



# Community Spirit

Celebrating the stories of pandemic volunteering in  
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Volunteers have done  
amazing work over the  
pandemic keeping us safe  
and cared for

This project celebrates  
volunteers and  
recognises all the  
positive benefits of  
helping our communities

*Thank  
you!*

**Community Spirit of Leicestershire** is a community arts project to celebrate the work of volunteers during the pandemic in the city, county and Rutland.

This project has been created by artist & creative producer Ruth Singer following her volunteering at a food bank in Leicester during the height of the pandemic. She felt it was so important to gather the stories of volunteering, to record just how vital their work was and to celebrate the amazing support and community-building that volunteers have done throughout 2020 and 2021 to support others impacted by Covid.

This booklet shares some of the volunteers' own words and some information about people who volunteered.

"I helped to vaccinate people. I was scared but when I saw how many others were also scared, it inspired me."

"It makes me feel useful."

"I feel I've been a small, but useful part, of a huge team effort."

"I got to know my neighbours better & made friends."

"It's amazing to be involved in something that really makes a difference."

We asked about  
volunteering commitment,  
about the emotional and  
personal impact and about  
how volunteering connects  
us to our communities

"We are all on the  
same side."

"The community has  
come together."

"I got to know my  
neighbours better."

"Warmth and  
friendship."

"I made new connections."

"Volunteering gives a feeling of being  
connected to the whole community."

"Being part of a  
supportive environment."

"Giving something back."

"Volunteering is  
transformative."

"Getting to know wonderful  
people."

## What we did

We gathered stories and thoughts about volunteering from local people through an online survey and we ran community workshops making rosettes.



We ran workshops to make rosettes with hand-printed paper and fabrics



We wanted the artwork to be made of small elements made by volunteers which had a feel of celebration and commemoration to them. We chose rosettes because they reminded us of prizes or awards and they can be made in paper or fabric.





Contribute  
Compassion

HEART  
Hope



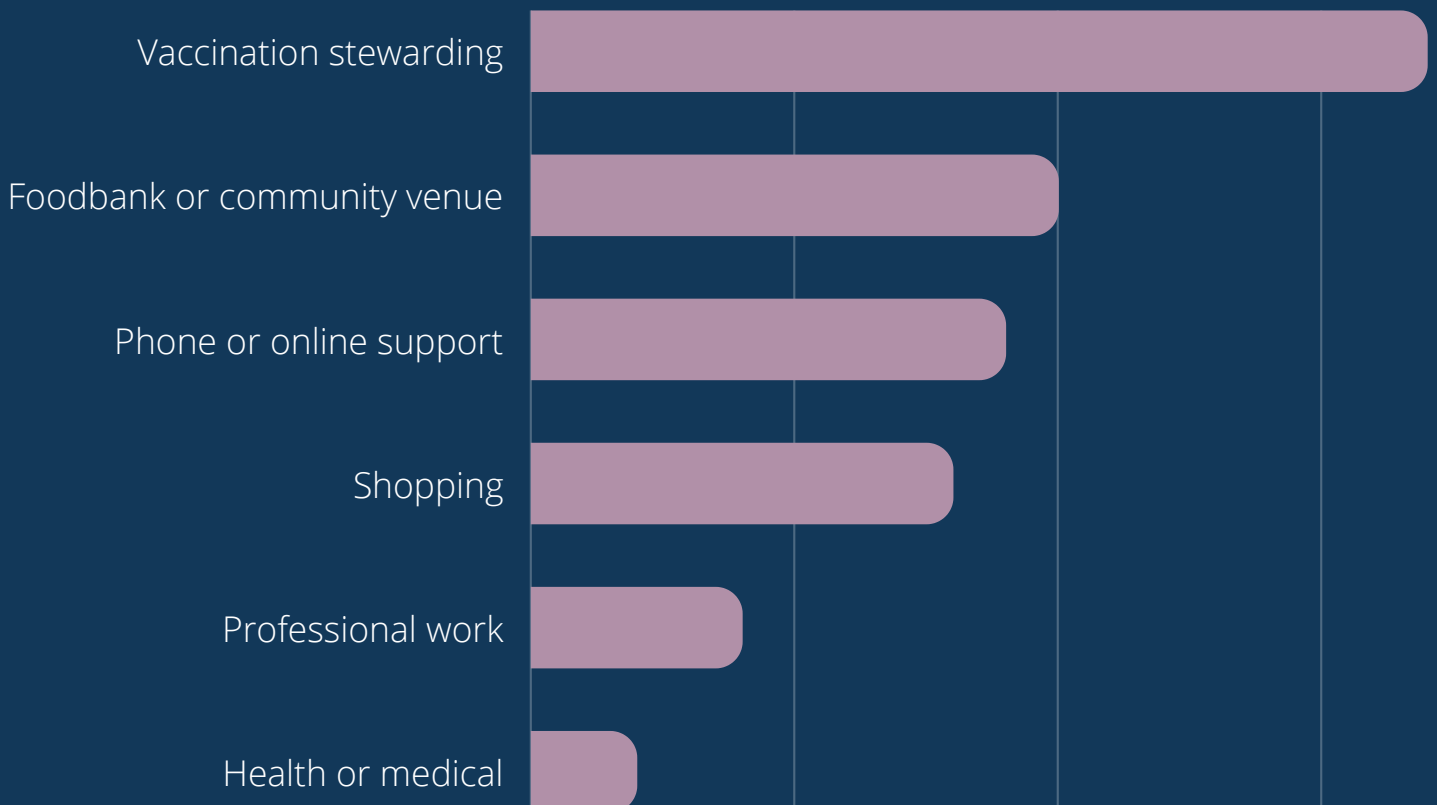
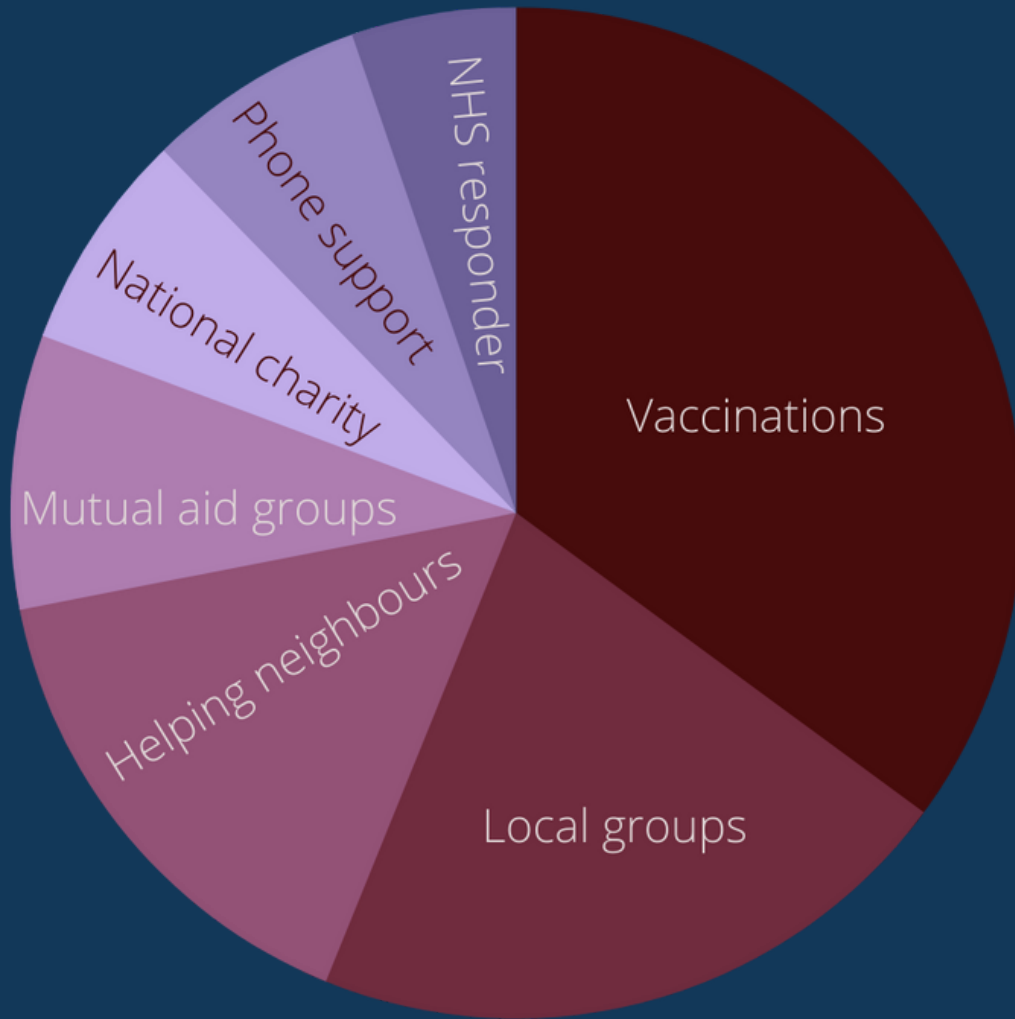
Together Giving

Contribute Compassion

Community

Connection

# What kind of volunteering did people do?



Words used to describe  
volunteering

empowering helping satisfying  
positive enlightening uplifting  
fun rewarding emotional  
developing purpose inclusive  
eye-opening giving helpful  
supportive community  
contributing  
wonderful sociable

Volunteering means...

Sharing

New connections

Learning new skills

Being part of something

Finding your place in the community



## Volunteering commitment



Over 50% of our respondents said they were new to volunteering

47% said they changed their volunteering to respond to the pandemic

2,000 registered volunteers have filled more than 20,000 shifts, across over 40 vaccination points.

Over half the volunteers surveyed were over 50

## Wellbeing

We asked which words described your feelings about volunteering

Helping  
Positive action  
Giving back  
Changing lives

Being active

Togetherness

Local people

Team work

Getting out

Being busy



60% said that  
volunteering improved  
their mental health or  
wellbeing considerably



# Why do you volunteer?

Helping others



Giving back to my community



To feel useful



Good for my mental health



I have skills to share



Getting out of the house



Feeling positive



Taking control



Developing my skills



Learning new things





We asked where people volunteered



We asked "Who do you consider as your community?"

Local people in my street / area



People I have shared experience with



People nearby who need support



My family / friends



People from my own culture / religion / background



Online communities or other not local community



Work colleagues



## Sense of community

We asked people how they felt about their community and how volunteering had impacted this

**85% said  
volunteering  
made them feel  
more connected  
to their  
community**

We asked for words  
about community  
and volunteers said

"Volunteering lets  
me use skills I don't  
use at work."

"I have better mental  
health due to more  
contact with others."

**Together**  
**Local people**  
**Connection**  
**Team work**  
**People in need**  
**Welcoming**

A few people also chose  
these words to describe their  
feelings about community:

Isolation  
Indifferent  
Unfriendly



"Volunteering means being active and relieving loneliness."

"I saw at first hand what love for your community can do."

"I get to meet new people, to learn and listen."

"It was amazing to see so many strangers coming together to make the vaccine strategy work."



The rosettes made by volunteers are being shown in community venues before being returned to volunteers as a keepsake of their work. Nominate a volunteer to receive one using the website below

"I felt like an important cog in a huge people-powered machine."

"Volunteering changed my life. I feel so inspired to make a difference in my community and use my skills for good."

Large print black and white version available on request or at display venues

PDF and audio versions of this booklet available on the website below

Find out more at  
[ruthsinger.com/community-spirit](https://ruthsinger.com/community-spirit)



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