

Volunteering, Health & Wellbeing

What does the evidence tell us?



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Scope...

- ✓ Volunteering, health & wellbeing
- ✓ Scottish volunteering context
- ✓ Implications for Scotland's H&W



Volunteer Scotland's report: “Volunteering, health & wellbeing”



Current perceptions

- Volunteering is a ‘good thing’
- Good for beneficiaries and volunteers
- Positive health and wellbeing impacts
- More = better

Is this true?

- Are there benefits? Who benefits? Why do they benefit?
- Are there losers as well as winners?

Health & Wellbeing

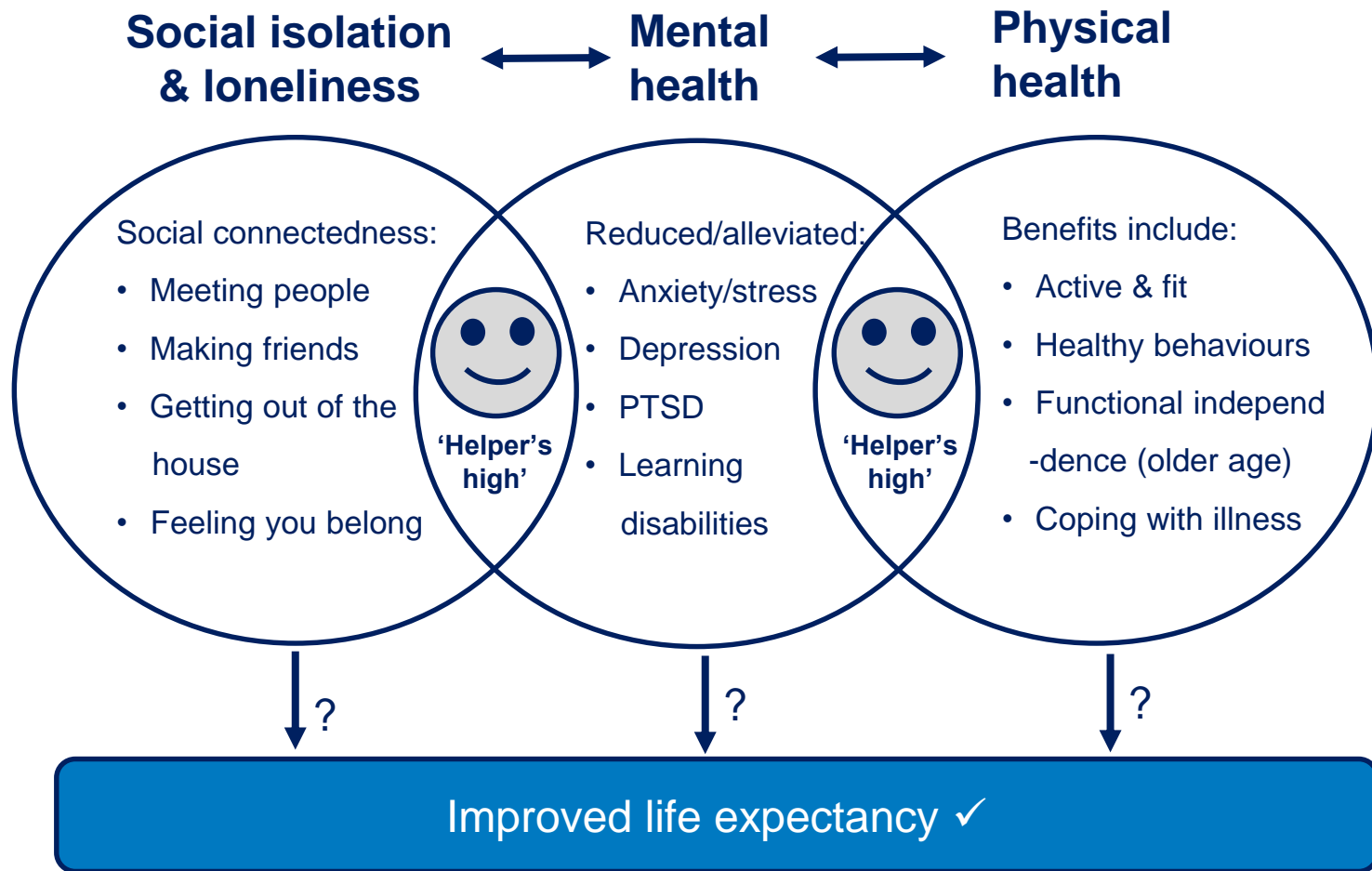
VOLUNTEERING



- Improved mental & physical health
- Reduced social isolation & loneliness

Improved community wellbeing?

Health & wellbeing benefits



Does age matter?

Young



Old



- Significant emphasis on careers & skills
- Not enough on subjective wellbeing
- Particularly important for building social skills, social capital & confidence
- And...combatting mental ill-health and loneliness



- 35 – 44 age group has highest vol. rate = 33%
- But evidence of role strain
- Lack of evidence on +ve health and wellbeing impacts



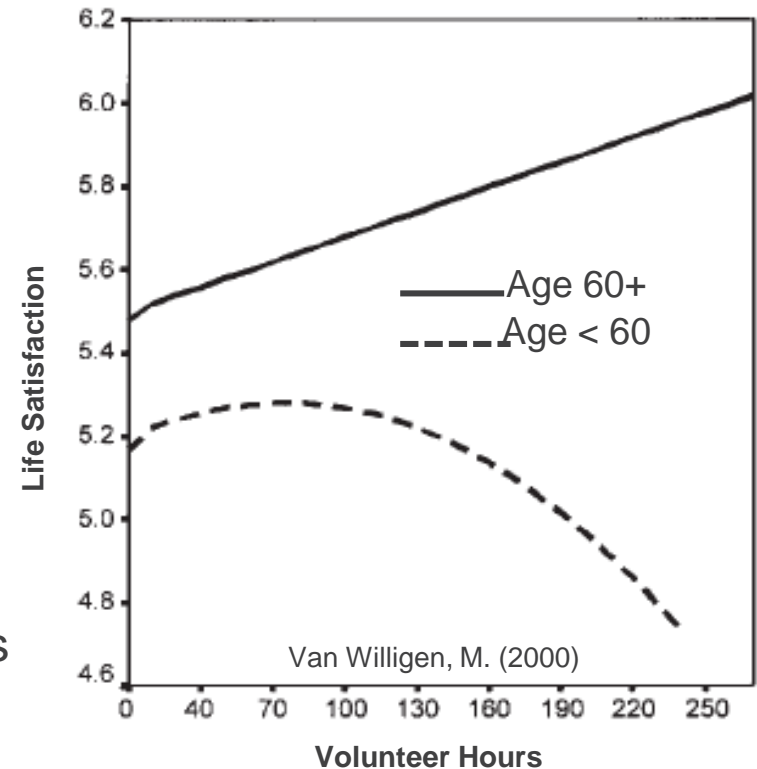
- Those retired & subject to 'role identity absences'
- Reducing social isolation & loneliness
- Physical health benefits
- The 'inoculation effect'

‘Facilitators’ affecting H&W

- **Dose-response effect** – frequency and intensity of volunteering ✓
- **Motivations** – altruism vs. self-interest ✓
- **Recognition** – thanks, appreciation and recognition ✓
- **Volunteer role** – type of role, responsibilities, social engagement ?

Possible adverse impacts

- Role strain and stress (multiple roles)
- Burnout (no. of hours volunteering)
- Physical health (esp. for older volunteers)
- Challenging /emotionally demanding roles



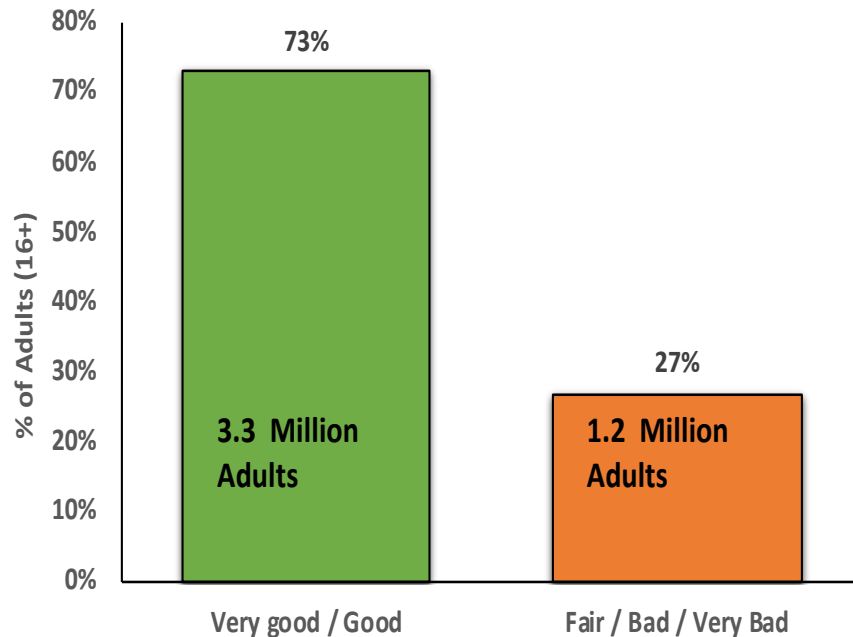
Possibility that H&W would improve if they stopped volunteering!

Scottish Volunteering Context

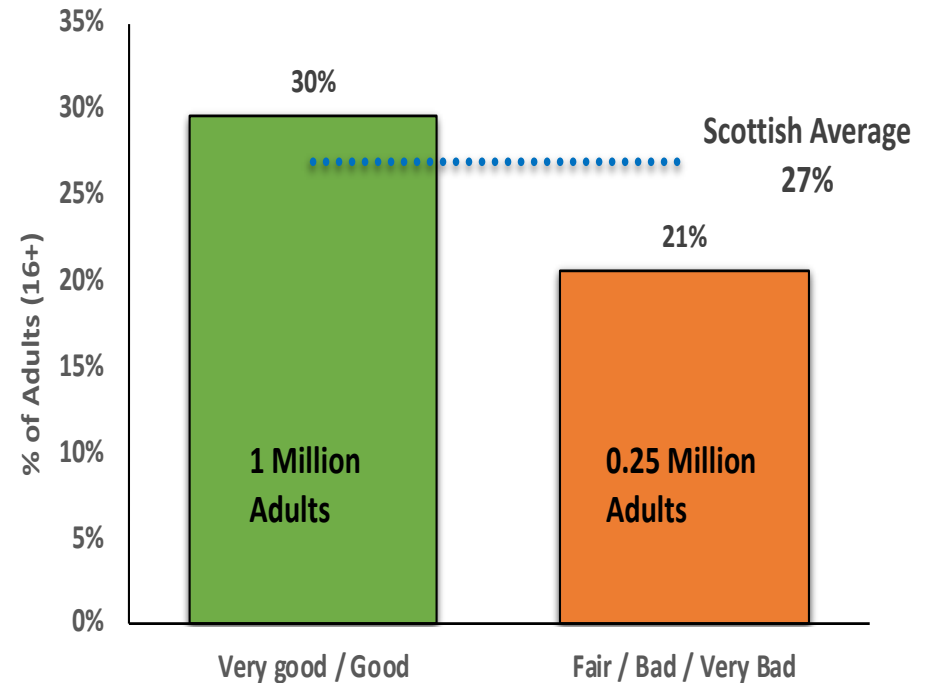
Health & Wellbeing

General Health – Scottish population

General Health – Scottish Population

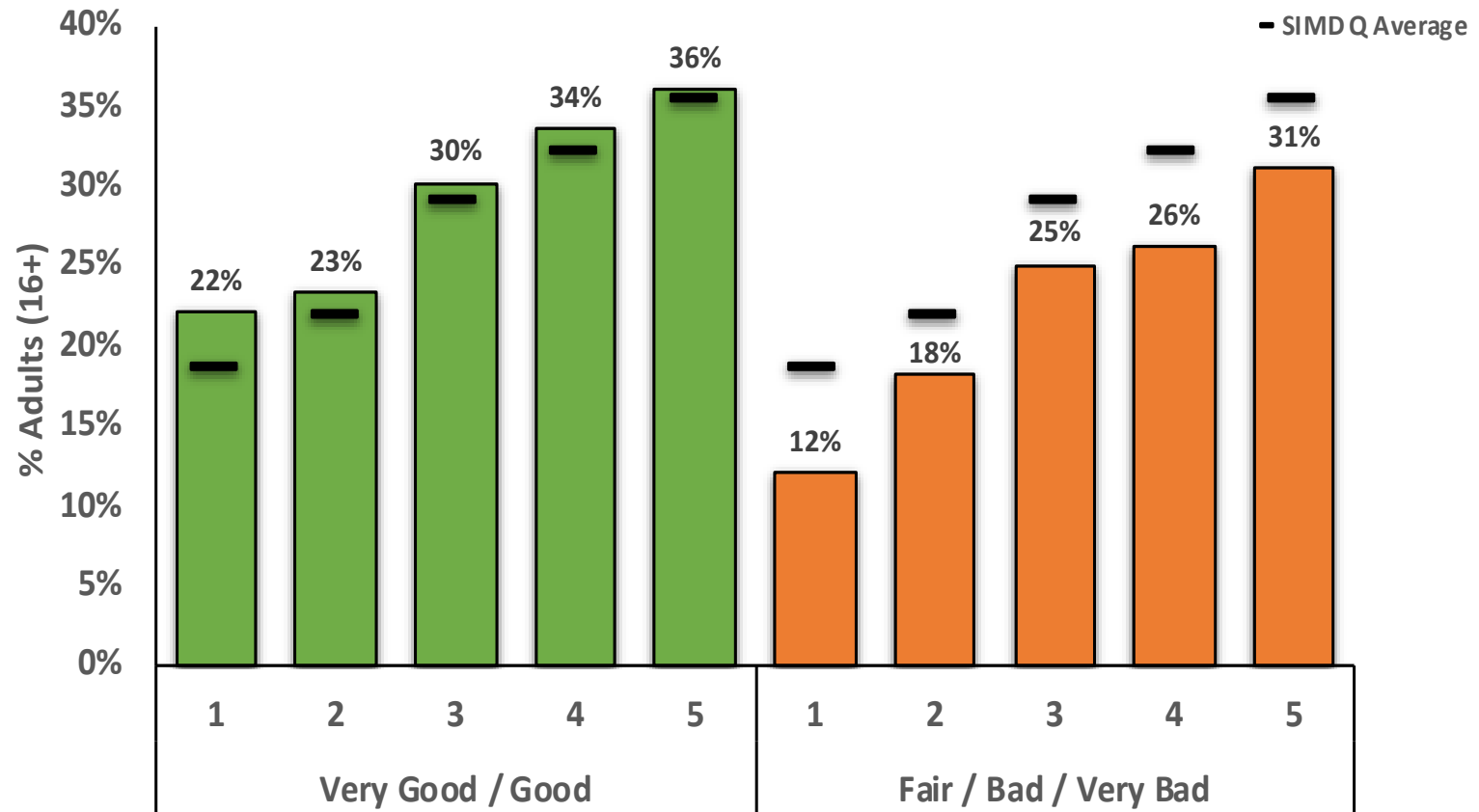


Volunteer participation and General Health



General Health – SIMD Q

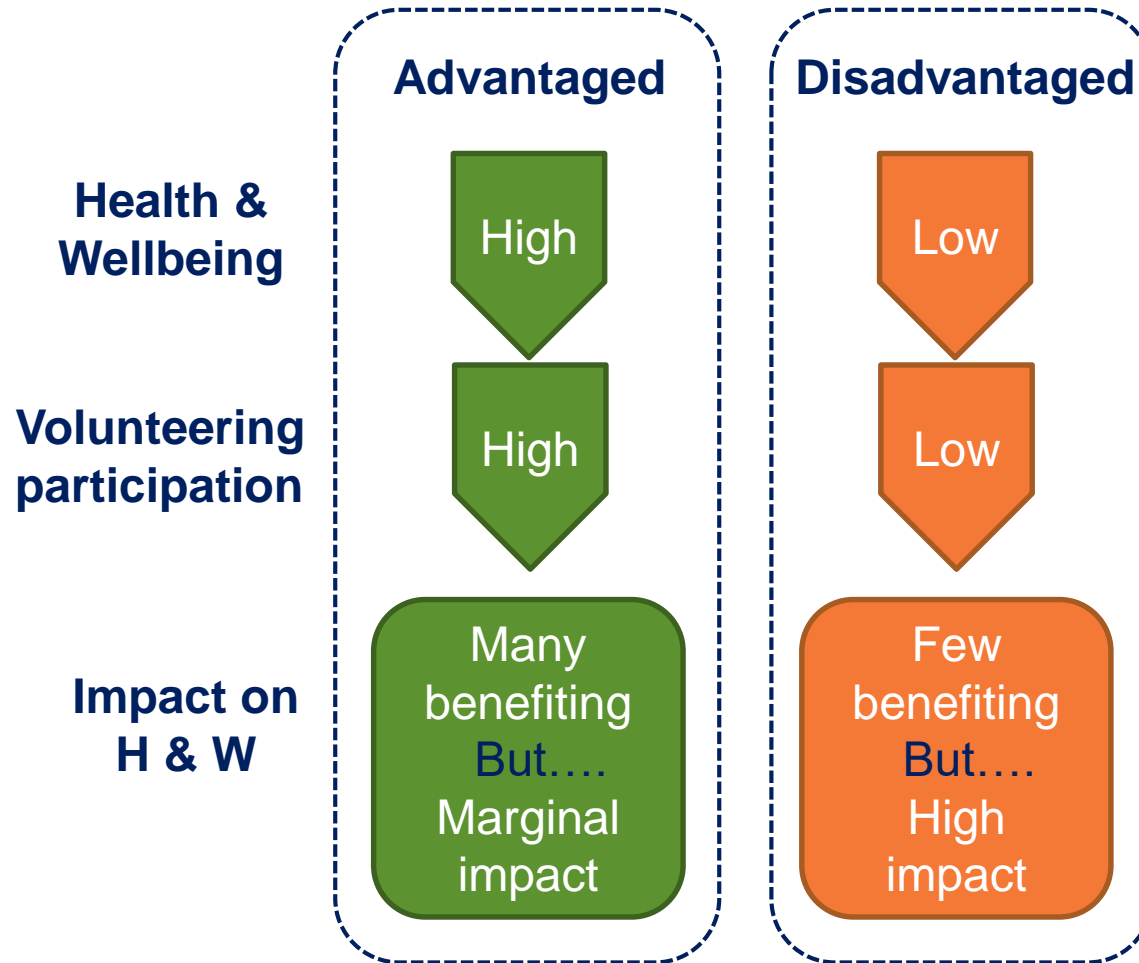
Volunteer participation and General Health - SIMD Q



Deprivation & mental health

Impact of deprivation on indicators of mental ill-health			
Indicators	SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived)	SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived)	% difference
	% of adults aged 16+		
GHQ-12: scoring 4 or more	24%	14%	10%
Depression – reporting 2 or more symptoms	20%	5%	15%
Anxiety – reporting 2 or more symptoms	17%	7%	10%
Self-harm	10%	7%	3%
Attempted suicide	12%	4%	8%
Source: Scottish Health Survey - 2017 edition – Volume 1, Main Report			

The 'Catch-22'



Further information

Reports:

- [Volunteering Trends in Scotland: Scottish Household Survey 2007 – 2017:](#)
Volunteer Scotland
- [Volunteering, Health & Wellbeing - Summary Report:](#) Volunteer Scotland
- [Volunteering, Health & Wellbeing - Full Report:](#) Volunteer Scotland
- [Young People Volunteering in Scotland, 2016:](#) Volunteer Scotland
- “Differential benefits of volunteering across the life course”: Van Willigen, M. (2000)

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