Literature Review to Inform the Development of Scotland's Volunteering Outcomes Framework

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

social research

Literature Review to Inform the Development of Scotland's Volunteering Outcomes Framework

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Introduction

Background

This report outlines a systematic review of the research literature on volunteering. The purpose of this review is to inform the development of a Volunteering Outcomes Framework to support the critical role that volunteering plays in Scotland for volunteers, beneficiaries and wider communities.

This literature review is the first element in a programme of analytical and policy research in support of the development of the Volunteering Outcomes Framework by the Scottish Government. The scoping work for the literature review identified that there was a significant body of evidence on volunteering, but that this had not been brought together and applied to the Scottish context.

The review has a broad remit: to include evidence on volunteer characteristics; motivations; activities; benefits; outcomes; barriers; and policies in other countries. It considers research quality, and identifies areas where there are knowledge gaps.

In this review we first provide an overview of the coverage of the papers included in the review. We then describe the papers that were reviewed in more detail in a thematic structure that firstly examines literature that gives insight into the complexity of volunteering with specific attention to different groups, activities and organisations linked to volunteering.

We have organised the review into four thematic sections:

- a picture of volunteering;
- motivations and barriers;
- outcomes and benefits;
- informal participation and inequalities.

The insights related to motivations, benefits and barriers to volunteering are explored followed by an examination of volunteering outcomes (individual, community and beyond). The literature review finishes with an overarching discussion around participation and equality, looking at inclusiveness, diversity and under-representation in volunteering.

Within each section we identify recommendations for consideration in shaping the Volunteering Outcomes Framework.

Volunteering within the Scottish context

The definition of volunteering held by the Scottish Government includes:

"the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's

own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary."

The main source of evidence for the scale and characteristics of volunteering in Scotland is drawn from the [Scottish Household Survey](#), which for the past decade has included a robust suite of questions on formal volunteering participation. From this survey we know that levels of volunteering have remained relatively stable over the last nine years, with around three in ten adults providing unpaid help to organisations or groups. In 2017, 28 per cent of adults provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months. Volunteers in Scotland tend to be adults aged 35-44 (33%) and 60-74 (30%), more affluent and with relatively high levels of education (Scottish Government, 2017b). There is also a strong urban rural divide, with participation in some remote rural areas almost double that of large urban areas.

The Scottish Government's newly reviewed [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) has the overall purpose of building opportunities for all through increased wellbeing through sustainable and inclusive economic growth led by values such as kindness, dignity, compassion and transparency. The third sector in Scotland has a role in supporting the 11 National Outcomes, which include: 'We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered resilient and safe'; 'We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society'; and 'We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential' (see Appendix One for full visualisation). The National outcome focusing on inclusive communities specifically mentions volunteering within its vision:

"We live in friendly, vibrant and cohesive communities which value diversity and support those in need. **We are encouraged to volunteer, take responsibility for our community and engage with decisions about it***. Our communities are resilient, safe and have low levels of crime"*.

The Scottish Government recognises the numerous contributions that volunteers make, as carers, providers, mentors, leaders and in many other roles. Ministers have been clear that they want to continue to support people to volunteer and contribute on the issues that matter to them. They have also been clear that this is crucial to the wider aim of creating a fairer, smart, inclusive Scotland with genuine equality of opportunity for everyone. Volunteering in Scotland is already making a crucial contribution to key strategic priorities including Community Empowerment and Public Service Reform - building social capital, fostering trust, binding people together and making our communities better places to live and to work.

The 2017-18 Programme for Government, [*A Nation with Ambition (Scottish Government, 2017a)*](#), stated the following commitments:

"We will be bold in realising our vision for volunteering and the role volunteers can play in shaping the lives of their communities. Volunteering is transformational: for the volunteer, for the beneficiary and for communities.

We will do more to support groups currently facing barriers to engaging in their communities, including disabled people, older people and people out of work. Building on positive trends for youth volunteering, we will work with young people throughout the Year of Young People 2018 to better understand opportunities and motivations and ensure young people can contribute on issues that matter to them." (Scottish Government 2017a: 110)

The 2018-19 Programme for Government, [*Delivering for today, Investing for Tomorrow (Scottish Government, 2018)*](#) builds on these commitments, noting that:

"We have made progress on our drive to increase participation in volunteering across society, building on the growth of youth volunteering during the Year of Young People by investing in the establishment of a National Youth Volunteering Design Team who will make recommendations to the Scottish Government early next year on actions required to grow participation rates.

We have also invested in the development of our volunteering evidence base and maintained our funding to support third sector organisations to engage with those facing barriers to participation, providing £3.8 million over the period 2017-20 through the Volunteering Support Fund.

In the coming year we will publish a National Volunteering Outcomes Framework that will set out a coherent and compelling vision for volunteering and identify the key evidence and data to drive an increase in participation for all." (Scottish Government 2018: 93)

The Scottish Government's objective in developing the Volunteering Outcomes Framework is to:
- Set out clearly and in one place a coherent and compelling narrative;
- Define the key outcomes desired for volunteering in Scotland;
- Identify the key data and evidence that will inform, indicate and drive performance at national and local level; and
- Allow informed debate and decision about the optimal combination of programmes, investments and interventions.

The Framework is being developed with the sector and is informed by evidence gathered by the Scottish Government and key delivery and strategic partners, and enriched by a series of internal and external engagements and by specific commissions, including:
- This literature review
- The recommendations from the National Youth Volunteering Design Team (now titled the Youth Volunteering Innovation Project [Youth VIP]).

The overall aim of this literature review is to give a comprehensive and robust collation, review and analysis of the available research literature evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) to more thoroughly synthesise and bring this together and evidence the impacts / outcomes brought about by volunteering on individuals, intended beneficiaries, organisations, communities and society.

Summary of Recommendations

Volunteering has clear, well-evidenced benefits to individuals, organisations and communities. But formal volunteering exhibits the social inequalities that we observe in broader society. Tackling these inequalities will require both specific volunteering policy, and recognition of the link between volunteering and broader social policy. Informal volunteering is a significant form of participation, particularly with minority and disadvantaged communities. The focus on formal volunteering (in research and in policy) risks playing down both the scale and significance of informal volunteering, and its role in inclusion. Both acknowledging and supporting the conditions for informal volunteering is likely to be critical in making volunteering more inclusive.

Through the course of the review we make a number of recommendations to inform the development of the Volunteering Outcomes Framework, and these are summarised below.

A Picture of Volunteering

Place is important for volunteering in Scotland, with much higher levels of participation in rural areas than urban areas. We need to understand the drivers behind this difference, as well as whether there are lessons to be learned from communities with high levels of participation. Scotland is experiencing population ageing, as well as significant health inequalities. Healthier older age may increase participation around retirement, but health inequalities could perpetuate differences in participation. Changing life courses will also change participation: e.g. delaying starting families, longer working lives, increased informal care responsibilities.

Recommendation One: Volunteering is a cultural activity, and the motivations, meaning and factors predicting participation vary across both countries and contexts. Consideration should be given to how both the meaning and context of volunteering may change as the Scottish population changes.

Recommendation Two: Volunteering participation varies through time, and across the lifecourse, although it is often studied as a discrete activity at one point in time. Key transitions from the literature include starting a family, and retirement in older age. Evidence on the significance of other lifecourse transitions is more limited. Consideration should be given to how interventions to encourage participation at one point might also influence participation later in life.

Motivations and Barriers

In Scotland motivations to volunteer will vary by context e.g. urban / rural; community / education. The close links between motivations and place may explain some of the variation in participation across communities, but the research evidence on the role of place is limited.

Attempts to increase participation amongst young people in Scotland have included appealing to the individual benefits of volunteering. The 2017-18 Programme for Government (Scottish Government, 2017a) has a specific focus on younger people volunteering. In focussing on volunteering outcomes, it is tempting to prioritise

these benefits, and the evidence suggests that this needs to be carefully considered. Focusing on only benefits may overlook structural barriers to volunteering.

Barriers to volunteering participation reflect wider structures of inequality, and so overcoming them in the Scottish context needs to be linked to wider policy. The National Performance Framework in Scotland has tackling inequality and poverty fully integrated across national outcomes and indicators, showing that it is a key priority. The evidence demonstrates the reliance that volunteering will have on other policy areas in Scotland.

Recommendation Three: There is a rich range of motivations for volunteering, and these are fairly well documented and understood in the literature. The most commonly considered motivations are altruism and personal development, but consideration should be given to the broader spectrum of motivations such as personal values and cultural norms when developing the Framework. We should resist the temptation to focus solely on instrumentalist motivations and routes into volunteering.

Recommendation Four: An important distinction is made between barriers to accessing volunteering, and barriers to continuing to volunteer, and a range of these barriers are well described. Consideration should be given to the ways in which these barriers can be tackled that is sensitive to the motivations and context and lifecourse events in which volunteering takes place.

Outcomes and Benefits

The literature evidence suggests that there are wide and significant benefits for individuals, organisations and communities from volunteering participation. We would expect these benefits to apply to volunteering in Scottish communities. Given the deprivation gradient in volunteering participation in Scotland, we know that the benefits of volunteering are not very equally distributed. We must be careful that support for volunteering in Scotland does not perpetuate these inequalities by only being accessible to those with existing privilege.

Recommendation Five: It should be acknowledged that the benefits do vary with both activity and context, and benefits are not equally distributed across all volunteering activities. There is a broad evidence base for a wide range of benefits from volunteering, and this will be core to the Framework.

Recommendation Six: The relatively limited evidence on community-level outcomes suggests that volunteering has potential to support the development of social networks, solidarity and mutual help within communities, and increasing both bonding and bridging social capital. These outcomes should be related to national outcomes around building resilient and inclusive communities.

Recommendation Seven: The evidence on broader organisational and community outcomes suggests potential for volunteering to have positive impacts, but is limited in its estimation of the scale of those benefits. The Framework needs to recognise

that there are wider benefits, but that measuring or quantifying these is very challenging.

Recommendation Eight: An underlying assumption in the literature is that volunteering has positive outcomes. This means that there is relatively little study of potentially negative outcomes. Consideration should be given to how potential negative outcomes are incorporated and mitigated in the Framework. Potential negative outcomes can be challenged by including positive support structures for volunteering participation, encouragement of good volunteering management practices, and a focus on increasing the accessibility for currently under-represented groups within the volunteering sector.

Informal participation and inequalities

Given the focus to date on formal volunteering in both policy and measurement, there is a risk in privileging formal forms of participation. Informal volunteering may be seen as a route to formal volunteering in Scotland, but this could risk devaluing it as an important form of participation in its own right. The new Scottish Household Survey questions on informal volunteering, introduced in 2018, will provide valuable additional evidence on these patterns in Scotland. Exploring the contribution of informal volunteering can give more light to certain activities and groups that have been traditionally undervalued.

Understanding the structural barriers to participation in Scotland for disadvantaged groups, and how these are influenced by both local and national policy, will be critical if volunteering is to play an effective role in decreasing social inequality. Tackling inequality is a priority in the 2017-18 Programme for Government (Scottish Government, 2017a) and is an essential component of creating sustainable and resilient communities. Informal volunteering has potential to play a significant role in widening voluntary participation in Scotland. Its lower reliance on human capital means that it can be an accessible form of participation for disadvantaged groups. But it still requires social capital, in the form of strong, connected communities in order to play this role.

Recommendation Nine: Informal volunteering is an important form of participation for traditionally excluded or disadvantaged groups. Its lower visibility means that participation amongst these groups is also less visible. The Framework needs to consider ways in which informal volunteering can be recognised and included, without implying a hierarchy in forms of participation.

Recommendation Ten: Informal volunteering is distinct from formal volunteering in its activities, participants, motivations, benefits and outcomes. Where there are evidence gaps, we should not assume that these are the same as for formal volunteering. Consideration should be given to taking these distinctions into account within the Framework.

Recommendation Eleven: When successful, volunteering can build social capital[1] and connections both within and between communities. The limited evidence on informal volunteering suggests that it has an important role in these outcomes, and the Framework should consider ways in which this can be supported.

Recommendation Twelve: There remain distinct barriers and challenges for disadvantaged groups in participating in volunteering. The importance of culture and context in participation accentuate these. Consideration should be given to the diversity of both volunteering and volunteers in the development of the Framework.

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[1] Social capital is defined by the OECD as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups". This covers bonding (links to close people such as family), bridges (links that stretch beyond a shared identity such as friends) and linkages (to groups further away) https://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf

Approach and Methods

The Stirling literature review method

We used the 'Stirling literature review method' to identify, collate and evaluate relevant literature to be synthesised. This incorporates systematic searches of a wide range of databases, filtering of results for relevance, and the use of a specially designed pro forma to systematically extract key information regarding the subject matter, results, and assess the quality of the research as reported.

This method has been successfully used to provide a rigorous assessment of the evidence base in a range of contexts, e.g. physical activity for older people (Bowes, Dawson, Jepson, & McCabe, 2013); cultural differences in satisfaction with adult social care (Bowes, Dawson, & Greasley-Adams, 2013); home care services for people with dementia (A. Dawson, Bowes, Kelly, Velzke, & Ward, 2015); design of residential environments for people with dementia and sight loss (Bowes, Dawson, Greasley-Adams, & McCabe, 2016). Our search strategy, described in more detail below, is designed to rigorously and systematically interrogate the evidence base to identify research of direct relevance.

The data extraction section of the Stirling pro forma has been tailored to the project and designed to capture data in line with the objectives of the literature review. The data extracted from articles included a summary of the key findings of the work, data about the nature of the research described, and authors' key conclusions and recommendations for further research.

In the course of completing the Stirling pro forma, reviewers identified the research design of the item being reviewed, and then answered a series of evaluation questions (linked to the Scottish Household Survey where possible) relating to specific research designs based on standard protocols widely used in reviewing. These included: the Centre for Research and Development (CRD) Report No. 4 used for randomised controlled trials; Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) checklists used for controlled before-after studies; and, Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) assessment criteria used for literature reviews and qualitative studies (CASP, 2013; EPOC, 2015; NHS CRD, 2001). Having responded to detailed questions about the design of the study, its conduct, and conclusions, reviewers were then asked to rate it as of high, medium, or low quality and to record their reasons for doing so. Thus, each study was quality assessed according to specific criteria relating to studies using the same approach, and assessments were structured and consistent within study type without implying a hierarchy between types of research evidence.

The reviewing process and numbers reviewed

The literature review filtering process is visualised in Figure 1 below. A total of 37,031 papers were returned by the database searches. The development of the keywords for the search is detailed in Appendix Two (removing duplicates left a working database of 30,234 papers).

Figure 1 The Literature Review Filtering Process
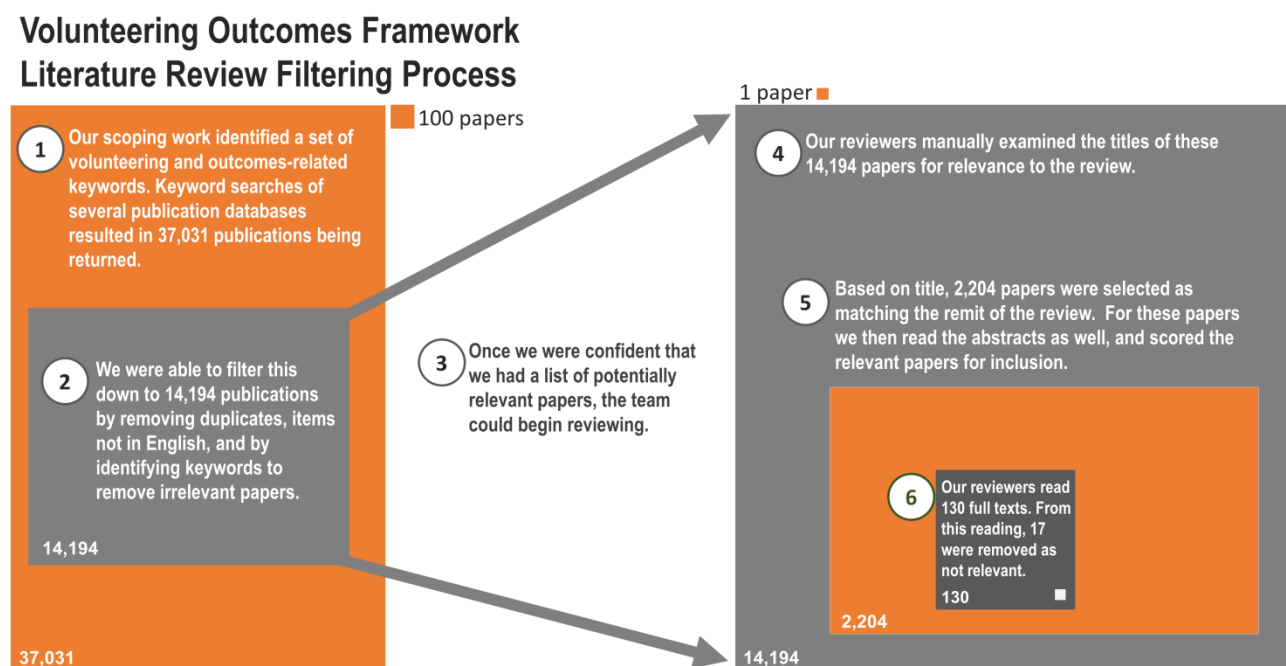
We conducted some keyword-based batch deletions[2], primarily targeting medical articles where the term 'volunteer' was used in the context of trial participants, which removed 10,849 irrelevant papers, and a further manual inspection of duplicates and non-English articles to remove a further 5,191. This left a database of 14,194 papers to be considered by the review team. Full details of the literature downloaded are contained in Appendix Three.

Examination of the paper titles by the review team identified 2,204 papers for abstract review. These papers were then scored on the basis of their title and abstract, identifying 735 potential papers for full text review. We used a priority scoring system, detailed in Appendix Three, to identify 130 papers to be read by the reviewers, with 17 being removed as not relevant following the full text review.

The papers that were given a full text review were also assessed for their quality as evidence, taking into account their sample, research design, methods and presentation of results. We have indicated a summary of the quality of evidence for each topic grouping using a traffic light system, where green indicates that more than 30% of papers reviewed were assessed as high quality; amber indicates that most papers were medium quality, and red indicates that more than 30% of the papers read were of low quality. This provides some indication of where the evidence is strongest, and where there are still gaps in our knowledge about volunteering.

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[2] See Table A3.4 in Appendix 3

Overview of the reviewed literature

Coverage of the review

We start by describing the coverage of the literature that was reviewed, describing the publication type; geographical coverage; and the overall quality scoring.

In total, 130 articles were full-text reviewed by multiple reviewers. After reading, 113 of them (87%) were assessed as appropriate for inclusion in the review and were fully evaluated. As shown in Table 1, the majority of the fully-evaluated papers primarily targeted an academic audience.

Table 1: Publication primary audience

Publication primary audience	Frequency	%
Academic	108	95.58
Professional	4	3.54
Service provider organisations	1	0.88
Total	113	100

The majority (95%) of the evaluated publications were empirical studies describing a single research study (see Table 2). As shown in Table 3, 28% of the evaluated publications were based on qualitative research design; and roughly 67% were quantitative studies (N=76), including 71 case-control/cross-sectional/uncontrolled longitudinal studies, two cohort studies, two economic evaluations and one 'before and after' study.

Table 2: Publication type

Publication type	Freq.	Percent
Describes a single research study with empirical evidence	107	94.69
Describes an example or case study relating to volunteers or volunteering	1	0.88
Presents the author's own views, opinions or experiences	2	1.77
Reviews two or more independent research studies	3	2.65
Total	113	100

Table 3: Research design

Research design	Freq.	Percent
Case-control/cross-sectional/uncontrolled longitudinal study	71	62.83
Qualitative research	32	28.32
Not a research study or literature review	3	2.65
Cohort Study	2	1.77
Economic Evaluation	2	1.77
Literature Review, including systematic review and rapid review	2	1.77
Controlled Before and After Study (CBA) and uncontrolled Before-and-After Study	1	0.88
Total	113	100

As shown in Table 4, 43% of the papers evaluated covered one or more countries outside of Europe. A further 22% related to research conducted soley in England. Five publications (4%) were about research focussed exclusively on Scotland. In addition, there were another seven publications (6%) related to more than one country in the UK; and five of them used data from Scotland. There were also six publications that covered countries both within and outside of Europe.

Table 4: Which country/countries the publications related to

Country studied	Freq.	Percent
Country/countries outside of Europe	49	43.4
England exclusively	25	22.1
Other country/countries in Europe	18	15.9
More than one country in the UK	7	6.2
Countries within and outside of Europe	6	5.3
Scotland exclusively	5	4.4
Not specified	3	2.7
Total	113	100

Table 5 reports the distribution of the priority scores in the evaluated literature. Only eight publications scored four (out of seven priority domains); whereas the majority of publications scored two or three.

Table 5: Priority scores

Priority Scores	Freq.	Percent
4	8	7.08
3	52	46.02
2	53	46.9
Total	113	100

Regarding the quality of research, most of the publications reviewed were assessed as either high or medium quality. Only a small number of them were categorised as low quality publications (see Table 6). This quality assessment was taken into account in writing this review.

Table 6: Research quality evaluated by reviewers

Quality Assessments	Freq.	Percent
High quality	45	40.18
Medium quality	51	45.54
Low quality	16	14.29
Total	113	100

We now go on to present our review of this literature structured into four themes: a picture of volunteering; motivations and barriers; outcomes and benefits; and informal participation and inequalities.

A picture of volunteering

We begin our in-depth review by describing a picture of volunteering in the 21st Century. This section explores the papers and evidence that relate to the definition, activities and organisations related to volunteering.

Volunteering: Who, What and Where?

Groups and organisations

Many of the papers that we reviewed provided some insights into the different groups, clubs and organisations in which volunteering typically takes place. However, this was usually not the explicit focus of the research. In 62 papers we noted that the publications did not identify specific volunteering groups, clubs or organisations. In 51 of the papers specific volunteering groups, clubs or organisations were identified. From these 51 papers, Figure 2 shows the types of groups and organisations that were mentioned (noting that one paper can mention multiple groups).

Figure 2: Groups, clubs or organisations
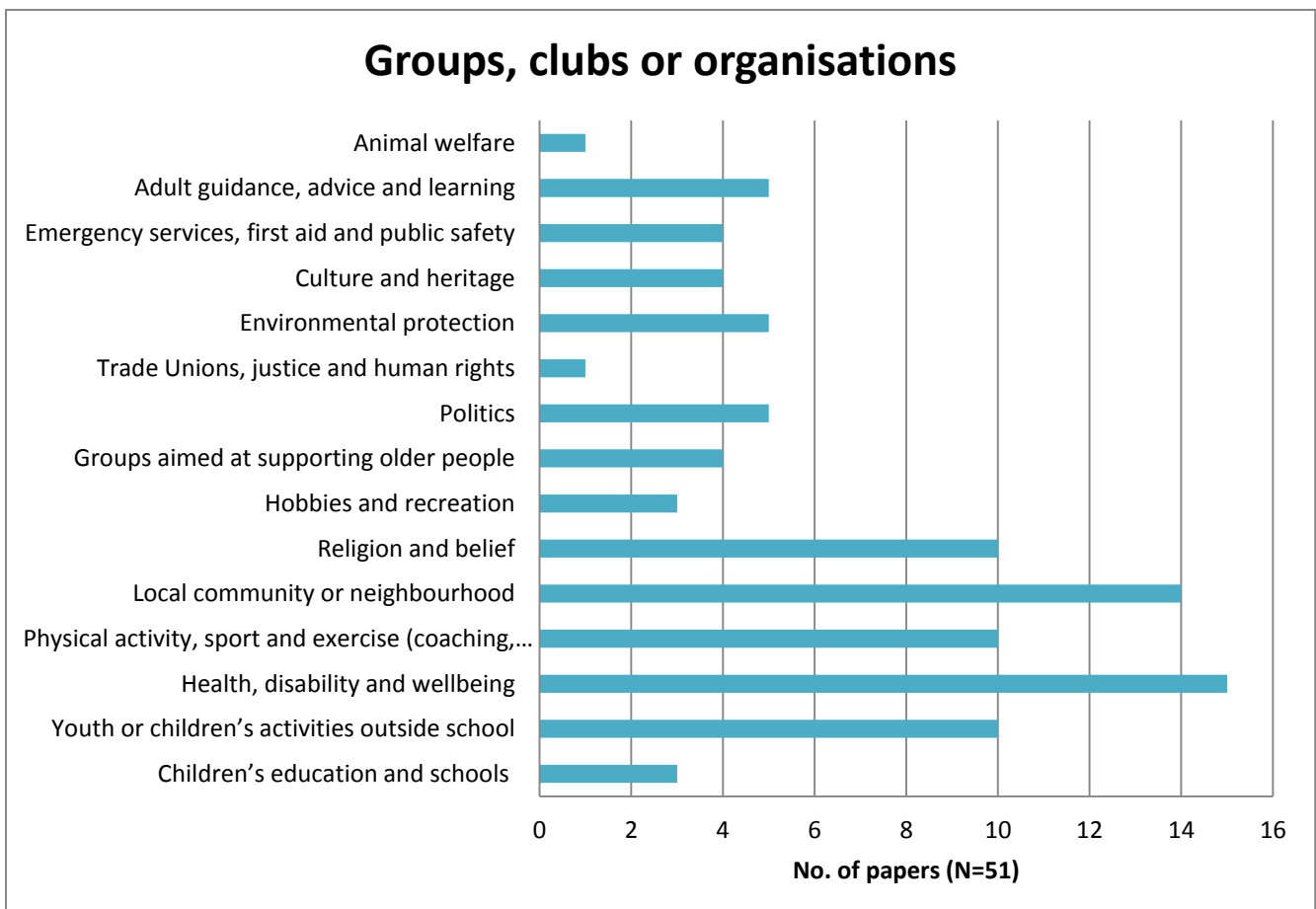
"Health, disability and wellbeing" and "local community or neighbourhood" were the most evidenced types of group, clubs or organisations included in the literature, followed by "youth or children's activities outside school", "religion and belief", and "physical activity, sport and exercise". This maps well to the common types of organisations where people volunteer in Scotland (Scottish Household Survey, 2017), which included 'children's activities associated with schools', 'youth or children' organisations, and 'local community or neighbourhood groups'. This indicated a large interest in physical and mental health in community based settings (Charlesworth et al., 2017; Daniels, Sanders, Daviaud, & Doherty, 2015; Warburton & Winterton, 2017; Whittall, Lee, & O'Connor, 2016). Sport clubs volunteering was also a popular area for examination (Bradford, Hills, & Johnston, 2016; Taylor, Panagouleas, & Nichols, 2012; Yeomans, Le, Pandit, & Lavy, 2017). Groups, clubs and organisations relating to animal welfare, trade unions, justice and human rights were covered by only one publication each included in the review.

Publications that explored multiple volunteering groups, clubs or organisations included Ertas (2016) looking at sector differences and implications with Millennials and volunteering. Akintola (2011) noted many groups and organisations involved in motivations behind volunteering with AIDS caregivers in faith-based organisations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Interestingly, some of the research challenged traditional types of groups, clubs and organisations. Amichai-Hamburger (2008) explored the potential and promise of online volunteering. This study presents a narrative literature review into online volunteering in a variety of situations, arguing for its potential in 'harnessing of the Internet to increase social justice and human well-being through unpaid volunteer work'. However, the depth and quality of the paper is limited, and this type of volunteering and evidence of its expansion into traditional volunteering domains remains restricted.

Volunteering activities

Insights from publications that examined groups, clubs or organisations are also interlinked to volunteer activities. From those reviewed, 75 papers did not specifically mention activities related to volunteering. 38 publications did identify specific volunteering activities. Activities such as providing advice, support or advocacy, education, training or coaching to develop people's skills were most represented in the publications (note that 1 paper can mention multiple groups), shown in Figure 3. Activities around campaigning, counselling and "acting as a committee member or as a trustee" were less represented in the review. These differed somewhat from the most common volunteering activities reported in the Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government, 2017b), which were generally helping out; raising money; doing whatever is required; helping to organise or run events or activities; and committee work.

Figure 3: Volunteering Activities

Figure 3: Volunteering Activities
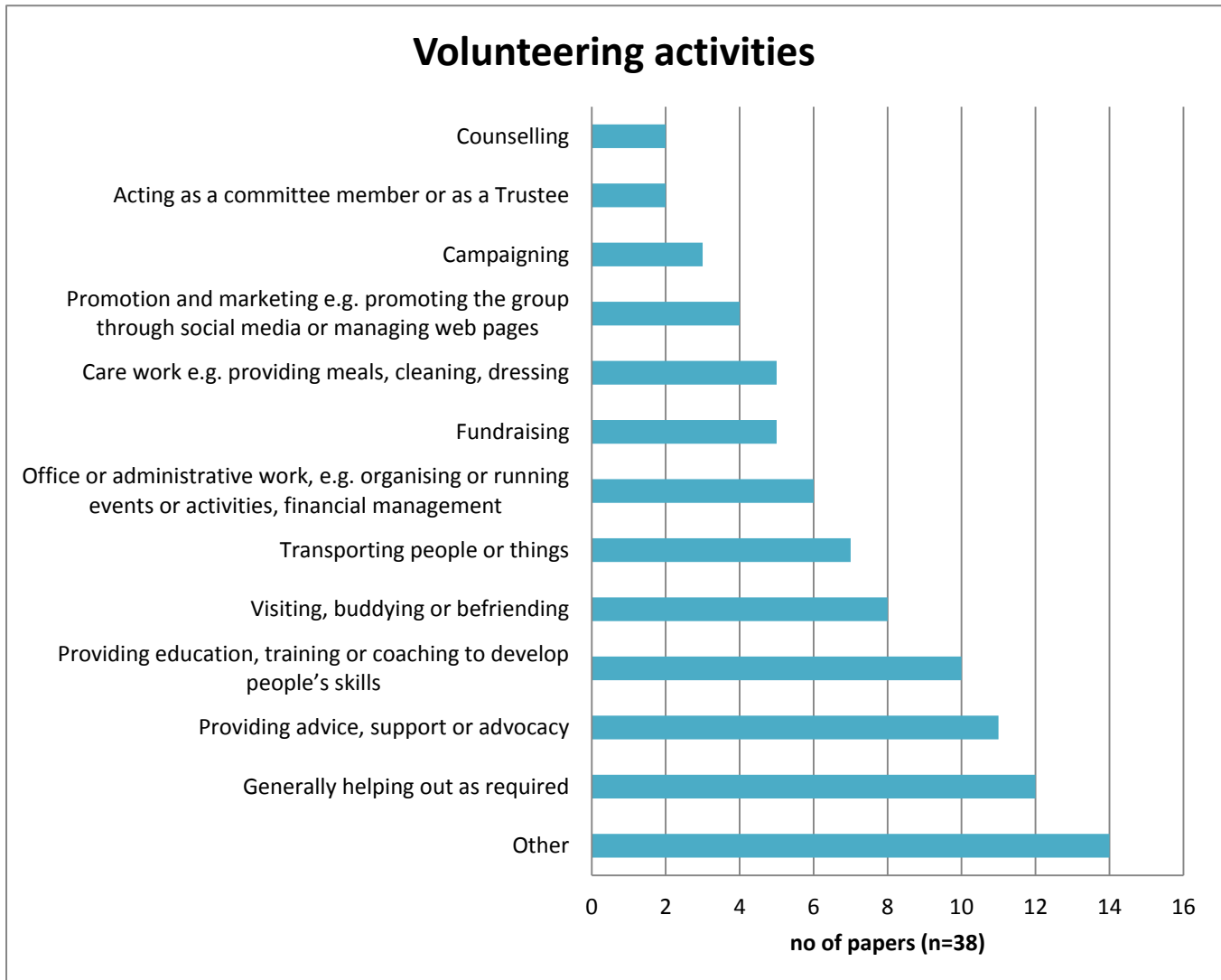
Activities related to working with charities and faith-based organisations were a common theme in the publications (Body & Hogg, 2018; Caputo, 2009; Darley, 2018; Flores, 2014; Kay & Bradbury, 2009).

Similarly to volunteering groups, clubs and organisations, specific activities within the publications are often not outlined in detail and are implicit in the analysis that is usually more focused on volunteer characteristics, participation, outcomes and motivations behind volunteering.

Volunteering location and setting

There were limited publications that identified where the volunteering activities took place (other than country). From our full text reviews we noted 85 of the papers did not indicate the location in which volunteering took place, and only 29 publications explicitly described the setting. From these (shown in Table 7), we found a dominance of research based in non-administrative organisational / institutional premises and other indoor community settings (public or semi-public).

Table 7: Volunteering locations

Volunteering locations	No. of papers
Service-user's own home	4
Volunteer's own home	1
Non-administrative organisational / institutional premises, i.e. day care centre, care home, hospital, hospice, school	9
Other indoor community settings (public or semi-public), i.e. cafés, shops, churches	11
Administrative organisational / institutional settings, e.g. local or head offices	3
Exclusively outdoor community-based settings, e.g. gardens, parks	6
Exclusively outdoor non-community settings, e.g. National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, etc.	5
Other not listed above	3

The publications specifically examining locations give interesting insight to the role of place in supporting and challenging volunteer activities. Flores (2014) explored charity shop settings, noting that certain locations and settings such as these can be linked to the development and receipt of compassion in the practice of care. The article analyses charity shop volunteering in the UK as an instance of individual commitment towards organisations devoted to combating suffering, as 'some respondents found in volunteer work a way of regaining meaning, structure and belonging after experiences of social dislocation such as retirement and bereavement'. A setting or organisation can facilitate relational processes, exchanges and support.

Davies, Lockstone-Binney, and Holmes (2018) take a rarer look at volunteering in rural places and why people volunteer by presenting over 6,000 survey responses from the non-retired population in Australia. The survey highlighted a high rate of volunteering in rural communities but also a high rate of out-migration. Crouch et al. (2017) also look at rural-urban differences in unpaid care-giving. Outlining an analysis of the 'Caregiving in the U.S. 2015', survey in a national examination of rural caregivers, they 'indicate differing cultural values in rural and urban respondents, rather than better health among rural caregivers'.

In the international comparative studies that were reviewed, place and location was an important comparitor in volunteering activities and motivations. Gronlund et al. (2011) in a high quality, comprehensive quantitative study comparing student motivation to volunteering across 13 countries noted that structural and cultural factors influence volunteerism, as do values and norms linked to the differences between North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific regions.

The conclusion from the review is that the setting and environment where volunteer activity is taking place is important. Studies that considered and examined this

show community, regional and international variations in volunteering. However, many publications do not take place and setting into consideration within their analysis, and this remains a gap in the literature. Specifically, evidence based in service-users own homes, and volunteer's homes remains a gap in the literature.

Factors associated with volunteering participation

The review indicates a dynamic and complex variety of factors that are inter-related to volunteering. These are mainly focused on gender, employment, wealth, education and social capital. For comparison, the Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government, 2017b) suggests that in Scotland volunteers are more likely to be women; from higher socio-economic and income groups; from rural areas; and from less deprived areas.

A study using cross-national data from the European Value Survey (including the UK) found that gender, civil status, household composition, educational level, working status and income were significantly related to volunteering (Gil-Lacruz, Marcuello, & Saz-Gil, 2017). More specifically, regarding the gender difference, men were more likely to volunteer in professional and political, as well as education and leisure activities; whereas women were more likely to be involved in social justice activities. Further, this study highlighted the importance of social factors at national level, finding that the size of community, social attitudes, values, social capital and reciprocity were associated with individuals' decisions to engage in voluntary work.

Also using data from the European Value Survey but focusing exclusively on Denmark, Frederiksen, Henriksen, and Qvist (2014) found that socio-economic variables, including education, employment status, health and urbanisation, were associated with volunteering. More specifically, people with low education, unemployed, with poor health and living in urban areas were less likely to volunteer compared with their more privileged counterparts. Further, it was found the gaps in the likelihood of volunteering between groups tend to be decreasing over time between 1990 and 2008, which the authors attributed to the changes in the structural preconditions, expanding educational achievement and economic prosperity in particular. The same study also found that perceived importance of politics and post-materialist values were positively associated with volunteering, but these relationships remained stable over time. This study also confirmed that men were more likely to volunteer in Denmark.

Drawing data from the General Social Survey 2000, Warburton and Stirling (2007) found that social capital variables and health were significantly associated with volunteering among older people. However, they did not find any evidence that gender, employment status, marital status or income were related to volunteering.

Another study using cross-national data from 17 countries, including Great Britain, found that people with low education were less likely to volunteer consistently, but the educational differences varied significantly across countries (Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2012). The authors argued the observed educational effect could be explained partially by differences in cognitive competence, job status and worldview. Moreover, it was found that the educational differences depended on

country level variables. For example, in countries with a larger cognitive gap between the lower and intermediated educated, the educational difference in volunteering was also larger. Their findings highlighted the importance of national policies in influencing volunteering. Interestingly, a study of volunteering among Spanish children and young people found that the most influential factors were parental volunteering and paternal educational level (Garcia Mainar, Marcuello Servos, & Saz Gil, 2015).

Using English data, Dawson and Downward (2013) focused on sport volunteering, finding that increasing age, being single, having children under the age of 6 years old, keeping house, being in full-time work, having recently moved into the area, general watching TV reduced the likelihood of sport volunteering and the time spent volunteering; whereas being a man, having a higher educational level and income, good health, and watching sport were associated with a higher likelihood of sport volunteering and longer volunteering time. Moreover, their findings suggested that participation in sports and sport volunteering were complementary rather than substitutes for each other, which were both linked to factors such as sporting tastes. Thus, it was important to acknowledge the interdependence of these two activities.

Again focusing on sport volunteering, Taylor et al. (2012) found that people most likely to volunteer in sports and to spend more time volunteering in sports were people with more than one car in the household; people with higher levels of dissatisfaction with local sports provision; men; people with children in the household (but the youngest older than 5 years). People who had higher rates of volunteering in sports (but no effect of volunteering time was found) were those of white British ethnicity, higher levels of education qualifications, on higher income, and those who owned their houses. People who were less likely to volunteer and volunteered less time were women, those with children 0–5 years old in the household and people of Asian ethnicity.

A study of Japanese older adults found that female older people who had lived in the community longer, those residing in a single household, actively participating in hobbies or adult education, not working and reporting better self-rated health were more likely to participate in volunteer activities (Lee, Saito, Takahashi, & Kai, 2008). There were no specific correlations for men.

In looking at a set of slightly different factors, British female hospice volunteers scored significantly lower on neuroticism, and significantly higher on agreeableness and conscientiousness compared with both American and British adult females (Claxton-Oldfield, Claxton-Oldfield, & Paulovic, 2013). Another study which also looked at personality traits found that two facets of personality, extraversion and emotional stability, could be central in determining if people do or do not volunteer and, if they did, extraversion might predict how many different groups they participate in (Village & Francis, 2010).

Looking at volunteer tourism, Bailey and Russell (2012) reported that volunteer participants had unique characteristics compared with non-participants. They

reported higher levels of civic engagement, civic attitude, openness, compassion, cognitive drive and reflectivity.

In summary, most studies take into consideration gender in their analysis of volunteering but they give a mixed picture. Assumptions around the characteristics of volunteers (such as the likelihood of them being female, older and wealthier) are challenged by the international literature that breaks down categorisations to show that in some countries (such as Denmark) men are more likely to volunteer. There are clearly differentiations between gender and where people volunteer (studies showing women are more likely to be involved in health sectors and men more likely to be involved in sport and leisure orientated volunteering for example). An interesting thread through the above literature is the factors relating to community links and social capital. Education was also a very important theme, with formal volunteers more likely to have higher education levels. Therefore, the factors affecting volunteering are context specific and dependent on cultural context. Studies looking at wider factors, such as 'conscientiousness' and 'compassion' were rarer but interesting in creating a more in-depth picture of volunteering.

Routes to volunteering

Understanding the routes into volunteering is of keen interest to both researchers and volunteer-involving organisations. Several papers touched on this topic. The examination of routes into volunteering was linked often with specific groups of volunteers. The differences in routes into volunteering between different groups were consistently highlighted.

For example, Wilson, Mirchandani, and Shenouda (2017) noted that the main recruitment of older volunteers was by recommendation. However, they argued this approach might not be as effective to recruit younger volunteers as they were less likely to be embedded in a social network of current volunteers.

Focusing on structural factors, Dean (2014) is critical of the policy focus on three main approaches to encouraging young people to volunteer, including:

a) macro-level government policies that promote volunteering as a pathway to employment and which side-line citizenship and critical community engagement;

b) specific volunteering programmes that reward short-term, instrumentalised commitments;

c) operational volunteer brokerage strategies that see volunteering as an experience to be sold to young people in exchange for private benefits to them.

With regards to labour and work-related routes, the availability of community volunteering tended to both increase individual volunteering and also influence some labour force participation decisions, particularly those of working age women (Neymotin, 2016). A study of middle-aged and older Americans found that individuals transitioning between work and retirement were more likely to be

involved in volunteering compared to the not-retired (Tang, 2016). It was also reported that partial and full retirees were more likely to start volunteering, but full retirees were also more likely to disengage from volunteering compared to the non-retired. The author advised that volunteer organisations could target older adults and the newly retired who have time and social connections with the workforce (the study sample was those aged 51-74).

However, based on analyses of German longitudinal data, Erlinghagen (2010) argued that the impact of entering retirement is over-stated, which is not as important as past volunteering experience in promoting engagement in voluntary work among older people. Therefore, he questioned the effectiveness of activation programmes that were targeted directly at older people, suggesting it would be more appropriate first to win over young adults to engage in voluntary work, because that would greatly increase the chances that they would continue or resume such activities when they were much older.

A study of volunteers in a university community garden found that social connections played an important role in engaging and keeping individuals involved in volunteering activities; and regular communication through email and social media was also found as a key enabler to engagement (Anderson, Maher, & Wright, 2018).

A study of college students in India reported that the opportunity to volunteer for religious institutions and as mentors were positively associated with volunteering frequency; whereas volunteering that was required as part of study or religious practice appeared to suppress volunteering frequency (Ghose & Kassam, 2014).

In looking at some under-represented groups, more nuanced routes into volunteering were reported. For example, in the area of dementia care, experienced family carers of people who lived with dementia were a valuable source who were often willing to volunteer with other families in similar situations and should be used as such (Charlesworth et al., 2017). A small scale qualitative study by Whittaker and Holland-Smith (2016) examined the influence of social capital over parental sports volunteering. They found that social capital played an important role in recruitment and retention of parental sports volunteers, especially in coaching. However, social capital acted as a double-edged sword, on one side benefiting some and on the other side discriminating and excluding some in volunteer activities. Social capital could be used to maintain and benefit a particular group of individuals at personal and collective levels. As such, there was strong bonding social capital that acted against diversity and inclusiveness. The bridging social capital was sparse, making it difficult for outsiders to join in where people within the group capitalised on power to produce new power. These findings are counter to the general acceptance of social capital as 'good' and needs promoting.

In summary, publications that were focused on the routes into volunteering were dominated by either a focus on older people or younger people. Together they emphasise the dynamics of voluntary participation and the importance of taking a lifecourse view of routes into (and out of) volunteering.

Recommendations and gaps for consideration

In connecting the factors relating to volunteering and the routes taken to volunteering, the publications are mostly dominated with a focus on either older people or younger people in relation to volunteering activities and recruitment. Considerations of gender, education and socio-economic status are well represented. Younger people (especially students) and older retirees dominate the focus in research publications reviewed.

Specific activities, locations and organisations and groups appear to be an integrated feature of most publications, varying in their importance within each study. The overall conclusions show that these elements do influence the extent, ability, routes and motivations of different groups to volunteer.

The Scottish Government's National Outcomes and Indicators include a focus on education, skills and equal access to opportunities. The evidence suggests that volunteering and volunteering organisations have an integrated role within these priorities.

Research gaps that we identified include:

- The existing evidence focuses primarily on volunteering amongst younger people and older people. There has been less study of volunteering patterns in between.

- There is relatively little longitudinal data on volunteering, which means that patterns of participation within the lifecourse are not that well studied at a population level.

- Few papers explicitly consider the role of place in volunteering participation. Consideration of the impact of place - comparison of location and settings of volunteering would help us to understand the role that place has in participation.

- The relatively light coverage of informal volunteering in the literature – driven by a lack of data on this form of participation – means that we would benefit from exploring more informal routes into volunteering, and focusing on the more nuanced routes to a wider range of volunteer activities.

The publications offering these insights ranged in quality and type. They included quantitative studies that were able to provide international-level comparisons, showing that cultural context was an important element in volunteering. Smaller scale qualitative studies were able to break down more nuanced activities and outcomes and give insight to under-represented groups. Brought together, the picture of volunteering is a dynamic mixture of activity, routes, and groups in a variety of locations. The publications overall emphasise the positive impact of volunteering, which is given further insight in the next section focusing on motivations, benefits and barriers.

Reflections on the Scottish Context:

Place is important for volunteering in Scotland, with much higher levels of participation in rural areas than urban areas. We need to understand the drivers behind this difference, as well as whether there are lessons to be learned from communities with high levels of participation. In the Scottish context, place has been shown to be integrated with volunteering, class, perception of area and regeneration policy as shown by research conducted on the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 (Paton, McCall and Mooney, 2017). The research indicated that those living in more deprived areas have strong identities and communities. Yet, the literature review highlights that people living in certain places also encounter extra barriers to volunteering. This increases the importance of place in consideration of enablers and barriers to volunteer participation.

The Scottish Government has been clear that volunteering is crucial to the wider aim of creating a fairer, smart, inclusive Scotland with genuine equality of opportunity for everyone. Volunteering in Scotland is already making a crucial contribution to key strategic priorities including Community Empowerment and Public Service Reform - building social capital, fostering trust, binding people together and making our communities better places to live and to work.

The important role of volunteers is highlighted in many connected policies, such as the Health and Social Care Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2016), which notes that 'key stakeholders and volunteers is vital'. Scotland is experiencing population ageing, as well as significant health inequalities. Healthier older age may increase participation around retirement, but health inequalities could perpetuate differences in participation. Despite much literature focusing on older people, knowledge on the impact of volunteering for those experiencing ill-health is limited and could be explored in further statistical analysis of the Scottish Household Survey.

Changing lifecourses will also change participation: e.g. delaying starting families, longer working lives, increased informal care responsibilities. This can be both positive and negative in relation to volunteering. For example a study on the role of volunteers in dementia care in Scotland and England found that having an experience of dementia in the family was a key pathway into volunteering (McCall *et al.* 2017). These highlight the importance of lifecourse views of routes into (and out of) volunteering in the Scottish context.

Recommendations for the Volunteering Outcomes Framework:

1. **Volunteering is a cultural activity, and the motivations, meaning and factors predicting participation vary across both countries and contexts. Consideration should be given to how both the meaning and context of volunteering may change as the Scottish population changes.**

2. **Volunteering participation varies through time, and across the lifecourse, although it is often studied as a discrete activity at one point in time. Key transitions from the literature include starting a family, and retirement in older age. Evidence on the significance of other lifecourse transitions is more limited. Consideration should be given to how interventions to encourage participation at one point might also influence participation later in life.**

Motivations and barriers to volunteering

This section focuses on volunteer motivations and barriers to volunteering. These areas are the most commonly cited in the literature reviewed in regards to volunteering activity.

Altruism/Prosocial
The desire to help others, or give something back. This is the most commonly expressed motivation, and is what people, often think of when they picture volunteering.

Personal development/ Employability
Volunteering to develop skills and experience is a key motivation for people, where they can access opportunities.

Values and norms
Volunteering can be a way of expressing your values and identity, or being part of a group. This can be an important motivation for under-represented groups.

People volunteer for lots of reasons. Understanding motivations can help us see what people hope to achieve from their volunteering.

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Motivations to volunteering

A great number of papers touched on the topic of the motivations of volunteers. There seems to be a general agreement in the contemporary literature that motivations to volunteering are complex and multi-faceted. Although conducted earlier than this literature review's focus, a significant piece of research in this area includes E. G. Clary, Snyder, and Ridge (1992) who proposed six motivational functions:

(a) values (relating to altruistic and humanitarian concerns);

(b) understanding (e.g. new learning experience or practicing skills or knowledge);

(c) social (e.g. interacting with others);

(d) career (relating specifically to career development);

(e) protective (e.g. eliminating negative feelings to protect the ego); and

(f) enhancement (e.g. increasing positive strivings of the ego).

Building on this six-dimension framework, they developed an instrument, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (E. Gil Clary et al., 1998), which has been widely used in subsequent research as a tool to assess volunteers' motivations.

Erasmus and Morey (2016) explored the applicability of the VFI to faith-based volunteers, which led to an amended four-functions model, including: (a) values, (b) social, (c) career, and (d) enrichment. This new model eliminated protective function in the VFI. The newly added enrichment function is a combination of the elements from the understanding and enhancement functions.

There are also alternative ways of categorising volunteer motivations in the literature. For instance, In a survey of volunteers of the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games, Y.-J. Ahn (2018) grouped motivations into four categories:

- leisure motivation, relating to relaxation and recreational needs;
- egoistic, relating to self-actualisation or self-esteem;
- purposive motivation, referring to making contributions to the event or community;
- external influence, such as family, friends or other significant others.

Drawing on data from Turkish college students, Boz and Palaz (2007) grouped their motivations into three categories: altruism, affiliation, and personal improvement.

In the literature reviewed, we identified two motivations based on the VFI framework that are most frequently identified: altruism; and instrumental motivations relating to career, employability and self-improvement.

Table 8 summarises the volunteering motivations themes, and the quality of the research evidence for those motivations. We have the strongest evidence for altruistic and values-based motivations in volunteering.

Table 8: A summary of volunteering motivations

Themes	Contents	Quality
Values, Altruism & Helping	• Altruistic (Akintola, 2011; Anderson et al., 2018; Chareka, Nyemah, & Manguvo, 2010; Claxton-Oldfield, Claxton-Oldfield, Paulovic, & Wasylkiw, 2013; Holdsworth, 2010; Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008) • Religious faith (Holdsworth, 2010) • To give back (Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008) • Concern for community needs (Currie, Lackova, & Dinnie, 2016; Gates, Russell, & Gainsburg, 2016)	🟢
Instrumental (e.g. understanding, career)	• To increase knowledge (Anderson et al., 2018; Holdsworth, 2010) • To gian skills and experiences (Chareka et al., 2010; Currie et al., 2016; Holdsworth, 2010) • To enhance CV in general (Holdsworth, 2010) • To help job search (Chareka et al., 2010)	🟠
Social	• Connectedness / socialisation (Gates et al., 2016)	🟠
Other	• Something to do or to get out the house (Currie et al., 2016) • To do something different or to escape from study or work (Holdsworth, 2010) • To stay active (Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008) • Being asked (Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008) • Circumstantial or serendipitous opportunities, e.g. programmes organised by school, church or other organisations (Holdsworth, 2010)	🟠

Notes: 🟩 indicating studies are at least 30% high quality; 🟠 mostly medium quality; 🔴 30% or more low quality

Values, Altruism and helping others

A study focusing on British hospice volunteers found that altruistic motives were the most influential reasons for choosing to join the hospice; while personal gain motives were the least influential reasons (Claxton-Oldfield, Claxton-Oldfield, Paulovic, et al., 2013). Similarly, a survey of volunteer drivers showed that the top five motivations for their involvement were (in order): (a) to help others, (b) to do something meaningful, (c) to give back, (d) to stay active, and (e) because they were asked (Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008). Drawing on data from Turkish college students, Boz and Palaz (2007) grouped their motivations into three categories (in order): altruism, affiliation, and personal improvement.

A qualitative study of volunteer AIDS caregivers in South Africa found that the motivating factors for volunteers tended to be complex and varied (Akintola, 2011). The most frequently reported motivations were altruistic concerns for others, community, career and looking for activities while unemployed. Gates and

colleagues (2016) looked at volunteers from the LGBTQ[3] community, reporting that connectedness, socialisation and genuine concern for meeting needs of LGBTQ communities were the strongest motivators for LGBTQ volunteers.

Based on a survey of emergency service volunteers in Australia, Francis and Jones (2012) compared the difference between young (under 35) and older (35 or above) volunteers, finding that the most important motivations for both age groups were values and understanding. Younger volunteers placed relatively more importance on career and protective motivations compared with those who were older.

Motivations to volunteering therefore varies by age groups, with younger people more likely linked to career or employment-related motivations and older people linked to more altruistic motivations. Interestingly, studies that looked at more under-represented groups highlighted that values-driven motivations became more important.

Career and Employability

Focusing on students in English Higher Education, Holdsworth (2010) identified three main themes of volunteer motivation, including employability, personal value and opportunity. Employability is mentioned more frequently over other motivations, and the students who are motivated by employability are more likely to seek out structured activities. Drawing data from qualitative interviews, Holdsworth (2010) argued that student volunteering was not necessarily goal-orientated or according with a strategic plan, rather it could relate as much to student's self-identity, as well as giving them the opportunity to do something different and challenging, while also having fun and escaping from the rigours of study or work. Anderson and colleagues (2018) conducted a qualitative study on volunteers in a university community garden, finding that the most common motivations were to increase knowledge, altruistic and career related motivations.

A study of recent African immigrants in Canada showed volunteering is primarily driven by career-related motives, such as to gain skills and to help job search (Chareka et al., 2010). Other motivations identified in the same study included cultural norms of 'helping the less fortunate people' and of being a 'global citizen'.

Characteristics relating to motivation

An important point emerged from the literature review: volunteers' motivations were related to personal characteristics of individual volunteers. Based on the VFI, Clary and colleagues (1996) found that younger people, especially those in early adulthood, tend to place more importance on career, understanding and protective motivations compared with those who were in order age groups. Similarly, a study through in-depth interview with volunteers at the London 2012 Olympic Games showed that in general older volunteers were more likely to express altruistic values, while younger volunteers tend to report motivations related to employability (Geoffrey Nichols & Ralston, 2016). A study of health care executives found that Chief Executive Officers were more likely to be motivated by altruistic reasons while

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[3] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning.

mid-level executives tend to be more individualistic such as career advancement and having an enjoyable time (Weil & Kimball, 2010).

Motivations may be related to other structural and cultural factors. For instance, it was found that volunteers were more likely to show altruistic motivations to volunteering activity in countries with weaker welfare provision (Hustinx et al., 2010). Another study looking at student volunteers across 13 countries reported that students from cultures with high individualism scores rated resume (career motives) higher and those from countries with dominant egalitarian values rated altruistic motives higher (Gronlund et al., 2011). Kyriacou and Kato (2014) compared undergraduates in England and Japan, arguing despite some similarities students' motivations to volunteering were complex and varied and might be subject to national and cultural differences. The study of sport event volunteers by Allen and Bartle (2014) investigated the relationship among motivation, manager autonomy, support and engagement. Their findings indicated that volunteers who were intrinsically motivated and having greater manager support were more likely to report a higher level of engagement.   .

Barriers to volunteering

Compared with motivations, relatively fewer studies discussed barriers to volunteering. Drawn from qualitative interviews with environmental volunteers in the UK, O'Brien and colleague (2010) grouped barriers to volunteering into two groups: (a) barriers to getting involved and (b) barriers to staying involved. The former included the lack of information, lacking confidence to make the first step, not knowing what to expect, and the costs of travelling. The latter included being given undesirable tasks, not getting feedback, no access to the right equipment, unwelcoming group dynamics and a lack of organisation and planning.

Table 9 summarises the evidence on the barriers to volunteering. While there are many studies on this topic exploring different aspects of the barriers, there are few studies that were assessed by the reviewers as being high quality.

Table 9: A summary of barriers to volunteering

Themes	Contents	Quality
Barriers to getting involved	• Lack of time (Anderson et al., 2018; Dyson, Liu, van den Akker, & O'Driscoll, 2017; Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008; Lee et al., 2008) • Lack of information/access/route (Chatwin & Ackers, 2018; Lee et al., 2008; Martinez, Crooks, Kim, & Tanner, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2010) • Lack of confidence to make the first step (O'Brien et al., 2010) • Lack of external support, e.g. from employers (Chatwin & Ackers, 2018; Dyson et al., 2017) • Health problem (Martinez et al., 2011) • Transportation issues, incl. costs (Martinez et al., 2011; O'Brien et al., 2010; Whittall et al., 2016) • Other (Whittall et al., 2016)	🟠
Barriers to staying involved	• Poor volunteer management, including lack of feedback and engagement, lack of organisation and planning, no access to equipment, inflexible time, controversial task assignment (Anderson et al., 2018; Bullock, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2010) • Unwelcoming group/institutional dynamics (Campbell, 2010; Casselden, Walton, Pickard, & McLeod, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2010)	🟠

Notes: 🟩 indicating studies are at least 30% high quality; 🟠 mostly medium quality; 🔴 30% or more low quality

Martinez and colleagues (2011) looked at American volunteers aged 65 and over, having identified various barriers to formal volunteering including: health and medical problems, inadequate personal resources, concerns about structured activities or schedules and transportation issues. In Japan, it was found the main reasons of non-participation among older adults were having no time and the lack of accessibility (Lee et al., 2008). The lack of time was also perceived as the major barrier by current volunteers in another study of American volunteer drivers (Kerschner & Rousseau, 2008).

A review of studies on palliative care found that palliative care in rural settings face significant challenges as opposed to urban areas, such as travel distance, isolation, lack of privacy, limited health care services and infrastructure, and workforce shortages (Whittall et al., 2016). A qualitative study of volunteers in a university community garden identified barriers including: competing priorities, lack of communication and information, timing of activities and perceived lack of opportunities (Anderson et al., 2018).

A study on nursing students identified three main barriers, including limited time, limited access and the lack of academic support (Dyson et al., 2017). Another study focused on overseas volunteering placements in the NHS, having identified barriers stemming from structural and organisational shortcomings within the NHS, including difficulties in filling clinical roles and no clearly defined pathway (Chatwin

& Ackers, 2018). At managerial level, a lack of feedback and engagement of volunteers could also be barriers which lead to dropping out (Bullock, 2017).

The tension between new and established volunteers could also be a barrier. A qualitative study on Stock Camp volunteers in Australia showed that a gendered division of roles and hierarchical power structures made it difficult for volunteers to accept the roles imposed by established volunteers, leading to volunteer dropout and impairing further commitment (Campbell, 2010). Another study on library volunteers highlighted the tension between institutional power and individual empowerment as a challenge (Casselden et al., 2017).

Recommendations and research gaps for consideration

The review highlights the ongoing focus in the current volunteering literature on motivations. These were still dominated by traditional categorisations in the volunteering literature: employment and career and altruistic motivations. Additional insights were gained through examinations with under-represented groups, that highlighted value-driven motivations such as group identity and solidarity, but these were rarer.

When publications addressed barriers to volunteering, they most often do so within the current understanding of volunteer processes and structures. For example, the most common barriers of time, lack of feedback and support address only those activities that are already set-up. There is more room to explore the structural, social and economic barriers in Scotland, out-with the volunteering process. Addressing these structural barriers could be a priority in regards to next steps due to the importance of inclusion and equality in the National Performance Framework.

Research gaps that we identified include:

- Strong arguments are made for 'starting young' in volunteering as a way to increase participation. While this may well be successful, there is little longitudinal evidence to explore the effectiveness of this approach.

- Improving our understanding of cultural differences in volunteering participation, particularly in the context of migration, identity and integration.

- Structural barriers to current volunteering processes and how they can exclude certain groups.

- Understanding the consequences of the policy focus on instrumentalist motivations in recruiting young people to volunteer for longer-term participation.

Reflections on the Scottish Context:

In Scotland motivations will vary by context e.g. urban / rural; community / education. The close links between motivations and place may explain some of the variation in participation across communities, but as noted earlier, the research evidence on the role of place is limited.

Attempts to increase participation amongst young people in Scotland have included appealing to the individual benefits of volunteering. The 2017-18 Programme for Government, *A Nation with Ambition (Scottish Government, 2017a)* notes a focus on younger people volunteering specifically. In focussing on volunteering outcomes, it is tempting to prioritise these benefits, and the evidence suggests that this needs to be carefully considered. Focusing on only benefits may overlook structural barriers to volunteering.

Barriers to volunteering participation reflect wider structures of inequality, and so overcoming them in the Scottish context needs to be linked to wider policy. The National Performance Framework in Scotland has tackling inequality and poverty fully integrated across national outcomes and indicators, showing that it is a key priority. The evidence demonstrates the reliance volunteering will have on other policy areas in Scotland.

Recommendations for the Volunteering Outcomes Framework:

3. **There is a rich range of motivations for volunteering, and these are fairly well documented and understood in the literature. The most commonly considered motivations are altruism and personal development, but consideration should be given to the broader spectrum of motivations such as personal values and cultural norms when developing the Framework. We should resist the temptation to focus solely on instrumentalist motivations and routes into volunteering.**

4. **An important distinction is made between barriers to accessing volunteering, and barriers to continuing to volunteer, and a range of these barriers are well described. Consideration should be given to the ways in which these barriers can be tackled that is sensitive to the motivations and context in which volunteering takes place.**

Outcomes and benefits of volunteering

The majority of publications report benefits and positive aspects of volunteering. It should be noted that there is an underlying assumption in the literature that frames volunteering in a positive light. Research looking critically at the role of volunteering is much rarer. This section breaks down and reviews some of the benefits of volunteering offered in the literature and goes on to consider evidence around the negative effects of voluntary participation.

Benefits of volunteering

A number of studies have identified the benefits of volunteering to individual volunteers. Based on their study on environmental volunteers in northern England and southern Scotland, O'Brien and colleagues (2010) reported that environmental volunteering had benefits in physical health. Similarly, it was reported that volunteering is related to positive self-rated health (Detollenaere, Willems, & Baert, 2017). Moreover, Ayalon (2008) reported that volunteering was associated with a reduced mortality risk even after adjusting for potential confounders.

In another study on mental well-being, volunteers that were providing services for homeless people reported that volunteering provided companionship, camaraderie, sociability, a boost for self-esteem, and for some individual volunteers, formed part of a process of personal rehabilitation (Cloke, Johnsen, & May, 2007). Connolly and O'Shea (2015) reported that volunteering conferred various positive outcomes for volunteers aged 55 or over, particularly in relation to feelings of self-worth and socialisation. A qualitative study by Currie et al. (2016) investigated the influence of engagement with greenspace among conservation volunteers from deprived areas in a Scottish city. They found that interacting with greenspace has multiple health

and well-being benefits; and the benefits differ for men and women, which is possibly related to the purpose of their engagement to start with.

Nichols and Ralston (2012) argued volunteering gave the same benefits as paid work except for financial remuneration, including: structured time, shared social experiences outside of family, providing individuals with goals and a purpose, personal status and identity, undertaking regular activity and skills development.

Connolly and O'Shea (2015) undertook a breakdown of volunteer activities among older people, comparing characteristics. The aim of this article was to examine the perceived benefits of volunteering among older people and to determine whether the benefits differ by volunteer characteristics. Their research linked volunteering with a catalogue of well-being indicators but it was unclear whether all volunteers derive the same benefit. Older volunteers perceived a wide range of benefits arising from their voluntary activities both to themselves and service recipients. In particular, volunteering seemed to confer positive outcomes for participants in relation to feelings of self-worth and socialisation. Evidence suggested that benefits vary by volunteer characteristics, with the older-old (in this particular study, it refers to people aged 75+), the less educated, and the retired reporting the greatest benefit.

Table 10 summarises the benefits of volunteering to volunteers that are prominent in the research literature. There are a large number of papers on a range of different benefits. The highest quality evidence is on the physical health benefits that participation can have. The weakest evidence is on the instrumental benefits (e.g. skills development and employability).

Table 10: A summary benefits of volunteering to individual volunteers

Themes	Contents	Quality
Physical health benefits	• Healthy life style (Daoud et al., 2010) • Better self-rated health (Currie et al., 2016; Detollenaere et al., 2017) • Reduced mortality risk (Ayalon, 2008)	🟢
Mental well-being benefits	• Self-esteem, and / or self-efficacy (Cloke et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2016; Daoud et al., 2010) • Self-worth, purpose of life (Connolly & O'Shea, 2015; Currie et al., 2016; Nichols & Ralston, 2011) • Gains in confidence (Baines & Hardill, 2008) • Feeling less depressed (Daoud et al., 2010) • Increased life satisfaction (Kahana, Bhatta, Lovegreen, Kahana, & Midlarsky, 2013) • Subjective well-being (Binder & Freytag, 2013) • Sense of belonging (Currie et al., 2016)	🟠
Social benefits	• Forming new relationships (Cinelli & Peralta, 2015; Daoud et al., 2010) • Companionship and / or socialisation (Cloke et al., 2007; Connolly & O'Shea, 2015) • Improving existing relationships (Cinelli & Peralta, 2015; Daoud et al., 2010) • Social inclusion (Nichols & Ralston, 2011) • Social capital (Baines & Hardill, 2008; Kay & Bradbury, 2009)	🟠
Instrumental benefits	• Knowledge and / or skill development (Baines & Hardill, 2008; Cinelli & Peralta, 2015; Daoud et al., 2010; Nichols & Ralston, 2011; Yeomans et al., 2017) • Openness, affection, reflection and civic attitude (Bailey & Russell, 2012) • Employability (Nichols & Ralston, 2011)	🔴

Notes: 🟩 indicating studies are at least 30% high quality; 🟠 mostly medium quality; 🔴 30% or more low quality

Kay and Bradbury (2009) focused on youth sport volunteering, finding that volunteering could develop social capital by fostering personal and skill development for individuals and contributing to the development of social connectedness. Another qualitative study in a disadvantaged community in England also saw volunteering as an avenue for reinforcing social capital, in particular for people who were not in paid work (Baines & Hardill, 2008).

Based on qualitative research, Nichols and Ralston (2011) reported that volunteering could provide social inclusion benefits in addition to employability by enriching volunteers' life and empowering them to make choices over a work-life balance. Benefits reported by volunteers in a university community garden included: connecting with others and gaining a sense of belonging, gaining skills and knowledge, and emotional benefits, such as pleasure and satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2018). Curran, Taheri, MacIntosh, and O'Gorman (2016) conducted a survey of active Scouts volunteers to explore the impact of non-profit

brand heritage on the experience of volunteers. Brand heritage is defined as a brand's identity in its track record, longevity, core values, history and the use of symbols. They found that brand heritage had a positive direct effect on volunteers' satisfaction. It also influenced volunteers' satisfaction indirectly through volunteer engagement. Using panel data from the Americans' Changing Lives survey, Tang (2009) found strong evidence that volunteering engagement among older people was associated with improved self-rated health and decreased functional dependency.

Although not included for evaluation due to concerns that the activities described were remunerated for some participants and thus did not meet the definition of volunteering used in this review, it may be of interest to note the findings of a recent research study on NHS staff who had taken time away from their normal work setting to teach on training courses in sub-Saharan Africa (Yeomans et al., 2017). Responses to a survey sent to staff six months after their return to the UK suggested that the experience of delivering the courses in partnership with local health services had positive impacts on respondents' personal and professional development, for example by giving an opportunity for them to develop their teaching and leadership skills and to reflect on their practices.

The benefits of volunteering may be moderated by other factors. For example, it was found that volunteers in a management organisation reported fewer benefits and more drawbacks compared with volunteers in a cultural or social organisation (Celdran & Villar, 2007). A study on older volunteers suggested that benefits varied by volunteer characteristics, with the older-old, the less educated, and the retired reporting the greatest benefits (Connolly & O'Shea, 2015).

Most of the findings on the benefits of volunteering mentioned above were drawn from cross-sectional research designs. Therefore, the direction of the relationships could sometimes be ambiguous. However, the evidence from longitudinal studies does seem to confirm the benefits of volunteering in some aspects. For example, it was found that informal volunteering and volunteering frequency were positively associated with positive outcomes and life satisfaction in later life among older people (Kahana et al., 2013). Binder and Freytag (2013) reported that volunteering regularly significantly increased volunteers' subjective well-being using data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Based on a repeated-measures design, Bailey and Russell (2012) reported that volunteer tourism contributed to a growing gap between participants and non-participants in openness, affection, reflection and civic attitude.

In summary, the benefits of volunteering to individual volunteers which have been identified in the literature can be grouped into the following categories: (a) physical health benefits, (b) mental well-being benefits, (c) social benefits, and (d) instrumental benefits (see Table 10 and infographic at the beginning of this section).

Negative effects of volunteering

Very few studies have touched on the topic of the potential negative effects of volunteering. Some of the risks of volunteering identified were volunteer burnout

(Celdran & Villar, 2007) and being forced in to volunteering (Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Table 11 summarises the strength of evidence on the negative effects of volunteering. While there is some coverage of these issues, there is a lack of breadth or high quality research in this area.

Table 11: A summary of negative effects of volunteering

Themes	Contents	Quality
Personal	- Feeling of being forced into volunteering (Chareka et al., 2010; Warburton & Winterton, 2017) - Feeling of being tied-up (Celdran & Villar, 2007) - Investing too much effort (Celdran & Villar, 2007) - Feeling lack of recognition (Celdran & Villar, 2007)	🔴
Structural	Inequality in volunteering opportunities leading to unequal policy outcomes (Dean, 2016)	🟠

Notes: ◼ indicating studies are at least 30% high quality; 🟠 mostly medium quality; 🔴 30% or more low quality

Celdrán and Villar (2007) examined the influence of the type of volunteer organisations on volunteers' perceptions of drawbacks, finding that volunteering in a management organisation is associated with the feelings of being tied-up and investing too much effort; and volunteering in a cultural organisation is related to feeling lack of recognition.

On a different note, Chareka et al. (2010) looking at volunteering amongst African immigrants in Canada, examined the broadly positive role of volunteering in cultural integration, but with a cautionary note as participants could also be coerced into volunteering.

It was rarer for publications to consider the structural barriers and negative effects of volunteering, but when this was done it was particularly insightful. For example, in a qualitative study on education, Dean (2016) discusses the structural limitations in recruiting young volunteers. The paper concludes that there are inequalities in targeting volunteering opportunities, leading to unequal policy outcomes. This is linked to social class and school type as a sociological analysis suggests that class habitus (with the paper taking its framework from Bourdieu[4]) favours grammar schools over comprehensive schools (in the English context). Grammar schools provide a structure that supports volunteering over other structures, giving those students a favourable chance to take part in volunteering activities that benefits their future (such as through employment opportunities). Grammar schools become 'volunteering brokerage workers' that benefits their students and provides routes to volunteering not available through other schools. Volunteering organisations also

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[4] Pierre Bourdieu is a French sociologist whose work focuses on the power relations between cultural, social, economic and political capital. His notions of class and cultural reproduction have shaped how sociologist understand power dynamics in society. The concept of habitus in particular is a well-used idea that brings together how people see, imitate and behave in ways that are unconscious, a habit, as something that is normal and ingrained.

(consciously and unconsciously) reinforce barriers to volunteering among potentially more disadvantaged students.

Overall, when publications considered wider structural implications this was useful learning for policy and practice. The negative aspects of current volunteering processes remain a gap in the literature.

Broader outcomes of volunteering: community and beyond

This section builds on the evidence linked to motivations, benefits and barriers to look in detail at the level of impact of volunteer activities. The section investigates in more depth the insights that are focused on wider community and international impact.

In addition to benefits to individual volunteers and beneficiaries, volunteering could also provide benefits to the broader community and society as a whole. A small number of studies directly looked at benefits beyond individuals. Kay and Bradbury (2009) reported increased service capacity and quality, increased sense of citizenship, enhanced inter-generational relationships and extended connection to the community due to the presence of volunteers in youth sport volunteering. A study on volunteering of rural older Australians reported that volunteering contributed to the sense of community solidarity and the provision of mutual support (Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Another study of Arab and Jewish women volunteers also highlighted the importance of volunteering in increasing solidarity across ethnic groups, as well as improving women's status and roles in the community (Daoud et al., 2010).

Studies focusing on volunteering of university staff and students found that volunteering could make a significant contribution to promoting public engagement and improving university relations with local communities (Bussell & Forbes, 2008; Darwen & Rannard, 2011). In addition, Bussell and Forbes (2008) also argued that participation by universities in employer supported volunteering could benefit the local community in offering new skills and energies, supporting under resourced schools, extending cultural outreach and breaking down the barriers between different sections of society.

It is important to note that all of the evidence aforementioned was drawn from qualitative enquiries with volunteers or stakeholders. The lack of quantitative evidence could be due to the difficulty to quantify benefits at community or societal levels.

Recommendations and research gaps for consideration

The review shows the focus in the volunteering literature on various benefits of volunteer activity. The outcomes and benefits of volunteering were wide and varied but generally positive. There are still assumptions in the literature regarding the positive foundations and impact of volunteering. However, it is worth noting that even in studies that offered critical analysis, there were always positive outcomes reported relating to volunteering.

The different levels of impact that were reported were mainly focused on individual impact. This is likely to be indicative of the difficulty of measuring wider outcomes at community or society level reliably. However, individual outcomes in this area have potential to link to broader National Outcomes in the Scottish policy context, such as people being able to contribute to society, to grow up loved, safe and respected (see Appendix One).

There was some evidence to show community, organisational and international impact, but these still remain a gap in the literature. This area has potential for development in light of the National Outcomes where 'we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe' (see Appendix One).

Research gaps that we identified include:

- Measurement of broader organisational and community-level impacts of volunteering. In particular, there is a gap in evidence quantifying these benefits, although this is a challenging area.

- The potential negative consequences of volunteering, particularly in perpetuating social inequalities, is not well understood. More exploration into the negative effects of volunteering would help to give more steer for improvements in policy and practice for volunteering.

Reflections on the Scottish Context:

Volunteering in Scotland is highest in rural areas, where it is a significant feature of communities. This is an interesting opportunity for Scotland, as wider research in housing suggests that rural residents have added challenges around areas such as transport, adaptations and fuel poverty (McCall *et al.,* 2019). The same research outlines the invaluable work of volunteers in rural communities offering such services as community transport. Different contexts and patterns of service provision play a role, but can urban communities learn from rural communities?

The literature evidence suggests that there are wider community benefits, albeit difficult to measure. We would expect these benefits to apply to volunteering in Scottish communities. If attempts are made to measure outcomes, then we should acknowledge that these outcomes are likely to vary across both forms of participation and communities in Scotland.

Given the deprivation gradient in volunteering participation in Scotland, we know that the benefits of volunteering are not very equally distributed. We must be careful that support for volunteering in Scotland does not perpetuate these inequalities by only being accessible to those with existing privilege.

Recommendations for the Volunteering Outcomes Framework:

5. **It should be acknowledged that the benefits of volunteering do vary with both activity and context, and benefits are not equally distributed across all volunteering activities. There is a broad evidence base for a wide range of benefits from volunteering, and this will be core to the Framework.**

6. **The relatively limited evidence on community-level outcomes suggests that volunteering has potential to support the development of social networks, solidarity and mutual help within communities, and increasing both bonding and bridging social capital. These outcomes should be related to national outcomes around building resilient and inclusive communities.**

7. **The evidence on broader organisational and community outcomes suggests potential, but is limited in its estimation of the scale of those benefits. The Framework needs to recognise that there are wider benefits, but that measuring or quantifying these is very challenging.**

8. **An underlying assumption in the literature is that volunteering has positive outcomes. This means that there is relatively little study of potentially negative outcomes. Consideration should be given to how potential negative outcomes are incorporated and mitigated in the Framework. Potential negative outcomes can be challenged by having positive support structures for volunteering participation, encouragement of good volunteering management practices, and a focus on increasing accessibility for currently under-represented groups within the volunteering sector.**

Informal volunteering, participation and equality

This section explores the themes of informal volunteering, participation and equality that emerged from the papers reviewed. Informal volunteering is less visible than formal volunteering, and this was reflected in the coverage of informal volunteering in the literature reviewed. Discussions of the definition and visibility of informal volunteering raise issues of participation and equality, and so we have drawn these discussions together in this section.

Formal and Informal volunteering

The Scottish Government's definition of volunteering, discussed in the introduction, described volunteering as "the giving of time and […] undertaken of one's own free will, and [is] not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary." Formal volunteering is participation that takes place within the context of an organisation or group, such as volunteering in a charity shop. Informal volunteering is participation outside of an organised group, such as clearing paths for neighbours in bad weather. This binary distinction is useful as a tool to contrast two broad forms of participation, but in practice we acknowledge that there are significant grey areas that blur the boundaries between different forms of participation. It may be useful to think instead of a spectrum of participation, ranging from the most formal, 'traditional' volunteering roles to the most informal of helping and neighbourly activities, allowing for a wide variety of forms of participation of different formality in-between. For Scotland, we know more about formal participation at the population level as there has been a consistent suite of questions in the Scottish Household Survey on formal volunteering for more than a decade. From 2018, there will also be data on informal volunteering collected biennially through a new suite of questions, with the first set of results released in 2019.

The vast majority of the papers reviewed examine formal volunteering and 14 were unspecified and / or unclear. No publications focussed solely on informal volunteering, but 20 publications looked at more than one type of volunteering and gave insight to both formal and informal volunteering. This section looks in more detail at the insight given in these papers around the relationship between formal and informal volunteering. Martinez et al. (2011) examine informal volunteering termed as 'invisible civic engagement' among older adults in America. They conclude that current definitions of volunteering and the concept of civic engagement are currently too narrow and exclude important informal contributions. Not only this, defining volunteering so narrowly can exclude certain groups (such as those living in poverty) and increase inequalities.

Brewis and Holdsworth (2011) in a major study of student volunteering based on case studies of six Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England found that formal and informal volunteering contribute significantly to university life and to the wider community. Organisational support for formal volunteers was important to

enable this, yet, student volunteers felt less well managed than volunteers in the general population. They identify a need for more consistent approaches to promoting and supporting volunteers across universities and university departments.

Windebank (2008) conducted a cross-national analysis of the gender division of labour and argues that formal and informal voluntary work should be included in such analyses. They show that men spend more time on formal volunteering in France than women, but there was minimal gender differentiation in the UK. Participants in France spent more time doing informal volunteering, compared to the UK which was focused more on formal volunteering (although in the UK women spent more time volunteering informally than men). The evidence suggests that 'formal volunteering is both horizontally and vertically segregated by gender and informal volunteering is also horizontally segregated' (Windebank, 2008).

Cramm and Nieboer (2015) examined informal and formal volunteering in older adults in a longitudinal study in the Netherlands. The association regarding certain characteristics were slightly different for each type of volunteering. For formal volunteering, significant associations were found with being born in the Netherlands; higher educational levels; social capital; and social functioning. Informal volunteering activities were significantly associated with age; being born in the Netherlands; marital status; educational level; and social capital.

Research on formal and informal volunteering in Denmark (Henriksen, Koch-Nielsen, & Rosdahl, 2008) was one of the first to explore informal volunteering as practical informal help and economic assistance. The paper offers a continuum of civic engagement going from the most public to the most private and concludes that there are three sets of factors that are particularly relevant for explaining volunteering: personal or 'human capital' factors; social network resources; and civic values. Formal volunteering is different from informal volunteering but education, social resources and networks and number of years in the community affect both. Informal volunteering is especially dependent on social network resources over 'human capital' (individual) resources. Interestingly, attachment to community and church attendance are strongest indicators of informal volunteering.

Adams and Deane (2009) explore conceptualisations of formal and informal volunteering in sports activity. They note that the perspectives of volunteers can be more useful than formal criteria in understanding volunteering in this area. This could overcome the limited scope of current studies on sports volunteering, which can include a much wider range of activity.

Moen and Flood (2013) found that health, education, disability, income, family relations were related to formal and informal volunteering and the time of volunteering, but the relationships could be different for men and women. For example, being married limited the time women apportioned to formal volunteering but not for men.

Martinez et al. (2011) specifically examines the contribution of informal volunteering for older adults. They argue that the motivation of older adults to participate has

been under-recognised, in part due to its taking place through informal activities. Barriers for this age group included health and medical problems, inadequate personal resources, concerns about structured activities or schedules, and transportation issues. Also significant for this age group are the contexts of caregiving, poverty, housing and transportation in which participation takes place. This is important when looking at volunteering through the lens of productive ageing activity as highlighted by Warburton (2010) in investigating volunteering in Australia. Warburton (2010) noted that there is an increasing role for both formal and informal volunteering within families, with peers, and in communities. However, there is a lack of programmes that support formal and informal volunteering. Evidence that shows how to support informal volunteering remains a gap in the literature.

Looking to a different generation, Ertas (2016) looks at Millennials and volunteering, noting that there were consistently higher levels of participation for public-sector workers in formal and informal ways. Higher participation in both formal and informal venues implies that Public Service Motivation (PSM) is the rationale underlying participation behaviour across individuals working in different sectors. Utilising Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory, the research found that individuals working in public and non-profit sectors were more likely to participate in most formal and informal volunteering activities, suggesting that PSM is the rationale underlying participation behaviour across individuals working in different sectors (Ertas, 2016). The same study also compared Millennials with older generations, but the results should be interpreted with caution as it did not disentangle age effects from generational effects.

As an example of this in practice, Shandra (2017) outlines formal and informal volunteering with a focus on disability and social participation. The use of social participation is a useful lens and context in which to understand the difference between formal and informal volunteering. It helps to challenge assumptions around people living with disabilities as not just being recipients of help. Examining the dynamics of informal volunteering re-positions those living with a disability as volunteers themselves. This highlights the contributions of those who volunteer in a positive light and challenges negative assumptions.

Inclusiveness, diversity and under-representation in volunteering

It is important to note that publications that examined informal volunteering often noted its importance with wider non-white and excluded groups. For example, S. Ahn, Phillips, Smith, and Ory (2011) did a study of volunteering in Texas and found that Hispanic participants were not only less likely to volunteer than their non-Hispanic white counterparts but bivariate analyses indicated that the non-Hispanic whites tend to participate in formal volunteering, whereas those of Hispanic origin were more often informal volunteers. Another study found that people of Asian ethnicity were less likely to volunteer and volunteered less time in England (Taylor et al., 2012). Among current volunteers, it was reported ethnic minority volunteer groups generally reported a lower level of inclusion (Bortree & Waters, 2014).

Brown and Ferris (2007) argued that the ethnic differences in volunteering could be explained by social capital. After controlling for social capital, they found that black and Hispanic individuals were more likely than were whites to volunteer. Without controlling for social capital, it was the other way around, suggesting that the observed negative relationship between belonging to a minority group and volunteering was driven by lower stocks of norm-based social capital (e.g. trust in others).

Shandra (2017) looked at disability and volunteering, finding that people with physical disabilities were less likely to formally volunteer, but they were no less likely to volunteer informally. Moreover, if they do volunteer, disabled people gave no fewer hours than other volunteer groups. Wicki and Meier (2016) in their research on 'Supporting Volunteering Activities by Adults with Intellectual Disabilities' note that those living with intellectual disabilities (sic) are less likely to volunteer in general. However, with the right support they can and do volunteer on the same terms as those not living with a disability.

Based on the high-quality qualitative study on youth volunteers mentioned earlier, Dean (2016) gives insights to key structural barriers to volunteering. He argued that young people from advantaged middle-class backgrounds inhabited behaviours and possessed capitals marking them more likely to take volunteering opportunities; whereas those from working-class backgrounds did not possess the knowledge of "how to play the game" and for whom, volunteering was not part of their necessary habitus. There was a role within the school system and volunteer organisations for reinforcing barriers and assumptions about working-class children. The pressure to meet targets forced volunteering workers to recruit middle-class young people who were more likely to respond favourably to the call. As a consequence, they were built on existing advantages, rather than challenging them. Dean (2015) uses Pierre Bourdieu's theories of habitus and cultural capital to highlight that class and class behaviours are part of the policy process (even when this is in specific opposition to what policy-makers want). Volunteer organisations can make generalised assumptions about working-class communities, schools and less privileged groups that can reinforce cycles of inequality.

In the study on volunteering as productive ageing mentioned earlier, Warburton (2010) also argued older people from more diverse backgrounds were excluded from volunteering due to individual and organisational barriers.

These themes are similar in different types of volunteering, with a study focusing on volunteer board members in America, found that females, ethnic minority, and young people aged 20 to 35 were under-represented in board membership (Dougherty & Easton, 2011).

Recommendations and gaps for consideration

The literature reviewed points to an interconnection between the "formality" of volunteering, and inequality and exclusion. Informal volunteering was linked to more social outcomes such as building social capital, and community connectedness.

The findings support the wider understanding of volunteering that has been building in Scotland. For example, in the Scottish context, volunteering is seen as a wider holistic activity to mean 'all people who give their time freely by choice' (Scottish Volunteering Forum, 2015). Working from a more inclusive understanding of volunteering will capture the wider activities that are often overlooked in research only focusing on formal volunteering.

The focus on tackling inequality is a key priority area that is integrated into the National Performance Framework through a variety of outcomes and indicators (Scottish Government, 2018 – Appendix One). The related indicators include wealth inequalities, poverty, gender, social capital – all issues that have been related to volunteering in this literature review. However, understanding how volunteering can help tackle inequalities and develop more in-depth investigation into structural barriers for under-represented groups remains a key gap.

Studies that examined the connections between formal and informal volunteering report more informal volunteering often from non-white ethnic groups, more likely to be women or in a lower socio-economic grouping. Other studies suggest that this could reinforce structures of inequality, as formal volunteering mechanisms are significant routes to increased benefits around career and employability for example. It perhaps suggests that excluded groups are volunteering, just in different ways (just as valuable), and not benefiting from formal support mechanisms.

Research gaps that we identified include:

- Exploring the connection between formal and informal volunteering within traditionally excluded groups.

- Investigate how current volunteering support networks can diversify their support mechanisms to include informal volunteer activities.

- Understanding the structural barriers that apply in Scotland to the participation of under-represented groups.

Reflections on the Scottish Context:

Given the focus to date on formal volunteering in both policy and measurement, there is a risk in privileging formal forms of participation. Informal volunteering may be seen as a route to formal volunteering in Scotland, but this could risk devaluing it as an important form of participation in its own right. The findings from Shandra (2017) for example show that for certain groups, such as those living with a disability, informal volunteering can be more significant. The new Scottish Household Survey questions on informal volunteering, introduced in 2018, will provide valuable additional evidence on these patterns in Scotland. Exploring the contribution of informal volunteering can give more light to certain activities and groups that have been traditionally undervalued.

Understanding the structural barriers to participation in Scotland for disadvantaged groups, and how these are influenced by both local and national policy, will be critical if volunteering is to play an effective role in decreasing social inequality. As noted previously, tackling inequality is a priority within the 2017-18 Programme for Government, *A Nation with Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2017a) and is an essential component of creating sustainable and resilient communities.

Informal volunteering has potential to play a significant role in widening voluntary participation in Scotland. Its lower reliance on human capital means that it can be an accessible form of participation for disadvantaged groups. But it still requires social capital, in the form of strong, connected communities in order to play this role.

The wider structural barriers and policy connections mean that volunteering policy in Scotland can only go so far. It cannot tackle these directly, and so strong links need to be made between the accessibility of volunteering and broader social policy in Scotland.

Recommendations for the Volunteering Outcomes Framework:

9. Informal volunteering is an important form of participation for traditionally excluded or disadvantaged groups. Its lower visibility means that participation amongst these groups is also less visible. The Framework needs to consider ways in which informal volunteering can be recognised and included, without implying a hierarchy in forms of participation.

10. Informal volunteering is distinct from formal volunteering in its activities, participants, motivations, benefits and outcomes. Where there are evidence gaps, we should not assume that these are the same as for formal volunteering. Consideration should be given to taking these distinctions into account within the Framework.

11. When successful, volunteering can build social capital and connections both within and between communities. The limited evidence on informal volunteering suggests that it has an important role in these outcomes, and the Framework should consider ways in which this can be supported.

12. There remain distinct barriers and challenges for disadvantaged groups in participating in volunteering. The importance of culture and context in participation accentuate these. Consideration should be given to the diversity of both volunteering and volunteers in the development of the Framework.

Conclusion

Our review has described the complexity of volunteers and volunteering in the range of literature that we have considered for this review. Volunteering is a significant phenomenon across countries and cultures, with large benefits to volunteers, service users, communities and society.

In our review we have presented research evidence from across the world. This coverage provides significant insight; but it also highlights the importance of culture and context in understanding both the form and determinants of participation. This diversity makes specific policy recommendations challenging to identify.

However, government policy can have a significant impact on voluntary activity. In the past ten years volunteering policy-related research in the UK has explored the notion of the 'Big Society' and the role that government policy has on volunteering (Bartels, Cozzi, & Mantovan, 2013; Nichols & Ralston, 2012). Bartels et al. (2013) noted that the debate on volunteering in 'The Big Society' highlighted how public spending affects the decision to volunteer. Importantly, Bartel et al's research shows that when government intervention declines, volunteering is likely to decline. This demonstrates that it is not only 'volunteering policy' that affects volunteering, but also broader government policy in relation to the provision and funding of services that involve volunteers, both within the public and voluntary sectors.

There is also critique (Dean, 2014) of volunteering policy which focuses too strongly on instrumental motivations to volunteer, at the expense of values-based motives. Dean's (2015, 2016) explorations of class diversity and youth volunteering gives a particularly strong argument for 1) Focusing on the barriers created by structural inequalities and 2) Examining the current structures, activities and organisations that support volunteering in the UK and how they potentially enable and reinforce those inequalities.

In the course of the review we have identified a number of recommendations that should be considered in the development of the Volunteering Outcomes Framework. These include both opportunities for the research evidence to inform the development of the Framework, and also areas where there are gaps in our understanding of volunteering that need further exploration.

Throughout the report we identify strong links to the Scottish Government's (2018) National Performance Framework. It is clear that issues covered in the review cut across several areas (see Appendix One) but have the strongest links to the following outcomes:

- 'We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.'

- 'We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.'

The National Outcome that could have the most potential, but is currently one of the key gaps in the volunteering literature review, would be:

- 'We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.'

The Volunteering Outcomes Framework provides an opportunity to support these outcomes through identifying the vibrancy and diversity of voluntary participation, and providing a focal point for considering the impact that policy can have on the participation of the Scottish population in civil society.

Developing a coherent and compelling narrative for volunteering

This literature review is one piece of work in the programme to develop the Volunteering Outcomes Framework for Scotland. One of the aims of that programme of work is to develop a coherent and compelling narrative for volunteering. Our review of the evidence on volunteering leads us to make some final observations to contribute to the development of that narrative.

Volunteering has clear, well-evidenced benefits to individuals, organisations and communities. But formal volunteering exhibits the social inequalities that we observe in broader society. Tackling these inequalities will require both specific volunteering policy, and recognition of the link between volunteering and broader social policy. Informal volunteering is a significant form of participation, particularly with minority and disadvantaged communities. The focus on formal volunteering (in research and in policy) risks playing down both the scale and significance of informal volunteering, and its role in inclusion.

Volunteering can build social capital; but a lack of it can be a significant barrier to participation. There is an important differentiation between bonding and bridging social capital. Informal volunteering builds and relies on bonding social capital, whereas formal volunteering can provide opportunities to develop bridging social capital. There is no easy way to build social capital; it takes time. Volunteering is one piece in the bigger policy puzzle for building stronger communities.

There is a temptation to be drawn to emphasising the instrumental benefits of volunteering (e.g. skills / employability / personal development). But we don't know the longer-term consequences of framing volunteering in this way. Neglecting values-based motivations, which evidence suggests are more important to the involvement of marginalised groups, risks undermining attempts to broaden volunteering participation.

The volunteering literature broadly underplays the role of place in volunteering participation, but this distinction is particularly significant for Scotland, specifically related to urban / rural differences. There are positive and negative drivers of these differences e.g. higher social capital in strong communities versus volunteering through necessity due to deficits in service provision. Understanding and acting on these will be essential in creating a narrative for volunteering that is inclusive across communities in Scotland.

Appendix One: Scottish Government (2018) National Performance Framework

We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy

We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally

We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely

We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

OUR PURPOSE
To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth

We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe

OUR VALUES
We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way

We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential

We are healthy and active

We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

Appendix Two: Literature Search Strategy

Our proposal document for the Volunteering Outcomes Framework literature review project set out a number of 'Example search string components'. A series of preliminary searches were undertaken with a view to refining these terms, developing search strings, and making recommendations for the search strategy. In particular, the objectives of the preliminary searches were:

- To test different relevant search terms to get a broad understanding of how many potentially relevant items might be identified in the bibliographic databases searched under different search conditions.

- To consider how best to manage the balance between sensitivity (identifying all relevant items but at a risk of identifying large numbers of items not relevant to the current study) and specificity (using more constrained search strings and limitations but at the risk of not identifying potentially relevant items).

- To develop an optimal search strategy which searches the evidence base comprehensively and produces a manageable number of potentially relevant items in a resource-efficient way.

A number of searches were conducted between 13 and 23 August 2018. The initial focus was on using 'Web of Science – all databases' to test search terms, strings and inclusion criteria. This is a gateway service which includes a number of large bibliographic databases and from experience often produces large numbers of potentially relevant items. To test refinements made, searches were then carried out across each of the remaining three bibliographic databases services to be used for the review (ProQuest, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect).

Developing the search strategy – Recommendations

Below documents the steps we undertook to develop our search strategy approach and the recommendations for our approach that were agreed.

Developing the 'volunteering-related term'

An initial set of searches aimed to refine and develop the 'volunteering-related term' for use in search strings. These began by using 'Topic' (TS) as the field tag. 'Topic' searches for items in which the specified terms appear in Titles, Abstracts, Keywords and Indexing fields such as Systematics, Taxonomic Terms and Descriptors. The search strings use Boolean searches.

The publication date limiter was initially set to 'All years'. In the service description this defined as '1864-2018', and in practice means from the earliest date at which items were included in individual bibliographic databases.

- Recommendation 1: The final composite volunteering term should be ((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement")' in order to increase search specificity.

- Recommendation 2: The composite volunteering term should be limited to the 'Title' field to keep number of items identified to manageable levels within the review.

Considering publication date limitations

Initial searches considered the results of date changes using the unrefined volunteering-related composite term and using 'Topic' as the search field. A range of publication date limits were tested to allow an understanding of how the numbers of potentially relevant items might change under different restrictions. The results obtained show that the numbers of potentially relevant items identified were unmanageable in the context of this review without the refinements to the volunteering-related composite terms recommended above AND the use of a restricted publication date inclusion criterion. The final publication date inclusion criterion tested, 2007-2018, allows for identification of relevant publications over the last decade, but many of these referenced key texts from before 2007.

- Recommendation 3: A publication date inclusion / exclusion criterion should be used. Only items published after 1 January 2007 should be included.

Developing the general 'outcome-related' composite term

Development of other potential composite search terms was primarily based on the recommended refinements to the volunteering-related composite term, search field and inclusion dates for publications noted above. However, the first search was undertaken using the individual outcome-related term 'result*' prior to other refinements. This search identified an issue with identification of very large numbers of potentially relevant items as a consequence of the term appearing as a heading in the standard format of abstracts in many scientific journals. The remaining searches examined other proposed elements in the general 'outcome-related' composite term.

A decision was made to retain 'Topic' as a search field for terms other than the volunteering-related composite term as this provided for greater sensitivity than more restrictive search fields and the results obtained suggested a manageable number of items for subsequent screening.

- Recommendation 4: The final composite beneficiary-related terms should include all of the individual terms identified. The final composite micro-beneficiary term should be '(volunteer* OR helper* OR participant* OR beneficiar* OR recipient*)'; the final composite meso-beneficiary term should be '(group* OR organisation* OR (community OR communities))'; and the final composite macro-beneficiary term should be (societ* OR public OR national OR Scotland OR Scottish)'.

- Recommendation 5: The search field used with the composite beneficiary-related term should be 'Topic' to allow for greater sensitivity of searches where the volunteering-related composite term is restricted to 'Title'.

Developing the micro-, meso-, and macro-specific 'outcomes-related' composite terms

Searches to test the micro-, meso-, and macro-specific 'outcomes-related' composite terms suggest that a manageable number of potentially relevant items are returned from searches which use all the individual search terms suggested in these categories to make three level-specific outcomes-related composite search terms.

Additional searches for items identified in both searches using the general outcomes-related composite terms and the searches using micro-outcomes and meso-outcomes composite terms suggest a degree of overlap and duplication between search results. The number of unique results left for screening following removal of duplicates will therefore be lower than individual search totals suggest.

- Recommendation 6: The final composite specific outcomes-related terms should include all of the original individual terms. The final composite micro-outcomes term should be '(volunteer* OR helper* OR participant* OR beneficiar* OR recipient*)'; the final composite meso-outcomes term should be '(group* OR organisation* OR (community OR communities))'; and the final composite macro-outcomes term should be (societ* OR public OR national OR Scotland OR Scottish)'.

- Recommendation 7: The search field used with the composite specific outcomes-related term should be 'Topic' to allow for greater sensitivity of searches where the volunteering-related composite term is restricted to 'Title'.

Comparison of 'Web of Science – all databases' and other bibliographic database services

There are a number of key differences between the four bibliographic database services that were used in this review. There are minor differences in the ways in which publication date limits are set across the services, but these are trivial.

One of the main issues relates to differences in the available search fields, with none of the other services using 'Topic'. However, it is possible to construct an equivalent search using available search fields in ProQuest and EBSCOhost. ScienceDirect does not allow this, but has a composite search field of 'Title, abstract and keywords' that can be used instead.

EBSCOhost presents issues with overlap of searched databases (primarily MedLine), and with the inclusion of databases of news articles and other sources of 'grey literature'. Test searches suggested that where these are left in, the numbers of potentially relevant items identified by the refined searches detailed above are infeasibly high.

- Recommendation 8: To exclude specific databases and to limit the search to 'Document type: academic journal' to address this issue.

Finally, ScienceDirect does not support wildcard searches, meaning that truncated terms used in searches on other services will need to be replaced by multiple relevant whole terms for this service. This will create longer search strings, which gives rise to a second issue, that ScienceDirect does not support the use of more than eight terms in a search field. The proposed solution would see the composite terms used in other services turned into multiple search terms where necessary, with all permutations of part terms searched to ensure equivalence of results.

Summary of recommended search strings and inclusion / exclusion criteria to be applied

The following general inclusion / exclusion criteria were applied:

- Exclude any items with a publication date before 1 January 2007
- Include only items where full text publication language is English
- For EBSCOhost – limit 'Document type' to 'Academic Journal'

The following searches were carried out using each of the bibliographic database services:

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(outcome* OR benefit* OR impact* OR improv* OR effect*)

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(volunteer* OR helper* OR participant* OR beneficiar* OR recipient*)

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(group* OR organisation* OR (community OR communities))

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(societ* OR public OR national OR Scotland OR Scottish)

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(employment OR education OR cohes* OR equit* OR ((social OR human OR cultural OR political) AND capital) OR resilience OR reputation* OR financial OR capacity)

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(((mental OR psychological OR physical) AND health) OR training OR employ* OR career* OR ((social OR human OR cultural OR political) AND capital) OR functioning OR rehabilitation OR "quality of life")

- TI=((volunteer* NOT "healthy volunteers" NOT "human volunteers") OR charit* OR unpaid OR unsalaried OR "civic engagement") AND TS=(collectiv* OR communitarian* OR cohes* OR equit* OR ((social OR human OR cultural OR political) AND capital) OR resilience)

Appendix Three: Record of searches and downloads to EndNote

Volunteering Outcomes Framework literature review: priority scoring system

We used a scoring system to prioritise for full text review those 735 items which were considered high likely to be relevant to the current literature review after all search results had been subjected to individual examination for relevance by reviewers in a two-stage filtering process: first by title alone and then by title and abstract.

The scoring system incorporates five priority themes identified from content analysis of the Scottish Government's specification for the literature review and a mechanism for prioritising research carried out in or using data from the UK, which we anticipate to be the most generalisable to the Scottish volunteering context.

The scoring system is set out in Table A3-1. Publications were awarded points for meeting either criteria 1.a) or 1.b) and for appearing to meet each of the other criteria on the basis of the publication title and abstract. The range of possible scores was thus 0-7.

Table A3-1. Scoring system for prioritisation of publications for full text acquisition and examination

Criterion	Points awarded
1.a) The publication relates to research on volunteering in a Scottish context or carries out analysis of data gathered from Scottish participants, <u>OR</u>	2
1.b) The publication relates to research on volunteering in a UK-wide or English / Welsh / Northern Irish context or carries out analysis of data gathered from English / Welsh / Northern Irish participants	1
2. The publication appears to discuss or relate to outcomes that highlight benefits of volunteering at a national, community and / or organisational level (i.e. beyond only individual benefits e.g. skills development)	1
3. The publication appears to discuss or relate to or give insight to issues of diversity / equality / inequality / inclusion	1
4. The publication discusses or gives insight to 'Informal volunteering' / helping out (for example, unpaid help given as an individual directly to people who are not relatives such as helping a friend or a neighbour helping with shopping or gardening etc.)	1
5. The publication appears to discuss or relate to individual or organisational barriers to volunteering	1
6. The publication appears to discuss or relate to individual or organisational motivations to start or to stay volunteering	1

The 735 items were divided between four reviewers for scoring, with results collated. The results of the scoring exercise using this system are summarised in Table A3-2. The maximum score was 4 (12 papers), and the minimum score was 0 (57 papers).

Table A3-2. Summary of scores for publications assessed as relevant after examination of title and abstract (n=735)

Score	Number of publications	As a proportion of all publications scored for priority
4 points	12	1.6%
3 points	64	8.7%
2 points	242	32.9%
1 point	360	49.0%
0 points	57	7.6%

Table A3-3 provides a breakdown of the overall numbers of papers which were awarded a point in each category. Four papers related specifically to volunteering in Scotland or used data collected in Scotland, and a further 50 papers related to volunteering in other UK contexts or analysed data collected from within the UK.

Table A3-3. Summary by scoring criterion for publications assessed as relevant after examination of title and abstract (n=735 publications)

Criterion	Number* of publications	As a proportion of all publications scored for priority*
Scottish context or Scottish data	4	0.5%
UK or UK-constituent country context or data	50	6.8%
Meso- or macro-level benefits of volunteering	178	24.2%
Inequality or inclusion	141	19.2%
Informal volunteering / helping out	28	3.8%
Barriers to volunteering	134	18.2%
Motivations for volunteering	545	74.1%

*Publications could score in multiple thematic categories

Prioritisation for fulltext consideration

Fulltexts were sought for all publications scoring 4 or 3 points. In relation to publications scoring 2 points, fulltext acquisition was prioritised for publications relating to research in or using data from the UK or one or more of its constituent countries (21 publications). Following this, fulltexts of additional items scoring 2 points were selected to provide coverage of the full range of themes guiding this review, with 'over-sampling' of themes with smaller numbers of publications to provide depth of coverage in those areas.

Table A3-4 Details of batch-deletions

Action	Identified and cut	Comment
Remove identical duplicates	6797	Note that many duplicates remain – marginal differences in how authors are recorded, replacement of special characters, etc.
Remove if word in title: pharmacokinetic	453	
Remove if word in title: pharmacokinetics	813	
Remove if term in title: 'healthy male volunteers'	298	
Remove if term in title: 'healthy young'	68	
Remove if term in title: 'healthy adult'	201	
Remove if term in title: 'healthy volunteers'	1043	
Remove if word in title: 'gene'	71	
Remove patents	501	
Remove Audiovisual materials	16	
Remove Book and Book Section	1480	Saved to separate Library
Remove Conference proceedings	136	
Remove Magazine articles	301	Saved to separate Library
Remove Newspaper articles	461	To Magazine Library
Remove Thesis	1401	
Remove if author 'Anonymous'	369	To Magazine Library
Remove if item with no listed author	1264	To Magazine Library
Remove if term in title: 'volunteer subjects'	23	
Remove Web pages	47	
Remove if Journal: 'Figshare'	224	Generally repository for supplementary information
Remove if word in title: bioequivalence	129	
Remove if word in title: biological	18	
Remove if term in title: 'carbon dioxide'	80	Measures collected by Volunteer Observing Ship
Remove if word in title: bioavailability	89	
Remove if term in title: 'normal volunteers'	195	
Remove Journal: Gene Expression Omnibus	511	
Remove if word in title: Allele	67	
Remove if word in title: Pharmacodynamic	14	
Remove Shapefile	148	TIGER/Line Shapefiles are an extract of selected geographic and cartographic information from the Census MAF/TIGER database.
Remove if author given in Korean characters	428	Sample of papers all in Korean full text

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