



People First Volunteers

April 2024



wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

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Foreword

Volunteering at People First

Volunteering is a huge part of what we do at People First; we started out as a volunteer-led organisation working for people with learning disabilities and have grown into the well respected and impactful charity we are today.

Our mission is:

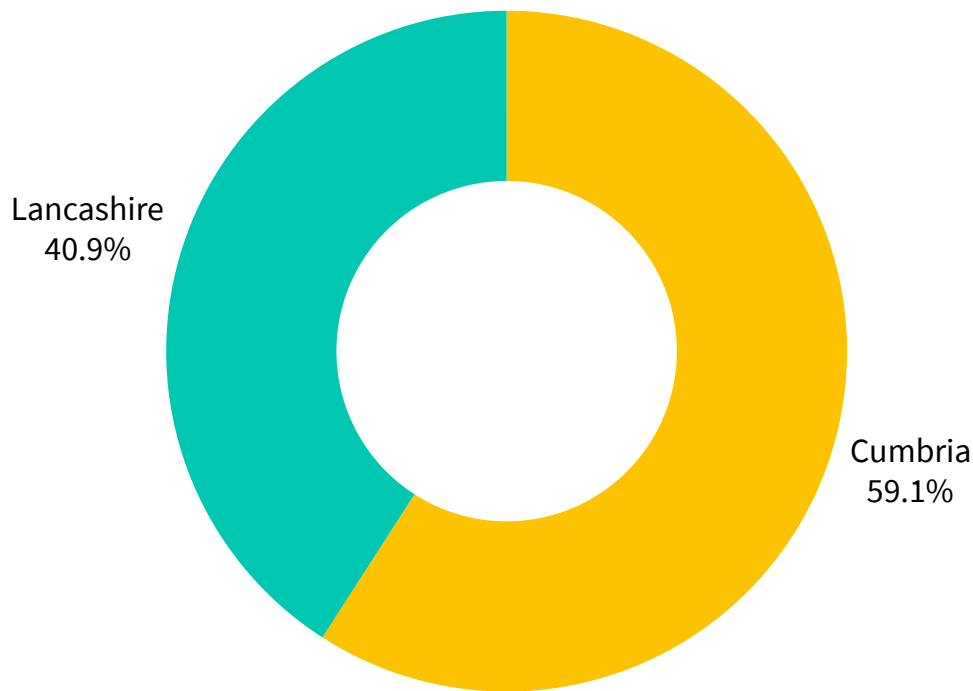
We exist to support every customer to live their best life:

- We speak out fearlessly, for those who cannot speak out for themselves
- We stand shoulder to shoulder with people as they work through their most challenging times

- We challenge services to improve based on people's real lived experiences
- We build people's skills so that they can lead healthier and fulfilled lives
- We connect people to communities, so that they feel included

This is our first report to focus solely on volunteering at People First, and it gives us a good idea of where we are, and where we need to be going when it comes to volunteers.

Where do you volunteer?



Volunteering

The situation up to now

Up until last year, volunteers were surveyed about their experience as part of the yearly staff survey. However, after the recruitment of two dedicated Volunteer Coordinators, we are moving towards a more strategic approach to our volunteering offer.

In order to do this, we conducted a Diversity Audit and a Volunteer Experience Survey to evidence who our volunteers are, which area they are volunteering in, and what they thought about their volunteering experience so far.

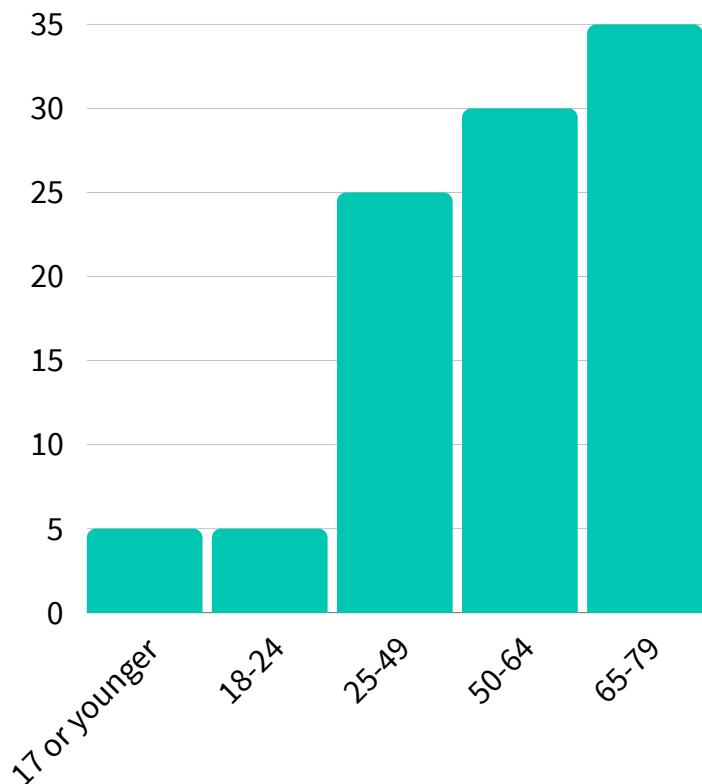
Both reports should be read side by side to gain a full picture of volunteering at People First.

We currently have 12 different volunteering roles available across People First and Healthwatch, and across Lancashire and Cumbria.

The largest number of volunteers are in our cafe and in Healthwatch Lancashire, but we also have volunteers in Advocacy, Self Advocacy, the Conference Centre, Learner Services, Youth Services and all of Healthwatch.

Age & Disability

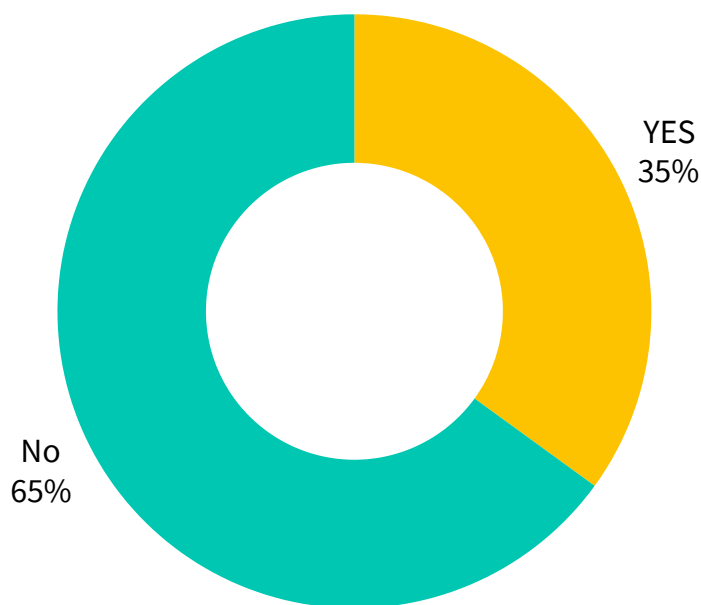
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



1. What is your age?

Most of our volunteers (65%) are between 50 and 79 years old. In comparison, 45% of the population in Cumbria and Lancashire are in this age group.

This shows that we need to carry out some targeted recruitment to focus on bringing younger volunteers to the organisation, as well as our older volunteers.

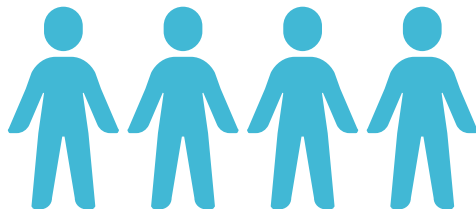


2. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

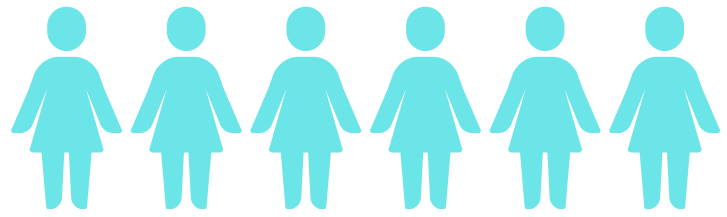
35% of our volunteers consider themselves to have a disability, compared to 18.8%* in the general population of Cumbria and Lancashire.

This shows that a commitment to our Mission flows throughout the whole of People First.

“We challenge services to improve based on people’s real lived experiences”+



Male 40%



Female 60%



Gender same as assigned at birth 100%

Gender

What is your gender? Is it the same as your sex assigned at birth?

Although there were options in the gender field including non-binary and 'other', 100% of volunteers answered either male or female to the question around gender.

100% also agreed that their current gender was the same as the one assigned at birth.

Our volunteers are 40% male and 60% female, compared to Cumbria and Lancashire as a whole, the population is 49.2% male and 50.8% female*.

Although all of our volunteers stated that their current gender is the same as their sex

assigned at birth, in Cumbria and Lancashire 0.5% of residents identify as a gender different to their sex registered at birth*.

We currently have no volunteers who openly state that they are transgender, agender or non-binary. In order to represent this group appropriately, we will need to audit our recruitment process to make sure we are not unconsciously making it difficult for these volunteers to apply.

We will then target recruitment for this group so that we can be representative.

*NOMIS Uk 2021 Census data Cumberland, Westmoreland & Furness, Lancashire combined & mean averaged . Accessed 23/01/2024 16.15.

Partnership

Legal partnership status



We asked about the relationship status of our volunteers.+

Interestingly, we have fewer volunteers who are:

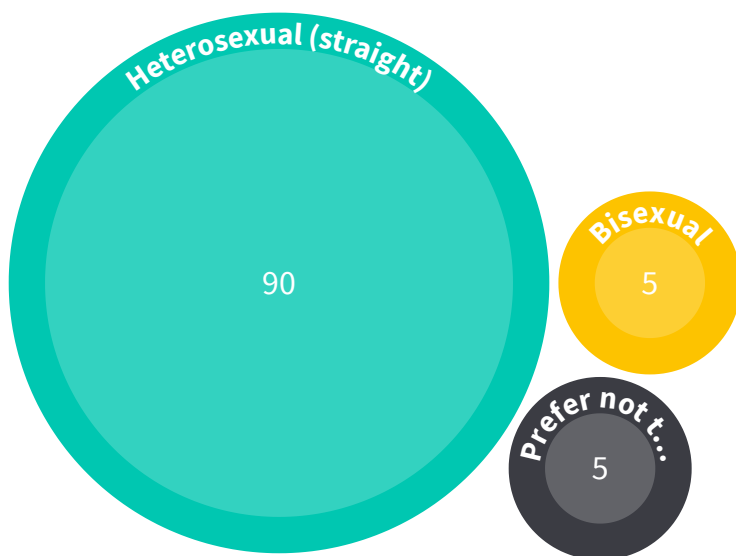
- widowed (0% compared to 6.7% regionally)
- married (25% compared to 47.7% regionally)

And more volunteers who are:

- Divorced: 15% compared to 6.9% regionally
- Single: 30% compared to 22.9% regionally.

This could be because the question wasn't as specific as the Census question, or it could be something in the profile of volunteering today.

Sexual Orientation

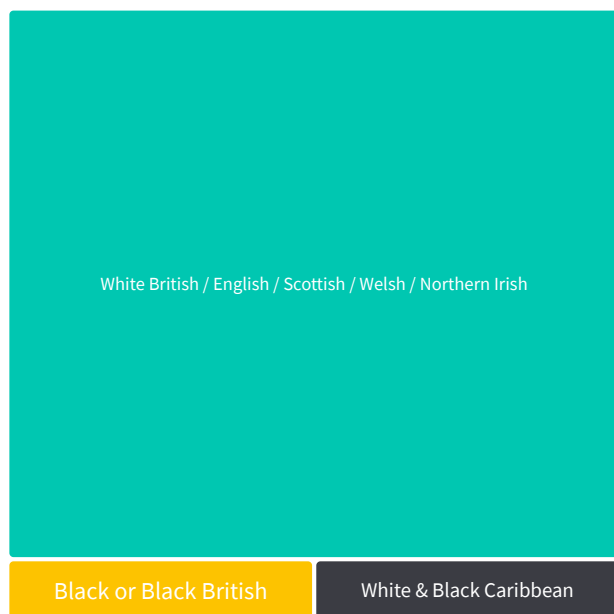


There were multiple possible options for answers to this question, including asexual, pansexual and undecided, but only 5% of volunteers openly stated that they were of a sexuality other than heterosexual, compared to 2.4%* regionally. 5% also preferred not to answer the question (Compared to 6.6% regionally).

+Nobody stated that they were in a Civil Partnership, but as the UK Government does not differentiate between these in the Census, they have been joined together. *NOMIS UK 2021 Census data Cumberland, Westmoreland & Furness, Lancashire combined & mean averaged. Accessed 23/01/2024 16.15.

Ethnicity & Beliefs

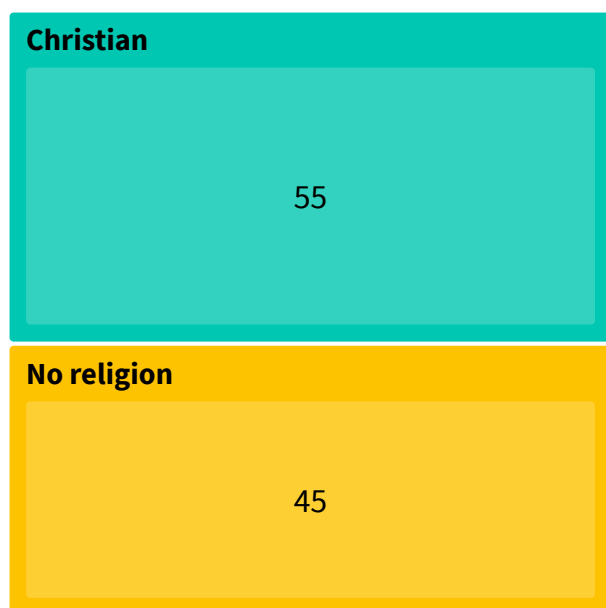
Across Lancashire & Cumbria



Ethnicity

90% of our volunteers described themselves as White (British, English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish), 5% as Black or Black British, and 5% as White & Black Caribbean. In Cumbria and Lancashire joined, white people make up 94.7% of the population. However, there is a difference between Cumbria and Lancashire, with Lancashire having an 88.9% white population.

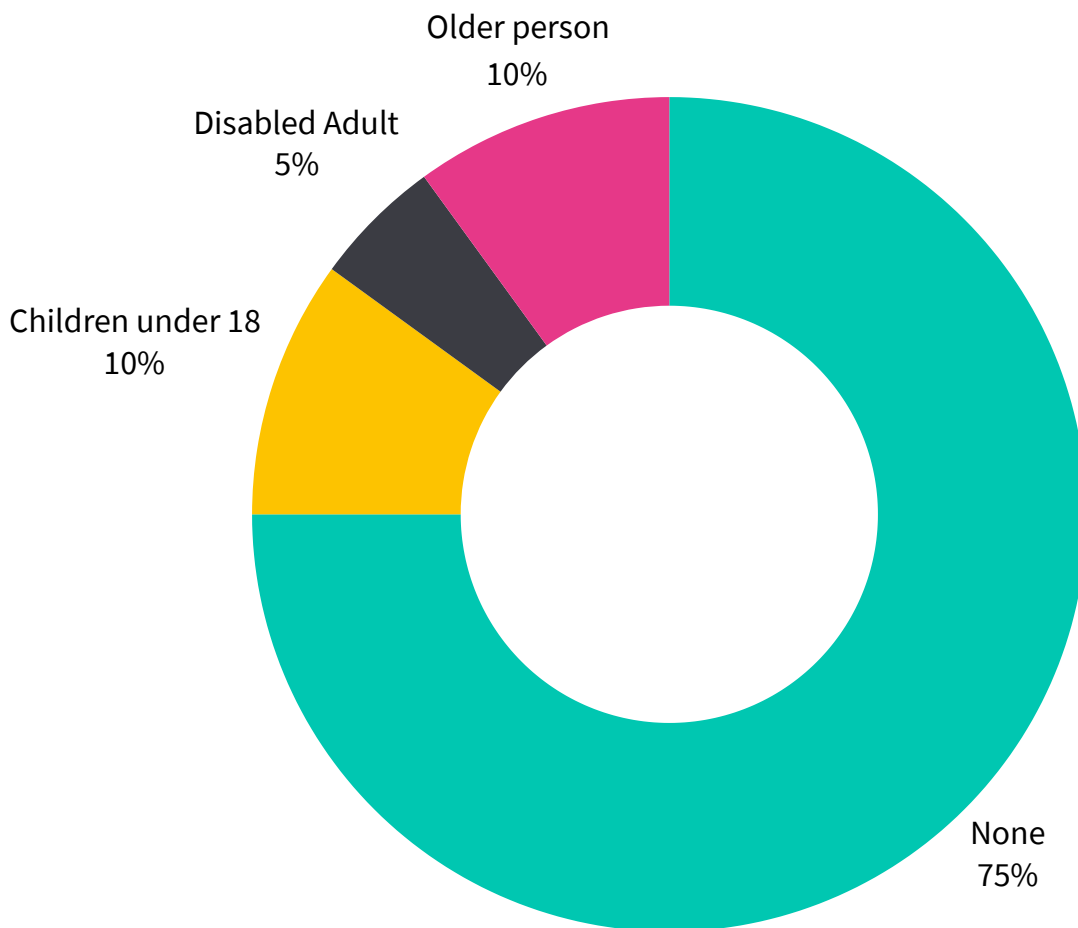
Nobody in our volunteer pool identified as Asian or Asian British, yet this group makes up 8.1% of the population in Lancashire and 3.4% overall in our region.



Belief

In Lancashire & Cumbria, 56.1% of people stated that they were Christian. Comparatively, 55% of our volunteers stated that they were Christian. The other 45% of our volunteers stated that they had no religion, compared to 34.5% in the local area.

There were no volunteers of any other religion. In Lancashire, Muslims represent 6.9% of the population (2.6% regionally), so this is an group where we need to recruit more volunteers.



Carers

Caring responsibilities amongst volunteers

In Cumbria and Lancashire as a whole, only 10% of the population had caring responsibilities.++

Amongst our volunteers, that number is 50% higher at 15% (not including care of non disabled children).

There was an option to state that a volunteer was caring for a disabled child, but nobody chose this option, so we can only assume that those who chose 'child under 18' meant typical child caring responsibilities.

Carers are an often unheard group in Health & Social care and it is important that this group is represented amongst our volunteers.

Carers often face barriers to support and inclusion as their caring responsibilities can make it difficult to attend any groups or events.

++ NOMIS 2021 Census: "An unpaid carer may look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illness or problems related to old age" Aged 5 and above, does not include care of non disabled children. *NOMIS UK 2021 Census data Cumberland, Westmoreland & Furness, Lancashire combined. Accessed 23/01/2024 16.15. Accessed 23/01/2024 16.15.

Life Experience

Reaching different groups



We asked all of our volunteers about their life experience with the following question:

Do you have any experience in any of the following areas / communities? This could be through personal experience, caring experience, through supporting a friend or family member with this issue, or through working with people in these groups. Please tick all that apply.

This question is to ensure that our group of volunteers is representative of the community we aim to represent as an organisation.

These groups are those who are under represented when it comes to influence in Health & Social Care and it is our vision that we can act as an amplifier for their voices to reduce barriers in access to Health & Social Care.

Key for the next page:

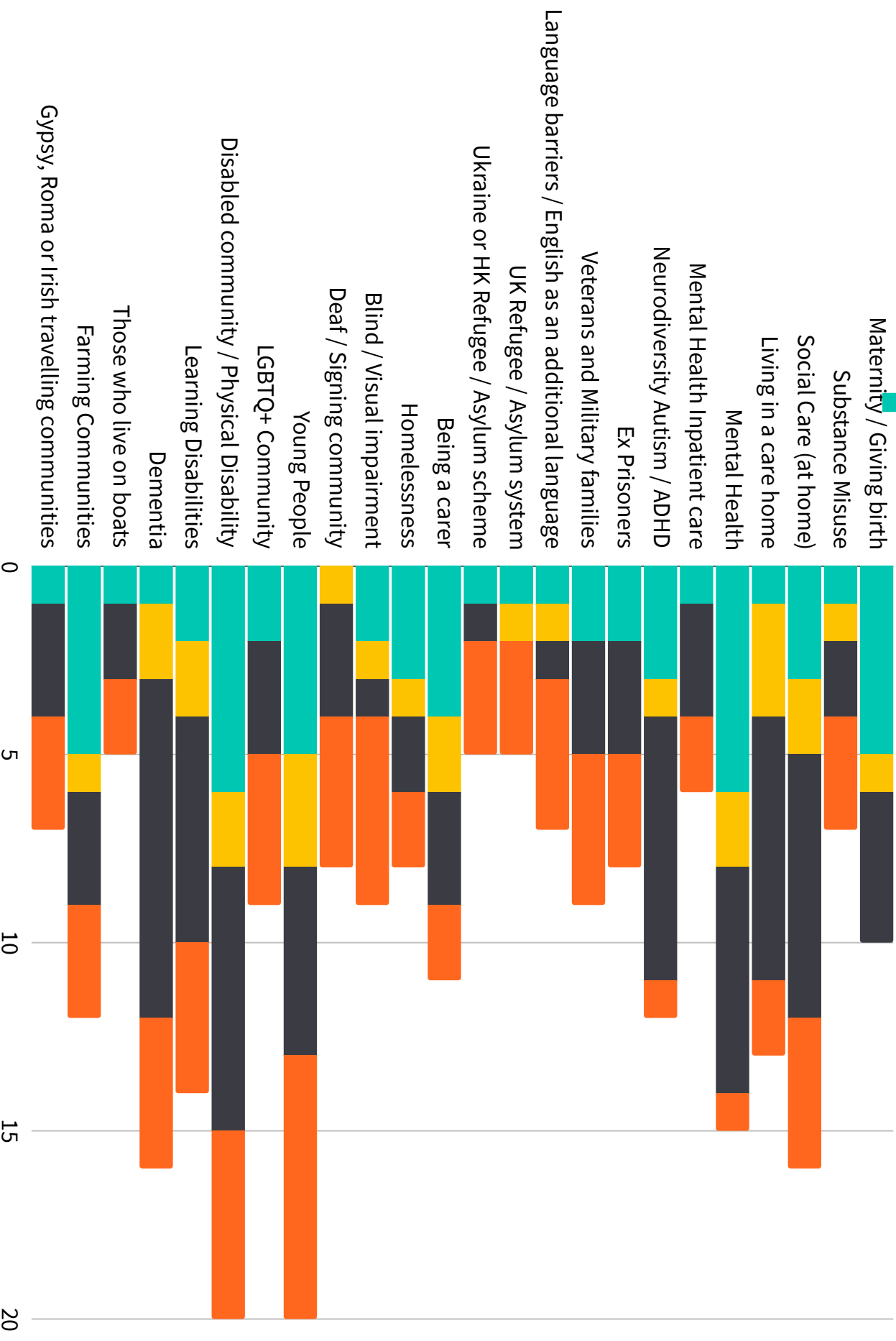
Personal experience

Caring experience

Supported a friend or family member

Worked with this group

Life Experience





Conclusion

Next steps

From the data in this report, we can see that our current volunteers do not represent the ethnic and religious diversity of the area we work in. The Asian population in Lancashire is especially underrepresented as that group constitutes 8% of the population in Lancashire.

We have also found that the LGBTQ+ community and those who care for disabled children are under-represented amongst our volunteers.

As an organisation, there is also work to be done to engage with those who live on boats, and the travelling community. This group is also under-represented in our volunteer population.

In order to rectify this imbalance, we will commit to the following in the next financial year:

1. An audit of our recruitment process to identify any unintentional or indirect discrimination.
2. An audit of our recruitment advertising to ensure that all sectors of our community are represented as far as possible.
3. Targeted recruitment campaigns to engage with members of underrepresented communities, starting with the Asian and LGBTQ+ communities.
4. A Diversity audit every year

“I’m so glad I stepped out of my comfort zone as it [volunteering] has given me so much confidence!”



Appendix

Volunteer EDEI Survey Questions

Thank you for taking part in our survey.

As an organisation, we strive to ensure that we are representing all areas and communities we serve and we recognise that volunteers are a vital link into those communities. We want to ensure that volunteering within our organisation is accessible, inclusive and that diversity is championed in all aspects of our volunteer team.

By answering these anonymous questions, you will be supporting us to explore which communities and experiences are currently represented within our volunteer team. Your answers will also support us to identify any communities that are not represented, so that we can continue to proactively engage and reduce any barriers that may prevent a person from volunteering with us.

Your answers will be anonymous and will not be linked in any way to the volunteer experience survey.

1. What is your age?

17 or younger

18-24

25-49

50-64

65-79

80+

Prefer not to say

2. Do you consider yourself to have a

disability? (a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities?) *

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

3. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Intersex

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

4. Is your current gender (above) the same as your gender registered at birth?

Yes

No

Undergoing reassignment

Prefer not to say

5. Are you married or in a civil partnership? *

Married

Divorced

Widowed

Civil Partnership

Single

Co habiting

Prefer not to say

6. Are you currently pregnant? *

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

7. What is your ethnicity? Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. Please tick the appropriate box:

Asian or Asian British: Indian

Asian or Asian British: Pakistani

Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi

Asian or Asian British: Chinese

Asian or Asian British: Other (please click other option below and specify)

Black or Black British: African

Black or Black British: Caribbean

Black or Black British: Other (please click other option below and specify)

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: Other (please click other option below and specify)

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups:

White: British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish

White: Irish

White: Gypsy, Roma or Irish traveller

White: Other (please click other option below and specify)

Arab

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

8. Which is your religion or belief? *

Buddhist

Hindu

Muslim

Christian

Jewish

Sikh

No religion

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

9. What is your sexual orientation? *

Heterosexual (straight)

Gay man

Gay woman/lesbian

Bisexual

Asexual

Pansexual

Undecided

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

10. Do you have caring responsibilities? Please tick all that apply:

None

Primary carer of a child/children (under 18)

Primary carer of a disabled child/children

Primary carer of a disabled adult (18 and over)

Primary carer of an older person

Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)

Prefer not to say

11. Do you have any experience in any of the following areas / communities? This could be through personal experience, caring experience, through supporting a friend or family member with this issue, or through working with people in these groups. Please tick all that apply. (Personally, As a carer, Family/Friend, Work)

Maternity / Giving birth

Substance Misuse

Social care (at home)

Living in a care home

Mental health

Mental health inpatient care

Neurodiversity (Autism/ADHD)

Ex prisoners

Veterans & Military families

Language barriers or not speaking English as a first language

The refugee/ asylum system in the UK

The Ukraine or Hong Kong refugee/asylum system

Being a carer

Homelessness

Being registered blind or having a visual impairment

The deaf and signing community

Young people

LGBTQ+ community

Physical disability/disabled community

Learning disabilities

Dementia

Those who live on boats

Farming communities

Gypsy, Roma or Irish travelling communities

12. Do you have any support needs in order to volunteer with us? (Please tick all that apply)

I need documents in a different format (large print, braille, on coloured paper etc)

I need help with reading or writing

I need my volunteering to be flexible

I need regular time away from volunteering

I need extra notice for volunteering

I need support around anxiety

I need support to access online training and resources

Other (please specify):

13. What is your current employment status *

Working full time

Working part time

Retired

Full time student

Not working due to illness or disability

Not working but looking for employment

Not working due to caring responsibilities

Not working as the support I need to work is not available

Not working and not looking for employment

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

3. Thank you for completing this survey!

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey.

We are also asking for feedback on your volunteering experience. Your answers will not be linked to the Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey.

You can take this survey here: (link)



“I want to thank Healthwatch Lancashire because your work gives people dignity and makes them happy.”

Inna, Volunteer at Healthwatch Lancashire