

Rethinking Working Time: Can Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) Foster Volunteering?

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Research Questions

Does Working Time Affect Volunteering in the UK ?

- Total Working Hours ?
- Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) ?



Motivation

Benefits of Volunteering

For Individuals

- Self-esteem, purposefulness, accomplishment, pride and empowerment.
- Social integration, social network, social ties and social support.
- Wellbeing, mental health, physical health
- Socioeconomic benefits

(Wilson, 2012; Nichol *et al.*, 2024; Davies *et al.*, 2024)

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For Society

- Sense of community, social cohesion, solidarity
- Provision of essential goods and services

(Gomez & Gunderson, 2003; Bartel *et al.*, 2012; Kobayashi *et al.*, 2019)

Focus on the UK

- Stable proportion of population engaged in volunteering (Lindsey & Mohan, 2018)
... or even declining in recent years (DCMS, 2024)
- Working time has remained stable
 - Around 37h weekly hours

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- Stable proportion of population engaged in volunteering (Lindsey & Mohan, 2018)
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- Working time has remained stable
 - Around 37h weekly hours
- Policies promoting FWAs
 - Flexible Working Regulations 2002, Children and Families Act 2014, Flexible Working Bill 2023, Employment Rights Bill 2024
 - Potential to strengthen civil society e.g. through voluntary work (Goerlich & Vis, 2024)

Literature Review

Working Hours and Volunteering

- Main Theories : Time Constraint/Role-overload VS Social Integration Theory/complementary perspective
(Lup & Booth, 2018 ; Kobayashi et al., 2019 ; Qvist, 2021)

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Empirical Results

- Working longer hours reduces volunteering in the US, Denmark and Germany
(Taniguchi, 2012 ; Qvist et al., 2021 ; Kelle et al., 2024)
- Longer working hours do not significantly affect volunteering in UK and Canada
(Gomez & Gunderson, 2003 ; Lup & Booth, 2018)
- In the US, the unemployed volunteer more than workers
(Piatak, 2016)
... but part-time workers volunteer more than either employees or the unemployed
(Einolf, 2011)

Mixed evidence but mainly negative impact

Literature Review

FWAs and Volunteering

- Mitigate time constraints while still retaining the «social» benefits of work
- Potential work intensification and blurring of work/leisure time (De Spiegelaere & Piasna, 2017 ; Hanbury *et al.*, 2023)

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Empirical Mixed Results

- Part-time workers volunteer more than FT workers in the US (Einolf, 2011 ; Piatak, 2016)
- Shifting to part-time does not affect volunteering in US (Mantovan *et al.*, 2021)
- Working from home increased the probability of volunteer participation, whereas the availability of flextime did not. (Gomez & Gunderson, 2003)
- Working from home and autonomy over working hours increased total hours of volunteering in Denmark. (Qvist, 2021)

Our Data

Longitudinal Study (2010-2019)

3009 individuals - 11,856 observations Data from the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS)

- Waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 (no FWA in other waves)
- Exclusion of observations in 2020 (Covid-19 restrictions)
- Focus on the employees

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Impact on both likelihood and frequency of volunteering

7 forms of FWAs

A wide array of volunteering determinants

Dependent Variables

Participation in Volunteering

In the last 12 months, have you given any unpaid help or worked as a volunteer for any type of local, national or international organisation or charity?

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Frequency of Volunteering

- Hours spent volunteering in last 4 weeks
- Yearly Frequency
 - One-off activity
 - Just a few times
 - At least once a month
 - Once a fortnight
 - Once a week
 - Twice a week
 - On 3 or more days a week

Working time and FWAs

Working time

Weekly Working Hours + Overtime + Hours in side job

Working time and FWAs

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Weekly Working Hours + Overtime + Hours in side job

FWAs use

- Flexible Time :
 - **Flextime** (flexible Start/end of day)
 - **Compressed workweek** (same hours, less days)
 - **Annualised hours** (varying distribution over the year)

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 - **Working from Home** (on a regular basis)

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- Working Time Reduction :
 - **Part-time work** (<30h)
 - **Term-time work** (not working during school holidays)
 - **Job sharing** (pro-rata FT)

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 - **Job sharing** (pro-rata FT)
- Subjective perception : :
 - **Autonomy over working hours**

Control Variables

Time uses

- Housework
- Caregiving
- Commuting time

Job characteristics

- Job type (managerial, routine, etc.)
- Job sector
- Pay type (hourly, salaried, etc.)

Wellbeing

- Health
- Job satisfaction
- Feeling under strain

Socio-demographic characteristics

- Age
- Marital status
- Household net income
- Number of children (<16 y.o.)

Estimation Strategy

Accounting for complex survey design

- Sampling weights
- Clustering at PSU level

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Fixed-effects panel models - Within variations

- **Participation** : conditional logit model with fixed effects (clogit)
- **Monthly hours** : fixed-effects linear model (xtreg)
- **Yearly frequency** : ordered logit model with fixed effects (feologit)

Controlling for unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity (e.g. personality traits), only within-variation

[Descriptive Statistics](#)

Results : Volunteering Participation

Working Time and FWAs

- WTR and Working from home (+)

Job characteristics

- Routine Job, paid by the hour (+)

Time uses

- Housework (+)

Socio-demographics

- Never married, divorced (+)

Wellbeing

- Health (+)

Table 1. Volunteering Among Employees — Estimated Odds Ratios from Conditional Logit with Fixed Effects

	(1) Volunteering	(2) Volunteering
Weekly working hours	0.99* (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)
Working time reduction		
Part-time	-	1.19** (0.11)
Term time	-	1.29** (0.16)
Job sharing	-	1.53** (0.29)
Other FWA		
Compressed week	-	1.28 (0.25)
Flextime	-	1.15 (0.10)
Annualised hours	-	1.08 (0.33)
Working from home	-	1.28** (0.14)
Subjective perception of FWA		
Autonomy over WH	-	1.02 (0.03)
Control variables	✓	✓
Observations	11,856	11,856

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Results : Yearly Frequency

Working Time and FWAs

- Working Hours (+)
- FWAs n.s.

Job characteristics

- Paid by the hour (+)

Time uses

- Caregiving (-)

Socio-demographics

- Separated (+)

Table 2. Yearly frequency of Volunteering Among Employees
— Estimated Odds Ratios from Ordinal Logit with Fixed Effects

	(1) Volunteering	(2) Volunteering
Weekly working hours	0.98*** (0.01)	0.98*** (0.01)
Working time reduction		
Part-time	-	1.12 (0.18)
Term time	-	1.14 (0.22)
Job sharing	-	0.97 (0.34)
Other FWA		
Compressed week	-	0.78 (0.26)
Flextime	-	1.12 (0.18)
Annualised hours	-	1.35 (0.58)
Working from home	-	1.34* (0.23)
Subjective perception of FWA		
Autonomy over WH	-	0.94 (0.07)
Control variables	✓	✓
Observations	7,320	7,320

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Results : Monthly Hours

Working Time and FWAs

- Working Hours and FWAs n.s.
- FWAs n.s.

Socio-demographics

- Age (+)
- Separated, living as a couple (+)
- Young children (-)

Table 3. Monthly Hours of Volunteering Among Employees —
Estimated coefficients from fixed-effects within estimator

	(1) Volunteering	(2) Volunteering
Weekly working hours	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)
Working time reduction		
Part-time	-	-0.83 (0.94)
Term time	-	0.15 (1.19)
Job sharing	-	0.71 (1.10)
Other FWA		
Compressed week	-	-0.19 (1.59)
Flextime	-	0.27 (0.73)
Annualised hours	-	-0.70 (1.44)
Working from home	-	0.44 (0.99)
Subjective perception of FWA		
Autonomy over WH	-	-0.17 (0.35)
Control variables	✓	✓
R-squared	0.019	0.025
Observations	7388	7388

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$



Discussion

Do total working hours affect volunteering participation in the UK ?

- Weakly reduce the odds of volunteering. . .
but not when controlling for FWAs.
- Reduce the yearly frequency of volunteering. . .
but do not seem to affect monthly hours of volunteering.

Do FWAs affect volunteering participation in the UK ?

- Increase the odds of volunteering...
But do not affect the frequency.
- Working time reduction and flexible space arrangements. . .
not other forms of flexible time arrangements.

Role Overload and Time Constraint Theory

Discussion

What is the impact of other time use variables on volunteering participation?

- **Weekly hours of housework and a low frequency of informal care slightly increase the odds of volunteering participation.** High frequency of informal care decreases the odds of volunteering at least once a year by 57%.
- Daily commuting time has no effect on volunteering participation and frequency.

Discussion

What is the impact of other time use variables on volunteering participation ?

- **Weekly hours of housework and a low frequency of informal care slightly increase the odds of volunteering participation.** High frequency of informal care decreases the odds of volunteering at least once a year by 57%.
- Daily commuting time has no effect on volunteering participation and frequency.

What is the impact of job characteristics and socio-demographic characteristics on volunteering participation ?

- Working in a routine job, compared to a managerial job, increases the odds of volunteering participation. But not the frequency.
- Being **paid by the hour increases the odds of volunteering participation and yearly frequency.**
- Compared to being married, being divorced, separated, or never married increases both the odds of volunteering participation and the number of hours volunteered per month.
- A higher number of children in the household reduces the likelihood of monthly hours participation.

Discussion

Policy implications

- 2030 Blue-print for European volunteering (CEV, 2021) : New ideas to enable all european citizens to have more time from employment or other duties in order to fulfil any citizen's rights or duties contributing to the common good, including volunteering.
Simunkovic (2022)
- Promoting working time reduction (e.g. Part-time, term-time, job sharing) and remote work at the national and organizational level.

Thank you !

Questions/Comments ?

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Discussion

Normative view on volunteering

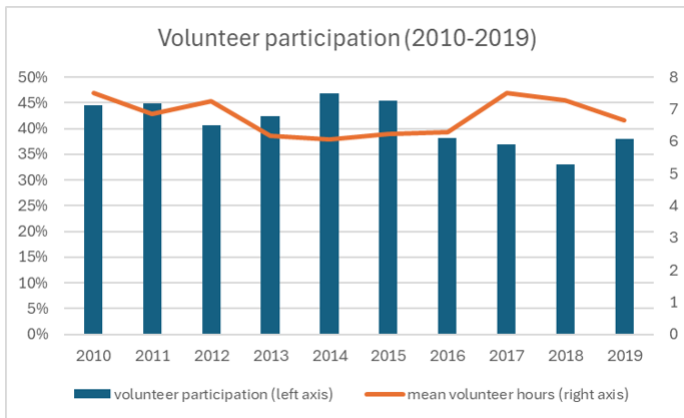
- The literature advocates for the individuals and socio-economic benefits of volunteering...
Nichol et al. (2023), Wilson (2012), Simunkovic (2022)
 - But volunteering can be considered as free labor in response to market and government failure or lack of trust.
Hackl *et al.* (2009)
 - Volunteers are not only a source of labor for essential and significant tasks in society, but play an important role in social cohesion, interpersonal relations, and societal transformation (CEV, 2021)
 - Volunteering can be a complementary feature of the welfare state : In UK volunteering is likely to decline when government intervention decreases
Bartels *et al.* (2013)
 - Risk of emotional exhaustion
Höing et al. (2016), Willems *et al.* (2020)

Descriptive statistics - Back

Table 4. Descriptive statistics

	No volunteer	Volunteer	Total
N	6,948 (58.6%)	4,908 (41.4%)	11,856 (100.0%)
Hours spent volunteering in last 4 weeks	-	6.8 (12.0)	6.8 (12.0)
Frequency of volunteering over the year			
Three or more days a week	-	512 (11.9%)	512 (11.9%)
Twice a week	-	915 (21.3%)	915 (21.3%)
Once a week	-	821 (19.0%)	821 (19.0%)
Once a fortnight	-	810 (18.9%)	810 (18.9%)
At least once a month	-	1,041 (24.2%)	1,041 (24.2%)
Just a few times	-	435 (10.1%)	435 (10.1%)
One-off activity	-	289 (6.7%)	289 (6.7%)
Working hours	37.5 (12.4)	36.7 (13.1)	37.2 (12.7)
Working time reduction			
Part-time	1,723 (24.8%)	1,414 (28.8%)	3,137 (26.5%)
Term time	504 (7.3%)	419 (8.5%)	923 (7.8%)
Job sharing	113 (1.6%)	117 (2.4%)	230 (1.9%)
Other FWA			
Compressed week	142 (2.0%)	118 (2.4%)	260 (2.2%)
Flexi-time	1,038 (14.9%)	836 (17.0%)	1,874 (15.8%)
Annualised hours	78 (1.1%)	51 (1.0%)	129 (1.1%)
Working from home	489 (7.0%)	452 (9.2%)	941 (7.9%)
Subjective perception of FWA			
Autonomy over working hours	2.453 (1.173)	2.508 (1.174)	2.476 (1.174)
Control variables			
Constantly under strain	2.043 (0.740)	2.049 (0.757)	2.046 (0.747)

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics - Back



Transition probabilities :

- 40% chance of taking up volunteering
- 60% chance of giving up volunteering

Figure 2. Descriptive statistics Back

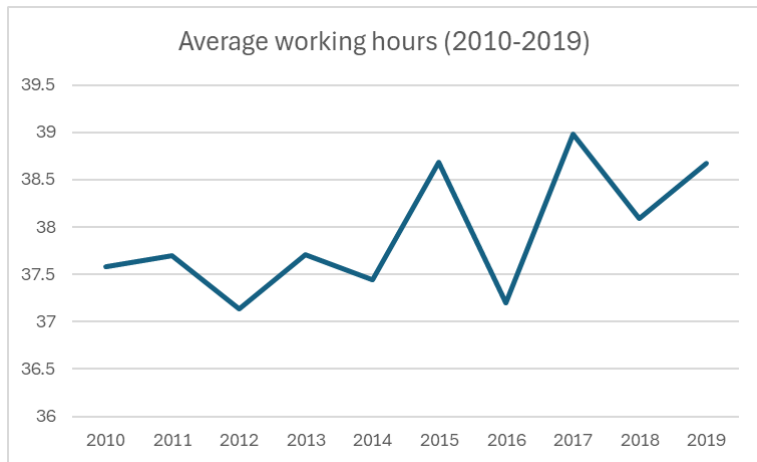


Figure 3. Descriptive statistics Back

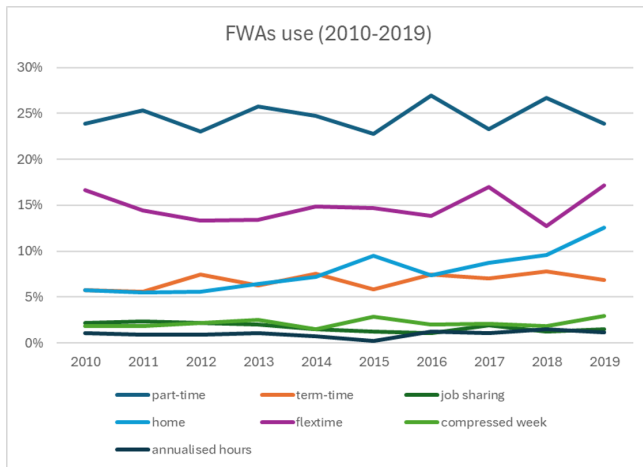


Table 1 - Volunteering Participation - Back

			Weekly hours of housework	1.01** (0.01)	1.01** (0.01)
			Weekly hours caring time (ref: 0 hours)		
			1-9 hours	1.19* (0.11)	1.18* (0.11)
			10-19 hours	0.92 (0.19)	0.92 (0.19)
			20-34 hours	0.78 (0.21)	0.77 (0.21)
			More than 35 hours	0.91 (0.28)	0.92 (0.28)
Control variables			Daily Hours Commuting	0.90 (0.09)	0.89 (0.09)
Under Strain	1.02 (0.04)	1.01 (0.04)	Age	1.10 (0.10)	1.10 (0.10)
Occupational Class (ref: Manager/Professional)			Marital status (ref: Married)		
Intermediate	1.12 (0.14)	1.14 (0.14)	Living as couple	1.26 (0.20)	1.28 (0.20)
Lower supervisory/technical	1.30 (0.25)	1.30 (0.25)	Widowed	1.35 (0.62)	1.36 (0.63)
Semi-routine/routine	1.39** (0.18)	1.39** (0.19)	Divorced	1.72** (0.37)	1.73** (0.38)
Public sector (ref: Private firm)	0.93 (0.09)	0.92 (0.09)	Separated	1.57* (0.37)	1.58* (0.37)
Pay type (ref: Salaried)			Never married	1.63** (0.34)	1.64** (0.34)
Salary plus commission	1.31 (0.40)	1.31 (0.40)	Number of children in the household	1.09 (0.06)	1.08 (0.06)
Paid by the hour	1.27*** (0.12)	1.25** (0.12)	Standardized net household income	1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)
Other	1.97** (0.53)	1.93** (0.53)	Subjective Health	1.08* (0.04)	1.09** (0.05)
			Job satisfaction	1.04* (0.02)	1.03 (0.02)

Table 2 - Yearly Frequency - Back

			Weekly hours of housework	1.01 (0.01)	1.01 (0.01)
			Weekly hours caring time (ref: 0 hours)		
			1-9 hours	1.14 (0.16)	1.12 (0.16)
			10-19 hours	0.87 (0.26)	0.84 (0.25)
			20-34 hours	0.43** (0.18)	0.43* (0.19)
			More than 35 hours	0.43** (0.18)	0.43* (0.19)
			Daily Hours Commuting	1.00 (0.14)	0.99 (0.13)
			Age	1.24 (0.20)	1.24 (0.20)
			Marital status (ref: Married)		
			Living as couple	1.03 (0.40)	1.08 (0.42)
			Widowed	1.90 (1.60)	1.74 (1.53)
			Divorced	1.46 (0.73)	1.57 (0.78)
			Separated	2.44** (1.06)	2.49** (1.10)
			Never married	0.87 (0.38)	0.92 (0.41)
			Number of children in the household	0.98 (0.10)	0.98 (0.10)
			Standardized net household income	1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)
			Subjective Health	0.98 (0.08)	0.98 (0.08)
			Job satisfaction	1.01 (0.04)	1.01 (0.04)
Control variables					
Under Strain	0.99 (0.07)	1.00 (0.07)			
Occupational Class (ref: Manager/Professional)					
Intermediate	1.01 (0.25)	1.03 (0.25)			
Lower supervisory/technical	1.60 (0.60)	1.54 (0.59)			
Semi-routine/routine	1.02 (0.28)	1.00 (0.27)			
Public sector (ref: Private firm)	1.13 (0.19)	1.14 (0.19)			
Pay type (ref: Salaried)					
Salary plus commission	0.31* (0.20)	0.30* (0.20)			
Paid by the hour	1.58** (0.30)	1.59** (0.30)			
Other	0.24*** (0.10)	0.24*** (0.10)			

Table 3 - Monthly Hours - Back

			Weekly hours of housework	0.03 (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)
			Weekly hours caring time (ref: 0 hours)		
			1-9 hours	1.12 (0.93)	1.15 (0.92)
			10-19 hours	1.00 (1.57)	0.98 (1.57)
			20-34 hours	4.75 (4.06)	4.92 (4.07)
Control variables			More than 35 hours	0.25 (2.86)	0.22 (2.92)
Under Strain	-0.46 (0.39)	-0.40 (0.38)	Daily Hours Commuting	0.00 (0.39)	0.03 (0.42)
Occupational Class (ref: Manager/Professional)			Age	1.66** (0.68)	1.69** (0.68)
Intermediate	-1.45 (1.34)	-1.53 (1.32)	Marital status (ref: Married)		
Lower supervisory/technical	-0.98 (2.02)	-0.93 (1.99)	Living as couple	5.32** (2.60)	5.41** (2.52)
Semi-routine/routine	0.81 (1.53)	0.80 (1.49)	Widowed	-3.16 (3.59)	-2.90 (3.78)
Public sector (ref: Private firm)	0.02 (0.86)	-0.06 (0.83)	Divorced	4.56* (2.58)	4.89* (2.51)
Pay type (ref: Salaried)			Separated	4.93** (2.05)	5.07*** (1.95)
Salary plus commission	-4.98 (3.76)	-5.10 (3.80)	Never married	5.32* (3.14)	5.56* (3.06)
Paid by the hour	0.21 (1.07)	0.24 (1.06)	Number of children in the household	-0.97** (0.48)	-1.05** (0.50)
Other	-0.34 (2.13)	-0.40 (2.14)	Standardized net household income	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
			Subjective Health	-0.17 (0.41)	-0.20 (0.41)
			Job satisfaction	0.06 (0.26)	0.09 (0.25)

Gender analysis

Table 5. Volunteering Among Employees Per Gender — Estimated Odds Ratios from Conditional Logit with Fixed Effects

	Women	Women	Men	Men
Weekly working hours	0.99*** (0.00)	0.99* (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.01)
Working time reduction				
Part-time	-	1.23** (0.12)	-	1.03 (0.19)
Term time	-	1.08 (0.15)	-	2.50*** (0.67)
Job sharing	-	1.45* (0.30)	-	1.68 (0.81)
Other FWA				
Compressed week	-	1.26 (0.29)	-	1.48 (0.49)
Flextime	-	1.21* (0.13)	-	1.09 (0.16)
Annualised hours	-	2.16 (1.13)	-	0.65 (0.23)
Working from home	-	1.10 (0.17)	-	1.44** (0.22)
Subjective perception of FWA				
Autonomy over WH	-	0.96 (0.04)	-	1.10* (0.06)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	7112	7112	4744	4744

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Gender Analysis - Frequency

Monthly hours :

- No effect of WT and FWAs

Yearly frequency :

- Working hours reduces only women's frequency
- Women : (high) caring (-)
- Men : Widowed (+)