighborhood? Base: All respondents (n=2001).



Global and local environmental issues make up two of the top five issues that young people care about most

Together with concern over a lack of opportunities for young people, volunteering for an environmental organisation such as the Trust could be used to address the top issues

How much do you care about the following issues?



Q08. On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is 'do not care at all' and 7 is 'care about strongly', how much do you care about the following issues?
Base: All respondents (n=2001).



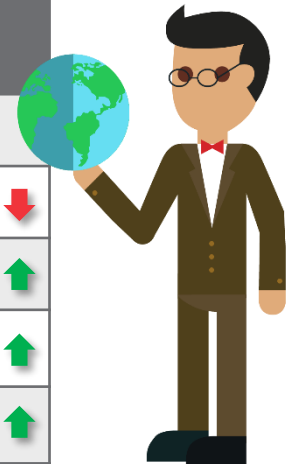
Females care more strongly than males about the top issues asked about

Certain stand out groups who care strongly about rising mental health issues are those that may be suffering themselves, due to health, disabilities and low satisfaction with their lives. Also, current volunteers, and those interested in volunteering for the Trust, care more strongly about both local and global environmental issues.

Stand out figures for the most prominent issues

Care strongly about rising mental health issues amongst young people	
Total sample (n=2001)	46%
Male (n=955)	38% ↓
Female (n=999)	54% ↑
North West (n=253)	53% ↑
Limited by a health problem/disability (n=370)	59% ↑
Dissatisfied with their life i.e. rated 0-4 out of 10 for life satisfaction (n=467)	54% ↑

Care strongly about environmental issues:	Global	Local
Total sample (n=2001)	40%	30%
Male (n=955)	34% ↓	25% ↓
Female (n=999)	47% ↑	35% ↑
Have volunteered within the last 12 months (n=508)	50% ↑	36% ↑
Interested in volunteering for the Trust (n=839)	50% ↑	38% ↑
Not interested in volunteering for the Trust (n=381)	27% ↓	20% ↓

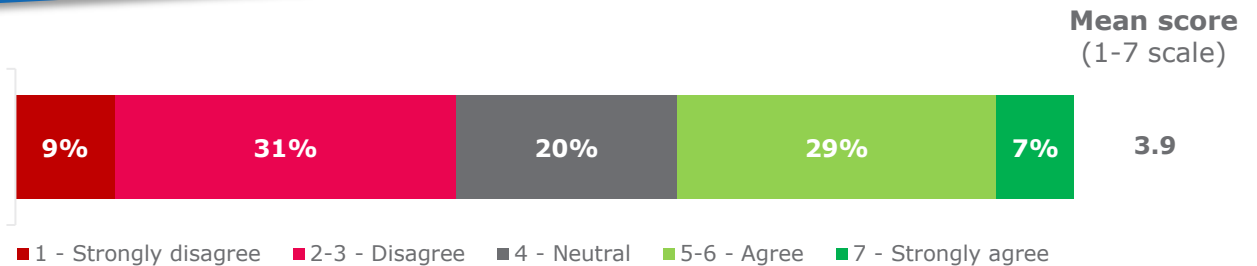




As high as two in five young people disagree there are enough opportunities to get involved in decisions that affect them

To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...?

There are enough opportunities for young people to get involved in the decisions that affect them



Agreement is higher among:

- Young people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood (43% cf. 29%)
- Young people from higher socio-economic groups (45% SEG A)



Young people have mostly positive feelings towards nature

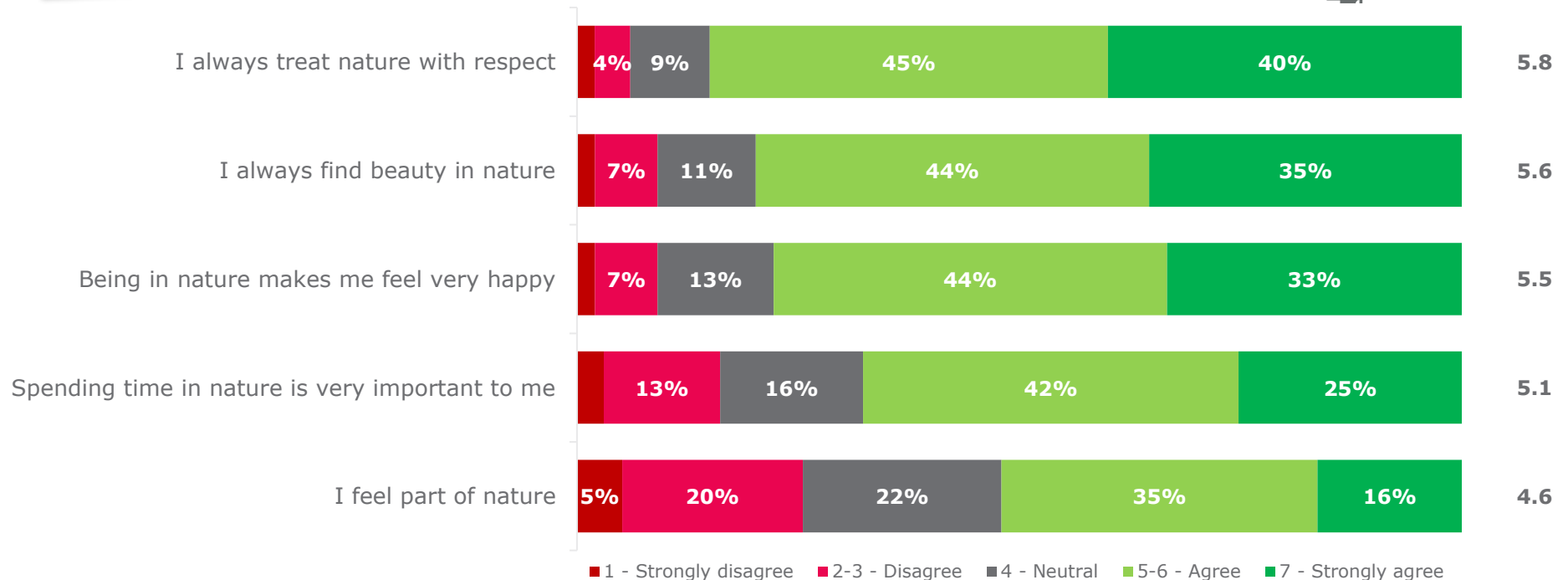
Those who have volunteered in the last 12 months are significantly more likely to strongly agree that they 'feel part of nature' than those who haven't (20% cf. 13%).

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Females have significantly higher 'strongly agree' scores than males for all of these statements



Mean score (1-7 scale)





Solving environmental issues is the most common wish amongst young people

This wish is significantly more common for those who have volunteered in the last 12 months.

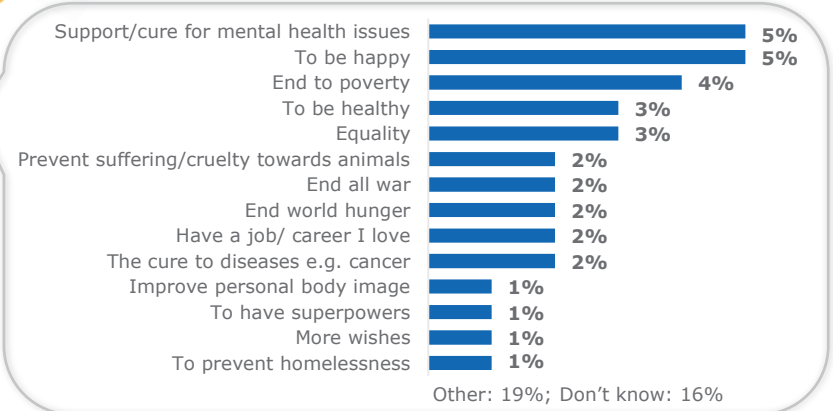
What one thing would you change/wish for with the world/your wellbeing today?



"I would make people in power do something about global warming and the environment."

"That everyone respected the environment, preventing climate change."

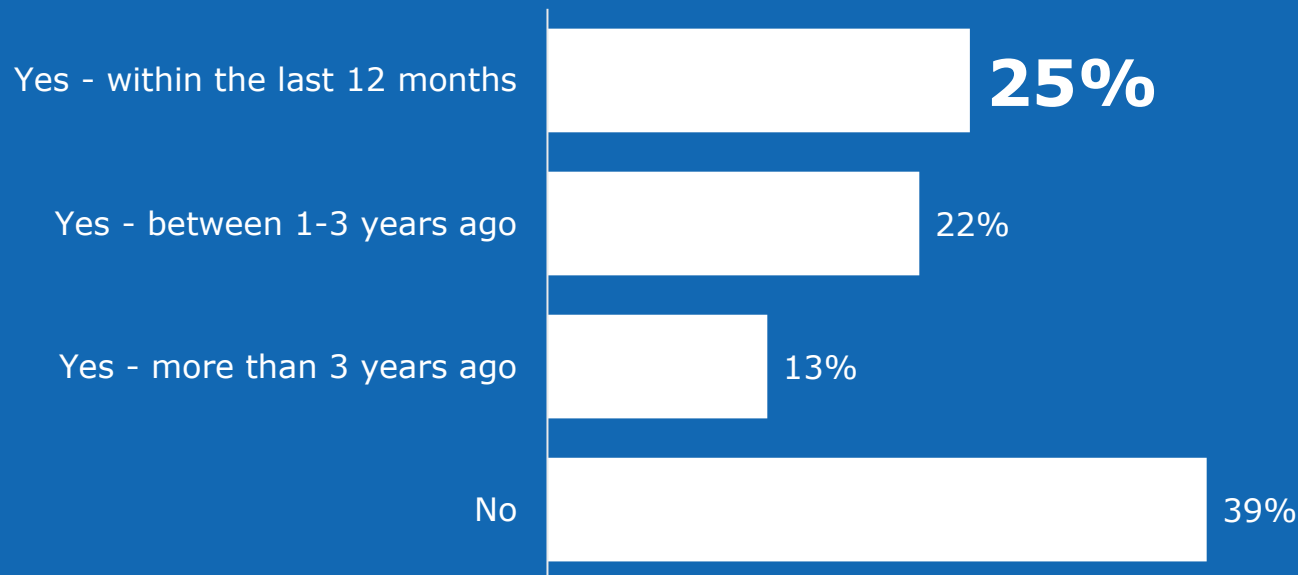
"A miraculous sudden saving of the environment from human devastation."



Current volunteers and their involvement

This section looks at the proportion of young people who have volunteered in the last 12 months and what it is they are doing.

Have you ever volunteered or taken social action?







Q14. Have you ever volunteered or taken social action? Base: all respondents (n=2001).





Profile of young volunteers vs. total

Our survey found that **25% of respondents have volunteered within the last 12 months.**

	Volunteers (n=508)	Total sample (n=2001)
Male	48%	51%
Female	52% 	49%
SEG: ABC1	62% 	53%
SEG: C2DE	38% 	47%
London and South East	32%	29%
East Midlands and East	17%	18%
Wales and South West	16%	15%
Yorkshire and North East	13%	15%
North West	11%	13%
West Midlands	10%	11%
Employed	47%	51%
Unemployed	5%	7%
Student	43% 	35%

Research carried out in 2017/18 by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) found that **24% of young people in the UK aged 16-24 are regularly involved in volunteering.** Source: <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/demographics/>

Q14. Have you ever volunteered or taken social action? Base: All respondents (n=2001).

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Significant differences vs. total:  Sig higher  Sig lower

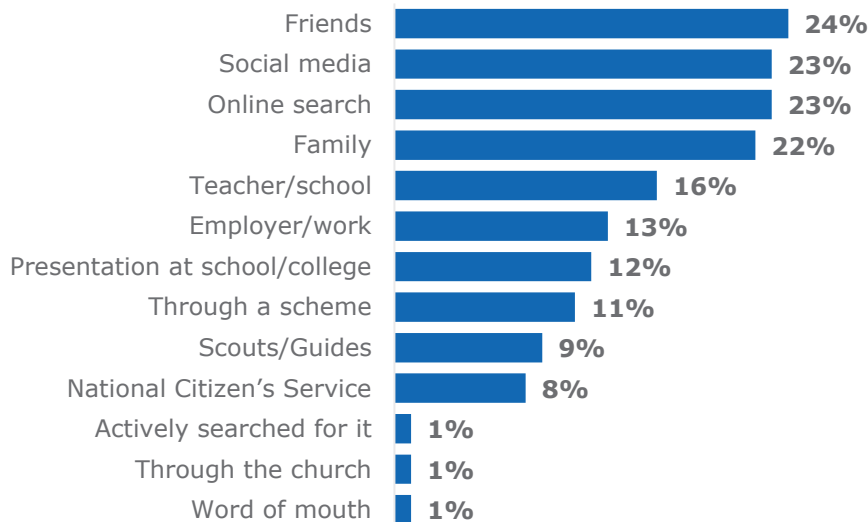


The majority of young volunteers find out about the opportunity through friends and family or online/social media

Subsequently, almost a third of volunteering is self organised or through online campaigns; however, most is organised by an actual club/organisation or charity.

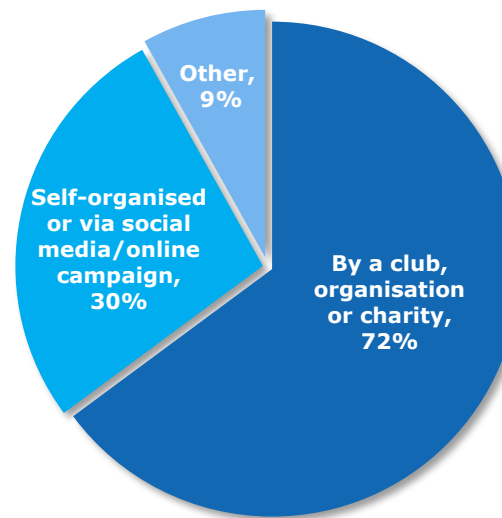
Awareness and organisation of volunteering opportunities

How did you find out about your volunteering activity?

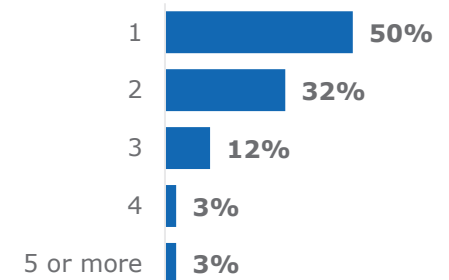


Other: 4%; Don't know/can't remember: 4%

How was this volunteering organised?



For how many groups, clubs or organisations have you volunteered in the last 12 months?



Q23. How did you find out about your volunteering activity? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508)

Q15. How was this volunteering organised? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508).

Q16. For how many groups, clubs or organisations have you volunteered in the last 12 months? Base: All who have volunteered for a club/organisation/charity in the last 12 months (n=363)

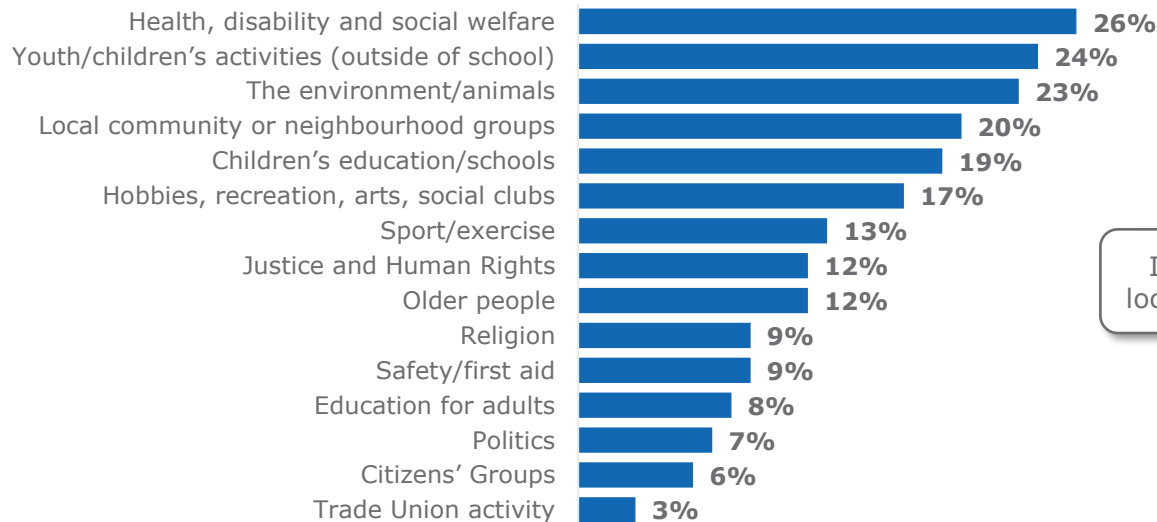


Environmental/animal organisations such as the Trust are among the most popular for young volunteers

The majority of volunteering is carried out within their local area, and almost exclusively within the UK.

Who/what young people volunteer for and where it takes place

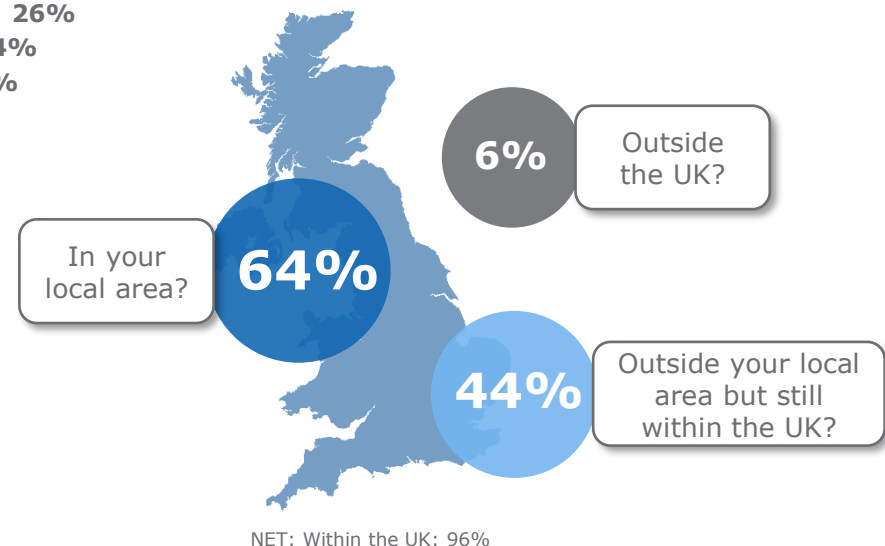
What sector does/do the group(s), club(s) or organisation(s) you volunteer for operate in?



Other: 11%; Don't know: 3%

Does your volunteering take place...?

*Multi-code question, total will not add up to 100%



Q21. What sector does/do the group(s), club(s) or organisation(s) you volunteer for operate in? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508)

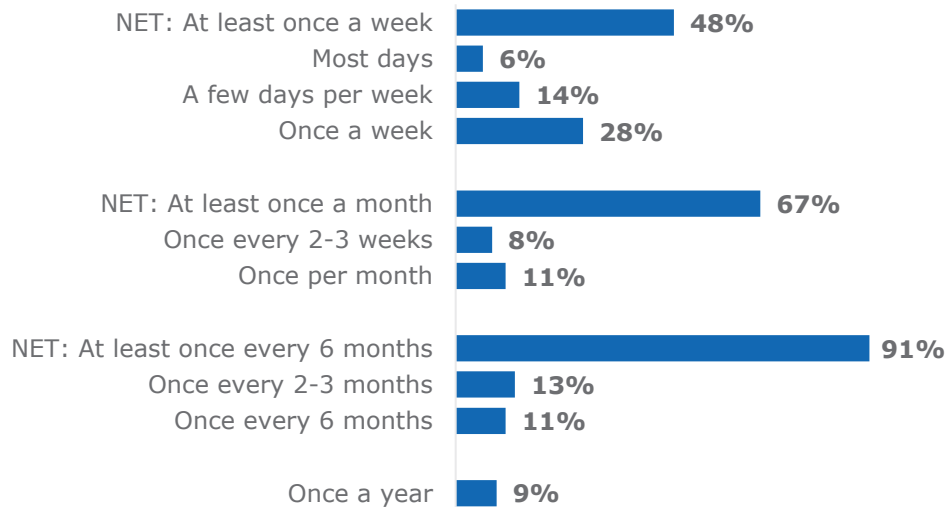
Q19. Does your volunteering take place...? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508)



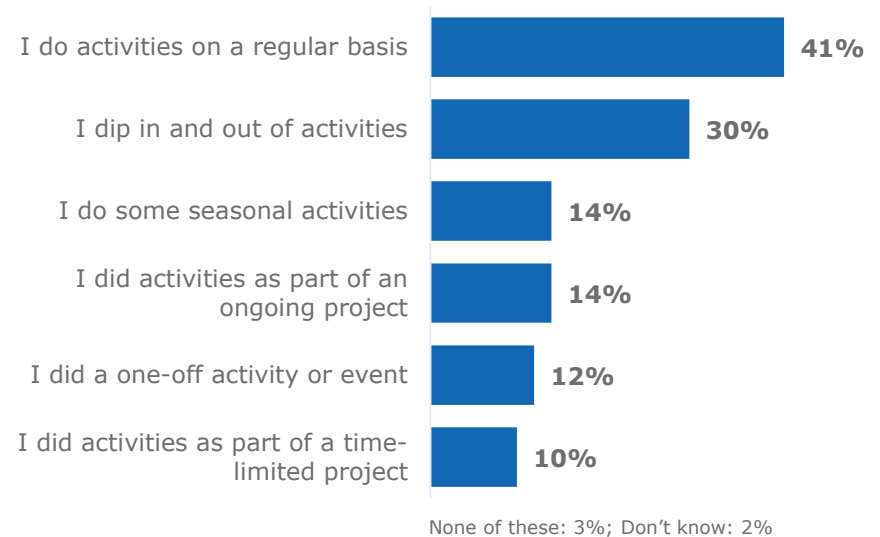
Almost half of volunteers undertake volunteering activity at least once a week

Frequency and type of young people's volunteering involvement

How frequently have you volunteered in the last 12 months?



Which of the following best describes your type of volunteer involvement?



Q17. How frequently have you volunteered in the last 12 months? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508)

Q22. Which of the following best describes your type of volunteer involvement? Base: All who have volunteered in the last 12 months (n=508)

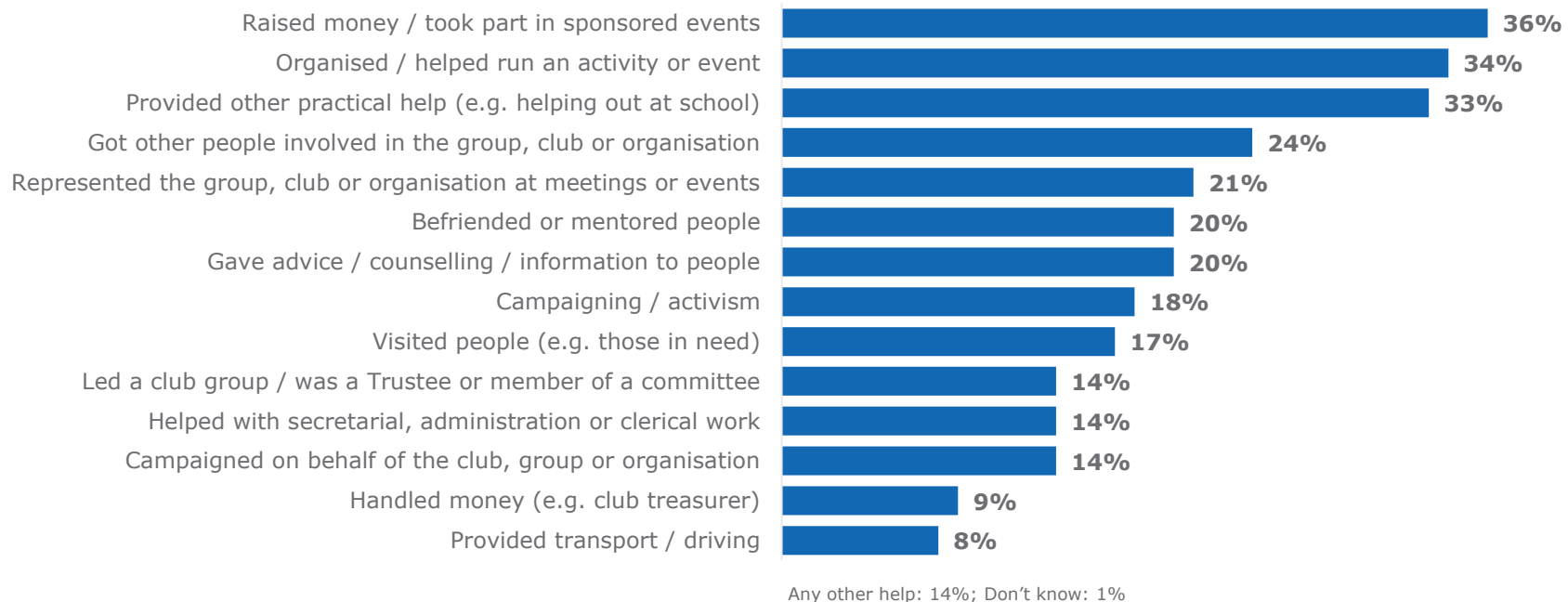


Activities centred around events attract large proportions of current volunteers

Volunteers of a higher socio-economic group (ABC1) are significantly more likely to volunteer by providing practical help, and lean towards activities that can be done solo, whereas those from a lower socio-economic group (C2DE) have a slightly greater tendency to participate in group-based activities and events.

What types of volunteering activities have you taken part in over the last 12 months?

*Multi-code question, total will not add up to 100%



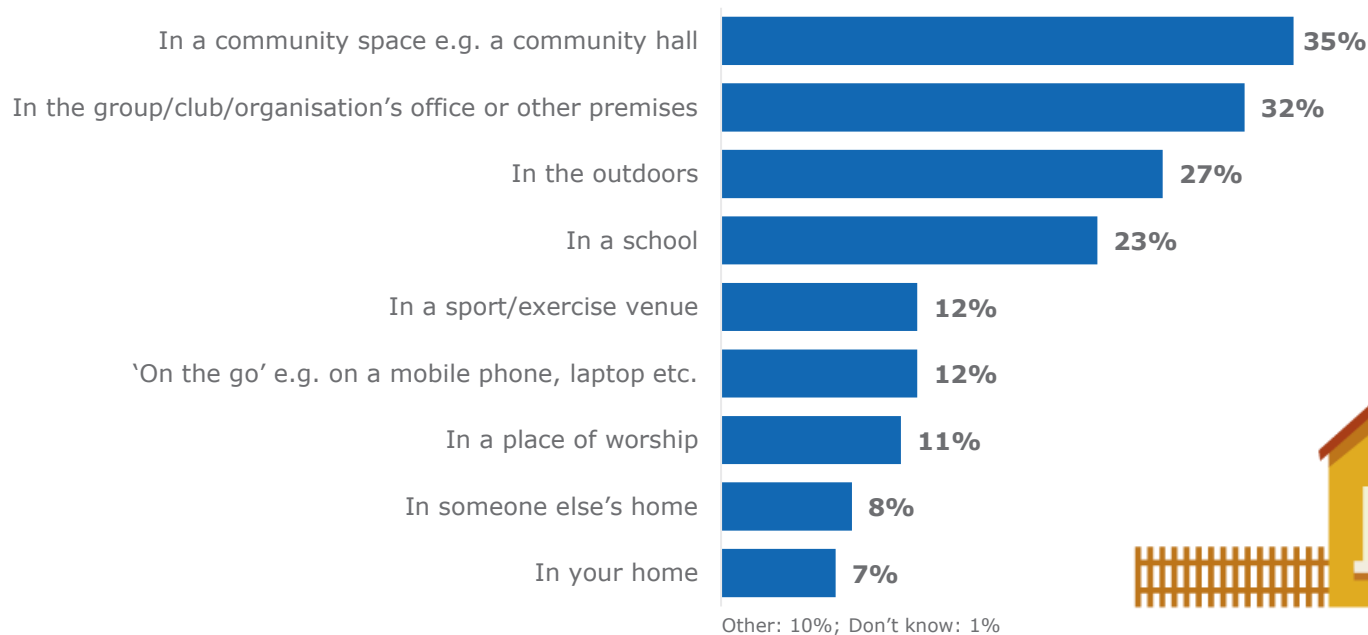


Most current volunteering activity is done inside, although over a quarter is undertaken in the outdoors

Those uninterested in volunteering for the Trust are much less likely to currently volunteer in the outdoors at just 19%.

Whereabouts does your volunteering take place?

*Multi-code question, total will not add up to 100%



Young people and their preferences towards volunteering

This section focuses on attitudes and preferences towards volunteering for all, with comparisons against current volunteers when notable

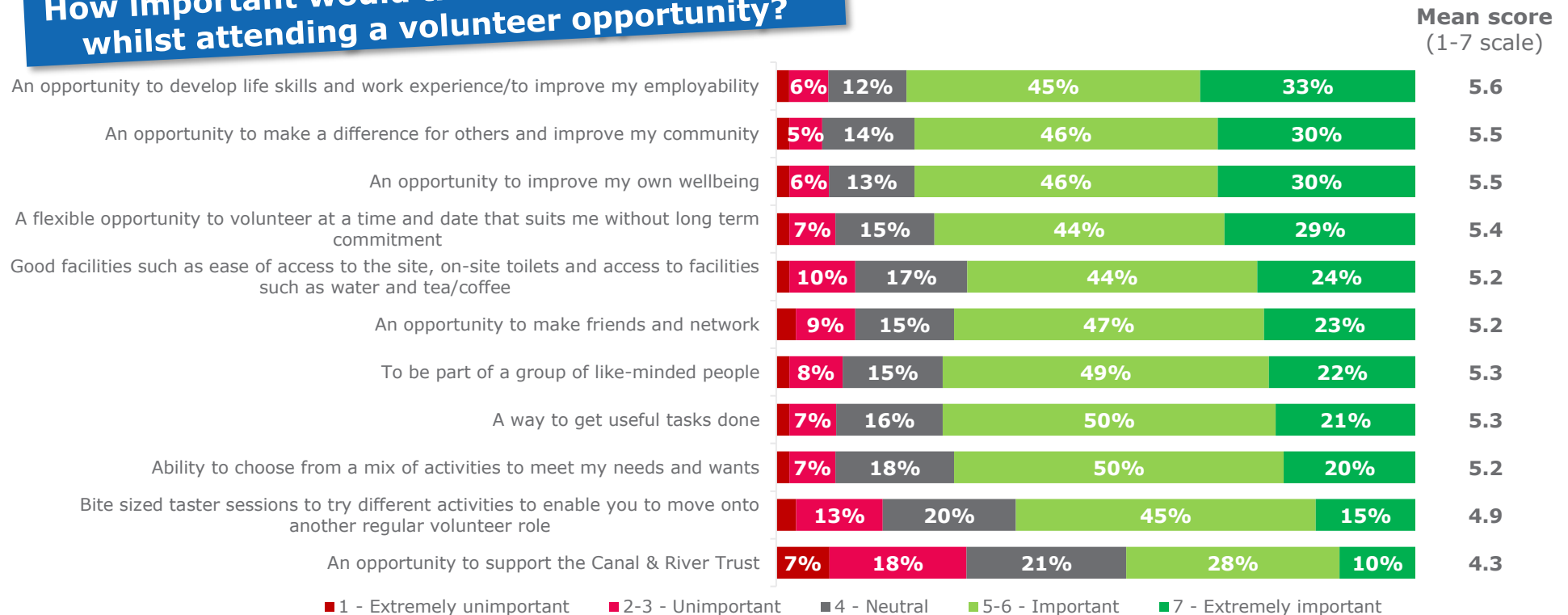




Of most importance are opportunities to improve and develop not only themselves, but other people and the wider community

Knowledge of the Trust influences how important young people feel it is to support, with 34% of those who know a lot about it feeling it is extremely important to support compared with just 7% for those who have never heard of the Trust.

How important would the following be for you whilst attending a volunteer opportunity?



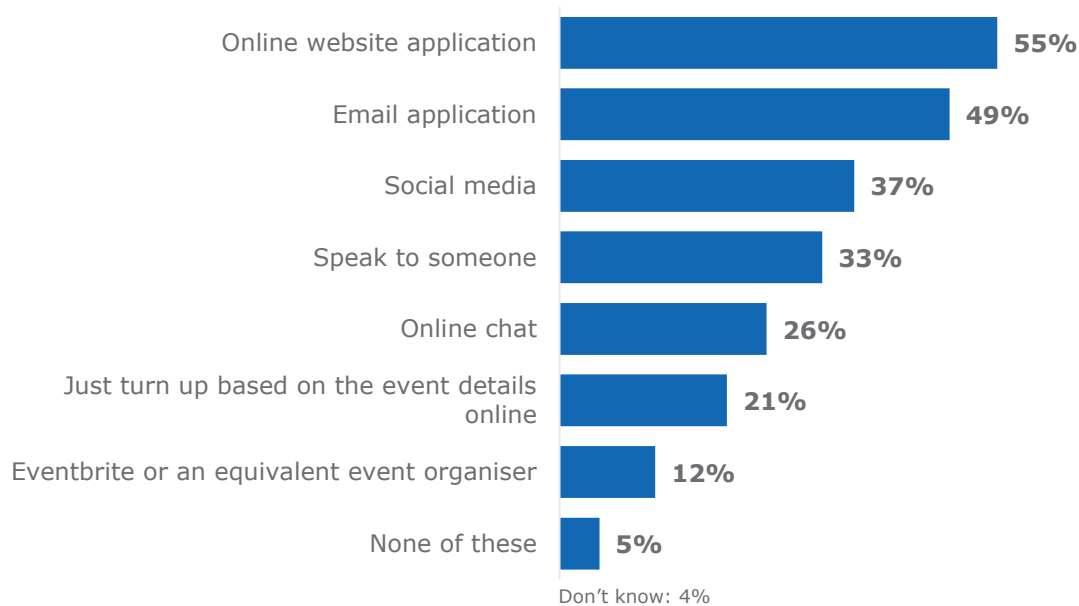
Q24. On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is extremely unimportant and 7 is extremely important, how important would the following be for you whilst attending a volunteer opportunity? Base: All respondents (n=2001)



Online methods of application are the preferred option when applying to volunteer

Specifically the more formal approaches i.e. through the website or direct via email.

Please specify your preferred methods for applying for a volunteering opportunity?

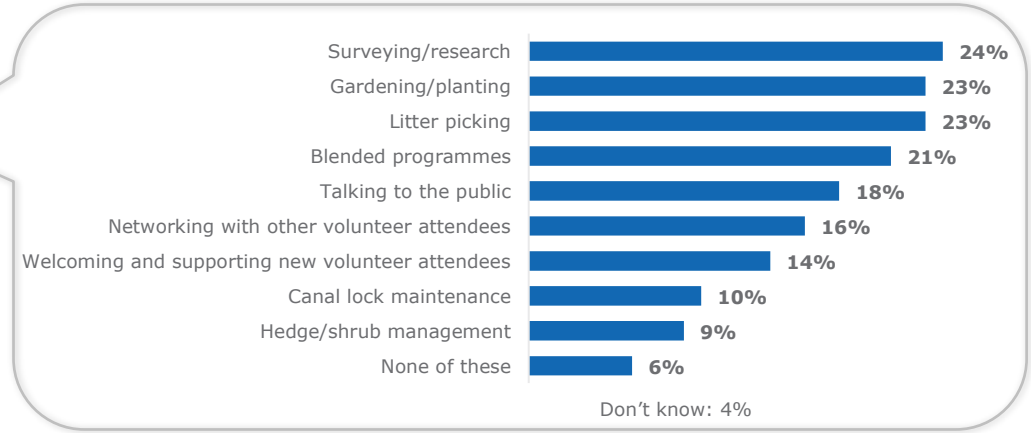
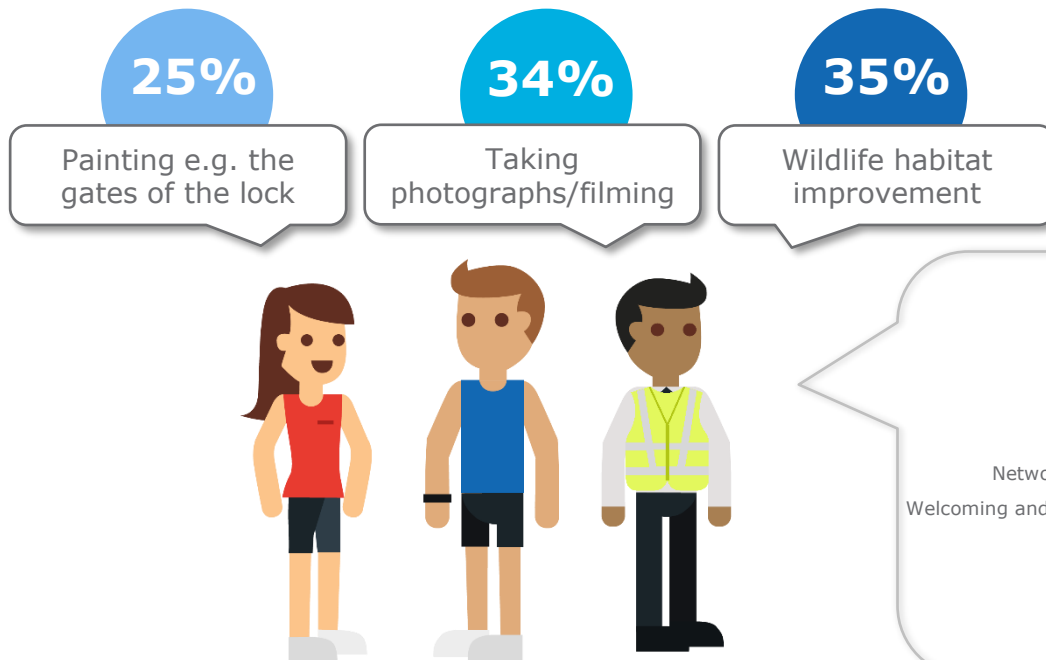




There is a good amount of interest across a range of types of practical activity

There is little difference in the preferences of volunteers and non-volunteers, although current volunteers show more interest in blended programmes (26% cf. 17%) and networking with other volunteers (20% cf. 13%).

Top 3 things you would like when attending a practical volunteering opportunity?

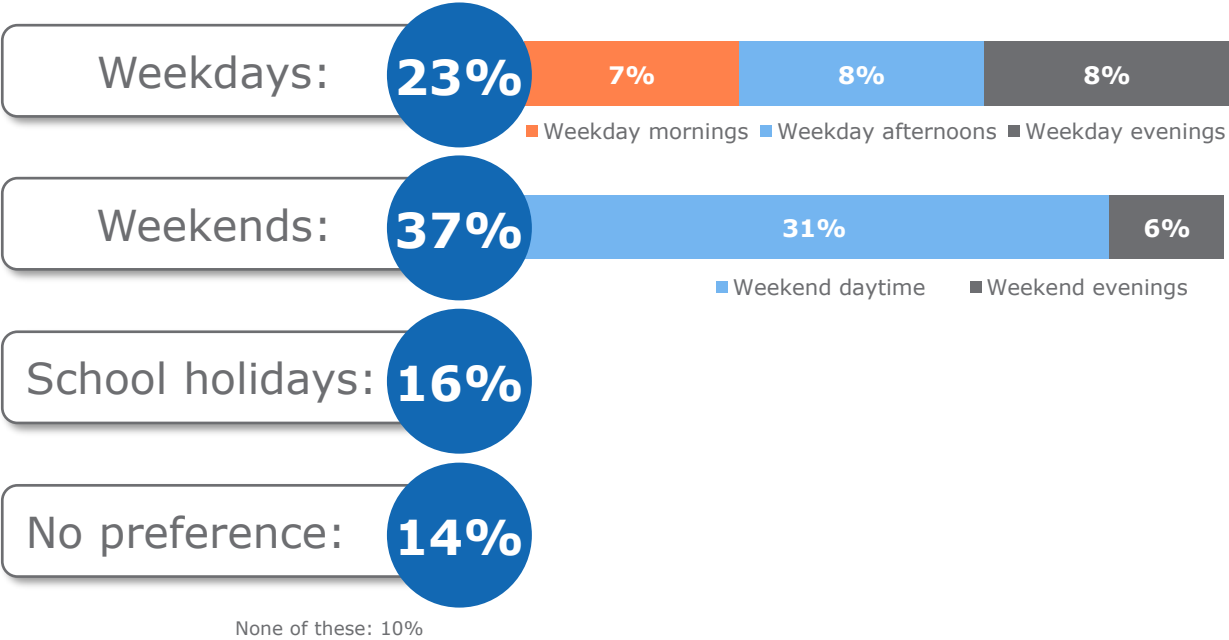




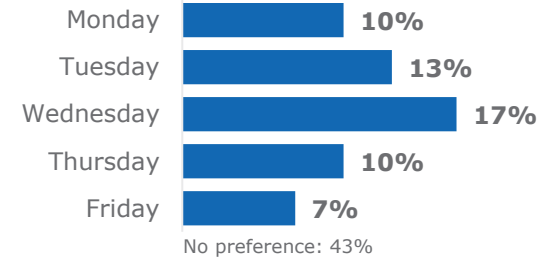
The preferred time/day for young people to volunteer is during the day at weekends

If during the week, then Wednesdays would be the best day to focus on, although a large proportion don't have a preference on a specific weekday.

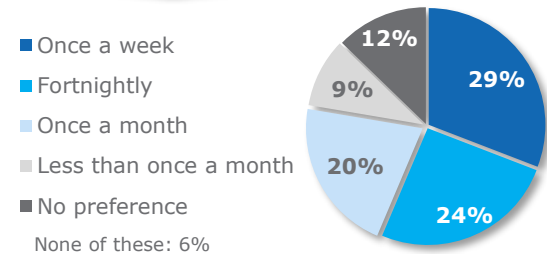
Preferred days and frequency for volunteering



Are there any specific weekdays which you would prefer to volunteer on?



How often would you prefer to volunteer?



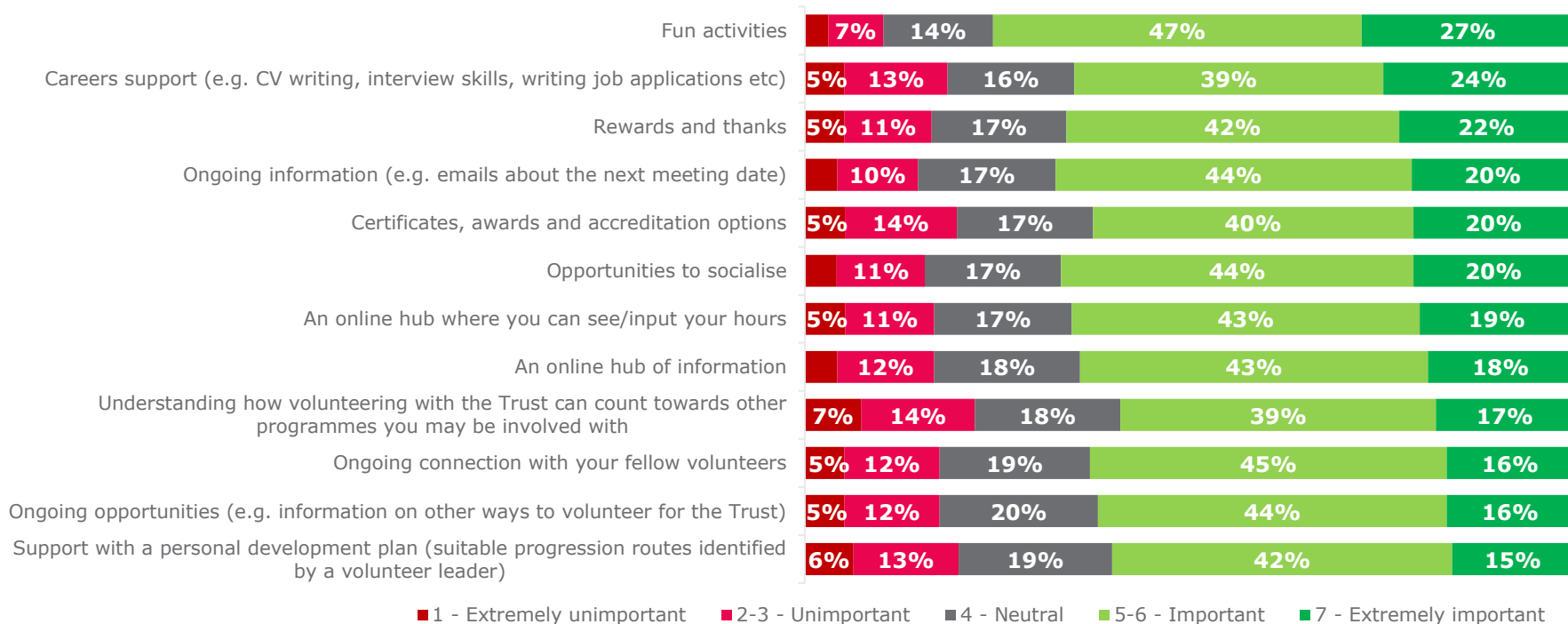
Q28. When would you prefer to volunteer? Base: All respondents (n=2001)
 Q29. And are there any specific weekdays which you would prefer to volunteer on? Base: All who would prefer to volunteer on a weekday (n=464)
 Q30. How often would you prefer to volunteer? Base: All respondents (n=2001)



Getting enjoyment out of volunteering through fun activities is of most importance for young people

However, all the aspects asked about still have a relatively high importance, so none should be overlooked.

How important would each of the following be to you as a volunteer?



■ 1 - Extremely unimportant ■ 2-3 - Unimportant ■ 4 - Neutral ■ 5-6 - Important ■ 7 - Extremely important

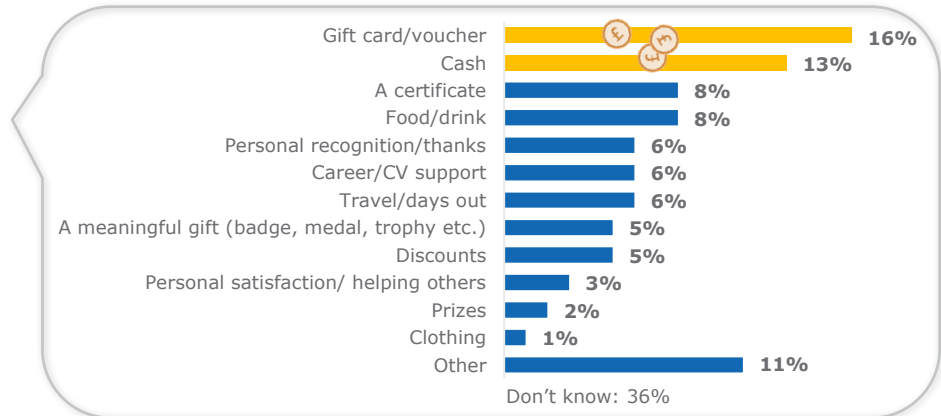
Q31. On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is extremely unimportant and 7 is extremely important, how important would each of the following be to you as a volunteer?
Base: All respondents (n=2001)



Excluding monetary rewards/incentives, simple recognition and sustenance are most appealing to young people

Physical rewards and incentives may not be essential given the importance of aspects such as simply having fun and gaining career support etc.

Can you specify what types of rewards or incentives you would find appealing?



Features of an online hub related to the individual, rather than to groups or other volunteers, attract a greater interest



Which features of an online hub would you be interested in interacting with?

61% of young people would find an online hub important (Rated 5-7 out of 7)



Contact us...



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