

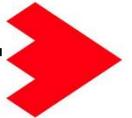
# Is Volunteering Voluntary? Exploring the Dark Side of Volunteering

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*WFOT 2018*



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# Plan:

1. Why Volunteering Matters
2. PAR Project & Participants
3. Key Findings:
  - *“Selfish Altruism”*
  - *“The darker side of volunteering”*
4. Key Message & Questions



# What is volunteering?

***The giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups, communities, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain.***

**Volunteering Strategy, Scottish Executive, 2004**



# Why Volunteering Matters to Communities

Research shows that volunteering can provide many benefits to communities...

## Economic Benefits

- ▶ Individual and community benefits prevent costly social problems
- ▶ Increased employability & ability to spend wages in community
- ▶ NHS cost savings as healthier individuals
- ▶ Contributing to the prevention agenda

## Thriving Communities

- ▶ Improved population health
- ▶ Reduced crime & antisocial behaviour
- ▶ Improved educational performance
- ▶ Greater life satisfaction & happiness
- ▶ Decreased loneliness & isolation
- ▶ Enhanced mental wellbeing

## Crime Prevention

- ▶ Reduced anti-social behaviour
- ▶ Positive behavioural change
- ▶ Positive diversionary activity
- ▶ Supports reducing reoffending
- ▶ Increased understanding of others in community

## Active Citizenship

- ▶ Increased social & civic participation
- ▶ Increased community cohesion
- ▶ Increased intergenerational & intercultural integration
- ▶ More empowered communities
- ▶ Increased community spirit & trust
- ▶ Increased civic commitment/ connection



# Why Volunteering Matters to Individuals

Research shows that volunteering can provide the following benefits...



# Participatory Action Research (PAR):

**People with lived experience of mental illness: engaged in unpaid voluntary work in the community through personal choice as part of their journey of recovery.**

- 1. What are the benefits & challenges of volunteering?***
- 2. How might we work together to achieve something of benefit for group/ community?***



# Findings 1:

***“Selfish  
Altruism”***

**Journeys of  
Recovery  
Through  
Volunteering:**

- ***Self-management & recovery***
- ***Volunteering identity, belonging & influence***



*“People frequently say things like “that’s really good that you do that & people must really be thankful that you do that”; and I always say well that’s an element of it but it’s really **selfish altruism**, I do it for me more than anything else. I do it for what I get out of it. The fact that I’ve perhaps helped someone else is good as well but it’s really for my own benefit”. (Pete)*



## Findings 2:

### ***The Darker Side of Volunteering***

- ***Challenges,  
Contradictions &  
Kafkaesque Experiences***



A photograph of David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, speaking to a large crowd. He is wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers. He is gesturing with his right hand, pointing towards the audience. The background is filled with a dense crowd of people, many of whom are looking towards him. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor event or a well-lit indoor arena.

**LET'S CUT  
BENEFITS FOR  
THOSE WHO  
REFUSE WORK**

Vote Conservative



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## Key Message:

# ***Volunteering matters for individuals & communities***

- 1. Volunteering is multi-faceted**
- 2. Occupation is political**
- 3. PAR gives voice & contributes to positive socio-political change**



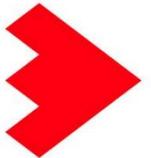
# Thank you...

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