

Compendium

Chapter 8: Home produced 'volunteering' services

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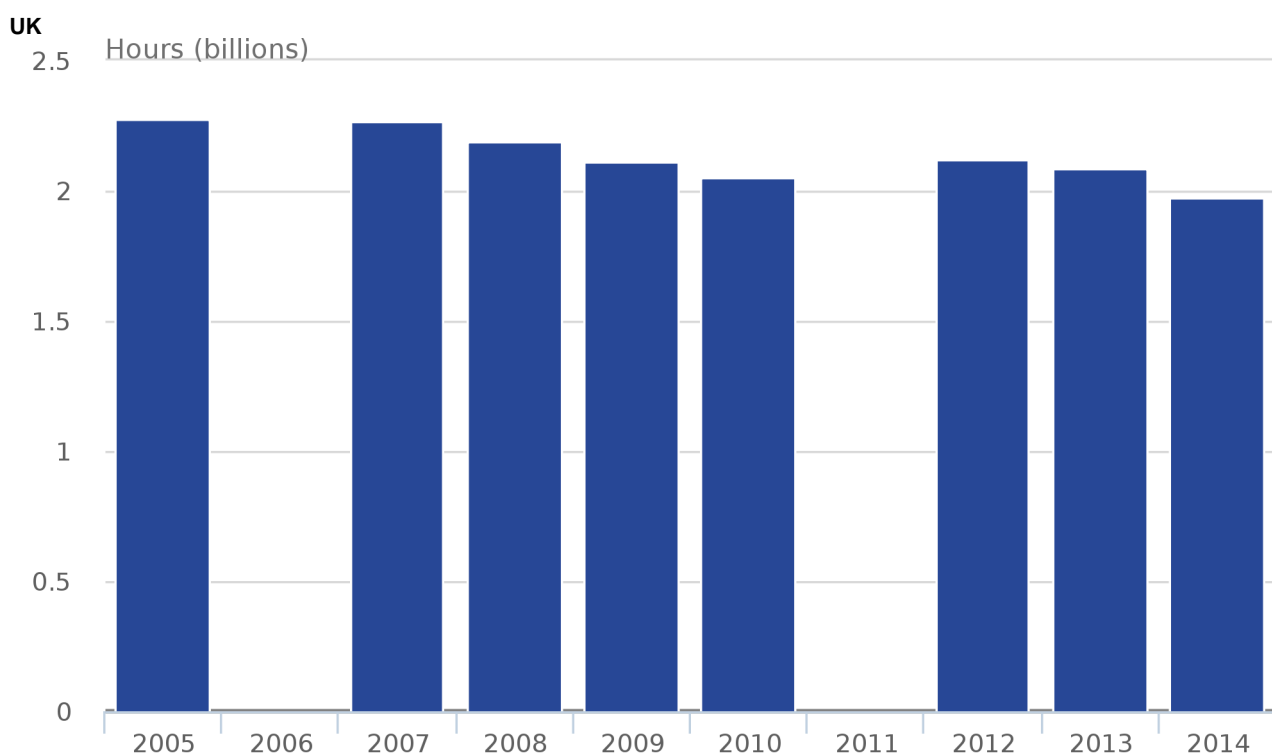
1 . What is voluntary activity?

The potential crossover between volunteering and care – of which informal child and adult care is valued elsewhere within the Household Satellite Account (HHSA) – requires clear definitions of what voluntary activity includes within these measures. Volunteering is defined by the International Labour Organisation (2001) as ‘unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside of the household’. This definition shows that voluntary activity can be classed as formal or informal depending on the nature of the activity. Volunteering activity measured within the HHSA only includes activity that occurs through a formal institution – a group or organisation. Informal volunteering, such as helping friends or family members, is included either in the childcare or adult care projects (separate modules within the HHSA). Excluding informal activity, some of which may not be picked up elsewhere within the HHSA, is likely to underestimate the full value of volunteering in the UK.

2 . Hours of formal volunteering

The number of hours spent volunteering is obtained from the Citizenship Survey for years: 2005, 2007/08, 2008 /09, 2009/10, and 2010/11. The Community Life Survey, the successor to the Citizenship Survey, provides estimates of hours spent volunteering for 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15. To ensure comparability with the rest of the HHSA, financial year information is assumed to be equivalent to calendar year information. For instance, the number of hours of formal volunteering reported in 2007 is equal to 2007/08 financial year information. Those who volunteer at least once a month are characterised as frequent volunteers. This article only estimates the value of frequent volunteering. The exclusion of infrequent volunteering is due to issues with data quality. Data on infrequent hours tends to be less consistent and by just using the frequently volunteered hours, the estimates are likely to be more accurate.

Figure 8.1: Total frequent hours of formal volunteering, billion hours, 2005 to 2014



Notes:

1. 2006 and 2011 data not available

There has been a general downwards trend in the total number of frequent hours volunteered, from 2.28 billion hours to 1.97 billion hours between 2005 and 2014 (see figure 8.1). This is despite population growth of 6.9% over the same period, meaning that the average number of frequent hours volunteered per person has declined by 19.3% over the 10 year period. More recently, between 2013 and 2014 there was a 6.0% fall in the total number of hours volunteered.

3 . Gross value added of volunteering activities

The total number of hours by type of voluntary activity is multiplied by an appropriate wage rate to estimate output of frequent formal volunteering. Currently, we are unable to identify intermediate consumption of the voluntary activity, and therefore, the gross value added (GVA) is equal to output. The methodological section of this report and the [previous release](#) provide a more detailed explanation of the process for estimating output and GVA.

As mentioned previously, the Citizenship Survey and Community Life Survey didn't provide estimates of hours volunteered for 2006 or 2011. To ensure a consistent time series, output was imputed for 2006 and 2011. This was based on the assumption that output per person of the UK was constant between the years where information on hours volunteered is missing.

Figure 8.2: GVA of volunteering and GVA relative to GDP, 2005 to 2014

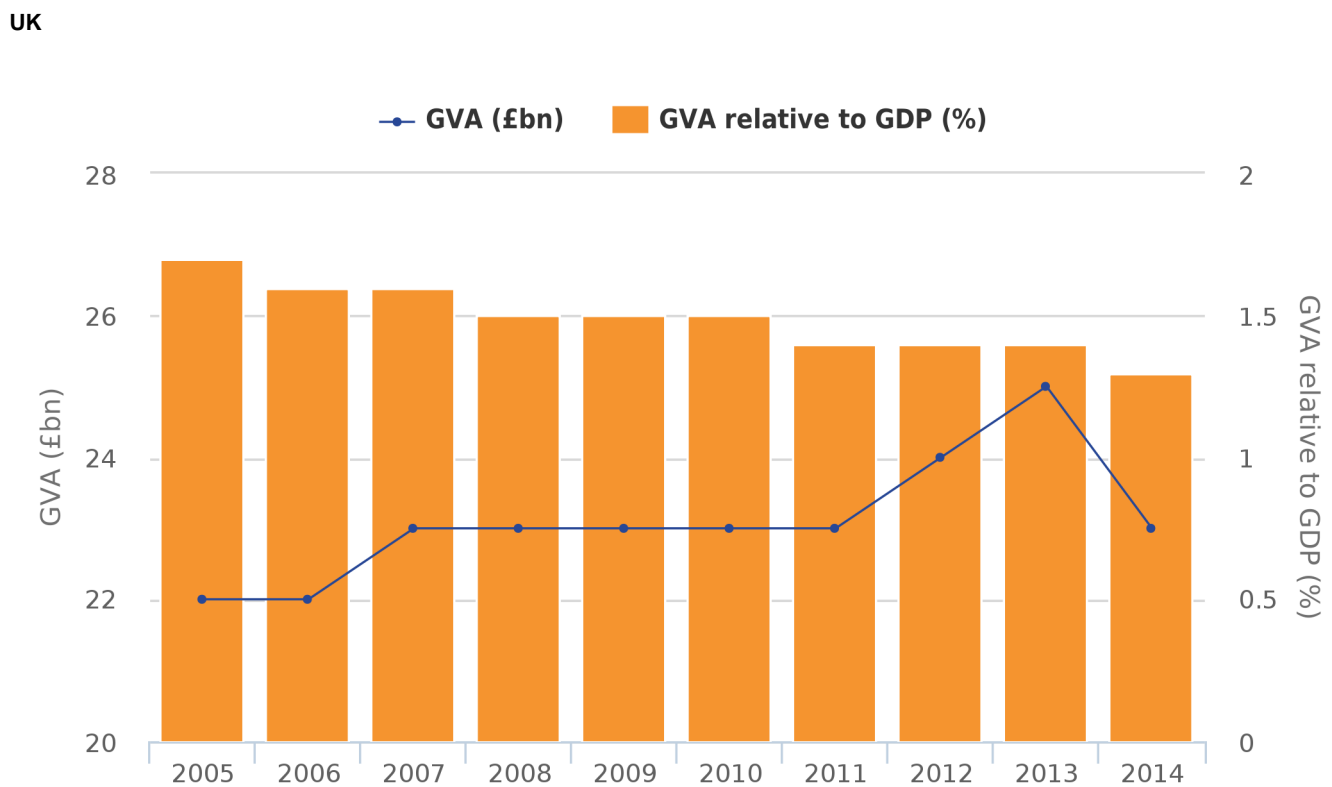


Figure 8.2 shows the value of informal frequent volunteering was £23.3 billion in 2014, £1.2 billion less than it was in 2005. Growth in value added of volunteering remained fairly steady between 2005 and 2014, averaging 0.6% per year, despite a fall of 5.0% between 2013 and 2014. GDP over the same period grew, on average, 3.6% per year over the 10 year period. This means that the value of volunteering activity is equivalent to a reducing share of GDP, declining from 1.7% in 2005, to 1.3% in 2014.