## The Volunteering Experience: Annual Volunteer Survey 2022

Author: Hannah Baguley

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## Section One: Executive Summary

### What is going well?

The findings indicate a positive volunteering experience where respondents feel comfortable being themselves, feel like they are making a difference, and have the knowledge and confidence to carry out their role effectively. The proportions of volunteers being provided with the training and information needed to carry out roles and receiving clear expectations and boundaries relating to their roles, have increased from previous quarters. The proportion of volunteers gaining confidence and learning new skills through volunteering have also increased since 2020.

### What is not going so well?

Although scores around communication are respectable, the comments reveal a mixed experience where some respondents lack communication from managers, do not feel listened to, or are unaware who their volunteer manager is. Additionally, the proportion of volunteers feeling supported has dropped since the previous quarter, and awareness and engagement with resources and platforms available to support volunteers is low, particularly the Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programme (EVAP). Finally, volunteer satisfaction measured through a Net Promoter Score (NPS) and volunteer engagement score has decreased from previous quarters.

### Where can RNIB make improvements?

There are a number of suggestions to improve the volunteering experience, such as providing a clear explanation of what individuals can expect from and to achieve from their volunteering role. Improvements also need to be made around communication, particularly in how the RNIB communicates with volunteers, and this should be explored in future research. Finally, highlighting and communicating the impact of volunteering on customers and RNIB as an organisation will increase satisfaction, value, and recognition amongst volunteers.

## Section Two: Introduction

Volunteers are involved across many different functions throughout RNIB to extend the reach of our services and allow blind and partially sighted people to live equitably. In addition to our quarterly check-in surveys, the annual volunteer survey is an opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of the volunteer experience at RNIB. The purpose of this research is to understand what is working well and invite recommendations to improve our volunteering offer, to inform the future work of the Volunteering team. The data also allows the team to monitor progress against our strategic objectives and vision, such as volunteers feeling recognised and supported.

Most results from this survey cannot be directly compared to previous annual volunteer surveys because the questions have been changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the release of the Contribution & Participation Strategy, and following recommendations from the volunteering insight review. For example, recruitment and induction questions were removed due to low response rates and retrospective completion, and instead will be asked in a separate survey to volunteers after successful completion of their induction.

## Section Three: Method

### 3.1. Data Collection

The online survey was open for over three weeks from Wednesday 5 October to Sunday 30 October 2022. Volunteer managers and colleagues across the organisation were encouraged to promote and share the annual survey link amongst their volunteer networks. A timeline of central survey communications is shared below:

* 4 October: An email was sent to volunteer managers with key information and some draft wording to share with their volunteers.
* 5 October: Volunteers were invited to complete the survey through the Volunteer News. The survey link and information were also posted internally on Workplace.
* 12 October: Key information and real-time response rates from teams, alongside an ask to encourage their teams to promote the survey were shared with senior leaders in the LiVE (Leaders in Volunteer Engagement) communication. A reminder email was sent to any volunteers who hadn’t opened the Volunteer News on 5 October.
* 19 October: Real-time response rates from teams were posted internally on Workplace and staff were encouraged to share the survey.
* 25 October: RNIB staff were made aware the survey deadline had been extended to 30 October. This was posted alongside the real-time response rates from teams internally on Workplace.

Teams were offered a bespoke report if at least 30 responses were received from their volunteers. Both the Technology for Life and Sooty Box teams met this threshold to receive a tailored volunteer experience report.

### 3.2. Response rate

* 559 volunteers were sent an email inviting them to complete the survey and 65% opened the email. 41 unique clicks were made to the survey from the Volunteer News email.
* A total of 109 volunteers completed the 2022 annual volunteer survey. 106 volunteers completed this via the online survey link and three completed it over the phone.
* On 5 October 2022, there were 847 active volunteers at RNIB. This is a response rate of 13%, the same as our last annual survey in 2020.

### 3.3. Discussion

Although the response rate remained unchanged from the 2020 annual survey, the 13% response rate achieved is below the average response rate of 25% for volunteer surveys (according to Agenda Consulting).

Internal stakeholders became more involved in promoting the survey nearing the closing date and there was a need to extend the deadline to increase the response rate. The timing of the survey is likely to have impacted the number of responses received for several reasons. October was an extremely busy time for the organisation with business planning, the launch of RNIB’s See The Person campaign, and the Festival of Volunteering events to name a few. This was echoed in feedback from colleagues that volunteer managers were being asked to do a lot, in addition to promoting the volunteer survey. There were also external factors which may have affected survey responses, including political instability in the UK during the time of the survey, and increased communications from RNIB after the period of national mourning that followed from Her Majesty The Queen’s passing.

### 3.4. Recommendations

* Key stakeholders, particularly volunteer managers, are made aware of upcoming volunteer surveys at least two weeks in advance.
* Increase the length of time between volunteer surveys to reduce survey fatigue and increase response rates.

## Section Four: Sample

### 4.1. Diversity and equality data

The main demographic characteristics of the survey sample have been shared below. Prefer not to say responses were removed from the analysis.

* The sample is skewed to older volunteers with 31% of respondents aged 56 to 65, and 46% aged over 65.
* Majority of respondents are retired (62%), with only 17% of the sample working full-time or part-time.
* 49% of respondents were male and 51% female.
* The sample is heavily skewed towards White volunteers (92%).
* Majority of respondents are sighted (62%), but one in five are severely sight impaired.
* 21% of respondents disclosed having a disability or long-term health condition aside from their sight status. The most reported descriptions of impairments or disabilities were physical/motor, mental health, and long-term health condition.

The full data tables for these questions can be found in the appendix.

Blind and partially sighted respondents were given the opportunity to share if their lived experience has contributed or made a difference to their volunteer role. 28 comments were received which spoke to their lived experience leading to greater understanding, empathy, and credibility to support customers in their volunteering role. A few quotes have been shared below.

“Definitely so as being sighted until 2015 I am able to appreciate what VI and Blind people now have to contend with and this drives me to proceed for success in my campaigns and which I feel is extremely important.”

“Yes, my lived experience of sight loss provides a greater understanding and empathy for people struggling with sight loss themselves. It makes you appreciate everything you are lucky to have so much more.”

### 4.2. Key volunteering data

* 21% of respondents have more than one volunteer role at RNIB.
* Responses were received from volunteers across several different teams, in particular Technology for Life (27%), Fundraising (27%), and Community Connection (18%). Three respondents are unsure of the team they volunteer with.
* All regions across the UK were represented in the survey, in particular Scotland (19%) and the South West of England (14%).
* One third of respondents (34%) spend their time volunteering completely within the local community and another third (32%) are completed home-based.
* 28% of respondents volunteer on at least a weekly basis.
* Most respondents have been volunteering between six and ten years (25%). A further 25% have volunteered with RNIB for more than ten years.

The full data tables for these questions can be found in the appendix.

### 4.3. Discussion

It is important to note the biases of the survey sample where some groups are under-represented, particularly around age and ethnicity. Caution should therefore be taken when generalising the findings to the whole volunteer population at RNIB.

According to NCVO’s Time Well Spent 2019 research, BAME volunteers are more likely to report lower satisfaction and negative experiences and are less likely to feel recognised or to continue volunteering in the future.

This sample is heavily skewed towards White volunteers (92%), however it is reflective of RNIB volunteers who chose to disclose their ethnicity, with 89% stating they are White.

The sample is also skewed towards older volunteers who have retired. 62% of RNIB volunteers who choose to disclose their age are aged over 55, compared to 77% of the survey sample. Although NCVO data shows that those aged 65 and over are most likely to have volunteered recently, it is important to note that they may have different experiences than younger volunteers, particularly when it comes to the motivations for volunteering.

In this report, comparisons have only been made where groups have at least 30 respondents. Due to small sample sizes, comparisons can only be made for Technology for Life volunteers, fundraising volunteers, and between sighted and visually impaired respondents. It is also worth noting that 43% of visually impaired respondents volunteer within Community Connection, and therefore it is possible that differences in results are driven by experiences in that team rather than as a blind and partially sighted volunteer.

### 4.4. Recommendations

* Explore ways to obtain a more diverse sample for future volunteering surveys.

## Section Five: Volunteer Training

### 5.1. Results

* 89% of respondents have the knowledge and confidence to carry out their role effectively.
* 83% of respondents been provided with the training and information they need to carry out their role.
* 81% of respondents agree that the expectations and boundaries relating to their volunteer role are clearly defined.

### 5.2. Discussion

The findings indicate that volunteers have been provided with the training and information needed to carry out their role and that they feel confident doing so.

The proportion of volunteers being provided with the training and information they need to carry out their role has increased by five percent since this question was last asked in quarter four of 2021/22. There has also been an 11% increase in the proportion of respondents agreeing that the expectations and boundaries of their role have been clearly defined since the previous quarter. Despite all Sooty Box respondents agreeing they have the knowledge and confidence to carry out their role effectively, only 73% of Technology for Life respondents feel the same.

## Section Six: Volunteer Support

### 6.1. Results

* 91% of respondents feel comfortable being themselves whilst volunteering.
* 78% of respondents feel supported in their volunteering role.
* 74% of respondents would recommend volunteering with RNIB to others.
* One in ten respondents feel they have no one to share their volunteering concerns with. 77% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.
* 6% of respondents feel under pressure to volunteer more time than they want to. 80% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.
* Less than half (42%) of respondents were aware the Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programme was available to them before the survey.

Respondents were given the opportunity to share what the Volunteering team at RNIB could do to ensure they feel supported in their volunteering role. 83 comments were received which mainly centred around more communication and email updates from RNIB and volunteer managers, and face-to-face meetings with other volunteers. A few quotes have been shared below.

“It would be helpful if local volunteer meetings could be organised face to face, if possible, as this would make volunteers feel more connected. However, I know I can contact my coordinator at any time during office hours to discuss any issues that I might have.”

“I hugely appreciate the time my RNIB 'line manager' has taken so that we can get to know one another. I like to feel part of a team, and she has been active in supporting that. She has also signposted upcoming events (IRL and online) to meet other volunteers and RNIB staff.”

“I would like the volunteering team at RNIB to keep in touch with me check all is well as some time I feel as if I am floundering at times.”

### 6.2. Discussion

The findings indicate that majority of respondents feel comfortable being themselves and feel supported whilst volunteering. However, the proportion of respondents who would recommend volunteering with RNIB to others fell from 81% in the previous quarter to 74%. Although the proportion of Sooty Box respondents who feel supported has decreased since quarter one, this remains five percent higher than the overall sample.

Whilst majority of respondents do not feel this way, ten percent agree that they have no one to share their concerns with. More needs to be done to increase the awareness of points of contact and resources to support volunteers from the Volunteering team in addition to volunteer managers, as the verbatim comments highlight that some volunteers don’t know who their volunteer manager is. Awareness of the Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programme (EVAP) also needs to be increased as less than half of volunteers (42%) are aware they can access this programme.

### 6.3. Recommendations

* Increase the awareness of resources available to support volunteers, particularly EVAP.

## Section Seven: Communication

### 7.1. Results

* 81% of respondents agree their manager is available to talk to if they need support. 12% disagree with this statement.
* 77% of respondents are satisfied with the communication they receive from their manager. 13% are dissatisfied.
* 72% of respondents agree they have the opportunity to have their voice heard and to give feedback whilst volunteering. 11% disagree with this statement.
* 66% of respondents agree the RNIB communicates well with volunteers.

#### Frequency of communication methods

Respondents were asked how often they engage with types of volunteer communication. Results are shown in the table below which has eight columns and six rows.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Weekly | Fortnightly | Monthly | Quarterly | Annually | Never | Unaware of this communication |
| Updates from my manager | 16% | 10% | 31% | 21% | 6% | 4% | 12% |
| Meetings with my team | 6% | 4% | 16% | 7% | 21% | 29% | 17% |
| Keeping in Touch sessions | - | - | - | 14% | 13% | 35% | 38% |
| Volunteer Hub | 1% | 2% | 9% | 5% | 10% | 50% | 29% |
| RNIB’s social media | 16% | 3% | 9% | 4% | 3% | 52% | 14% |

RNIB’s Keeping in Touch (KIT) sessions run on a quarterly basis, however 16% of respondents stated that they attended KIT sessions more frequently than every quarter. This may be due to respondents thinking about the more frequent communication they receive in the lead up to a KIT session. These responses were removed from the analysis for this question.

#### Usefulness of communication methods

Respondents were then asked how useful they find each type of communication. Those who selected ‘Not Applicable’ have been removed from the analysis.

* 61% find the Volunteer News extremely useful or useful.
* 86% find updates from their manager extremely useful or useful.
* 83% find meetings with their team extremely useful or useful.
* 74% find KIT sessions extremely useful or useful.
* 45% find the Volunteer Hub extremely useful or useful.
* 48% find RNIB’s social media channels extremely useful or useful.

Respondents were given the opportunity to share any further comments about their communication experiences whilst volunteering. 32 comments were received which mainly centred around good communication experiences and a demand for face-to-face meetings with the team. There were also a few negative comments around a lack of communication or slow responses from managers and not feeling listened to. A few quotes have been shared below.

“Customers are often first to hear about things before volunteers. Should be communicating to everyone in their preferred format, not just focus on email.”

“I had no idea about some of the things mentioned in this survey. I feel that more transparency is needed and that meetings should occur once a week with my team to discuss difficulties and problems about the role.”

“My manager sends emails when there is information to pass on and occasionally to check how we are so communication. This varies in frequency depending on need. I did enjoy attending an RNIB event recently.”

“As a volunteer I feel it wouldn't hurt for staff to listen to us more and respect what we have to say rather than treating us like children.”

### 7.2. Discussion

The findings indicate that majority of respondents are satisfied with communication experiences around volunteering.

The results highlight the importance of communication with volunteer managers as 57% of respondents receive updates from their managers on at least a monthly basis, and 86% find these extremely useful or useful. Respondents also find meetings with their team useful, but these occur on a less frequent basis. Majority of respondents say their manager is available to talk to if they need support and they are satisfied with the communication they receive from them, although the verbatim comments suggest some volunteers feel isolated and do not hear from their manager. Satisfaction with communication and availability of volunteer managers is higher amongst Sooty Box respondents compared to the overall sample and Technology for Life volunteers. The findings also indicate more could be done to improve the way RNIB communications with all volunteers.

Half of respondents have never used the Volunteer Hub and a further 29% were unaware of this platform, so more needs to be done to increase the awareness of this amongst volunteers. Of those who have used it, only 45% found it extremely useful or useful. Understanding what volunteers would like to see on the Volunteer Hub should be explored in future research.

### 7.3. Recommendations

* Increase the awareness of Keeping in Touch sessions.
* Increase the awareness of the Volunteer Hub.
* Explore what volunteers would find useful to be communicated in the Volunteer News and on the Volunteer Hub.
* Explore opportunities for teams to hold in person meetings with volunteers.
* Gather insight to understand how RNIB could better communicate with volunteers.

## Section Eight: Outcomes of Volunteering

### 8.1. Results

#### Motivations for volunteering

Respondents were asked to select their motivations or reasons to start volunteering for RNIB. Results are shown in the table below which has eight columns and six rows.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Motivation** | **Percentage** |
| A chance to use my existing skills | 68% |
| To help people who may be disadvantaged | 63% |
| Personal connection to sight loss/blindness | 44% |
| To fill my spare time | 32% |
| A chance to learn new skills | 28% |
| To improve services, processes and/or charity impact | 26% |
| I have, or know someone that has, benefitted from RNIB services | 24% |
| To meet people/make friends | 20% |
| To build confidence  | 9% |
| To gain work experience or enhance my employment prospects | 8% |
| Other | 6% |

#### Important aspects of volunteering

Respondents were asked to state the importance of different outcomes of volunteering with RNIB. The table below shows the proportion of respondents that rate different aspects of the volunteering experience as extremely important or fairly important. The table contains three columns and ten rows. Not applicable responses were removed from the analysis for this question.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aspects of volunteering** | **Extremely important** | **Fairly important** |
| Delivering a good experience for RNIB customers | 74% | 24% |
| Getting a sense of personal achievement | 42% | 48% |
| Having a chance to share my skills | 39% | 43% |
| Enjoying it and having fun | 38% | 45% |
| Meeting people and making friends | 24% | 42% |
| Having a chance to learn new skills | 23% | 49% |
| Improving my mental wellbeing | 23% | 41% |
| Improving my employment prospects | 20% | 8% |
| Building my confidence | 17% | 39% |

#### Personal Impact of Volunteering

* 80% of respondents feel volunteering improves their wellbeing.
* 68% of respondents have achieved what they set out to achieve through volunteering with RNIB.
* 61% of respondents have learnt and developed new skills through volunteering with RNIB.
* 58% of respondents have gained confidence through volunteering with RNIB.

### 8.2. Discussion

The findings show that the main motivation for volunteering is a chance to share existing skills, with two-thirds of survey respondents marking this as a motivation. This is considerably higher than the 28% of volunteers stating this was a motivation in NCVO’s Time Well Spent 2019 research, however this is likely due to differences in the survey samples.

Despite being the third most common motivation for volunteering, less than half of respondents (44%) said that personal connection to sight loss/blindness was a motivation. It is often assumed that volunteers join RNIB because of a connection to the cause so this should be considered in our marketing material and promotion of volunteering opportunities. Additionally, over 90% of respondents who started volunteering to fill their spare time and to meet new people/make friends are retired or unemployed.

Delivering a good experience for RNIB customers is the most important aspect of volunteering for respondents, with 98% stating this is extremely or fairly important. More should be done to demonstrate and communicate the impact of volunteering activities on customers to increase satisfaction and recognition of their role. Having the chance to share skills is also more important to respondent’s volunteering experience than learning new skills, which echoes the NVCO research. Improving wellbeing appears to be more important to fundraising volunteers than the overall sample but making friends and meeting new people is less important.

The importance of improving employment prospects through volunteering is magnified due to the removal of 44% of respondents who answered not applicable. Whilst the findings suggest improving employment prospects are not an important aspect of volunteering, it is important to note the sample is largely skewed towards retired individuals. However, improving employment prospects is an important aspect of volunteering for over half (54%) of visually impaired respondents. Those with a visual impairment also place more importance on learning new skills, meeting new people, improving wellbeing, and building confidence through volunteering than sighted respondents.

When looking at the personal impact of volunteering, the proportion of respondents stating they have gained confidence through volunteering has doubled since this question was asked in 2020. There has also been a 14-point increase in the proportion of respondents stating they have learnt new skills through volunteering in the same timeframe. Blind and partially sighted volunteers are more likely to have gained confidence (77%) and learnt new skills from volunteering (77%) than sighted respondents.

### 8.3. Recommendations

* Highlight how volunteers can use existing skills when promoting volunteering with RNIB.
* Demonstrate the personal impact of volunteering when promoting volunteering with RNIB.
* Showcase the personal impact of volunteering across RNIB to increase the value and recognition for volunteering activities.
* Demonstrate and communicate the impact of volunteering on customers.
* Use the motivation and outcome data to develop volunteer journeys.
* Compare the insight into volunteer motivations with the data produced for the supporter segmentation project.

## Section Nine: Overall Volunteering Experience

### 9.1. Results

* 87% agree RNIB is flexible around the time they give.
* 83% of respondents feel like they are making a difference to the lives of others by volunteering at RNIB.
* 81% of respondents feel valued for the time and effort they donate to RNIB. 11% disagree with this statement.
* 74% of respondents agree RNIB is a great organisation to volunteer with.
* 70% of respondents strongly agree or agree the expectations for their volunteering experience have been met.

#### Net Promoter Score

A Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a standardised measure of customer loyalty and satisfaction and is embedded into all volunteering surveys. NPS scores are measured with a single question and reported with a number from -100 to +100, with a higher score being desirable. More information on the NPS measure and how to calculate it can be found [here](https://www.hotjar.com/net-promoter-score/).

The Net Promoter Score for this survey is +21. This is above the target of +20, but a three-point decrease from quarter two.

#### Volunteer Engagement Score

The volunteer engagement score is a key performance indicator that is reported into the organisational scorecard with a target of 80. The engagement score is an average of the percentage of volunteers who agree with four volunteering statements. The four statements are presented below:

* I feel supported in my volunteering role
* RNIB is a great place to volunteer
* I feel like I am making a difference in the lives of others by volunteering at RNIB
* I would recommend volunteering with RNIB to others

The engagement score for volunteers is 78 which is below the target of 80. It is also a two-point decrease from quarter two and a five-point decrease from quarter one.

#### What does volunteering mean to you?

Respondents were asked what volunteering means to them. 106 comments were received which mainly centre around making a difference, giving back to RNIB, using skills, and helping others. Comments also spoke to the feel-good factor of volunteering through gaining a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and personal achievement. A few quotes have been shared below.

“It has meant doing something of value in my retirement, feeling part of something larger than myself, opportunities to use & develop skills, meeting other people etc.”

“RNIB helped me when I was pretty low with my Sight Loss of 2 years and […] when they looked for Volunteer Connectors I was pleased to sign up and help others through RNIB as I had been helped. This has given me more confidence myself and satisfaction in helping others. Giving me back "Me" which I had lost along with my sight.”

“It is a method of sharing my own life experiences of the sight loss journey to people new to sight loss and others as well as keeping me busy volunteering in various areas of RNIB. I like and enjoy being a volunteer and feel I am important and my volunteer role is appreciated by others in the community”

#### Volunteer comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to share any further comments on their volunteering role or experience with RNIB in a text box. The 30 comments received from volunteers were mixed and include wanting opportunities to meet in person, feeling satisfied and fulfilled in their role, whilst others lack enjoyment. A few quotes have been shared below to compliment the quantitative data.

“The RNIB is starting to ask volunteers to take on roles that really should be completed by paid staff this is something that needs to be carefully managed”

“As a blind and partially sighted person, Volunteering is so fundamental to me as a person as a way to pay it forward and helping others.”

“Volunteering for RNIB used to be very rewarding and fulfilling and it created a real ‘feel good’ factor so all the time expended was very worthwhile. Unfortunately things have changed within RNIB and the fulfilment and ‘feel good’ factor has been lost.”

### 9.2. Discussion

The findings indicate a positive volunteer experience where respondents feel valued, like they are making a difference, and that RNIB is flexible around the time donated.

Majority of the core questions remain unchanged from the previous quarter. Making a difference to the lives of others saw a five percent decrease from quarter two, but this could be accounted for by the five percent increase in respondents remaining neutral on this question. Only seven in ten respondents feel their expectations have been met, and two-thirds feel they have achieved what they set out to achieve through volunteering. This requires further investigation to ensure volunteers are aware of the expectations for their volunteering experience.

Both the Net Promoter Score and volunteer engagement score have experienced a decrease from the previous quarter, largely driven by the seven percent decrease of respondents who would recommend volunteering with RNIB to others. NCVO’s Time Well Spent 2019 research stated that although volunteers aged 55 and over are the most satisfied with their volunteering experience, they were less likely to recommend their volunteering in the future than younger volunteers. This could potentially be driving the decrease in the engagement score given that three-quarters (77%) of the survey sample are aged over 55. Additionally, blind and partially sighted respondents are less likely to recommend volunteering with RNIB (69%) than sighted respondents (79%). The age and sight status of respondents should continue to be asked in future volunteer surveys to identify any trends around this measure.

For fundraising volunteers, there have been increases in the proportion of respondents who feel they like they are making a difference through volunteering and agree RNIB is a great organisation to volunteer with, in addition to the Net Promoter Score, since quarter one.

The findings also highlight the importance of the feel-good factor of volunteering, with respondents saying it gives them a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and personal achievement. Promotional material around volunteering should speak to this feel-good factor, particularly in recruitment campaigns, and quotes should be used to bring this to life.

### 9.3. Recommendations

* Gather insight to understand what would make RNIB a better organisation to volunteer with.
* Gather insight to understand what RNIB could do to ensure expectations for the volunteering experience are met.
* Improve communication around what volunteers can expect from their role and what they may achieve.
* Mention the feel-good factor of volunteering and increase the use of quotes in promotional material and volunteer recruitment campaigns.

## Section Ten: Future Volunteering Behaviour

### 10.1. Results

Respondents were asked about their future volunteering behaviour and 19% said they plan to volunteer more within the next two years, three percent said they plan to volunteer less, and 56% plan to volunteer the same amount. Five percent plan to stop volunteering with RNIB in the next two years, and a further 17% don’t know what their future volunteering behaviour looks like.

The eight respondents who indicated they were planning to stop volunteering or reduce the amount of time spent volunteering were asked why. The most common reasons are no longer feeling valued and older age.

### 10.2. Discussion

The findings are reassuring that three in five respondents are planning to volunteer the same amount in the next two years. The vast majority of those who plan to volunteer more are retired or unemployed.

Although the sample size is small, volunteer recognition activities across different teams should be reviewed to ensure less volunteers leave as a result of something within RNIB’s control. Five out of the eight respondents who indicated they were planning to stop or reduce the amount of time spent volunteering are in the Technology for Life team.

### 10.3. Recommendations

* Review volunteer recognition activities across different teams to ensure volunteers feel valued.

## Section Eleven: Conclusions

The findings indicate a positive volunteering experience where respondents are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to carry out their role, feel comfortable being themselves, and are making a difference through volunteering.

However, the proportion of volunteers feeling supported, and volunteer satisfaction measured through a Net Promoter Score (NPS) and volunteer engagement score have all decreased from the previous quarter. These core measures should be monitored to establish if this is the start of a downward trend.

Although scores around communication are respectable, the comments reveal a mixed experience where some respondents lack communication from managers, do not feel listened to, or are unaware who their volunteer manager is. Future research should explore how RNIB can improve the communication experiences for volunteers. Creating a feedback loop between staff and volunteers would also be beneficial to ensure volunteers feel valued and that their voice is heard.

The impact of volunteering on RNIB customers should be communicated to ensure volunteers feel recognised, a sense of personal achievement, and are aware they are delivering a good experience for RNIB customers, which are all important to their experience.

Whilst the survey has provided great insights into the volunteering experience, it is important to remember the biases of the survey sample. Caution should therefore be taken when generalising the findings to all volunteers at RNIB.

## Section Twelve: Final Recommendations

* Promote the resources available to support volunteers in their role, particularly EVAP, Volunteer Hub, and Keeping in Touch sessions.
* Gather more insight to further understand communication experiences, particularly how the RNIB communicates with volunteers, what volunteers would like to see in the Volunteer News, and how communication experiences vary across different teams and volunteer managers.
* Use the insight to inform recruitment campaigns, promotional material, and volunteer communications. Recruitment campaigns should speak to how people can share their skills and help those who may be disadvantaged through volunteering with RNIB and should also speak to the feel-good factor of volunteering. What volunteers can expect to achieve from their experience should also be clearly communicated from the start.
* Demonstrate the impact of volunteering on customers and RNIB as an organisation to ensure volunteers feel valued. Communicating this through team meetings, customer stories and the Volunteer News will feed into a personal sense of achievement, which respondents noted is important to their volunteering experience.

## Appendix

### Demographic questions

#### Age

108 volunteers provided their age, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| 18-25 | 1% |
| 26-35 | 5% |
| 36-45 | 5% |
| 46-55 | 12% |
| 56-65 | 31% |
| Over 65 | 46% |

#### Working status

108 volunteers provided their working status, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Working full-time | 6% |
| Working part-time | 9% |
| Unemployed and looking for work | 8% |
| Unemployed and not looking for work | 7% |
| Unemployed and not able to work | 5% |
| Retired | 62% |
| Stay at home parent or carer | - |
| Student | 2% |

#### Gender

108 volunteers provided their gender, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Male | 49% |
| Female | 51% |
| Non-binary | - |
| Self-description | - |

#### Ethnicity

106 volunteers provided their ethnicity, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| White | 92% |
| Black | 2% |
| Asian | 4% |
| Mixed | - |
| Other | 2% |

#### Sight Status

107 volunteers provided their sight status, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Visually impaired but not certified | 4% |
| Sight impaired | 6% |
| Severely sight impaired | 20% |
| Sighted | 62% |
| Other | 3% |

#### Disability, impairments, or health conditions

107 volunteers provided their disability status, and one respondent skipped this question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 21% |
| No | 79% |

For respondents who stated they had a disability, impairment, or long-term health condition, they were asked to describe the types of impairments or conditions. 20 volunteers responded to this question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Mental health | 30% |
| Long-term health condition | 25% |
| Physical/motor | 25% |
| Sensory/speech | 15% |
| Other impairment(s) or condition(s) | 5% |

#### Team

All 109 respondents provided the team they volunteered with. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Campaigns | 3% |
| Community Connection | 18% |
| Connect Radio | - |
| Fundraising (Sooty Box team) | 27% |
| Governance, HR, Legal Rights and Volunteering | 4% |
| Reading Services | - |
| Sight Loss Advice Service | 3% |
| Specialist Support (Counselling, Employment, and Living Well with Sight Loss) | 1% |
| Talk & Support | - |
| Technology for Life | 27% |
| Transcription | 7% |
| Other | 2% |
| I don’t know what team I volunteer in | 4% |

#### Region

108 respondents provided the region they engage most in their volunteering role, and one respondent skipped the question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| East Midlands | 6% |
| East of England | 7% |
| London | 5% |
| North East | 5% |
| North West | 6% |
| South East  | 8% |
| South West | 14% |
| West Midlands | 8% |
| Yorkshire & Humberside | 8% |
| Northern Ireland | 6% |
| Scotland | 19% |
| Wales | 8% |

#### Where respondents volunteer

108 respondents shared which best describes where they volunteer, and one respondent skipped the question. The results are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentage** |
| Completely office based | 5% |
| Completely within the local community | 34% |
| Completely from home | 32% |
| Mainly office based with some volunteering from home | 3% |
| Mainly office based with some volunteering within the local community  | 2% |
| Mainly within the local community with some volunteering from home | 18% |
| A mix of office, within the local community and from home | 6% |

#### Frequency of volunteering

104 respondents provided their frequency of volunteering, but five respondents didn’t know and were removed from the analysis. The results are shown from the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentages** |
| More than once a week | 19% |
| Weekly | 18% |
| Fortnightly | 5% |
| Monthly | 19% |
| A few times a year | 19% |
| Once a year | 1% |
| On an ad-hoc basis | 18% |

#### Length of volunteering

104 respondents stated how long they had been volunteering with RNIB, but five respondents didn’t know and were removed from the analysis. The results are shown from the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response options** | **Percentages** |
| Less than 6 months | 9% |
| 6 months to 11 months | 10% |
| 1 to 2 years | 13% |
| 3 to 5 years | 18% |
| 6 to 10 years | 25% |
| 11 to 15 years | 9% |
| More than 15 years | 16% |

Document ends.