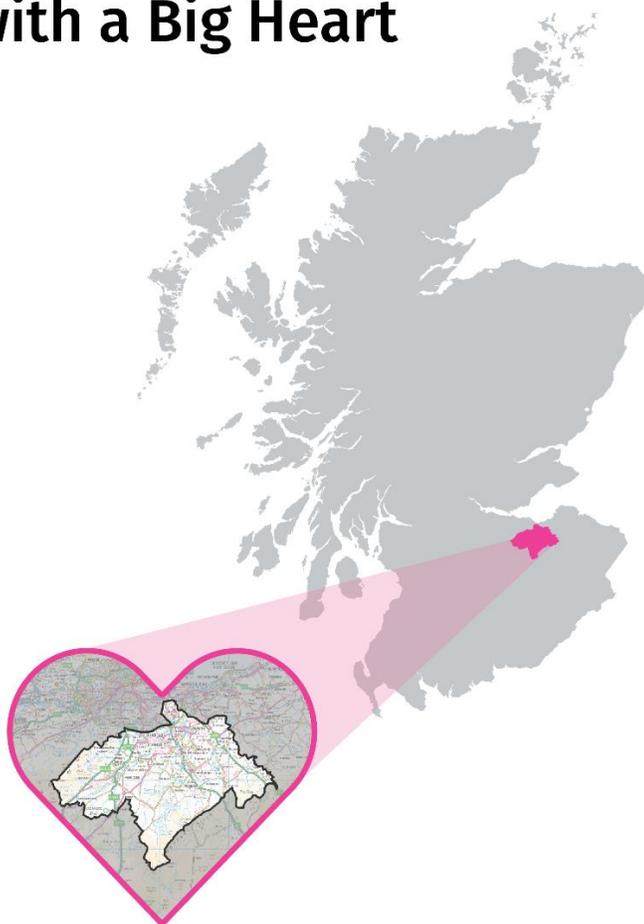


# Small Authority with a Big Heart



## Profiling Volunteering in Midlothian

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## Overview

The primary beneficiary of this report are Midlothian Volunteer Involving Organisations, our stakeholders, professionals working in the sector and general public, everyone who has got an interest in local volunteering.

There are sections in this report that are data driven, with statistical information as well as anecdotal information, reflections. You are welcome to use the information according to your needs, to learn more about volunteering generally and to support your own project or use the information to support your funding application, and more. It is an overview of volunteering activity and demographics in Midlothian which to help local VIO target their activities more directly or where they can play a part in future development of volunteering infrastructure at a local level.

This report is also to advise Volunteer Midlothian Outcome Framework, an internal policy commitment, which sets a direction on how Volunteer Midlothian can promote, recruit, recognise, celebrate and retain volunteers in Midlothian. It reflects our core funding agreement with the Scottish Government.

This briefing will give a view of how volunteering happens currently in Midlothian. It hopes to prove, Midlothian, in comparison to other Scottish authorities is geographically a small authority but with a big heart and the same big commitment to help others.

### 1. Reasons for producing the report

The intention was to produce a short briefing because of the changes that have happened over the past two years and the impact that they have had on the volunteering sector. Further analysis and data collection however, proved making the document *brief* and informative in the same time, quite challenging. The report is divided into sections we trust the reader will find required information.

Our existing vision statement is 'To encourage and inspire more people to volunteer and ensure that organisations have access to the best possible expertise and guidance on volunteering policy and practice'. Our commitment encompasses different strands of our work: '**Leading the Way in Volunteering**' and our key themes are: **Develop; Transform; Connect and Sustain**. These themes derive from our past VM Strategy but they are still relevant and timeless in relation to volunteering as a principle. However what Covid pandemic taught us is we also need to focus on **Retention** of volunteers and the Cost of living crisis made the need even more prominent.

Volunteer Midlothian's core duty is around promotion of volunteering and provision of evidence based information to our Third Sector, Private and Public sector about volunteering. Our volunteer development activities and advertising need to be suit for purpose. Therefore we need to know who, where and why volunteers in Midlothian. We would like to reach out to those who volunteer already, who volunteered in the past, those who are thinking about doing it in their spare time now or in the future or for someone they know or care for.

As stated in the Overview the reason for writing a report would be to further explore the landscape of volunteering activities and services in Midlothian, to explore volunteering demographics and to link this to wider and more thorough research about who volunteers where/when. This in turn will help to ensure further understanding of the context for volunteering locally and where to target activities appropriately.

### 2. Intended audience / Intended uses

We have primarily prepared this report for our Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) to help them make informed decisions on their future projects, to support their funding applications, creating new volunteer opportunities. We also looked at evidence for meeting the current need or trend for supported volunteering or "transformative" volunteering providing work experience.

### 3. Parameters and limitations

Our aim was to ensure that the methodology we used would derive from national data, reflect the local characteristics and allow comparison with Scotland as a whole showing trends and influences.

We have used external sources of information as well as gathered Volunteer Midlothian projects local views.

We have done a review of the available literature and data around this topic, combined with some local data gathering, to give a snapshot of volunteering activity in Midlothian presently. It should be noted that despite the length of the report it is still just a snapshot and contains some degree interpretative reflections where factual data was not yet available. It is the TSI's perspective based on the best data that we could find and use, with advisory support from Volunteer Scotland.

For example: if the data shows less older men volunteering than older women, what are the implications for practice? We need to understand that better, then create more targeted opportunities for older men which would be promoted in Midlothian by Volunteer Midlothian and our partners.

- Our sample size – is Midlothian – (93.150K, 2020). Following Volunteer Scotland and Volunteer Midlothian joined up analysis of data samples we are confident that data measured for Midlothian is reliable and ready for interpretation. Volunteer Scotland use a 4 year average in their reporting to compensate for variability from smaller sample sizes.
- Scottish Household Survey (SHS) results are very valuable, representative and are used on national and local level. But the smaller sample size means that data cannot always be broken down in the same ways as previous surveys.
- SHS results weren't broken down by Local authority in 2020, due to an overall reduced sample size due to COVID 19.

Local Authority	2016	2017	2018	2019
Midlothian	260	260	250	280

(Used is the volunteer participation rate - the number of volunteers.) There is no data available yet through [SHS 2021](#), to add to the above, The headline results are due to publish at the [end of April 2023](#), however we don't have information on whether they will allow for detailed local authority analysis.

We have identified reliable data from SHS and Midlothian Profile and obtained permission to use it for our purpose. However

- We believe some local data is not being captured due to inconsistency in logging all information onto internal systems and it's been identified, that lack of prior – sole focused - research studies on the topic of volunteering in Midlothian made comparison or citing challenging.
- Similarly presenting data in a form of a 'review' or an 'update' wasn't possible, and national studies like NCVO - Time Well Spent provide insights only at a national level (can't be split into local authority).

### 4. The National Picture

Volunteer Midlothian as part of Midlothian TSI contributes towards **national outcomes** included in the National Performance Framework.

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

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
We are healthy and active, empowered, resilient and safe
We live in communities that are inclusive

More specifically with a view to volunteering related policies, – Volunteer Midlothian is strongly committed to achieve the national **Outcomes** included in [Volunteering for All](#), as follows:

- Volunteering and participation is valued, supported and enabled from the earliest possible age and throughout life
- Volunteering in all its forms is integrated and recognized in our lives through local and national policy
- There is an environment and culture which celebrates volunteers and volunteering and all of its benefits.
- The places and spaces where we volunteer are developed, supported and sustained
- There are diverse, quality and inclusive opportunities for everyone to get involved and stay involved

**Volunteering for All Framework’s “Vision** is of a Scotland where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives.

Volunteering is a choice undertaken of our own free will, a choice to give time or energy to get involved, help out and participate in our communities.

Volunteering contributes to our personal, community and national wellbeing.”

Nationally guided volunteering principles are **Flexibility and responsiveness**, where a volunteer:

- can adjust his/ her commitments or change a role when its needed to.
- gives his/ hers time on his/ hers own terms and around his/ hers life.
- knows what is being asked to do and how to stop if they wish.

## 5. Vol Action Plan and 'Road to Recovery'.

The work of Volunteer Midlothian and other TSI's is also informed and guided by the Scotland's [Volunteer Action Plan](#) Part of the V4All Framework, which aims to create a “Scotland where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives.” The plan is designed to provide actions over a 10-year period as a living, evolving/changing plan.

As Volunteer Midlothian our core duty is to raise the profile of volunteering and its benefits for society. The V4All ( principle document/ policy position) aims to do the same throughout the country and since it was written and launched after the pandemic had started its inclusive of the changes the national lockdown brought, changes in volunteering and societal consequences including attitudes to volunteering and mental health concerns.

[Volunteering for All](#): national framework, developed over 2018 by the Scottish Government jointly with partners from the volunteer and community sector, local government and NHS, with academics and social researchers, and with volunteers. It is a lead document that helps Volunteer Midlothian streamline and develop its service.

[Volunteering Action Plan](#) had been developed from the above mentioned national framework – Volunteering for All. The VAP (practice position / the 'how to') as an action plan through which the development of volunteering infrastructure in Scotland it is planned to be channelled over the next decade.

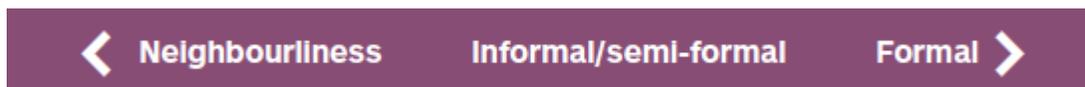
The work on the development of the Volunteering Action Plan was lead by Scottish Government, facilitated by [Volunteer Scotland](#) that Volunteer Midlothian has strong links with and a successful partnership working that benefits from information and data share.

That good working relationship had helped us in gathering and in an analysis of volunteering data nationally, comparing it and applying it to local landscape.

## 6. What is volunteering ? - Differences between informal and formal volunteering

Scottish Government describes 'Volunteering', as: "a wide range of ways in which people help out, get involved, volunteer and participate in their communities (both communities of interest and communities of place).

Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary.



## 7. Key observations about the volunteering landscape in Scotland

Rates of volunteering in Scotland vary depending upon economic status and other demographic factors.

In general, the percentage of adults volunteering increases with income. However, research published by Volunteer Scotland in 2021 (['Who Contributes the Most to Volunteering?'](#)) indicates that volunteers living in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland contribute more informal volunteer hours compared to any of the other SIMD quintiles - and a similar number of hours for formal volunteering. This research also shows that for formal volunteering the highest volunteering participation rates are among those who are self-employed, in part-time employment and in education or training. However, the highest average numbers of volunteering hours (i.e. the amount of time spent volunteering) are provided by those looking after the family/home, the retired and the unemployed.

For information: SIMD (7 domains: income, employment, health, education, housing, crime, access to services) – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - [Map](#)

## 8. Current issues and challenges

It should be noted that the cost of living crisis (COL) has highlighted a change in interpretation of deprivation and poverty, including: in work poverty. ['In-work' or working poverty \(Report 2019\)](#) describes households who live in relative poverty even though someone in the household is in paid work. Working poverty is of particular concern in tackling poverty given that the majority of the working-age population in relative poverty now live in working households.

We at Volunteer Midlothian continued looking into the mitigating the effects of the COL locally and trying to understand the "cause and effect" and "the domino" effect of the economic and societal changes in order to support our local volunteering and VIO.

We identified gaps in legislation regarding support for volunteering, instigated and further, contributed to changes of the national policy and [Best Practice](#), in October 2022. Following this we presented a Cost of Living Crisis analysis at the Scottish Third Sector Interface Network.

The Best Practice made the ways of supporting volunteers much clearer:

- Anything you pay volunteers must be for reasonable expenses incurred because of their volunteering role with your organisation or group.
- You should reimburse volunteers to the nearest penny (you're likely to need receipts for audit purposes also) and resist the temptation to provide a flat rate payment.
- You can provide a cash float to people before they incur expenses to prevent them being out-of-pocket; then processing their receipts and topping up the float. When someone finishes volunteering for your group, they should return any remaining balance.
- You can provide fuel cards for drivers to ensure they are never out-of-pocket.

- You can provide a warm venue for volunteers' meetings, training or to undertake their volunteering activities.
- You can provide equipment such as clothing if it is, "needed to complete the voluntary work". This could include clothing for keeping warm during volunteering over the winter months.
- If you are providing food (rather than reimbursing volunteers for the cost of food), then it should be provided because people will be volunteering outside of their homes at or around normal refreshment and meal times."
- On the other hand, our COL presentation at the Scottish Third Sector Interface Network focused on understanding resilience:
  - impact on people (financial and health and wellbeing)
  - impact on organizations (increase in demand, increase in cost, reduced income and reduced number of volunteers and paid staff), closure of businesses
  - impact on community

A comparison of Covid 19 and COL crisis response in the context of volunteering triggered more debates relating to resilience and ["erosion of people's ability to help themselves and each other"](#).

Covid-19 crisis VS cost of living crisis	
COVID PANDEMIC	COST OF LIVING CRISIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed rapidly</li> <li>• Made everyone equal in the face of <a href="#">the an infection</a></li> <li>• People were supported by Government by various schemes including furlough. Community support much stronger during Covid then currently</li> <li>• People had time to volunteer</li> <li>• Governments concentrated on addressing the cause of the infection – resulted in development of a vaccine(s)</li> <li>• Mostly affected those vulnerable and elderly (risk group)</li> <li>• Domestic abuse – increased. Other types of crime and safety decreased due to lockdown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes introduced gradually</li> <li>• Social injustice and income inequality</li> <li>• Government support through energy saving schemes. Communities support each other locally by food banks and sharing information on energy saving</li> <li>• People stop/ reduce volunteering to take up paid jobs and /or care for relatives so other members of family can increase working hours</li> <li>• Central government focusing on mitigating the effects of <a href="#">CoL</a></li> <li>• Vulnerability is exacerbated</li> <li>• All types of crime might be on increase ( cause effect)</li> </ul>

Some best practices are better discribed by an image:



The most recent research (published in August 2022) by the Scottish Council for Volunteering ( SCVO) outlined the current challenges facing third sector organisations, echoing many of the concerns we are seeing here in Midlothian. ("[Lifeline services at risk as voluntary organisations call for funding assurances](#)"). A large majority (86%) of organisations also reported rising costs since December 2021, with the most common rises being: Cost of materials and supplies (63 %); Transport costs (53 %); Staffing costs (47 %) and Energy costs (45%).

These results were based on an online survey of 457 third sector organisations based or operating in Scotland. The research took place between March and April 2022 and it shows that 42% of volunteer involving organisations felt this affected their ability to deliver their core services or activities. SCVO believes that with groups across Scotland facing challenges, planned, multi-year funding is key to ensuring that vital public services provided by charities and voluntary groups can continue.

On the other hand there is at times a capacity issue to deal with funding streams offered to VIO by Scottish Government and other organisations. It is mostly about short turn around of funding requiring swift completion of efficient funding applications which translate into effective projects. It often seems that organisations should have an "internal bank of projects" which they could dip in and out of when funding becomes available. This requires a degree of flexibility and sufficient staffing.

There is less evidence at the moment but speculating we can predict with some degree of certainty that the cost of living crisis will affect the supply of volunteers. The main areas we're considering at the moment are the cost of volunteering - for example the cost of fuel (<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/about-us/news-blog/news/charity-coalition-calls-on-chancellor-to-tackle-fuel-cost-crisis/>) and time. When more people have to take on additional hours / jobs which could reduce their free time to volunteer - is there a knock on impact of one adult in the family working more and partners or even grandparents taking on child care therefore reducing their time to volunteer.

To complete the picture of changes and challenges that are detrimental to the future of volunteering and VIO and the services they provide, we must include the Local Authority budget cuts. In the time of writing Midlothian councillors are still to make the final voting to decide where and how big the cuts will be. We hope our grass root democracy in a form of petitions and demonstrations and #CareDontCut campaign will make a difference to the organisations we support. ("[Charities Fight back](#)")

## 9. Volunteering patterns and trends in Scotland - what does the research show?

Trends and patterns are explored in more detail in each section compared with data available specifically for Midlothian or are emphasised when Midlothian follows national trend.

For example:

- Over two-thirds (68%) said that their volunteering helps them feel less isolated. – national trend
- Two-thirds of volunteers say they are always or often alongside other volunteers when volunteering– national and local trend
- Their volunteering is more likely to involve a mix of online and offline activities (57%) than one or the other. National and local trend.
- Very few volunteer exclusively online (6%). National and local trend
- Disabled people are more likely to volunteer online than non-disabled people,
- Motivation in some disadvantaged young people’s group is different in Midlothian to those nationally where the main motivation is to gain skills and qualifications but locally the recent Education Maintenance Allowance affected this motives

Source: [volunteer-experience\\_full-report.pdf \(volunteerscotland.net\)](#)

## 10. The Local Picture

The organisational context for volunteering in Midlothian

We work closely with Midlothian Council and our organization’s ethos, projects and initiatives contribute to the **Single Midlothian Plan** key priorities:

Reduction in inequality in **1.** learning, **2.** health and **3.** economic circumstances.

We are doing it as part of the **Improving Opportunities in Midlothian (IOM)** Community Planning Partnership thematic group. We work towards the below priority outcomes 2021-22

- The number of households in poverty across Midlothian is reduced
- The number of children living in households in poverty is reduced
- Participation measures for young people over 16 increase
- The qualification levels of people in Midlothian increases
- The number of people who are economically active increases
- The annual turnover of third sector organisations and volunteering rates increases
- Health inequalities for people in Midlothian are reduced

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## 11. The role of the TSI

Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) provide the third sector with a single point of access for support and advice. There is a TSI in every local authority area in Scotland. TSI’s receive core funding from the Scottish Government, but are also reliant upon income from a range of other public bodies and funders. The third sector is an overarching term which includes charities, social enterprises, community groups and other non-profit bodies that have been established for social or environmental benefit.

Midlothian Third Sector Interface is made up of two organisations: [Midlothian Voluntary Action](#) (also known as MVA) and [Volunteer Midlothian](#). Both are registered charities. A third branch, [Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian](#) (also known as SEAM), is part of Midlothian Voluntary Action.

## 12. The role of national charities

[National charities in Scotland](#) get people involved through volunteering as well as other activities such as: campaigning & petitions, charity jobs, events, fundraising, gifts, gifts in will & in memory.

They can be divided into categories of **general interests** such as:

Activities & Days Out	Animals & Pets	Arts & Crafts	Books and Films	Camping & Outdoors
Ethical Fashion and Beauty	Family Activities	Food & Entertainment	Gardening	Green Living
Health & Fitness	Lifestyle & Travel	Museums & Culture	Sporting Challenges	Technology & Travel

Scottish National charities can also be grouped in **categories of care** such as:

Aged	Animals	Armed & Ex Services	Children & Families	Community & Poverty
Culture and Heritage ( Urban or rural conservation)	Disabilities & Specific Conditions	Education & Training	Environment	Health & Therapy & Counselling
International	Religious	Rescue Services	Social Welfare & Equality	Sports & Recreation

All the 668 nationally registered charities in Scotland – are : 164 children & Youth Charities, 94 Religious charities, 126 Community Charities, 105 Culture & Heritage, 41 Health charities, 37 Animals charities, 42 Social Welfare, 21 Disables Charities, 20 Education and Training related, 18 Aged charities.

We support [Volunteer Managers Forum](#) which gathers volunteer managers, coordinators or project leads (paid or unpaid) and currently have 56 local representatives registered from 28 member organisations.

The Volunteer Managers Forum is open to our member organisations. It is an informal group which allows share of knowledge, experience and resources. It's a vibrant and useful networking structure/hub. Feedback from the group is used to inform community planning, and group members collaborate on joint projects such as the 'Big Thank You' event for local volunteers, the national Volunteers' Week Award Ceremony and an annual Volunteer Recruitment Fair, information stalls/ road shows etc. Each meeting ( 4 per year) has a main discussion topic and/or a guest speaker.

As presented in the last Midlothian Profile 2021 it is challenging to estimate exact number of groups that operate in Midlothian as some are not in contact with any umbrella organisations. There are at least 700 formal groups and organisations in Midlothian, including sports clubs; uniformed youth groups (for example Brownies, and Scouts); and small informal local or special interest groups, such as art clubs, and walking groups. There are also many volunteers that work with parent's councils during school terms and for religious institutions that provide childcare and activities out with academic year and at weekends or evenings.

"There are approximately 270 charities based in Midlothian registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR). It is difficult to know the exact figure because of the way data is collected and displayed by OSCR (e.g. many Edinburgh only organisations are displayed as Midlothian, and not all charities that are based in Midlothian are registered at a Midlothian postcode). In addition, many of the larger charities that work in Midlothian are based elsewhere (e.g. Edinburgh), and work in more than one local authority area. " (Midlothian Profile 2021)

### 13. The role of the local third sector and community organisations

The most recent results from Citizen's Panel survey will be available in the end of 2022 with a refreshed panellists to ensure equal representation and allowing a fresh view on local affairs. However based on the Citizen's Panel survey 2017/18 we understand that 31% of adults living in Midlothian were actively engaged in some form of volunteering through an organisation or group. The 31% of volunteering adults in Midlothian represents an estimated 27,000 people and is above the national average of 28%.

The picture had changed during the 2020/21 Covid Pandemic where restrictions of social distancing meant that formal volunteering dropped in numbers and informal volunteering become the main and admirable way for social interactions.

“This has included neighbours providing one another with informal support, communities self-organising and an overwhelming response to requests for volunteers. A public survey for Volunteer Scotland during June found that volunteering participation increased by half during the pandemic (from 48% to 74%), with higher numbers than previously (59%) expected to volunteer post-COVID.” ((Source: [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 - Chapter 4: Communities, Poverty, Human Rights | National Performance Framework](#))

“Since the pandemic there has been a significant increase in the number of adults volunteering informally in Midlothian's communities, linked to grassroots and neighbourhood resilience initiatives. Over 500 volunteers registered in response to the national 'Scotland Cares' campaign to recruit a volunteer workforce during the first lockdown in April 2020. Conversely, the number of formal volunteering opportunities in Midlothian dropped by around 50% as third sector organisations moved their services online to avoid the need for face-to-face contact”.( Midlothian Profile 2021)

### 14. Profiling Volunteering in Midlothian

According to the data from Scottish Government volunteers in Scotland (measured as the % of the demographic group volunteering) are more likely to be:

- “female (28% female vs 24% male SHS 2019)
- self-employed/part-time employed or in education (unfortunately we cant break SHS down in this was for Midlothian due to sample sizes)
- from higher socio-economic and income groups (Income up to 15K – 16%, £15,001-£30,000 – 26% 30k+ = 32%)
- from rural areas
- from less deprived areas(SIMD Q 2=14%. 3=38%. 4=44%, sample size to small for Q1 and Q5)
- healthy and non-disabled” (General Health - very good – 33%, good =3-%, fair =18.2% bad or very bad -11.1%) (Long term health condition – Yes 24% , No=28%) Its not possible with the sample size to breakdown long term health condition into the impact on day to day activities.

We can confirm that this trend is also relevant to Midlothian.

As per Midlothian Profile 2021, Midlothian's population in 2020, was 93,150. This is an increase of 0.7% from 92,460 in 2019. Between 2018 and 2028, the number of households in Midlothian is projected to increase, at a faster rate than the rest of Scotland. Midlothian's current population can be characterised by a population swell between the ages of 30 and 59 and the 0-15 year segments. This could be the impact of new-build family housing increasing the younger and working age population. It was projected that between 2018 and 2028, the population of Midlothian is projected to increase by 13.8% to 103,945 compared to a 1.8% for Scotland as a whole. Currently Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size out of all the 32 council areas in Scotland.

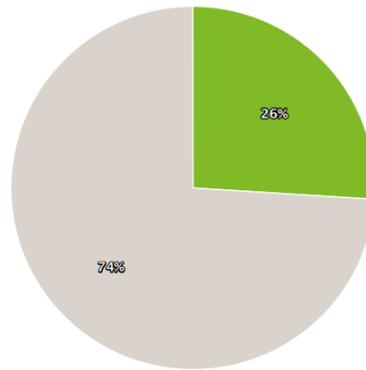
We believe that volunteering numbers will grow alongside a population increase proportionally with a third of Midlothian population currently volunteering. We hope that Volunteer Midlothian core functions which are promotion of volunteering, support of third sector organisations and rising profile of

volunteering and its value to community will have a desired effect and will be reflected in an increase numbers of volunteers.

As per the latest statistics from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 26% of adults in Midlothian, an estimated 19,507 people, volunteer formally through an organisation or group. To provide a more robust result, this is calculated on a 4-year average. This is the same as the national average in 2018 of 26%.

Data from the citizens advice panel questionnaire indicates 31% participation ( formal and informal) Differences in survey methodology and questions asked can be reasons for some differences in percentages.

4 year average participation rate: Midlothian



Highcharts.com

Adults, Base: 970 (sum of respondents for last 4 years 2015-2018)

Nationally, this had been the 'core group' over the years however this might be changing as a result of the pandemic and due to people's re-evaluation of lifestyles, changing focus on improvement and access to local green spaces, services to support mental health and wellbeing, change in work patterns and balancing life-work stability.

Children in Midlothian are mostly the receivers of the services provided by volunteers. Children do volunteer themselves, but guided by parents, schools or local neighbourhoods as part of local grassroot actions. Children also learn about volunteering from observations: parents, family members or taking part in community events and initiatives. Setting good role models is a key as well as mentoring. Recognition of volunteering achievements is important to the young then the older volunteers.

Only one school in Midlothian participates in the Young people in Scotland survey ( Ipsos Mori). The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Scotland has a potential for development in Midlothian if introduced to local area.

Young people in Midlothian are involved in the [Saltire Awards](#). The Saltire Awards are the Scottish Government's way of celebrating, recognising and rewarding the commitment, contribution and achievements of young volunteers in Scotland, aged between 12 and 25.

Volunteer Involving Organisations were supporting young people through the Saltire Award program before the Covid pandemic on regular basis. This was put to halt during the lockdown and now we are seeing an increase in the uptake of young volunteers which is very promising. It is an opportunity for the young person to gain confidence, skills and experience; as well as gain proof of commitment, team work, punctuality and much more.

## 15. Challenges for volunteering in Midlothian

Midlothian is the fastest growing local authority in Scotland with investment in housing and what follows a demand for education and health services and local infrastructure. Through conducted research we believe the increase in population will not translate into an increase in number of volunteers immediately. There is a link between the "will or need to give back to the community" and the use of local services and

a connection to the local area. It is believed that many of the new arrivals will still use the services of their old residence through convenience, custom, habit and loyalty.

All of the above change in time. We will predict an increase in numbers of volunteers proportional to the increase of the population as time progresses. Geographically, Midlothian sits on a commuter belt to Edinburgh with closed links to east and West Lothian thanks to its proximity to the Edinburgh City Bypass. Nevertheless, interestingly the post pandemic time could be a really exciting time for Midlothian with more companies adapting hybrid working models. With a mix of at home and in office working, with less commuting time and more time within local communities this might increase community engagement and volunteer participation. (If companies move to 4 days working week this would probably increase local engagement). This subject is discussed in greater detail the [Road to Recovery](#) document. (Lessons Learned from Scotland's Volunteering Response.)

Our population is changing. We are becoming more diverse, and more people are living for longer, often with longer term health conditions.

Also, more people will be working for longer (change in the retirement age) and may be caring for longer – “either for elderly family or for their own dependants as older family members, who might have once been relied on to support childcare, are working for longer – suggesting those from the younger end of the ‘civic core’ may not feel able to contribute as much. Already there is evidence emerging from the pre-retiral age group (45 – 59 years) of a decline in formal volunteering participation rates.” (SG Volunteering for All Framework). This trend it is predicted will apply to Midlothian as well.

## 16. What do they typically do and when/where do they do it?

According to the “Volunteering for All” , volunteers combine different types of activities, causes, organisations and frequency of involvement which reflect their own lifestyles, values and priorities.

Younger adults have tended to work with children and with sporting activities.

Older adults have preferred to volunteer for religious organisations, community groups and groups working specifically with the elderly.

And, [Time Well Spent](#) ( SCVO) suggests that most volunteers enjoy the experience and feel well supported and that they are recognised enough for their volunteering. Seven in 10 volunteers say they have or would recommend volunteering to friends or family.

The UK wide data shows that “Volunteers provide a wide variety of support [to community businesses](#). This ranges from their role as trustees and managers of many businesses, through clerical and administrative roles to directly providing services to customers (e.g. driving community buses, working in shops and helping in libraries).”

According to “Time well spent” volunteers in the UK are most likely to be involved in range of activities, most commonly relating to:

Scottish Household Survey provides a breakdown of activities for 2019 and 2018 as follows: (different questions were asked in 2018 and 2019)

-	2019	2019
<b>Adults who did voluntary work in the last 12 months</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Midlothian</b>
Children’s education and schools	19%	17%
Youth or children’s activities outside school	23%	26%
Health, disability and wellbeing	18%	15%
Physical activity, sport and exercise	15%	15%
Local community or neighbourhood	22%	19%
Religion and belief	15%	10%
Hobbies and recreation	10%	13%
Groups aimed at supporting older people	7%	10%

Politics		2%	1%
Trade Unions, justice and human rights		3%	4%
Environmental protection		5%	5%
Culture and heritage		6%	4%
Emergency services, first aid and public safety		2%	2%
Adult guidance, advice and learning		4%	8%
Animal welfare		4%	4%
Other		5%	5%
None		0%	3%
Don't know		1%	-

-		2018	2018
<b>Adults who did voluntary work in the last 12 months</b>		Scotland	Midlothian
Acting as a committee member or Trustee		25%	27%
Promotion and marketing		11%	11%
Office or administrative work		21%	20%
Providing advice, support or advocacy		14%	14%
Transporting people or things		12%	8%
Providing education, training or coaching		21%	28%
Campaigning		8%	6%
Fundraising		28%	34%
Counselling		4%	8%
Visiting, buddying or befriending		9%	11%
Care work e.g. providing meals, cleaning, dressing		4%	6%
Generally helping out as required		55%	59%
Other		1%	2%
Don't know		2%	1%

**What** do volunteers do?

<b>Scotland and Midlothian</b>		
Organising or helping to run <b>events</b> was the most popular type of volunteering activity (39%) ( all age groups)	Helping with secretarial/ <b>administration</b> or clerical work (28%) ( older volunteers)	Raising money or taking part in sponsored events and <b>getting other people involved</b> in the organisation (27%).
		<b>befriending and mentoring</b> (young volunteers (18-24))

**Where** do they volunteer?

<b>Scotland</b>		
People mainly volunteer locally, in their own neighbourhoods (81%) – data only available at Scotland level		
Community spaces (i.e. community hall) (35%)	At home (26%)	'on the go' (eg via phone or laptop) (16%).
<b>Midlothian</b>		
Citizen's panel 17/18)		

Just under a third (31%) of all respondents said that they volunteer in their local community, mostly but not exclusively as listed below:				
Community Centre	Parks and woodlands	Spots clubs	Museums	Health centres and gardens

**Who** do they volunteer for?

<b>Scotland and Midlothian</b>				
(42% of recent volunteers first got involved with the main organisation they volunteer five or more years ago, suggesting many have a long-standing relationship with their organisation. They vo data only available at Scotland level lunteer there on regular basis ( 48%) or (23%) as one off activity or dip in and out)				
recreational or leisure groups (20%)	local community or neighbourhood groups (20%)	health, disability and social welfare organisations (18%).	civil society organisations (67%)	(17%) are public sector organisations.

Source: [volunteer-experience\\_full-report.pdf](http://volunteer-experience_full-report.pdf) ([volunteerscotland.net](http://volunteerscotland.net))

**Why** do they volunteer ?

<b>Scotland</b> (Volunteer for All – 2019 ) People volunteer because they want to, because they can and because there is something for them to do				
<b>Midlothian</b>				
<b>Local Example:</b> (Volunteer Midlothian VMF survey August 2022)				
<b>Age/ Wellbeing</b>	<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>Community &amp; Poverty</b>	<b>Culture and Heritage</b>	<b>Health &amp; Therapy &amp; Counselling</b>
The common answer is to help others in their local community lead a more active life.  People wanting to feel useful.	Young people lack confidence to volunteer on their own that's where Transform steps in with supported volunteering.  Young people want to achieve DOE, Saltire etc. Good for CV and experience for further education and life in general.	It is to give something back to the to make a difference/give something back (everyone), to meet new people and get me out (retired), e community.  Themes as to why people volunteer are about social connections and giving back.	A desire to support local heritage. No gender differences, but age-wise, our younger volunteers are all looking to further their careers in heritage/museums.	To make a difference/give something back (everyone), to meet new people and get me out (retired), to gain experience (students and change of career)

**How many hours** per month?

<b>Scotland</b> (2021 Time well spent)
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Formal and informal volunteering	Men Average 10h p/m	Women Average 12h p/m	
<b>Midlothian</b> (2017/18 Midlothian Citizen's Panel)			
23% spent between 5 and 8 hours a month volunteering	12% spent between 9 and 12 hours a month	36% spent 15 hours or more per month volunteering	
<b>Local Example: Age/ Wellbeing project</b> (Volunteer Midlothian VMF survey August 2022)			
Total volunteer hours per year: 21/22 – 3841hrs	Total volunteer hours per year: 20/21 – 2087 hrs	Total volunteer hours per year: 19/20 – 4986 hrs	Total volunteer hours per year: 18/19 – 4314 hrs

### Recent volunteer trends

<b>Scotland</b> (Volunteer for All – 2019 )	
Increase in recognising an under-representation of disadvantaged groups in volunteering due to their exclusion from formal volunteering opportunities.	
Increase in recognising higher benefits of volunteering on a disadvantaged/ vulnerable then on the 'core group' of volunteering.	
<b>Midlothian</b>  (Volunteer Midlothian VMF survey August 2022)	Some young people gain experience via volunteering to help them get onto college courses. Young people are currently given Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which means they are often 'paid' to volunteer and those who don't receive the EMA are often not motivated.
	Increased level of understanding amongst many 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations that a supported volunteering such as buddying makes a difference to young people once they start it. There is an increased interest in an introduction of buddying projects.
	Many young people are keen to volunteer to help them into further education and college courses particularly those that have left school with few or no academic qualifications.
	Some older volunteers have been more frightened to come back to volunteering due to post Covid - 19 policies and procedures, guidelines.
	Virtual and remote volunteering. This was instigated by volunteers requesting tasks to do at home during lock-down. Higher percentage of applications to volunteer have also indicated a desire to volunteer remotely.
	More people looking to volunteer to get experience to use on their CV when applying for jobs (after as suggested by job centre) and more recently volunteers whose lives have changed due to covid/lockdown e.g. businesses that was no longer viable leading to early retirement.
	Early retired or early retired for health reasons seems to be a predominant group of the people who step forward to do befriending. People who have more time on their hands and want to give structure to their day or increase their socialisation.

### 17. Local patterns of volunteering in Midlothian mirror the national picture.

Scottish Household Survey 2020 consisted of 2,790 telephone/video interviews. For comparison the SHS 2019 completed around 10,500 face-to-face interviews.

This sample size is large enough for statistical analysis and for the statistics to be published by the Scottish Government. However there can be variability in participation rates with smaller sample sizes therefore yearly comparisons might be inconsistent.

The data from Time Well Spent – includes 877 respondents across Scotland (divided into under and over 55)  
The Citizen’s Panel responses intends to gather 1000 panellists across Midlothian, in

- 2016/2017 Questionnaire was sent to 998, responded 629 response rate 63%
- 2017/2018 Questionnaire was sent to 980, responded 619 response rate 63%
- 2019/2020 Questionnaire was sent to 1000, responded 551 response rate 55%
- 2021 Questionnaire sent to 1000, responded 542, response rate 54%
- [2022 Questionnaire](#) was sent to 1000, responded 565 response rate 57%

We are well aware of the work that went into creating Neighbourhood Plans, and that some of them would need to be soon updated especially due to the effects of the pandemic and recovery from lockdowns, cost of living crisis as well as the tectonic shift in local council budgeting and it’s future predicted even greater cuts.

What we know however by analysing each plan is that many volunteers took part in planning and contributing greatly towards these plans but the word “volunteer” was only used twice in the all 16 plans. We believe volunteers were appreciated through the process, in the future however, we would like to make sure volunteering is more locally recognised.

## 18. Economic Value

In Midlothian, formal volunteers contributed:



**Note:** The data (hours and economic value) is based on a 2-year average (2016 and 2018). Data on the economic value of volunteering is not available for 2015 and 2017.

**Scottish Household Survey Data:** Due to the small sample sizes for each local authority there can be large variability in SHS volunteering data year-on-year. Care should therefore be taken in the use and interpretation of participation rates, hours volunteered and economic values.

Source: [Economic value for Midlothian](#)

Following data from the [“Assessing the value of volunteers in community business”](#) (June 2020),

“The value of an hour of their time is valued at what it would cost to employ a worker to do the same job, or(…) their time should be valued at the hourly rate”

The monetary value is what can be calculated as an real input into the economy with a return on profit, however there is a preventative value of volunteering which is measured differently. For the whole of the UK, “using national values of improved wellbeing from volunteering, these benefits would be around £230 million per annum for the volunteers”. This applies on local level as well however as this figure is based on a different economic concept from the value of volunteering time they cannot be combined to present the huge societal benefit.

## 19. How can we break down barriers to participation?

Flexibility in all demographic groups in terms of length of commitment

According to "Time well spent" research the trend that is applicable to Midlothian as well as the whole of Scotland is that nowadays more volunteers are interested in dipping in and out and one off activities than giving time on a regular basis with an ongoing commitment. The survey respondents who were interested in volunteering opportunities, were most fond of flexible ways of giving time with less ongoing commitments. I.e. a) being able to dip in and out (34%), b) giving time for a one-off event (31%), c) carrying out activities at a time/and or place of their choosing (28%), and only 5% of those that have never volunteered in the past were interested in giving their time regularly, compared to 38% of recent volunteers.

#### Flexibility in different demographics in terms of type of engagement

Following the findings from the same research, it is apparent that some opportunities are more appealing to certain demographic groups. These included the following:

- a) opportunities to dip in and out, to participate in one-off activities or volunteer seasonally were more likely to appeal to older volunteers over 55 than volunteers aged under 55
- b) younger volunteers, conversely, were more likely than older volunteers to be interested in opportunities that involved carrying out activities in a time and place of their choosing (29%) and giving time on a regular basis (24%).
- c) Women were more likely than men to be interested in the flexible ways of giving time, such as one-off events (35% vs 26%), or opportunities that allowed them to dip in and out (36% vs 31%). And men were more interested than women in ongoing projects that are not time-limited (21% vs 15%). We believe the Midlothian demographics trends follow the Scottish demographic trends, which mirror those of the GB-wide results. This trend is associated with women traditionally being committed to childcare or grand – childcare.

#### Motivation for uptaking volunteering amongst recent volunteers and those who never volunteered

Volunteers are mostly motivated by opportunities where they could make use of existing skills or experience (53%). Volunteering opportunity was more attractive when it provided:

- a) the flexibility in combining time giving unpaid help with an existing hobby or interest (45%),
- b) unpaid activities which look fun and enjoyable to be part of (45%),
- c) opportunity to socialise and meet new people (37%).

As above the these results follow the UK -wide trends. Interestingly those surveyed who have never volunteered had the highest proportion interested in giving unpaid help through activities that are mostly or all online (29%, vs 21% of recent volunteers). Trend clearly visible throughout Midlothian following evidence from Volunteer Midlothian local survey.

#### Differences in interest across demographic groups

As mentioned above the most popular motivators for looking at volunteering opportunities are combining current interest or a hobby and fun aspect with element of socialisation.

There are some differences in interest across demographic groups. Opportunities that were enjoyable and fun activities and those that involved giving unpaid help through activities that are mostly or all online are more popular among volunteers aged under 55 vs. those over 55. Through Volunteer Midlothian internal research we can confirm that the main motivation for volunteering for young people is to gain work experience, gain confidence and transferable skills whereas the main motivation for older people is "giving back" to society.

Only 10% of recent volunteers give time through employer-supported volunteering, reflecting relatively low levels of awareness generally for this type of volunteering.

In addition, (from this 10%) the “Time well spent” indicates that interest in employer-supported volunteering declined with age, with 27% of those aged under 55 interested, compared with 3% of those aged 55+. Still we in Volunteer Midlothian strongly believe in supporting local businesses and organisations to offer volunteering opportunities through work schemes and value volunteering opportunities when interviewing for new employment. We have supported development of a [Midlothian Council Volunteer Policy](#) by the local government, with one of the commitments being an establishment of a local councillor becoming a champion for volunteering across the county.

Volunteering with Midlothian Council (largest employers remain the public sector with 4,269 employees) runs in two stands:

- one: as Staff Time Donation Scheme where staff is released from normal duties to devote limited and agreed with line manager time to a charitable cause, local community
- two: volunteering with council departments to enhance existing service, delivered by dedicated employed staff. Volunteering in this capacity helps deliver service either for longer, more often or to a higher degree.
- Volunteering positions are advertised on My Job Scotland page - [Volunteering | Midlothian Council | myjobscotland](#)

Volunteer Midlothian made a request to Edinburgh College Midlothian Campus and Midlothian Council to change their job application forms to reflect the value in volunteering. In practice it meant a decision made to add a sentence: “volunteering experience or unpaid work, which may be relevant to your application.” Following from this applicants are welcome to use the volunteering experience in competency based interviews as well as supporting information.

This small change, we believe, will slowly but firmly change the perception of volunteering and add to recognition of it’s great value.

Alongside an establishment of new volunteer opportunities by our local Volunteer Involving Organisations - **supply** of volunteers - we advocate valuing volunteering amongst local employers (including East and Midlothian Chamber of Commerce) – we create a **demand** for skills gained through volunteering.

Our long term aim is to see job candidate’s clarity about benefits of having volunteering experience as “good to have” on their CV as volunteering experience do increase employment prospects.

[Volunteering helps refine and develop new skills](#) and gives candidates different talking points to answer interview questions.

During the last year (2021/22) we have done a considerable amount of advocating amongst local businesses and public sector, educational institutions and reviewed our own recruitment policies to reflect the need for greater recognition of skills gained through volunteering at local job market. ( see economic value - above)

It had been noted (“Time well spent”) that volunteers from higher social grades were more likely to be interested in using existing skills (56%) than those from lower grades and with lower qualifications (48%).

In the same context, as stated in the Midlothian Profile 2021, there is variation in volunteering depending upon an individual’s economic status. In general, the percentage of adults volunteering increases with income.

The 2017 SHS survey revealed that nationally over a fifth of adults in households in the lowest net income bands (£0-£20,000) volunteered, compared to almost two-fifths (39%) of those with a net household income of more than £40,000.

Data from 2021 confirms similar tend with:

34% (more than £40,000/ 8,6 h p/m) and (£0-10,000/ 9h p/m) 29% and (£10,001 -20,000/ 11h p/m) 32% - formal volunteering,

43% (more than £40,000/ 7h p/m) and (£0-10,000/ 12.4h p/m) 29% and (£10,001 – 20,000/ 12.4h p/m) 32% - informal volunteering.

These 34% of formal volunteers are regular volunteers who get involved in multiple volunteering activities in the same organisation. Some activities were much more likely to be undertaken by formal volunteers than occasional volunteers such as: leading a group/being a trustee, handling money and representing the group which requires a certain level or type of time commitment.

The below table from "[Value of volunteering](#)" apart from evidencing value of volunteering work in pounds per hours presents the type of community / businesses within which the activities are taken up.

Volunteer Midlothian supports VIO through volunteering journey. We, once a year organise Volunteer Recruitment Fairs, we lead on celebrating volunteers during the National Volunteers' week by organising the Volunteer Award Ceremony and a Thank you event.

Following from our success in persuading few leading organisations in Midlothian to include volunteering skills in their job interview process, we will aim for those who are preparing for retirement to have an access to a comprehensive information on volunteering as part of their HR leave pack. This is to ensure the skills are not lost but used and passed as valuable assets to younger generations and to facilitate a smooth transition from being fully engrossed in work to activities that will help sustain physical and mental health of those who retire.

### Estimates of the value of volunteering in community businesses in 2019 by sector

Community business sector	Total volunteers	Total hours (millions)		Total value £m p.a.		Value per business £000s p.a.	
		Higher	Lower	Higher	Lower	Higher	Lower
Village halls	66,300	2.3	2.3	£31.1	£31.1	£15	£15
Community hubs	39,500	4.4	4.4	£60.0	£60.0	£30	£30
Libraries	17,600	2.0	1.2	£26.7	£17.0	£67	£42
Arts centre/facility	11,900	1.3	0.8	£18.1	£11.5	£45	£29
Employment; IAG; training and education; business support etc.	11,600	1.3	1.3	£17.6	£17.6	£20	£20
Shops (and cafés)	10,500	1.2	0.9	£16.0	£12.2	£40	£30
Food, catering and production	9,600	1.1	0.7	£14.6	£9.3	£73	£46
Sports and leisure	9,400	1.0	0.8	£14.3	£10.9	£36	£27
Environment/nature and conservation	8,700	1.0	0.6	£13.2	£8.4	£44	£28
Health, social care and wellbeing	8,200	0.9	0.9	£12.5	£12.5	£31	£31
Other	5,200	0.6	0.6	£7.9	£7.9	£26	£26
Housing	4,200	0.5	0.5	£6.4	£6.4	£21	£21
Energy	1,900	0.2	0.2	£2.9	£2.9	£14	£14
Digital services, consultancy or products	1,500	0.2	0.2	£2.3	£2.3	£23	£23
Pubs	1,300	0.1	0.1	£2.0	£1.5	£20	£15
Craft, industry and production	300	0.0	0.0	£0.5	£0.5	£5	£5
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,700</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>£246</b>	<b>£212</b>	<b>£27</b>	<b>£24</b>
All excluding village halls	141,400	15.7	13.2	£215	£181		
All excluding community hubs	168,200	13.6	11.1	£186	£152		
All excluding village halls and hubs	101,900	11.3	8.8	£155	£121		

Source: Nicol Economics analysis. Notes: (1) estimates of number of volunteers from the Community Business Market 2019 report (Higton et al., 2019); (2) the lower range is based on a bespoke assessment of average hours per volunteers for each sub-sector, the higher range applies national data on average hours of formal volunteering adjusted for the propensity of volunteers to volunteer in more than one organisation

**Table 3.2: Estimates of number of community business and volunteers by sector, 2019**

Sector	No. of businesses	Staff	Volunteers	Volunteers per		Proportion of all volunteers
				staff member	business	
Village halls	2,100	3,200	66,300	21	32	32%
Community hubs	2,000	7,900	39,500	5	20	19%
Libraries	400	400	17,600	44	44	9%
Arts centre/facility	400	1,800	11,900	7	30	6%
Employment; IAG; training and education; business support etc.	900	4,600	11,600	3	13	6%
Shops (and cafés)	400	1,300	10,500	8	26	5%
Food, catering and production	200	2,400	9,600	4	48	5%
Sports and leisure	400	3,700	9,400	3	24	5%
Environment/nature and conservation	300	1,000	8,700	9	29	4%
Health, social care and wellbeing	400	4,900	8,200	2	21	4%
Other	300	900	5,200	6	17	3%
Housing	300	1,000	4,200	4	14	2%
Energy	200	200	1,900	10	10	1%
Digital services, consultancy or products	100	400	1,500	4	15	1%
Pubs	100	300	1,300	4	13	1%
Childcare	100	-	-			
Finance		-	-			
Transport	300	-	-			
Craft, industry and production	100	300	300	1	3	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>33,900</b>	<b>205,600</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>100%</b>
All excluding village halls	6,900	30,700	139,300	4.5	20.2	68%
All excluding community hubs	7,000	26,000	166,100	6.4	23.7	81%
All excluding village halls and hubs	4,900	22,800	99,800	4.4	20.4	49%

Source: Nicol Economics analysis of data from Highton et al. (2019)

The main occupations amongst those employed in Midlothian by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) ([Business in Scotland 2020](#)) are:

- Professional (11,800),
- Associate Professional and Technical (6,000),
- Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations (5,700),
- Managers, Directors and Senior Officials (5,100),
- Administrative & Secretarial (3,900),
- Sales and Customer Service Occs (3,800),
- Skilled Trades Occupations (3,400).

We can draw conclusion that those who volunteer the most (in formal volunteering) come from these areas below:

## Business locations

Business parks, industrial estates, and science parks continue to offer developmental opportunities for all sectors.

### Business Locations

	Location
Dalhousie Business Park	Bonnyrigg
Sherwood Industrial Estate	Bonnyrigg
Bio-campus	Penicuik
Edinburgh Technopole	Penicuik
Gowkley Moss Bio-manufacturing Campus	Penicuik
Midlothian Innovation Centre	Penicuik
Pentlands Science Park	Penicuik
Roslin Innovation Centre	Penicuik
Grannies Park Industrial Estate	Dalkeith
Hardengreen Industrial Estate	Dalkeith
Newbattle Abbey College Annexe	Dalkeith
Thornbank Industrial Estate	Dalkeith
Whitehill Business Centre	Dalkeith
Easthouses Industrial Estate	Easthouses
Bilston Glen Industrial Estate	Loanhead
Edgefield Industrial Estate	Loanhead
Eldin Industrial Estate	Loanhead
Engine Road	Loanhead
Pentland Industrial Estate	Loanhead
Straiton Parc	Loanhead
Mayfield Industrial Estate	Mayfield
McSence Business Enterprise Park	Mayfield
Butlerfield Industrial Estate	Newtongrange
Lady Victoria Business Centre	Newtongrange
Vineyard Business Centre	Pathhead
Eastfield Farm Road Industrial Estate	Penicuik
Eastfield Industrial Estate	Penicuik
Roslin Bio-Centre	Roslin

Data Source: Midlothian Council, Economic Development Section

This data should support supplementing existing volunteer opportunities or help create development of new ones, inform target groups, advertising channels and role descriptions with elements of flexibility and number of hours.

For both formal and informal volunteering there is an almost linear relationship between increasing household income and increasing participation. However, the average number of formal and informal volunteer hours per volunteer is highest for those on lower household incomes.

Volunteers living in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland contribute more informal volunteer hours compared to any of the other areas, and this is also reflected in Midlothian.

For formal volunteering the highest volunteering participation rates are for those who are self-employed, employed part-time and in education/government training. However, the highest average numbers of volunteering hours are provided by those looking after the family/home, the retired and the unemployed. (<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/who-contributes-the-most-to-scottish-volunteering/> "Who contributes the most to Scottish volunteering")

There's also variation in volunteering according to people's current economic situation. Those in 'education (including HE/FE)', those who are 'self-employed', and those in 'part-time employment' are the most likely to volunteer (all 32%) (2019). Data from 2021 survey separates those categories with 32% of self employed volunteering, 25% in full time employment, 34% part time, 26% retired.

Whereas only 11% of adults who are 'permanently sick or have short-term ill health issues or are disabled' volunteer (13% in 2019). One-quarter (25%, 2021) of those 'unemployed and seeking work' have volunteered and 23% looking after family/ home.

Disabled respondents were more likely to be interested in opportunities that could be done all or mostly online than non-disabled people (25% vs 22%) and giving unpaid help on their own (i.e. not alongside other people giving unpaid help) (28% vs 24%).

Those with 'very good' general health have the highest formal volunteer participation rate (30%, 2021) dedicating 9.6 hours per month in formal volunteering and (36% 2021) with 'very good' general health dedicating 9.8 hours per month in informal volunteering.

In the survey 2019 and 2021 however, those with 'fair' health had the highest formal average volunteering ( 10.4h p/m 2021) but those with 'bad / very bad' health have the highest informal average volunteering hours – 12.8h/ p/m ( 2021).

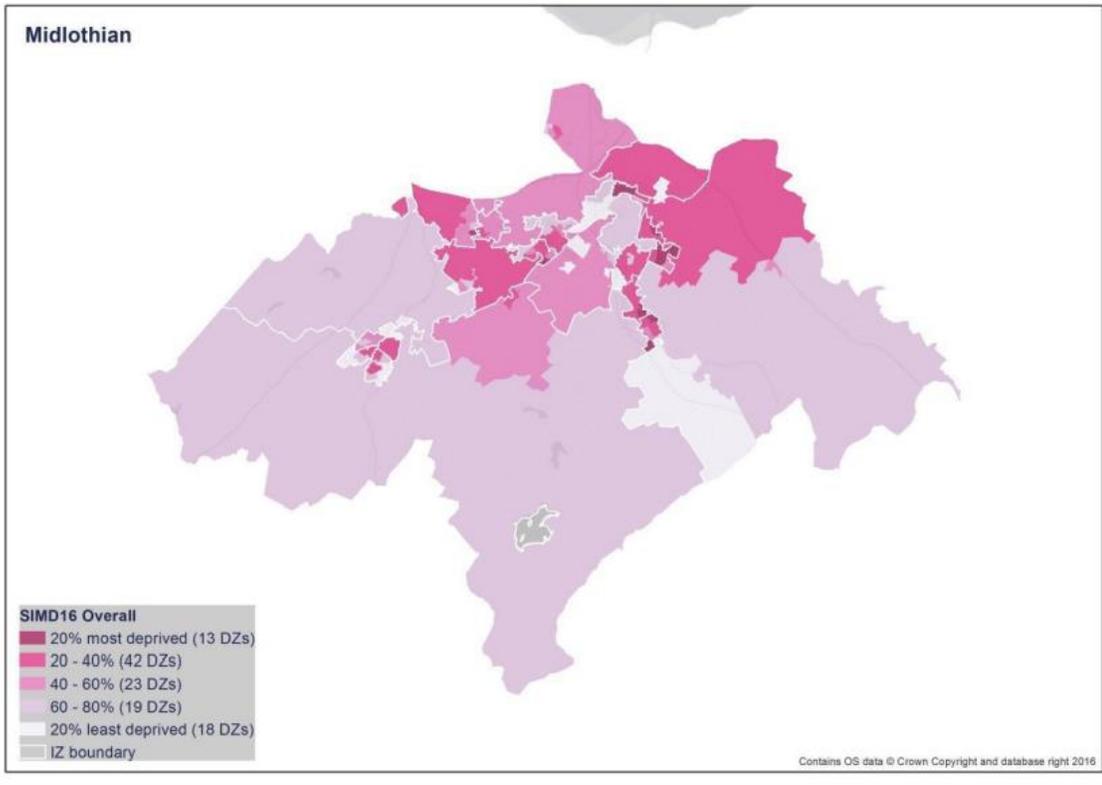
[Scottish Household Survey issued 2019/ modified 2021](#) published data about an "Involvement with people in the neighbourhood" - where 95% of all respondents regardless SIMD, ethnicity, age or gender agreed with the below statements:

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I can rely on people in this neighbourhood to help me  
I can rely on people in this neighbourhood to look after my home when away  
I can turn to people in this neighbourhood for advice or support  
I would offer help to neighbours in an emergency

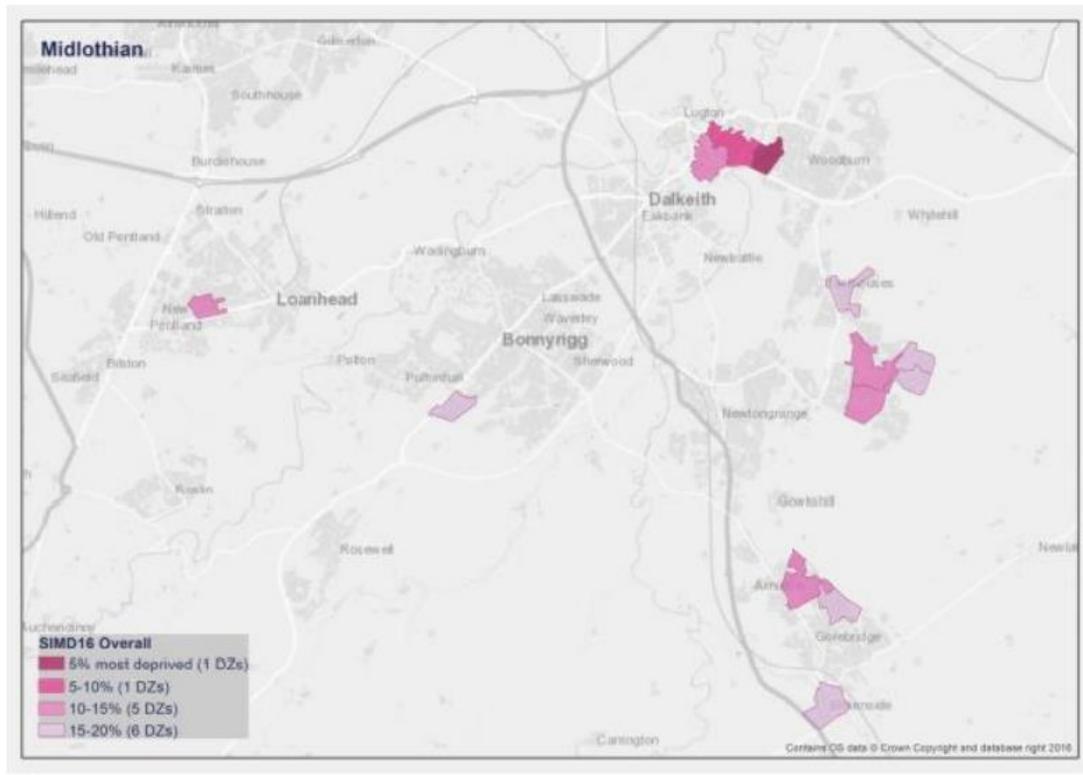
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This leads to the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation\(SIMD\)](#) is "the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation. In this context, deprivation is defined more widely as the range of problems that arise due to lack of resources or opportunities, covering health, safety, education, employment, housing, and access to services, as well as financial aspects.



*Data source:* <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00510961.pdf>

**Map 3: SIMD16 most deprived vigintiles**



The table below lists the ten most deprived DZs and where they rank compared to the rest of Scotland.

<b>Table 1: The ten most deprived DZs Data zone</b>	<b>Data zone name</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Vigintile</b>
S01011012	Dalkeith - 03	254	≤ 5%
S01011011	Dalkeith - 02	400	5-10%
S01011010	Dalkeith - 01	778	10-15%
S01011029	Mayfield - 05	826	10-15%
S01010965	Straiton - 04	890	10-15%
S01011027	Mayfield - 03	927	10-15%
S01011038	North Gorebridge - 02	1035	10-15%
S01011040	Gorebridge and Middleton - 01	1088	15-20%
S01011022	Easthouses - 02	1094	15-20%
S01011025	Mayfield - 01	1182	15-20%

It can be deduced from this correlation that these areas will have a lower level of volunteering but higher demand for volunteering support.

This conclusion can be supported by reflections from recent (Summer 2022) Volunteer Midlothian promotional activities. VM staff held an information stall in retail store in Mayfield/ Easthouses and approached consumers for an informal chat about volunteering opportunities. It became clear that our approach quickly shifted from a potential recruitment to an information hub about local support services for individuals and families alike.

Citing after information from “Time well spent” volunteers from lower socio - economic groups are less likely to undertake activities that involve organising and leading, for example being a trustee or member of a committee. Less likely but not exclusively 15% (lower earnings vs 23% higher earnings).

In addition women are less likely than men to be involved in representative roles, such as representing the organisation at meetings or events (28% vs 22%).

This variation is anecdotally confirmed by Midlothian third sector organisations.

It should also be noted that Midlothian Council volunteering policy contains commitment to “increase diversity of volunteers to reflect our population profile and increase opportunities for family friendly and youth volunteering with the Council.” As it is believed this is a one of the gaps in provision of volunteering in Midlothian.

## 20. Covid recovery

In late 2021 and early 2022 we have observed an anecdotal decline in numbers of people wanting to volunteer in Midlothian. We have seen less people engaging in formal volunteering with Volunteer Midlothian and other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations. In the same time, also anecdotally through informal networks we were aware of examples of a healthy number of informal volunteering in local neighbourhood across Midlothian. We believe that the decline in formal volunteering was due to breakdown in communication, use of different forms of communication (online, zoom, Teams). It has to be stressed some volunteers chose not to communicate via zoom or teams not due to lack of knowledge how to use it but due to their preference to communicate face to face. Other factors were: worsen by Covid health conditions, long Covid and imposed self-isolation periods, as well as family commitments in post pandemic time when individuals have moved on from home working to hybrid or full return to work, redundancies, reduced hours or change of career.

“The pandemic has brought unprecedented disruption to citizens’ social and community connections through the closure of most of the usual hubs for social interaction between different groups of people. Reflecting this, several measures of “social capital” fell sharply during the lockdown period.<sup>[xlv]</sup> In particular, the proportion of people who had met others socially at least once in the previous week fell from 73% at the baseline (in 2018) to 35% in July 2020, and the proportion of people who felt lonely some or all of the time rose from 21% at the baseline to 56% in July. The proportion of people who felt they had someone to turn to for help and advice also dropped steeply from 77% at the baseline to 50% in July.” (Source: [Scotland’s Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 - Chapter 4: Communities, Poverty, Human Rights | National Performance Framework](#) )

It is evident that the Covid- 19 lockdown, the crisis response and then the recovery from the pandemic dictated the behaviours and the attitudes to volunteering including reluctance of some groups to return to volunteer.

Volunteer Midlothian therefore is committed to reach out to different groups of people by holding information stalls in various locations including retail stores, community cafés, community/leisure centres, in person and via social media, and [VM website](#).

During and post the pandemic there has been a significant increase in the number of adults volunteering informally in Midlothian's communities, linked to grassroots and neighbourhood resilience initiatives.

Over 500 volunteers registered in response to the national 'Scotland Cares' campaign to recruit a volunteer workforce during the first lockdown in April 2020.

Conversely, during pandemic the number of formal volunteering opportunities in Midlothian dropped by around 50% as third sector organisations moved their services online to avoid the need for face-to-face contact.

## 21. Ex -Mining Community

Midlothian is a small local authority in comparison to other’s in Scotland but as mentioned above, fastest growing. Over the years Midlothian mining legacy might have become less visible in tradition and symbolism but still remains a factor for not reaching full prosperity.

Report analysis by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) in [“The State of former Scottish Coalfields”](#) 2020 found that when compared to the national average, many people in Midlothian have lower life expectancies and higher rates of 16 to 19-year olds not in education or jobs. The report added that rates

of unemployment and child poverty are higher than in not ex-mining communities, and health and wellbeing still need to be improved.”

All this should also be viewed in a context of other ex-mining communities in Scotland. Following information from the above mentioned report, “Lothians have much better access to local services” and are better connected than for example: “more rural parts of the East Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire coalfields”.

## Conclusion

### Summary overview

We will continue to work in partnership with other organisations to promote existing and develop new volunteering opportunities in Midlothian. Volunteer development actions and our core functions to promote volunteering are written into our Midlothian TSI updated Outcomes Framework with specific actions relating to Volunteer Manager’s Forum, promotion and community engagement.

As an organisation we have grown considerably in the last few years and with sufficient resources have the potential to grow even bigger remaining effective in our service. We are open to new ways of working, promoting and developing volunteering in Midlothian, we are inclusive and progressive.

We believe that it is important to combine our mutual strengths; experience and resources that is why we will work together in partnerships, and support local organisations by promoting volunteering to achieve positive change in our community.

We will oblige to our commitment to **‘Lead the Way in Volunteering’** and our key themes are: **Develop; Transform; Connect, Sustain and Retain.**

### Recognition of local volunteers

Every year in June, in Midlothian we recognise and celebrate our volunteers. As part of the annual, national Volunteer’s Week, we ask the VIO to nominate their most deserving volunteers for a Volunteers’ Week Award. We usually have approximately 40 nominations spread across 7 nomination categories, such as: Active Volunteering, Mentoring and Befriending, Outstanding New Volunteer, Dedicated service, Equality and Diversity, Health and Wellbeing. The recognised volunteers are celebrated during the [Volunteers Week Award Ceremony](#).

Looking ahead, Volunteer Midlothian is inclined to follow **national trends** (“[Time Well Spent](#)”) in exploration into:

- Adults who have not volunteered recently to understand what stops people getting involved in volunteering
- The more recently someone has volunteered, the more likely they are to volunteer again. However, there is potential for future engagement across all groups irrespective of whether they have ever volunteered and how long ago they volunteered.
- Hence the importance of providing volunteering opportunities that fit with individuals’ skills and interests, and also opportunities that can be flexible around people’s time commitments. The findings also show that different groups appear easier to engage than others. However, care must be taken not to overburden those that already give time frequently and to address the diversity issues that are present in Scottish (and GB) volunteering.
- Factors which may encourage non-volunteers to get involved in volunteering in the future.
- People’s interest in future volunteering opportunities, among both volunteers and non-volunteers.
- We will increase awareness amongst potential candidates that volunteering (apart from well known benefits to the community and oneself) provides a lot of positive information to a prospective employer: [What volunteering reveals about you to Employers](#). The list provides examples such as: passion, growth mindset, acting proactively, connections, ambition, motivation as well as that there is more to the person than just a role - relating attributes. The latest Midlothian Citizen’s Panel questionnaire evidently supports the idea of local ‘employers using skills of volunteers’.

## Suggested areas for future development

Apart from the above national trends we routinely listen to our local VIO concluding few local areas for development:

What are the gaps in Midlothian?		
Improvement on infrastructural and organisational – know how – increase awareness VM web	Speedy administrative process	Online opportunities
Family volunteering ,	Supported volunteering,	Mentoring and buddying programmes
Organisations - reimbursement expenses – information sessions or / website info/ training	Trustee board or committee boards to be more inclusive and diverse economically,	Organisations know better how to involve young people,
Promotion of employer supported scheme,	Volunteer Friendly recognition scheme	

In addition, at the recent Volunteer Recruitment Fair (February 2023) Volunteer Midlothian were exploring how best to support volunteer involving organisations as keen to explore training/support needs of local Volunteer Involving Organisations. The 22 out of 25 attending organisations said they will welcome provision of the below training sessions.

- How to Attract Volunteers – getting the Role Description and Volunteering Brief right
- Volunteer Selection – What’s next when a potential volunteer expresses interest
- Sustaining Volunteers
- Engaging Young Volunteers & Saltire Awards
- Dealing with Challenging Volunteers

[Time Well Spent](#) ( SCVO) suggests in *Overcoming Barriers*, that when it comes to time, we need to think about what it really means when people cite ‘doing other things with my spare time’ as their main reason for not getting involved. It highlights the importance of providing opportunities that resonate with people’s lives and make their volunteering feel worth their while.

Midlothian’s population shows an increase due to **migration**. The bulk of the increase is due to migration from elsewhere in Scotland. Data Source: NRS - [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk) Migration

However in terms of **immigration** , the Minority Ethnic Population by Postal Area At the 2011 Census showed less than 1.8% of Midlothian’s population belonged to a minority ethnic community but it is a double from 2001.

In this context, we should mention the response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees with rights to settle and work for three years.

Midlothian welcomed approximately 130 Ukrainians ( February 2023) and the numbers are expected to grow. Volunteer Midlothian within TSI, works in a strong partnership with Midlothian Council to support the local host families for them to support the Ukrainian guests. Many of them were encouraged to volunteer as a way of integrating with local community and learning about a culture as well as a step forward to gaining employment though practicing working skills in a Scottish environment. Anecdotally, many of them would like to start volunteering as a way to “give back” and to feel useful in a society that welcomed them.

There are three areas in Midlothian with a high percentage of ethnic minorities (data 2021): Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Dalkeith (central).

In March 2022, as part of the Scottish Government Community Based Adult Learning Funding aimed to support recovery from Covid 19, and improve people's employability skills. Our Partner Midlothian Council, Community Lifelong Learning and Employability asked 200 local people about volunteering.

The survey consisted of an online questionnaire, a setup 5 focus groups as well as a street consultations in Dalkeith, Woodburn, Bonnyrigg, Gorebridge, Mayfield and Penicuik.

### **What did respondents tell us**

- 72% of respondents were keen to take part in learning over the next year
- 52% of respondents were interested in gaining new qualifications to support with their employability
- 28% of respondents are interested in learning new skills to take make a difference or take up volunteering in their community
- 35% of respondents said they would be interested in volunteering. The most common reason cited for this is to give something back to their local community.

Whilst we were pleased to see 1/3 of surveyed were keen to take up volunteering, we failed to ask another vital question such as: Are you aware that volunteering can provide you with opportunities for learning, training, gaining new skills etc. all of the above listed in bullet points. This exercise proves that still a lot of work need to be done in changing perceptions and attitudes to volunteering.

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Other relevant literature:

Research published by Volunteer Scotland in 2021 (['Who Contributes the Most to Volunteering? Full Report on who volunteers in Scotland - HERE](#))

Government open access reporting

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>

LA level hours and economic value

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/data-and-graphs/local-area-profiles/midlothian/>