

11 Volunteering

Main Findings

Levels of volunteering have remained relatively stable over the last nine years, with around three in ten adults providing unpaid help to organisations or groups. In 2017, 28 per cent of adults provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months.

The profile of volunteers has also remained relatively stable over time. Volunteers are more likely to be:

- women
- from higher socio-economic and income groups
- from rural areas
- from less deprived areas.

Overall, the volunteering results from 2017 by economic situation, household income and area deprivation continue to support existing evidence about the under-representation of disadvantaged groups in volunteering.

The type of organisations most commonly volunteered for were 'children's activities associated with schools' (21 per cent), 'youth or children' organisations (20 per cent), and 'local community or neighbourhood groups' (19 per cent).

Women were more likely to volunteer with children and young people, with 'health, disability and social welfare' organisations and 'religious groups', whilst men were more likely to volunteer with 'sport / exercise' organisations, with 'hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs' and with their local community.

Younger adults were more likely to volunteer with children and young people and help with sporting activities, whilst older adults were more likely to volunteer for religious organisations, community groups, and groups working with the elderly.

11.1 Introduction and Context

The Scottish Government recognises that volunteers of all ages form a valuable national resource, vital to the success of Scotland and that volunteering is a key component of strong communities. Volunteering is all about new experiences, feeling good and making a difference and it is important to recognise the benefits of volunteering, in terms of skills development, community empowerment and strengthening public services.

The definition of volunteering currently used by the Scottish Government is: “the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary”⁷³. This definition broadly encompasses ‘formal volunteering’ – where unpaid work is undertaken through an organisation, group or club to help other people or to help a cause (such as improving the environment). In contrast, ‘informal volunteering’⁷⁴ refers to unpaid help given as an individual directly to people who are not relatives.

The volunteering questions in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) ask about providing unpaid help to organisations or groups, therefore the focus of this chapter is on formal volunteering. This chapter presents findings from the 2017 data about the prevalence and frequency of volunteering, and the type of organisations for which individuals give up their time. Biennially, questions are asked about the activities which individuals undertake, hours spent volunteering in the past month, and reasons why people who volunteered in the past have now given up. These questions were last asked in the 2016 survey. A number of terms are used interchangeably to refer to volunteering throughout the chapter (e.g. unpaid help, unpaid work, unpaid activity and voluntary work).

⁷³ Scottish Executive (2004) Volunteering Strategy <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/05/19348/36990>

⁷⁴ New questions on ‘informal volunteering’ are to be asked in the survey, biennially from 2018. The first reporting of these questions will be in 2019.

11.2 Providing Unpaid Help to Organisations or Groups

11.2.1 Prevalence of Providing Unpaid Help

The overall rate of volunteering has remained relatively stable between 2009 and 2017 with the proportion of females volunteering being consistently higher than males.

Table 11.1 shows that **28 per cent of adults provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months.**

Profile of volunteers

- There is an under-representation of disadvantaged groups who have volunteered.
- In 2017 as in every other year, more women (30 per cent) than men (26 per cent) volunteered in the last 12 months.
- Fewer people from lower socio-economic groups have provided unpaid help compared with higher income groups.
- The percentage of adults volunteering increased with income.
- Volunteering has been consistently lower for those in the 20 per cent most deprived areas (19 per cent), compared to 37 per cent in the 20 per cent least deprived areas.
- The rate of volunteering has been consistently higher in rural areas than in urban areas
- Those in 'education (including HE/FE)', those who are 'self-employed' and those in 'part-time employment' (all 32 per cent) were most likely to have provided unpaid help.
- Adults who are 'permanently sick or have short-term ill-health issues or are disabled' (13 per cent) were least likely to have volunteered.

There is a difference along gender lines with **a higher percentage of women** (30 per cent) saying that they **provided unpaid help compared with men** (26 per cent) (Table 11.1).

Table 11.1: Whether provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by gender

Column percentages, 2017 data

Adults	Male	Female	All
Yes	26	30	28
No	74	70	72
Total	100	100	100
Base	4,540	5,270	9,810

Figure 11.1 shows the trend in volunteering over the past nine years. It can be seen that the overall **rate of volunteering has remained relatively stable** over the time period with the proportion of females being consistently higher than males.

Figure 11.1: Percentage providing unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by gender

2009-2017 data, Adults (minimum base: 2,450)

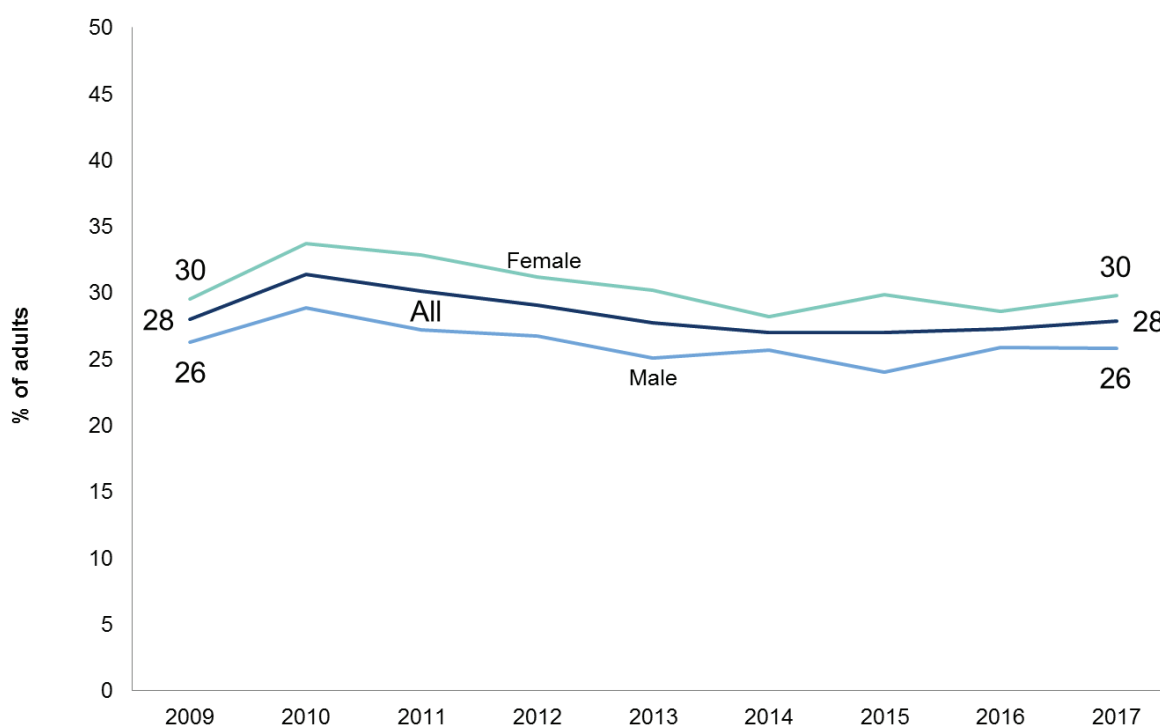
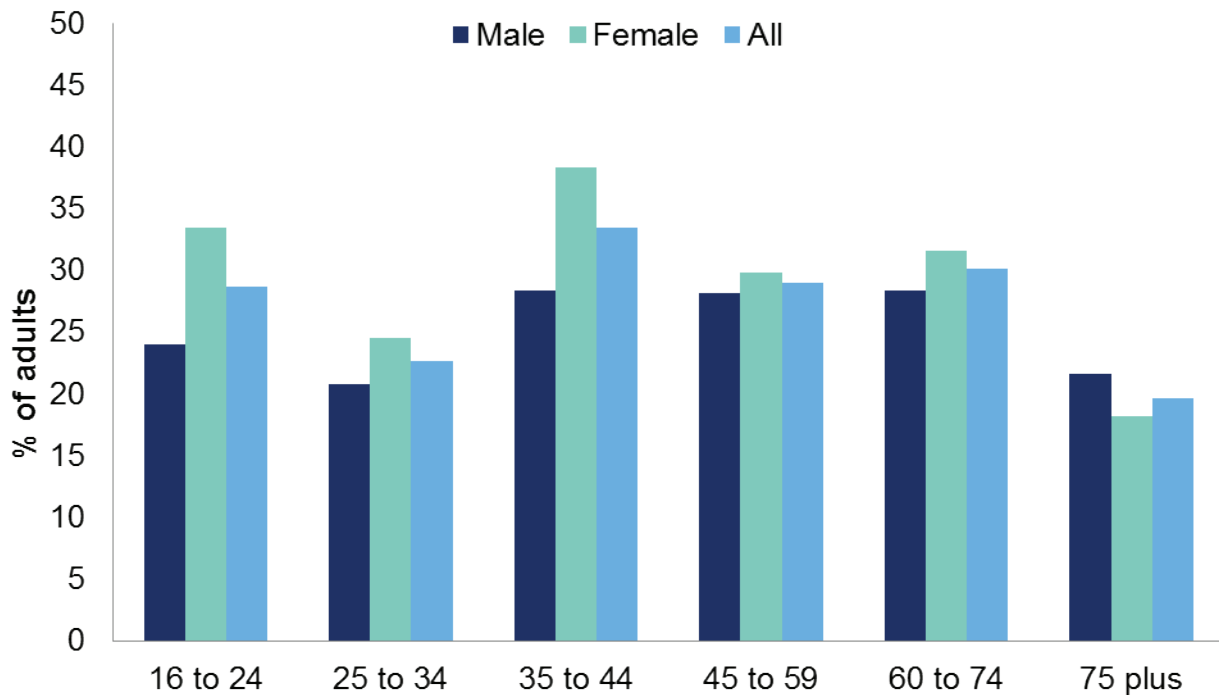


Figure 11.2 shows the gender difference in volunteering by age. In 2017, there was a difference between females and males within the 35 to 44 age group, where 38 per cent of females and 28 per cent of males volunteered. Also in the 16 to 24 age group 33 per cent of females volunteered compared to 24 per cent of males, and in the 25 to 34 age group, 24 per cent of females volunteered compared to 21 per cent of males.

Volunteering was lowest among men aged 25 to 34 compared to all of the other age groups under 75. After the age of 75, providing unpaid help declined particularly for women (18 per cent), and more men in this age group (22 per cent) provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months.

Figure 11.2: Percentage providing unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by age within gender

2017 data, Adults (minimum base: 650)



There is also variation in volunteering according to individuals' current economic situation (Table 11.2). **Those in 'education (including HE/FE)', those who are 'self-employed', and those in 'part-time employment' were most likely to have provided unpaid help** (all 32 per cent). Adults who are 'permanently sick or have short-term ill-health issues or are disabled' (13 per cent) were least likely to have volunteered. Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of those 'unemployed and seeking work' had volunteered in the previous 12 months.

Table 11.2: Whether provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by current economic situation

Column percentages, 2017 data

Adults	Self - employed	Full-time employment	Part-time employment	Looking after home / family	Permanently retired from work	Unemployed and seeking work	In Education (including HE/FE)	Permanently sick or short term ill health or disabled	All
Yes	32	28	32	27	27	24	32	13	28
No	68	72	68	73	73	76	68	87	72
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Base	620	3,220	980	420	3,380	290	370	520	9,810

Table 11.3 shows the differences in volunteering by household income. It can be seen that **in general the percentage of adults who volunteered increased with income**. Just over a fifth of adults in households in the lowest net income bands, £0-£20,000, volunteered in the last 12 months, compared to almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of those with a net household income of more than £40,000.

Table 11.3: Whether provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by net annual household income

Column percentages, 2017 data

Adults	£0 - £6,000	£6,001 - £10,000	£10,001 - £15,000	£15,001 - £20,000	£20,001 - £25,000	£25,001 - £30,000	£30,001 - £40,000	£40,001+	All
Yes	23	20	22	24	25	26	28	39	28
No	77	80	78	76	75	74	72	61	72
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Base	260	820	1,550	1,500	1,140	900	1,380	1,900	9,450

Household income in the SHS is that of the highest income householder and their partner only. Includes all adults for whom household income is known or has been imputed. Excludes refusals/don't know responses.

Figure 11.3 shows the prevalence of volunteering by level of deprivation, as defined using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It can be seen that the levels of volunteering increase as area deprivation decreases, 19 per cent of adults in the 20 per cent most deprived areas volunteered in 2017 compared to 37 per cent in the 20 per cent least deprived areas

Figure 11.3: Whether provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Column percentages, 2017 data

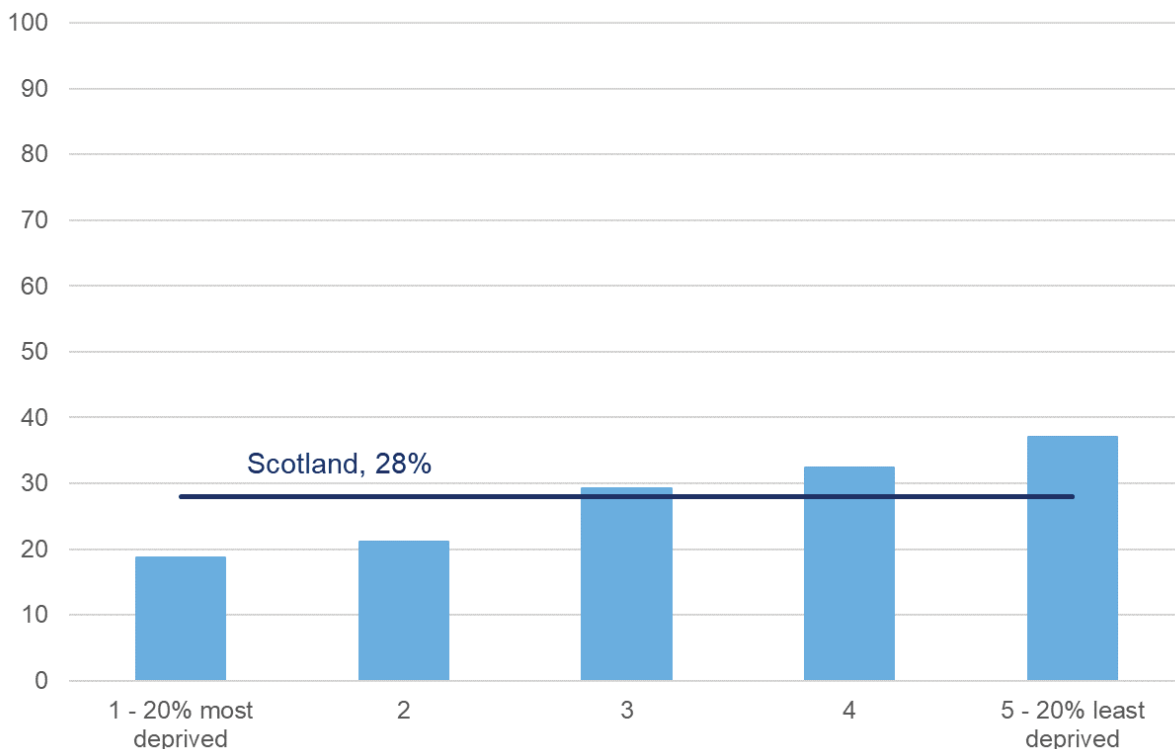


Table 11.4 shows differences in volunteering by Urban Rural classification. It can be seen that **the rate of volunteering in rural areas was higher than in urban areas**, with 31 per cent of adults in both remote rural areas and in accessible rural areas saying they provided unpaid help to groups or organisations compared to around a quarter of adults in large and other urban areas (26 per cent and 27 per cent respectively).

Table 11.4: Whether provided unpaid help to organisations or groups in the last 12 months by Urban/Rural Classification

Column percentages, 2017 data

Adults	Large urban areas	Other urban areas	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Accessible rural	Remote rural	Scotland
Yes	26	27	30	28	31	31	28
No	74	73	70	72	69	69	72
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Base	2,810	3,530	880	570	1,000	1,030	9,810

11.2.2 Types of organisations Unpaid Help Provided to

Table 11.5 shows **the most common types of organisations** which volunteers helped with **were** those who worked with **'children's activities associated with schools'** (21 per cent), followed by people who worked with **'youth / children'** (20 per cent) and people who worked with **'local community or neighbourhood groups'** (19 per cent). The next most common types of volunteering were, 'sport / exercise (coaching or organised)' and 'hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs' (both 17 per cent), and then 'health, disability and social welfare' organisations (16 per cent) and 'religious groups' (15 per cent).

Table 11.5: Types of organisations or groups for which adults provided help for in the last 12 months by Urban/Rural Classification

Percentages, 2017 data

Adults who did voluntary work in the last 12 months	Large urban areas	Other urban areas	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Accessible rural	Remote rural	All
Children's activities associated	19	21	22	27	23	20	21
Youth / children	19	19	27	23	23	19	20
Local community or	18	14	21	23	23	38	19
Sport / exercise (coaching or	12	18	16	33	18	20	17
Hobbies / recreation / arts /	16	15	21	19	18	17	17
Health, disability and social	15	17	16	11	19	12	16
Religious groups	13	17	14	6	17	17	15
The elderly	8	11	12	6	14	17	11
Environmental protection	8	5	8	5	8	16	7
Education for adults	6	6	5	2	6	3	6
Citizens groups	2	3	3	5	5	10	4
Safety, first aid	2	3	5	5	5	6	4
Wildlife protection	3	3	8	3	6	10	4
Political groups	4	5	3	3	3	3	4
Justice and human rights	4	2	3	1	3	2	3
Domestic animal welfare	4	3	2	2	3	3	3
Trade union activities	1	1	0	1	1	2	1
None	5	3	1	9	2	4	4
Don't Know	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>BaseMin</i>	<i>720</i>	<i>980</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>320</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>2,790</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

Table 11.5 also shows the variation in the types of organisations that adults volunteered with by Urban Rural Classification. It can be seen that similar percentages of **adults in large and other urban areas and remote and accessible rural areas** (around one-fifth) **provided unpaid help to 'children's activities associated with schools' and 'youth / children' organisations.**

A higher percentage of **adults in accessible small towns, remote small towns and accessible rural areas** (around one-fifth) provided unpaid help to **'hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs'** compared to large and other urban areas (16 and 15 per cent respectively).

A higher percentage of adults in **accessible rural areas and other urban areas** (19 per cent and 17 per cent respectively) provided unpaid help to **'health, disability and social welfare'** organisations compared to remote small towns and remote rural areas (11 per cent and 12 per cent respectively).

A higher percentage of adults in **other urban areas, accessible rural and remote rural areas provided unpaid help to 'religious groups'** (all 17 per cent) compared to large urban areas and accessible small towns (13 and 14 per cent respectively) and remote small towns (6 per cent). Providing **unpaid help to 'the elderly' was also highest in remote and accessible rural areas** (17 and 14 per cent respectively) compared to all other areas.

Thirty-eight per cent of volunteers in remote rural areas and around one-quarter in accessible small towns, remote small towns and accessible rural areas provided unpaid help to 'local community or neighbourhood groups' compared to large urban areas (18 per cent) and other urban areas (14 per cent).

Conversely, a higher percentage of **adults in remote small towns provided unpaid help to 'sport / exercise** (coaching or organising)' groups (33 per cent) than all other areas, and a higher percentage of adults (16 per cent) in remote rural areas provided unpaid help to 'environmental protection' compared to all other areas (between 5 and 8 per cent).

Table 11.6 shows the types of organisations that adults volunteered with in the last 12 months by gender and age. **Women were more likely to volunteer with ‘children’s activities associated with schools’** (26 per cent), ‘youth / children’ (22 per cent), ‘health, disability and social welfare’ organisations (18 per cent), and ‘religious groups’ (17 per cent). **Men were most likely to have volunteered with ‘sport / exercise (coaching or organising)’** (23 per cent), ‘local community or neighbourhood groups’ and ‘hobbies / recreation / arts / social club’ (both 20 per cent).

Providing help with ‘children’s activities associated with schools’ (34 per cent) was most common among adults aged 35 to 44 and providing help to ‘youth / children’ was most common among adults aged 16 to 24 (34 per cent). Adults aged 16 to 24 were also most likely to have volunteered with ‘hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs’ (27 per cent) followed by ‘sport / exercise (coaching or organising)’ (23 per cent). In contrast, volunteering for ‘religious groups’ and organisations working with ‘the elderly’ tended to increase with age, as did volunteering with ‘local community or neighbourhood groups’ (to age 60-74 on the latter). Of those adults aged 75 and over who had volunteered, 38 per cent did so with ‘religious groups’, 20 per cent did so with ‘local community or neighbourhood groups’ and 19 per cent with organisations working with ‘the elderly’.

Table 11.6: Types of organisations or groups for which adults provided help for in the last 12 months by gender and age

Percentages, 2017 data

Adults who did voluntary work in the last 12 months	Male	Female	16 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 59	60 to 74	75 plus	All
Children's activities associated with schools	14	26	30	25	34	19	10	3	21
Youth / children	18	22	34	20	26	20	12	5	20
Local community or neighbourhood groups	20	18	15	18	15	20	24	20	19
Sport / exercise (coaching or organising)	23	11	23	19	16	19	11	7	17
Hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs	20	14	27	13	12	15	19	12	17
Health, disability and social welfare	14	18	11	19	14	18	18	13	16
Religious groups	13	17	8	6	12	12	25	38	15
The elderly	9	12	5	5	8	12	16	19	11
Environmental protection	9	6	4	7	6	9	9	4	7
Education for adults	7	5	4	9	5	5	8	4	6
Citizens groups	4	4	0	3	4	3	5	8	4
Safety, first aid	4	3	6	3	5	4	2	0	4
Wildlife protection	5	4	3	6	5	5	4	1	4
Political groups	6	2	2	3	5	4	5	2	4
Justice and human rights	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Domestic animal welfare	2	4	5	5	2	3	3	1	3
Trade union activities	2	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	1
None	3	4	4	2	3	4	3	7	4
Don't Know	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Base/Min</i>	<i>1,210</i>	<i>1,580</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>510</i>	<i>720</i>	<i>780</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>2,790</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.