



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Volunteering (National Survey for Wales): April 2019 to March 2020

The report looks at people who volunteer and the organisations they volunteer with for April 2019 to March 2020.

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In 2019-20, the National Survey asked people whether they gave their time for free (that is, 'volunteered') for any clubs or organisations. Questions on volunteering during the coronavirus pandemic were also asked in 2020-21 and are also reported on here.

Main findings

26% of people were volunteers in 2019-20, down from 28% in 2016-17.

The following factors are independently linked with people who volunteer:

- being aged 65 to 74
- having good educational qualifications
- being an owner-occupier
- taking part in regular sporting activity

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- using the internet
- speaking Welsh daily
- having a religious faith
- being in good general health
- feeling that things in life are worthwhile
- where you live (for example, living in Denbighshire or Pembrokeshire rather than in Merthyr Tydfil or Blaenau Gwent)

People who were volunteers before the coronavirus pandemic were more likely to volunteer to help with the COVID-19 situation than people who had not volunteered previously.

Volunteers

When controlling for other factors (explained in our [Regression technical report](#)) the following characteristics were significantly associated with being a volunteer in 2019-20.

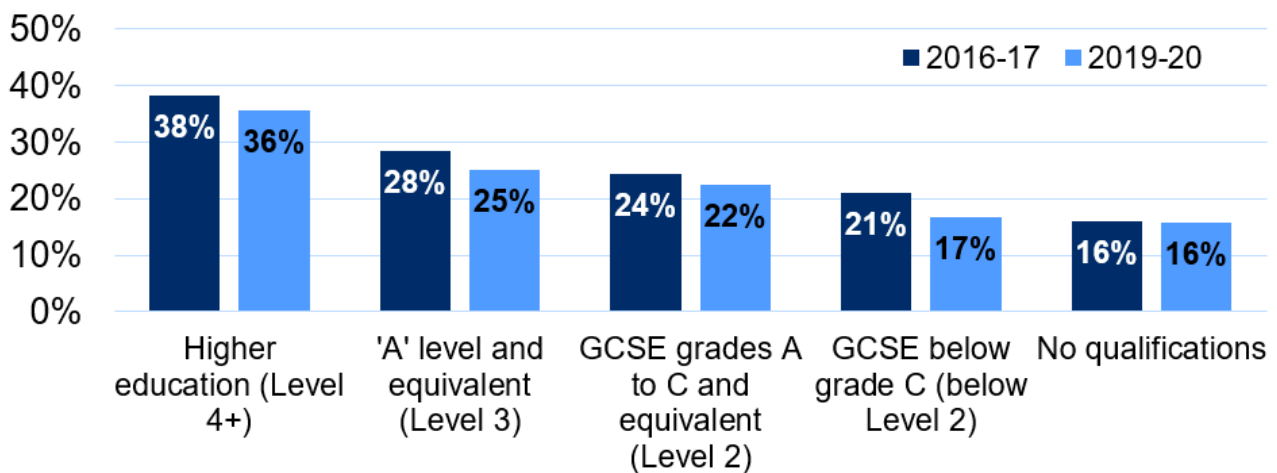
Age

30% of people aged 65 to 74 volunteered. The proportion of people aged 16 to 24 who volunteered increased from 22% in 2016-17 to 27% in 2019-20.

Education

Likelihood of volunteering increases with the level of educational qualification achieved. (Chart 1)

Chart 1: People volunteering, by highest qualification and year, April 2016 to March 2020



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2016-17 and 2019-20

Tenure

29% of owner-occupiers were volunteers, compared with 15% of people living in social housing. This reflects the pattern seen in 2016-17.

Sporting activity

35% of people who participated in sporting activities three or more times a week were volunteers, compared with 22% of those who did not participate in this amount of sport. 12% of people who regularly participated in sport also volunteered at a sports club. Similar results to those in 2016-17. (Chart 2)

Internet use

15% of those who did not use the internet at home, work or elsewhere were volunteers, compared with 27% of those who did use the internet. (19% and 30% respectively in 2016-17).

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Speaking Welsh daily

37% of people who spoke Welsh daily and could speak more than a few words were volunteers compared with 25% who did not speak Welsh regularly. Again, this difference was observed in 2016-17.

Religion

People with a religious faith were more likely to be a volunteer than those without a religion: 32% compared with 21%. (33% and 24% in 2016-17).

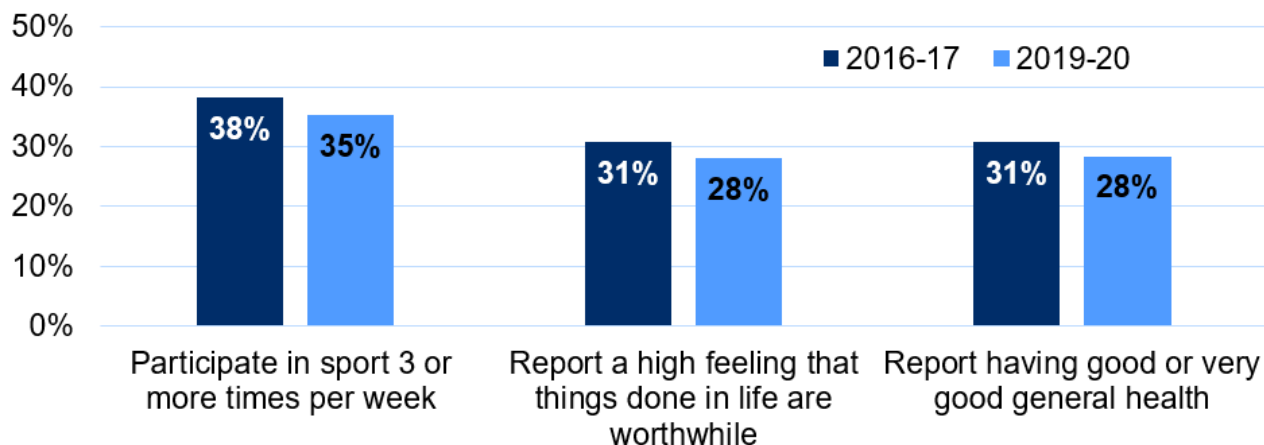
General health

28% of people who said they were in good general health were volunteers compared with 15% of those in bad health. This is a complex relationship in that poor health may be a barrier to volunteering whilst volunteering may have health benefits for volunteers. (Chart 2)

Feeling that things in life are worthwhile

26% of people who felt things in their life were highly worthwhile were volunteers compared with 11% of those who gave a low measure that things in life were worthwhile. As with health status there is a two-way relationship between these factors: volunteering may increase a person's sense that things in their life are worthwhile whilst a person who views things as worthwhile may also be more inclined to contribute time to volunteering. (Chart 2)

Chart 2: People volunteering, by participation in sport, general health and feeling that things in life are worthwhile, April 2016 to March 2020



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2016-17 and 2019-20

Local authority area

Whilst holding other factors constant there remained a variation in volunteering rates between local authorities. As in 2016-17, rates were lowest in Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The highest rates of volunteering were found in Denbighshire and Pembrokeshire.

Volunteering type

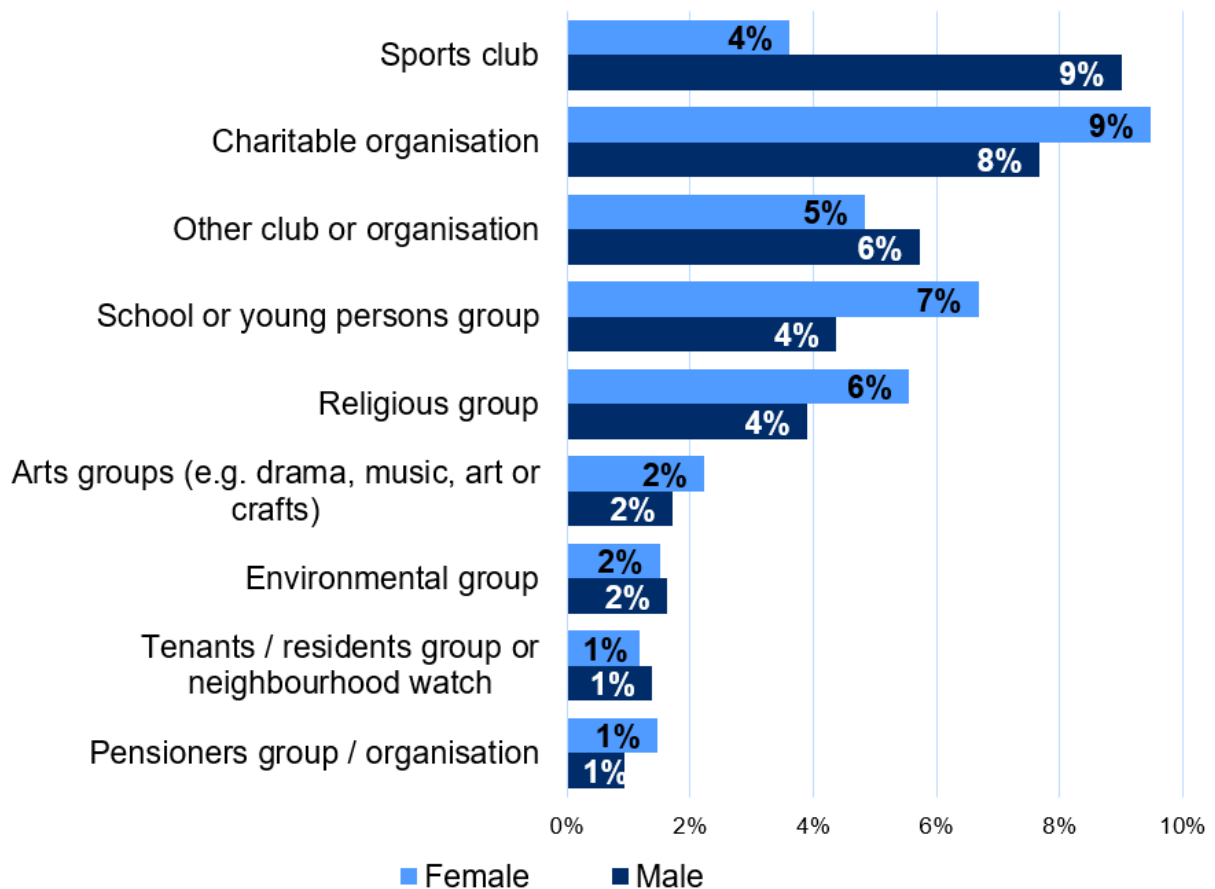
People gave their time for free to many different organisations (Chart 3). A similar distribution was seen in 2016-17. Although gender was not a significant factor in overall volunteering rates, there appear to be gender differences in the type of organisation where people choose to volunteer. Women accounted for the majority of volunteers at schools and with young people, whilst a notably higher proportion of men than women volunteered at sports clubs.

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Chart 3: Proportion of volunteers by sex and organisation type, April 2019 to March 2020



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

Volunteering and COVID-19

Following the start of the coronavirus pandemic the National Survey could no longer be conducted face-to-face and from May 2020 it became a shorter monthly telephone survey. From June to September, people were asked whether they had volunteered to help with the COVID-19 situation.

- In June, 10% of people said they had volunteered to help in the past 4 weeks. This had fallen to 5% in September.
- In September, of those who had volunteered, over three quarters said they expected to carry on volunteering for at least 6 months or as long as

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necessary.

Because the telephone survey respondents had also previously taken part in the face-to-face National Survey, we could compare answers with those they gave before the coronavirus pandemic.

When linked with their full-year responses 62% of people who were volunteering (in June) to help with the COVID-19 situation had previously responded in the full-year survey that they volunteered for clubs and other organisations.

Policy context

The Welsh Government's **Third Sector Scheme** sets out how the Welsh Government will promote the interests of voluntary organisations and defines four cross-cutting themes which underpin activity in the sector, these are: sustainable development, Welsh language, equality and diversity, and tackling poverty.

Emerging from the scheme, the Welsh Government's **Volunteering Policy: Supporting Communities, Changing Lives** set out three key purposes: improve access to volunteering for people of all ages and from all parts of society; encourage the more effective involvement of volunteers, including through appropriate training; raise the status and improve the image of volunteering. Volunteering is recognised as an important aspect of strong communities by the Welsh Government and the Third Sector Partnership Council, and as something to be promoted and supported.

Quality and methodology information

The 2019-20 **National Survey** was a face-to-face survey of over 12,000 randomly selected adults across Wales running from April 2019 to March 2020.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic we changed to a shorter, monthly telephone survey. From May 2020 onwards telephone interviews were carried out with a random sample of people who had previously taken part in a full-year, face-to-

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face [National Survey](#).

Detailed charts and tables of results are available in our interactive [results viewer](#). For information on data collection and methodology please see our [Quality report](#) and [Regression technical report](#).

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2020 following a compliance check by the Office for

Statistics Regulation ([letter of confirmation](#)). These statistics last underwent a full assessment ([full report](#)) against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

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- provided more detailed breakdowns in the [results viewer](#) and made it easier for users to compare results across years
- updated the survey topics annually to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need
- made regression analysis a standard part of our outputs to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016. The National Survey collects information for [15 of the 46 indicators](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact details

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