



# Volunteering in the Pandemic: Evidence from Two UK Volunteer Matching Services

Professor Alasdair Rutherford  
University of Stirling



BE THE DIFFERENCE

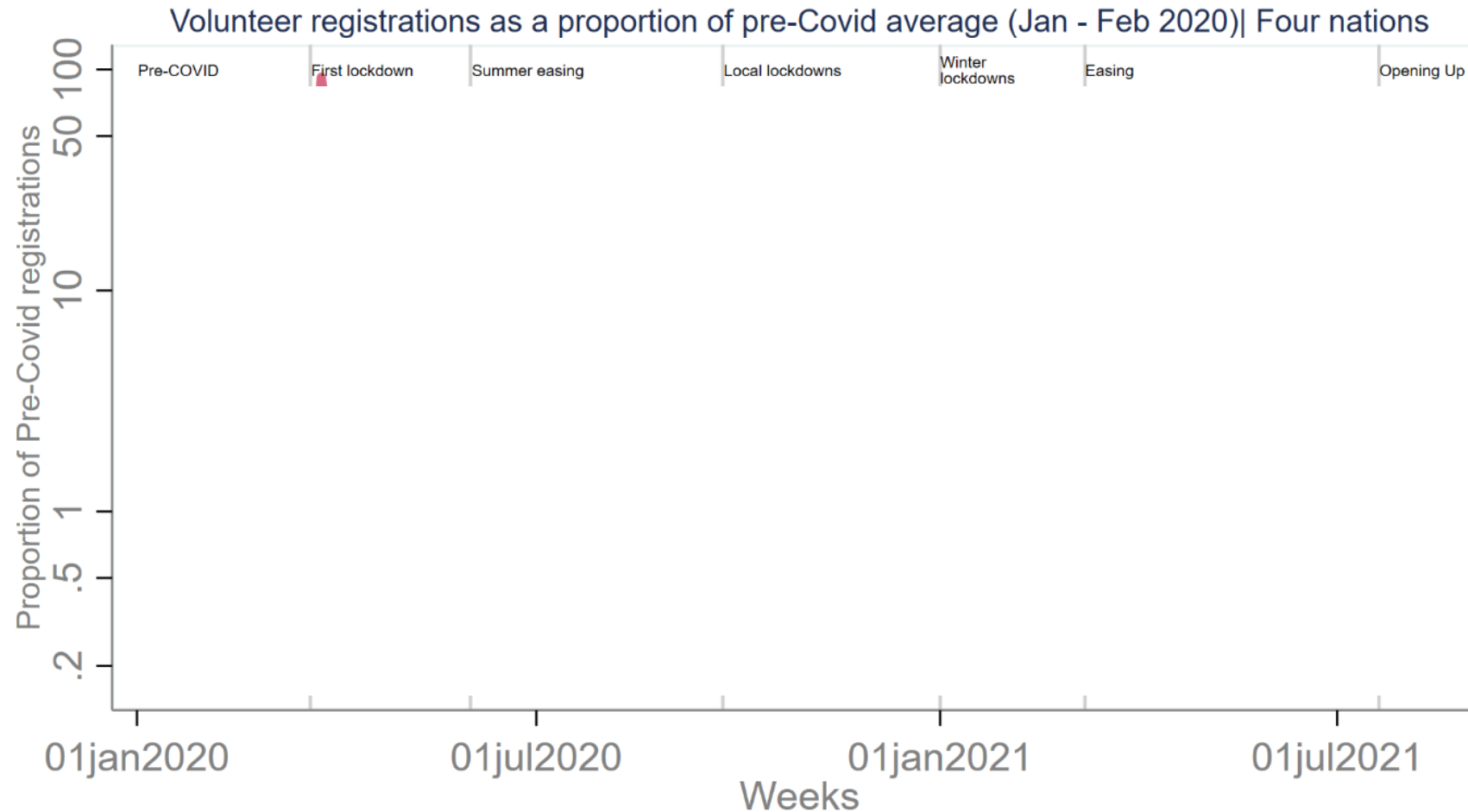
# Using matching data to explore volunteering

---

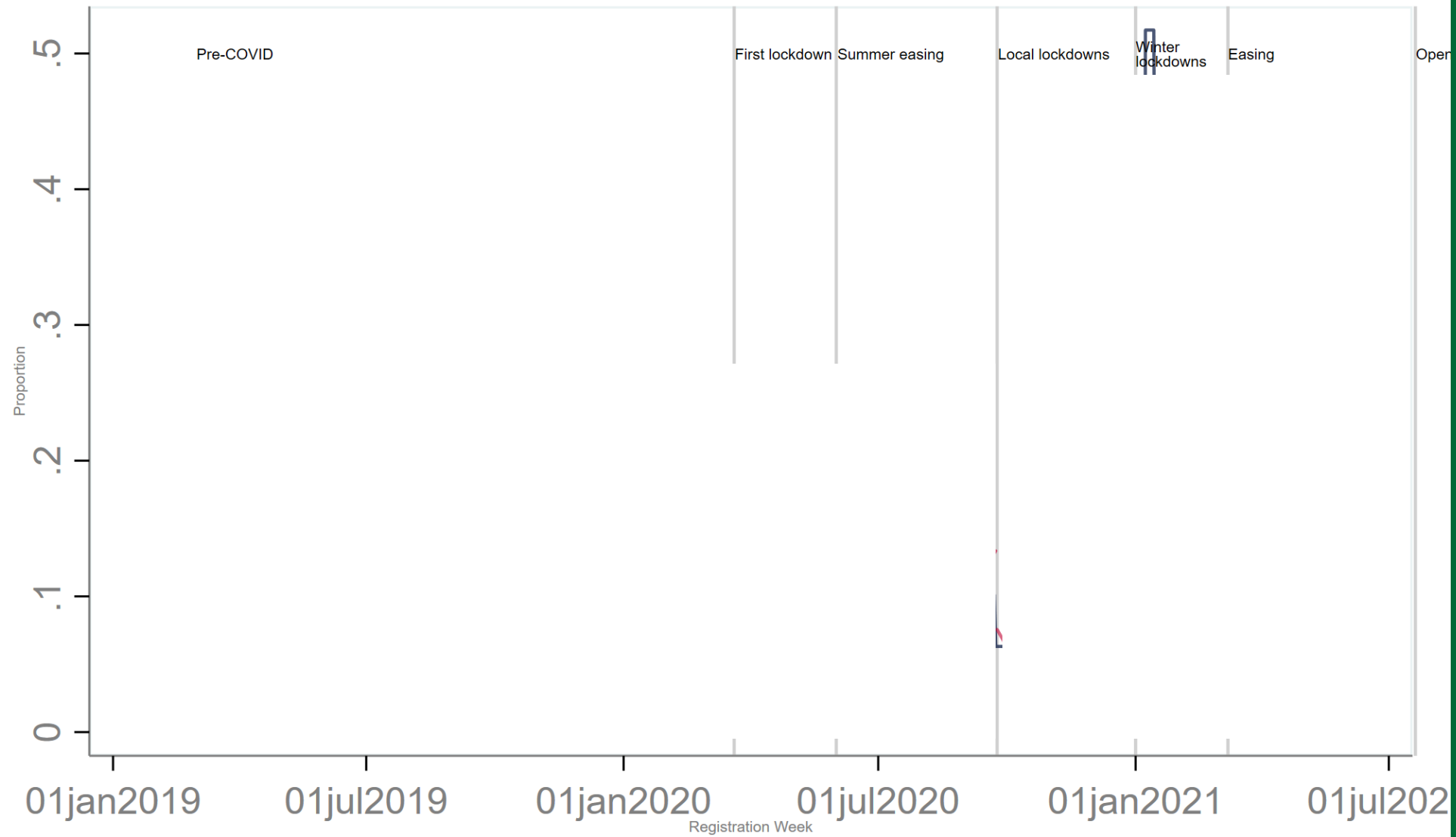
The challenge of understanding phenomena such as volunteering during the pandemic is the difficulty of collecting individual-level data in a timely fashion at sufficient scale.

We use administrative app data collected from volunteering matching services that provides a real-time look at how one mode of volunteer participation evolved before, during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

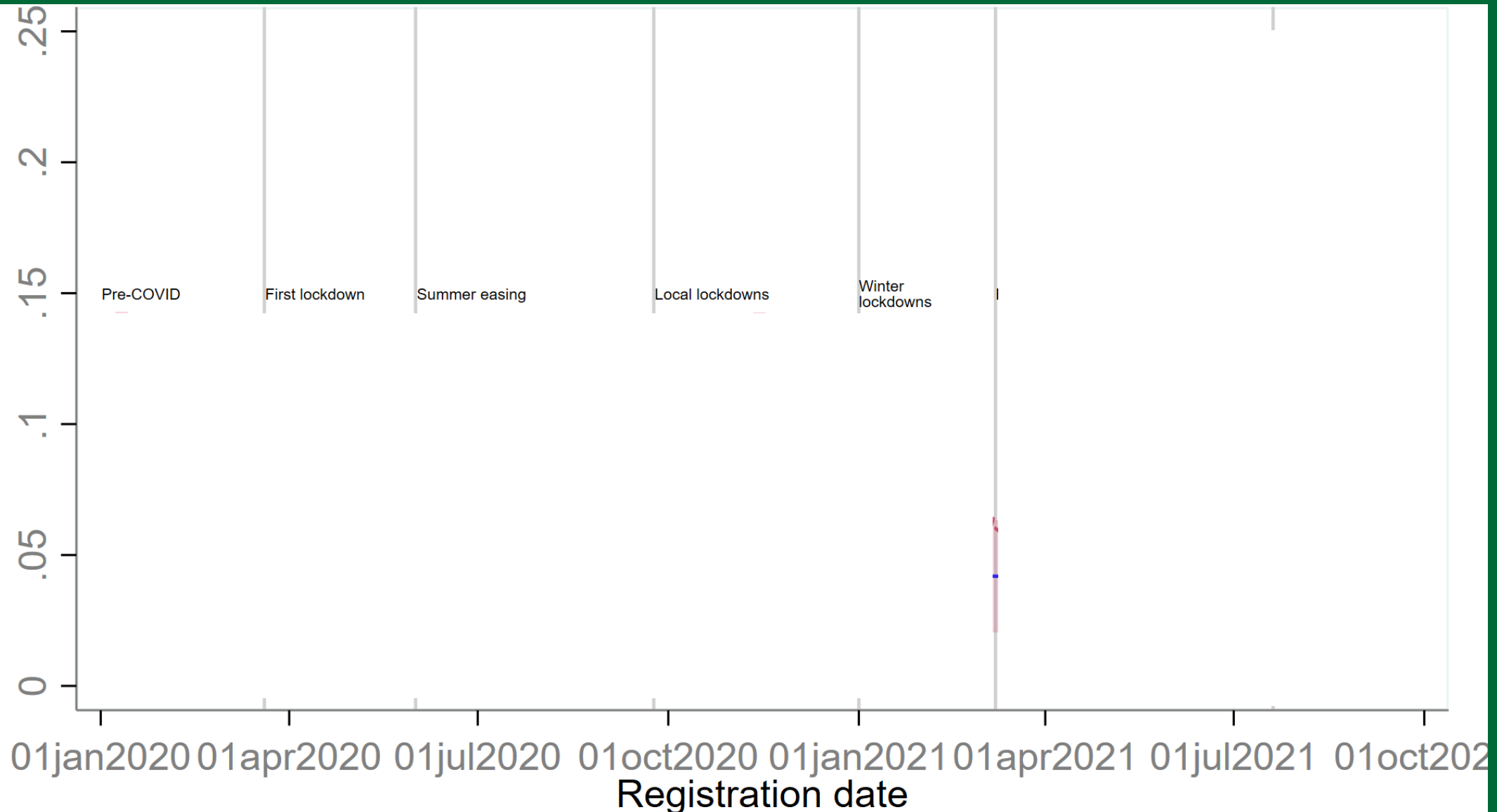
All four nations saw large peaks in volunteering immediately following lockdown in March/April 2020, and again in the Winter lockdowns.



Volunteers were more likely to become active, and were active faster, in the second lockdown than the first.



Volunteering by people with disabilities was lower in both lockdown periods.  
But opening up is having a negative effect almost as big as the two lockdowns.



# Reflections from the Volunteer Matching Data

There was remarkable similarity in volunteer response across the four nations, despite policy differences.

Volunteering is resilient. The challenges of the first lockdown did not deter volunteers registering in the second.

Volunteer registrations have mostly returned to normal. But we must be concerned with those left behind if volunteering is to be a diverse and inclusive activity.

This may require fresh thinking in the ways in which people can get involved, and feel safe in their involvement, as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic.