

Change and diversity in volunteering

A strategic strength

Rob Jackson, 10th October 2025, Community First Yorkshire



A bit about me

Rob Jackson FRSA

- Over thirty years working in volunteer engagement
- Global thought leader on volunteer engagement
- Writer, speaker, trainer and consultant
- Work with clients around the world
- Active volunteer since school days



Volunteering is
changing



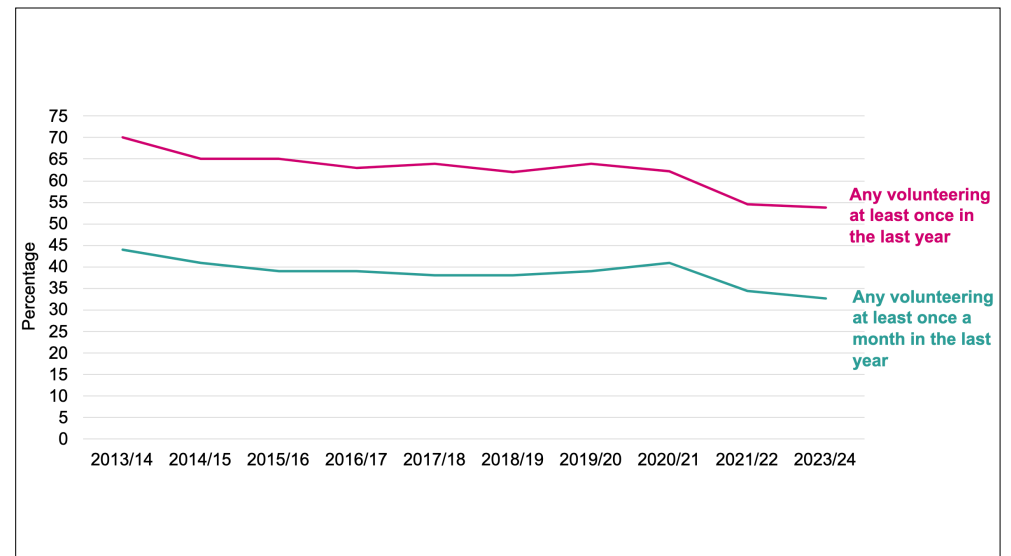
Two key trends



Volunteer rates

Declining

- Regular formal volunteering dropped to its lowest level since 2000 during lockdown and has flatlined since.
- Occasional formal volunteering has flat-lined since 2021-22 and is down 9% since the year before Covid, and dropped 17% since a decade ago.



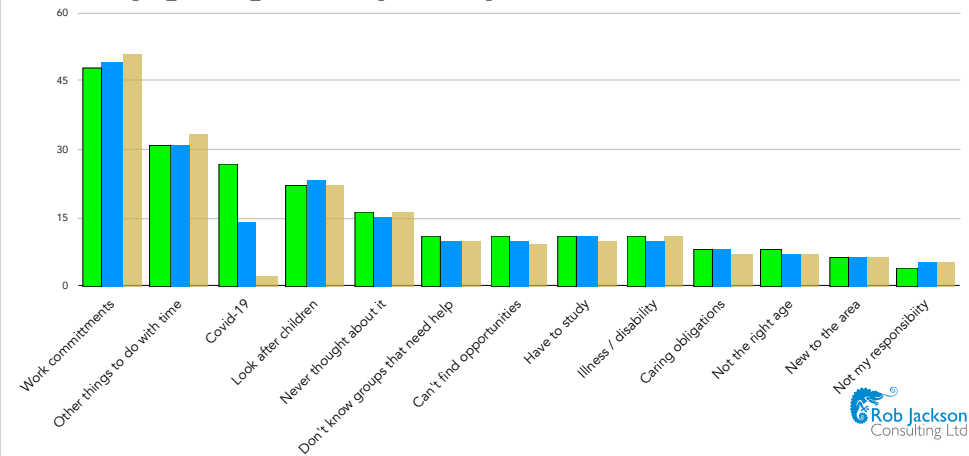
Time given

Between 2000 and 2015

- Ave. all ages — 3.67 declining to 3.47 days a year (almost 5 hrs a year)
- Aged 16-24 — 2.28 increasing to 4.31 days a year
- Aged 25-34 — 3.8 decreasing to 1.5 days a year
- Aged 65+ — 4.82 decreasing to 3.3 days a year



Why people say they don't volunteer



“Crises rarely change anything. They simply accelerate existing trends.”

This is not the
death of
volunteering



It's the green
shoots of
recovery



“Many volunteers aren’t going to commit on day one. The organisation needs to make access to volunteering as fast and frictionless as possible, then put the effort into stewarding the relationship and curate the volunteer experience, so people want to keep coming back. That’s building commitment. People today will volunteer on their terms, not ours, and we have to adapt accordingly.”

Rob Jackson, January 2025

The task ahead is not to restore volunteering to what it once was – but to recognise and support what it is becoming. The energy, willingness and care are all still here. The question is: will our institutions, practices, and strategies evolve to meet them?

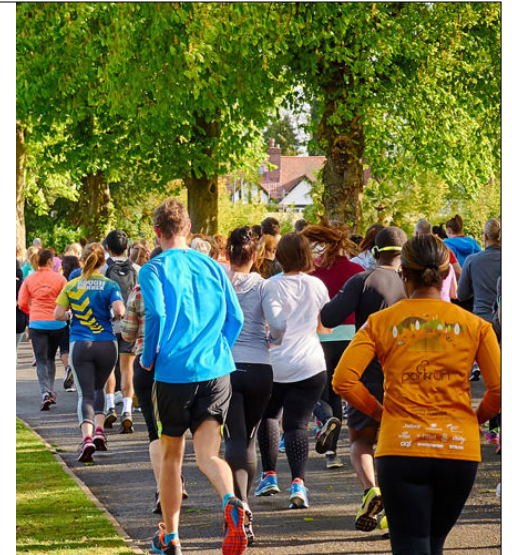
2025 State of Volunteering Report
Volunteering Victoria

2025
**State of
Volunteering
Report**



Be more
parkrun

 Rob Jackson
Consulting Ltd



“The number one barrier to people taking on volunteer roles is a lack of flexibility. Nearly half (44%) of the UK population cannot commit to set hours for regular shifts each week.”

“We shouldn’t rely on outdated ways of doing things. Today’s new volunteers are more likely to be younger people in employment than retired people.”

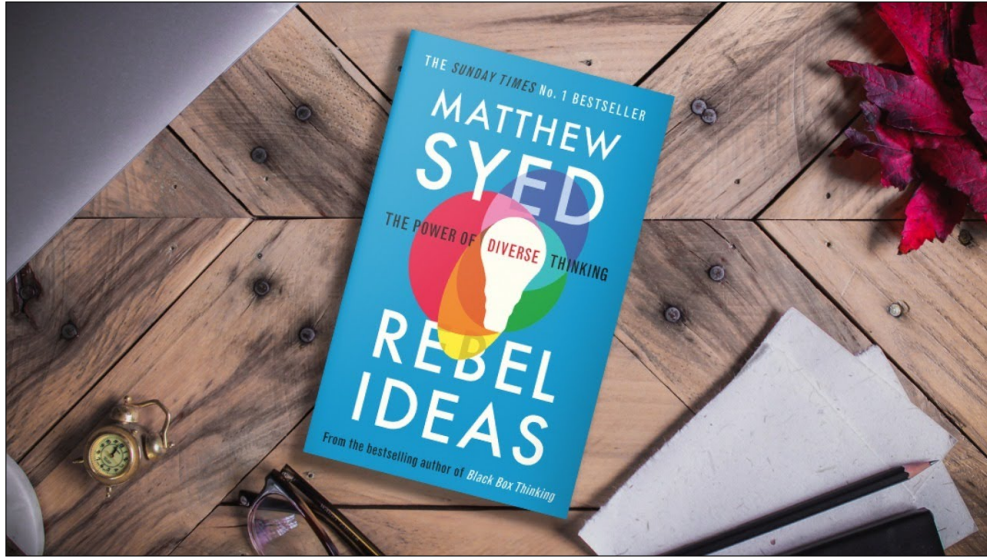


The result?

More people volunteering

A greater diversity of people volunteering





In conclusion

- See changes in volunteering as an opportunity, not a threat
- Be more parkrun — what does this look like for you?
- Embrace diversity
- Use that diversity as a strategic strength and advantage



Getting in touch

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