



Economic and Social Research Council



Northumbria University  
NEWCASTLE

# Mobilising Voluntary Action

Researching Voluntary Action during the pandemic

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@MVAin4



[www.mvain4.uk](http://www.mvain4.uk)

# Our project: overview



- We are a UK wide team exploring voluntary action responses during the pandemic across the four UK nations.
- Led by the Northumbria University with partners representing each nation. Volunteer Now leading Northern Ireland strand.
- It is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

# Objectives



- It explores policy and organisational responses to co-ordinating and managing volunteers during the pandemic, exploring questions such as:
  - Did the policy responses differ in the 4 nations, and how effective were they?
  - Who has volunteered, and how do we sustain engagement beyond the pandemic?
  - Can we gather and share examples of good practice to improve volunteering for the future?

# Methods employed



- Working collaboratively to coproduce knowledge employing mixed methods
- Within each jurisdiction: survey of volunteer-involving organisations, workshops, interviews
- Across the UK: analysis of policy documents and published research from each jurisdiction; analysis of management app data; producing themed podcasts and 'think pieces'

# Outcomes



- We aim to:
  - Help guide the UK volunteer effort to continue to respond to the pandemic, support recovery and prepare for future crises.
  - Make a real impact to improve and enable volunteering efforts in the future.

# Policy analysis

Working Paper 4 Professor Ewen Speed

Sector policies non-reserved

Divergence pre-pandemic

Analysis voluntary action relevant policy from across the 4 jurisdictions for the period between March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 and March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021.

- Policy responses to the pandemic have exacerbated policy divergence
- Especially between England and other UK nations, highlighting English exceptionalism.
- Wales and Scotland partnership working and collaboration characterised pandemic policy responses, around processes of community involvement and engagement across a range of social issues as a vital part of the response to COVID-19.
- This was also the case but to a lesser extent in Northern Ireland
- England - pragmatically focused on delegating to voluntary action as a subsidiary component of the public health response

# MVA Presenters



- Professor Alasdair Rutherford, Stirling University
- Matthew Linning, Volunteer Scotland
- Dr Rhys Dafydd Jones, University of Aberystwyth
- Catherine Goodall, NCVO
- Denise Hayward, Volunteer Now





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**Mobilising**  
UK VOLUNTARY ACTION

**Thank you**