

Beyond numbers and hours:

Measuring the impact and value of volunteering

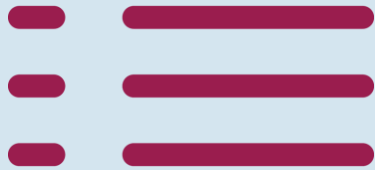


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Today's session



- Volunteering in Citizens Advice
- Background to the research
- Methodology
- Value of volunteering results
- Value calculator
- How might you evidence value?
- Reflections and close

Volunteering at Citizens Advice



Volunteering overview

- Volunteering is at the **heart of Citizens Advice**, bringing immense and diverse value
- We currently have **10,400 volunteers active** across local Citizens Advice and **2000 trustees** volunteering on local Citizens Advice boards
- In addition to this we involve **1500 volunteers** in the nationally delivered Witness Service
- We're seeing some **challenges in volunteering**, with overall **numbers** of volunteers decreasing, and local offices concerned about **retention** of volunteers and **sustainability** of existing volunteer models

In late 2022 we established the Volunteering Transformation Programme

To work collaboratively across local and national Citizens Advice to effectively and sustainably leverage the benefits of volunteering to support the achievement of our strategic missions

Co-designed and delivered by a Taskforce Steering Committee made up of colleagues (including volunteers) from across our network.

Our research objectives

①

To understand and **evidence the value and impact of volunteering** for volunteers, Citizens Advice and the local community

②

To better understand **the cost, benefits and deliverability** of volunteering models within the network

③

To explore the benefits and accessibility of volunteering and the volunteer experience at Citizens Advice

Commissioning the research

- We needed an **up to date and holistic picture** about volunteering across the network and to update research to demonstrate value of volunteering.
- **Tendering process** and commissioned experts to deliver an ambitious brief



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Advisory & Impact

Methodology

Our research objectives

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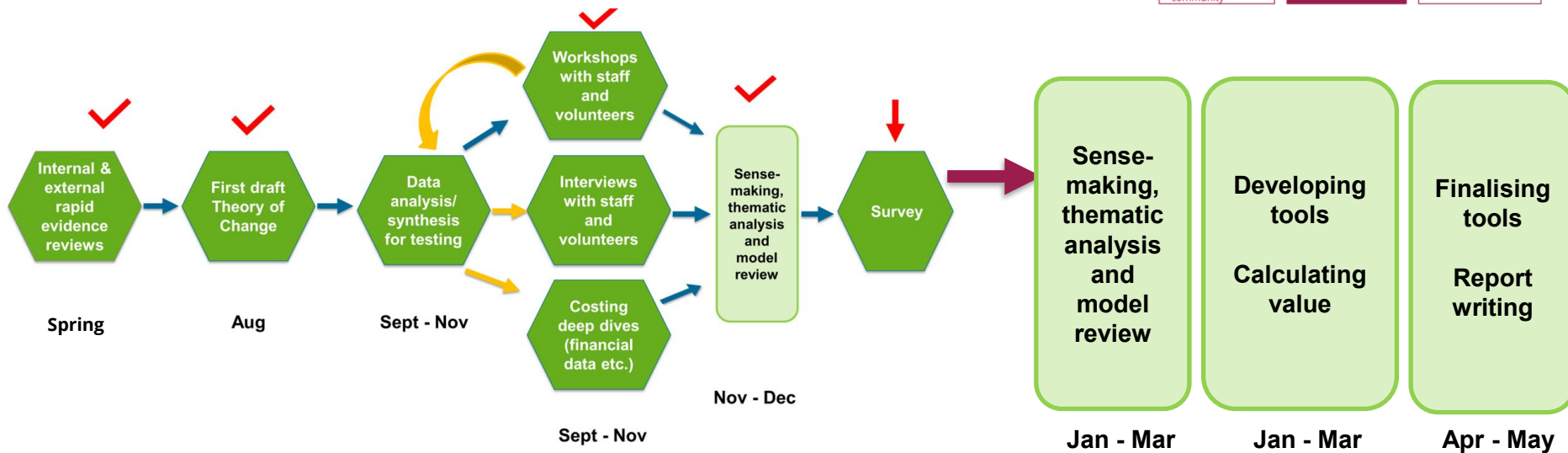
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Placing a value on volunteering at Citizens Advice

Total value across the Citizens Advice network* in 2023/24 is at least £100 million.



How we got the numbers: the value calculator

The value generated by the calculator is the monetary value of **improved socio-economic outcomes** as a result of volunteering including:

- **Improved life satisfaction** to volunteers themselves
- **The impact of reduced loneliness** on volunteers, which translates into lower demand for NHS services due to a reduction in depression and anxiety among some volunteers
- **Productivity gains to the economy** due to either volunteers **developing skills** more quickly or **securing employment** sooner because of their time with Citizens Advice

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To understand and **evidence the value and impact of volunteering** for volunteers, Citizens Advice and the local community

How to identify where value lies

Identified areas of “value” through:

- External and internal **evidence review**
- **Workshops** with staff and volunteers
- **Survey** of volunteers

- Internally and externally validated
- Quantitative and qualitative data (numbers and stories)

- Standardised/recognised means of calculating

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To understand and **evidence the value and impact of volunteering** for volunteers, Citizens Advice and the local community

How to work out what that value is worth in £?

- Standardised/recognised means of calculating e.g.
 - ONS Annual Survey of weekly earnings
 - National Careers Service starter salaries
 - Average base salary Citizens Advice
- Government Office for Science data on skills and lifelong learning
- Existing research on wellbeing impacts of volunteering (Lawton et al, 2020)
- Greater Manchester Cost Benefit Analysis Model (CBA)

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Value beyond £

- Capacity and sustainability of local offices
- Diversity of “workforce” and diversity of thought
- Community connections
- Positive working culture
- The power of quotes and stories

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How might you evidence value

Value of volunteering time by capturing:

- number of volunteers
- average number of hours
- how frequently

Selecting a means to value time e.g. NMW, or weekly earnings (ONS)

Wider value

- Skills / employability
- Progression into paid roles within the organisation
- Physical health
- Wellbeing and mental health
- Client/beneficiary impact

How might you evidence value

Methods:

- One off surveys
 - “Polls”
 - Diaries / video diaries
 - Workshops
 - Interviews
 - Case studies
 - Cost modelling
-
- One off volunteer experience surveys
 - Routine/repeated
 - Longitudinal

Impact of the work to date

- Helps evidence contribution to our strategic missions
- Provides a robust evidence base for funding bids
- Supports recognition and recruitment of volunteers
- Helps us influence on value of volunteering internally and externally

Summary tips

- Think about the “So what...”
- Consider your audience (and their capacity to receive)
- Be proportionate and pragmatic – no one way
- Perfection as the enemy of the good (enough)
- Be consistent – build data over time
- Be patient
- Just start!

Questions?

Reflections?

Thank you

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Citizens Advice: [Value of volunteering research](#)



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