

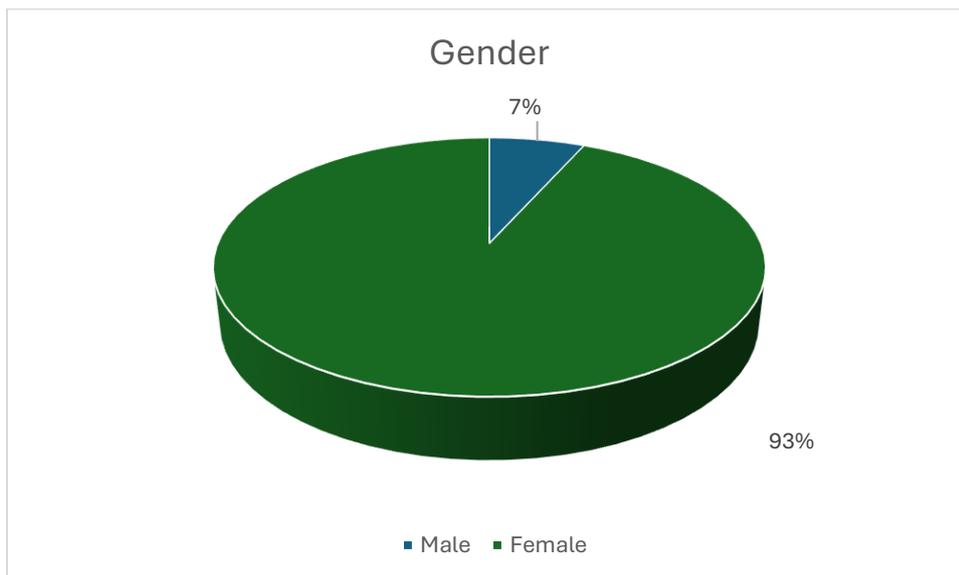


Volunteer Survey Report

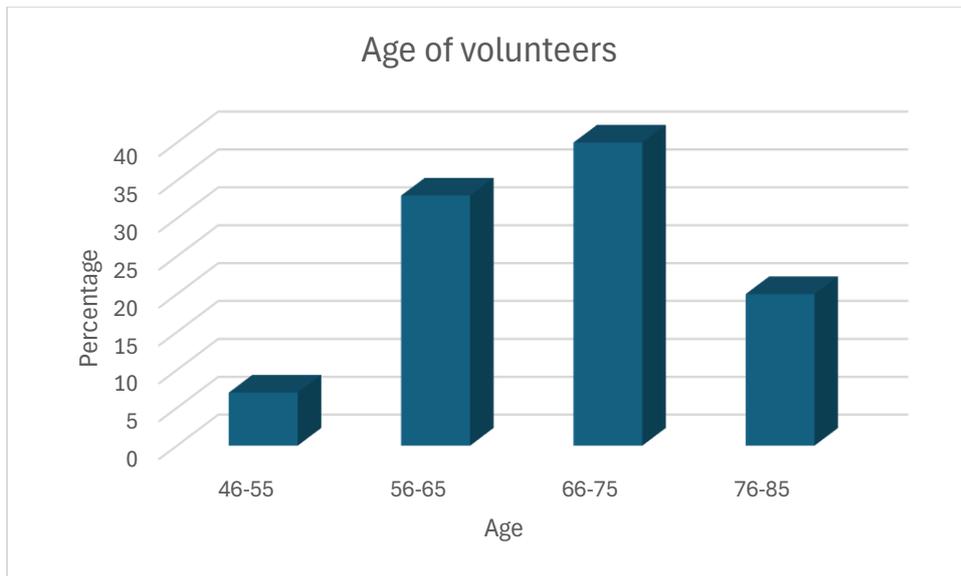
Since Newton Stewart Initiative was set up in 1996, volunteers have been an important part of the organisation. Volunteering to act as a trustee, to work in the community shop, to help out at events and volunteering in the community.

In February 2025 we conducted surveys of our volunteers in the community shop for several reasons. To gauge how volunteering impacts on their wellbeing, to find out what the social value their volunteering is and to ensure how volunteers feel part of the wider community as well as the role they play in NSI.

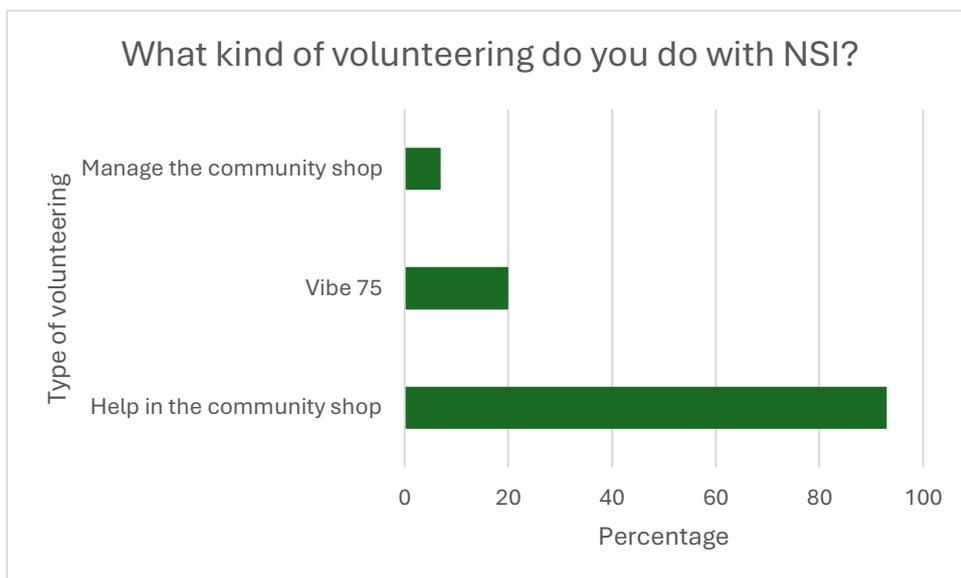
The results of the survey can be seen below and following that is an explanation of the results



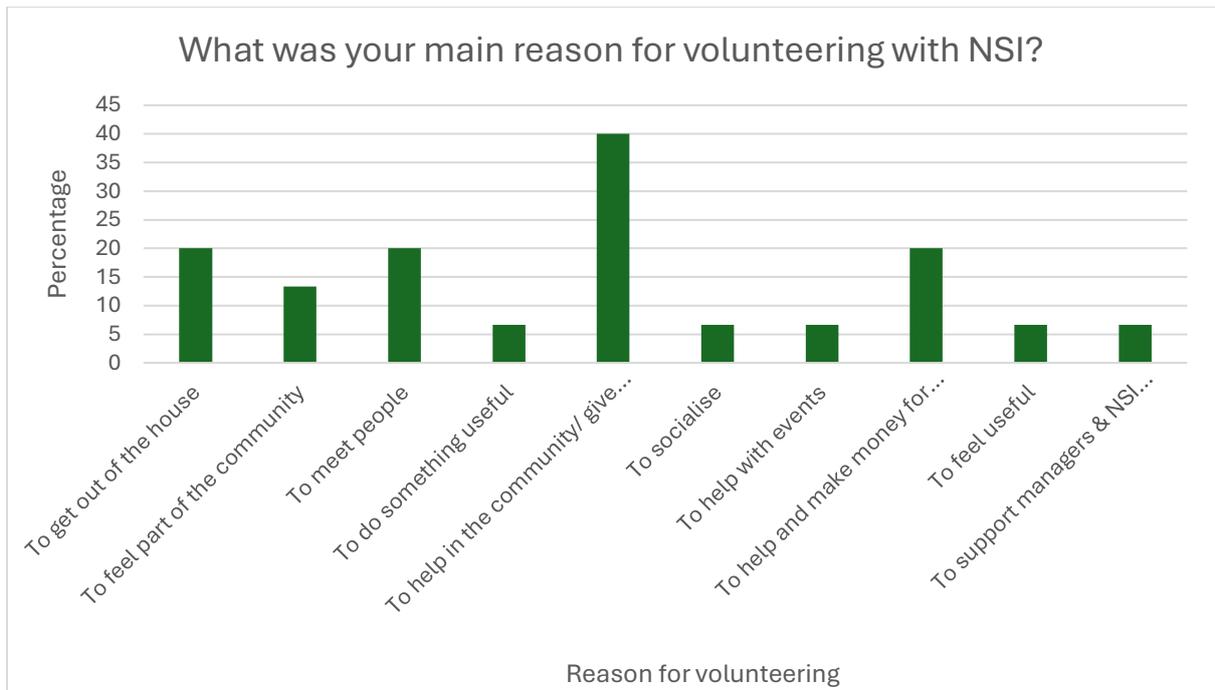
In total we have 15 volunteers at the NSI Community Shop including the shop manager, who is also a trustee of NSI. 93% of our shop volunteers are female and 7% male.



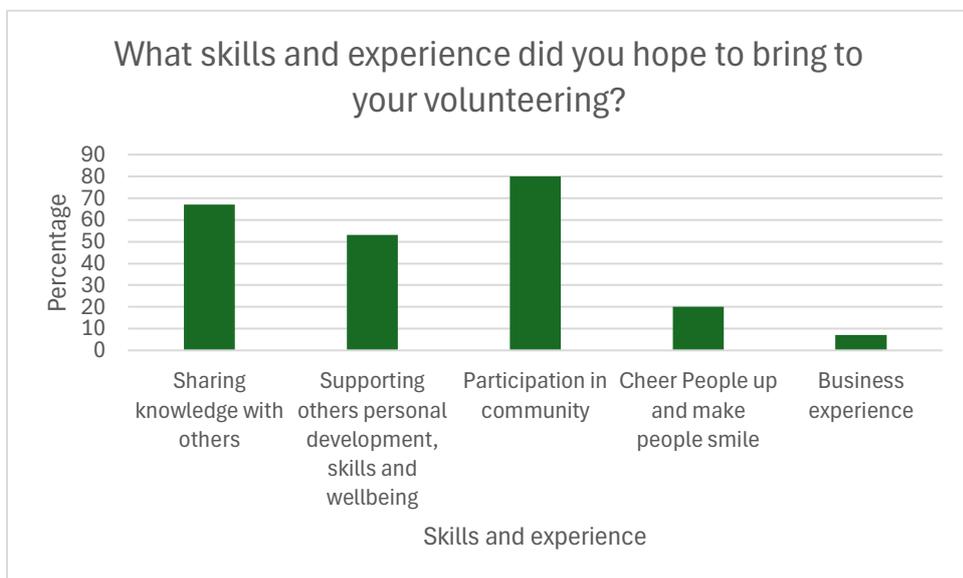
40% of our volunteers fall into the 66-75 age bracket, indicating that they are retired and are freely giving their time to volunteer. 7% fall in the 46-55 age bracket, with 33% aged 56-65 and 20% 76-85.



Whilst the majority of our volunteers help out in the community shop three hours a week, 20% of them have also started to help out with events at Vibe 75, which is a venue that NSI lease and run markets and fayres from with teas and coffees once a week for the community. Therefore, expanding their roles and skills showing they are willing to get involved with other NSI projects too.

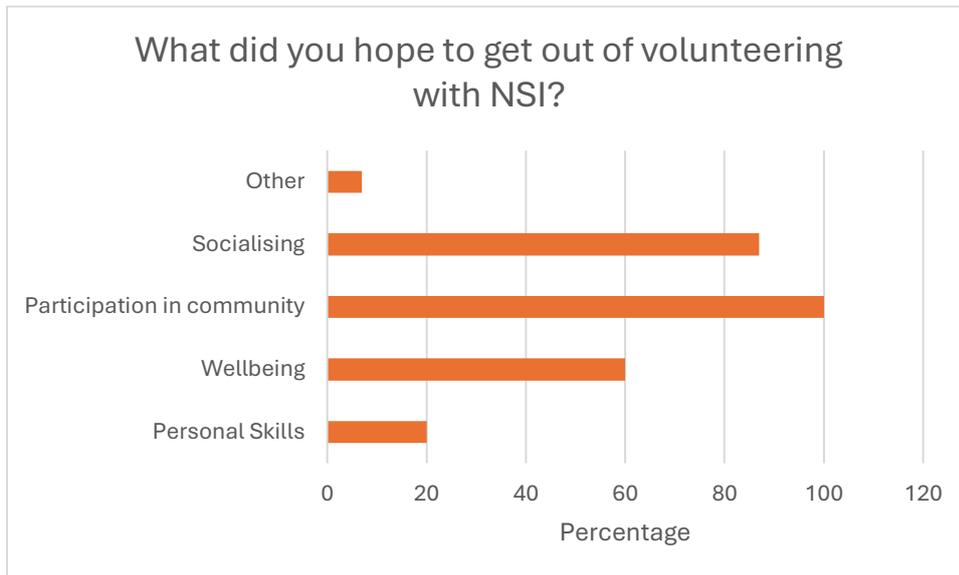


40% of the volunteers at NSI wanted to help in the community/ give back to the community. There was a wide range of answers for peoples reasons to volunteer with NSI which included getting out of the house due to a bereavement, feeling part of the community, meeting people, doing something useful, to socialise, to help with events, to help make money for NSI and local groups and organisations, to feel useful and to support managers and NSI. To summarise, the main reasons people want to volunteer for NSI is because they know we are a community based charity working in and for the community and they want to support with that. Working in the community shop also allows for social interaction, through other volunteers and customers in the shop. The importance of social interaction in rural towns is hugely significant to help reduce isolation and therefore mental health.



80% of our volunteers wanted to participate in the community. 67% wanted to share their knowledge and experience with others, whilst 53% wanted to support others personal development, skills and wellbeing. 20% wanted to cheer people up and make them smile, whilst 7% wanted to bring business experience. Many of the skills and experience that our volunteers bring is life experience as well as business acumen, social skills and a willingness to share their knowledge with others.

100% of our volunteers felt that they had brought the skills and experience they wanted to by volunteering with NSI.



100% of volunteers wanted to participate in the community, whilst 80% wanted to socialise. 60% said it was for their wellbeing, whilst 20% wanted to learn personal skills and 7% wanted to make a difference.

CELEBRATE

100% of our volunteers felt that volunteering with NSI felt significant!



80% of our volunteers enjoyed meeting new people the most when volunteering with NSI and 40% enjoyed the social interaction. 7% enjoyed helping the community, grabbing a bargain and developing friendships.

73% of volunteers said they had seen an improvement in their skills and wellbeing.

Comments included:

I'm more confident with people
General wellbeing good
I have learnt a lot working with Linda
Helps structure my week
Met some lovely people
I feel happy and it contributes to my sense of purpose

CELEBRATE

100% of our volunteers said they would recommend NSI volunteering opportunities to friends and family

73% felt that through volunteering it had had a positive impact on their wellbeing

The Numbers

All of our shop volunteers work one three hour shift in the community shop. Open six days a week from 10-4 this equates to 1872 hours over the year of voluntary time. On top of that our trustee and community shop manager often spends up to 30 hours per week volunteering which comes to 3432 hours per year. If we paid all our volunteers for their time it would come to the value of £41,184 per year.

The investment of NSI into a thriving volunteer programme, and the hard work of our dedicated volunteers generates significant social benefit for the volunteers themselves, and the town of Newton Stewart. Individual volunteers report feeling significant benefit through their volunteering, primarily through increased opportunity for social interaction and to meet new people. This is particularly significant due to the older age profile of our volunteers, who are often over 65 and therefore of retirement age. Older people can be acutely vulnerable to social isolation, which is often exacerbated in rural areas. Therefore, creating reliable and constructive spaces where the older population of Newton Stewart can meet, work and socialise whilst becoming part of a larger project is invaluable.

Social Return on Investment

Social return on investment (SROI) is a technique used to assign a monetary value to the social benefits generated by an organisation's work. This value is then illustrated as a return on investment: how much good is generated from the money invested.

Social Benefit (Useful for funding applications)

Providing opportunities for social interaction

Financial Proxy

£240 per annum; visiting a café with friends four times a month with an average spend of £5 per visit $£240 \times 15 \text{ volunteers} = £3600$

Social Benefit

Offering a sense of routine and helping mental stimulation

Financial Proxy

£12 per hour (based on Real Living Wage) $\times 3$ (no of hours in a shift) $£36$ per volunteer per week $\times 15 \text{ volunteers} = £540$ per week

Social Benefit

Overall sense of being part of the community

Financial proxy

£25 per annum (based on an annual subscription to a society/club) $\times 15 \text{ volunteers} = £375$

Based on the survey results and the social return on investment it can be seen that our volunteers participation in the community via the community shop gives a high amount of social benefit not only to the town but also to them.

From Volunteer Scotland.net

We've estimated that volunteering at least once a week with a group or organisation (formal volunteering) is worth £1,000 per person per year in terms of the increased wellbeing they experience. That's roughly equivalent to a £20 a week boost to your wellbeing.

Across Scotland this translates to over half a billion pounds worth of increased wellbeing for Scottish volunteers (who volunteer at least once a week). Combined with the time Scottish volunteers contribute weekly; this is a contribution of £2.3 billion in terms of economic and social value (note that this does not account for the costs of volunteering). That's equivalent to the gross value added on the arts, entertainment and recreation industry to the Scottish economy (worth £2.1 billion).