

# Volunteering voices: a future vision for Hastings

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A collaborative project  
commissioned by  
**Hastings Voluntary Action**



and undertaken by  
**Institute of Volunteering  
Research at the University  
of East Anglia**



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# VOLUNTEERING VOICES: A FUTURE VISION FOR HASTINGS

## Report

A collaborative project funded by the Community Renewal Fund, commissioned by Hastings Voluntary Action and undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research at the University of East Anglia.



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# Executive Summary

Hastings is in an excellent position to drive a positive vision for inclusive volunteering with impacts on communities, organisations and volunteers.

Many residents feel that Hastings already offers them a sense of community, belonging and connectedness. This is supported by a vibrant and strong voluntary and community sector, which involves many regular volunteers in ways that enable them to make a difference and in ways that improve the volunteers' health. Compared to the national picture, it even appears that volunteering in Hastings is more common than in the rest of England. Crucially, volunteers report that they feel their volunteering makes a difference. This is likely to be connected to positive volunteer experiences, which can be linked to the effective activities of volunteer involving organisations.

When collaboratively and inclusively developing a strategy for volunteering in Hastings, stakeholders can build on these strengths and on their existing networks and collaborations. However, they will also need to address certain challenges. These challenges relate to the difficult socio-economic situation in England, which is exacerbated in Hastings, and the challenge of including people currently not involved in volunteering. The work to underpin this report, which was deliberately collaborative and intended to support a collective effort of creating a volunteering strategy for Hastings, identified three key themes for further strategic considerations:

## **Inclusive Volunteering**

Volunteer involvement depends not just on an individual's decision to volunteer, but also on the availability of suitable and meaningful volunteering opportunities. Socio-economic or physical barriers might prevent individuals from becoming involved. The challenges of inclusive volunteering might be resolved by reaching individuals with effective communication, offering suitable and accessible volunteering opportunities and ensuring satisfying volunteer experiences for all.

## **Inclusive Involvement Practice**

Volunteer involvement practice is constantly evolving and responding to a changing environment. Digital technology use is fast becoming a regular component of 'hybrid' approaches to volunteer involvement. The challenges of adapting practice are to ensure that volunteers and volunteer involving organisations can design and enable change together. It will be important to strive for a good balance between resolving technical obstacles and retaining sociability for volunteers.

## **Inclusive Leadership**

Given the complex challenges facing Hastings over the coming years, implementing any volunteering strategy will require effective change management. However well a strategy has been consulted on, the challenges of inclusive leadership are to continuously explore underrepresented sectors and unheard voices, enabling their active involvement with accessible and engaging processes.

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# 1 Introduction

This report is intended to provide an accessible evidence base for volunteer involving organisations, for local government and other stakeholders in Hastings, to collaboratively plan their future work supporting inclusive volunteer involvement. It is based on systematic data collection and a subsequent thematic analysis, considering plausible responses to current challenges to volunteering in Hastings and potential consensus amongst key stakeholders.

Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) has obtained funding from the Community Renewal Fund to commission work to explore a “*whole system*” approach to volunteering, set in the context of local and national trends, to consider how local volunteering in Hastings can be configured most effectively in the future. HVA has commissioned a third-party analysis of plausible responses to current challenges and potential consensus amongst key stakeholders to inform future collaboration and work-strands, based on well-documented, robust evidence and facilitated stakeholder engagement.

## 1.1 Project plan

In order to prepare the required output for this work, a report with evidence for strategic development of inclusive volunteer involvement, by July 2022, the commissioned project work was undertaken between January 2022 and June 2022. A detailed plan with iterative phases including a trends analysis, data collection through a survey and workshops, with time for deliberation by key stakeholders, was drawn up in collaboration with Hastings Voluntary Action. A Steering Group helped refine the research questions, informed the design, provided secondary data to inform the work, and were included in sense checking the findings of this report, before publishing, see Section 1.2.

To guide the trends and thematic analysis, we firstly developed a conceptual framework collaboratively using shared definitions, described below in Sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4. The work was commissioned within clear time and resource restrictions, resulting in some limitations, which are set out in Section 1.5.

The report presents findings from the phases of the work: ‘trends analysis’ (see Section 2) citing relevant baseline data (see Section 3); from a ‘survey’ (see Section 4) and from workshops with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations (see Section 5). The report then presents emerging topics arising from a thematic analysis of all data included in the report (see Section 6). Conclusions, challenges and implications are also discussed (see Section 7).

## 1.2 Collaboration

The work was commissioned to inform future collaboration and work-strands, based on well-documented, robust evidence and facilitated stakeholder engagement. The facilitated stakeholder involvement included responses from the Steering Group and workshops.

### 1.2.1 Steering Group

The Steering Group, with members from the local authority, local volunteer involving organisations and local volunteering infrastructure organisations, was set up specifically for the project: Elizabeth Bailey (Local Authority), Kim Batty (HEART), Jane Caley (Hastings Voluntary Action), Jenifer Deering (St Michael's Hospice), Tracy Dighton (Citizens Advice), Simon Hubbard (Hastings Voluntary Action), Steve Manwaring (Hastings Voluntary Action), Paul Rideout (Local Authority). The Steering Group met online on 08 March 2022, for a deliberative meeting to discuss the research questions which included the review of initial findings from a trends analysis and the review of the research design, especially of the survey. The Steering Group met again online on 29 June, for a deliberative workshop to consider the findings of the research and the emerging themes, in particular their relevance for strategic development and future actions.

### 1.2.2 Workshops

Two workshops were organised to qualitatively explore and understand volunteering in Hastings, from the perspective of volunteers in Hastings, as well as organisations which involve volunteers in Hastings. The first workshop on 6 May 2022 involved five participants from volunteer involving organisations. The second workshop on 26 May 2022 involved eight volunteers. The workshops explored motivators, enablers and barriers of volunteering in Hastings and sought to explore what a successful volunteering strategy in Hastings might look like (see Section 5).

## 1.3 Conceptual framework

To analyse information using a “*whole system*” approach to volunteering, set in the context of local and national trends, we developed a bespoke conceptual framework which was discussed and confirmed in collaboration with key stakeholders in the first Steering Group meeting. In order to identify patterns relevant to specific groups, this document will systematically order key elements of the information, as it affects four different groups: volunteers, organisations, community and national, specifically England.

To consider volunteering activities, a range of typologies for areas in which voluntary action takes place are available. Dingle (2001) is quoted in Rochester et al (2010) which includes: community activity; emergency response; community peacekeeping; social assistance; personal assistance; children and youth; human rights, advocacy, and politics; economic justice; religious volunteering; education; health care; environment; data collection; promotion of knowledge; promotion of commerce; law and legal services; culture; and recreation. These are broadly reflected in the typology used in the Community Life Survey, used in Sections 3 and 4.

Mechanisms are the factors that influence the different voluntary action responses including how volunteers are found, matched to opportunities and supported, with tools such as volunteer matching platforms like DoIT, online communication tools like WhatsApp, volunteering infrastructure organisations like Volunteer Centres, and local



government services like community engagement teams.

In Figure 1.1, activities and mechanisms are represented by dotted lines between the actors and indicate that they relate to all trends.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



## 1.4 Definitions

The concepts of 'volunteering', 'Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector' and 'community' are contentious and there are no legal or commonly agreed definitions (Grotz et al, 2021). Rather than proposing fixed definitions, this document suggests that stakeholder engagement should gain shared understanding, which is likely to be more achievable than agreement on a given definition.

### 1.4.1 Volunteering

The most common official conceptualisation of volunteering in the UK has remained largely unchallenged for over two decades. It refers to three components of activities that are: unpaid, uncoerced and of benefit. These have also been widely used to define volunteering in academic literature since the end of the last millennium (Smith et al, 2016). A definition adopted by the UK Volunteering Forum in 1998, as quoted in Kearny (2001/2007):

*"It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain"* (p:6).

Later definitions include examples of the breadth of activities encompassed by this:

*"The Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland suggests that 'It comprises the widest spectrum of activity for example, community development, arts, sport, faith based, education, neighbourliness, youth, environmental, health and direct care"* (Department for Social Development, 2012 p:15).

*“This can include activities undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as community participation and social action in associations and groups which may not be registered or don’t have a confirmed structure” (Grotz, 2021a).*

#### 1.4.2 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector

A document from Community Action Suffolk describes the VCSE sector as follows: *“The sector itself has been the beneficiary of many names to date – Civil Society, the Third Sector, and the VCS to name a few. The VCSE sector is the current ‘catch all’ term that includes any organisation (incorporated or not) working with social purposes. This ranges from small community-based groups/schemes (Good Neighbour Schemes, ‘Stitch & Knit’ or Cubs & Brownies, etc.), through to larger registered Charities that operate locally, regionally & nationally” (Reid, 2019).*

#### 1.4.3 Community

A literature review by IVR about ‘Understanding how volunteering creates stronger communities’ provided the following observation: *“Community is not a given or static concept. Indeed, people are widely acknowledged to belong to multiple communities, whether these are geographical or of interest and/or shared experiences. But it is important to recognise that voluntary action [volunteering] happens in space and place, and that the community is simultaneously a location, a site of identification and a set of relationships.” (Ramsay, 2012).*

### 1.5 Limitations

The sources for the trends analysis have been collected with few defining parameters. Their use is largely descriptive and illustrative.

The Hastings survey was distributed by HVA through a wide range of contacts and was live for 44 days, opening on 4th April 2022 and closing on 18th May 2022. The tight timelines for the project meant that the team had to use the Easter holiday period and a week with a bank holiday which may have impacted upon response rates. Although 302 people responded to the survey, it was only fully completed by 231. This relatively low number of responses to the survey restrict the conclusions that can be drawn. Analysis of the characteristics of the survey respondents revealed them to be older, more likely to be retired, more likely to be women and more likely to be white. Any further research undertaken or commissioned by HVA should aim to target under-represented groups, e.g. younger, male, working and non-white.

Qualitative research often deals with small participant samples; this is the nature of qualitative research and not a limitation of it. In qualitative research we seek to explore similarities and differences, and do not seek to ensure generalisability. We seek to sample in a way that allows us to obtain diverse views, from a diverse range of participants. However, within our workshops, there was possibly sampling bias for how participants were recruited. We worked with HVA as a gatekeeper to recruit participants,

using a convenience sample. We had a short timeframe to recruit participants for the workshops after receiving ethical approval, so it is likely that volunteers and volunteer involving organisations which were already most engaged with HVA were recruited. Moreover, workshops were hosted online, which might have excluded some people from being able to participate. The impact of these decisions will be unknown, so we should exercise caution when interpreting these findings, and not generalise them to all volunteers and volunteer involving organisations within Hastings. Outreach work could be undertaken to involve people from more diverse backgrounds.

## 2 Trends

The purpose of this trends analysis was to inform the design of the overall work and to provide an accessible evidence base for organisations in Hastings to collaboratively plan their future work supporting inclusive volunteer involvement.

In order to identify 'trends', a bespoke conceptual framework was developed (see Section 1.3) and information from diverse sources was collected to provide a range of perspectives from local to national, from academic to sector led. A specific focus in the search for information were recent and relevant efforts to develop volunteering strategies from other national actors, for example governments in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland; local authorities or communities including Newham, 'Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole'; and organisations such as The Conservation Volunteers, PCC Hertfordshire, Leeds Teaching Hospitals, York CVS and Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway, see Table 2.1. The documents used in the trends analysis will be made available through HVA in a separate folder and will be quoted and clearly cited throughout, to identify the origins of any points made. This does not mean that the points are necessarily authoritative, directly relevant to the Hastings context or comprehensive. They are presented to enable future deliberations. Information was systematically ordered under four headings: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural, Technological and Environmental with a view to identify areas of particular relevance to Hastings. Information was then reviewed and summarised under the headings: 'volunteer', 'organisation', 'community' and 'national'.

The following wordcloud was created from a wordcount search in relevant documents with a total of approximately 250,000 words, highlighting the role of participation and involvement in local community activities.

Figure 2.1 Wordcloud Trends



Table 2.1 List of documents included for 'Trends'

Citation	Title
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, 2021a	Draft Community and Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy 2021-2024
British Academy, 2021	Shaping the COVID decade: addressing the long-term societal impacts of COVID-19
Brodie et al, 2011	Pathways through participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship?
Chadwick El-Ali, 2022	Future Trends in Volunteering: Exploring Synergies Across Research From IAVE, Forum and UN Volunteers
Chan et al, 2022	The Road Ahead 2022: Finding a new practicality through uncertain times
Conservation Volunteers, 2020	For people and green spaces: a thriving network for everyone Strategy 2021 - 25
Cretu, 2020	A Catalyst for change. What COVID-19 has taught us about the future of local government
Curtin et al, 2021	'Solidarity in a time of crisis: the role of mutual aid to the Covid-19 pandemic'
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2022	Government Response to Danny Kruger MP's Report: 'Levelling Up Our Communities: Proposals for a New Social Covenant'
Department of Rural and Community Development [Government of Ireland] (2021)	National Volunteering Strategy 2021 - 2025
Donahue et al, 2022	Volunteering together: Inclusive Volunteering and disabled people, A report for Spirit of 2012
Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface, 2020	Volunteering Strategy 2020 –2023 'Making Dumfries and Galloway a great place to Volunteer'
East Sussex, 2016	Building Stronger Communities
East Sussex Community Voice, 2021	Embedding and Evaluating the NHS Volunteer Responders Programme
Hastings Borough Council (no date)	Culture-Led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-2021
Hastings Voluntary Action, 2017	Helping Self Help: Final Report
House of Lords, 2019	Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities, Report of Session 2017–19: The future of seaside towns.
Institute for Voluntary Action Research, 2021	The contribution and value of the VCSE sector in East Sussex
Lloyd, 2020	Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2026: Crime reduction & Community safety is a shared responsibility for us all
National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2021	UK Civil Society Almanac 2021: Executive Summary
Newham, no date	We are Volunteering, We are Newham: Volunteering Strategy
Roche, 2020	The 'V' rate - Six ways the pandemic has shaped volunteering
Rochester, 2018	Trends in Volunteering
Scottish Government, 2022	Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan
United Nations Volunteers programme, 2021	2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report. Building equal and inclusive societies.
Vision for Volunteering, 2022	How does volunteering need to adapt by 2032?
Volunteer Now, 2017	Volunteering & combating social isolation and loneliness
Wilson et al, 2021	Briefing 10 Rapid research COVID-19. Community responses to COVID-19: Striking a balance between communities and local authorities

## 2.1 Political

English politics currently appear characterised by uncertainty with the economy hit by the combined adverse effects of the pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine. With regard to policies regarding the voluntary and community sector, in England, government policy has been largely absent. The most recent and relevant developments would appear to be the response of the Government to the report by Danny Kruger MP (Huddleston, 2022) and the collaboration of key national volunteering infrastructure organisations: Association of Volunteer Managers, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Volunteering Matters and Sport England, to develop a vision for volunteering (Vision for Volunteering, 2022). Volunteer involving organisations argue that social infrastructure is crucial to levelling up the UK, and organisations might have opportunities to contribute to this agenda (Chan et al, 2022). Directly relevant to Hastings as a coastal community, is the report by the House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities: The future of Seaside Towns (House of Lords, 2019). In comparison, Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan was recently published (Scottish Government, 2022) based on a national framework (Scottish Government, 2019).

### 2.1.1 Volunteer

Volunteers are continuously praised on the political stage with recognition in a number of ways, for example, by the Conservative Baroness Sate during the House of Lords Debate on the Charitable and Voluntary Sector, 30 April 2020: *"I am in awe of every volunteer who has helped to tackle this unprecedented Covid-19 challenge; we owe them our deepest gratitude for their kindness, selflessness and commitment."* (Hansard, 2020). However, Community Life Survey data suggests that it is unlikely that the number of volunteers will grow significantly over time (See Section 2.3). Recruitment of long-term volunteers appears to be falling, however, it is likely to be replaced by more self-organised and episodic volunteers (Rochester, 2018), at times encouraged by political campaigns, for example: *"We need you to come forward again, to work alongside our brilliant GPs, doctors, nurses and pharmacists, to deliver jabs and save lives."* (Johnson, 2021).

### 2.1.2 Organisation

The important role of volunteer involving organisations and of volunteering infrastructure organisations is recognised politically, for example, see the debate on Charities and Civil Society: Ministerial Responsibility, 23 November 2021 (Hansard, 2021). However, volunteer involving organisations have sometimes been caught up in controversies, sometimes criticised, for example, on their stance towards equality, diversity and inclusion (Chan et al, 2022; Donahue 2022).

### 2.1.3 Community

Some authorities now have Mayors who hold powers over making decisions for their own areas. Communities can work with these Mayors to influence decision making and identify needs of the community (Chan et al, 2022). Many local authorities currently develop bespoke solutions, see for example, “*Local councils and voluntary organisations working together to support people experiencing homelessness*” (Hastings Borough Council, 2021b).

### 2.1.4 National

At this stage it does not appear possible to ascertain whether the Government’s position in England has significantly shifted since the publication of its Civil Society Strategy: building a future that works for everyone (Cabinet Office, 2018). While in England, the Government’s rhetoric has remained largely unchanged, for example, it “*believes that volunteering is critical to a vibrant and resilient civil society*” (Huddleston, 2022) so has its limited support to enable this. This is in contrast to other governments’ support, for example, in Scotland. The situation amongst the four nations of the United Kingdom is diverse (Hardill et al, 2022 forthcoming). It remains to be seen how the levelling up agenda will influence this (Chan et al, 2022).

### 2.1.5 Summary

While the Government’s rhetoric has remained largely unchanged, for example, it “*believes that volunteering is critical to a vibrant and resilient civil society*” (Huddleston, 2022), there is little compelling evidence in England of any strategic political endeavours to support this.

## 2.2 Economic

In comparison with other areas of England, Hastings has become even more deprived. There is little encouraging economic news. The country is currently facing a cost-of-living crisis, whereby inflation is likely to rise, putting pressure on households and a squeeze on public spending due to high national debt. However, parts of the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund might be directed into deprived coastal communities with the aim of “*breathing new life into our communities.*” (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2021).

### 2.2.1 Volunteer

With more people experiencing financial hardship, more people being in paid work, or unable to work, this might leave fewer people available to commit to formal volunteering (Chan et al, 2022). Under severe financial strain, public services are more likely to look for volunteers. “*...the NHS, through its employment, training, procurement and **volunteering activities**, and as a major estate owner to play a full part in social and economic development and environmental sustainability*” (NHS England, 2021) (bold by authors); and in libraries: “*Libraries use volunteers to support their services. There are nearly four times as many volunteers as there are full-time staff in the sector. We believe*

*that the involvement of volunteers in supporting paid staff in running public libraries can be valuable in building upon available services and ensuring close collaboration between public libraries and the community.”* (Huddleston, 2022). However, there are concerns that this might be seen as volunteers being asked to replace public services, such as library, policing and teaching staff, which have faced governmental funding cuts (Rochester, 2018).

### 2.2.2 Organisation

The VCSE paid workforce does not appear to have been significantly negatively affected (NCVO, 2021b). The Government is funding the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership to organise and deploy volunteers from 200 partner organisations, for future emergencies (Huddleston, 2022). The Government launched the £7 million ‘Volunteering Futures Fund’ to target barriers to volunteering and make sectors more accessible (Huddleston, 2022). If divided by the 343 local authorities, this would offer £20,000 for one year. NCVO suggest that organisations will need to consider the costs involved in digital and greener infrastructure. Organisations are advised to be aware of rising inflation, which can impact staffing and service delivery (Chan et al, 2022). At the time of writing this report, the Bank of England anticipates that inflation will rise to around 10% this year (Bank of England, 2022).

Organisations might be benefiting from increased cashless giving and digital fundraising since the COVID-19 pandemic, as more people now use cashless methods to pay for goods and donate to charity (Chan et al, 2022).

### 2.2.3 Community

As the cost-of-living increases, and more people face homelessness and poverty, there will be an increased reliance on food banks and voluntary organisations to provide support (Chan et al, 2022). Currently in the UK, the costs of fuel, food and energy are all rising. This will no doubt impact the most deprived communities and vulnerable groups the most, who might have a higher level of need from charities already (Chan et al, 2022). Of course, inflation will also affect communities, see also Section 2.2.2.

### 2.2.4 National

Danny Kruger’s seventh proposition for a new social covenant, is to create a social economy, which will incentivise social investment, with a focus on social and environmental gain, alongside financial gain (Huddleston, 2022). However, the cost-of-living is rising and in April 2022 there was the introduction of the Health and Social Care levy, which will have affected people’s disposable income, possibly pushing more people into poverty. This might result in fewer people being able to donate to charity (Chan et al, 2022).



### 2.2.5 Summary

There is little comfort from the economic trends. In the face of rising demand, for example, for volunteers in public services, volunteers will have less money and might have less capacity to volunteer, while organisations will also have less money to support them. Government investment in England does not appear commensurate with the strategic challenge posed by the economic situation. See Section 6.2.4 for plausible responses relating to the cost-of-living crisis.

## 2.3 Social and cultural

Hastings has a vibrant cultural sector with a 'Culture-Led Regeneration: A Strategy for Hastings 2016-2021' seeking to "*support social engagement and community cohesion through accessible and diverse cultural activity.*" Hastings Borough Council (no date). Key themes that emerge following the COVID-19 pandemic include social isolation and exclusion.

### 2.3.1 Volunteer

Social isolation is a theme that appears in a number of relevant documents. Social isolation and loneliness might be associated with being aged 75 and older, living in a single-person household, living in areas of higher social deprivation, being less educated, having no access to a car, and having a low household income (Volunteer Now, 2017). Individuals who are already socially isolated might not volunteer, due to lack of confidence and lack of community participation (Lim & Laurence, 2015).

COVID-19 lockdowns and shielding prevented older people and vulnerable groups from volunteering. Volunteering rates amongst these groups will only return to normal once individuals feel safe to return to face-to-face volunteering. See section 6.2.2. for plausible responses to accessible and inclusive volunteering. Although volunteering spiked initially for the 16-24 age group at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteering rates amongst this group have returned to pre-pandemic levels (Roche, 2020).

### 2.3.2 Organisation

NCVO states that voluntary and civic organisations need to be more inclusive and accessible, and suggests that organisations need to consider barriers to volunteering for people from different Ethnic backgrounds and abilities (Chan et al, 2021). Prior research suggests that volunteering, such as befriending services, can be effective at reducing social isolation and loneliness (Volunteer Now, 2017).

### 2.3.3 Community

Newham's 'Social Integration Strategy' adopts four principles:

*"relationships that promote shared experiences, building networks and quality interactions between groups, building understanding and trust; participation that encourage residents to be active in civil society through volunteering and democratic*

*participation; equality for residents by overcoming barriers and challenges to work, support with ESOL and other skills; evidence to measure and evaluate the impact of social integration”* (Newham London, no date).

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council currently offers “a range of volunteering opportunities such as volunteers for Green spaces, Culture Volunteers, Arts by the Sea festival, Family Hubs, Community transport and care leaver mentors” (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, 2021a, p.27).

#### 2.3.4 National

The Government pledges that it is committed to designing and delivering services with the local community, and will pilot ‘Community Covenants’ schemes, removing barriers for community organisation, and provide communities with the support they need to shape their local area (Huddleston, 2022).

Public perception of some social issues has changed, partly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and people seem to be more tolerant of marginalised groups, or people requiring more support (Chan et al, 2022).

#### 2.3.5 Summary

As part of further devolution, the Government might enable local authorities to have more financial autonomy and greater influence over local decisions increasingly involving residents in decision making (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2022). This might strengthen alternative approaches, however, in this context all local authorities and local organisations might be expected to be seen to challenge social exclusion.

### 2.4 Technological and environment

During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote online activities have replaced many face-to-face activities. However, cyber security and lack of sociability and accountability have been highlighted as parallel issues (Nottingham Trent University, 2021). There appears to be a clear message to volunteer involving organisations that they need to develop their digital capacity while remaining mindful of digital exclusion of key beneficiaries and the nature of volunteering activities. Climate change might affect Hastings comparatively more severely including through sea level rise (Sayers et al, 2022), suggesting a bespoke volunteering response with examples from existing environmental organisations (Conservation Volunteers, 2021).

#### 2.4.1 Volunteer

Interactions using technology will become more prominent, but they will not replace all or even the majority of volunteering interactions. It might be worth remembering that the majority of volunteering takes place in sport and that social isolation can be temporarily addressed with technology, but not permanently. Moreover, some groups within society will be digitally excluded if volunteering moves exclusively online.

Observers suggest that volunteers will need training in digital skills and they will need access to suitable digital infrastructure, in order to continue volunteering through the digital revolution (Haldane, 2021). The digital revolution can facilitate digital skills-based volunteering, which the younger generation might be more likely to engage with (Rochester, 2018). Social media can be used for campaigning and individual support groups.

Individuals were more likely to donate online during the COVID-19 pandemic, with social media playing an important role (Chan et al, 2022).

#### 2.4.2 Organisation

NCVO suggests that VCSE organisations will need to invest in digital infrastructure and training for their volunteers and also to begin cutting their carbon emissions (Chan et al, 2022). Many organisations require their volunteers to complete e-learning; they will need to consider whether e-learning is inclusive and accessible for their volunteers. Some believe that the digitalisation of services has made volunteering more accessible.

#### 2.4.3 Community

As a coastal community, Hastings will be affected by climate change severely, for example, through sea level rise and more extreme weather patterns. While climate change action might benefit people who live in more deprived areas, which could help to level up these areas, the physical impact of climate change is expected to be significant. Volunteering in coastal protection, as well as flood risk management might become more prevalent in coastal communities such as Hastings.

#### 2.4.4 National

In its response to Danny Kruger MP, the Government does not support certain technical solutions such as a national passport system for volunteering, however the Government will continue to support VCSE led pilots specifically for youth volunteering (Huddleston, 2022).

Danny Kruger MP's fourth proposition for a new social covenant suggests the need to identify climate change as, not only a moral crisis, but also a security threat to the UK and highlights the UK's target of net zero by 2050. This target will inevitably impact how the future of volunteering is shaped (Huddleston, 2022), see also section 2.4.3.

#### 2.4.5 Summary

Technology will change a range of volunteering interactions, but it will not replace face-to-face activities which can be expected to remain dominant. However, organisations need to adapt to the technological changes. Climate change is expected to become a more dominant theme in many VCSE activities and volunteer involvement will need to respond.

## 2.5 Summary

Despite the widespread praise of volunteers and the recognition that they are contributing economic, social and cultural value to their local communities and personal benefits such as health improvements, there is no clear indication from political leadership that this will lead to additional financial support for volunteer involvement in England. While the Government's rhetoric has remained largely unchanged, for example, it "*believes that volunteering is critical to a vibrant and resilient civil society*" (Huddleston, 2022), there is little compelling evidence of any strategic political endeavours to support this.

Unfortunately, there is little comfort from the economic trends. In the face of rising demand, for example, for volunteers in public services, volunteers will have less money and might have less capacity to volunteer while organisations will have less money to support them. Government investment in England does not appear commensurate with the strategic challenge posed by the economic situation.

The government in England might enable local authorities to have more autonomy over decisions increasingly involving residents in decision making. This might strengthen alternative approaches such as Hastings' focus on Culture-Led Regeneration. However, all local authorities and local organisations might be expected to be seen to challenge social exclusion. Therefore, the rationale for volunteer involvement in areas such as social isolation or cultural vibrancy appears strong in Hastings but will clearly be dependent on resources.

After changes in the use of technology during the 2020-2022 COVID-19 pandemic, organisations will need to adapt their practice. Technology will change a range of volunteering interactions but is unlikely to replace face to face activities, which can be expected to remain dominant.

Climate change is expected to become a more dominant theme in many VCSE activities and volunteer involvement will need to respond. The rationale for volunteer involvement regarding ecological issues, such as climate change, in Hastings is strong.

## 3 Baseline Data

We collaboratively developed a bespoke framework for data analysis, using existing and new data. Existing data was drawn from the Charity Commission, the Community Life Survey and the Office for National Statistics. In this section, we will describe the sources for baseline data to assist future strategic deliberation, summarise information relating to Hastings, explain the techniques used to extract data from existing sources and to combine this with new local data. For each section of baseline data, we offer direction to sources and possible further exploration.

### 3.1 Charity Commission

The Charity Commission in England and Wales collects and publishes data from all the organisations registered with the commission. This data contains details on what the organisations do, where they are based, and their financial history. The detail of the information depends on the organisation, with less detail available for smaller organisation. This data can be searched and results can be downloaded from the Charity Commission website: <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

For this work, we searched for all charities registered within the Hastings postcode TN34 and reviewed their annual income. According to the Charity Commission data, 92 charities are registered, against the national average fewer of the charities in TN34 are large and more are small. They report a total annual income of almost £17m. The top nine earners (10%) receive 67% of the income reported. These numbers seem to broadly reflect the analysis for East Sussex (Institute for Voluntary Action Research, 2021).

We searched but could not locate new local data on organisations not registered with the Charity Commission and recommend that this could be a topic for further exploration.

- The rationale for further exploration: the higher levels of volunteering in Hastings are likely to extend into organisations that are not registered with the Charity Commission, and it might be of interest to add and compare organisational data from organisations not registered with registered charities.
- HVA can also extend the search of the Charity Commission database to include further postcodes such as in St Leonards.
- HVA may also compare the results with the listings in 'Table 9.4.11, Q3.1 - Which organisation do you volunteer for?' and extend the exploration with volunteers.

### 3.2 Community Life Survey

The Community Life Survey provides official government statistics from England on 'Identity and Social Network', 'Wellbeing and Loneliness', 'Neighbourhood and Community', 'Civic Engagement and Social Action' and most relevant for this work on 'Volunteering and Charitable Giving'. This data has been collected since 2012, first using a face-to-face method, and since 2016-17, a self-completion online and paper mixed method approach.

The entire dataset can be downloaded, however, that usually requires some technical expertise. Summaries such as “*Volunteering and Charitable Giving - Community Life Survey 2020/21*” are published regularly by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2021) and can be easily accessed.

For this work, we downloaded the entire dataset since 2012 to explore variations across regions over time. For the analysis in Section 4, we only used the latest data (2020/21) for comparison with the recently collected data in Hastings. Importantly, the new data from Hastings had been collected in a way that would make it comparable against the national and regional data.

Below, for illustration, we present some comparisons across regions over time, not directly linked the new data from Hastings.

For volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs (once a month), the South East of England’s trend line is high but not drastically above the national average. There is an interesting drop off after 2014/15, which contrasts to the South West and East around this period.

Figure 3.1: Volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs - Trends

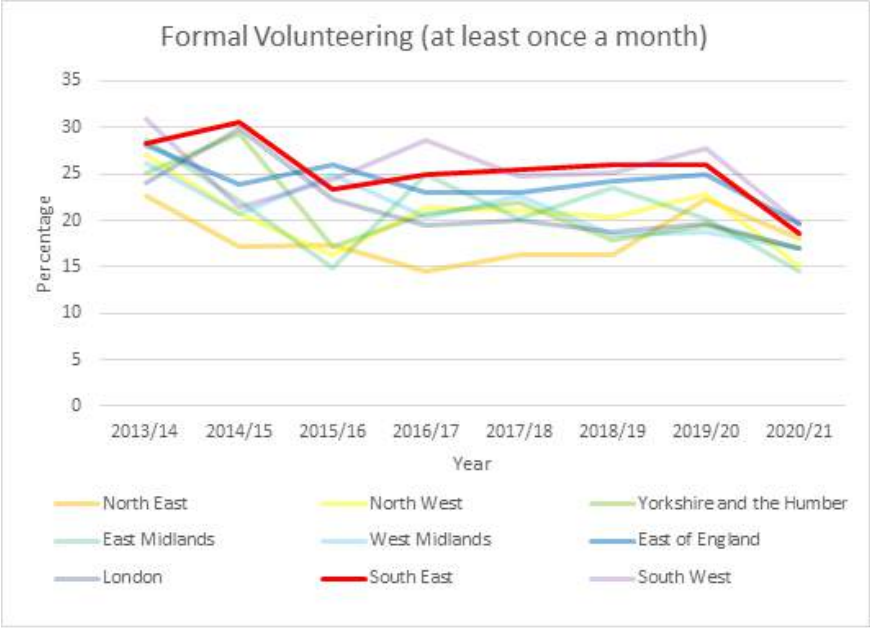


Table 3.1 shows demographics variations for three regions South East, London and East of England, as well as the national picture of the demographic profiles of respondents to the CLS.

Table 3.1: Regional comparison of demographics

	South East	East of England	London	England
Age	4.57 (1.48)	4.56 (1.47)	4.27 (1.45)	4.48 (1.50)
Female	0.55 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)
Employed	0.59 (0.49)	0.60 (0.49)	0.64 (0.48)	0.58 (0.49)
Working (past week)	0.56 (0.50)	0.56 (0.50)	0.59 (0.49)	0.54 (0.50)
Full-time	0.71 (0.45)	0.72 (0.45)	0.75 (0.43)	0.72 (0.45)
Married	0.54 (0.50)	0.54 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)	0.50 (0.50)
HH Adults	2.11 (0.93)	2.11 (0.91)	2.26 (1.06)	2.14 (0.97)
HH Children	0.45 (0.82)	0.45 (0.84)	0.48 (0.86)	0.46 (0.85)
HH Income	5.14 (2.12)	4.99 (2.08)	5.05 (2.29)	4.79 (2.14)
Formal Vol. (once per month)	0.27 (0.44)	0.25 (0.43)	0.20 (0.40)	0.23 (0.42)
Formal Vol. (once per year)	0.43 (0.49)	0.40 (0.49)	0.35 (0.48)	0.37 (0.48)
Any Vol. (once per year)	0.70 (0.46)	0.68 (0.47)	0.64 (0.48)	0.66 (0.47)

Means are given for each variable with standard deviations in brackets

Table 3.2 shows where volunteers report that they are active. Sports/exercise is by far the most popular category here at around 41% in the South East and above 30% in all regions. This is followed by hobbies/social clubs which is markedly lower at 20-26%. The South East tends to be above the national average across most categories except religious activities and trade union activity, and none. We see clear similarities between the South East and East of England, with the South East usually having slightly higher participation rates except for Trade Union activities, and none.

Table 3.2 Regional comparison of where volunteering happens

	South East	East of England	London	England
Child Education	0.16 (0.36)	0.15 (0.36)	0.13 (0.34)	0.14 (0.35)
Youth Activities	0.13 (0.34)	0.13 (0.33)	0.10 (0.30)	0.12 (0.32)
Adult Education	0.10 (0.29)	0.08 (0.28)	0.10 (0.30)	0.09 (0.29)
Sport/exercise	0.41 (0.49)	0.38 (0.48)	0.31 (0.46)	0.36 (0.48)
Religion	0.22 (0.42)	0.21 (0.41)	0.28 (0.45)	0.24 (0.42)
Politics	0.04 (0.19)	0.03 (0.18)	0.05 (0.22)	0.04 (0.19)
The elderly	0.10 (0.30)	0.09 (0.29)	0.07 (0.26)	0.09 (0.28)
Health, disability and social welfare	0.11 (0.31)	0.09 (0.29)	0.09 (0.29)	0.10 (0.30)
Safety/First Aid	0.06 (0.24)	0.06 (0.24)	0.05 (0.21)	0.06 (0.23)
Environment and animals	0.15 (0.36)	0.13 (0.34)	0.08 (0.28)	0.12 (0.32)
Justice and human rights	0.03 (0.17)	0.03 (0.17)	0.04 (0.20)	0.03 (0.18)
Local community	0.14 (0.35)	0.11 (0.31)	0.12 (0.33)	0.11 (0.31)
Citizens Group	0.05 (0.22)	0.04 (0.20)	0.02 (0.14)	0.04 (0.19)
Hobbies/Social clubs	0.26 (0.44)	0.24 (0.43)	0.20 (0.40)	0.23 (0.42)
Trade Union activity	0.06 (0.24)	0.07 (0.25)	0.08 (0.27)	0.08 (0.27)
Other	0.10 (0.30)	0.09 (0.29)	0.08 (0.27)	0.09 (0.28)
None	0.24 (0.43)	0.28 (0.45)	0.31 (0.46)	0.29 (0.45)



Figure 3.2 shows the self-reported barriers to volunteering for respondents in the South East. Work commitments are the most common barrier, reported by over 50% of the sample. Doing other things in their spare time and having to look after children are also commonly reported barriers.

Figure 3.2 Barriers to Volunteering in SE

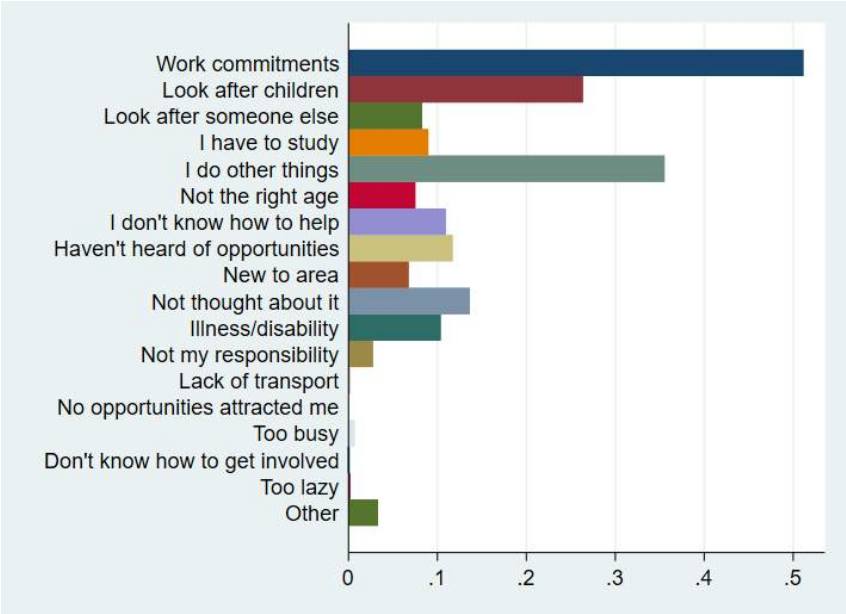
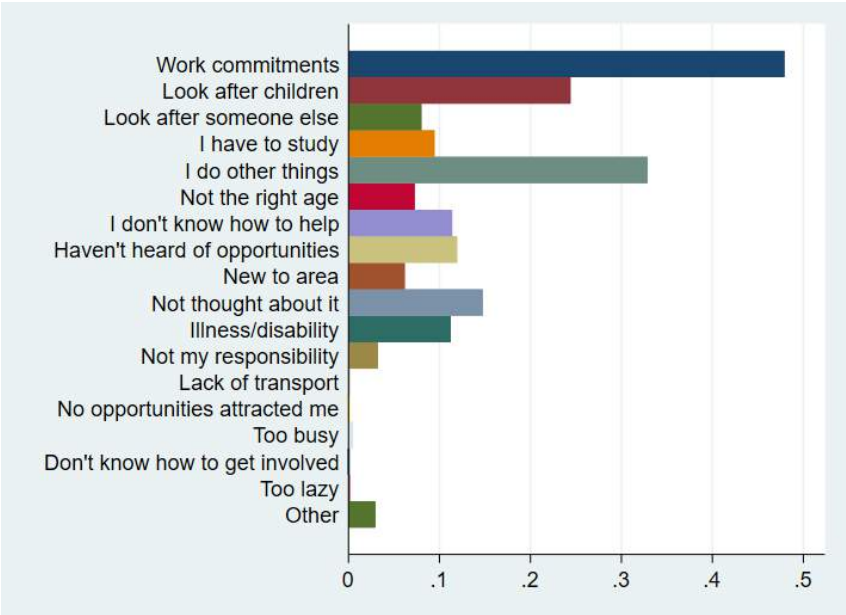


Figure 3.3 shows a similar spread for England as a whole...

Figure 3.3 Barriers to Volunteering in England



Volunteers tend to be older, and we can see that the age profile of volunteers in the South East is similar to that elsewhere in England. London appears to be more of an outlier with a higher proportion of volunteers under the age of 35. Outside of London, over time, in particular the South East, the age profiles of volunteers appear to have become slightly older over time.

Figure 3.4 Age of 2013 Volunteers (by region)

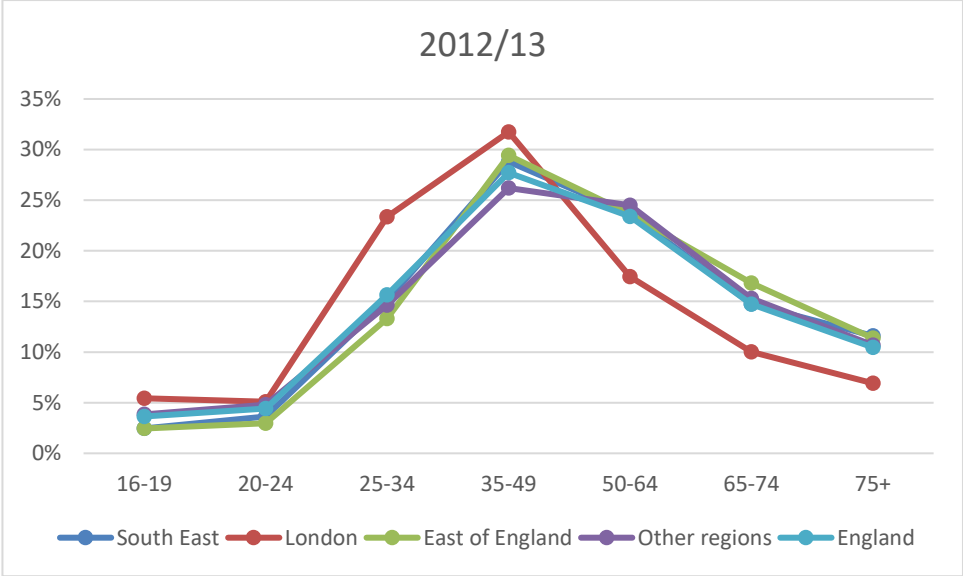
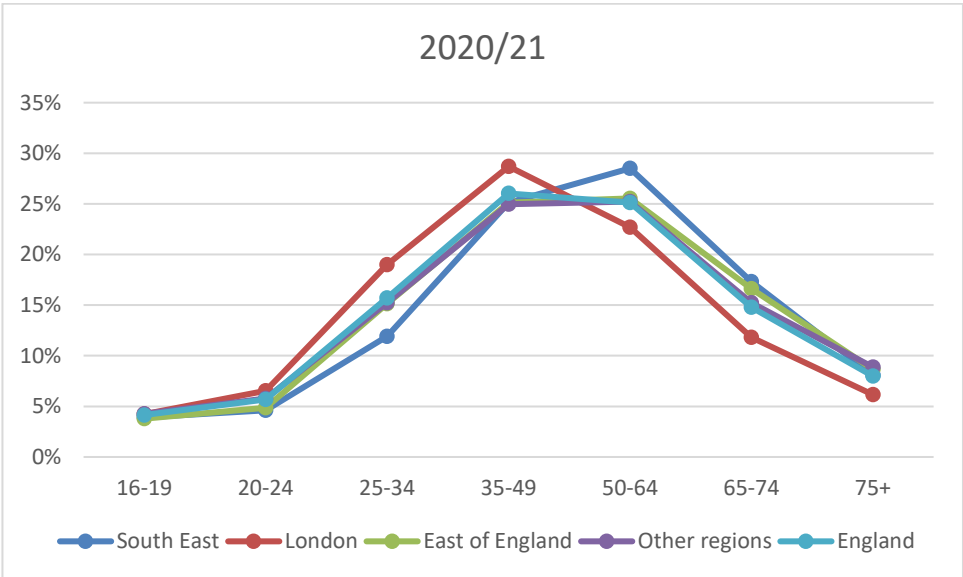


Figure 3.5 Age of 2020/21 Volunteers (by region)



Women are more likely to volunteer, they accounted for 56% of the volunteers in England in 2012/3 and 59% of the volunteers in the South East.

Volunteers are more likely to live in a household with at least one other adult. In 2012/3, only 33% of volunteers in England lived in a household where they are the only adult (31% in the South East) and by 2020/21 this share had fallen to 20% in England (18% in the South East).

Volunteers are less likely to have caring responsibilities (only 17% in 2012/13 and 14% in 2020/21).

The data from the Community Life Survey does not provide data at a local level, but important information on how regions compare over time covering a wide range of variables.

In Section 4, we compare the latest data of the Community Life Survey with the locally collected data. If a survey in Hastings is to be repeated, we strongly suggest retaining questions comparable to the Community Life Survey enabling comparison with the national and regional picture and over time within Hastings.

- The rationale for further exploration: We have established that Hastings does not match the national picture in all areas. If volunteering in Hastings is likely to change with a new strategy it might be of interest to add and compare new survey data at regular intervals, potentially coinciding with the Community Life Survey.

### 3.3 Office of National Statistics and the English Indices of Deprivation

The Census of England and Wales is conducted every 10 years, and this provides details of the people living in each household. Census data is used by local and central government to plan for the provision and financing of key public services such as education, health and infrastructure. At the time of writing this report, the Census 2011 was the most recently collected and fully analysed data available. The Office of National Statistics released the first results from Census 2021 on 28 June 2022 which included preliminary estimates of populations and household by sex and age groups, this can be accessed at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/initialfindingsfromthe2021censusinenglandandwales>.

Based on the Census 2021, the population of Hastings is estimated to be 91,100 with a gender breakdown of 51% female and 49% male which is the same as the average for England and Wales. This preliminary data provides population breakdowns by 5-year age groups. These data reveal some slight differences in the population profile in Hastings with slightly lower shares in the younger adult age groups (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) and higher shares in some older adult age groups (50-54, 55-59, 65-69, 70-74). This knowledge is useful for HVA and can help with identifying potential volunteers that align with their current volunteering demographic (older/retired population), offer a possible explanation for a missing generation of younger adult volunteers, and identify the likely need for certain support as the older adult population ages. We could not include any further data, but strongly recommend including it in the further strategic deliberations when more detail becomes available.

- The rationale for further exploration: Census 2021 will provide valuable up to date information on local levels of economic activity within households and therefore where there are households with no or multiple earners. It can also inform infrastructure planning for education and health based on the age composition of households.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) regularly collects and releases data, at a local level, such as on the labour market, benefit claimants, population, life events (births, marriages and deaths), and business registers (size, industry and legal status), which is presented alongside census data. This rich source of national, regional and local data can be accessed at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk> .

The ONS also provides local level data on deprivation and a mapping visualisation tool which provides local level statistics, ranking and enables national comparisons. This can be accessed at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc1371/#/E07000223>

It is possible to search the NOMIS data and obtain reports for local areas including at local authority, parliamentary constituency or regional level. Such local and regional data can also be located in publications we used, for example, for the trends analysis in Section 2.

*“Hastings had been the 20th most deprived area but these new figures show that things have worsened and Hastings now ranks 13th. The statistics are based on combining data on employment, low incomes, education, health, crime, living environment, and barriers to housing and services. Hastings’ ranking of 13th most deprived local council area is out of 317 areas in England. These figures show that Hastings is the most deprived local council area in the South East of England by far.”* (Hastings in Focus, 2019)

The regional and local data reports provide useful benchmarking of age and economic activity. For example, although the East Sussex area has an older population – 26% are aged 65 or older, compared with 20% elsewhere in the South East and 19% in England – the population in Hastings is slightly younger, 21% are aged 65 or older and a higher share of the population is aged 0-15. Levels of economic inactivity are higher in the Hastings area (25% compared with 19.9% in the East Sussex area, 19% in the South East and 21% in England, East Sussex in Figures, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022). Rates of employment and self-employment are also lower than elsewhere in the region. The data on benefit recipients shows that more residents of Hastings received Universal Credit, or Job Seekers Allowance, before and during the pandemic, compared to the rest of England (East Sussex in Figures, 2021).

The deprivation indices reveal that Hastings has one of the higher child poverty rates within the UK, at 34%. The National average child poverty rate was 31% in 2019/20 (Hirsch & Stone, 2021). The mapping tool shows that, in Hastings, 20.2% of the local population was income deprived in 2019 and was ranked the 14<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England. This data collected by the ONS details the extent of deprivation in Hastings but does not cover the type and nature of volunteering within deprived communities nor the need for the services provided by voluntary organisations within these communities. Outreach work could be undertaken to involve people from within more deprived communities to inform future volunteering strategies.

For this work, we specifically used deprivation data collected through the ONS, to confirm that of the 91 TN34 postcodes in Hastings, nearly half (47) are amongst the most deprived communities (below 10%), with only 17% ranking as less deprived (above 50%) and none are amongst the least deprived (above 70%). And that between 2009-2019, Hastings had a Gross Value Added per head much lower than the national average, reflecting a lower contribution made to the economy from that area (Nomis, 2020).

Whilst some of the data are collected periodically, for example, the deprivation indices are published every 4 to 5 years (2010, 2015, 2019) and the Census every 10 years. Much of the searchable local, regional and national data sources provided by the ONS are updated more regularly, the labour market data and claimant count are collected and published quarterly, the population survey and business register data are updated annually.

- The rationale for further exploration: the challenging economic climate makes it particularly important to monitor levels of economic activity and local population since these will be key indicators of community need and possible resource.

## 4 Survey

The aim of the survey was to gather data to build a local picture of volunteering in Hastings which is comparable to the regional and national pictures. Existing data from the Community Life Survey (CLS) describes the regional and national picture, but does not provide breakdowns at a local level, hence the local Hastings survey was commissioned. The comparisons give context and aid understanding of where Hastings sits in the wider picture. In turn, this helps identify areas of relative strength, as well as opportunities for improvement, and inform future volunteering strategy.

### 4.1 Method

The survey was co-produced with the Steering Group. It was then piloted by the Steering Group, to ensure that it was user-friendly and free of any glitches. We received ethical approval to conduct the survey from the University of East Anglia's Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee on 24th March 2022. The survey was produced and conducted through Qualtrics software and distributed via a QR and shortened link. Information on informed consent were presented to the participants on the opening page, with a link to the participant information sheet for additional details, and accepted by clicking the arrow to start the survey. The survey was live for a total of 44 days, opening on 4th April 2022 and closing on 18th May 2022.

We asked an initial question on whether the participant was filling out the survey themselves or on behalf of someone else. This was designed to facilitate participation of harder to reach groups and was something that the Steering Group felt was important to be implemented. A reduced version of the survey was presented to respondents filling out the survey through someone else, dropping questions on more sensitive matters which the participant may not want to relay through someone else. However, only one response indicated that they were filling out the survey on behalf of someone else, so this did not factor significantly into our analysis. But it is important to note that the option was made available.

The survey was deliberately designed to include questions which are directly comparable to questions asked in the CLS. This facilitated the comparisons which were the main aim of the survey. It also included some bespoke questions and options which are specifically relevant to Hastings. The questions of the survey can be categorised in five main sections: volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs, volunteering as giving unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative, general volunteering, demographics, and work/job characteristics. Participants were also given the option to give any final thoughts in a final open-text comment box at the end of the survey.

#### 4.1.1 Sample

The local survey (hereon HVA Survey) received 302 responses in total, of which 231 completed to the end. This HVA Survey data was combined with data from the CLS for the most recent year released at the time of writing: 2020-21. The CLS data gives a nationally representative sample of 12,629 (CLS in figures below) which can also be split by region. For Hastings, this would be the South East, which gives a sample size of

1,712 (CLSSE in figures below). Therefore, the CLS data give us the national and regional picture but does not allow for anything more local, which is the gap that the HVA Survey data fills.

The HVA Survey did not target any specific groups and was open to all residents of Hastings, whether or not they had any experience in the voluntary sector. We aimed to be as representative as possible. However, our local survey lacked the time, resources, scale, and established distribution channels outside of the voluntary sector which are available to the CLS, so it is not unreasonable to expect the local sample to be skewed towards volunteers. We consider this by comparing data from the three samples with data from Census 2011 for Hastings. This is displayed in Table 9.5.1 of the Appendix. Naturally, we expect some differences between the national, regional, and local pictures. We note only where large differences between the regional and local picture arise.

Moving from the national (England, CLS) to regional (South East, CLSSE) to local (Hastings, HVA), on average we see an increase in older respondents, more female respondents and a larger share of white respondents. In terms of employment status, we see higher rates of self-employment and more retired respondents as we move from the national to regional to local samples. The higher rate of retirement tallies with the older age already established and explains why the local data has fewer employed respondents than the national and regional pictures.

Overall, our local sample seems to display some bias towards older and female respondents. And, likely as a result, more retired and fewer employed respondents. While some of these differences may reflect actual population differences, the trends from comparing from the national to the regional to the local picture suggest that we should acknowledge the composition of the local sample in our analysis and mitigate it in future work where possible. Similarly, whilst the survey provides general demographic information on age, ethnicity and gender with details on economic activity, it does not capture levels of household income or financial need, as discussed in Section 3.3. This sort of granular detail on volunteers and users of volunteer services might be collated through detailed outreach work.

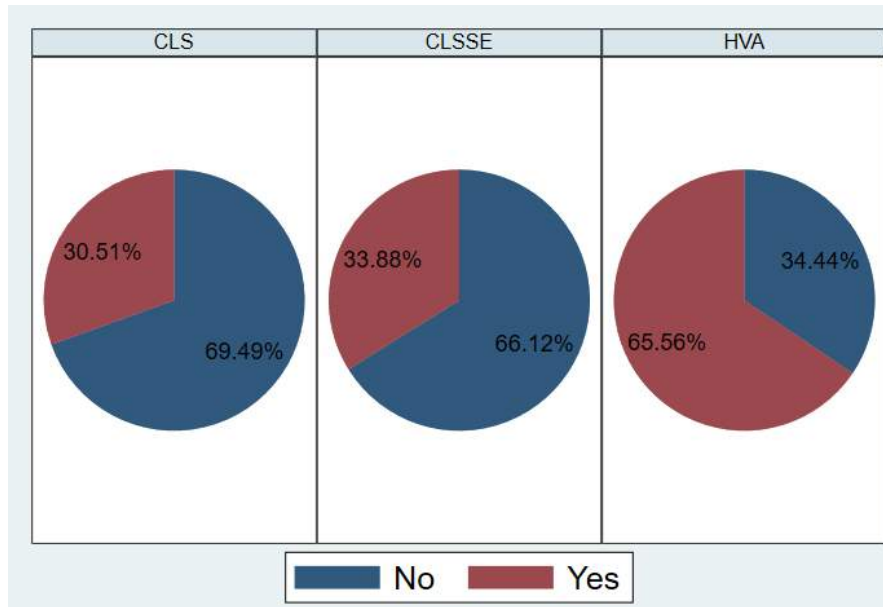
## 4.2 Findings

### 4.2.1 Volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs

Firstly, we consider the proportion of respondents who have volunteered offering unpaid help to groups or clubs in the last 12 months. This is displayed for the national, regional and local picture in Figure 4.1.

As Figure 4.1 shows, the proportion of respondents volunteering through groups or clubs is higher regionally in the South East than it is nation-wide in England but is much higher in Hastings. It is reasonable to assume that the composition of our sample, older and less likely to be working, and the routes by which the survey was circulated through HVA, may account for some of the much higher rates of volunteering through groups or clubs that we observe.

Figure 4.1 Volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs (last 12 months)



Next, we consider the frequency of volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs. This question asked how often respondents engaged in this form of volunteering within the last 12 months: once a week, once a month, or less frequently. As these results apply only to active volunteers offering unpaid help to groups or clubs, they should not be influenced by the higher rates of volunteering observed in Figure 4.1. The responses are displayed in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Frequency of volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs (last 12 months)

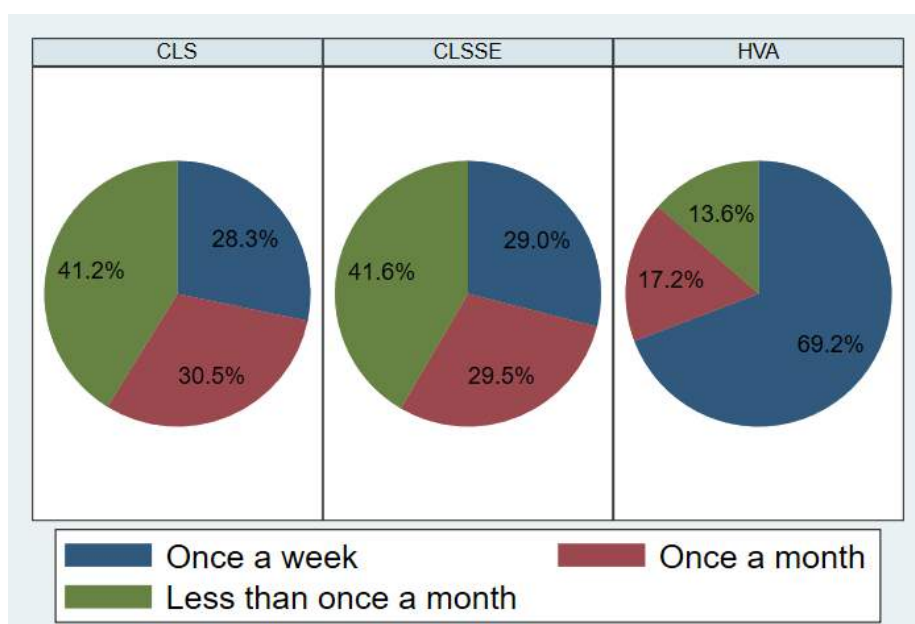
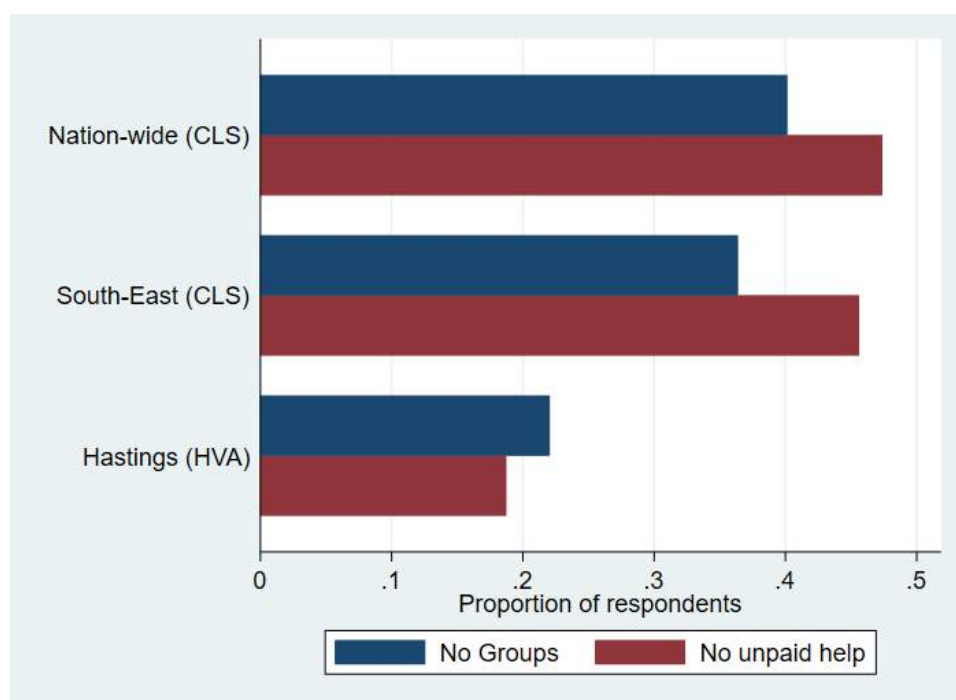




Figure 4.2 shows that the frequency of volunteering follows a similar pattern nationally and regionally, with a somewhat even split between the options but with “*less than once a month*” as the modal group. Locally in Hastings, we see more frequent volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs, with “*once a week*” as the modal group by a big margin. These differences do not seem to be due to the higher proportion of women in the sample but may be a consequence of the larger share of retired respondents. If we look only at the frequency of volunteering in the working population in the Hasting survey, the modal response is “*less than once a month*” (44%), which is fairly similar to the overall national and regional pictures in Figure 4.2. Further, if we focus on retirees in the national and regional surveys, the modal response is “*once a week*” with 43%. This is more similar to the local Hastings picture. Finally, we must recognise that people who volunteer more frequently through groups or clubs are probably more likely to respond to the HVA Survey distribution channels than people who volunteer less frequently.

Respondents were also asked about the types of groups they are involved with and the type of unpaid help they offer when volunteering for groups or clubs. Generally, the local HVA Survey shows higher proportions for most groups and activities, which should not be surprising given the discussion above. Figure 4.3 shows this by comparing respondents who indicate that they are not involved with any of the groups and any of the activities.

Figure 4.3 No volunteer involvement with groups



Given that the levels of volunteering and frequency of volunteering with groups or clubs is higher in the HVA Survey, we focus our analysis on instances when the proportions in Hastings are significantly different. Figure 4.4 shows which type of groups Hastings respondents are more likely to be involved in. These are community groups and especially health groups.

Figure 4.4 Higher volunteer involvement with groups by comparison

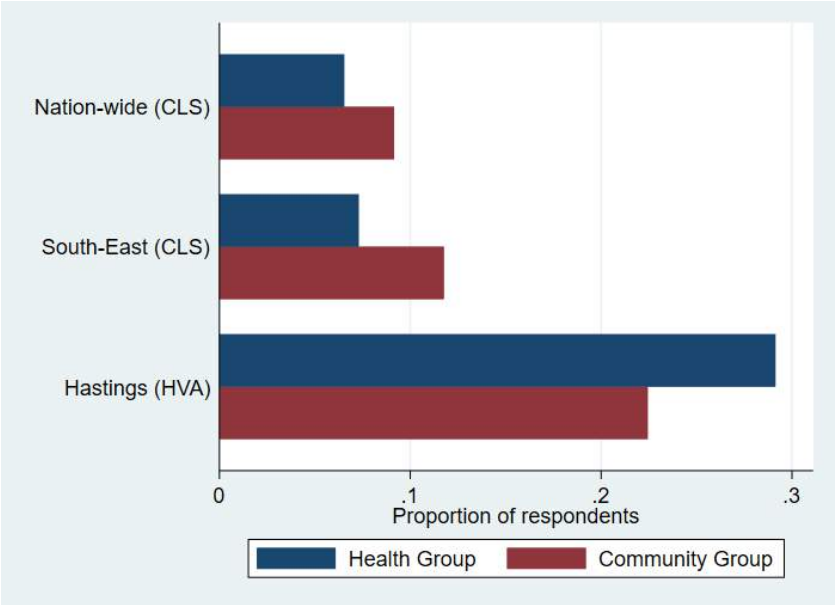
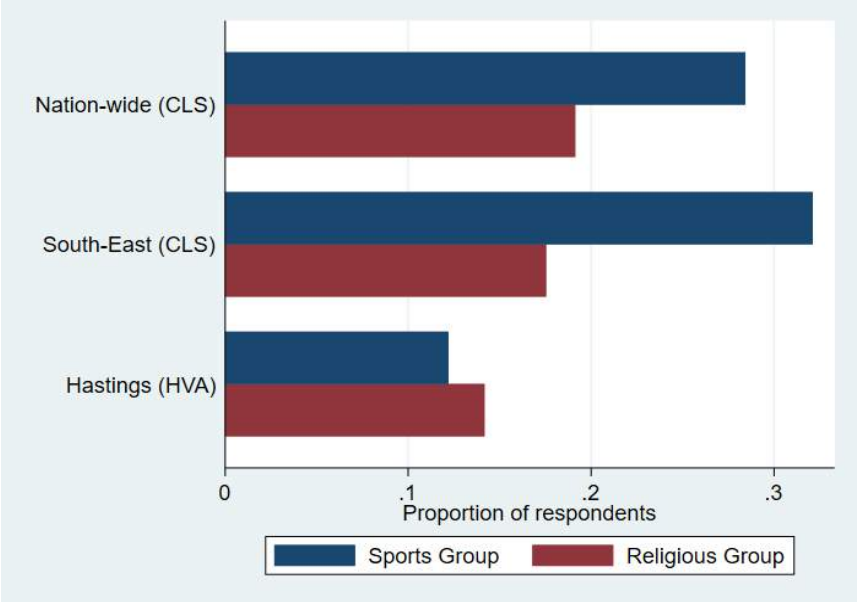


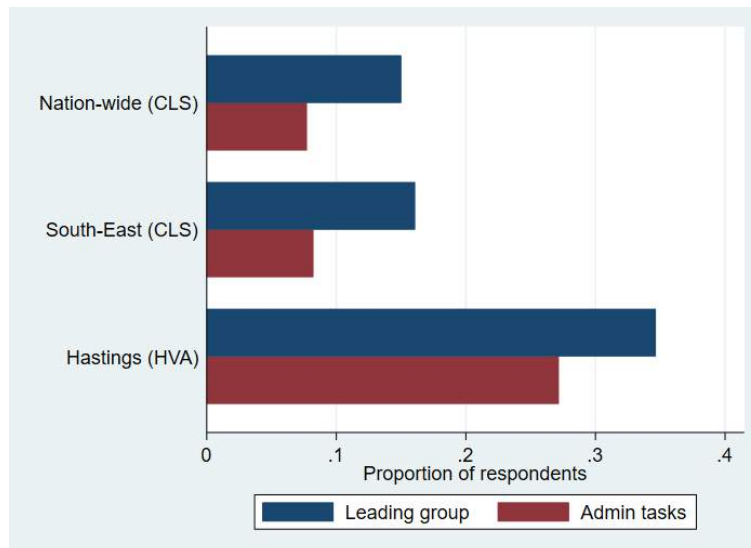
Figure 4.5 shows groups that the respondents in Hastings were less likely to be involved in, namely religious groups and especially sports groups. Interestingly, there is more involvement with sports groups in the South East. This suggests a potential area of growth for volunteering in Hastings, though more research may be needed to establish whether the lower level of involvement is due to the local sample, preferences or a lack of local opportunities.

Figure 4.5 Lower volunteer involvement with groups by comparison



In terms of the type of unpaid help given to the groups, there are no options for which the proportion was lower in Hastings except for “*other practical help*” option. However, Figure 4.6 highlights two types of unpaid help which seem to occur more often in Hastings: leading groups and admin tasks.

Figure 4.6 Types of volunteer involvement with groups, higher by comparison



#### 4.2.2 Volunteering as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative

Next, we consider volunteering which is given as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative. This differs from the type of volunteering discussed so far in that it does not happen through a group or club, but rather directly to an individual.

Figure 4.7 shows the proportion of respondents who report to have given unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative within the last 12 months. We see remarkably similar proportions in the nation-wide, regional and local data. While we previously saw that volunteering through groups was much higher in Hastings, this does not seem to be the case for volunteering directly to individuals who are not a relative.

Figure 4.7 Volunteering as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative (last 12 months)

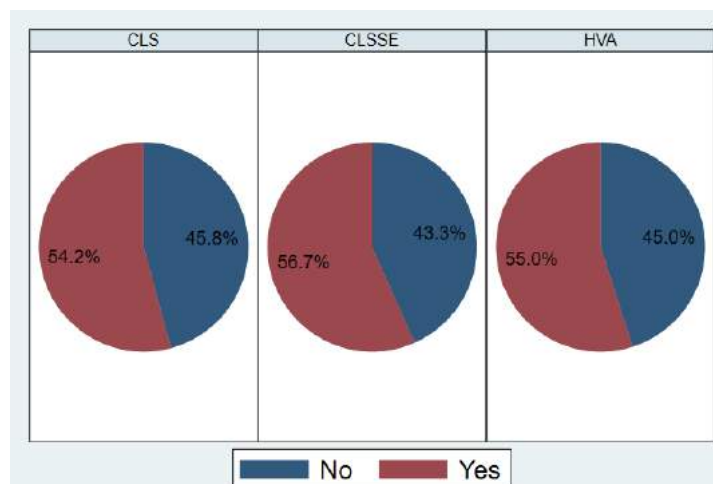
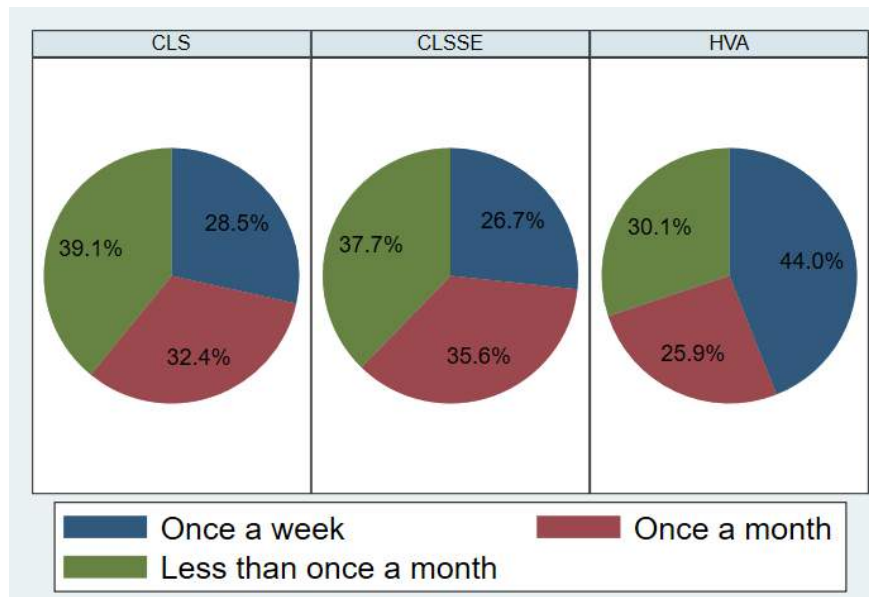


Figure 4.8 shows the frequency of volunteering given as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative. While the proportion of such volunteers does not appear to be higher in Hastings, the frequency of such volunteering is. The national and regional data show a similar picture with “less than once a month” being the modal group, but a fairly even spread between the options. However, the local data shows that “once a week” is the modal group in Hastings.

Figure 4.8 Frequency of Volunteering as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative (last 12 months)



Next, we consider the types of unpaid help given to individuals who are not a relative. Figure 4.9 shows the types of help which are given relatively more often in Hastings. These include generally more common types of help like keeping in touch and giving advice, but also less common types such as representing and caring for the sick.

Figure 4.9 Types of unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative, higher by comparison

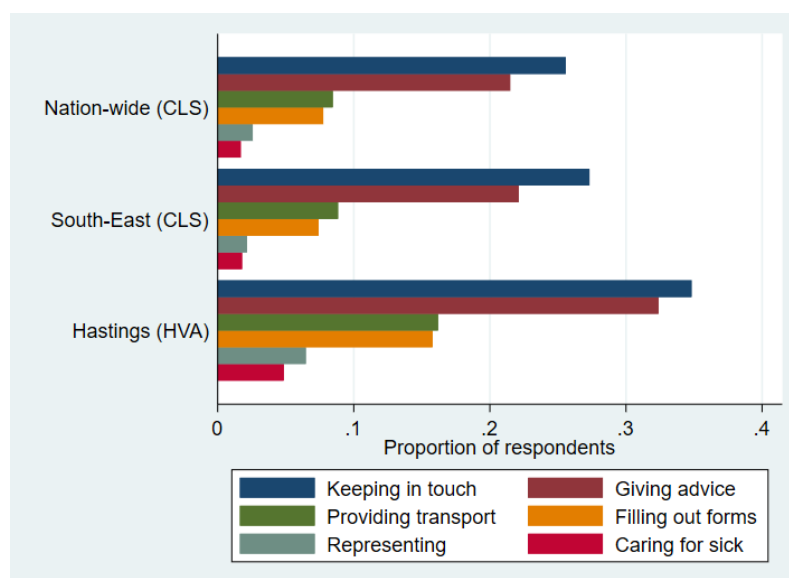
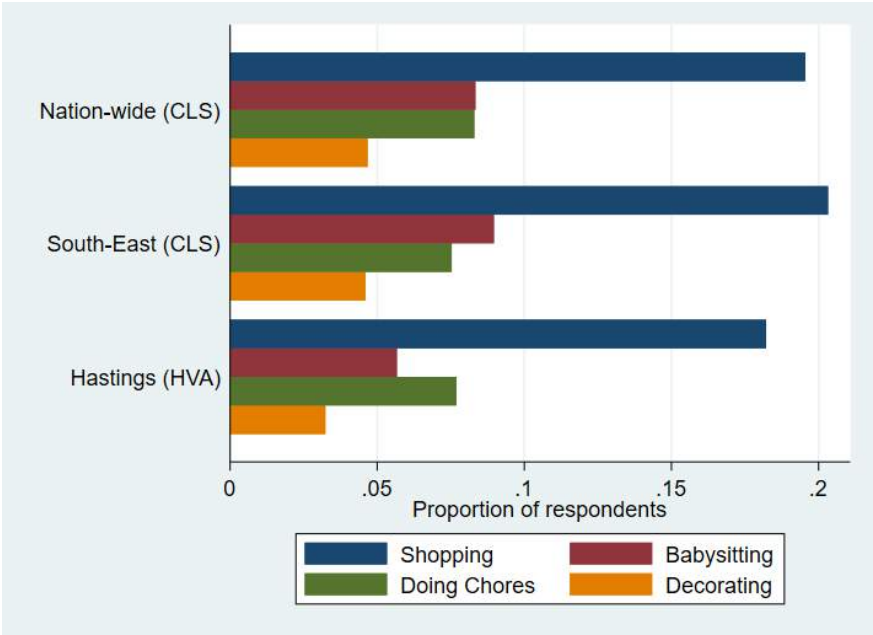


Figure 4.10 shows the types of help which are given relatively less often in Hastings. Again, these include generally more common types of help like shopping, but also less common types such as decorating.

Figure 4.10 Types of unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative, lower by comparison



### 4.2.3 General volunteering – motivators and opportunities

We asked respondents to the HVA survey whether volunteering had improved their mental health and whether they feel like they made a difference through volunteering. 26% report that volunteering had significantly improved their mental health, while 35% said it had a little. That is 61% in total reporting that volunteering has improved their mental health, with 20% saying it had not (18% not sure). Meanwhile, 53% report feeling that they made a significant difference through volunteering, while 43% say a little. That is 96% in total reporting to feel like they had a difference, with 1% saying they did not (3% not sure).

We also asked about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 31% report that it caused them to volunteer less often, 39% said about the same, and 20% said more often. The remaining 10% only started volunteering during the pandemic, with 9% planning to continue and 1% not. As these last options, particularly the former, are de facto increases in volunteering frequency, we find a fairly even split between responses of more often, less often and about the same.

To better understand the motivations behind volunteering, respondents were also asked why they started volunteering. The most popular answer across the national, regional and local data was “to help”. This was chosen by around 50% of respondents nationally and regionally, but even higher at around 70% locally in Hastings.

In Figure 4.11, we show where particular motivations were more likely to be expressed by the respondents to the HVA survey. Generally, we see that the most common motivating factors are consistent with those expressed nationally and regionally. Community need seems to be a particularly strong motivation in Hastings. The other important motivations in Hastings include having spare time, wanting to use existing skills and it being part of their philosophical outlook on life to help people.

Figure 4.11 Motivations by comparison, higher

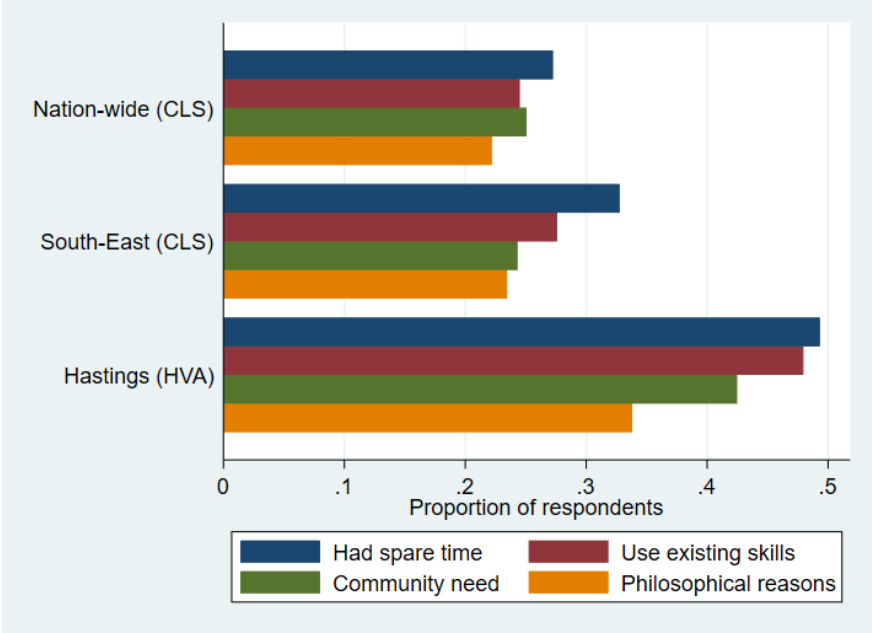
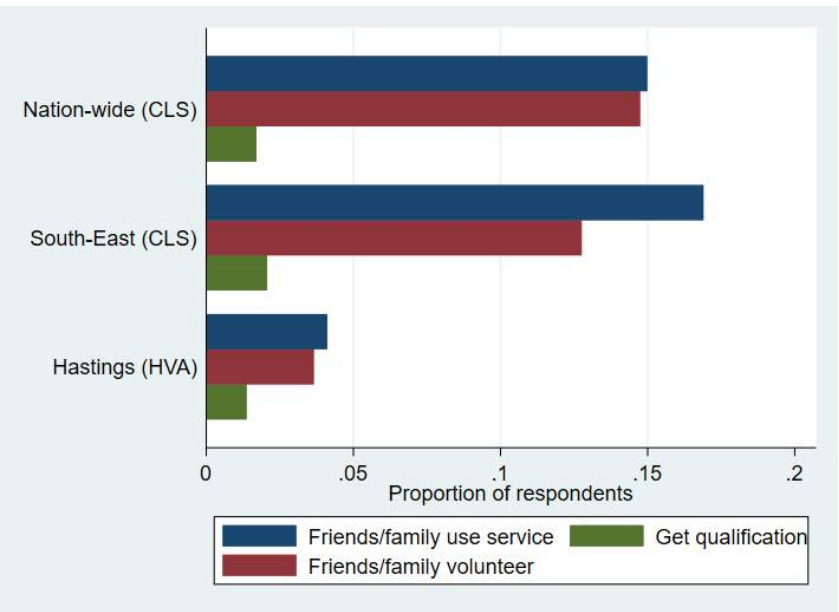


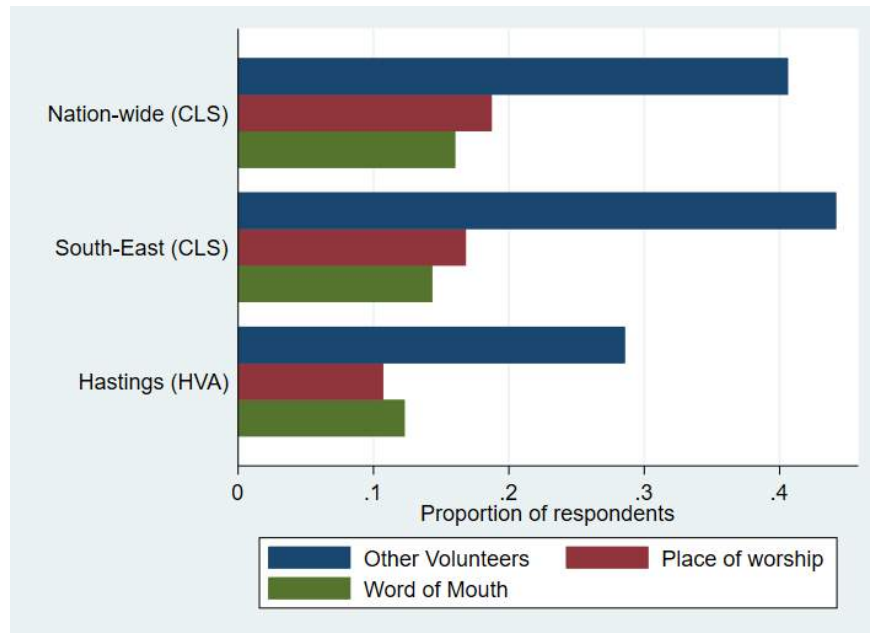
Figure 4.12 illustrates where particular motivations were less likely to be expressed by the respondents to the HVA survey. These include that friends or family use the service/support or that friends/family also volunteer.

Figure 4.12 Motivations by comparison, lower



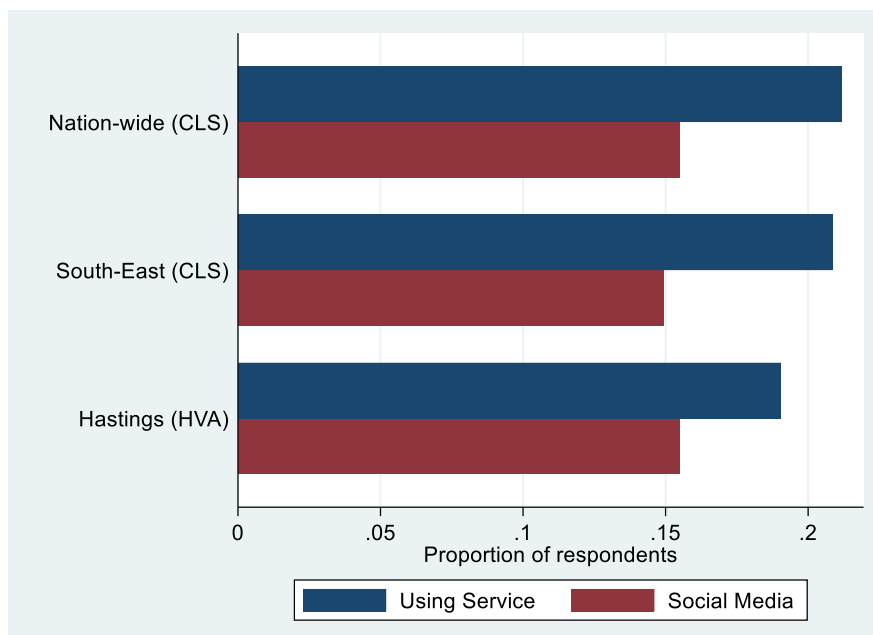
We also explore how people have heard about volunteering opportunities. Figure 4.13 shows the volunteers in Hastings were less likely to hear from other volunteers, through a place of worship or by word of mouth.

Figure 4.13 Opportunities by comparison, lower



Interestingly, Hastings volunteers were as likely as volunteers elsewhere in the country to have heard about volunteering opportunities through using a service and through social media, as shown in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14 Opportunities by comparison, similar



## 4.3 Summary

A survey was conducted in Hastings to build a local picture of volunteering in the area. It was designed to mirror questions from the Community Life Survey so that the data could be analysed in such a way to allow a comparison of the national, regional and local pictures. This helps to contextualise the HVA survey findings.

We found that, compared to national and regional data, a higher proportion of respondents in Hastings report to have volunteered through giving unpaid help to groups or clubs and they also gave this unpaid help more frequently. For volunteering through giving unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative, the proportion of this type of volunteer was more in line with the national and regional pictures, but again we found that this done more frequently in Hastings.

Respondents in Hastings tend to volunteer through health and community groups and are less likely to volunteer through sports and religious groups, particularly the former. In terms of the type of help given, respondents in Hastings report they were more likely to be leading groups and undertaking administrative tasks.

For unpaid help given to individuals who are not relatives, the respondents in Hastings were more likely to be offering a wide range of help including keeping in touch and giving advice, as well as help that is less likely to be given elsewhere in the country such as representing and caring for the sick. In the Hastings sample, they were less likely to offer help in the form of shopping, babysitting and decorating.

A significant proportion, 31%, of respondents in Hastings report to have volunteered less often during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, including people who started volunteering during the pandemic, 30% report to have volunteered more often during the pandemic. 39% report that it had little impact on their volunteering frequency. We therefore find quite mixed results on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on volunteering frequency.

We found that 61% of Hastings respondents report that volunteering improved their mental health at least a little, compared to 20% who said it had not. While 96% report that they at least made a little difference through volunteering. Compared to national and regional data, more respondents in Hastings report volunteering because they have spare time, to use existing skills, because there is a community need, and for philosophical reasons. They were less likely to volunteer in order to get qualifications, because friends/family volunteer or use volunteer-led services.

Almost 11% of Hastings respondents report to have heard of volunteering opportunities through HVA and almost 5% through HEART. Hastings volunteers were less likely to hear of volunteering opportunities through other volunteers, at a place of worship and via word of mouth. Interestingly given the age of the respondents and concerns over digital divides, Hastings volunteers were as likely as volunteers elsewhere in the country to have heard of opportunities through using the service and via social media.



## 5 Workshops and survey text

As part of the work to explore potential consensus amongst key stakeholders, two workshops were organised to qualitatively explore and understand volunteer involvement in Hastings, from the perspective of volunteers, as well as from the organisations which involve volunteers. The aim of both deliberative workshops was to identify motivators, enablers and barriers of volunteer involvement in Hastings. The workshops also explored what a successful volunteering strategy in Hastings might look like, and what participants thought would be important for the future of volunteer involvement in Hastings.

Furthermore, as part of their responses in the survey, participants could write into a free textbox. The analysis of these responses is presented below in Section 5.3.

### 5.1 Method

We received ethical approval to undertake the workshops from University of East Anglia's Norwich Business School Research Ethics Subcommittee on 20th April 2022. HVA recruited participants for the workshops via their networks and shared the participant information sheets with potential participants. All participants completed an online consent form to participate in the workshops. Consent was verbally confirmed at the beginning of each workshop. Workshops were facilitated by two members of the IVR team using a collaboratively developed topic guide to ask questions and stimulate discussion. We facilitated the first workshop, online using the platform Zoom, on 6th May for participants from volunteer involving organisations. We facilitated the second workshop, also online using the platform Zoom, on 26th May for volunteers from Hastings. Five participants from volunteer involving organisations attended workshop one and eight volunteers from Hastings attended workshop two. Most participants in workshop two volunteered for more than one organisation in Hastings. At the end of each workshop, participants were asked if they wanted to share any final thoughts or comments. Participants were then advised that they would receive a copy of the workshop summary to review and confirm whether or not this summary accurately reflected the workshop discussions. Workshops summaries were written up by Ellice Parkinson and then validated by the team member who co-facilitated each workshop. Participants were then emailed the workshop summary to be validated. The validated summaries are appended in Sections 10.1 and 10.2.

### 5.2 Findings

#### 5.2.1 Themes from Workshop One

Participants voiced that people volunteered if they had spare time, e.g. are retired or student, had lived experience of an organisation such as a charity, wanted to develop social connections and, or, wanted to develop skills and gain work experience. Participants thought that people would be motivated to volunteer for an organisation if they had flexible recruitment processes and volunteering roles, if the environment was welcoming and inclusive and if volunteers are reimbursed for expenses. Participants shared that lengthy recruitment processes, including safeguarding procedures, were a

barrier to volunteering, as they might be difficult for some people to complete. Participants also shared that some volunteering roles and organisations might be negatively perceived by society, and therefore find it more challenging to recruit to volunteering roles. Participants voiced that people with low self-esteem and confidence might find it difficult to approach the initial steps of applying to a volunteering role. Participants thought that it was important for a volunteering strategy to ensure that volunteers personally benefit from volunteering and feel appreciated. Participants also felt that volunteering should be inclusive. It was thought that volunteering opportunities should be advertised and communicated between organisations and to the public more efficiently, and ensure that there are in-person opportunities for volunteers to hear about volunteering and volunteering opportunities.

*“...benefiting from the experience of diverse groups of volunteers”*

### 5.2.2 Themes from Workshop Two

Participants shared that they felt people volunteered if they had spare time, e.g. retired people, if they received support to apply for and fulfil a volunteering role, if volunteering roles are flexible, if people value the work of an organisation, and if employers gave employees time to volunteer. Participants thought that people would be motivated to volunteer if they were interested in the work of a charity, if they had lived experience of an organisation or the work of a charity, to improve mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation, and to develop skills.

*“being able to benefit the organisation, clients, and team members by using my previous professional skills, as well as life experience”*

Participants shared that a lack of support and an over-reliance on the ‘volunteering workforce’ were barriers to volunteering. Volunteers saw unproductive or unnecessary meetings, e-learning or inadequate training as barriers. Participants felt that people might not volunteer if they don’t feel they have the necessary skills, or if volunteering roles are not advertised in physical spaces. Participants felt that it was important for organisations to be given support on how to offer people assistance and training to get involved in volunteering, as well as supporting and supervising existing volunteers. Volunteers felt that it was important to have face-to-face training, and not e-learning. However, the views of participants shared within the workshop, might not be shared by people who work full time, or have other commitments, who might find it more difficult to attend face-to-face training sessions. Participants felt that volunteering opportunities should be better marketed and advertised in physical spaces and between organisations, and that roles could be advertised by other volunteers sharing their positive experiences. Participants would like to see employers offering time off for staff to be able to volunteer, as well as capacity built for episodic volunteers to be able to offer skills for occasions/ events.

### 5.2.3 Similarities

Participants from both workshops mentioned that Hastings had a good sense of community. During workshop one, participants mentioned that they were surprised that certain larger organisations had not attended the workshop, however, they might not have been aware of the input other organisations provided through the Project Steering Group. Participants were recruited by HVA and so this could be due to selection and sampling bias. It could also reflect a lack of awareness or engagement with the research. Participants from both workshops discussed the need to raise awareness of and to build capacity for volunteer involvement that takes place not through organisations, for volunteers who might not be able to commit to volunteer opportunities offered by volunteer involving organisations.

*“...explore different ways to volunteer”*

Participants from both workshops highlighted the importance of organisations looking after volunteer wellbeing, with volunteers from workshop two specifically discussing volunteer stress, burnout and lack of support.

### 5.2.4 Differences

Participants in workshop one, from volunteer involving organisations, discussed hybrid working which would involve increased use of digital technology, while recognising the importance of offering some in-person opportunities for volunteers to socialise. They also suggested that volunteering opportunities should be advertised in physical spaces, as well as being better marketed online and via mailing lists. The focus on hybrid working in workshop one contrasts with workshop two, where participants consistently shared their view of the importance of in-person socialising within volunteering, whether it be with the public, or with fellow volunteers. This was seen as being central to the volunteer experience. There was a particular dislike for e-learning shared amongst participants, and volunteers felt that in-person group facilitated learning would be more useful, particularly for safeguarding training. Participants in workshop one, who worked for volunteer involving organisations felt that reimbursement of expenses was important for recruiting volunteers, but this topic did not arise during discussions in workshop two.

## 5.3 Free text responses from the survey

Within the survey, we asked the question *“If you have any additional comments about volunteering in Hastings, please give them here”*. This was to give respondents the opportunity to freely discuss volunteering in Hastings. We received free-text responses from 59 participants, out of the total number of 302 survey respondents.

Some survey respondents shared the same view as workshop participants, that Hastings has a good sense of community, and that volunteering is a feature of this. Some survey participants wrote that the voluntary and community sector fills the gap of services which are no longer funded and provided by the state. Many survey respondents voiced that their volunteering commitments had been disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and these volunteers have either not yet returned to volunteering, or they have returned at a reduced capacity.

*“I have always done voluntary work in the past but because of lockdown and long Covid I have not done anything recently”*

Survey respondents wrote about volunteering during retirement or having spare time to offer. Motivations of volunteering were similar to those of the workshop participants. Survey respondents wrote about volunteering giving them a sense of purpose, to feel part of the community, reduce social isolation, and improve mental wellbeing. Survey respondents shared numerous barriers to volunteering, some which were shared by workshop participants, such as the “*red tape*” and bureaucracy of training and completing applications, but some mentioned other barriers, including the absence of more local volunteering opportunities. Some survey respondents wrote that they wanted to help neighbours in need and did not want to or were unable to travel to volunteering opportunities advertised within Hastings more centrally. Many survey respondents wrote that there was a lack of awareness of volunteering opportunities or up-to-date information about how to get involved in volunteering.

*“It is difficult to find information about volunteering”*

There was some concern that volunteering was not accessible to people who work fulltime, and that volunteer involving organisations would benefit from the experiences and skills of these individuals. As was shared in workshop two, some survey respondents were deterred from volunteering due to the transition to online working. Some survey respondents have had negative volunteering experiences of unfriendly, unwelcoming and unsupportive environments which have deterred them from volunteering further. Some survey respondents would like to hear about one-off opportunities to volunteer, or flexible opportunities which could be undertaken alongside working full-time. This view was shared by participants within workshop two. Survey respondents suggested that since the COVID-19 pandemic they wanted to volunteer outdoors and were seeking more volunteering opportunities focused on the environment and gardening. Survey respondents suggested there should be more flexible volunteering opportunities which are inclusive of everyone, regardless of ability, employment status and level of confidence.

*“volunteering is definitely something that is difficult to do as a younger person who works full time.... However, i do wish i was able to do more volunteering if i could!”*



## 6 Plausible responses to current challenges

### 6.1 Introduction

To explore plausible responses to current challenges, a thematic review of the data assembled for this work was undertaken. It revealed three prominent themes relating to perceptions of volunteer opportunities, and volunteer experiences, and the changing use of digital technology in volunteer involvement. Additionally, following suggestions in collaborative deliberation, the data was reviewed with a focus on 'diversity and life-course'. In the final part of this section, we discuss how the diversity of views and knowledges, which emerged during this research, may influence leadership in the development of a strategy for volunteer involvement.

### 6.2 Volunteering opportunities

Volunteer opportunities are generally offered by volunteer involving organisations which can be in the voluntary, public or even private sectors. Such opportunities need to strike a balance between two foci: on the one hand they need to be able to achieve a particular aim, making a difference; and on the other hand they need to be attractive to a volunteer, so they take up the opportunity, and they need provide a positive volunteer experience, so that volunteering can be sustained.

#### 6.2.1 Communication

The way volunteer opportunities are advertised and promoted in Hastings seemed to be of real concern and importance to some respondents, for example, stressing that all physical and digital spaces need to be up to date with volunteering opportunities. While they recognise that there are a multitude of ways to advertise opportunities ranging from face-to-face, posters and leaflets, to online platforms, the survey respondents indicated that they did learn about volunteering opportunities through social media, yet they suggested that they would prefer a stronger focus on physical spaces.

- Consider setting up a physical volunteering hub for people to visit on the high street, evaluating who might be reached in addition to existing approaches.
- Consider increased advertising of volunteering opportunities alongside outreach work of local authority, charities and other organisations, to reach more marginalised groups in Hastings, linking to volunteer opportunities that are accessible and can be taken up, see Section 6.2.2.

#### 6.2.2 Accessibility

Volunteer opportunities need to be accessible for people to take them up. This was of concern to some respondents and is also reflected in the information on trends. Current challenges range from 'red tape', bureaucracy of training and completing applications, to physical issues of access such as the need to travel and opportunities for volunteering in outdoor spaces due to concerns relating to the ongoing pandemic. Participants

suggested, for example, support for people to complete volunteering applications, and matching them to existing opportunities, within a physical volunteering hub, see also Section 6.2.1. Participants also suggested that volunteer involving organisations might need to review training provision to make their volunteering opportunities more accessible.

- Consider creating a wider range of more accessible volunteer opportunities and a review of current volunteer opportunities, with a view to making them more accessible.

### 6.2.3 The effects of COVID-19

Both volunteers and staff of volunteer involving organisations reported the ongoing effects of the pandemic, restricting their ability to involve and be involved in volunteering.

- Consider a programme of volunteer opportunities specifically designed to enable volunteer involvement to resume, for people who currently still find this difficult, possibly in conjunction with Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.5.1.

### 6.2.4 Resources

While not raised extensively in the responses to the survey and the workshops, the trends literature points to the double impact of rising costs of living and falling financial support for volunteer involving organisations as a potential barrier for volunteers to become involved and for volunteer involving organisations to offer inclusive volunteering opportunities.

- Consider a strategic approach to ensure a sustainable level of financial support, enabling the planning, creation and maintenance of inclusive volunteering opportunities.

## 6.3 Volunteer experiences

The way volunteers experience their volunteering is seen as the single most significant indicator of successful volunteer involvement, impacting on whether or not a volunteer will continue to volunteer and whether there will be benefits to the volunteer, such as their wellbeing.

### 6.3.1 Getting it right

High levels of volunteering in Hastings suggest mostly positive volunteer experiences. However, while few in number, accounts from volunteers suggest that they might have given up on volunteering because of negative experiences. Such experiences ranged from unfriendly staff to accounts of xenophobic and racist attitudes. Respondents also mentioned the possibility of overburdening and burnout of volunteers, possibly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic but also beyond.

- Consider a strong collective approach of volunteer involving organisations to standards in volunteer involvement, ensuring positive volunteer experiences, and challenging prejudice. This could include the collaboration between several volunteer involving organisations with volunteers, organising social, team building, events, to create more inclusive and welcoming environments.

### 6.3.2 Making a difference

The majority of respondents to the survey felt that their volunteering made a big difference, but many felt the difference was only small and some even felt it had made no difference at all. The knowledge that their volunteer involvement makes a difference, is key to ensuring a positive volunteer experience. Efforts are required to establish what difference volunteer involvement makes and to share this with the volunteers.

- Consider a programme of non-intrusive but consistent and systematic evaluation of the impact of volunteering and ways to regularly share this with the volunteers

### 6.3.3 Purpose

In line with the trends analysis, survey respondents voiced concern that volunteers in Hastings might be called upon to replace the work of state-funded services which are either under-resourced or no longer available. Participants shared the importance of volunteers needing to feel appreciated and valued. This might affect their willingness to become involved. This concern was not voiced by participants within the workshops, however.

## 6.4 'Hybrid' volunteer involvement

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many activities, including volunteer involvement, to be undertaken in a 'hybrid' form, meaning in a combination of online or face-to-face, from home or the spaces where volunteer involvement can take place in person. This affects many aspects of volunteer involvement such as promotion of volunteer opportunities, onboarding and training of volunteers, and the activities volunteers undertake, such as taking part in hybrid events or volunteering using online video communication, instead of face-to-face meetings.

### 6.4.1 Sociability

Volunteers often shared that their motivation for volunteering was to feel part of a community and to meet others, bringing to the forefront the importance of volunteering in reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing. Volunteer involving organisations also felt that it was important to offer volunteers the opportunity to socialise.

- Consider a review of 'hybrid' volunteer involvement with a focus on enabling face-to-face interactions to reduce social isolation (see also Section 6.4.2).



## 6.4.2 Technology

The trends literature suggests that volunteer involving organisations need to update their technological systems to make them safe, to enable broader use of digital technology in volunteer involvement. However, some respondents felt they were not able to use digital technology while others expressed a dislike, for example, for e-learning and felt that in-person group facilitated learning would be more useful, particularly for safeguarding training. Further dialogue might be required between volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to discuss the most effective and flexible arrangements for undertaking training (see also Section 6.2.2).

- Consider a review of ‘hybrid’ volunteer involvement with a focus on the use of ‘enabling digital technology’ identifying clearly who benefits and how (see also Section 6.4.1).

## 6.4.3 Change management

The evidence suggests that the question today is not whether there will be ‘hybrid’ volunteer involvement or not, but what ‘hybrid’ volunteer involvement will look like in the future, meaning that change is inevitable. However, the responses from volunteers and staff of volunteer involving organisations indicate that there is currently no consensus and that change needs to be managed carefully and that volunteers should be, and feel, involved in decisions concerning them, as illustrated in what a volunteer said: *“Worst experience of being a volunteer is when decisions that affect your work are taken by people in positions of authority without consultation”*.

- Consider regular consultation with volunteers to manage changes in volunteer involvement, inclusively and gradually, in iterative phases, testing whether or not the changes lead to better outcomes.

## 6.5 Diversity and life-course

The following response, given in the survey, exemplifies many of the key issues relating to diversity and life-course in volunteer involvement:

*“I used to do voluntary work, helping people with gardening, but can no longer do it. So many things seem to be on line now, but I don’t feel comfortable with technology. I can’t walk too far, so am limited, but would like to meet other retired people, but don’t know how or where. Since covid began I have lost confidence to go out alone and would be scared to go out in the evenings. Afternoons I have to rest, so mornings are my only option.”*

In order to become involved in volunteering different people will seek different volunteering opportunities often relating to age or employment status, but also physical ability, skills and confidence.

### 6.5.1 Inclusion

Volunteers might need assistance to be supported into roles, which align with their strengths, experience and skills. For example, it was suggested during the workshops, that volunteers should receive regular supervision to discuss changing volunteering role, or in developing skills within their role. This also requires volunteer involving organisations to create welcoming and inclusive environments for volunteers to be involved with.

- Consider a shared approach to design volunteer opportunities specifically focusing on enabling volunteers who wish to be involved (possibly in conjunction with 6.2.2).

### 6.5.2 Nurturing self-organised volunteer involvement

One of the prominent themes of volunteer involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic has been volunteering that was not arranged into volunteering opportunities by volunteer involving organisations but by volunteers themselves, for example, in mutual aid associations. This was then at times supported by statutory bodies and volunteer involving organisations. Such forms of volunteering are potentially more likely to enable involvement in the ways people want and can contribute, ideally very locally to where they live.

- Consider a shared approach to designing a programme to nurture and support self-organised community volunteer involvement, facilitating communication between volunteers and self-organised groups, for mutual benefit.

### 6.5.3 Employer supported volunteering

As part of this work, we did not specifically explore the range of employer supported volunteering in Hastings. Employer supported volunteering offers employees the opportunity to volunteer with support from their employer. This can be in the form of time off, or time in lieu, for volunteering or in programmes organised by the employer often in partnership with local volunteer involving organisations, such as a team challenge event or pro bono support. It was raised repeatedly as a possible option to increase the number of volunteers in employment, which currently seem underrepresented in volunteer involvement in Hastings.

- Consider a shared approach to designing a programme to encourage and support employer supported volunteering in Hastings.

### 6.5.4 Exploring underrepresented sectors

The responses to the survey suggest that volunteers in Hastings are more involved with health and community groups than the national average, but far fewer with sports or religious groups, which may reflect demographic differences but also the reach of the volunteer infrastructure organisations.

- Consider reaching out to sports groups and other potentially under-represented groups to establish the current level and nature of involvement and strengthen collaboration between volunteering involving organisations in the field of sports and others.

#### 6.5.5 Exploring missing voices

The respondents from the survey and workshops cannot be seen as representative of all volunteers in Hastings. Furthermore, this work had only limited reach to people who do not volunteer or do not consider themselves as volunteers and have no or little contact with volunteer involving organisations. In the absence of their accounts this work could consider neither the reason for their absence in the work nor their possibly varying views on volunteering. In the context of Section 6.2.2 on accessibility and 6.5.1 on inclusion, these missing voices require further exploration.

- Consider further work on the strategy, seeking to include missing voices.

### 6.6 Together towards a strategy

The aim of this work is to offer evidence for the creation of a volunteering strategy in Hastings, involving all affected by such a strategy. With regards to collectively developing a strategy the approach underpinning this project appears to have worked well. However, at the core of the findings from this report are the findings that currently not all organisations and sectors appear to be involved in the conversation and the apparent differences in the accounts of volunteers and of volunteer involving organisations. Of course, neither volunteers nor the organisations that involve them form a single representative view. They are diverse, offering different views and knowledges, and cannot be seen as a homogenous. However, when analysing their responses across the two groups, clear differences emerge alongside many similarities. Put simply, while volunteers and the organisations that involve them share a strong desire to make a difference and recognise the wide range of benefits for the volunteers, communities and organisations, they do not always want the same things, and friction can emerge when that is the case, in the worst case leading to a breakdown in volunteer involvement.

*“There is a growing body of literature and guidance about volunteering and inclusion. Yet there is widespread acknowledgment from organisations themselves that there are inequalities and a lack of diversity within volunteering and that volunteering needs to be more inclusive and accessible to a wider range of people.” (Donahue et al, 2022)*

Beresford (2021) describes *“Learning to work together: [as] the key to inclusive involvement”* (p.89) and suggests that a *“commitment to working inclusively, equally and participatorily, building on the knowledge that already exists”* (p.98) is needed.

*“Organisations need to be clearer about leadership accountability, with the ‘lived experiences’ of their own staff [and volunteers] being the most important indicator of*

*inclusion at organisation, department and team levels.”* (Jolliff, 2019) [Insertion and emphasis by authors]

Combined with the deliberation of all involved with the work so far, this is leading the report’s authors to suggest considering three concepts when working towards a volunteering strategy: inclusive volunteering, inclusive involvement practice, and inclusive leadership.

## 7 Conclusion, challenges and implications

This report is intended to provide an accessible evidence base for organisations involving volunteers, local government and other stakeholders in Hastings, to collaboratively plan their future work supporting inclusive volunteer involvement.

### 7.1 Conclusions

In Sections 2 to 6, the report systematically lays out the available evidence drawn from a rapid review of literature, existing data sets, a survey and qualitative workshops. Based on this evidence, the report's authors conclude that organisations involving volunteers, local government and other stakeholders in Hastings are in an excellent position to drive forward a positive vision for inclusive volunteering with impacts on communities, organisations and volunteers. Combined, the following four key findings illustrate that volunteers in Hastings are currently involved well or can take actions themselves.

#### 7.1.1 Vibrant

Hastings has a vibrant voluntary and community sector, involving many regular volunteers in ways that enable them to make a difference, including improving their own health. We want to first draw the reader's attention to the survey responses in Table 9.4.11, page 80, identifying over 200 volunteer involving organisations in which residents of Hastings volunteer, ranging from allotments and choral societies to uniformed groups, from political parties and trade unions to churches and residents' associations, compellingly illustrating the enormous breadth and diversity of volunteering in Hastings.

#### 7.1.2 Strong

Comparing the local with the national picture further illustrates Hastings's voluntary and community sector's relative strength, as it appears that in Hastings more people volunteer, more frequently, contributing more hours (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

#### 7.1.3 Active

The majority of the volunteers in Hastings, that we heard from, have spare time and want to help people, improving things by putting their skills to good use (see the responses from volunteers in Tables 9.4.15 and 9.4.16, page 84). Those volunteers also feel they are making a difference (see Table 9.4.18, page 85) and that volunteering has improved their mental health (see Table 9.4.17 page 84). Volunteers in Hastings also tend to volunteer for multiple organisations.

#### 7.1.4 Mutual

Volunteering that was not arranged into volunteering opportunities by volunteer-involving organisations, but by volunteers themselves, has become more visible during the COVID-19 pandemic in England. Levels of such volunteering in Hastings compare

well to this national picture (see Figure 4.7) suggesting no additional barriers.

## 7.2 Challenges

However, volunteer involvement in Hastings also faces significant post COVID-19 pandemic, demographic and socio-economic challenges, and there are areas of volunteer involvement, which volunteers suggest, and volunteer involving organisations already recognise, can be improved.

### 7.2.1 Socio - economic

Hastings is amongst the most deprived areas in England and the most deprived local council area in the South East of England, see Section 3. The ongoing increase in the cost-of-living crisis is putting pressure on households and the high national debt might cause a further squeeze on public spending. This is likely to affect volunteer involvement in Hastings in three ways which might create negative synergy, meaning combined they have a greater negative impact than on their own. Firstly, with pressure on households and demographic changes, the number of volunteers who have spare time and can put their skills to good use might decrease. This comes at the same time as demand for essential support, often offered by volunteer involving organisations, such as foodbanks or dealing with homelessness, is likely to rise. It also comes at a time when volunteer involving organisations' resources to involve volunteers might be further reduced. Crucially, this also comes just after two years of dealing with the global COVID-19 pandemic, during which communities have been tested to their limits and have not yet had a chance to recover.

### 7.2.2 Diversity

Neither volunteers nor the organisations who involve them can be considered homogenous groups. Volunteers do not all share the same views and neither do the organisations that involve them. Accounts from volunteers and from the organisations who involve them can differ, for example, in areas such as accessibility and inclusiveness. Also, compared to the rest of the country, respondents to the survey for this report volunteer more with health and community groups, but far fewer with sports or religious groups. This may reflect demographic differences but may also reflect the current reach of the volunteer infrastructure organisations.

### 7.2.3 Practice development

Confronting the challenges outlined in Section 7.2.1 will require further development of practice, for example, as volunteers might need assistance to be supported into roles, which align with their strengths, experience and skills (see section 5.6.1). However, inclusive involvement practice is likely to be more resource intensive. The Compact Code of Good Practice on volunteering identified that it is necessary to “[r]ecognise that volunteering is freely given but not cost free. Resources, support, development and promotion for volunteers may incur costs” (quoted in Zimmeck, 2009, p.7).

## 7.2.4 Engagement

The work underpinning this report was deliberately collaborative, involving the local volunteering infrastructure organisation, local volunteer involving organisations and the Local Authority through the Steering Group, and hearing from over 300 volunteers and further volunteer involving organisations through a survey and through workshops. However, it became clear, for example, from the responses set out in Section 7.1.1, that one of the very strengths of volunteer involvement in Hastings, its vibrancy, means that there is room for further engagement and collaboration. To achieve a shared vision for a joined-up volunteering strategy in Hastings, more organisations, and volunteers might need to become actively involved in that process. The upcoming work to develop a strategy will therefore use the findings of this report to support an overarching focus on reaching out systematically to further engage with the following: volunteers and people not currently involved in volunteering; the organisations that are already involving volunteers but might not yet be involved in the process of developing the strategy and other organisations which might involve volunteers in the future; and communities where volunteering is vibrant and strong as well as communities where this could be developed. There is a commitment that, in each context, the purpose of reaching out is clarified and the difference it makes is captured.

## 7.3 Implications

The review of plausible responses to current challenges in Section 6 revealed prominent themes, leading the report's authors to suggest three concepts for consideration when working towards a strategy.

### 7.3.1 Inclusive volunteering

Volunteer involvement depends not just on an individual's decision to volunteer, but also on the availability of suitable and meaningful volunteering opportunities. Socio-economic or physical barriers might prevent individuals from becoming involved or it might not be possible to create new volunteering opportunities. The challenges of inclusive volunteering are reaching individuals with effective communication, offering suitable and accessible volunteering opportunities, and ensuring satisfying volunteer experiences for all.

Hastings appears to be well above the national average in offering meaningful volunteering opportunities. However, this is not something that can be taken for granted as individual volunteering changes during the life course and is currently still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain and potentially expand available volunteering opportunities, volunteers might need assistance to be supported into roles, which align with their strengths, experience and skills. This also requires volunteer involving organisations to create welcoming and inclusive environments for volunteers to be involved with.

A strategy to create new opportunities or make existing ones more easily accessible might consider approaches to increase employer supported volunteering and collaborate with underrepresented sectors.

While self-organised volunteer involvement, not through volunteer involving organisations, appears to match national levels, there might be potential to further nurture and encourage this.

### 7.3.2 Inclusive involvement practice

Volunteer involvement practice is constantly evolving and responding to a changing environment. An involvement journey begins with communications connecting volunteers to volunteer involving organisations. They can then be matched to suitable volunteering activities. In such volunteer involvement journeys, digital technology is fast becoming a regular component of 'hybrid' approaches, being used in areas such as promotion of volunteering opportunities and training, but also as part of some volunteering opportunities such as online mentoring and support. Digital technology has the potential to make volunteer involvement more cost effective and was a key tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, where involving volunteers face-to-face was impossible. However, using digital technology runs the risk to reduce the all-important social aspect of volunteering and exclude people who don't have access to the technology. The challenges of adapting practice are to ensure that volunteers and volunteer involving organisations can design and enable this together, ensuring that addressing technical obstacles and retaining sociability are well balanced.

### 7.3.3 Inclusive leadership

Given the complex challenges facing Hastings over the coming years, implementing any volunteering strategy will require effective change management. One respondent described a previous experience as follows: *"Worst experience of being a volunteer is when decisions that affect your work are taken by people in positions of authority without consultation"*. This would also easily extend to volunteer involving organisations if they were to encounter major changes without feeling that they had a voice in the development of such changes. However well a strategy has been consulted on, the challenges of inclusive leadership are to continuously explore underrepresented sectors and unheard voices, enabling their active involvement with accessible and inviting processes. This might require efforts in two distinct directions; firstly, the involvement of people and organisations who currently are or feel excluded, and secondly, the way inclusion works. We cite literature that offer principles to guide inclusive leadership. A further aspect is the acceptance that not everything is successful and that improvements, sometime difficult, might be needed. Inclusive leadership in such circumstances requires to as one stakeholder put it *"not to be those people"* who ignore challenging findings or different opinion.



## 7.4 Summary

The work to create a volunteering strategy for Hastings is well underway. While there is little comfort in the news about the country's economic and political outlook, Hastings has an advantage, as it can face the future with existing vibrant and strong volunteer involvement. The challenges of a volunteering strategy will be: keeping existing volunteers, continuing to involve them in positive volunteer experiences, reaching and involving new volunteers, and aiming for diversity and equity in any strategic approach.

In order to respond to these challenges the upcoming work to develop a strategy is expected to focus on reaching out systematically: further engaging existing volunteers and seeking to involve people not currently volunteering; collaborating with organisations that are already involving volunteers but might not yet be involved in the process of developing the strategy and also other organisations which might involve volunteers in the future; immersing in communities where volunteering is vibrant and strong as well as in communities where this could be developed.

Stakeholders have expressed a commitment that, in each context, the purpose of reaching out is clarified and that the difference it makes is captured. This is intended to become the basis of a continuous dialogue that leads to action, reflecting a can-do attitude.

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## 9 Appendix

### 9.1 Appendix A: Summary Workshop One

#### **Workshop 1 Summary – Volunteer Involving Organisations 6th May 2022**

Attendees: Five people attended from a range of organisations who involve volunteers.

Facilitators: Ellice Parkinson and Ritchie Woodard

#### 1. Is Hastings doing volunteering right?

- “Yes” x 3
- “Other” x 2

The participants who said “yes”, felt that their organisations were getting volunteering ‘right’ in Hastings.

The participants who said “other” felt that volunteering was a “mixed-bag” across Hastings, and some felt that they couldn’t comment on Hastings as a whole. Some participants commented that they were surprised that some larger organisations had not attended the workshop.

Participants commented that Hastings was a “community-oriented place”, which was especially seen during the Covid-19 pandemic response.

#### 2. Enablers of Volunteering

##### Individual factors

- Lived experience
- Alleviate social isolation and loneliness
- To give something back
- Sense of purpose
- Retired – spare time
- Young person – work experience
  - Placements
  - Course work
  - Build skills & CVs
- To develop skills/ practice digital skills
- Sense of community/ belonging/connectedness
- Organisational benefits for volunteers – same as staff benefits
  - Wellness support
  - Training and development opportunities

## Organisational factors

- Co-produced volunteering activities and schemes, led by community members
- Engagement with the local community and “harder to reach” groups.
- Reimbursement of expenses (subsistence, clothing, travel)
- An inclusive and diverse environment
- A welcoming, friendly team with a family feel
- Flexible volunteering opportunities – tailor them to individual skill sets
- Flexible recruitment processes – e.g. offer training/induction on evenings, or 1-1 to fit a volunteer’s schedule.
  - Relaxed interview
  - Support completing the application
  - Print hard copies of forms
- Adaptations of existing roles – e.g. make them volunteer-focussed
  - Accept people who might not be accepted elsewhere
  - Accept that some people might only volunteer for a short while.

### 3. Barriers to Volunteering

- Different types of charities/organisations might be more difficult to recruit volunteers to – stigma/negative associations
- Expenses – travel, subsistence etc.
- Volunteer time constraint to complete induction and training
- Volunteering opportunities which are physically demanding, might not be suitable for people with physical impairments.
- Stigma of certain volunteering opportunities
- Lengthy recruitment processes – DBS, applications, interviews
- Reliance on recruiting through digital platforms/methods.
- Difficult to complete a DBS for some people who might not have forms of ID.
- Lack of confidence/ low self-esteem
- Safeguarding procedures – lack of awareness by some volunteers of the lengthy process.

### 4. What would a successful strategy look like?

- Flexible and tailored opportunities for potential volunteers – volunteering needs to be mutually beneficial and require dynamic conversations and supervisions to check that volunteers are benefitting □ offer other opportunities to existing volunteers.
- Communication and networking between organisations in Hastings
- Universal pool of volunteers who can volunteer for multiple organisations flexibly, without the need to repeat recruitment processes for each organisation/charity “to use every volunteer”
- Mailing list for volunteering opportunities
- Community knowledge and engagement - raise the profile of HVA so that everyone knows they exist
- Volunteering adverts to be marketed well – keywords for people to search

for.

- Case studies/story telling from current/former volunteers
- Both digital and physical platforms
- Ensure that volunteers are appreciated and celebrated
- Ensure that volunteers are looked after and fulfilled from their volunteering role – Wellbeing support
  - Flexible recruitment approach
  - Flexible training and induction
  - Build confidence of volunteers
  - Identify skills and develop them
  - Look at volunteering from their point of view □ Some charities/organisations couldn't exist without volunteers.
- Provide social opportunities for volunteers – meet ups
  - Coffee and cake
  - Whatsapp groups
  - Social groups
  - Information sharing sessions between volunteers
- A physical volunteering hub for people to visit on the high street, which is non-threatening for people with low-confidence, supportive, friendly □ staff to help people complete applications and practice interviews, staff to help identify someone's skills and tailor opportunities to these, physical board of volunteering opportunities.
- 'Advice surgeries' already exist throughout the Hastings community □ a volunteering service rep could attend these surgeries and signpost opportunities.
- Matching volunteer's passions and skills to their roles □ consider their goals and aspirations and offer opportunities in line with these, to ensure that volunteering is mutually beneficial.

## 5. Aims and Outcomes of a Volunteering strategy

- To have fulfilled, satisfied and well-looked after volunteers
- To have a more joined up approach to recruiting volunteering across organisations.
- To have a universal pool of volunteers who can offer skills across organisations in Hastings.
- To raise the profile of Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) throughout Hastings, for advertising volunteering opportunities.
- To have a physical hub for potential volunteers to drop by and be signposted to opportunities.
- To have community engagement events throughout all parts of the Hastings community, to identify potential volunteer's skills and signpost to opportunities.
- Volunteering to be inclusive within a digital age.
- For volunteering opportunities to be flexible and personalised to volunteers.

## 9.2 Appendix B: Summary Workshop Two

### Workshop 2 Summary – Hastings Volunteers 26th May 2022

Attendees: Eight people attended who had various volunteering experiences.

Facilitators: Ellice Parkinson and Linda Birt

#### 1. Enablers of Volunteering

- Retirement - Having time to volunteer, applying life experience and professional skills to volunteer roles.
- Having the opportunity to socialise and meet others.
- Valuing an organisation/charity's work.
- Offering 1:1 support to support individuals into volunteering roles.
- Employers to give people time to volunteer

#### 2. Barriers to Volunteering

- An over-reliance on the volunteer workforce □ stress and burnout.
- Unnecessary or unproductive meetings
- Lack of support/adequate training to deal with inappropriate behaviour/difficult scenarios.
- E-learning – “red tape” training, lengthy time to complete, difficult to complete alone without support.
- Computer illiterate/ lack of digital skills
- Volunteers being excluded from organisational decision making, which affects them.
- Conflicting priorities/opinions between volunteer, organisation and community.
- Lack of physical advertising of volunteering roles/services.

#### 3. Motivations to volunteer

- Having lived experience/personal experience of something which the charity/organisation supports
- To improve personal mental wellbeing
- To reduce social isolation – to meet others/ social connectedness
- To help others/ advocate for others/ make a difference
- To develop skills, and/or gain experience for a career
- To share skills with others
- Personal interest/passion/hobby.

#### 4. Personal benefits of volunteering

- Feeling accepted and welcomed by the community/volunteers/organisation
- Improved mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation
- Learn new skills and have the opportunity to undertake various work experiences/roles/career development opportunities.
- Enjoyment for self and others
- Being able to work flexibly for organisations/charities which they can apply

previous professional experience and skills.

5. What should the future of Volunteering in Hastings look like?

- Facilitated face to face group learning/ training (especially for important topics such as safeguarding)
- Better linkage/communication between HVA and organisations for advertising roles and opportunities.
- Meetings to have clear agendas and effective chairing
- Volunteering roles and opportunities to be advertised in physical spaces/events and not just online or social media.
- Provide voluntary organisations with support/training to involve people who don't currently volunteer or need support to be able to volunteer.
- Organisations to fully support and supervise volunteers
- Raise awareness of informal volunteering opportunities for people who work fulltime and can offer particular skills to organisations i.e one off events for a specified time period.
- Develop a considered marketing strategy for advertising roles
- Encourage 'time off' for volunteering amongst local businesses, to raise awareness of its benefits.
- Share positive volunteering experiences amongst support groups/charities, to encourage others to volunteer

### 9.3 Appendix C: Anonymised comments from the HVA survey

Information likely to identify respondents such as names of charities or place names, as well as content likely to offend has been redacted.

*After being victim of crime received a letter saying they were too busy to help me. Police had given them my name. Tried to contact [REDACTED] on more than one occasion. Not interested until I mentioned one was racially motivated.*

*Caring for the night time economy in Hastings Town Centre where people need assistance has highlighted the need for the return of the Bar Watch and CCTV services and for the replacement of the all-night public conveniences in the town centre so stupidly removed by the council.*

*Did a great deal of volunteering all my life*

*Had a serious accident just after I retired nearly five years ago so have been unable to do anything except try to recover*

*Due to Covid I have not volunteered for over 2 years. I did help once a week in the Hospice, which I enjoyed, but due to my health issues I did not return when I could have done. I am still a registered volunteer and will do things as and when I can.*

*Enjoying being with people and to help with everyday life*

*Feel organisations I worked for did not give enough support to volunteers, and volunteers had no real rights.*

*Hastings is a good community*

*Have volunteered in a couple of places and do find they can be a bit clicky and staff not over friendly*

*I am thinking about volunteering as I have too much time on my hands and I single and live alone*

*I enjoy my volunteer role with [REDACTED] because the people I work for make me feel appreciated and are friendly plus, I feel that I am helping a good cause...*

*Also it nice to see people coming into the shop and buying the retail they probably can't afford in the major outlets and generally help customers with any quirked*

*I feel that there are many opportunities to get involved in volunteering and community groups in Hastings and this is an important part of what makes this a good place to live.*



*I feel there is a lot of need in Hastings but it's not always very clear how to get involved. The organisations I volunteer for are not local. During the pandemic I tried to be a volunteer on the national volunteer covid scheme but was never asked to help out. I would love to be able to use my extensive skills to help people locally.*

*I found some of the questions a bit ambiguous, and wasn't quite sure how to answer.*

*I have not particularly volunteered with [REDACTED] after initially joining at start of pandemic, because the safeguarding rules and training were off-putting and looked limiting. I am active and look for things I can do to help make a difference to my town that are active, not sitting about. I am passionate about the environment. Spent several years regularly visiting/doing paperwork for elderly parents (in our 50's-early 60's) so now enjoying grandkids and more free time to be less bound by the diary.*

*I have volunteered for over 25 years with various Charities. Although I have enjoyed the various roles I have had, I have concerns that it is more difficult to recruit younger volunteers to take over.*

*I also feel sometimes that in meetings, items are discussed which I know little about, having left the workplace some 11years ago, so have no up to date knowledge.*

*I know Hastings and St Leonards have a wonderful history of communities coming together to volunteer help for those in need. Churches and other charities work tirelessly to provide for the disenfranchised and marginalised let down by inefficient government systems and bureaucracy, saving millions of pounds every year in volunteering time and skills.*

*I live in rural [REDACTED]. There is a great need for volunteers because we are not well supported by the fauthorities*

*I live in [REDACTED] but work in Hastings [REDACTED] So most of my volunteering is around [REDACTED].*

*I might be able to volunteer for other small non regular events such as beach clearing but usually find out after the event. Since the Council Office moved onto the sea front there seems to be no where for notices about what is happening to be displayed. Somewhere in Priory shopping centre would seem a good place but do doubt with the money grabbing attitude that exists there I'm sure they would demand payment to allow a notice board to be put up.*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*I think Hastings has an amazing community spirit - sadly as a working mum I don't get as much time as I'd like to support the causes that mean a lot to me, but when I do, I thoroughly enjoy it.*

*I think it's great and I am always amazed at people's capacity to be able to volunteer/give back to communities and causes especially in Hastings.*

*However, volunteering is definitely something that is difficult to do as a younger person who works full time. I don't know when I'd have time to live my life/keep up to date with life admin outside of work if I also regularly volunteered on top of my working hours. If I were to overload myself with regular volunteering in addition to work I think there is a risk that mental health would slip as I'd potentially feel overwhelmed. However, I do wish I was able to do more volunteering if I could!*

*I think that the local authorities rely too much on volunteers to undertake work they should be doing. Whilst I appreciate money is tight, in my lifetime (62 years) there has never been a time when money hasn't been tight. We shouldn't have to rely on volunteers in order to have a decent society - the reason we need so many volunteers is because paid assistance only goes to those on benefits and there is a huge gap where people aren't on benefits but who live marginal lives yet get no support for anything.*

*I think the profile of volunteering and its benefits to the individual as well as society and town could be better promoted to all people of the town.*

*I think volunteering is a good way of keeping in touch with what is going on in the community and for meeting people.*

*I used to do voluntary work, helping people with gardening, but can no longer do it. So many things seem to be online now, but I don't feel comfortable with technology. I can't walk too far, so am limited, but would like to meet other retired people, but don't know how or where. Since COVID began I have lost confidence to go out alone and would be scared to go out in the evenings. Afternoons I have to rest, so mornings are my only option.*

*I volunteered before the pandemic, but face to face stopped during the pandemic and things are only just starting up again.*

*I would be more willing to help local neighbours so that I don't have to use transport to see them but people in need are always helped by a town-wide group, there is nothing local. When people advertise for a carer they never say which area they are in, so I don't find out if I have neighbours needing help.*

*I was going to volunteer in the library but lockdown happened as I was about to start.*

*Now we are out of lockdown (ish) I am looking to volunteer again. But outdoors hopefully.*

*So the last 12 months doesn't capture my past or present intentions to volunteer!*

*I was volunteering a lot for various people-centred charities before the pandemic hit so overnight I lost my 'jobs', purpose, usefulness and I felt pointless. I am slowly getting the latter back and am gradually easing myself back into volunteering again*

*I would like to do some voluntary work, but I don't know how to go about it*

*if you don't have the local paper then you don't hear about the events!*

*It can be very frustrating when what we're doing is filling in the gaps in social, legal and welfare support systems that are allegedly provided by central and local government, but which through policy and or chronic underfunding, simply are non-existent or not fit for purpose. The voluntary sector is not an "add on" to existing services, it's the replacement at zero or low cost to those who should be funding them.*

*It doesn't seem very coordinated ie I cannot go to one site to see everything. Where I previously lived, I could search by organisation or area of interest. They also advised of one off opportunities directly by email as long as you signed up with the central volunteer bureau.*

*It is difficult to find information about volunteering*

*It is not easy to volunteer, too many forms and questions to answer, too much training etc.*

*It would be good if there were better transport for volunteers and if there was more joined up thinking. There needs to be a way to reach those who really need help but have no voice. We need more youth services and hope for those young and living in poverty or disadvantaged in some way. More intervention in school programme.*

*It's a great way to keep in touch with your community & life in general especially when you are retired & gives you that 'feel good factor'.*

*Keep It up!*

*More gardening, community working. Taking people out of Hastings into nature.*

*The place opp. ESC, please keep finding this if possible, as such a great place.*

*Not always clear where to find out about the range of volunteering opportunities*

*Once covid has calmed down properly, I shall probably do more and find something that I enjoy and will keep doing*

*So glad I decided to volunteer with [REDACTED] for the [REDACTED], it has given me purpose and the cause is so important for men. We are neglected group and I hope to make a difference to the men in Hastings as time goes on and the service develops. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to voice my view.*

*The final question? My life in general or life for others in society? If the former, 10; if the latter 5*

*There are plenty of opportunities for volunteering for lots of worthwhile causes. It is easy to find something that you are interested in or where you feel you can contribute something to make life better for other people.*

*There us a great need for more volunteers to make a difference to their local environment.*

*There were two problems I had volunteering in Hastings. The first was that many people were overly curious and almost rude about someone they perceived as a "foreigner" volunteering with the organisation. I got tired of dealing with questions about where I was from and where my accent came from. I've lived here for almost 15 years! The second was that I found one of the organisations I volunteered with was very set in its ways and unwelcoming to newcomers with different ideas and ways of doing things. Genuine hostile behaviour from another volunteer means I've never gone back. Generally, there needs to be more tolerance of difference and less of fussy old people!*

*Unclear where to find information on people wanting volunteers.*

*Online "volunteering opportunities" sites often seem either under-populated or full of out-of-date and/or misleading info.*

*When do see information, far too often presented as quasi-employment "opportunities", rather than requests for help.*

*Volunteering does not take your time it enhances your life!*

*Volunteering for [REDACTED] has provided me great satisfaction over the last nine years and being able to support local people through life changing events is amazing, not just for our clients but their wider families and friends. It can be very challenging at times but also very rewarding. It has given a purpose to my life as well and I would recommend it always.*

*Volunteering has benefited me in many ways. Initially I started as a learner on several wellbeing courses, and have been a volunteer on many courses for the last 4 or 5 years. Volunteering is so useful because as well as helping others, it has increased my confidence, self esteem and is a good way to meet other people and make friends. Covid had a big effect. My mental health suffered while I was not able to volunteer. Fortunately it has started up again, but on a much smaller scale. Funding for projects is so difficult to access, especially for adult mental health issues even though so many people became isolated and are struggling to cope. I have volunteered within mental health over 20 years in [REDACTED]. It's kept me relatively safe and healthy.*

*Volunteering has like many other aspects of life in 21st century become increasingly bogged down with red tape, health and safety, and hurdles/training for volunteers to undertake over and above the direct work for and with people in the community. Many already have the knowledge, and others are put off by either the undertaking, or the additional time involved.*

*Volunteering is so satisfying, everyone should try it.*

*Volunteering is something anyone can do. It helps so many people. It gets you out in the community gets you talking with others and gives you the opportunity to give something back.*

*Volunteering is the best thing anyone can ever do. I always got so much more from volunteering than I expected.*

*Volunteering may be very worthwhile, both in terms of self confidence, self esteem and general wellbeing, however, for many the hours that they volunteer, and the nature of the volunteering are in my opinion hours that should be available as paid work, with volunteers supplementing this, and not the only option available for others who need their support. Funding cuts across all sectors have left volunteers being used and I feel open to abuse by the system as being able to plug the gaping hole in statutory care and welfare.*

*Volunteering services are really necessary to support the community at the present time, considering lose of funding (eg from European Social Fund because of Brexit), and social funding cut backs by British government..*

*Whilst working it hard to find daytime availability for voluntary work*

*Would like to volunteer now but not sure how and I don't drive*

*You have asked about current experience of volunteering. I have always done voluntary work in the past but because of lockdown and long Covid I have not done anything recently.*

## 9.4 Appendix D: All Hastings survey responses, basic tables

The following is the data from the survey conducted in Hastings for this report. Please note that the percentages given here include missing values in the totals, whereas percentages given in the main report only consider non-missing values which is the usual way of reporting. The percentages given in the report can be calculated from the data below by excluded missing values (including “prefer not to say” responses).

### Opening questions

**Table 9.4.1**

**Q0 - Are you filling out this survey for yourself or on behalf of someone else?**

	Freq.	Percent
Myself	287	95.03
For someone else	1	0.33
Missing	14	4.64
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.2**

**Q1.1 - Have you ever volunteered?**

	Freq.	Percent
No	26	8.61
Yes	263	87.09
Missing	13	4.30
Total	302	100.00

### Volunteering as unpaid help to groups or clubs

**Table 9.4.3**

**Q1.2 - Have you been involved with any of the following groups, clubs or organisations during the last 12 months? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
Children’s education/schools	29	11.4
Youth/children’s activities (outside school)	29	11.4
Adult education	21	8.3
Sport/exercise (taking part, coaching or going to watch)	31	12.2
Hobbies, recreation/arts/social clubs	60	23.6
Religion	36	14.2
Politics	19	7.5
Older people	42	16.5
Health, disability and social welfare	74	29.1
Safety, first aid	12	4.7
The environment, animals	33	13
Justice and human rights	20	7.9
Local community or neighbourhood groups	57	22.4
Citizens’ groups	8	3.1
Trade union activity	15	5.9
None of the above	56	22
Prefer not to say	0	0

**Table 9.4.4****Q1.3 - In the last 12 months, have you given unpaid help to the above groups in any of these ways? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
Raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events	63	25.1
Leading a group/member of a committee	87	34.7
Getting other people involved	42	16.7
Organising or helping to run an activity or event	84	33.5
Visiting people	35	13.9
Befriending or mentoring people	43	17.1
Giving advice / information / counselling	69	27.2
Secretarial, admin or clerical work	69	27.2
Providing transport/driving	24	9.4
Representing	27	10.6
Campaigning	18	7.1
Other practical help (e.g. helping out at school, shopping)	29	11.4
Any other help.	29	11.4
None of the above	47	18.7
Prefer not to say	0	0

**Table 9.4.5****Q1.4 - Over the last 12 months, how often have you helped the groups indicated above?**

	Freq.	Percent
Once a week	137	45.36
Once a month	34	11.26
Less than once a month	27	8.94
Prefer not to say	16	5.30
Missing	88	29.14
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.6****Q1.5 - Over the last 4 weeks, approximately how many hours have you spent helping the groups? (please answer with a number)**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Hours	205	16.288	0	100

**Table 9.4.7****Q1.6 - How did you find out about opportunities to give unpaid help? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
Through previously using services provided by the group	48	19
From someone else already involved in the group	72	28.6
From a friend not involved in the group/by word of mouth	31	12.3
Place of worship	27	10.7
School/college/university	7	2.8
Doctor's surgery/ community centre / library	6	2.4
Promotional events/volunteer fair	5	2
Local events	19	7.5
HEART	12	4.8
Social media	39	15.5
Local newspaper	13	5.1
National newspaper	0	0
TV or radio (local or national)	0	0
Volunteer bureau or centre	14	5.5
Employment Office	3	1.2
Employer's volunteering scheme	2	0.8
www.do-it.org.uk	8	3.1
National Citizen Service	0	0
HVA	27	10.6
Other internet/organisational website	27	10.6
Other way	26	10.3
None of the above	33	13
Prefer not to say	0	0

**Volunteering as unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative****Table 9.4.8****Q2.1 - In the last 12 months, have you done any of these things, unpaid, for someone who was not a relative? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
Keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about (visiting in person, telephoning or emailing)	86	34.8
Doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills	45	18.2
Cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs	19	7.7
Decorating, or doing any kind of home or car repairs	8	3.2
Babysitting or caring for children	14	5.7
Sitting with or providing personal care (e.g. washing, dressing) for someone who is sick or frail	12	4.9
Looking after a property or pet for someone who is away	35	14.2
Giving advice	80	32.4
Writing letters or filling in forms	39	15.8
Representing someone (for example, talking to a council department or to a doctor)	16	6.5
Transporting or escorting someone (for example, to a hospital or on an outing)	40	16.2
Anything else	20	8.1
None of the above	65	26.3
Prefer not to say	0	0



**Table 9.4.9**

**Q2.2 - Over the last 12 months, how often have you done these things?**

	Freq.	Percent
Once a week	73	24.17
Once a month	43	14.24
Less than once a month	50	16.56
Prefer not to say	15	4.97
Missing	121	40.07
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.10**

**Q2.3 - Over the last 4 weeks, approximately how many hours have you spent doing these things? (please answer with a number)**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Hours	168	9.313	0	168

## General Volunteering

**Table 9.4.11**

**Q3.1 - Which organisation do you volunteer for? (use as many boxes as necessary)**

Organisation	Freq	Organisation	Freq	Organisation	Freq
18 Hours	1	Hastings and Rother Credit Union	1	Quakers	1
Age UK	2	Hastings and Rother Mediation	1	RAF Air Cadets	1
allotment association	1	Hastings and Rother Refugee Buddy Project	1	Red Cross	2
An Anglican Parish Church	1	Hastings and St Leonards Allotment Federation	1	Relief for Romania Fund	1
Association of Carers	9	Hastings and St Leonards Museum Association	1	Residents Associy	1
At Michael's hospice	1	Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group	1	Riding for the Disabled Association	1
Baird Academy	1	Hastings Arts Forum	1	RNLI	1
Battle Choral Society	1	Hastings beach clean	1	Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership	1
Bexhill & Hastings Wildlife Rescue	1	Hastings Befriending Network	1	Rotary	1
Big Local North-East Hastings	1	Hastings Bonfire	2	Rother Responders	1
Blacklands CofE Parish	1	Hastings Community Network	1	Rother Voluntary Action	1
Bohemia Walled Garden	1	Hastings Community of Sanctuary	2	Royal College of Nursing	1
Bohemia Walled Garden Association	1	Hastings Community Transport	3	RSPCA	1
Borrow my doggy	2	Hastings Community Trust	1	running club	1
British Heart Foundation	1	Hastings Conservation Volunteers	1	Rye Baptist Church	1
Burton st Leonards society	1	Hastings Contemporary	1	Rye Community Garden	1
Care4Calais	1	Hastings HEART	1	Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Sussex Wildlife Trust	1
Carer for carers	2	Hastings Jack in the green	1	Salvation Army	1
Carnival	1	Hastings Library of Things	2	Samaritans	2
Cats Protection	1	Hastings Old Town carnival	1	Sandown School	1
CCHC	1	Hastings Old Town Carnival Association	1	Sara Lee	1
Chestnut Tree House	1	Hastings Older Women's Cohousing (Howch) CLT	1	Sara Lee charity	1
Christian Schools Workers Hastings.	1	Hastings Refugee Buddy Project	1	Sara Lee Trust	1
Church	3	Hastings Rock and Fell Club	1	Scouts	2
Cinnamon Trust	3	Hastings Rotary	1	Seaview Project	1
Citizens Advice	3	Hastings Storytelling Festival	1	Shipwreck museum	2
Citizens Advice 1066	1	Hastings Street Pastors	1	SLiC	1
Citizens Advice bureau	1	Hastings Supports Refugees	2	Snowflake	2
Citizens Advice Eastbourne	1	Hastings Voluntary Action	2	Sound Waves Choir	1
Commuity Timeline project	1	Hastings Week	1	South Downs National Trust Volunteers	1
Community friend group	1	Hastings zLibrary	1	St Andrew's Church	1
Community Group	1	HBBS	1	St Clement with All Saints Church	1
Community Hub	1	HEART	8	St Helens Church	1
community running group	1	Heart Hastings	1	St Helens Park Preservation Society	1
Community Speedwatch	1	HEART. Vaccination centre	1	St John Ambulance Homeless Division	1
Compass Community Arts	1	Helping Hands	2	St Leonards Church	1
Conquest Hospital	2	Hilden Oaks School	1	St Mary in the Castle	1
Counselling Plus	1	HMCTS	1	St Mary's star of the sea church	1
Craig's Cabin	1	Holy Trinity Church	1	St Mary's star of the sea Monday club	1
Criminom	1	Home Live Art	1	St Matthews church	1
Crisp Packets Project	1	Hospice	1	St Matthews Gardens	1
Cruse	1	HOTCA	1	Residents Association	1
Cruse Bereavement Support	1	Hrcu	1	St Michaels Hospice	4
				St Michael's Hospice	1

Culture Declares Emergency	1	HRVAB	1	St Michaels Hospice Retail	1
Dementia action Alliance	1	HVA	2	St Michael's Hospice, Hastings & Rother	1
Dragonflies	1	Interact Stroke Support	1	St Peter & St Paul church	1
East Sussex County Council	1	Jack in the Green	3	St. Matthews Gardens	1
East Sussex Hearing	1	Jan Brzechwa Polish Supplementary School in Hastings and St Leonards on Sea	1	St. Michael's Hospice	1
East Sussex Junior Badminton Academy	1	King's Church 1066	1	St. Peter and St. Paul Church	1
East Sussex Pond Warden Society	1	Lauriston Care Home	1	Stables Theatre	2
Education Futures Trust	1	Library IT for you	1	Stand Up to Racism	1
Emmaus Hastings & Rother	1	Lifesaving South Africa	1	Star-Change, Grow, Live	1
Energise South	1	Local Association ational Trust	1	Street Pastors	1
English heritage	4	Local Church	1	Table Tennis Rother	1
Fairfest	1	Local Church working in Parish Office	1	Tackleway Table Tennis Club	1
Fairlight Residents Association	1	Local Primary Academy	1	Talk Lipoedema	1
Fat Tuesday	1	Local residents association	1	Teaching Union	1
Fellowship of St Nicholas	1	Lower Torfield Allotments	1	Tempo Arts Ltd	1
Five Villages House	1	Mallydams	1	The Listening Place	1
Foodbank	1	Maritime Volunteer Service	1	The Pantry (Education Training Consortium)	1
Foreshore Trust	2	Marsham Older Peoples Project	1	The Stables Theatre Charitable Trust	1
Friends of Combe Valley	2	Medical practice	1	Tidy Up Dt. Leonards	1
Friends of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve	1	Mens group	1	Tidy Up St Leonards	4
Friends of Summerfields Wood	1	Mental Health Help Hastings	1	Tidy Up St. Leonards	1
Friends of Westfield Parish	1	Merivle Chowns Ltd	1	tidy up st.leonards	1
Fsn	3	Mind	1	TLG	1
FSN My Time	1	Music for the Memory	1	Toddler group run by church	1
FSN, Hastings/St Leonards on Sea	1	National Drama	1	Transforming Lives for Good	1
Girl Guiding	1	National piers society	1	Transition Town Hastings	1
Girlguiding UK	1	National Trust	2	Two Towers Trust	2
GoodSam Responder	1	NHS	3	Unison Retired Members - Hastings	1
GP Patient Participation Group	1	Old Hastings preservation society	3	Warming up the Homeless	1
Green Party	1	Old Town parish	1	West Hill Community Centre	2
Greenways Trust	1	Old Town Parish of St Clement and All Sai8nts	1	West Saint Leonards Forum	1
Halton Baptist church	1	Ore Community Land Trust	2	Westfield Parish Council	1
HARC	2	Ore Community Library	2	Whatlington Singers	1
Hasting Museum	1	Parchment Trust	1	White Rock House Residents Association Ltd	1
Hastings & Rother Credit Union	1	Penny Beale Memorial Fund	1	WI	1
Hastings & Rother Healthcare Patient Participation Group	1	Personal friend	1	Witness Service	1
Hastings & Rother MS Society Group	1	Pets As Therapy	1	Womens Institute	1
Hastings & Rother Rainbow Alliance	1	Piano competition	1	Wonky wi	1
Hastings & Rother Voluntary Association for The Blind & visually impaired	1	Pilot Field Area Residents' Association	1	WRAS (Wildlife Rescue Ambulance Service)	1
Hastings & Rother YMCA	1	Pilot Road Residents	1	XTRAX	1
Hastings & St Leonards Museum Association	1	PPG	1		
Hastings & St Leonards Seniors Forum	1	Private individuals	1		

**Table 9.4.12****Q3.1 - Which organisation did you volunteer for? (use as many boxes as necessary)**

Organisation	Freq	Organisation	Freq	Organisation	Freq
Age UK	1	Foodbank	1	NHS	1
AOC	1	FSN	1	Oxfam	2
BHF	1	Hastings and rother counselling services	1	Responders	1
Blind association	1	Hastings and Rother mediation service	1	School	1
BTCV	1	Hastings centre	1	Schools	1
Carers association	1	HCV	1	Seaview, St Leonards	1
Citizens Advice	2	HRVAB	1	Shipwreck Museum	1
Community alcohol team	1	infants school	1	St. Michael's Hospice	1
Education Futures Trust	1	Links Project	1	Stables Theatre	1
Electric Palace cinema	2	Lions club	1	Youth offending volunteer	1
ESCC 0-19 Service	1	MacMillan	1	Zooniverse	1
ESCC Library service	1	National Rail	1		

**Table 9.4.13****Q3.2 - How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the frequency of your volunteering?**

	Freq.	Percent
More often	25	19.23
About the same	50	38.46
Less often	39	30.00
Only volunteered during pandemic and do not plan to continue	1	0.77
Started volunteering during pandemic and plan to continue	12	9.23
Prefer not to say	3	2.31
Missing	172	56.95
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.14****Q3.2 - What were the main reasons you stopped volunteering? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
Not enough time - due to changing circumstances	0	0
Not enough time - getting involved took up too much time	0	0
Group/club/organisation finished/closed	0	0
Moved away from area	1	12.5
Due to health problems or old age	0	0
Group/club/organisation wasn't relevant to me anymore	0	0
Lost interest	0	0
It was a one-off activity or event	0	0
Felt I had done my bit / someone else's turn to get involved	0	0
Got involved in another activity instead	0	0
Didn't get asked to do the things I'd like to	0	0
Felt the group/club/organisation was badly organised	1	12.5
Felt my efforts weren't always appreciated	1	12.5
It was too bureaucratic / too much concern about risk and liability	0	0
Activity linked to my school/college/university/job I have now left	1	12.5
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic	1	12.5
Other	3	37.5
None of the above	1	12.5
Prefer not to say	0	0

**Table 9.4.15****Q3.3 - Did you start volunteering for any of the following reasons? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
To improve things / help people	154	70.3
To meet new people / make friends	60	27.4
The cause was really important to me	99	45.2
My friends/family did it	8	3.7
It was connected with the needs of my family/friends	9	4.1
There was a need in my community	93	42.5
To learn new skills	41	18.7
To use my existing skills	105	47.9
To help me get on in my career	17	7.8
It's part of my religious belief to help people	30	13.7
It's part of my philosophy of life to help people	74	33.8
It gave me a chance to get a recognised qualification	3	1.4
I had spare time to do it	108	49.3
There was no one else to do it	27	12.3
None of the above	2	0.9
Prefer not to say	0	0
Other	12	5.5

**Table 9.4.16****Q3.3 - Did you start volunteering for any of the following reasons? (choose as many as you like)**

	Freq.	Percent
To improve things / help people	10	55.6
To meet new people / make friends	9	50
The cause was really important to me	4	22.2
My friends/family did it	2	11.1
It was connected with the needs of my family/friends	3	16.7
There was a need in my community	7	38.9
To learn new skills	3	16.7
To use my existing skills	4	22.2
To help me get on in my career	2	11.1
It's part of my religious belief to help people	1	5.6
It's part of my philosophy of life to help people	7	38.9
It gave me a chance to get a recognised qualification	2	11.1
I had spare time to do it	5	27.8
To give back to the community	4	22.2
There was no one else to do it	0	0
None of the above	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
Other	1	5.6

**Table 9.4.17****Q3.4 - Has volunteering improved your mental health?**

	Freq.	Percent
Yes, significantly	54	17.88
Yes, a little	72	23.84
No	42	13.91
Not sure	38	12.58
Prefer not to say	3	0.99
Missing	93	30.79
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.18****Q3.5 - Do you feel like you made a difference through volunteering?**

	Freq.	Percent
Yes, significantly	111	36.75
Yes, a little	90	29.80
No	2	0.66
Not sure	7	2.32
Missing	92	30.46
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.19****Q3.6 - Have you used any of these services provided by volunteers in the last 12 months?**

	Freq.	Percent
Received Advice or information	27	11.4
Being represented by or spoken on my behalf (e.g. in court, etc.)	0	0
Received counselling (e.g. bereavement, etc.)	6	2.5
Being driven or used a community transport service	3	1.3
Taken part in an activity run by a club or society	39	16.5
Attended an event (e.g. sports event, community event, etc.)	41	17.3
Had a mentor	5	2.1
Had a coach/trainer/leader (e.g. sports, music, arts, etc.)	6	2.5
Received practical support services (e.g. gardening, etc.)	2	0.8
Used a befriending service	0	0
Used a food bank	3	1.3
Other	6	2.5
None of the above	128	54
Prefer not to say	0	0

## Demographics

**Table 9.4.20****Q4.1 - Please indicate your age bracket**

	Freq.	Percent
16 to 19	0	0
20 to 24	1	0.33
25 to 29	3	0.99
30 to 34	8	2.65
35 to 39	7	2.32
40 to 44	8	2.65
45 to 49	14	4.64
50 to 54	14	4.64
55 to 59	27	8.94
60 to 64	32	10.60
65 to 69	44	14.57
70 to 74	41	13.58
75 to 79	20	6.62
80 or over	5	1.66
Prefer not to say	2	0.66
Missing	76	25.17
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.21**  
**Q4.2 - Which of the following best describes your gender?**

	Freq.	Percent
Male	68	22.52
Female	156	51.66
Other	0	0
Prefer not to say	2	0.66
Missing	76	25.17
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.22**  
**Q4.3 - Do you consider yourself to be actively practising a religion?**

	Freq	Percent
Yes	53	17.55
No	159	52.65
Prefer not to say	11	3.64
Missing	79	26.16
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.23**  
**Q4.4 - Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?**

	Freq.	Percent
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	195	64.57
Irish	4	1.32
Any other White background	11	3.64
Indian	1	0.33
Any other Asian background	1	0.33
African	2	0.66
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.33
Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background	4	1.32
Any other ethnic group	1	0.33
Other	2	0.66
Prefer not to say	5	1.66
Missing	75	24.83
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.24**  
**Q4.5 - In which postcode do you normally live?**

	Freq.	Percent
TN34 1	17	5.63
TN34 2	26	8.61
TN34 3	33	10.93
TN35 4	10	3.31
TN35 5	23	7.62
TN37 6	19	6.29
TN37 7	14	4.64
TN38 0	37	12.25
TN38 1	1	0.33
TN38 8	9	2.98
TN38 9	12	3.97
Other	20	6.62
Prefer not to say	2	0.66
Missing	79	26.16
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.25**  
**Q4.6 - Do you have any of the following caring responsibilities?**

	Freq.	Percent
Child or children (school age or younger)	26	11.4
A dependent partner/relative/friend	30	13.1
Other	4	1.7
An older dependent	13	5.7
None of the above	144	62.9
Prefer not to say	0	0

**Table 9.4.26**  
**Q4.7 - How would you describe your...**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Mental Health	216	7.13	0	10
Physical Health	216	6.764	1	10

### Work/job characteristics

**Table 9.4.27**  
**Q5.1 - How would you describe your current employment status?**

	Freq.	Percent
Employed	68	22.52
Self-employed	24	7.95
Unemployed	12	3.97
Retired	116	38.41
Student	1	0.33
Prefer not to say	0	0
Missing	81	26.82
Total	302	100.00



**Table 9.4.28**  
**Q5.2 - Are you the main earner in your family/household?**

	Freq.	Percent
Yes, I am the main and only earner	26	8.61
Yes, I am the main earner	23	7.62
No	35	11.59
Prefer not to say	8	2.65
Missing	210	69.54
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.29**  
**Q5.2 - How long have you been unemployed?**

	Freq.	Percent
Less than 1 month	0	0
1 month to 3 months	0	0
3 months to 6 months	0	0
6 months to a year	0	0
Prefer not to say	2	0.66
More than a year	10	3.31
Missing	290	96.03
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.30**  
**Q5.2 - How long have you been retired?**

	Freq.	Percent
Less than 6 months	1	0.33
1 - 2 years	23	7.62
More than 5 years	79	26.16
Prefer not to say	4	1.32
6 months to a year	2	0.66
2 – 5 years	5	1.66
Missing	188	62.25
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.31**  
**Q5.3 - Which industry do you work in?**

	Freq.	Percent
Manufacturing	1	0.33
Construction	0	0
Retail	0	0
Financial Services	1	0.33
Hospitality and leisure	4	1.32
Accountancy	1	0.33
Legal	2	0.66
IT & telecoms	0	0
Media / marketing / advertising / PR & sales	1	0.33
Medical & health services	17	5.63
Education	11	3.64
Transport & distribution	1	0.33
Real Estate	0	0
Other	14	4.64
Prefer not to say	3	0.99
None of the above	0	0
Voluntary and Community Sector	21	6.95
Missing	225	74.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 9.4.32**  
**Q5.3 - Which industry did you work in?**

	Freq.	Percent
Manufacturing	8	2.65
Construction	2	0.66
Retail	7	2.32
Financial Services	5	1.66
Hospitality and leisure	4	1.32
Accountancy	3	0.99
Legal	3	0.99
IT & telecoms	3	0.99
Media / marketing / advertising / PR & sales	1	0.33
Medical & health services	23	7.62
Education	26	8.61
Transport & distribution	3	0.99
Real Estate	0	0
Other	12	3.97
Prefer not to say	2	0.66
None of the above	0	0
Voluntary and Community Sector	3	0.99
Missing	197	65.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 9.4.33**  
**Q5.3 - Which industry would you like to work in?**

	Freq.	Percent
Voluntary and Community Sector	1	0.33
Missing	301	99.67
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.34**  
**Q5.4 - How many hours do you work in a typical week?**

	Freq.	Percent
0-10	8	2.65
11-20	13	4.30
21-30	29	9.60
31-40	24	7.95
41-50	12	3.97
50+	4	1.32
Prefer not to say	1	0.33
Missing	211	69.87
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.35**  
**Q5.4 - How many hours do you spend studying in a typical week?**

	Freq.	Percent
11-20	1	0.33
Missing	301	99.67
Total	302	100.00

**Table 9.4.36**  
**Q5.5 – How satisfied are you with...**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Life in general	88	6.841	1	10
Work in general	88	6.716	1	10
Work-life balance	88	6.511	2	10

**Table 9.4.37**  
**Q5.5 – How satisfied are you with...**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Life in general	1	7	7	7
Your studies	1	7	7	7
Work-life balance	1	7	7	7

**Table 9.4.38**  
**Q5.5 – How satisfied are you with...**

	N	Mean	Min	Max
Life in general	123	7.041	3	10

Notes:

Tables 9.4.36, 9.4.37, 9.4.38 list answers to the same question, by respondents who answered Q 5.1 differently.

## 9.5 Appendix E: Additional comparative table

Table 9.5.1 Demographic comparison of sample

	Survey samples			Census 2011 <sup>1</sup>
	CLS - national	CLS – South East	HVA - Hastings	Hastings
Age	49.4	51.2	61.1	40.2 <sup>2</sup>
Female	54.6%	55.3%	71.7%	51.2%
White	78.5%	86.4%	92.5%	93.8%
Employed	42.4%	43.9%	22.5%	48.3%
Self-Employed	5.2%	6.3%	8.0%	11.2%
Student	4.8%	3.9%	0.3%	4.1%
Retired	21.9%	23.4%	38.4%	14.3%
Care Responsibilities	14.7%	14.7%	31.1%	10.5% <sup>3</sup>
Life Satisfaction	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.4 <sup>4</sup>
N	12,629	1,712	302	90,254

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000062>

<sup>2</sup> Census data covers the entire population, whereas the CLS and HVA surveys cover the age groups 16+.

<sup>3</sup> Census data based on providing unpaid care which differs from the wording of the HVA which asks about caring responsibilities (see Table 9.4.25 for question wording and response options).

<sup>4</sup> Taken from ONS Personal Wellbeing in the UK April 2020 to March 2021

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2020tomarch2021#personal-well-being-by-local-area>