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Student Sport Volunteering Event

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Origins and aims

- Small-scale research project
  - To explore our students' relationships with sport volunteering

- We would like to develop a way of brokering volunteer experiences for students with community and sport organisations who would benefit from this.

- In doing this, we recognise the importance of not only making connections, but to also gain an understanding of what local volunteer-requiring organisations might want and expect from (student) volunteers.
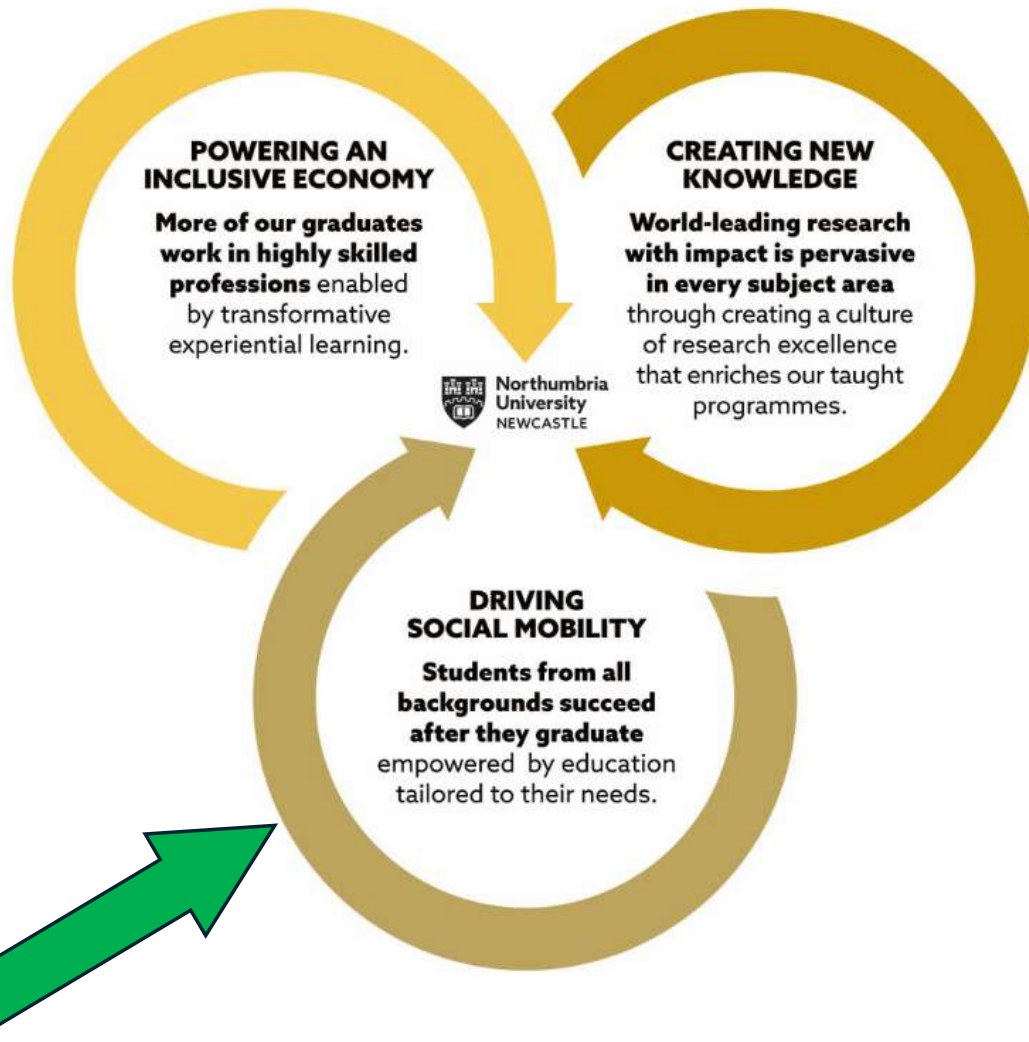
Workshop Outline

- Context Setting

- Overview of findings from student sport volunteer research project

- Discussion Activity 1

- Discussion Activity 2

- Going Forward

Northumbria Context

- **Up to 40% of our undergraduates come from traditionally under-represented backgrounds** (Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria, 2024)

POWERING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

More of our graduates work in highly skilled professions enabled by transformative experiential learning.

CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE

World-leading research with impact is pervasive in every subject area through creating a culture of research excellence that enriches our taught programmes.

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DRIVING SOCIAL MOBILITY

Students from all backgrounds succeed after they graduate empowered by education tailored to their needs.
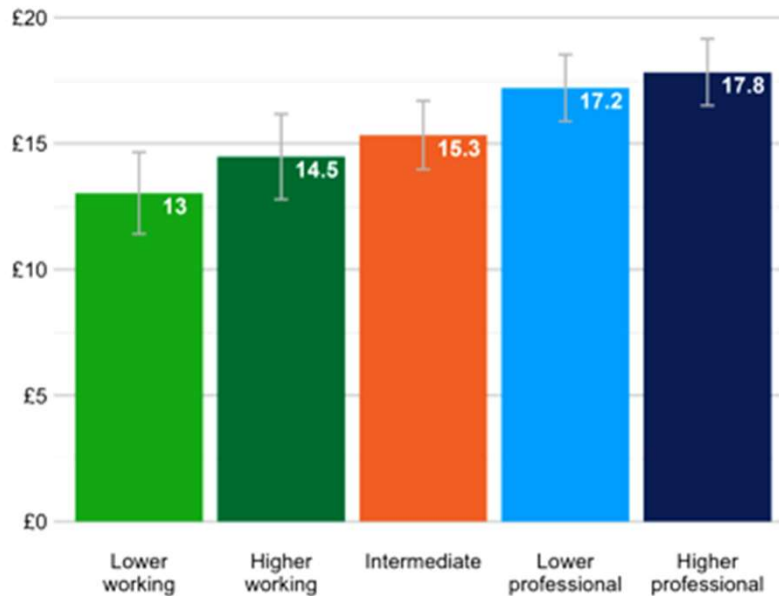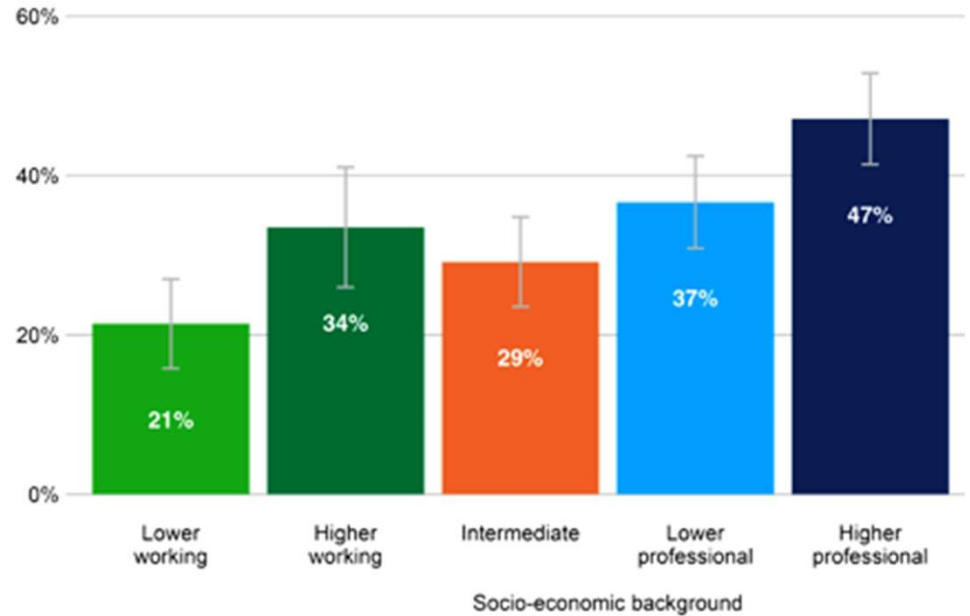
Social mobility

A person experiences social mobility when they have different life outcomes from their parents, for example, in income, occupation, housing, education or wealth.

Drivers of social mobility

| **Conditions of childhood** e.g. child poverty | **Educational opportunities and quality** e.g. school quality | **Work opportunities and quality** e.g. vacancy rates | **Social capital** e.g. civic engagement |

- There appears to be a closing of the socio-economic background (SEB) gap in university enrolment between 2014 and 2022. In 2014, young people from higher professional backgrounds were 3.9 times more likely to be studying for a degree than those from lower working-class backgrounds. In 2022 they were only 2.2 times more likely.

(Social Mobility Commission, 2024)

Percentage of young people aged 18 to 20 years in the UK studying for degree-level qualifications, 2022, by SEB.


60%

40%

20%

0%

47%

37%

34%

29%

21%

Lower working

Higher working

Intermediate

Lower professional

Higher professional

Socio-economic background

£20

£15

£10

£5

£0

17.8

17.2

15.3

14.5

13

Lower working

Higher working

Intermediate

Lower professional

Higher professional

Mean hourly earnings of young people aged 25 to 29 years in the UK, 2022, by SEB.

(Social Mobility Commission, 2024)

Percentage differences in hourly earnings of young people aged 25 to 29 years in the UK, from 2020 to 2022 (combined), **relative to those from lower working-class backgrounds**, controlling for highest educational level, sex and age.
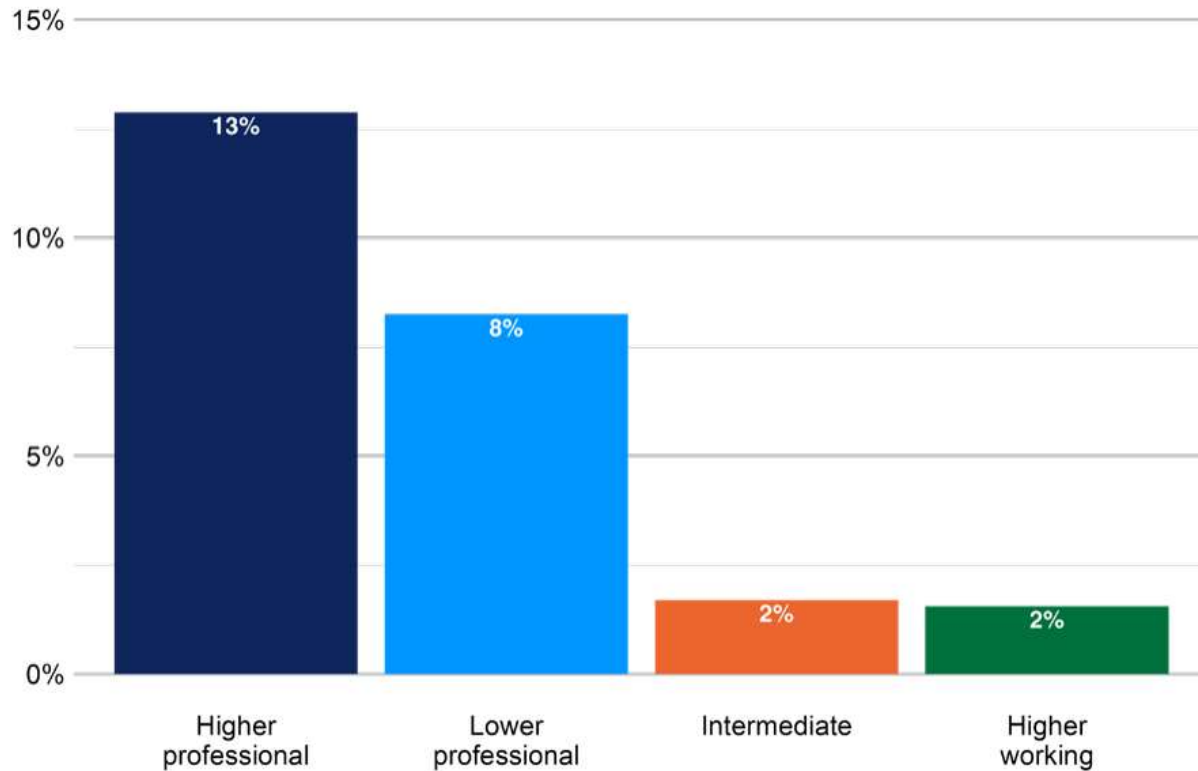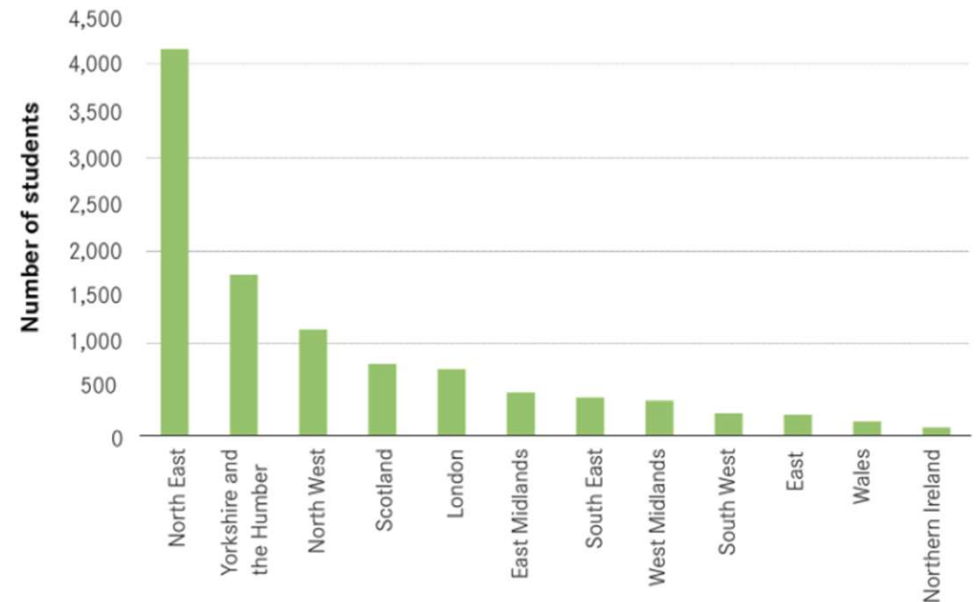

(Social Mobility Commission, 2024)

Across the University "well over half of our students are coming from the local area" (Dan Monnery, Chief Strategy Officer, 2023)

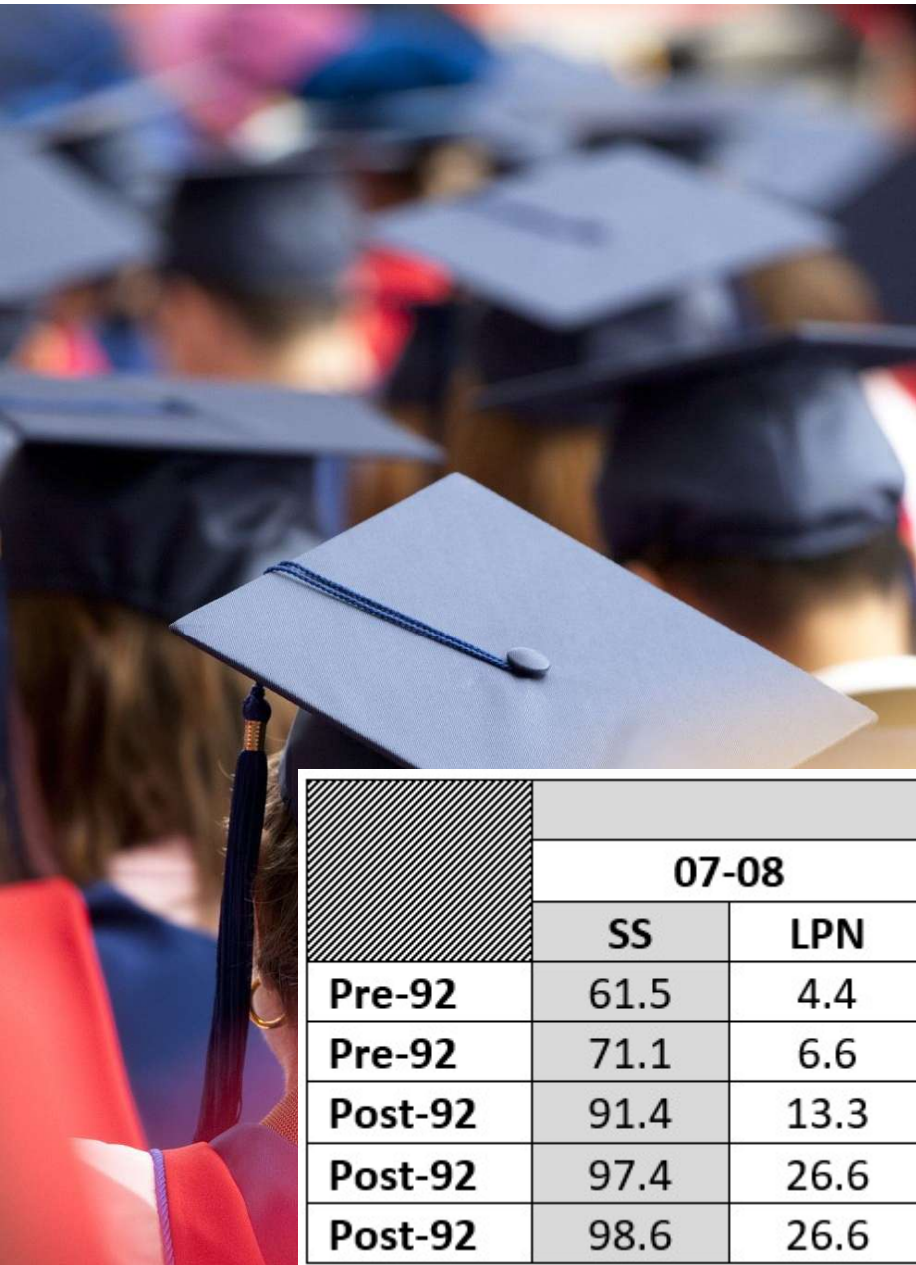**Origin of students at Northumbria University, 2014/15**
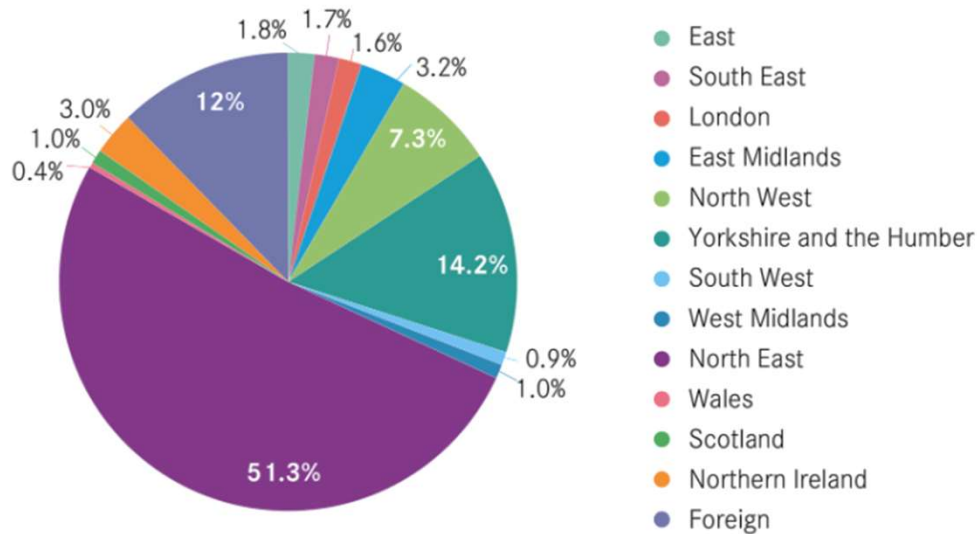
Destination regions of those moving away from Newcastle for university, 2014/15

(Centre for Cities, 2017)

Exploring motivations for, routes into and experiences of volunteering among students (Brewis, et al., 2010)

- Sample: 4,000 students and 6,000 graduates

- Students at pre-1992 universities had a higher rate of volunteering.

- Students who had not moved away from home to study were more likely to volunteer at least once a week. This hints at a particular commitment to local community among these students.

- However, students at post-1992 HEIs were less likely to volunteer once a week or more.

| | YEAR | | | | | | | |
| | 07-08 | | 08-09 | | 09-10 | | 10-11 | |
	SS	LPN	SS	LPN	SS	LPN	SS	LPN
Pre-92	61.5	4.4	59.2	4.6	59.2	4.7	59.5	5.5
Pre-92	71.1	6.6	69.2	6.3	71.5	7.9	70.9	7.5
Post-92	91.4	13.3	92.2	14.2	91.3	14.0	90.6	13.1
Post-92	97.4	26.6	98.1	25.7	97.4	25.1	98.1	26.9
Post-92	98.6	26.6	99.1	26.7	98.1	27.0	97.8	26.7

Strategies used to transition from HE to the labour market

- Drawing on social science degree and business degree students, Threadgold (2020) highlights different orientations towards what students think a degree will provide and what **extracurricular activities** are needed to lubricate success.

- In very broad terms, social science degree students, who tend to be the first in their family to attend university and from relatively low socio-economic backgrounds, often think that a degree will be enough to get them a job.

- In comparison, business degree students, who tend to come from more middle-class backgrounds, are often furiously networking while studying, trying to make connections to set themselves up post-university.

- Business students seem to realise that a degree is not enough and adjust their strategy to a precarious labour market that sees internships and volunteering as a given.

(Threadgold, 2020)

References

- Brewis, Russell, and Holdsworth (2010). *Bursting the Bubble: Students, Volunteering and the Community*. Institute for Volunteering Research.

- Centre for Cities (2017). The great British brain drain: Newcastle. https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/great-british-brain-drain-analysis-migration-newcastle/detailed-look-movement-students-graduates/

- Dean, J. (2016) Class diversity and youth volunteering in the United Kingdom: Applying Bourdieu's habitus and cultural capital. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45, 95S-113S.

- Meyer, M., & Rameder, P. (2022). Who Is in Charge? Social Inequality in Different Fields of Volunteering. *Voluntas*, 33, 18–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00313-7

- Social Mobility Commission (2024). *State of the Nation 2024: Local to National, Mapping Opportunities for All*. The Social Mobility Commission.

- Threadgold, S. (2020). Bourdieu is not a determinist: Illusio, Aspiration, Reflexivity and Affect. In G. Stahl, D. Wallace, C. Burke, and S. Threadgold (Eds.) *International Perspectives on Theorizing Aspirations*. Bloomsbury.

The Project (year 1)

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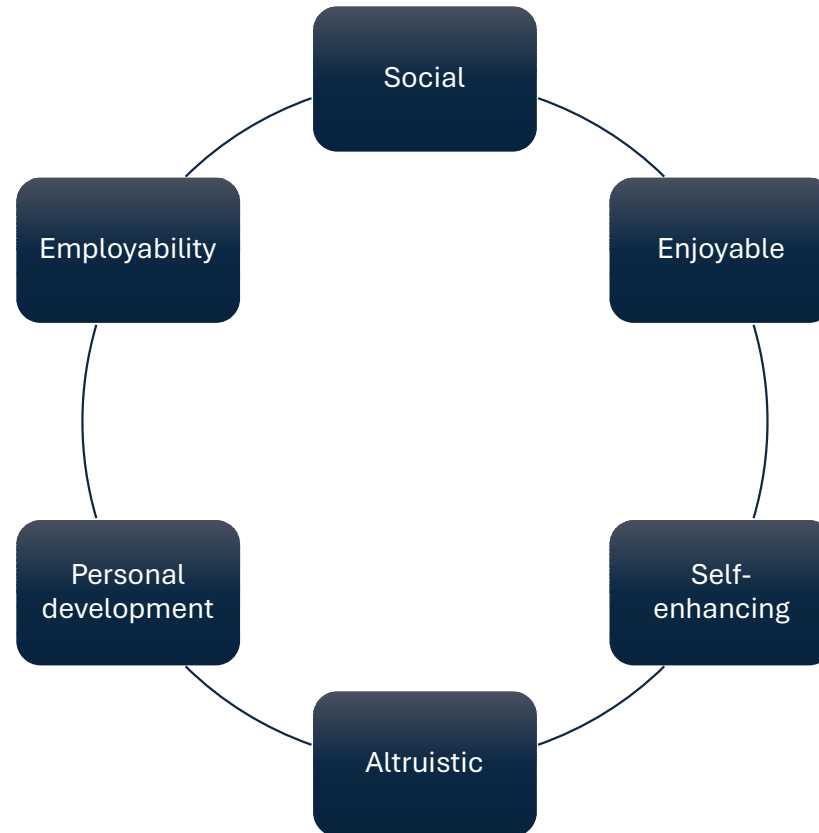Funded by Northumbria Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

Volunteering alongside university studies

- Expectations, prior experiences, barriers, meaning and values perceived by new students on sport programmes
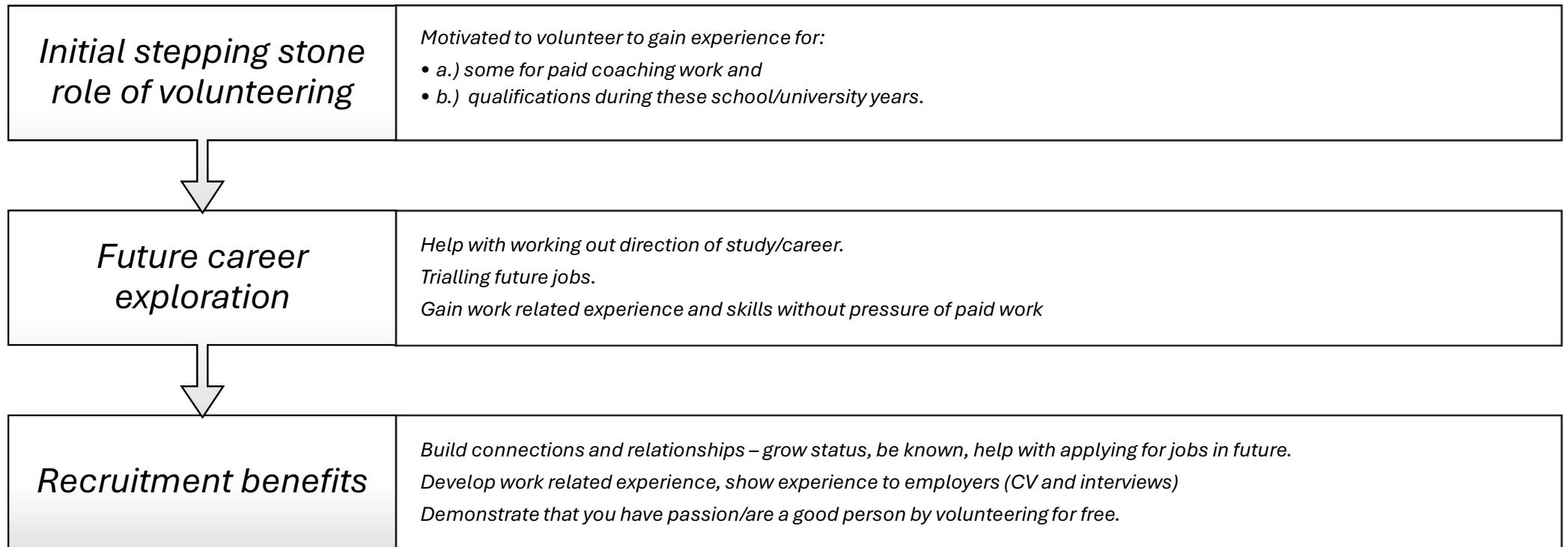- Focused on Level 3 (FY) and 4 students

Survey (n=99) (27 x FY and 72 x L4)

Interviews (n=14) (8 x FY and 6 x L4)

Value/Meaning of sport volunteering to new sport students at NU

Perceived employability benefits

Initial stepping stone role of volunteering	*Motivated to volunteer to gain experience for:* • *a.) some for paid coaching work and* • *b.) qualifications during these school/university years.*

↓

Future career exploration	Help with working out direction of study/career. Trialling future jobs. Gain work related experience and skills without pressure of paid work

↓

Recruitment benefits	Build connections and relationships – grow status, be known, help with applying for jobs in future. Develop work related experience, show experience to employers (CV and interviews) Demonstrate that you have passion/are a good person by volunteering for free.

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Challenges/Constraints

Objective	Subjective
Time	Negative perceptions of volunteering
Finance	Peer pressure/being different to friends
Information/Encouragement Opportunities/Types of volunteering roles/contexts Accessibility and support	Feeling able to (fit with the demands of the role)
Cultural and Spatial (unfamiliar places and people)	Voluntold or free choice?

Level of challenge

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[Sport volunteering] ...it's more intense, like it's more to the point. Everyone's there for a reason to play their sport. It's a bit more competitive. Where's general volunteering could be just like friendly chatting. You know, things like that. It's a lot more relaxed, a lot less intense.

Yeah, when I'm starting out I've definitely felt uncomfortable. Whereas I think it doesn't matter whatever you do, when you do something for the first time, you're probably feeling a little out of your depth.

It [volunteering] is a bit overwhelming, especially after just moving to Uni. I started in my second week and meeting all these new people was just like, wow. Like, how am I going to cope with this? But now I'm used to it and I can do it so.

Opportunities and support

- I think providing the opportunity to volunteer. Like sometimes I'm expected to send a CV of me just to get volunteering jobs. Yeah, it's just a push for a couple of like 5 hours. Like what we have to do, like, that's just a lot of effort. People don't have time for.

- We're all like new to the area as well, you don't really have the connections.

- The only stipulation is like, in terms of volunteering you can get good volunteering jobs. It's like I keep saying, it's who you know.

Changing perceptions of volunteering

- I feel like people that don't like volunteering aren't aware off or willing to listen to the positives that you get out of it. People just hear 'no money', and they're like, 'right I'm not doing it', but they don't understand that the positives that you're gaining from volunteering are probably a lot better than money for the future.

- I think before I did it, I probably thought it was a waste of time. Why would I want to do something I don't get paid for? After doing it and reflecting now I can see the vast benefits and where I would be if I hadn't done it. I think just seeing the progress and seeing things that other people have achieved because of me and things I've achieved because of it and how it's improved other things like people skills, people management, self-confidence, self skills and stuff like that. I think that reflecting on them would tell me that it's definitely a benefit.

Activity 1

Clubs and organisations to discuss:

1. **What challenges your organisations are experiencing / expecting to face**

2. **What you expect from volunteers**

At the same time, we asked students to discuss:

1. Perceptions, habits, and motivations of and around volunteering across all years of study so far
2. What should volunteer-requiring organisations understand about student volunteers (needs, expectations, enabling factors)

1. What challenges your organisations are experiencing / expecting to face?

2. What you expect from volunteers

How students responded...

- Perceptions, habits, and motivations of and around volunteering across all years of study so far

- What should volunteer-requiring organisations understand about student volunteers (needs, expectations, enabling factors)

WS1 (Students) ....**of sport volunteering**

Perceptions

Positive perceptions of volunteering in sport

Can be inspirational

Boring

Strict

Motivations

Builds key skills: confidence, commitment, professionalism and time management

Get experience

Good CV builder

Give back to the community in the sport sector

Passion

Employability

Qualifications e.g. first aid

Students only volunteer as forced

Habits

Restricted by time

Restricted by other priorities

Unpaid

WS1 (Students): **What should volunteer-requiring organisations understand about student volunteers**

Need to have time flexibility to accommodate – different days may be needed some weeks

- Studying
- Part time jobs
- Sport commitments
- Living away from home

Accessibility

- Can students get there
- Ease of communication (simple clear process)
- Need experience (can't get experience if all volunteer roles need experience)
- Understand that FD/L4 students may not have confidence or developed skills at this point.

Pre-volunteering

- Clear information on organisations and volunteering role
- Clear application process
- Sufficient detail to make an informed decision

Confidence and feeling competent

- Patience – skills may need to be learned
- Expectations of the volunteering shared both ways
- Sense of what volunteer requiring organisations will expect from students – professionalism, communication skills and an ability to listen and learn
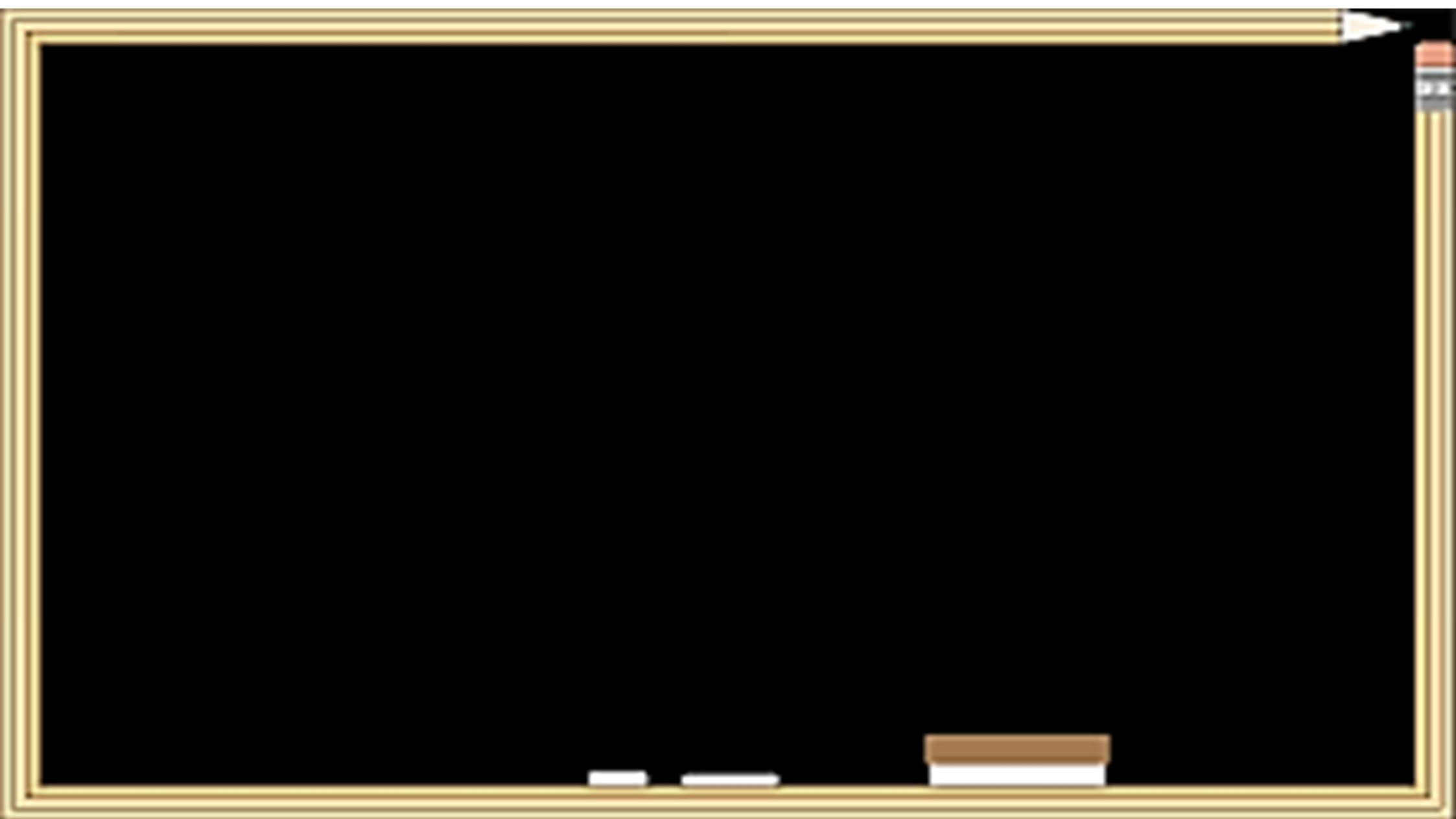
Activity 2

How might volunteer roles and opportunities be:

- **Communicated**
- **Packaged**
- **Shaped**
- **Supported**
- **Prepared for**
- **Responded to**

What works from a practical point of view?

WS1 (ALL): **How might volunteer roles and opportunities be: Communicated, Packaged, Shaped, Supported, Prepared for, Responded to**?

Communication:

- Need to cover all bases
- Professionalism
  - Post opportunities on Indeed sites/social media – snapchat, facebook, email
- Integrate with students through degree courses/modules
  - Face to face meeting to reduce any fears
- Face to face volunteer fair/speed dating (especially to help students new to Newcastle)

Offer training/leadership opportunities in short blocks i.e 2 hours

Packaged

- CV and interview style prior to volunteering to help for future careers
- Informal discussion also to give confidence
- Application forms can be a seen as a barrier

Roles

- Flexibility and accessibility
- Long term and smaller scale opportunities

Perceptions need to change

- Both sides

Volunteering skills

- Professionalism
- Interpersonal
- Communication

Moving forward:

➤ **Us:**

        - Developing two sets of guidelines

        - Development of Club/Organisation-student volunteer interface

➤ **You: What would you like to happen next?**

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THANK YOU