Evaluating the Wellbeing Impacts of Volunteering
Volunteering and Wellbeing

• The **impact** that volunteering has depends on the **individual** – their circumstances, motivations

• **NCVO Time Well Spent Survey 2018** demonstrated a clear link between volunteering and wellbeing
  - giving back - making a difference
  - feeling part of something - reducing isolation

• But respondents also highlight the importance of **being supported** in volunteering
Volunteering and Wellbeing
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Within 5 Ways to Wellbeing, does volunteering fall within ‘Give’?

A next step from connecting, being active, taking notice and learning...
Volunteering and Wellbeing – referrals and supported volunteering

**Social prescribing**
- holistic, person-centred approach to health and wellbeing
- alternative option to medical intervention

About 100 formalised social prescribing systems - link workers to refer and signpost

Referrals into the community and voluntary sector - all sorts of support and services

May include referrals to volunteering
- for the health and wellbeing benefits it can bring

Informal referrals into volunteering – we know, anecdotally, happen all the time
Volunteering and Wellbeing – supported volunteering

**Support** is key to social prescribing

**Mentors** are key to supported volunteering programmes

Examples of **successful museum mentored volunteering programmes:**

- Inspiring Futures – 5 Manchester museums, supported volunteering
- The Holburne in Bath’s Discover Museums - Pathways to Volunteering

Both brought **new challenge, perspectives and voices** into the Museum
Evaluation of volunteering for wellbeing programmes

Carefully chosen models:

Inspiring Futures - **Social Return on Investment**

Discover Museums - Pathways to Volunteering - **Theory of Change Model**

Both programmes were careful to **identify**, early on: what **distinguished them** from other offers - employability schemes and art therapy schemes;

Others to watch for evaluation of planned work:
Ripon Museums; Salisbury Museum
Volunteers....in a class of their own?! 

- Audience?
- Learners?
- Participants?
- Stakeholders/supporters?
- Workforce?
- Influencers?
- Super-participants?

In many different kinds of relationship with your organisation...?
So, how should we evaluate volunteering...?

**Why evaluate? Who is the evaluation for?**

- **Governance** of your museum
- **Funders** and stakeholders
- **Volunteers** – to explore, document and possibly celebrate the impact of volunteering; to develop new programmes
- **Staff** - to demonstrate impact and value of volunteering

- In a project context: **partners** in other sectors? They may have very, very different measures and data sets. Start conversations early
  - clarify your respective goals and roles
  - understand what you are evaluating
How should we evaluate...

- **What** will you evaluate?
  Your core volunteer programme?
  A funded programme with specific objectives and desired outcomes?

- **Which** measures and data?
  Quantitative data –
  ➢ nos. of vols, roles; hours; value; retention rates
How should we evaluate...

Qualitative data – could include...

- satisfaction;
- wellbeing; (using scales, e.g. UCL wellbeing)
- likelihood to recommend;
- attitude to museum;
- attitude to the role;
- attitude to different opportunities offered;
- change in any of these over the life of a project or over a year
How should we evaluate...

Qualitative responses...
- Take longer to give, gather, analyze
- External factors will affect responses
- Anecdotal and self reported data – hard to compare
- Make sure you consult first, obtain consent, feedback results in neutral, consultative ways, use results in planning with volunteers

Look at:

Audience Agency’s 2014 evaluation of Kirklees’ museums volunteering programme
Some conclusions...

For new kinds of volunteering programmes:

• Build partnerships over several years to develop mutual benefit and understanding; play to your strengths in partnerships
• What can you give that’s unique?
• What do you need?

In evaluation:

• Decide Why What Where How Who (for)
• Resource it!
• Report it to, and use it to with everyone – including the volunteers
Some resources...

- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/short-courses/search-courses/culture-health-and-wellbeing-introduction
- https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/social-prescribing
- https://www.socialprescribingnetwork.com/resources
- http://volunteeringforwellbeing.org.uk/
- https://www.holburne.org/pathways-to-wellbeing/