

Respond, recover, reset: the voluntary sector and COVID-19

VOCypf Forum: Fighting for Survival
February 2022

**What have been your
experiences of working
through Covid?**

Summary



Finances and services



Workforce and volunteers



Looking ahead



Trends



Respondents' profile



Operational Aims of the Project

- Real-time data and learning on how COVID-19 is impacting the whole sector
- Lessons-learned reports about how organisations on the impacts and responses
- Insights to aid long-term the VCSE Sector's resilience

Three Main Types of Activities

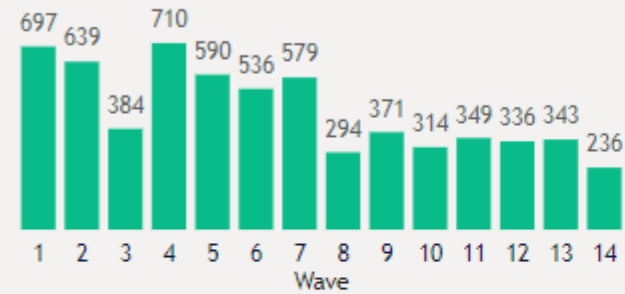
- **Monthly surveys** open to all VCSE organisations
- Quarterly **panel survey** of about ~300 organisations to monitor the changes over time
- Approximately 300 in-depth **interviews**

Overview

Project Outputs

- 1) Monthly Barometer Dashboards
- 2) Monthly Headline Reports
- 3) Milestone Reports
- 4) Final Report and toolkit for resilience
- 5) Anonymised Data Sets for researchers and sector to use for their own analysis

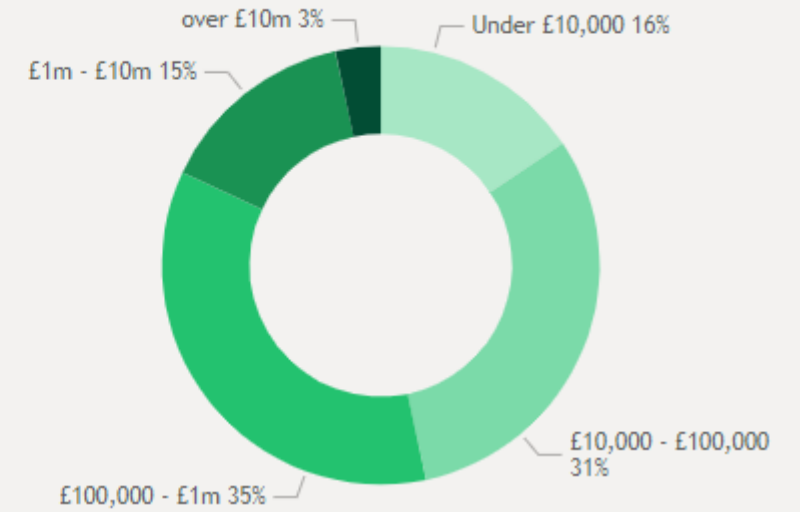
Responses by wave



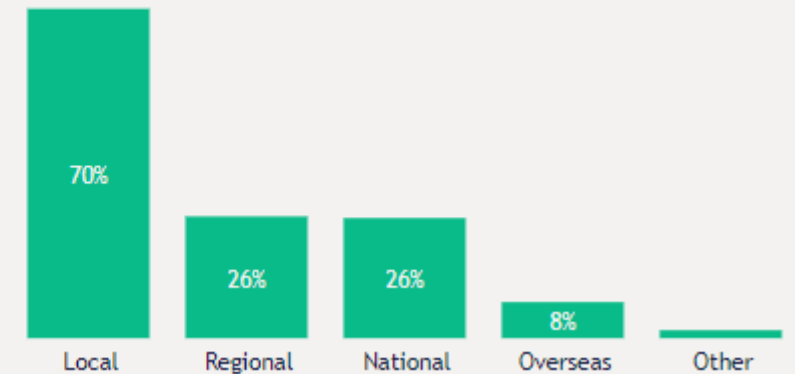
Location



Size



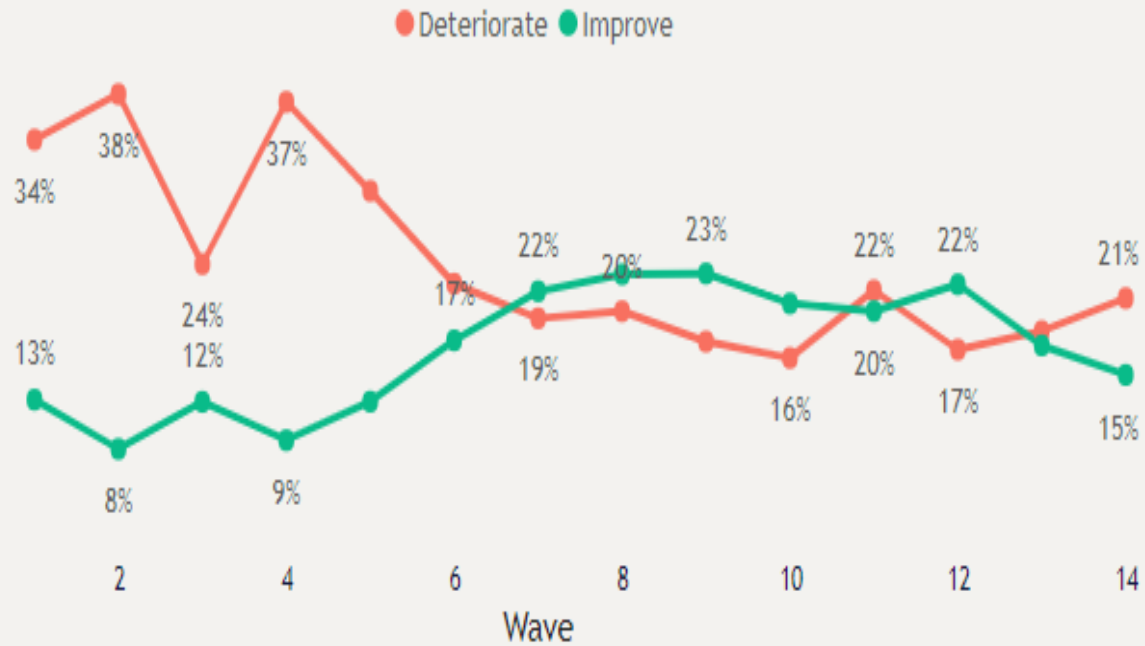
Level of operation



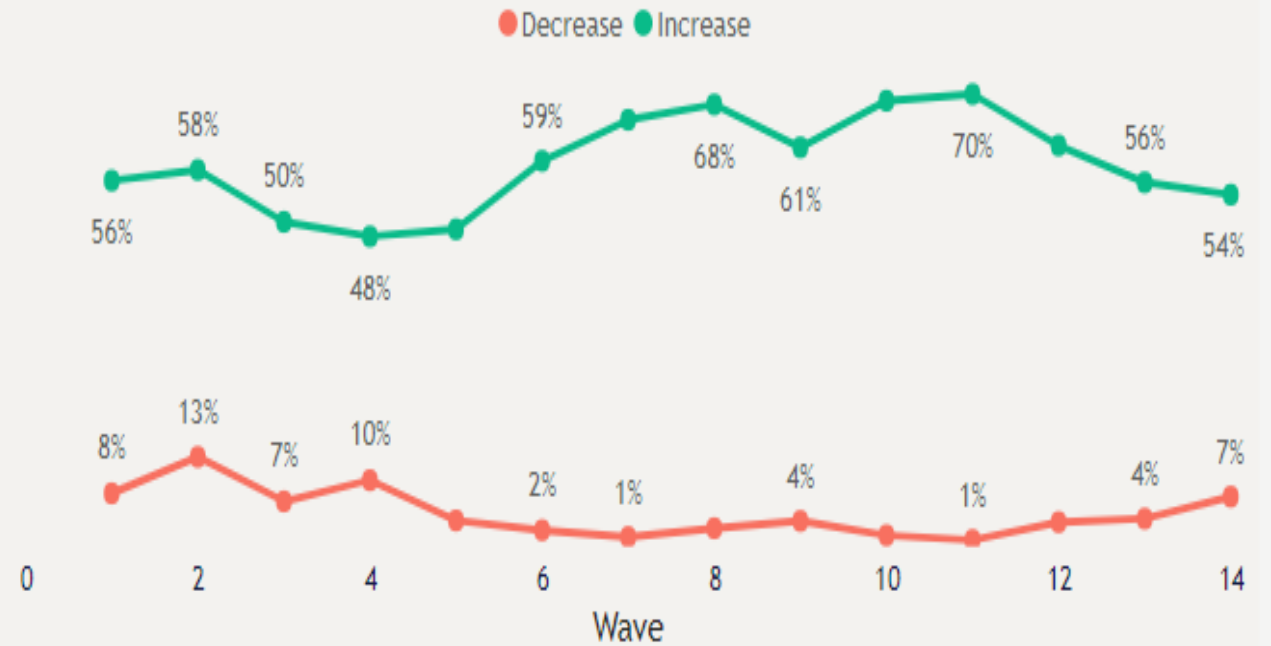
Mini reports include

- Wellbeing
- Volunteering
- Financial impact
- Relationship with local authorities
- Changing patterns of volunteering
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Digital inclusion
- Leadership
- Future of funding
- Infrastructure

Short-term expectations for financial position



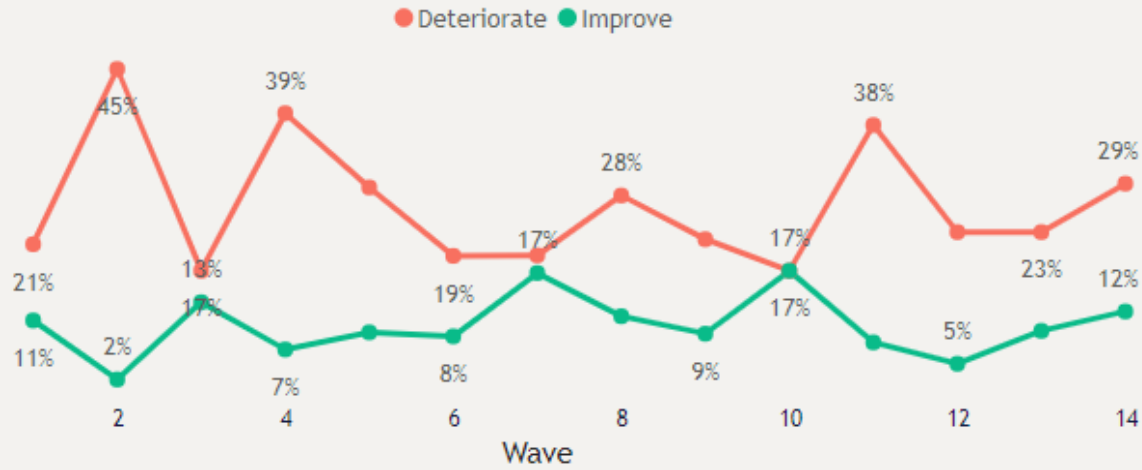
Short-term expectations for demand for services



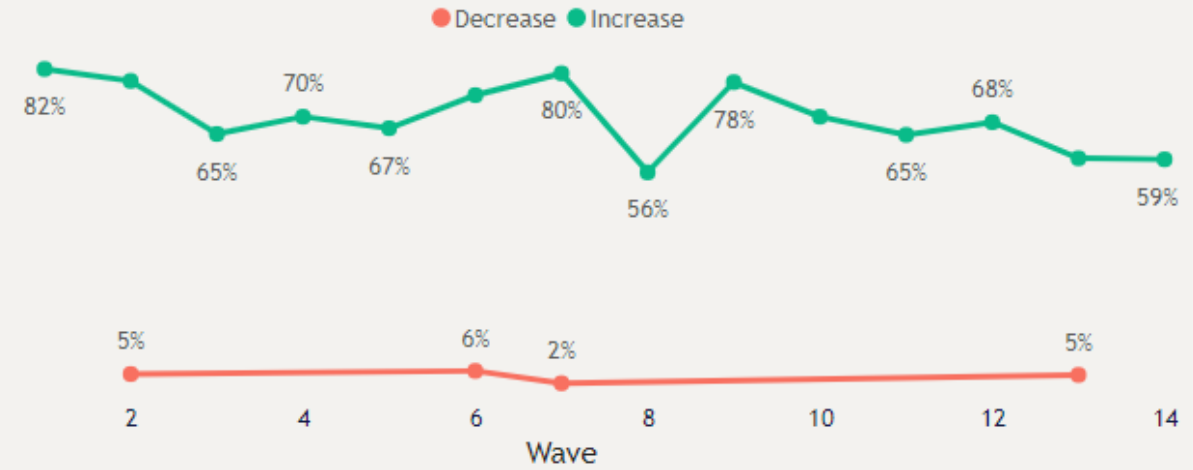
What is happening in Voluntary Sector?

- Fluctuating income and demands throughout the pandemic

Short-term expectations for financial position



Short-term expectations for demand for services

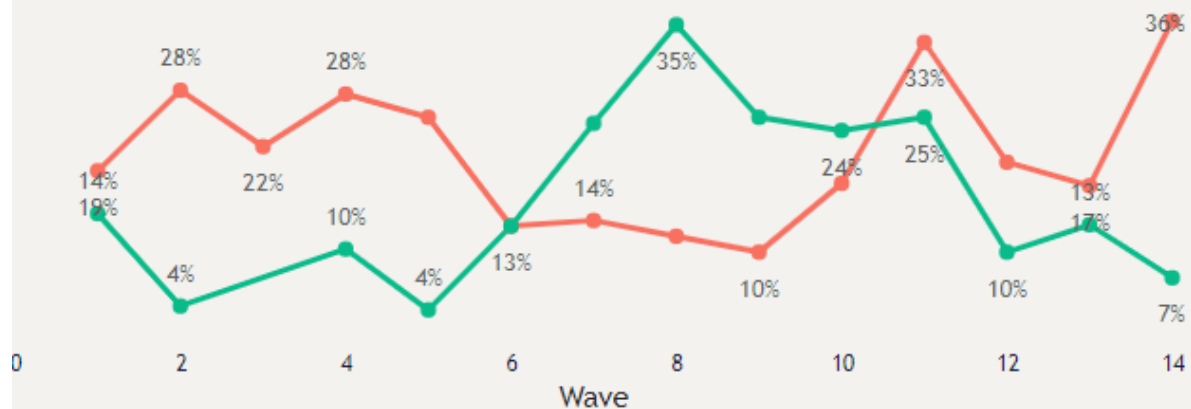


Individual and family social services

- High demand throughout the pandemic
- Please note sample sizes are small

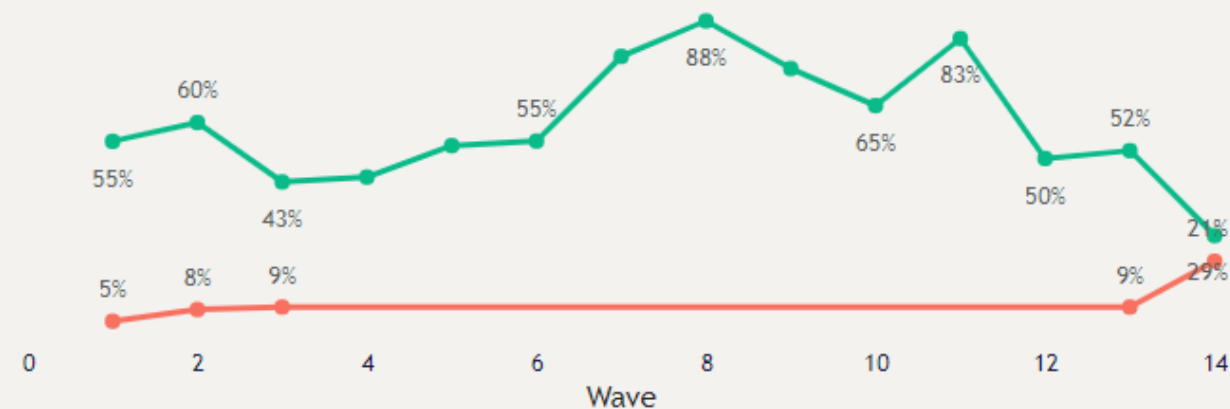
Short-term expectations for financial position

● Deteriorate ● Improve



Short-term expectations for demand for services

● Decrease ● Increase

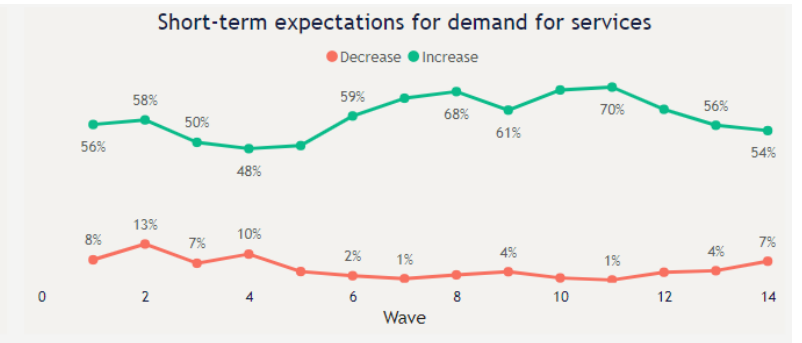
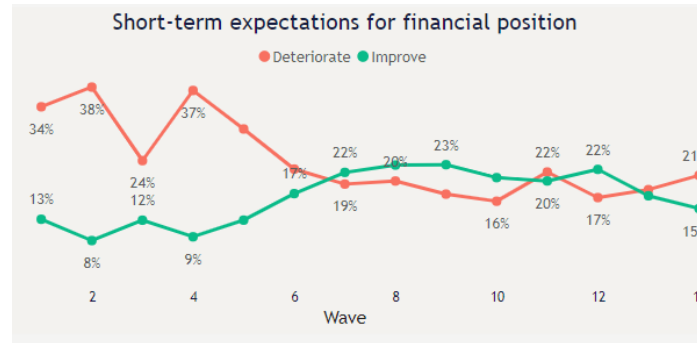


Civic, advocacy
and political
(youth clubs etc)

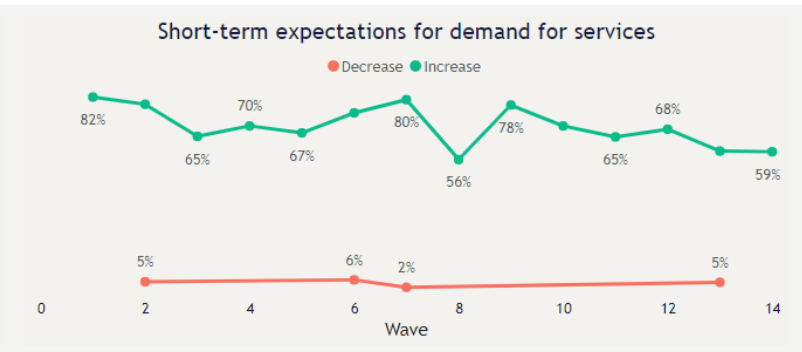
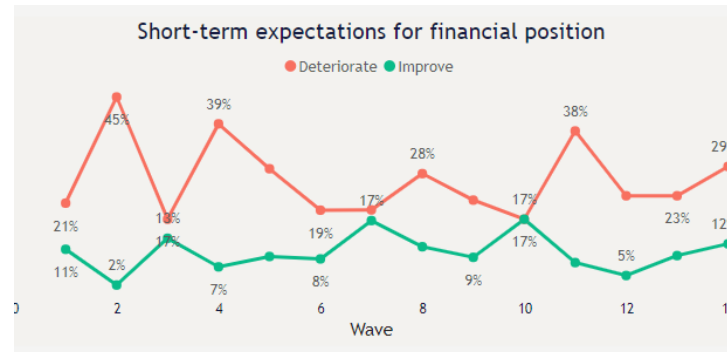
- Increased due to ending of lockdowns
- Please note sample sizes are small

Comparison sector to Individual and Family

- Individual and family's demand even higher than the sector average
- Financial position more difficult
- Challenging outlook – hidden demands now appearing



- Caveat sample sizes are small



Lessons from the trends

- Opening up = Rising demand
- Challenges fulfilling vacancies
- Summer optimism replaced caution and growing uncertainty
- Organisational survival – but potential reduction
- Innovations – but what stays
- Long-Covid for charities?
- Variable experiences



Overall major themes

- Innovation and (forced) flexibility
- Digitisation and digital exclusion
- Collaboration and connections
- Struggles for survival
- EDI and increased attention on inequalities
- Shifting funders behaviour
- Increased attention on wellbeing
- Changing patterns of volunteering

Volunteering throughout the pandemic

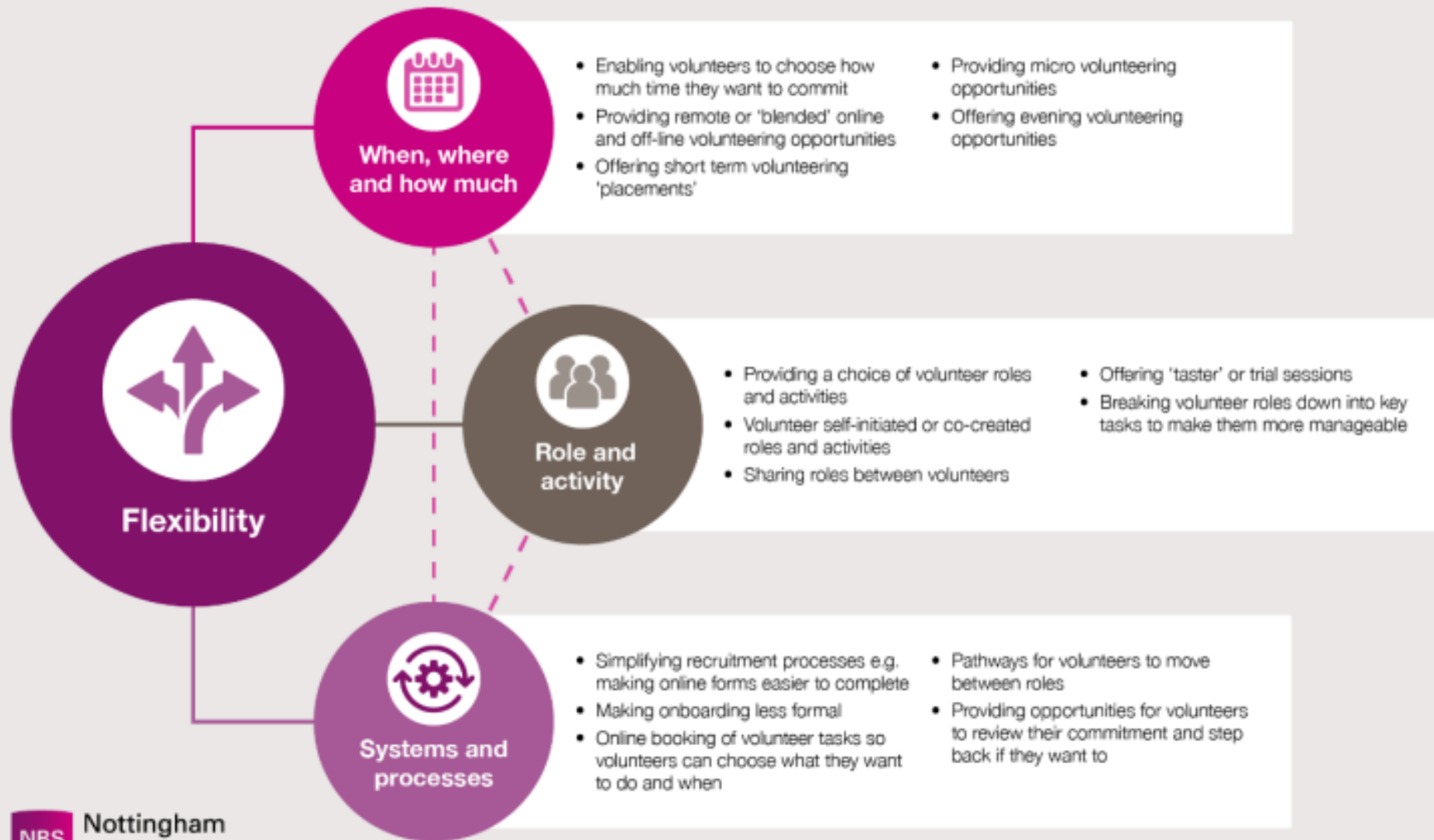
- NHS Volunteer
- Vaccine
- Mutual aid and neighbourhood helping out
- Upswing in some volunteering – extra time
- Furlough volunteers
- Digital volunteers
- Home-schooling
- Short-term volunteers
- Shielding volunteers
- Overwhelmed volunteers
- BLM and increased attention on EDI

Changing Pattern of Volunteering

- New, non-traditional Volunteers – Furlough but now back to work
- National vs Local Volunteering – NHS Volunteering
- New skills
- Does Location Matter?
- Digital skills and digital poverty
- Easier onboarding and less bureaucracy
- Diversity

Changing Pattern of Volunteering

- Mental health, well-being and connections
- Low confidence – particularly returning volunteers
- Changing demographics
- New skilled volunteers
- Rethink the volunteer offer
- Inclusive and flexible forms of volunteering
 - Flexible time and commitment levels
 - Meaningful roles
 - Remote and virtual volunteering
 - Co-creation



Impact of the pandemic - positives

- Built connections
- Togetherness
- Accelerator for Innovations
- New relationship funders
- Rethinking mission and purpose
- New practices
- Wider geography and scope
- Stronger relationships



Impact of the Pandemic - Negatives

- Depleted financial and emotional reserves
- Disconnections and loss
- Silos rebuilt
- Challenges of reopening
- Uncertainty of future
- Emergency funds been spent



Key lessons and questions – organisation and leadership perspective

- Importance of core costs, capacity, (collective) leadership and organising
- Importance of connections and space for learning
- Check wellbeing staff – recovery plan
- Personal and organisational lessons





Looking back and looking forward

- . What are the key lessons from the pandemic for your organisation?
- . What new possibilities has the pandemic opened up?
- . What things were a blip, what are the trends?
- . What new collaboration is possible?



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