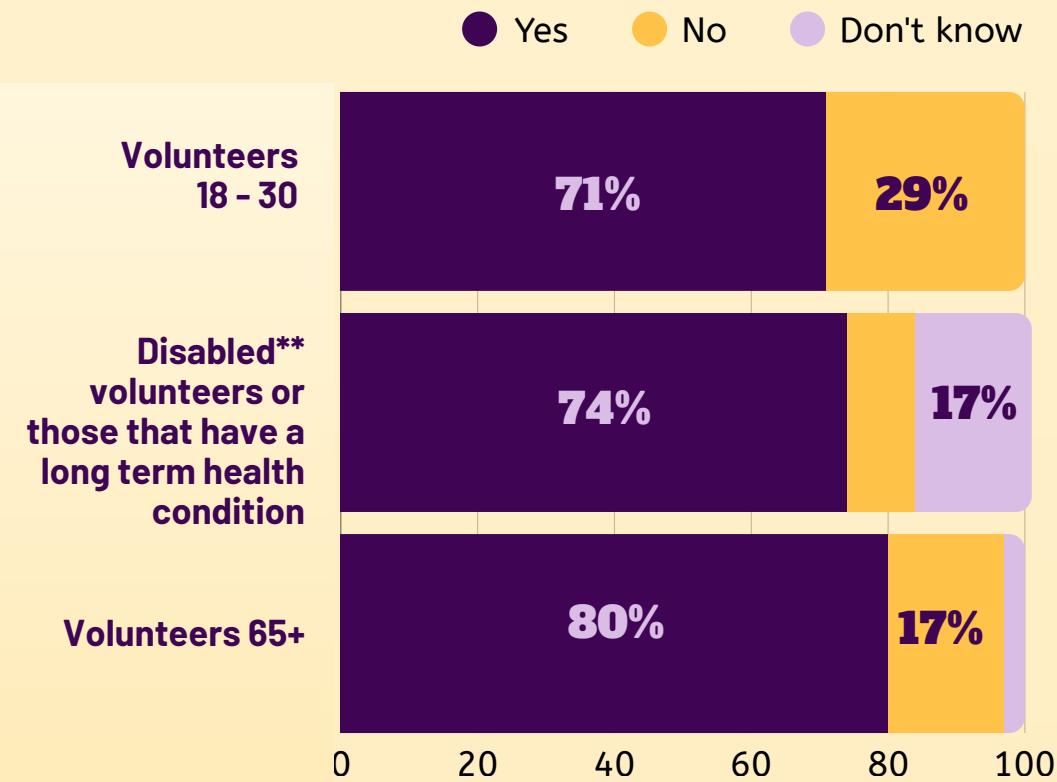


Insights discussed in this summary note are based on responses collected in our May 2025 Pulse Check. We thank everyone who has participated in either of our Pulse Checks conducted in 2025 to date.

Our final Pulse Check of 2025 will launch in October (please keep an eye out for it across our communication platforms) and, as always, we would value your participation in it.

The Pulse Checks, whilst drawn from a relatively small sample of organisations, offer valuable insight into the landscape of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector* across Salford. In this instance, and with specific regard to volunteering, it is apparent that Salford continues to benefit from a diverse and inclusive volunteer base, supported by a VCSE sector that is actively working to remove barriers to participation.

‘Do you have any volunteers in the following categories?’



Over two-thirds (71%) of responding organisations stated that they have volunteers aged between 18-30, whilst nearly three-quarters (74%) have volunteers who are Disabled or have a long-term health condition. Four-fifths (80%) of organisations surveyed had volunteers aged 65+, whilst over a third (36%) also have volunteers who are aged under 18.

*Voluntary groups, community groups, charities, community work from faith organisations and social enterprises.

**We use the term 'Disabled' in line with the social model of disability, which recognises that people are disabled by societal barriers rather than by their impairments, and we aim to use language that reflects this understanding.

A responsive and adaptive sector

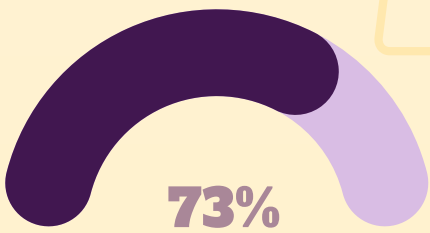
Volunteers in Salford benefit from a range of tailored support, including:

- personalised inductions
- flexible roles
- accessibility adjustments
- mental health awareness and support

These practices demonstrate a sector that actively responds to and evolves with the needs of its volunteers, not only enhancing the volunteer experience but also contributing to wider wellbeing outcomes across Salford.

Volunteer expenses

Nearly **three-quarters (73%)** of responding VCSEs state that they pay volunteer expenses.



This is a welcome finding and helps to address financial barriers and may be a key factor in enabling participation among those affected by the cost-of-living crisis. It also reflects a growing recognition of the need to make volunteering equitable and sustainable.

Geographic reach

Geographically, responses indicate that volunteers are **active in every neighbourhood in Salford**. This suggests that the benefits of volunteering – including community support, social connection, and local engagement – are being felt city-wide.



However, challenges remain. Organisations cited time and capacity constraints, difficulties in recruiting for specialist roles, and financial pressures as ongoing barriers in terms of volunteer recruitment and retainment, issues which mirror broader systemic challenges facing the VCSE sector.

Responses to the Pulse Check have therefore provided a snapshot of a volunteering landscape that is inclusive, locally embedded, and responsive to the needs of volunteers. The sector’s commitment to reducing barriers and enabling broader participation is clear. However, continued investment and strategic support will be vital to help organisations overcome some of the persistent challenges that remain around volunteering.