

VOLUNTEERING AND COVID-19 EVIDENCE GROUP

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has been hosting weekly webinars with both national networks of volunteer involving organisations and local volunteer centres. The webinars have provided a forum for information sharing regarding the implications of COVID-19 for volunteering, at both a national and local level. An informal Evidence Group has been set up to feed into the wider network, to help ensure that the group can learn from existing evidence as well as shape new evidence collection on volunteering and COVID-19.

The Volunteering and COVID-19 Evidence Group currently consists of representatives from [NCVO \(Veronique Jochum\)](#), the Voluntary Sector Studies Network ([VSSN](#)) ([Angela Ellis Paine](#) and [Jurgen Grotz](#)), the Institute for Volunteering Research (Jurgen Grotz) and the Third Sector Research Centre ([TSRC](#)) (Angela Ellis Paine). Others have joined the group to discuss and share insight on specific issues as they have arisen, including, for example, the [Salford University \(Daiga Kamerade\)](#), [Sports Volunteering Research Network \(Lindsay Findlay-King and Fiona Reid\)](#) and [Sport England](#) (Kristen Natale). The group meets online every Monday at 16:15-17:00 (until 13 July, at which point it will be reviewed), via Zoom. We welcome anyone who would like to contribute to the group either regularly or occasionally – please just get in touch: info@ivr.org.uk

Focus

The Group focuses on several sets of questions which have emerged from the weekly webinars in terms of what practitioners would like evidence on. These can be broadly summarised as follows under: Recruitment; Motivations; Experience; Outcomes and Impact.

Recruitment: How are volunteers best mobilised during the crisis?

- How effective are 'top down' volunteer recruitment drives, such as NHS responders?
- How effective are 'bottom up' mobilisations of volunteers, such as mutual aid groups?
- How do top down and bottom up processes interact?
- Who is 'mobilised' through the different channels?

Motivations: What motivates volunteers to help in the current crisis?

- Are motivations to volunteer in a crisis different to ongoing volunteer motivations?
- Are the motivations of those who volunteer for NHS responders different to those who volunteer in their local community?

Experience: How do people experience volunteering in the current context?

- How do they experience the recruitment and deployment process?
- What barriers do people face when trying to volunteer?
- What enables volunteering, including key worker status?

Outcomes: What are the outcomes of volunteering in the current crisis?

- For volunteers: e.g. in terms of their mental health?
- For communities: e.g. what does volunteering contribute to recovery and resilience in communities; how does this vary?
- For the nation: e.g. what does volunteering contribute to the national efforts to beat and recover from COVID-19?

Impact: What are the longer term outcomes/legacy for volunteering?

- Do those who get involved in volunteering through the crisis keep volunteering?
- Do mutual aid groups set up by volunteers in their local communities sustain beyond the crisis?
- What effect will the crisis have on longer term trends in/levels and patterns of volunteering?

Action

The group hopes to offer actions in two areas:

- Reviewing existing evidence (see for example a summary of the review NCVO completed on [spontaneous volunteering](#));
- Collecting new evidence (being part of efforts to coordinate and undertake research on the current crisis, to provide learning for the future).

We will share learning from both areas of work with NCVO's covid-19 volunteering group, through its webinars, as it becomes available.