

# Volunteering, wellbeing and civic pride

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# Agenda

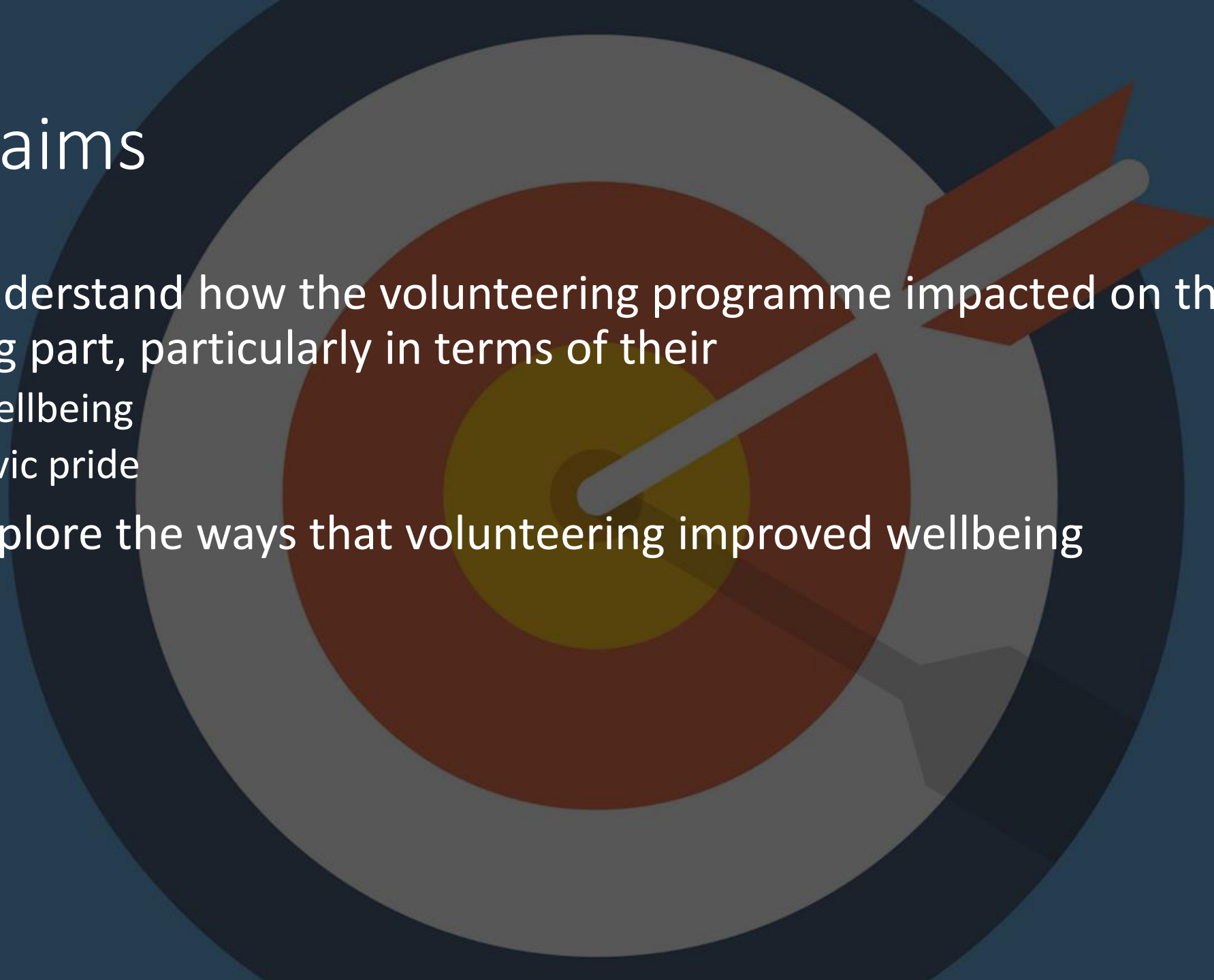
- Introduction
- The framework we used
- Our methods
- Findings
- Tell us what you think!
- Conclusions from the study
- Refreshments and networking

# Background

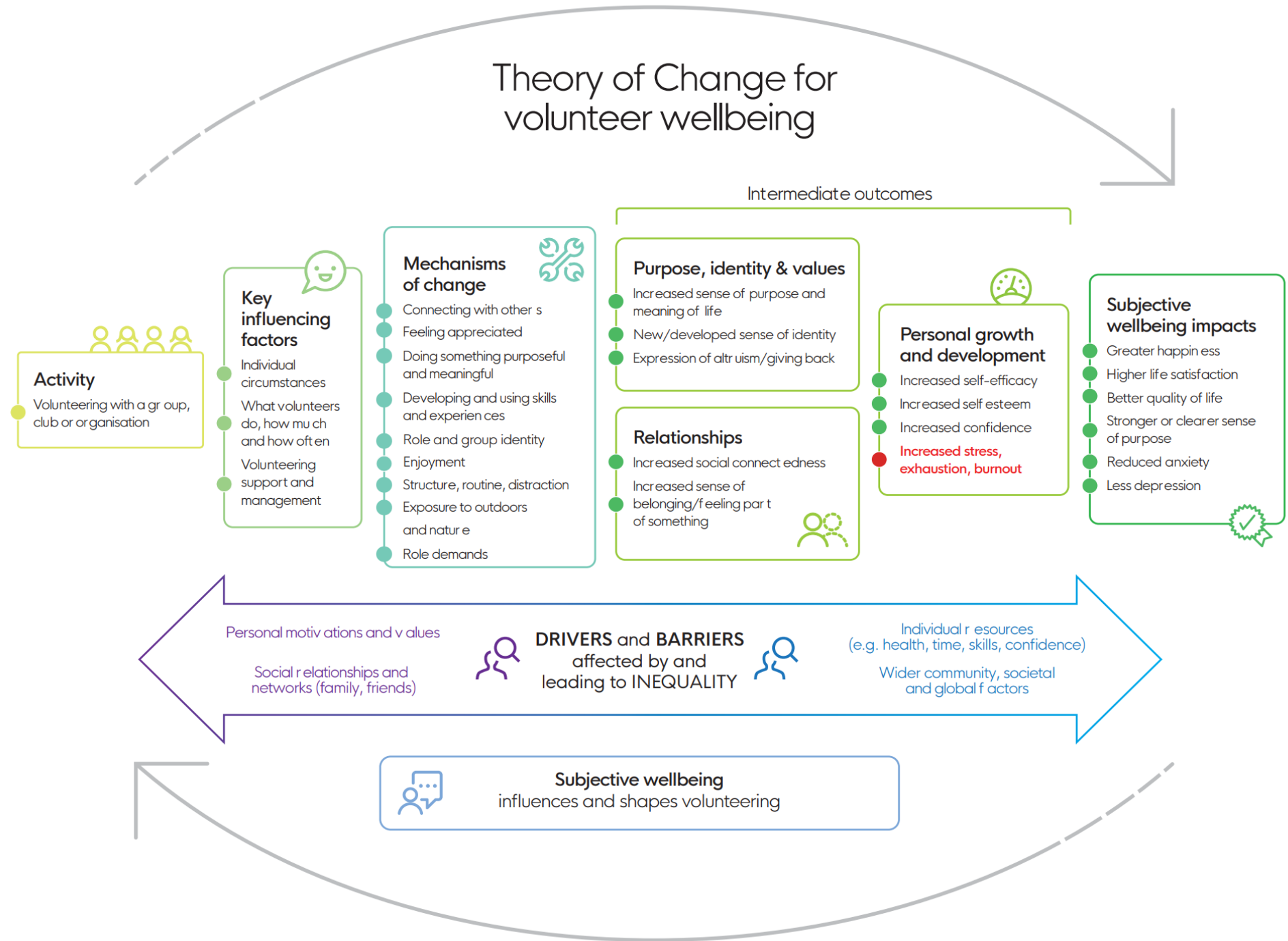
- In December 2017, Coventry was awarded UK City of Culture 2021
- The Coventry City of Culture Trust, in partnership with Coventry University Student's Union and EnV recruited a team of volunteers to support the year
- These volunteers were known as City Hosts
- A crucial essential part of the delivery of the City of Culture Year
- Provided with free training, given a uniform, and able to book shifts based on their interests and availability

# Our aims

- To understand how the volunteering programme impacted on those taking part, particularly in terms of their
  - Wellbeing
  - Civic pride
- To explore the ways that volunteering improved wellbeing



# The framework we used



From Stuart, J., Kamerāde, D., Connolly, S., Ellis Paine, A., Nichols, G. and Grotz, J. (2020) *The Impacts of Volunteering on the Subjective Wellbeing of Volunteers: A Rapid Evidence Assessment*, What Works Centre for Wellbeing and Spirit of 2012 [online] What Works Centre for Wellbeing. Available at: [https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/1920/10/volunteer-wellbeing-Oct-20\\_briefing.pdf](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/1920/10/volunteer-wellbeing-Oct-20_briefing.pdf)



# Methods

# Our methods

- Ethics approval received from the University of Warwick's Biomedical Sciences Research Ethics Committee
  - Reference BSREC 07/21-22
- Mixed-methods data collection
  - A series of 3 surveys sent out by the Monitoring and Evaluation team in August 2021, November 2021 and April 2022
  - Interviews with 20-40 City Hosts in person, by telephone or online via Teams



# Our methods – analysis of data

## Surveys

- Calculated the averages and frequencies of the variables
- Compared the average scores of wellbeing with the Coventry Household Survey at each timepoint
- Compared scores of civic pride with Coventry Household Survey at each timepoint
- Looked at association between volunteering status and wellbeing, after adjusting for key variables

## Interviews

- Each interview was transcribed
- Used ‘thematic analysis’ to analyse what participants were saying
  - First coded using the framework then identified additional codes outside of the framework
  - Open text responses from the three surveys were analysed in the same way
- Share with participants and other City Hosts to reflect on findings



BIG WEEKEND  
COVENTRY 2022



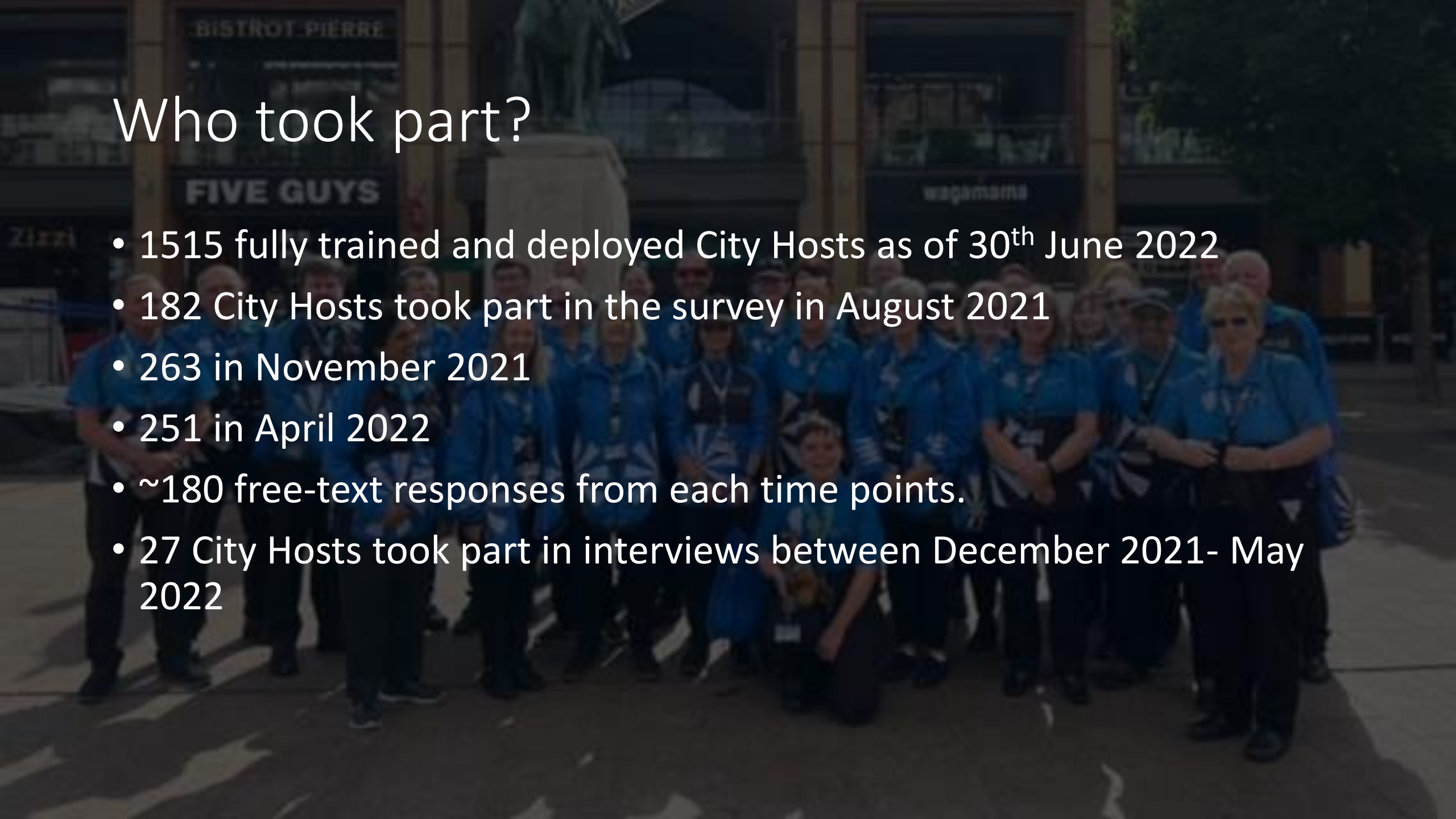
CREATIVE  
COVENTRY

# Findings

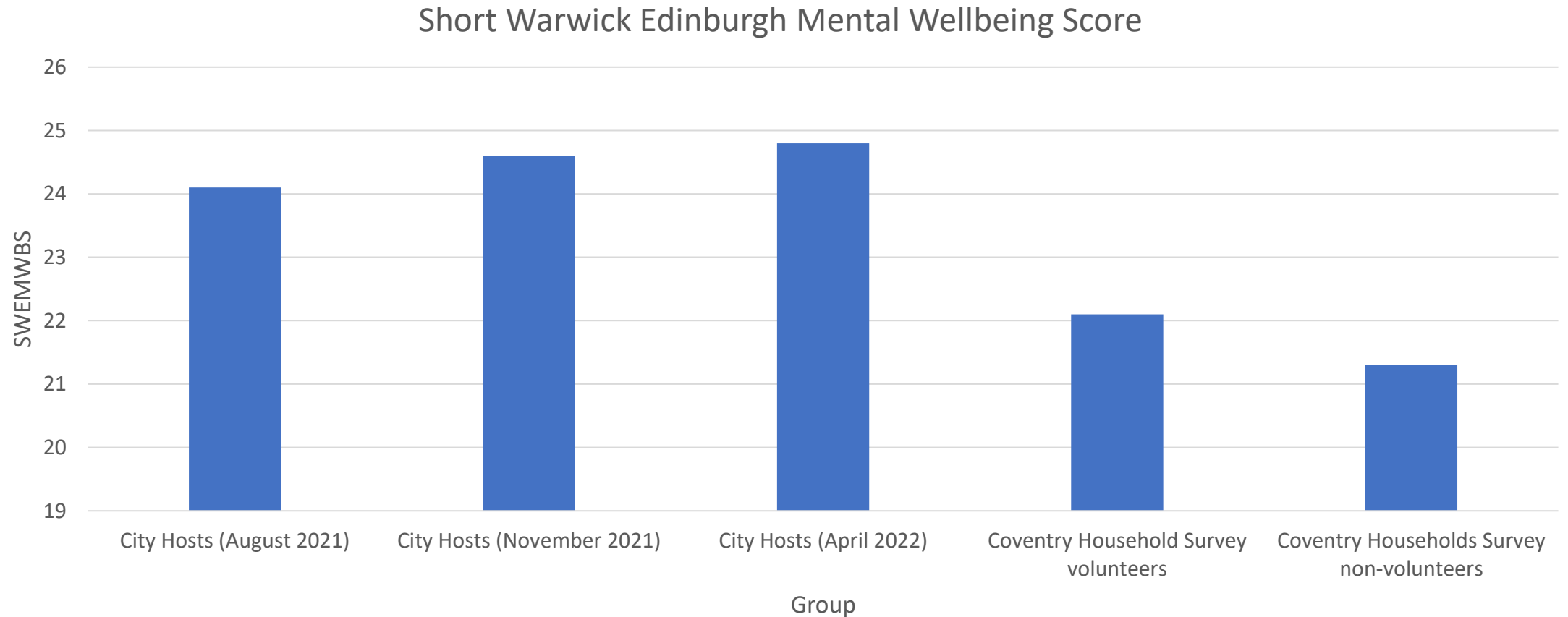


# Who took part?

- 1515 fully trained and deployed City Hosts as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022
- 182 City Hosts took part in the survey in August 2021
- 263 in November 2021
- 251 in April 2022
- ~180 free-text responses from each time points.
- 27 City Hosts took part in interviews between December 2021- May 2022

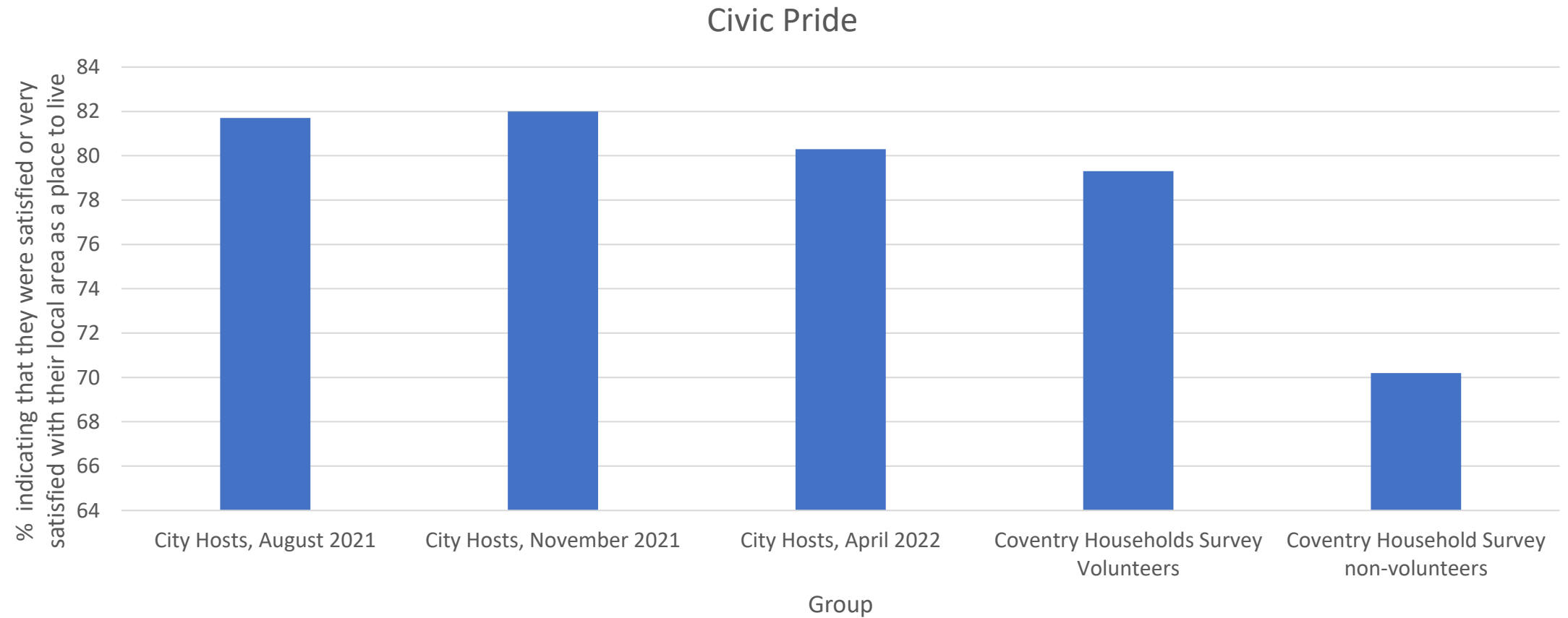


# City Hosts had statistically higher wellbeing scores



After adjustment for age, gender and disability, City Hosts were 2.6-3.4 SWEMWBS points higher than non-volunteers. Coventry Household Survey volunteers were 0.73 SWEMWBS points higher than non-volunteers ( $p < 0.001$ )

# City hosts had statistically higher civic pride



P<0.001

# Wellbeing impacts



Having those experiences has definitely made me feel sort of happier

Its quite fulfilling

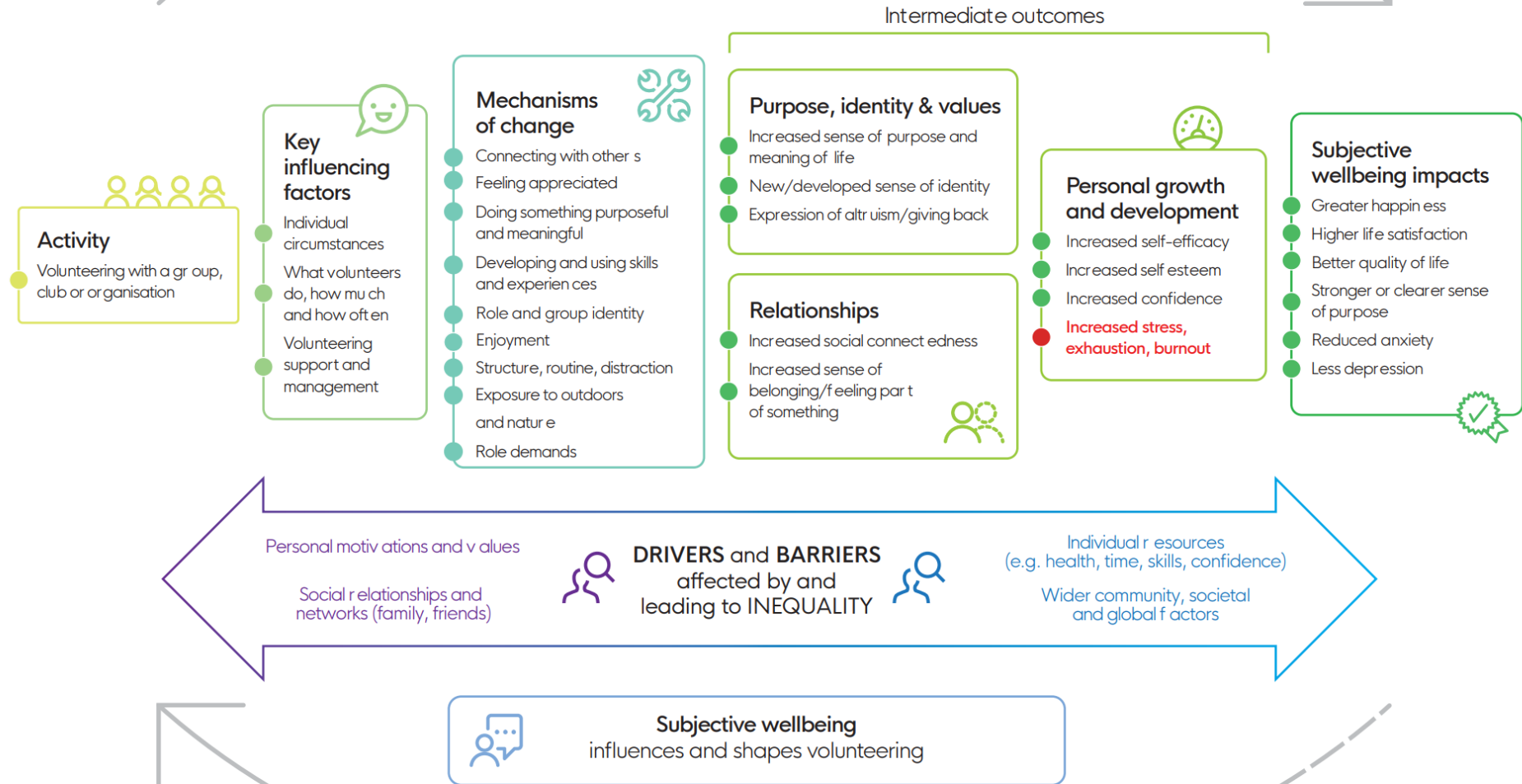
The confidence building... wouldn't say it's stopped me from overthinking things because I still do that, but just yeah, I guess I, I panic less

I smile every time I talk about doing the hosting

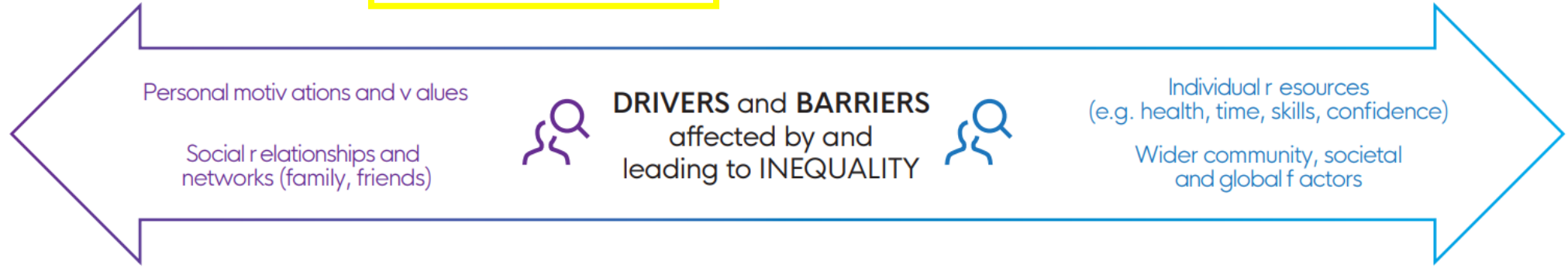
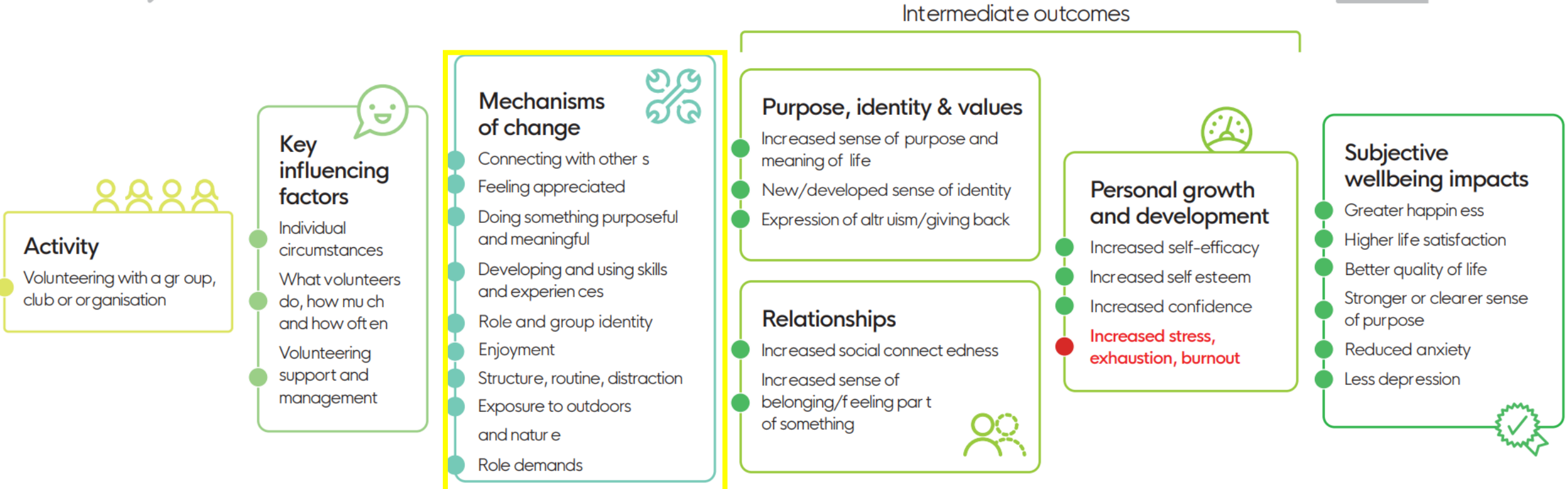
I spend my whole life a lot better, I'm not frustrated and angry all the time

It's great for one's mental wellbeing

# Theory of Change for volunteer wellbeing



# Theory of change for volunteer wellbeing



**Subjective wellbeing** influences and changes volunteering

# Connecting with others

To connect with people, so to build a network, because I no longer have a network in the UK... I lived in in [Country] that 20 years and in [Country]... So it was to also make connections with people. It's also to meet new people that are travelling and hear their stories

It's been lovely meeting new people of all walks of life and met some great fellow hosts too.

We, we're so good friends and not just ladies. There's all of us you know, students, male, female and it's amazing..., just getting to meet people again, you know. Even if it's the hosts or the public out there, it's just-just really good. It's just like I said, it brings me out of my shell and you know, it's very uplifting.



# Role and group identity

*Just proud that you're doing something and like belonging to like a team. People that are all together. No, you get yeah when you're wearing the uniform like you're proud to wear it. Like policemen... Well, no, it's real real pride.*

*I feel our [City Host] reputation is strong!!!*

*The other thing that surprised me is that people, if you take the talk time to talk to them, and sometimes because you've got the uniform on, will tell you things they wouldn't have told you otherwise. 'cause, I think it has been quite successful and people have got used to seeing us around in our blue uniforms and will come and talk to us now.*

# Other mechanisms of change

*They do little rewards have like sort of 10 shifts you get a bronze award... I think there's little things that do make you feel appreciated, and I, I and I do think any communication from them is always really positive.*

Feeling appreciated

*We have good fun. There's a bit of banter, most of my working life's been in a factory so I know all about banter and um. Yeah, we've had some good fun and I've worked. I'm working with some nice people. And yeah, it's just a pleasure to be doing it to be fair*

Enjoyment

*it seemed a great way to finally get out of the house and have some purpose to my weeks which the pandemic had stopped.*

Structure, routine, distraction

*volunteering for city of culture is life satisfaction, is good, doing good for others and the community, which provides me a natural sense of accomplishment.*

Doing something purposeful and meaningful

*It's nice to actually get out into the fresh air.*

Exposure to outdoors and nature

*Oh yes, yes it has had in terms of just thinking about what my employment skills are. Yeah, so that that's made me think about other job roles that I might be more interested in future.*

*Well, I I do think as I said before, it is important to stay in the world and to and to keep learning. I don't think you are ever too old to learn. And you can't not learn because so much is going on. And I've learned more about uh computers the kind of technical side, if you like, than I knew before...*

Developing and using skills and experience

# Role Demands: Mixed feelings

*You could be a leader, or you could be a host. You could take responsibility, you didn't have to.*

*There was one at the Coventry Cemetery. It's good to walk around it and get to see it, but then you just sitting about doing nothing. There was very little footfall on it. The lack the lack of things to do at some of the events. Like I said you are just basically present, it's not a lot of hands on, you know it's a bit boring. You come out and spend 4 hours there, you know, it's sort of like watching paint dry.*

*At some events I feel that I do not have enough to do, or that I am an extra body. Other times I am busy and feel I am helping. The latter is preferable*

# A new mechanism: Exposure to culture

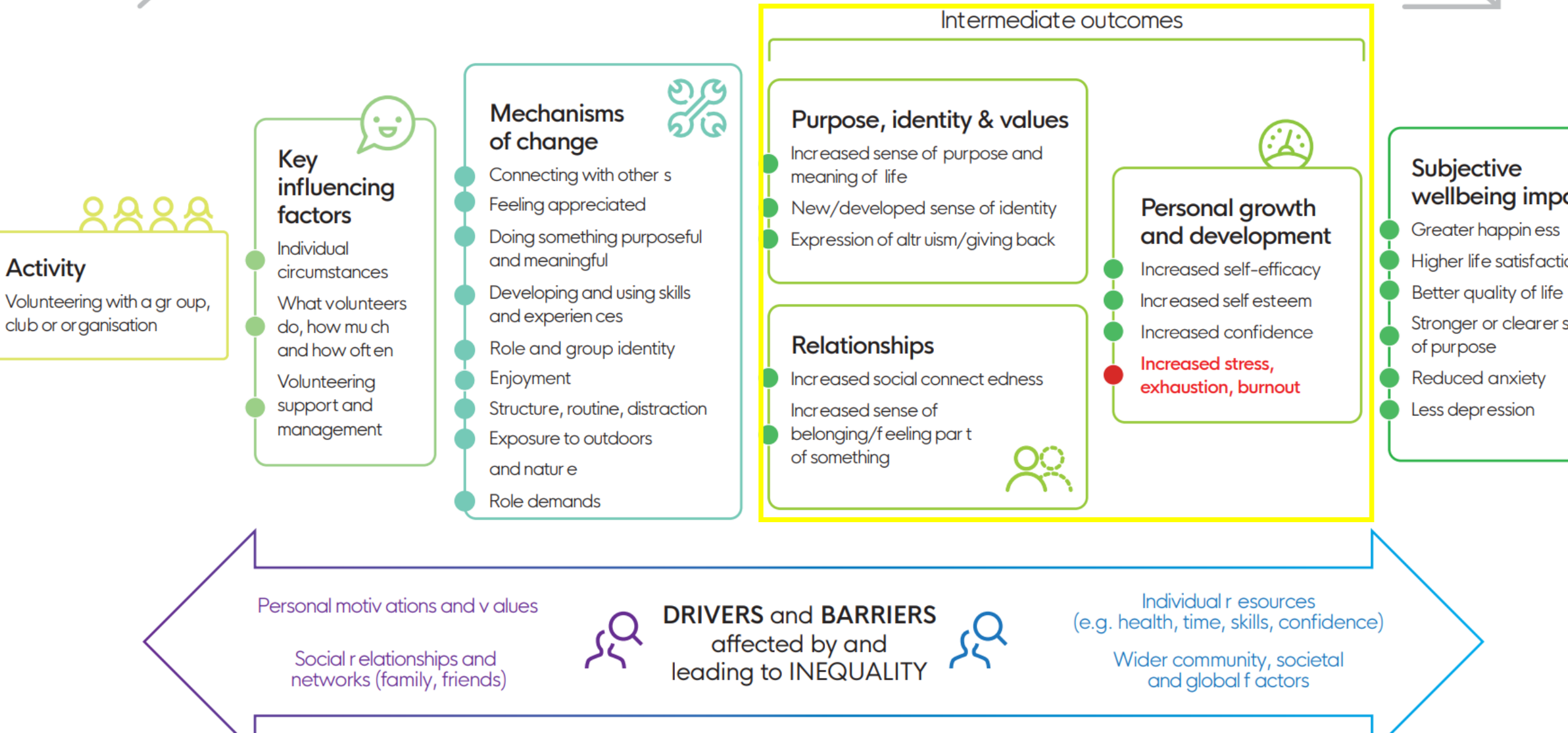
The richness of what I'm learning about the city, the opportunity to attend some of these events... And so you know, those are things that otherwise I probably wouldn't attend. Uhm, especially when I wasn't working, because if I financially, I couldn't afford it

And that particular one was great because I got to talk to the artist because he was there and actually talked through his different paintings and what they meant and also what was happening with them after.

it's nice to be involved in it in a way that I can afford to be involved in it if that kind of makes sense.

I was amused by the rich history, wonderful people and hidden talents that Coventry had hidden.

# Theory of Change for volunteer wellbeing



## Purpose, identity and values

*I want to be the person that I am now. More looking out on life... Looking positive for the future.*

*I'm just saying that sort of purposeful thing though. You know, I feel have contributed a little bit*

*Well, I'd rather help somebody than hinder somebody, um. That might have been not been too apparent when I was younger...*

*You know, we've got this uniform now and I would like to be a part of the city and be able to do to do more*

*I've seen people blossom, myself included.*

# intermediate outcomes

Purpose, identity and values	Relationships
<p><i>I want to be the person that I am now. More looking out on life... Looking positive for the future.</i></p>	<p><i>You know, we're obviously the Coventry people. I've integrated with the, you know, hell of a different community, a young community, very diverse community.</i></p>
<p><i>I'm just saying that sort of purposeful thing though. You know, I feel have contributed a little bit</i></p>	<p><i>meeting other people and sort of keeping in touch with them. So certainly there are people who I have built friendships with like [name].</i></p>
<p><i>Well, I'd rather help somebody than hinder somebody, um. That might have been not been too apparent when I was younger...</i></p>	<p><i>Being part of a community. And not just sit not just sitting and doing nothing but being being part being part of something. You know, just sort of say well, I was part, you know. Of City of Culture I was I was part, I was part of it, which is what I wanted.</i></p>
<p><i>You know, we've got this uniform now and I would like to be a part of the city and be able to do to do more</i></p>	<p><i>So there's a good sense of camaraderie... 'cause even though we're all doing it for unknown reasons. You know we're all doing it for one cause which is for the City of Culture.</i></p>
<p><i>I've seen people blossom, myself included.</i></p>	<p><i>It has been a wonderful experience. I feel that I have a new family.</i></p>

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Purpose, identity and values	Relationships	Personal growth and development
<p><i>I want to be the person that I am now. More looking out on life... Looking positive for the future.</i></p>	<p><i>You know, we're obviously the Coventry people. I've integrated with the, you know, hell of a different community, a young community, very diverse community.</i></p>	<p><i>I think as a confidence builder it has been it has been good it has been, this has forced me to try out new things, so I would be less, I'll be less fearful for trying out stuff in the future.</i></p>
<p><i>I'm just saying that sort of purposeful thing though. You know, I feel have contributed a little bit</i></p>	<p><i>meeting other people and sort of keeping in touch with them. So certainly there are people who I have built friendships with like [name].</i></p>	<p><i>I guess I'm just more open to talking to people.</i></p>
<p><i>Well, I'd rather help somebody than hinder somebody, um. That might have been not been too apparent when I was younger...</i></p>	<p><i>Being part of a community. And not just sit not just sitting and doing nothing but being being part being part of something. You know, just sort of say well, I was part, you know. Of City of Culture I was I was part, I was part of it, which is what I wanted.</i></p>	<p><i>I would say um so yeah, just, especially recently with doing more shifts that confidence has just increased because just through the the kind of experience and the like, almost like flooding myself with having to be in those situations.</i></p>
<p><i>You know, we've got this uniform now and I would like to be a part of the city and be able to do to do more</i></p>	<p><i>So there's a good sense of camaraderie... 'cause even though we're all doing it for unknown reasons. You know we're all doing it for one cause which is for the City of Culture.</i></p>	<p><i>I have enjoyed being a City Host. As someone who has autism for me it has helped me come more out of my shell.</i></p>
<p><i>I've seen people blossom, myself included.</i></p>	<p><i>It has been a wonderful experience. I feel that I have a new family.</i></p>	<p><i>I've really enjoyed it but I'm getting a bit tired now.</i></p>



### Activity

Volunteering with a group, club or organisation

### Key influencing factors

- Individual circumstances
- What volunteers do, how much and how often
- Volunteering support and management

### Mechanisms of change

- Connecting with others
- Feeling appreciated
- Doing something purposeful and meaningful
- Developing and using skills and experiences
- Role and group identity
- Enjoyment
- Structure, routine, distraction and nature
- Role demands

### Purpose, identity & values

- Increased sense of purpose and meaning of life
- New/developed sense of identity
- Expression of altruism/giving back

### Relationships

- Increased social connectedness
- Increased sense of belonging/feeling part of something

### Intermediate outcomes

### Personal growth and development

- Increased self-efficacy
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased confidence
- Increased stress, exhaustion, burnout**

### Subjective wellbeing impacts

- Greater happiness
- Higher life satisfaction
- Better quality of life
- Stronger or clearer sense of purpose
- Reduced anxiety
- Less depression

Personal motivations and values

Social relationships and networks (family, friends)

**DRIVERS and BARRIERS** affected by and leading to **INEQUALITY**

Individual resources (e.g. health, time, skills, confidence)

Wider community, societal and global factors

**Subjective wellbeing** influences and shapes volunteering

# Key influencing factors: Individual circumstances

As as I started, I got a job. So my intention was to be a team leader. And because I got work, I decided, you know, let me let me first will get priorities in the job and see where that takes me. And so I I haven't taken up the role of team leader. Because my work as a consultant means that I travel and I can't, I can't then commit two things in the week I can only commit weekends.

there are some delays with the training because I had to attend face to face training, but I couldn't make the slots. And then in the end I ended up doing the online training... there was lots of delay, in my end 'cause I couldn't do the face to face training

# Key influencing factors: What volunteers do

I think sometimes when I volunteered before for things, sometimes when people know that, I am, you're willing to give your time. Sometimes there's an expectation.

They want you to give more and more time if they know that you're free and available... That's one of the things I like about this programme. It is very flexible. And yeah, you can fit it around work and family.

Um, actual volunteering a lot of the time, you're not doing a lot. Usually the volunteering like we do [in other settings] is hands on and more, um, yeah, more going on. I'm doing the vaccine clinics at the moment so we're busy doing that but, um, with the City of Culture a lot lately is standing about. It might be 3–4 hours, it's not not doing a lot.

# Key influencing factors: Support and management

So probably my biggest sort of like, um, minus is the is the way that the shifts are given out.

I think that they have done well that if there's been a problem, they've tried to address it.

Within City of Culture, people said at the start of December they would investigate the whole matter and report back, two months and absolutely nothing.

# Civic Pride

- Longstanding love of Coventry
- *It's so the main thing is that I just I love Coventry and I know a lot of people don't... Yeah I just love the city I have lived here all my life apart from when I was at university and I just wanted to do what I could to help because I thought that the City of Culture year would be a good way to showcase the city and maybe change people's minds and I really wanted to be part of that. There's also possibly a bit of rebellion in there because my parents are included in the list of people who don't particularly like Coventry... I just wanted to be part of the year somehow and also that I just love Coventry and wanted to be part of showcasing how great it is.*

# Civic Pride

- Existing love of Coventry that has grown through the year
- *I think I've always I've been a 'Coventry kid' all my life. So I've seen changes in Coventry, you know, physically. And I think I suppose I've always, you know, because people always go 'sent to Coventry' and make a laugh about it and and and can put Coventry down quite a bit. And I've always been sort of a put up an argument about that, but I think this is made me even more proud of the city... it's it's made me much more proud, prouder than I'm I've ever been, really, about Coventry. Looking forward to the future, when you know they do the redevelopment. But it's it's been emotional as well, at times you know, because some of the things that we've been involved in they've all been different, you know It's just it's it's to me. It's it's been a a really good thing, yeah*

# Civic Pride

- Re-discovering a love of Coventry
- *When the new cathedral was built, which isn't so new now. I really thought it was awful because I was in my teens and it was very modern and compared to the old cathedral, pretty sort of garish. I thought I go in now if I'm on duty and it's so peaceful and lovely and I look at the windows and I know a bit more about them now and that makes quite a difference.*

# Civic Pride

- Getting to know Coventry for the first-time
  - *I think that well, this is really a good opportunity for me to to learn about this city and as well as the country. So assuming like well, and once I arrived UK, I must just apply for it and this really attracts me the most because I saw like because in this city there's lots of history.*
- *So this was my kind of the goal to meet people and know more about Coventry because I really wanted to get invested in the history of Coventry*



# Other

- Physical health benefits
- A cadre of trained and willing volunteers
  - *Once you catch the volunteering bug... you continue to do it really.*
  - *I like really like City of Culture. I don't know if I can find something like that again like city hosting. Which is quite sad, but I'm thinking maybe like [organisation] has like a lot of opportunities for volunteering. Maybe I'll try that. We'll see how it goes, but definitely I want it to be a part of my life.*

Do our findings reflect *your* experience  
of the City Host programme?

*In what way has it? What have we not captured?*

(all views welcome!)

# Conclusions from the study

Volunteering is likely to have boosted wellbeing for city hosts

Volunteering may have increased city host civic pride

Positive impact through many different routes

- Opportunities to make social connections
- A strong role and group identity

Flexibility mitigated individual circumstances that may have been a barrier

Watch out for:

- Overbooking volunteers reduces 'sense of purpose'
- Perceived fairness of shift distribution

Exposure to culture as an added mechanism of change

The image features a dense field of 3D-rendered question marks. Most are dark grey and recede into the background, creating a sense of depth. In the center, one question mark is highlighted in a bright yellow color, standing out prominently. The text "Any questions?" is overlaid in white, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the yellow question mark.

Any questions?

# Thank you for listening!



- And thank you to everyone who supported and took part in our study
- Time for refreshments and networking!

