

The State of Skilled Tech Volunteering

A Blueprint for Impact in the UK

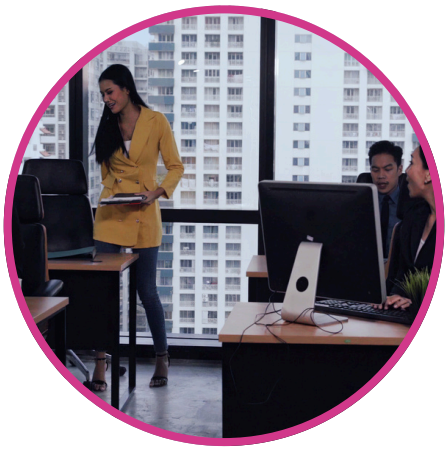
Tech For Good ALLIANCE

Clark.

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Foreword

As someone who spends considerable time working to improve the skills system, this report highlights a challenge I encounter repeatedly: The disconnect between supply and demand. In this case, it is the gap between charities' need for technical advice and expertise, and the willingness of skilled industry volunteers to provide it.

The evidence suggests that bridging this gap could deliver enormous benefits for charities and the people they serve, and the statistics are compelling. The report shows that 97% of charities believe technology could help solve their core operational challenges, while 79% say the lack of it diverts valuable time away from the people they serve. The supply is there too. Two in five tech employers plan to expand skilled volunteering, and where partnerships work, 96% of charities report real value. Yet three in four charities have never engaged a skilled tech volunteer, largely because they simply do not know where to find one.

What strikes me most is that this is fundamentally a skills story. Nearly half of charities report greater capability and confidence following projects, while 43% of employers recognise skilled volunteering as an opportunity to develop their own people. This is knowledge transfer in both directions, at no cost to the public purse, building precisely the digital and AI capabilities the wider economy needs.

The lesson will be familiar to anyone involved in skills reform. Goodwill and capacity are necessary, but not sufficient. Successful outcomes depend on effective brokerage, clear definition of needs and a focus on measuring real impact rather than simply counting hours volunteered. Indeed, organisations working through a trusted intermediary are more than twice as likely to measure meaningful outcomes for their beneficiaries.

I welcome this practical and pragmatic blueprint from the Tech for Good Alliance. It offers a credible route to turning goodwill into action, expertise into capability and volunteering into lasting impact, benefiting charities, employers and the communities they collectively serve.



Phil Smith CBE
Chair, Skills England

Skills England

Introduction

Every day, the UK's voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector performs quiet miracles on the front lines of our communities. Yet, in an era defined by rapid technological transformation, too many of these vital organisations are forced to navigate 21st-century challenges with fragmented systems, outdated tools, and severely overstretched resources. At the same time, we have a thriving, world-class UK tech sector—overflowing with world-class talent, innovation, and a genuine, growing desire to deliver meaningful social value.

The potential of bringing these two worlds together is immense, but good intentions alone do not guarantee impact. When done well, skilled tech volunteering is transformative—it reclaims hundreds of hours for frontline care, modernises delivery, and radically expands a charity's reach.

We commissioned this research to establish a clear, data-driven picture of skilled digital volunteering across the UK today. We wanted to uncover not only where the appetite lies, but where the friction sits—and, crucially, why so much potential remains untapped.

What this report reveals is an urgent demand for digital capability matched by an eager supply of corporate talent, yet separated by a gap in infrastructure, project scoping, and delivery frameworks. We conducted this study to build the blueprint needed to bridge that gap.

By providing both private sector companies and VCSE organisations with a shared framework to capitalise effectively on this opportunity, we hope to power sustained, sector-wide transformation. The appetite for change is clear across both sectors; our goal now is to turn that willingness into a powerful, permanent catalyst for good.



Alistair Forbes
CEO, Tech for Good Alliance

Tech For Good ALLIANCE

Executive Summary

This five-chapter report uses dual-survey data from 261 charities and 260 tech sector employees to examine the current state of skilled tech volunteering in the UK. By contrasting demand from not-for-profits with supply from corporate tech teams, the report outlines how engagements between tech companies and third sector organisations could be improved and provides a framework to convert skilled volunteering capacity into sustained sector transformation.

Key findings

1. **High demand, acute need:** 97% of charities acknowledge digital tools solve core operational challenges, with 79% stating a lack of tech tools directly steals time from frontline care. Their top obstacles remain a lack of funding (64%) and internal tech experience (63%).

2. **Most charities have not engaged:** Yet 75% have never used skilled tech volunteers from companies—and more than half (55%) of tech employees had not participated in skilled volunteering during the past 12 months.

3. **Tech overwhelm in the third sector:** Nearly half (49%) of third-sector leaders feel overwhelmed by tech adoption, and while 72% want free corporate tech help, 68% of non-users do not know where to find volunteers, and 34% lack the expertise to scope tech projects.

4. **Participation to increase:** Corporate tech teams have a desire to scale—40% plan to increase skilled volunteering participation over the next 12 months, driven by expanded day allowances (60%) and structured formats like hackathons (47%).

5. **High impact for not-for-profits:** Where partnerships succeed, 96% of charities receive positive value—primarily through direct time savings (58%), increased internal capabilities (47%), and cost avoidance (44%).

6. **Execution friction:** Only 32% of tech projects complete seamlessly. Commercial priority conflicts stand as the #1 barrier for corporate volunteers (53%), causing 32% of active charity projects to stall mid-execution.

7. **Measuring the right things:** Standard corporate reporting relies heavily on input metrics (48% track hours only) which may not have a direct relationship to impact.

8. **The third party advantage:** Businesses that partner with a third-party manager are more than twice as likely to measure actual beneficiary impact (63% vs 30%). Working with a third party also helps alleviate the tension between commercial priorities and pro-bono work.

1. High appetite for tech in the UK third sector



Across the UK third sector, digital transformation is no longer viewed as a nice-to-have capability or an ambitious long-term objective. Instead, it's understood as an urgent operational necessity, and is increasingly becoming a priority for charities and not-for-profits across the UK.

There's an operational imperative to use tech in the third sector

97%

Acknowledge that technology could directly solve their operational challenges

UK third sector organisations are operating in an environment of compounding pressures: escalating demand for frontline services, tighter funding windows, and rising operational costs. According to the Charities Aid Foundation's annual corporate giving report, the UK's biggest businesses are giving less to charities despite record profits [1]. In this climate, modern digital tools represent mechanisms capable of stretching limited resources.

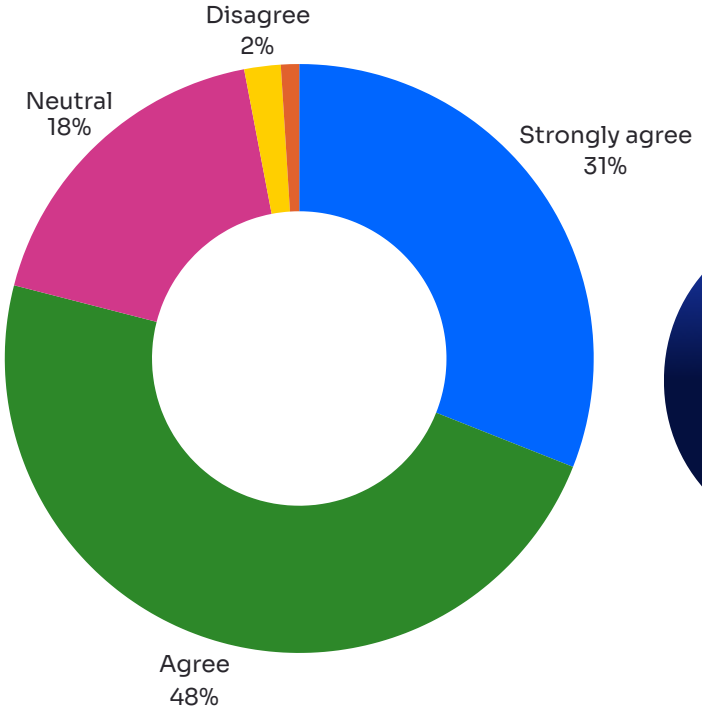
Volunteering employee time and skills is an alternative way for corporates to give back that can be just as powerful as financial donations.

"We're increasingly reliant on tech as a key enabler for our strategic ambitions, especially around fundraising. **Without technology, there are limits on what we can do.**"

– Isobel Wick, Head of Transformation & Innovation, Plan UK

The desire for digital adoption is effectively universal in the third sector. An overwhelming **97%** of the organisations we surveyed acknowledge that technology can directly help solve their operational challenges. VCSE organisations recognise that the right tech can significantly improve their delivery efficiency, and **79%** agree or strongly agree that, **without proper digital tools, their organisation loses time that could be spent directly serving beneficiaries.** Hours spent manually transferring spreadsheet data, managing fragmented contact lists, or troubleshooting legacy systems are hours taken directly away from the frontline care these organisations deliver on a daily basis.

"Without proper digital tools or tech support, our charity loses time that could be spent directly helping our service users."



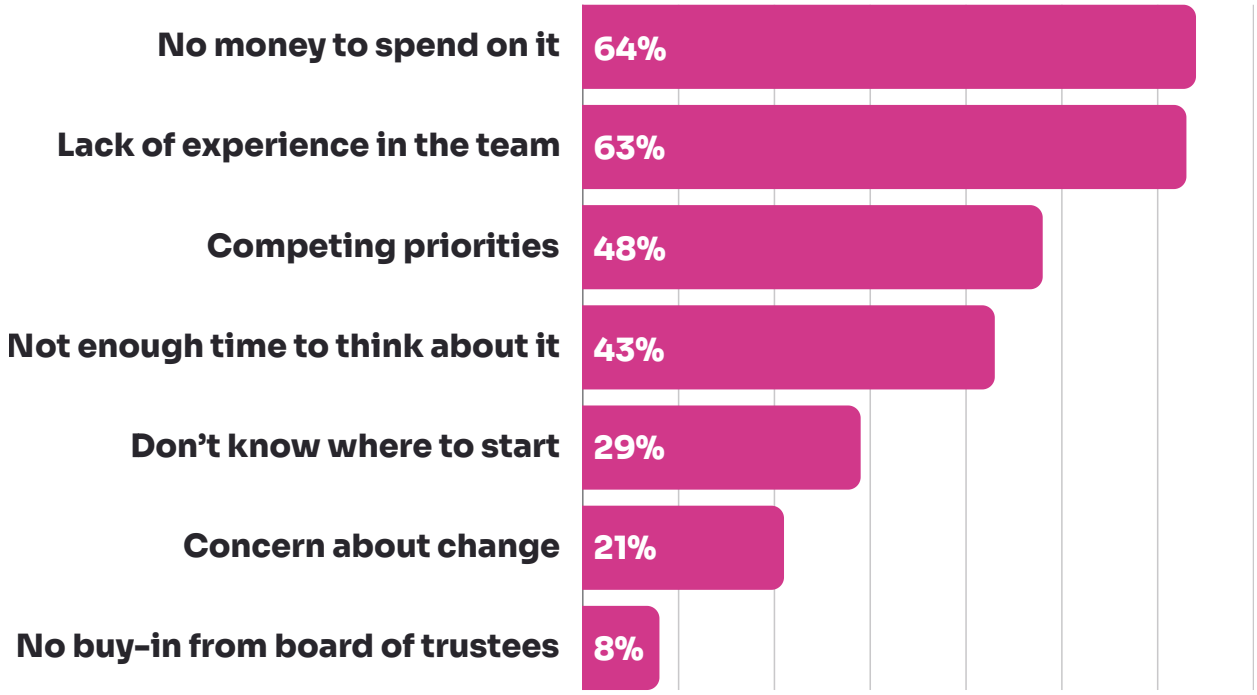
79%

Agree or strongly agree that, without proper digital tools, their organisation loses time that could be spent directly serving beneficiaries

Key barriers to using tech to solve operational challenges

There are, of course, many barriers to greater and more effective tech adoption in the third sector. When we asked our third sector respondents what's getting in the way of them using technology to solve their operational challenges, a lack of money to spend on it and a lack of tech experience on the team emerged as the top obstacles.

Nearly half of VCSE organisations cited competing priorities, and **43%** told us they don't have enough time to think about it. **Almost a third** stated that they don't know where to start. This is unsurprising; without the right expertise in the organisation, it is difficult to know what could be achieved with tech, far less how to go about it.



These results reflect a sector that's perennially over-stretched and under-resourced. Pro-bono tech volunteers are well placed to help tackle the top two barriers but in the absence of a clear definition of the problem and the approach needed to solve it, it can be difficult for them to do so.



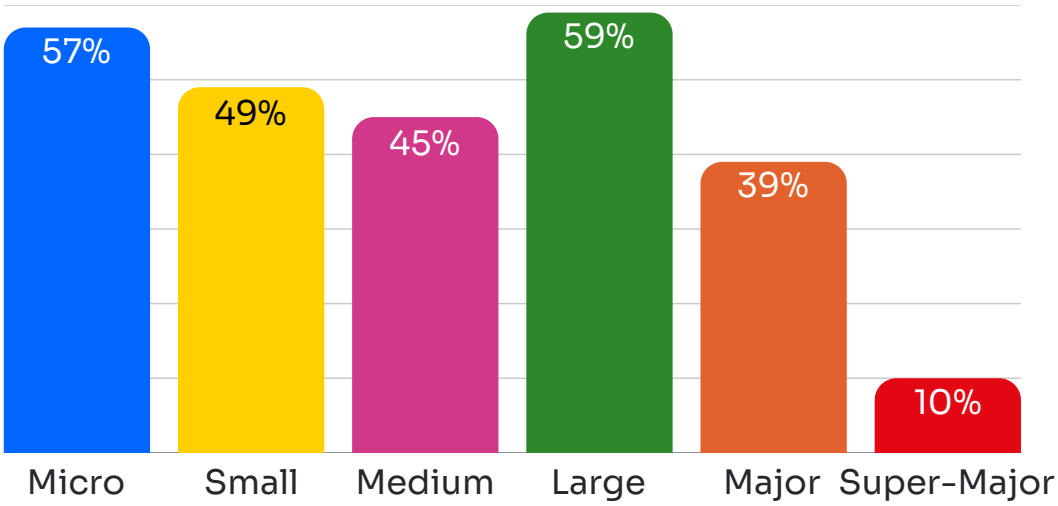
High appetite, high anxiety

While the appetite to adopt technology is strong, the path to implementation creates anxiety for charities and not-for-profits.

Nearly half of the third sector professionals we surveyed (49%) report feeling overwhelmed by the pressure to adopt new technology safely. Non-profit leaders face a difficult balancing act: they must modernise operations while navigating serious risks around data protection, cybersecurity, regulatory compliance, and cost overruns.

This is a topic that's come into particular focus alongside the rapid development of AI tools. Rather than simply adopting this technology and experiencing the benefits, many VCSE organisations are rightly deliberating over the ethics of using it. It's new and unknown territory for all of us, but, given that the average charity has very little digital technology and AI knowledge and expertise, concern is high for these organisations.

Charity overwhelm by organisational size

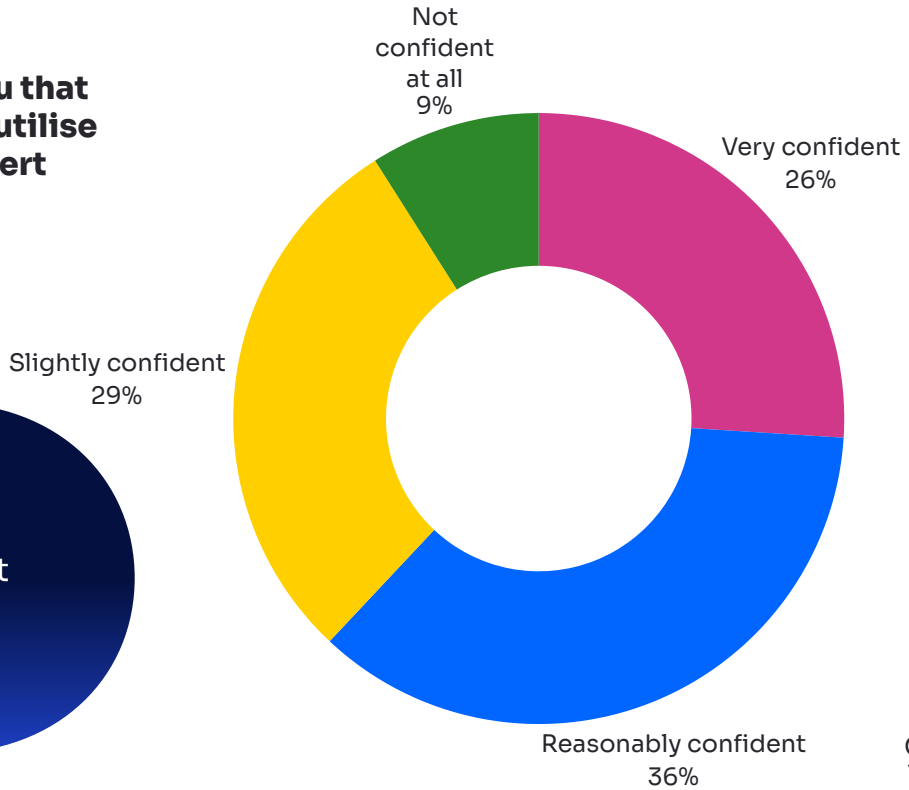


Despite these anxieties, charities actively want technical support. A clear majority—**72%**—state that they would happily accept free corporate tech help. However, this willingness comes with a critical caveat: they openly admit they do not know how to scope projects or manage skilled technical volunteers.

Without technical managers on staff, charity leaders struggle to translate broad operational needs into defined, actionable technical tasks. They also don't have time to manage them.

While most charities would have some sense of what to do with that expertise, many are unsure they could put it to use. When asked if they thought they could effectively utilise £10,000 worth of expert tech consultation, only **26%** of the VCSE organisations we surveyed told us they were very confident in their ability to direct those resources.

How confident are you that you could effectively utilise £10,000 worth of expert tech consultation?



26%

Are very confident that they could effectively utilise £10,000 worth of expert tech consultation

Our experience also highlights an underlying skepticism among some charities: that because pro bono support is offered free of charge, it may lack the operational commitment, urgency, or deliverable quality of a paid commercial contract.

> "There's a feeling that if we did work with volunteers, **we'd have to put in more than we might get out, especially because some of our technology is highly customised.** We'd need quite a niche skillset—at least this is the assumption."
>
> Isobel Wick, Head of Transformation & Innovation, Plan UK



A genuine desire for pro-bono skills

The sector's hesitation to engage with corporate volunteers isn't necessarily caused by a preference for cash over labour. Out of the charities and non-profits we surveyed who had not yet worked with skilled volunteers, only **14%** stated that it was because they prefer financial donations instead. The vast majority of those who haven't engaged with skilled corporate volunteers simply don't know where to find them (this is something we'll come back to later).

Tech employees report a similar frustration from the other side of the table: **13%** of tech workers we surveyed who hadn't participated in skilled volunteering said they simply did not know how or where to find skilled volunteering projects.

Top reasons for VCSE organisations not engaging with skilled tech volunteers

Don't know where to find them	**68%**
Worried about hidden costs/time drains	**40%**
Don't know how to scope a tech project	**34%**

68%
Haven't engaged with skilled volunteers because they don't know where to find them

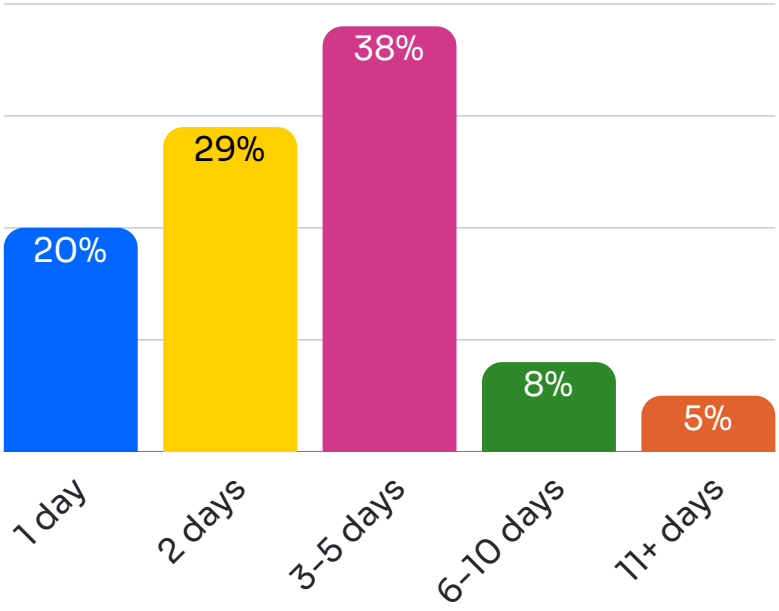
Don’t have the time	17%
Prefer financial donations over pro bono labour	14%

This demand aligns with a rapid expansion in corporate volunteering supply. Benchmark data from Benevity* shows that corporate giving rose eight percent year-over-year, with a record 1.87 million employees logging nearly 24 million volunteer hours in 2025. [2] Furthermore, **96%** of large corporate firms cite employee engagement as a primary motivation for expanding these programmes.

UK tech companies ready to scale participation

As it stands, the majority of the tech workers we surveyed that have participated in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months are granted between one and five volunteer days a year, although research shows that uptake in these schemes is generally low (around **25%**). [3]

Number of annual volunteer days offered

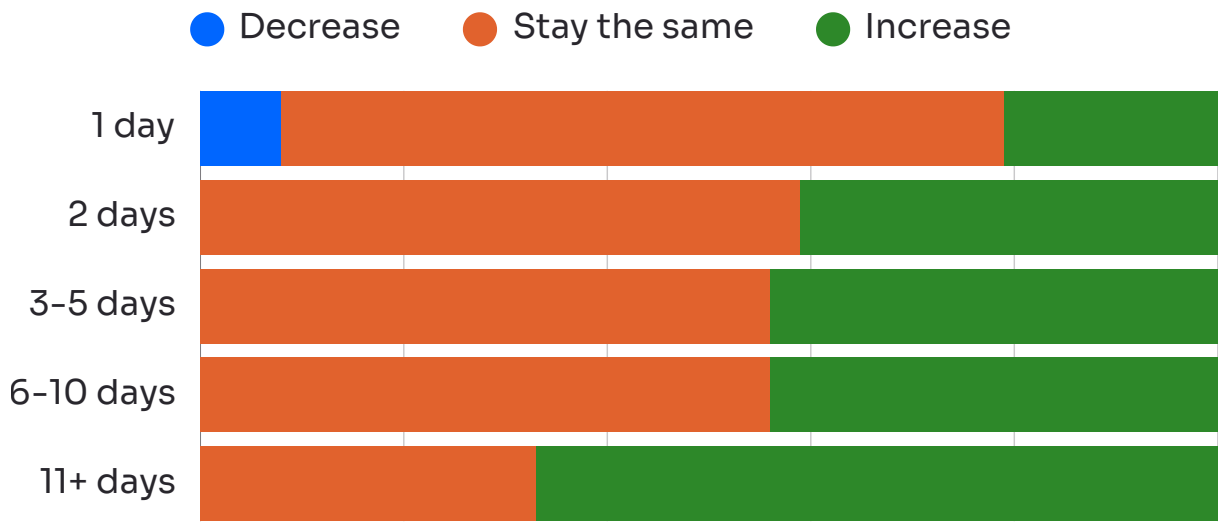


2 in 5
Plan to increase their participation in skilled volunteering

Many corporate tech teams are actively preparing to expand their involvement. **Two in five** of the tech organisations we surveyed plan to **increase their participation** in skilled volunteering over the next 12 months, with one in ten planning a significant expansion and three in ten planning a slight increase. That appetite for growth is even greater among organisations that already offer a larger volunteering time allowance.

* Survey carried out in US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia

Breakdown by number of annual volunteer days offered



3 in 5

Plan to increase participation by allocating more volunteer days

To drive this growth, firms are focusing on structural changes. Out of the two in five who are planning an increase, **three in five** plan to increase allocated volunteer days, **47%** intend to run structured formats like hackathons, and **32%** are urging managers to approve volunteer requests more readily.

How do you plan on increasing participation?

Increase the number of allocated volunteer days	**60%**
Offer more organised opportunities to volunteer (e.g. Hackathons)	**47%**
Encourage managers to approve volunteering requests	**32%**
Better promotion of volunteering allowance	28%
Nominate a company-wide volunteering day	23%
I don't know	2%

> **“We would welcome them if we knew what to do with them.”**
> – Leader at a medium-sized charity
>
> **“We haven't utilised any tech volunteers—only relied on our paid tech staff working extra unpaid hours.”**
> – Leader at a small charity

The core challenge facing the sector is not a lack of interest or corporate willingness. VCSE organisations need digital capability, and tech workers have the skills and employer backing to provide it. **The friction lies in the lack of infrastructure connecting the two sides.**

2. The proven value of skilled volunteering in tech



Digital transformation in the third sector is often discussed as a theoretical ambition. However, when charities successfully connect with corporate tech talent, the operational impact is often transformative.

Skilled volunteering acts as a force multiplier for resource-constrained organisations, helping them bridge capability gaps that standard grants cannot solve alone. This chapter charts the current adoption rates of skilled corporate volunteers, the skillsets on offer, and the tangible operational returns generated when skilled tech engagements succeed.

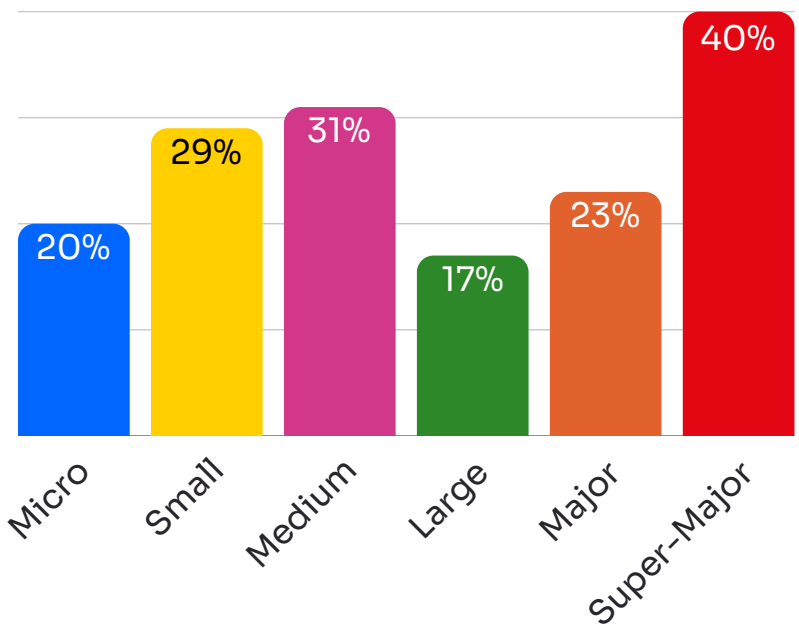
> "**A tech volunteer transformed our operations** by replacing our manual intake forms with a streamlined, automated system. This change reduced our admin processing time from days to minutes. Our team was therefore able to function better and **serve the community as less hours were wasted on admin time**."
> – Leader at a medium-sized charity

> "The corporate volunteers that have supported our journey have been **worth their weight in gold.**"
> – Leader at a large charity

Third sector adoption and corporate participation

Despite a clear appetite for digital adoption and transformation, engagement with skilled corporate volunteering across the UK third sector remains low. Only **25%** of non-profits surveyed have utilised pro bono skilled tech volunteers, meaning three out of four charities have never engaged corporate tech talent to support their mission.

Percentage of charities and not-for-profits that have engaged with skilled volunteers (by organisational size)



Adoption rates vary by organisation size. Super-major charities lead the sector at **40%**, likely because they're large enough to have dedicated operational teams to negotiate and manage pro-bono projects. Medium (**31%**) and small charities (**29%**) show moderate adoption.

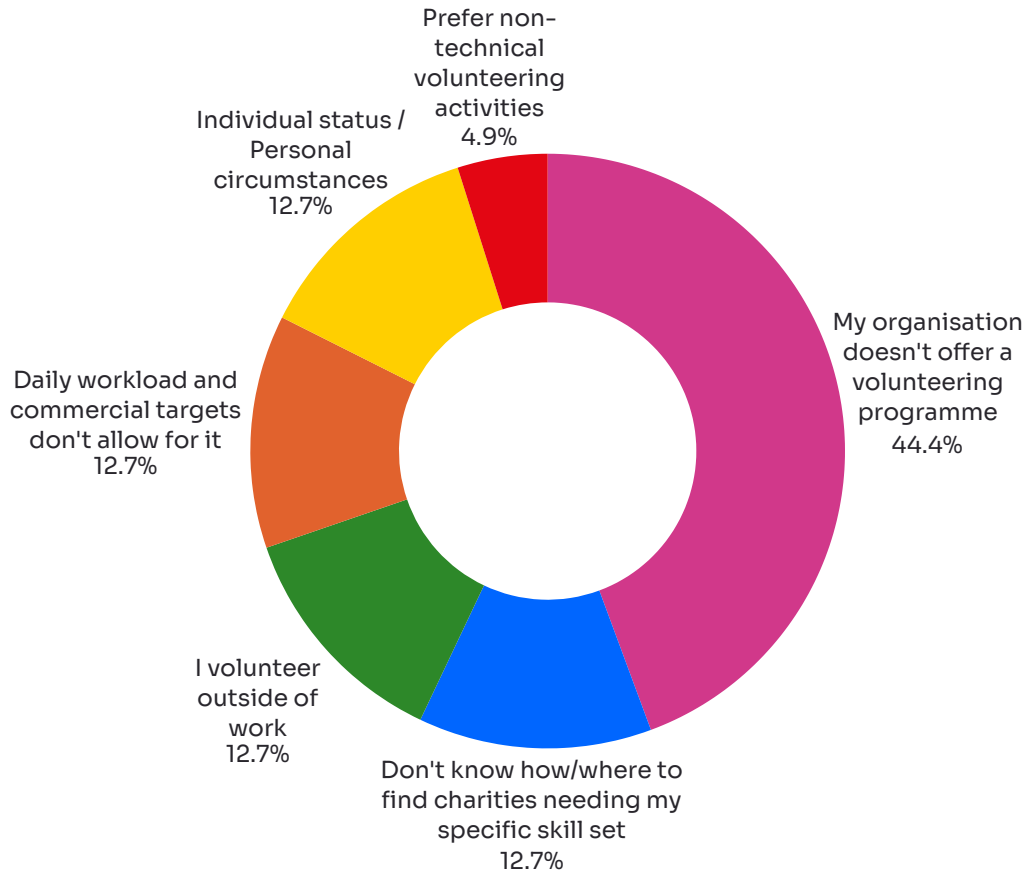
In contrast, large (**17%**), micro (**20%**), and major (**23%**) organisations lag behind. For micro-charities, the barrier is likely bandwidth: leaders simply lack the time to source or direct volunteers. For larger VCSE organisations, our experience suggests they're less likely to rely on pro-bono support due to having internal IT teams or more access to budget to pay for it.

On the supply side, more than half the tech sector employees we surveyed (**55%**) have not participated in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months. When we asked this group why they hadn't engaged, the majority said it was because their organisation doesn't offer a volunteering programme.



55%
Have not participated in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months

What is your primary reason for not participating in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months?



Once again, the bottleneck is not employee reluctance, but a lack of structured pathways to direct that talent into not-for-profit environments effectively and facilitate impactful interactions.

High-demand skills

Skilled tech volunteers contribute across a spectrum of skills. These are the most popular.

What specific tech skills are your employees most frequently contributing?

45% Data Analysis & CRM Strategy

42% Artificial Intelligence

36% IT Infrastructure & Cloud Migration

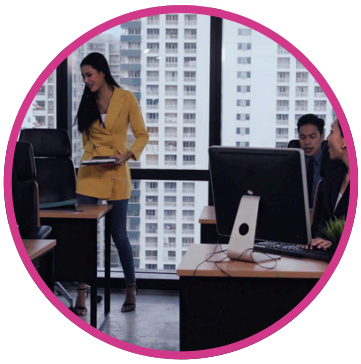
36% Project Management

35% Web/App Development

20% Digital Marketing & SEO

14% Product Strategy

Data and CRM support represents the single highest area of contribution (**45%**), with a strong (and likely growing) level of interest in AI. It is unsurprising to see data and CRM-related skills at the top, since smaller not-for-profits especially tend to operate with donor and constituent information fragmented across spreadsheets (or one unwieldy 'spreadsheet from hell').



> "Because our existing customer process is based on incomplete spreadsheets and holding things in our heads, we miss opportunities to follow up with people and help customers at the right time. Without automated follow-ups, people we could help drop off our radar. We stop following up on them, they forget about us. **People sit there and suffer when we could have an automation that keeps vulnerable people on our radar.** "
>
> – Chris Carus, Managing Director, Loco Home Retrofit

Volunteers can assist in consolidating, cleaning, and organising this data into centralised CRM systems, giving leadership better visibility and simplifying reporting requirements. We see this a lot in our work at the Scottish Tech Army —a significant portion of the projects we do cover CRM consultations and implementations.

AI is rapidly emerging as a key domain of skills on offer (**42%**). Skilled tech volunteers can help charities and not-for-profits implement practical AI tools —ranging from automated constituent triage systems to content generation— reducing routine administrative overhead. This aligns closely with third sector needs, although VCSE organisations remain cautious about the data protection and ethical risks surrounding AI.

Core infrastructure (**36%**), technical project management (**36%**), and custom web development (**35%**) round out the primary contributions. Engaging these skills can help charities and not-for-profits modernise constituent-facing platforms and transition their organisations away from fragile legacy systems.

Impact for VCSE organisations

Pro bono tech engagements have the potential to deliver high-impact returns for VCSE organisations.

Among organisations that have partnered with skilled volunteers, **79%** rated the support as "very helpful" (**38%**) or "fairly helpful" (**41%**). Overall, **96%** reported receiving positive value from the collaboration, while only **4%** found the volunteer support unhelpful.

"We are a very small charity with only two staff and no IT support whatsoever, and **we simply could not have achieved this transformational change** without [the skilled volunteer's] help."

– Leader of a small charity

"We've received amazing support in the past from a tech volunteer who has helped us **transform the way we collect and utilise data"**

– Founding director of a small charity

"Having **someone who 'got' our social mission as well as the tech ambitions** of the organisation has been amazing. Finally we feel hopeful about consultants in tech!"

– Leader at a medium-sized charity

96%
Reported receiving positive value from skilled volunteers



Top benefits

The top benefits, according to the charities and not-for-profits we surveyed, are as follows:

What impact did the work of skilled volunteers create?

Saved us time	**58%**
Increased our capabilities and confidence	**47%**
Helped us avoid/reduce costs	**44%**
Helped us expand our reach	35%
Expanded our service offerings	26%

Improved our funding opportunities	20%
Helped us serve more beneficiaries	9%
No impact	11%

1. **Direct time savings:** Streamlined tools and automated processes allow staff to reclaim time that is redirected toward frontline service delivery.

2. **Increased capabilities & confidence:** Effective engagements upskill internal staff, ensuring the charity can manage and maintain its systems long after the volunteer project concludes. This is an important ripple-effect benefit to VCSE organisations. Learning these skills helps them grow, not just survive.

3. **Cost avoidance:** Pro bono tech support reduces reliance on expensive external IT agencies or commercial software licenses.

Returns for businesses that participate

Research shows organisations that use their volunteer hours have **52%** less staff turnover than organisations that don't. [4] **86**% of organisations that do volunteering report a significant positive association between volunteering and job satisfaction, and **77%** of employees who volunteer report that it improved their motivation at work. [5][6] These benefits are elevated when volunteers use their specialised skills to support VCSE organisations:

> "**I wasn't quite prepared for just how invested I'd become in each of the charities**; I was expecting it to feel more like a day-to-day project, where we just do the work and hand it over to the client... But we've taken on a real feeling of ownership and responsibility to these charities, because what we deliver really matters for these people."
>
> – Thomas Gracie, volunteer through the Tech for Good Alliance with BJSS

> "We're an IT consultancy. Usually people will do social engagement by litterpicking, planting flowers or painting fences, but in my experience our people **get a real kick out of using their skillset to do something that's going to touch people's lives.**"
>
> – Caroline Pretty, Director of Consulting Services, CGI
>
> "The benefits are really far-reaching. It's important for our team to feel like they really can contribute, especially for the young people. This is a way for them to give back and see that we're not just about the profit margin. **That's the kind of business we want to be.**"
>
> – Laura Casci, Managing Partner, Valcon

Beyond the engagement-related benefits and the impact skilled volunteering projects have for not-for-profits and the communities they serve, there are brand-related benefits for organisations that participate. For companies that bid to win public contracts and so have to demonstrate a commitment to social value, skilled volunteering projects can help them win new business.

> "It's good for our people, it's good for the community, but it's also good for us because we get our name out there and people know who we are. If we're in a bid for something, **we can say we were involved in Tech for Good Alliance projects**."
>
> – Caroline Pretty, Director of Consulting Services, CGI
>
> **"It's also great from a new business perspective.** As a consultancy we have to go out and win work. Particularly for public bids, they want to know: if you win this bid, what will you do for the community? So we can talk about the work we do with the Tech for Good Alliance, mention a project that resonates with them, and deliver that as part of the contract."
>
> – Laura Casci, Managing Partner, Valcon

3. Common frictions: Sourcing, scoping, execution

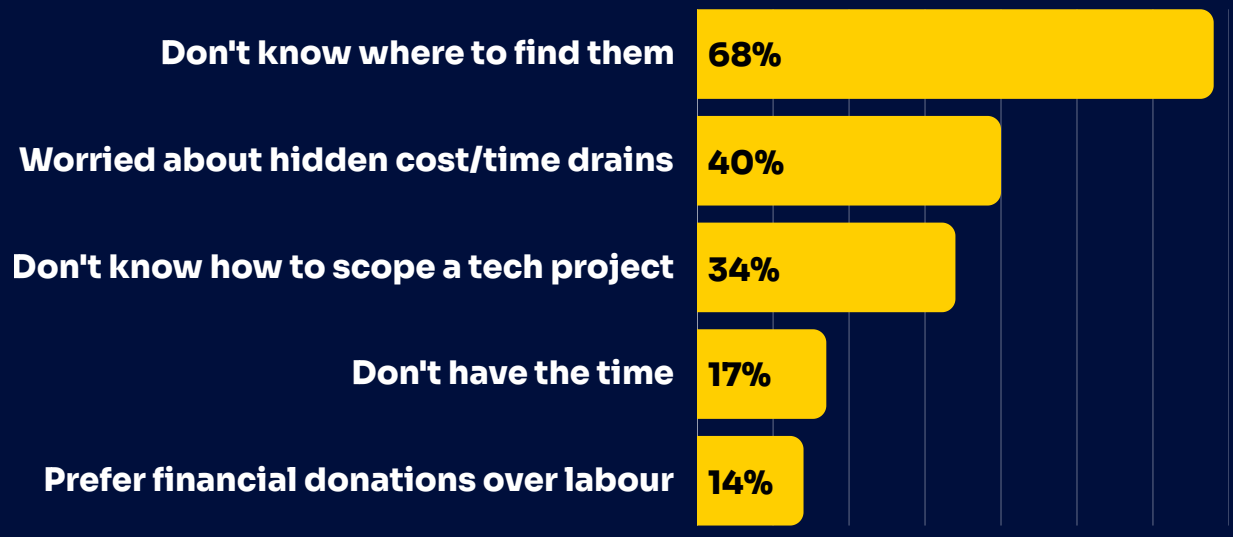


Despite the acknowledged helpfulness of skilled volunteers, execution efficiency remains a problem. Only **32%** of participating charities reported that their technical project was completed seamlessly and without friction.

This matches wider industry trends: The yearly Standish Group CHAOS Report, one of the best-known longitudinal studies on IT projects, has come to the same conclusion for 30 years now: around **70%** of tech projects do not go as planned. [7] In the third sector—where internal management capacity is typically more constrained—unstructured technical projects carry an even higher risk of scope creep, project stalls, or abandonment.

Sourcing and scoping

As we covered earlier, often the friction begins before work on a project has even started. When we asked the **75%** of VCSE organisations that haven't worked with skilled corporate volunteers why this is the case, the majority told us it was because they don't know where to find them.



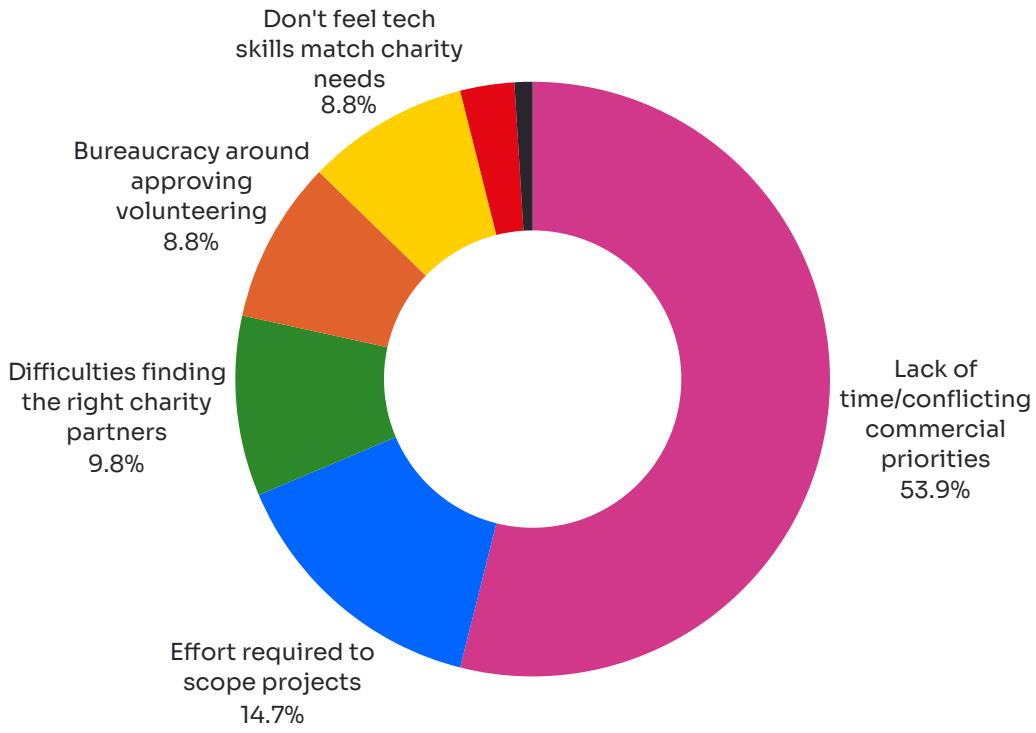
Without clear, accessible entry-points, corporate tech expertise and volunteer hours remain locked behind closed doors.

On the corporate side, businesses are facing parallel barriers. When we asked tech sector employees who hadn't participated in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months why that was the case, the most common response was "my organisation doesn't offer a volunteering programme." What's true for the third sector is also true for businesses: Employees need clear entry-points for skilled volunteering. When an employer offers volunteer hours but doesn't have a volunteering programme in place, opportunities for skilled volunteering remain hard to find.

Commercial realities and conflicts

When we asked the segment of tech sector employees who have participated in skilled volunteering in the last 12 months about their single biggest barrier to volunteering more, we got the following results:

What is your single biggest barrier to volunteering more frequently?



Over half of tech volunteers identify conflicting commercial priorities as the primary barrier preventing them from volunteering more frequently.

Pro-bono projects are almost universally conducted on a "best effort" basis, secondary to billable hours, client emergencies, and internal product deadlines. On the charity and not-for-profit side of things, **32%** of the organisations we surveyed who have worked with skilled volunteers reported that work was paused due to the commercial priorities of the volunteers involved.

Importantly, skilled volunteering projects are still taking place within a business context. This means commercial operations take priority, and businesses that participate in skilled volunteering need to become adept at maintaining this balance.

One way to navigate this issue is to work with a third party to scope and manage skilled volunteering projects. When a business has an organisation bring opportunities to its door, all it has to do it decide whether or not it has the resources to take on the project.

> "**There will always be that tension**. We're in business to serve our clients, and that takes priority. But it's about balancing that pipeline of work—understanding what your resource profile is, where people need to be, and who has the time to work on what...
>
> **...I don't have to go out and build relationships with charities or qualify leads**, because the Tech for Good Alliance brings them to my door. I just have to figure out if we have the capacity to do the work."
>
> – Caroline Pretty, Director of Consulting Services, CGI

Executional challenges & post-project debt

Here's a breakdown of the issues faced by charities and nonprofits who have engaged with skilled corporate volunteers:

None—the experience was seamless and high-impact	**32%**
Project management issues (e.g. paused due to volunteer priorities)	**32%**
Could not offer project enough internal time	**24%**
Mismatched expectations	23%
Tech built was too complex to maintain afterwards	12%
Data sharing and privacy issues	12%

While conflicting corporate priorities are one of the main challenges, charities themselves also struggle to maintain their side of the bargain. **24%** admit they could not dedicate enough internal management time to review work, provide feedback, or answer developer questions.



On top of this, **23%** report experiencing mismatched expectations, and **12%** report being left with tech that's too complicated for them to maintain afterwards. This demonstrates how important it is for projects to be well-scoped. Skilled volunteers need to understand the context of what they're building in order to create solutions that have a lasting impact.

A broken pathway leaves skilled volunteer time and third sector needs disconnected

These results point to a broken pathway between the skills and goodwill of UK tech professionals and the opportunities for effective skilled volunteering in VCSE organisations. Without dedicated project management, clear scoping frameworks, and protected volunteer time, these engagements are vulnerable to friction or failure—**or simply never start at all.**

4. Impact measurement



If skilled volunteering in the UK is to become a driver of sector-wide digital transformation like it has the potential to, corporate sponsors and VCSE organisations alike need to agree on what success looks like.

Corporate motivations and strategic realities

For businesses, skilled volunteering initiatives operate within formal frameworks designed to fulfill business objectives and strengthen market positioning. That's to say: altruism is rarely the only motivator for pro-bono corporate tech support. When we asked about the primary drivers for skilled volunteering programmes, we got the following results:



Three in five tech employees who have participated in employee skilled volunteering initiatives cite CSR and ESG targets as a driver and **half** cite brand reputation and marketing. Direct community impact is a driver for **37%**, whilst **43%** do skilled volunteering for employees' skills development and **41%** do it for employee retention and engagement.

These results show how far-reaching the benefits of skilled volunteering are—there are benefits internally, externally, and reputationally. That said, it's important to note that, for businesses, targets, reputation, and employee development and retention are more common drivers than the desire to solve societal issues.

The measurement challenge

Nearly half of tech firms track success by measuring "hours logged." A further **32%** calculate a monetised equivalent to satisfy ESG reporting templates.

Measurement of hours put in	**48%**
Number of beneficiaries supported by the charity/not-for-profit	**39%**
Impact survey filled out by charity/nonprofit	**35%**
Financial value calculated based on hours	32%
Not measured / Focus purely on charity benefit	3%

These input-based metrics fail to account for project quality or actual operational outcomes. A team logging 100 hours building an over-engineered tool that a charity eventually abandons counts as a victory under standard impact measurement. There's a feedback gap, too: Only **35%** of tech companies deploy post-project feedback surveys to recipient charities. This means that nearly two-thirds of corporates that do skilled volunteering complete their projects without assessing whether their intervention helped or hindered the charity's operations.



> "It's important to find ways to quantify the value of these things so that people understand it. Just because it's hard to measure, doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. **You could spend an hour on something and make somebody's life so much easier**."
>
> – Caroline Pretty, Director of Consulting Services, CGI

There are measurements on the charity and not-for-profit side of the equation too. For example, although on-profits experience direct returns—such as time saved and costs avoided—few have ways to measure this impact tangibly.

5. The third party advantage

Some of the tech workers we surveyed work for organisations that partner with a third party to conduct their skilled volunteering initiatives. When it comes to scoping out and selecting skilled volunteering projects, **40%** use informal local selections, **35%** run open application rounds, and **33%** rely on employee votes to choose. Only **27%** told us their organisation partners with a third party to select, scope, and manage skilled volunteering initiatives with VCSE organisations.

Our data also shows businesses that do work with a third party are more than twice as likely to measure impact via an impact survey filled out by the beneficiary of their work.

Intermediaries handle pre-engagement scoping, manage in-flight project risks, and implement robust feedback frameworks to track operational metrics accurately. They also play a role in alleviating the tension between pro-bono work and commercial priorities.

63%

Of organisations using a third party to manage skilled volunteering measure beneficiary impact

30%

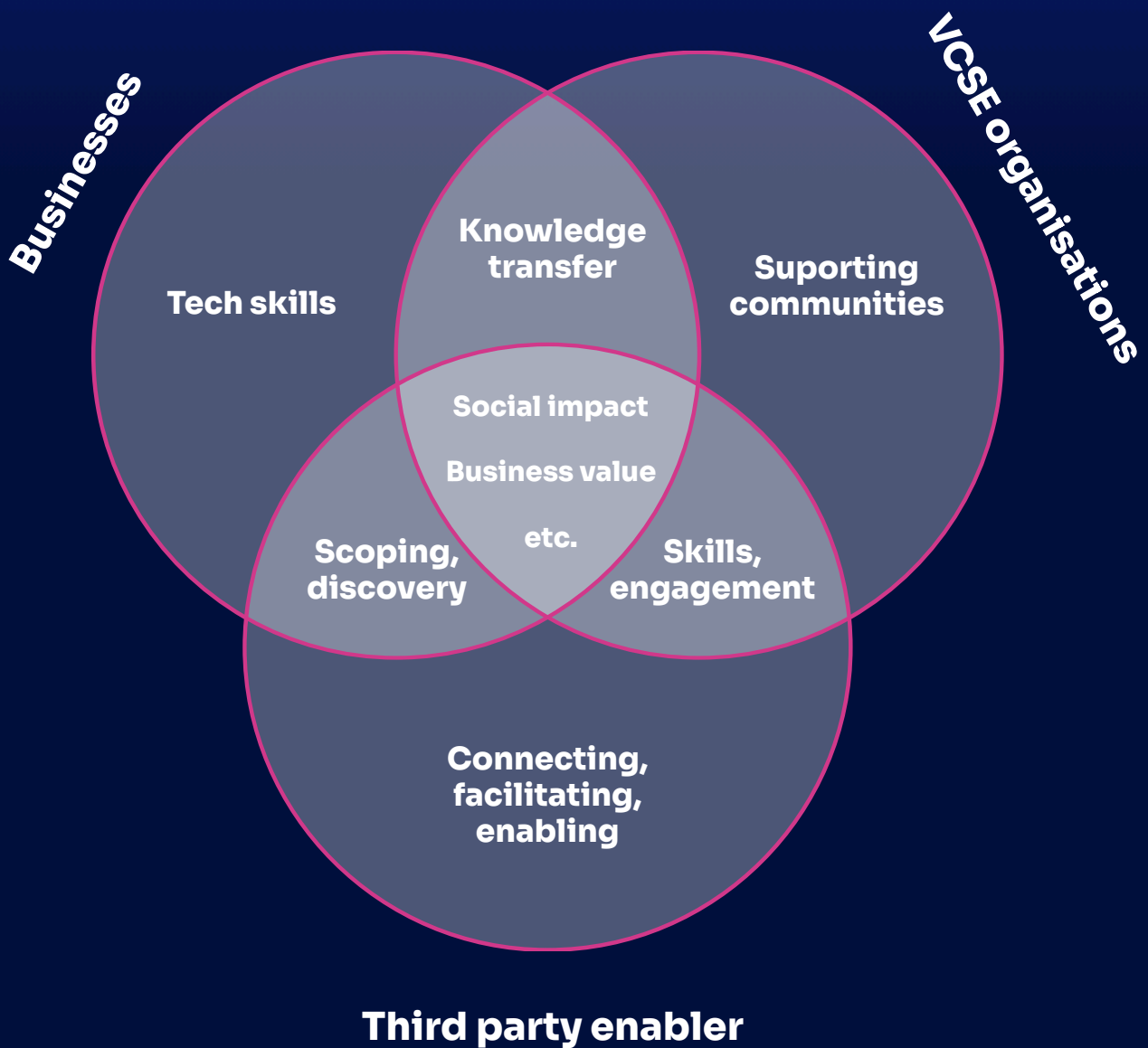
Of organisations that don't use a third party to manage skilled volunteering measure beneficiary impact

"We're a really busy business. If we had to engage with all of the charities we want to do work with, **we'd be lucky if we did one project a year**. Paid work has to take priority. By engaging with a third party, we have an easy way to help the third sector, it makes it much easier for us. We have a regular engagement, new projects coming through, all the benefits, without a lot of effort from us as a business. **It's a really efficient way to do it.**"

– Laura Casci, Managing Partner, Valcon

6. A blueprint for impactful skilled volunteering in the UK tech sector

To convert corporate goodwill into lasting third-sector transformation, UK tech companies and VCSE organisations need an operational framework. The blueprint contained in this section provides clear steps that both parties can take. **The steps in the blueprint are the tools that equip all parties to realise skilled tech volunteering initiatives to their fullest potential.**



The blueprint

To convert corporate goodwill into lasting third-sector transformation, UK tech companies and VCSE organisations need an operational framework. This blueprint outlines:

- **How corporate tech teams** can bridge the execution gap, align skilled volunteering work with commercial realities, and leave charities with sustainable tech tools
- **How VCSE organisations** can find and engage with skilled volunteers from the private sector, play their part in the definition and delivery of solutions that can benefit their organisations and ensure that they end up with appropriate and sustainable solutions

Below is a high-level view of the blueprint. Read on for more details about each step.

For private sector companies	For VCSE organisations
1. Prepare the ground	1. Understand what you're getting into
2. Source leadership commitment	2. Pick your target
3. Make it easy	3. Make a clear ask
4. Commit to what you know you can deliver	4. Commit and stay the course
5. Manage expectations	5. Be responsive
6. Execute with momentum	6. Test and feed back
7. Handover and exit	7. Reap the rewards and tell the story

For private sector companies

1. Prepare the ground

The first step is to give your people permission. If you don't have a well-defined and widely-communicated volunteering policy you need to implement one, and if you do, you should review it to see if it is still fit for purpose. A good example of both defining and communicating things is the **programme offered at Salesforce**. [8]

2. Source leadership commitment

Having a policy is necessary, but not sufficient. If senior leadership in the organisation is not visibly committed to it, it will fail. This commitment takes a number of forms:

- **Communicate the existence of the policy, but also communicate its importance.** Talk about and emphasise leadership's personal commitment to it and the value it brings to the organisation.
- **Lead by example.** Leaders should set the tone in the organisation by undertaking skilled volunteering themselves and by creating an environment in which participation is both expected and recognised. We have seen various approaches to this: One company makes participation in volunteering a requirement for eligibility for annual bonuses; another nominates a specific day in the calendar on which people are specifically encouraged to volunteer; a third builds it into their learning and development programme. Think about what this could look like for your organisation.
- **Celebrate success.** Successful skilled volunteering delivers benefits to all parties and will generate great stories that can be shared with every stakeholder group in the business. Include these in communications across the organisation and outside of the company—to customers, partners and shareholders.

3. Make it easy

Unless you have somebody in-house whose job it is to do charity outreach, qualify the charity and scope projects, skilled volunteering projects often simply don't happen. If skilled volunteers are left to find, prepare and complete skilled volunteering opportunities on their own, it can create a barrier that is simply too high to overcome. This means people who do decide to volunteer often default back to unskilled activities.

It takes quite a bit of work to prepare and set up a skilled volunteering project; it can consume all of the volunteering time available without actually getting to the execution part. In this situation, working with a third party can alleviate these problems and can be the difference between success and failure.

Intermediaries like the Tech for Good Alliance bring qualified, scoped, structured opportunities directly to your team, eliminating administrative overhead and doubling the likelihood of measuring true beneficiary outcomes.

4. Commit to what you know you can deliver

One of the findings of our research is that around a third of skilled volunteering projects suffer from project management issues and delays.

For skilled volunteering programmes to be effective, they must be established within the framework of what the organisation can deliver sustainably and in line with commercial operational priorities. This means being realistic at the outset about how much resource you can commit to these projects and having the discipline to ensure that these commitments are met.

An important consideration is how the project is organised. In our work with private sector companies, we've seen a number of different approaches work—so we know that different models will suit different companies. Examples include:

- **Delivery sprint** - organising a larger team to work on the project in a short period, typically 1-3 days
- **10% time** - committing a few hours a week over a period of weeks
- **Use a contract team** - for organisations that have to deliver social value commitments as part of a public sector contract, the delivery team can commit time to supporting a VCSE organisation relevant to the client's area of responsibility

Whatever approach is taken, the level of commitment to delivery must match what would be expected by a commercial client, albeit the scale of the project and the timescales are likely to be different.

Unstructured technical projects carry a high risk of scope creep or delivering complex tools that charities cannot maintain. Proper scoping ensures solutions are fit for purpose, low-risk, and operationally viable.

Something to consider when scoping a project: Many charities experience similar problems that could be solved with the same tools. **Reusable solutions, maintained by a third party for the benefit of the sector at large, can be implemented faster—and improvements or additional features developed over time benefit all users.**

Three important tips for scoping out a skilled volunteering project are:

1. **Start with the problem**
2. **Meet the charity where they are**
3. **Define what 'done' means**

Doing this well has such a big impact for the charity. Everybody knows what's being asked of them and how it's going to make a difference.

This is the crux of our methodology and service at the Tech for Good Alliance: We are not match-making, we are scoping, path-setting, changing thinking and decision-making processes. Working with a third party to do skilled volunteering projects facilitates upskilling in the charity sector and can have a big impact on charity workers' confidence and ability around how to engage with technology.

> "**For me personally, I also learnt a lot from [the volunteer]** about the background systems in MS Dynamics but also the process we went through, which has been super beneficial to me in leading on developing our Beacon CRM."
>
> - Clare Nichols, Member Services Coordinator at SportedUK

On top of that, there can be a nervousness about what's being handed over. A third party is there to reassure them that they'll be handed something that is appropriate and maintainable, and can be there after the private company has wrapped things up so that the charity has someone to come to if there is a problem. This eases some fear and increases the chances of successful digital transformation.

5. Manage expectations

VCSE organisations are generally realistic in what they expect skilled volunteers to deliver, but setting clear expectations at the outset is critical. This includes explicit agreement of the scope of the project and a shared understanding of the delivery approach and what that entails.

All parties want to see the anticipated impact delivered but clarity on how that will be achieved is vital. Again, this is no different to the approach that private sector companies take with commercial clients—the same standards must be met.

6. Execute with momentum

Assuming that the project has a realistic scope, has been well-scoped, and that there is a shared understanding on delivery approach and timescales, one of the most common issues that causes projects to stall or fail completely is a lack of momentum. **Once momentum drops, it's very hard to pick that back up again.**

This is very much a joint responsibility, but, on the part of the private sector company and its volunteers, is often dependent on the commitment of managers in the organisation to the programme. There are often situations in which things in the business can change, but how these are managed is central to the successful outcome of a skilled volunteering project.

The biggest contributor to projects stalling and failing is a lack of communication. If the project has to be adapted in terms of scope or timeline, making that clear avoids that black hole feeling where no-one is clear on the current status or the route to completion.

If capacity has to be scaled back, look for ways to maintain a consistent lower level of activity for a period of time so that you continue to make progress and maintain the engagement of all parties.

7. Handover and exit

A project is not complete when code is pushed to production; it is complete when the VCSE organisation can independently operate, maintain, and derive value from the system over the long term. Elements of this include:

- **Training & documentation:** Make sure that staff in the VCSE organisation are confident enough to use the solution that has been delivered, and that assets have been provided to allow them to onboard new staff and volunteers.
- **Make a 'clean' exit:** Ensure that there are no information or personnel dependencies within your organisation. If there are, you are likely to receive requests for support beyond completion that you cannot sustain. Finish the project with a proper handover and move on to the next project.
- **Plan for long-term success:** Ensure that it is clear what has to be done to make sure that the solution is viable, robust and secure and will remain so.

> **"We're really making use of the time saving the portal has given us**, and it's nice to be where we all hoped it would take us... I now just need to work out when we'll hit the point of maxing it out... Then it's finding another big efficiency, or trying to increase staffing for the first time since pre-covid."
>
> - Kallum Taylor, Executive Officer, York Neighbours

For VCSE organisations

1. Understand what you're getting into

Private sector organisations that undertake skilled volunteering are generally making a finite amount of time available to work on a project and they are fitting it around their commercial operations. Accessing this skill and experience can be hugely beneficial for your organisation, but you need to understand that the success of the project will be dependent on your involvement as much as theirs.

Make sure that when you make a request, you will be ready to commit the time and effort that will be required to make it successful. Avoid periods when you will be busy with core activities, and make sure that any of your team that will be involved know what their role will be and what they will be expected to do.

2. Pick your target

By utilising skilled volunteers, you will be getting access to expertise that would be very hard to acquire in other ways. It is unlikely that you could recruit someone to do the work to a similar level or pay commercial rates to have the work done.

With that in mind, you should think carefully about what you ask for help with. Try to identify areas in which technology can have the greatest impact:

- **Where does your team spend a lot of time carrying out repetitive or manual tasks** – things that are essential but taking time away from higher value activities?
- **How are you managing your information for operational, decision-making or reporting purposes** – do you have the "spreadsheet from hell" that started out as a simple tool to manage things in the early days but has grown large and unwieldy with the risk of errors or inconsistencies?
- **Do you have multiple internal systems that are not connected**, with the result that you find it hard to get a complete picture or end up downloading things into spreadsheets for manual analysis?

These are examples of areas in which effective and appropriate technology can make a transformational impact on the organisations and for the people who work in it.

3. **Make a clear ask**

Being clear in making a request is an essential prerequisite to success but, importantly, that does not mean that you need to specify a technical solution. That specification is down to the expertise of the skilled volunteers who engage in the delivery of the project.

What they need from you in order to be able to do this is **a clear definition of the problem you are trying to solve or the opportunity you want to grasp**. Frame the request in terms of what you do now, what you would like to be able to do in the future, and the impact that getting to that point will have for your organisation.

It's also important to help the company and skilled volunteers understand the positive impact you have on the lives of the people you support. This helps both to motivate people at the outset but also to maintain their commitment to the end of the project.

4. **Commit and stay the course**

Once you have agreed with the skilled volunteers what the project will deliver and the approach and timescales they will take to carry out the project, it's vital that you carve out the time to be an active participant in the project. It can be hard enough for the private sector organisation and its volunteers to maintain momentum, but if you are not an active partner in the process the risk of disengagement and ultimately failure to complete the project increases.

5. **Be responsive**

In relation to the point above, timely responses to questions and consistent communications mean that the skilled volunteers do not find themselves stalled as they wait for information. Having to make repeated requests for information is likely to generate questions about how important your organisation thinks the project is, and they may just stop asking.

It's always possible that unforeseen circumstances mean that things have to change, but giving early notice of that and trying to provide a clear indication of when you will be able to respond means the skilled volunteers know where they stand and can plan ahead. With clear communications in place, when you are ready to pick the activity back up, the corporation you're working with is more likely to respond to that.

6. **Test and feed back**

Developing digital solutions is an iterative process. The skilled volunteers working with you will try to get things right first time but only you can confirm whether the solution is working as you expected and need and can be used by all the people in your organisation that need to.

You can prepare for this testing phase by thinking in advance about how you will judge the solution, preparing any data that you will need to do the testing and making sure that you have people ready to do it. Be as specific as possible in providing your feedback—this makes it easier to address any problems.

7. **Reap the rewards and tell the story**

Once the project has been completed, you should be able to experience the benefits that were projected at the outset. However, often you will only really see this once the solution has been in use for some time.

It's important to let the solution bed in and to carry out an evaluation a few months after project completion. You should be able to see clear benefits in terms of time saved, increased capacity, cost savings, etc, and it is really valuable for the private sector company and the skilled volunteers to see the impact of the work that they have done. So, as well as tracking that impact for your own purposes, communicate it to them.

Any hard data that you can share is very valuable, but time and again we hear that what is the most impactful is telling the story in personal terms. We know from experience that it is often this kind of feedback that generates the strongest emotional response and **encourages people to go on to do more**, having seen the impact that their skills and commitment have had.

6. Appendix

Methodology

This report is built on a dual-survey research model designed and deployed by the Tech for Good Alliance (an initiative of the Scottish Tech Army) between July and August 2026. Two online structured surveys were deployed using JotForm to capture quantitative metrics and qualitative context from both sides of the skilled volunteering ecosystem. We also conducted qualitative, 1-to-1 interviews with both charity leaders and corporate tech volunteers.

Third sector sample (N=261)	Tech sector sample (N=260)
• Micro (<10k): 12% • Small (£10k–£100k): 22% • Medium (£100k–£1M): 33% • Large (£1M–£10M): 21% • Major / Super-Major (>£10M): 12%	• 1-100 FTE: 29% • 101-500 FTE: 15% • 501-1,000 FTE: 15% • 1,001-5,000 FTE: 13% • 10,000+ FTE: 20% • Unspecified: 7%

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Tech For Good ALLIANCE

About the Tech for Good Alliance

The Tech for Good Alliance is a UK-wide collaborative network that connects tech companies, corporate partners, and skilled volunteers with charities and non-profits needing digital expertise. It links the advanced skill sets of the tech sector and corporate ESG goals with the frontline digital needs of under-resourced charities.

Clark.

About Clark

Clark is an award-winning integrated PR, digital marketing, and creative agency based in Scotland. Its specialist tech division, Clark.tech, was Scotland's first B2B technology PR boutique. From local start-ups to global leaders, it helps ambitious technology companies translate complex ideas into clear, credible, real-world narratives that connect with customers, investors, partners and employees.