

# IMPACT OF COVID ON VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION IN IRELAND

OMNIPOLL RESEARCH

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# INTRODUCTION

# 1

# BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

- Telephone (CATI) survey conducted via Ipsos MRBI's *Omnipoll* service on behalf of Volunteer Ireland.
- 1,000 interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of individuals aged 15+.
- Fieldwork conducted from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- At analysis stage, the data was weighted in line with the latest CSO estimates of the population.
- The **overall objective** of this research was to measure the impact of COVID-19 on volunteer participation in Ireland.
- Questions focused on **volunteer participation** in Ireland, namely:
  - Before COVID-19
  - During COVID-19
  - After COVID-19
- We have segmented volunteering into three types:
  - Formal volunteering
  - Mutual aid
  - Informal volunteering



# CLASSIFICATION OF VOLUNTEERING

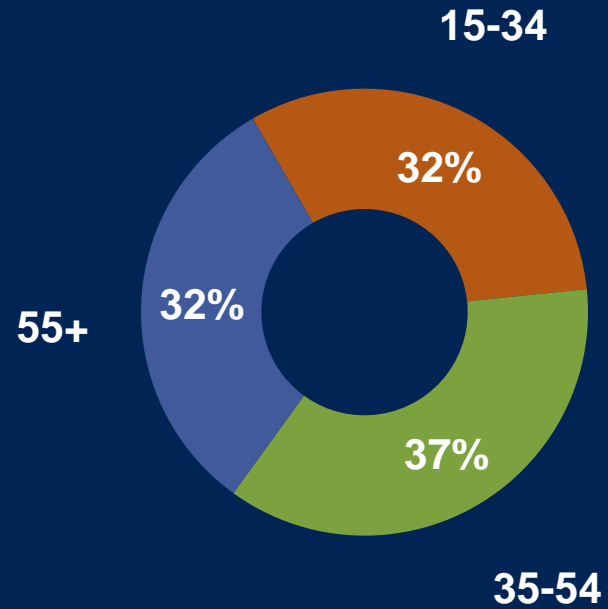
- **Formal volunteering** - *through a charity, formally organised group, club or an organisation* - the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided through formally constituted groups, including registered charities, employers, clubs and societies.
- **Mutual aid** - *through an informal group set up by people in your area to support and help others in your local community* - the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided through non-constituted groups without legal/charitable status. This category refers specifically to groups on Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. set up to support communities or issues in society.
- **Informal volunteering** - *as an individual to help other people outside your family, or to support your local community* - the key distinguishing feature is that the volunteering is provided directly by the individual to the beneficiary/local community/environment and not through any form of group.

# SAMPLE PROFILE

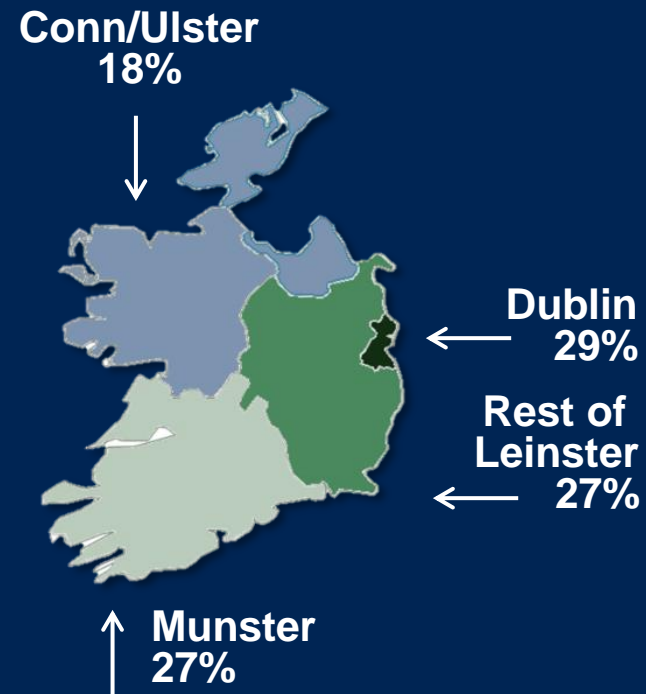
## Gender



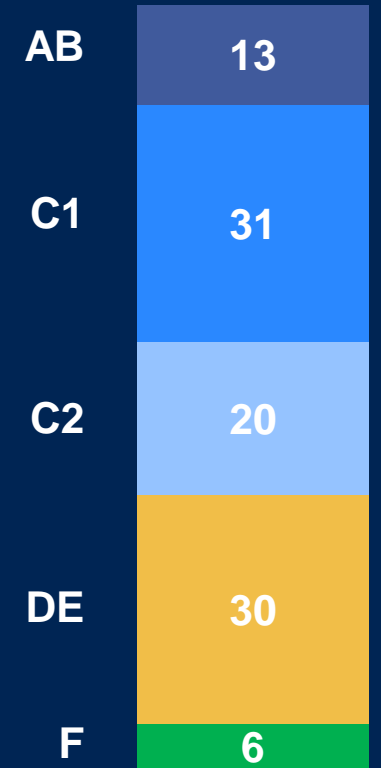
## Age



## Region



## Social Class



# FINDINGS

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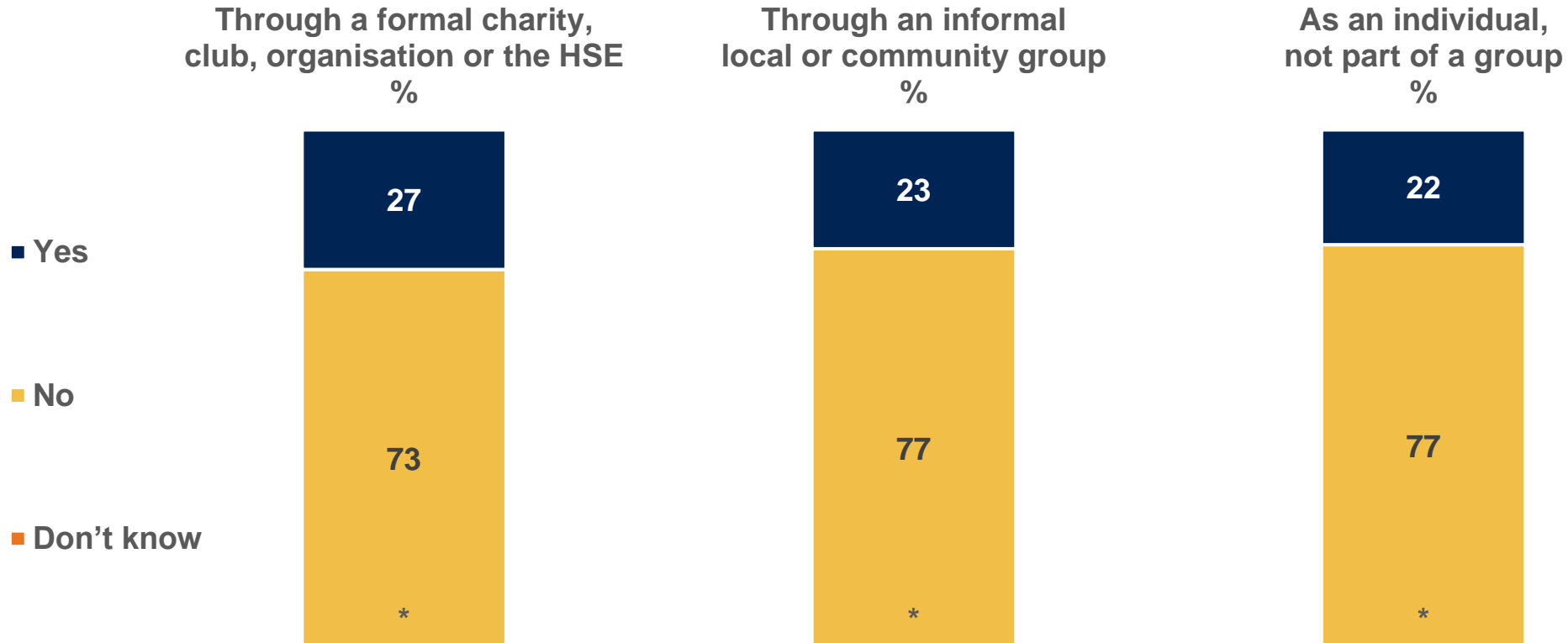
# VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION BEFORE COVID-19





# PROVIDED VOLUNTARY AID BEFORE COVID CRISIS (FROM MARCH 2019 TO FEBRUARY 2020)

One third of respondents volunteered informally/mutually pre-COVID. Participation is higher amongst those aged 65+.

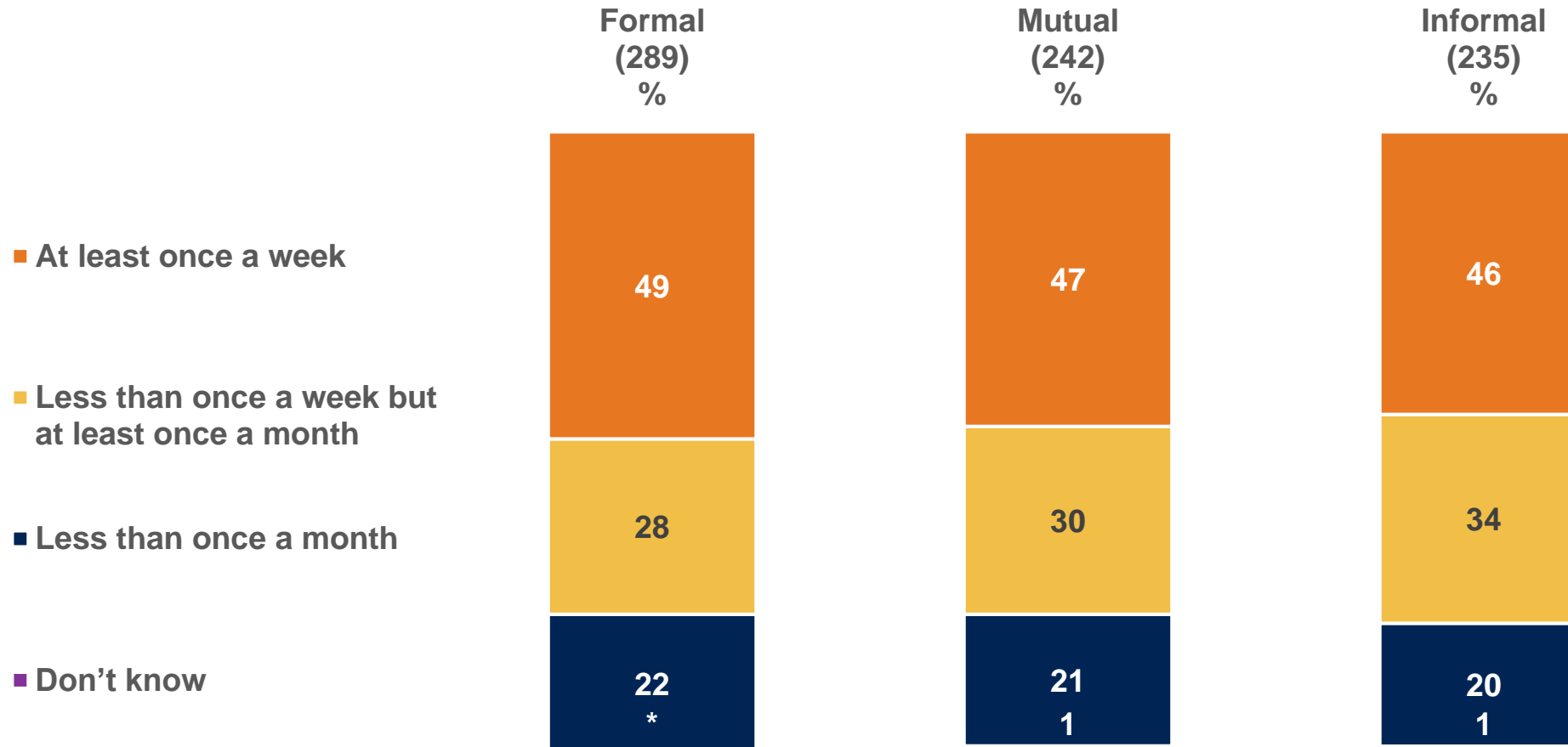


**Any Informal/  
Mutual Aid: 34%**

Q.3 Now, thinking back over the 12 months before the COVID crisis began, so from around March 2019 to February 2020, did you give any voluntary unpaid help in any of these ways?  
Base: All respondents aged 15+: 1,000

# FREQUENCY OF VOLUNTEERING BEFORE COVID CRISIS

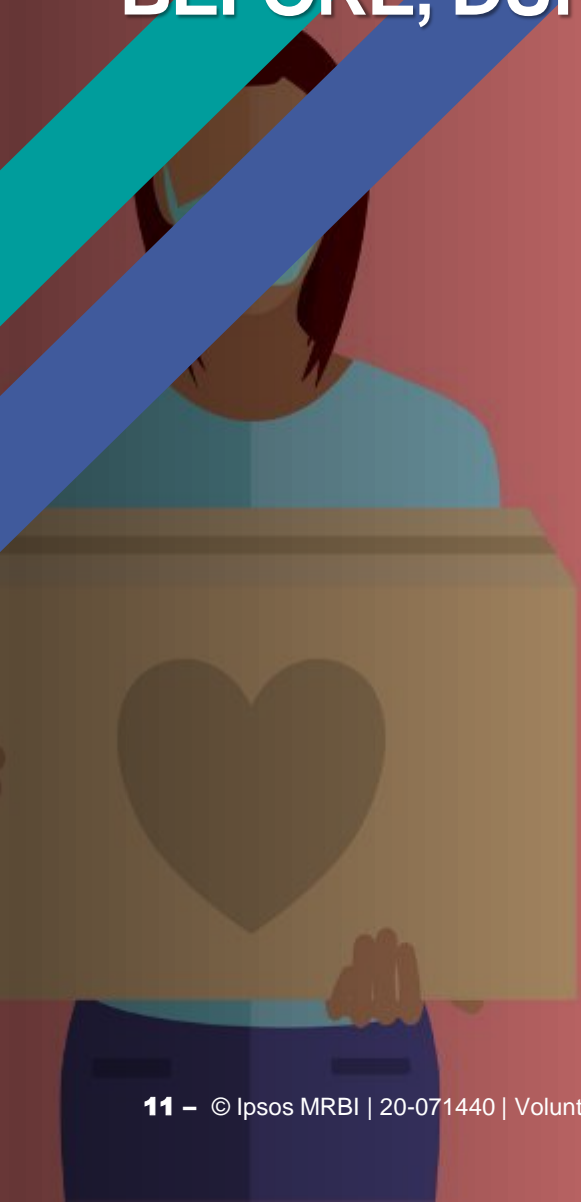
Among volunteers, weekly was the typical frequency of volunteering pre-COVID.



**Any Mutual/Informal Weekly Volunteering: 49%**

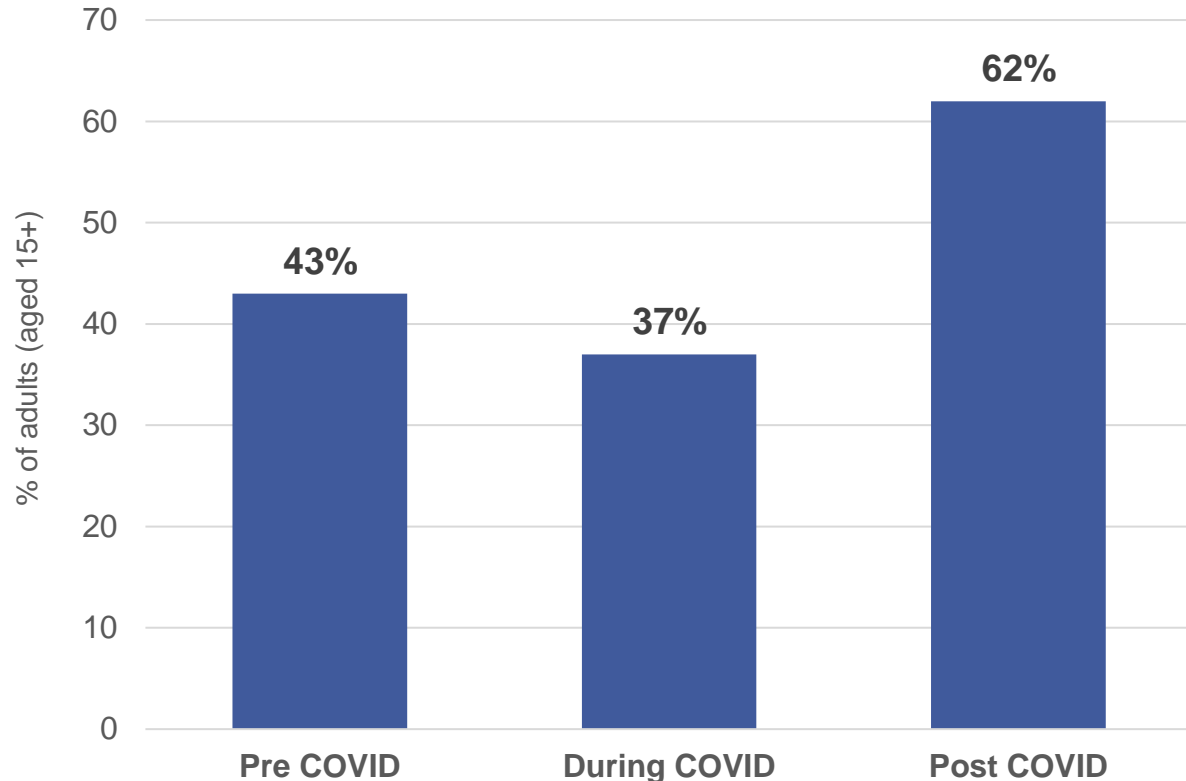
Q.4a Thinking about the voluntary unpaid help you gave before the COVID crisis through a charity, club or organisation, how often did you provide this help?  
 Q.4b (And) thinking about the voluntary unpaid help you gave before the COVID crisis through an informal local or community group, how often did you provide this help?  
 Q.4c (And) thinking about the voluntary unpaid help you gave before the COVID crisis as an individual i.e. not part of a group, how often did you provide this help?  
 Base: All those who volunteered formally, mutually or informally

# TREND IN VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER COVID



# TREND IN TOTAL VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION

(Formal, mutual aid and informal)

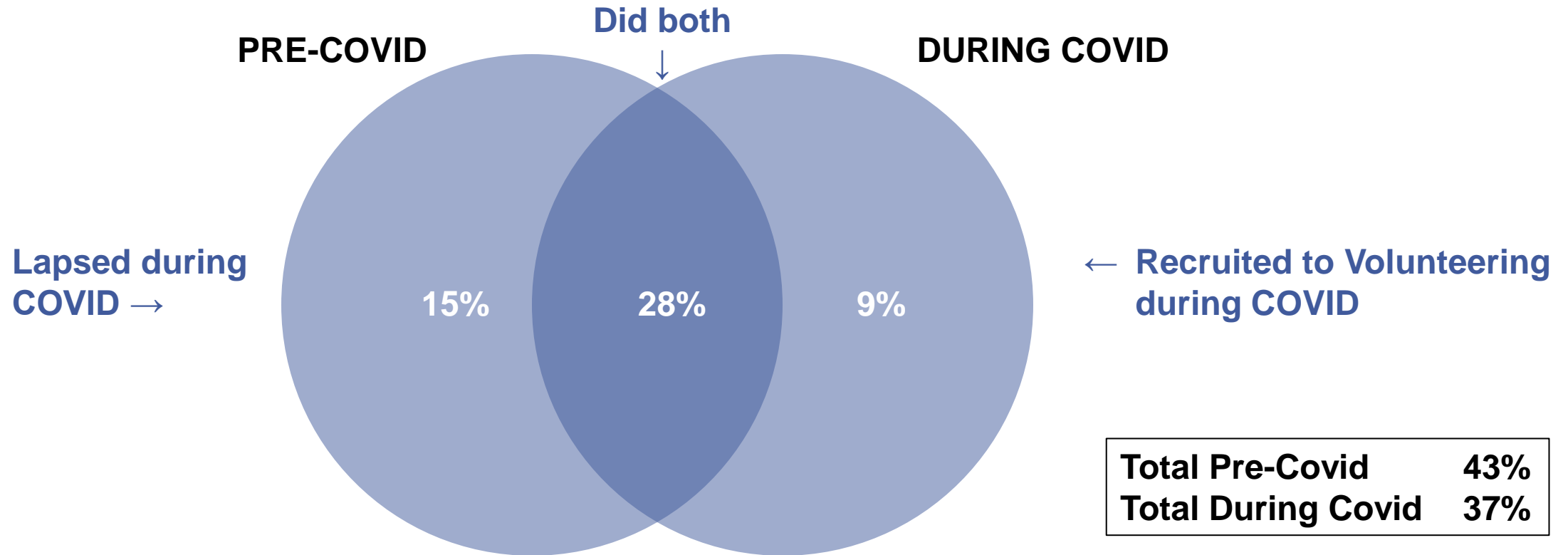


- Volunteer participation pre-COVID stands at 43%.
- Slight decrease in volunteering participation during COVID to 37% (Note: this rate is for seven months compared to pre-COVID being 12 months).
- Expected volunteering participation post-COVID is significantly higher (19 points) than pre-COVID (62% vs. 43%).

Base: All respondents aged 15+ : 1,000

# VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION – PRE VS. DURING COVID

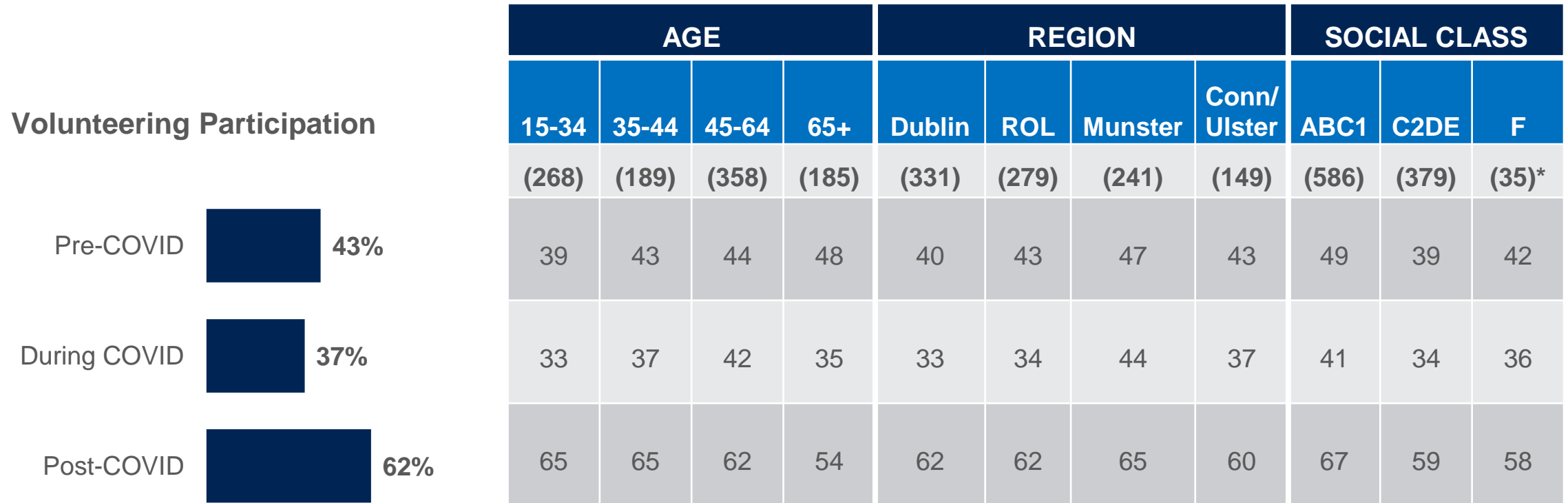
Around 3 in 10 respondents volunteered both pre and during COVID.



Base: All respondents aged 15+ : 1,000

# TREND IN TOTAL VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION X KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Volunteer participation during COVID is higher amongst those aged 45-64 years and ABC1s (upper/middle class). Participation is also significantly higher in Munster (44%).



\*Caution small base size

Q.1 Since the COVID crisis began in March, have you volunteered in any of these ways?

Q.3 Now, thinking back over the 12 months before the COVID crisis began, so from around March 2019 to February 2020, did you give any voluntary unpaid help in any of these ways?

Q.5 Once the COVID crisis is over - that is, restrictions has been lifted and we are no longer in a pandemic – do you plan on giving any voluntary unpaid help in any of these ways?

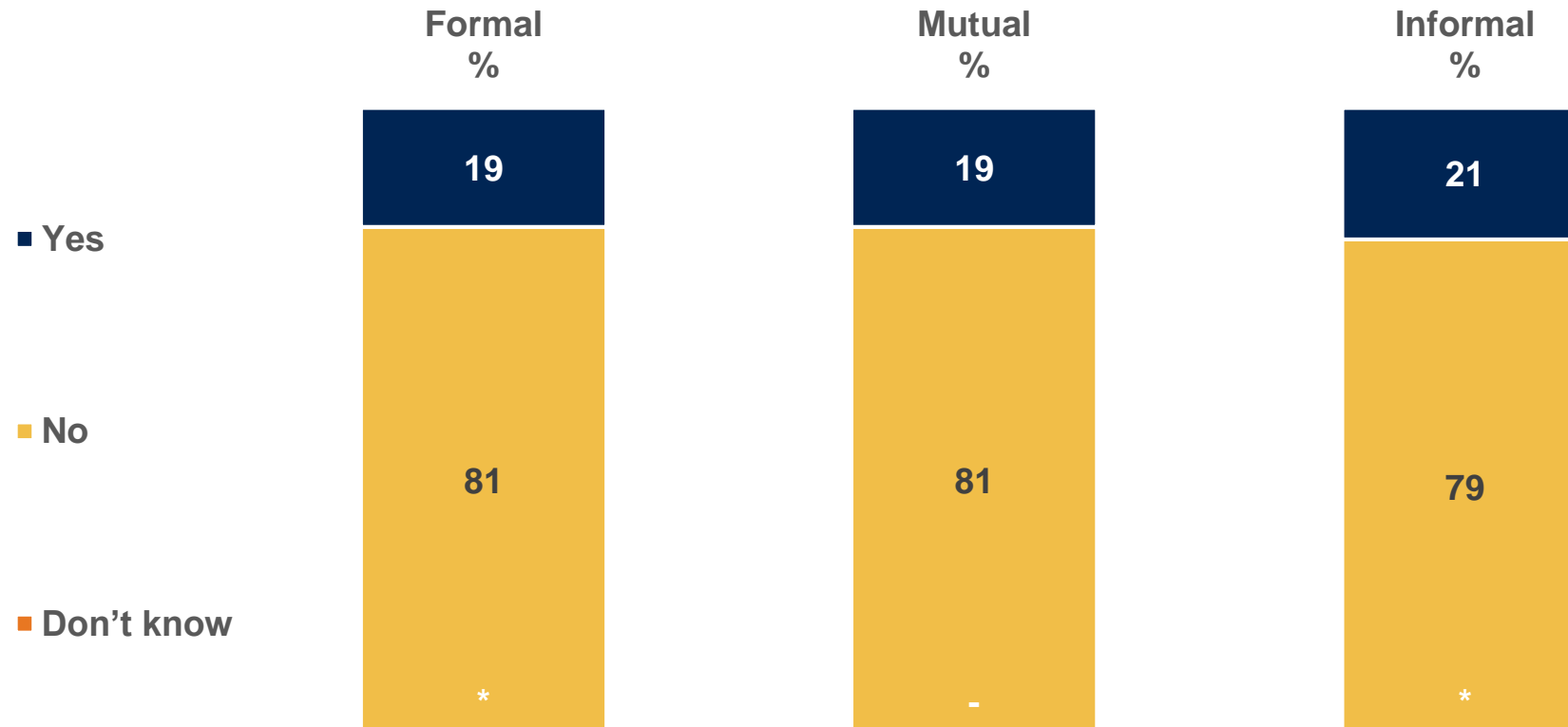
Base: All respondents aged 15+: 1,000

# CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION DURING COVID



# VOLUNTEERED DURING COVID (SINCE MARCH 2020)

Just under a third volunteered informally/mutually during COVID.



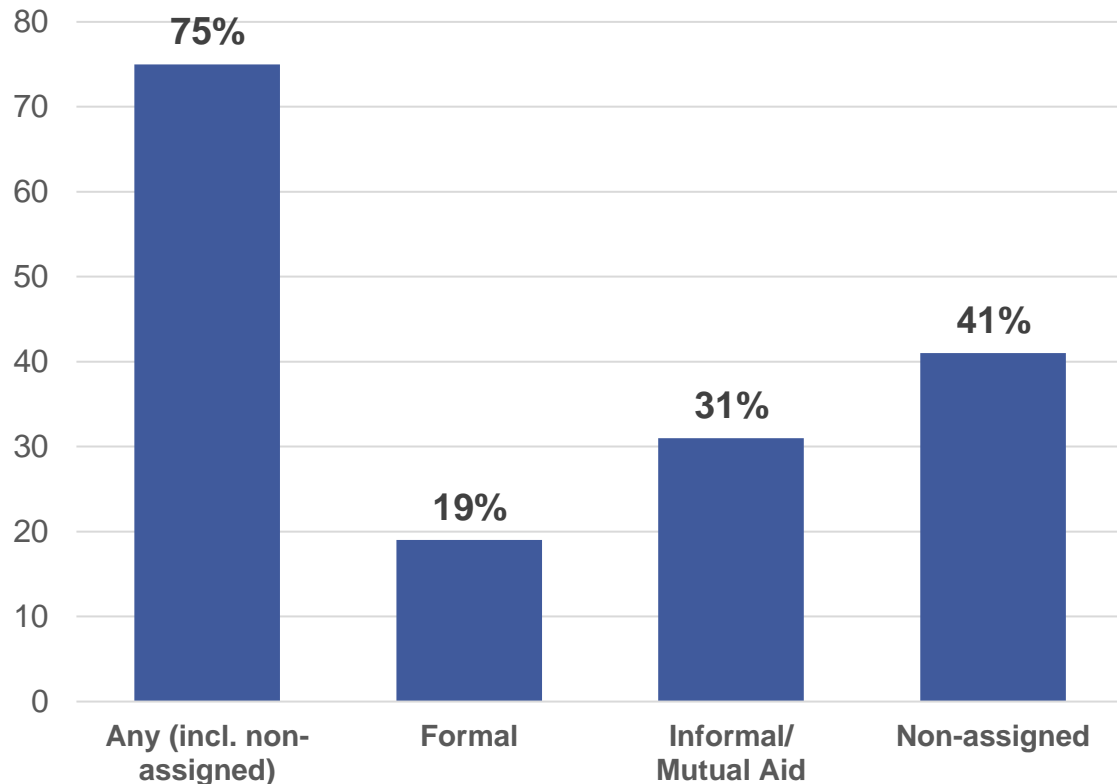
**Any Informal/  
Mutual Aid: 31%**

Q.1 Since the COVID crisis began in March, have you volunteered in any of these ways?  
Base: All respondents aged 15+: 1,000



# VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION DURING COVID - ANY

(Formal, informal/mutual aid – March to September 2020)

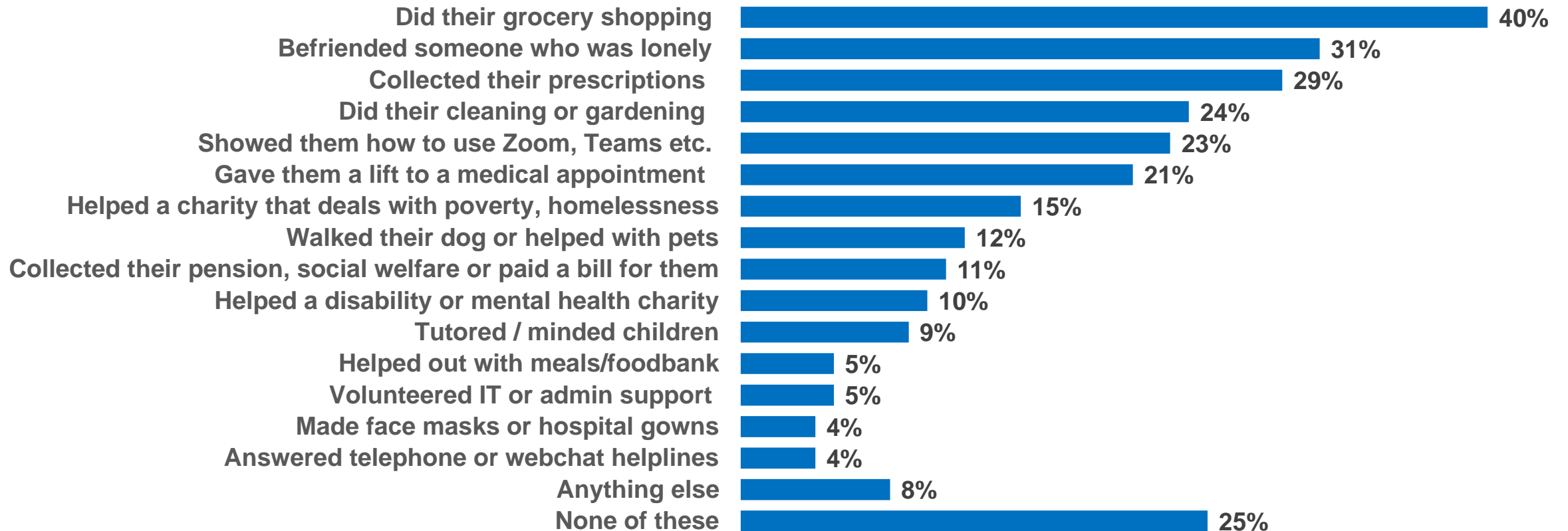


- Three-quarters of respondents engaged in some form of volunteering during COVID.
- ‘Non-assigned’ has the highest level of participation at 41% - these are respondents who did not identify with any of the following categories (e.g. formal, informal volunteering/mutual aid) but undertook one or more volunteering activities.

Base: All respondents aged 15+ : 1,000

# VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID (NON-ASSIGNED)

Doing their grocery shopping (40%), befriending (31%) and collecting prescriptions (29%) were the main ways people helped others during COVID.



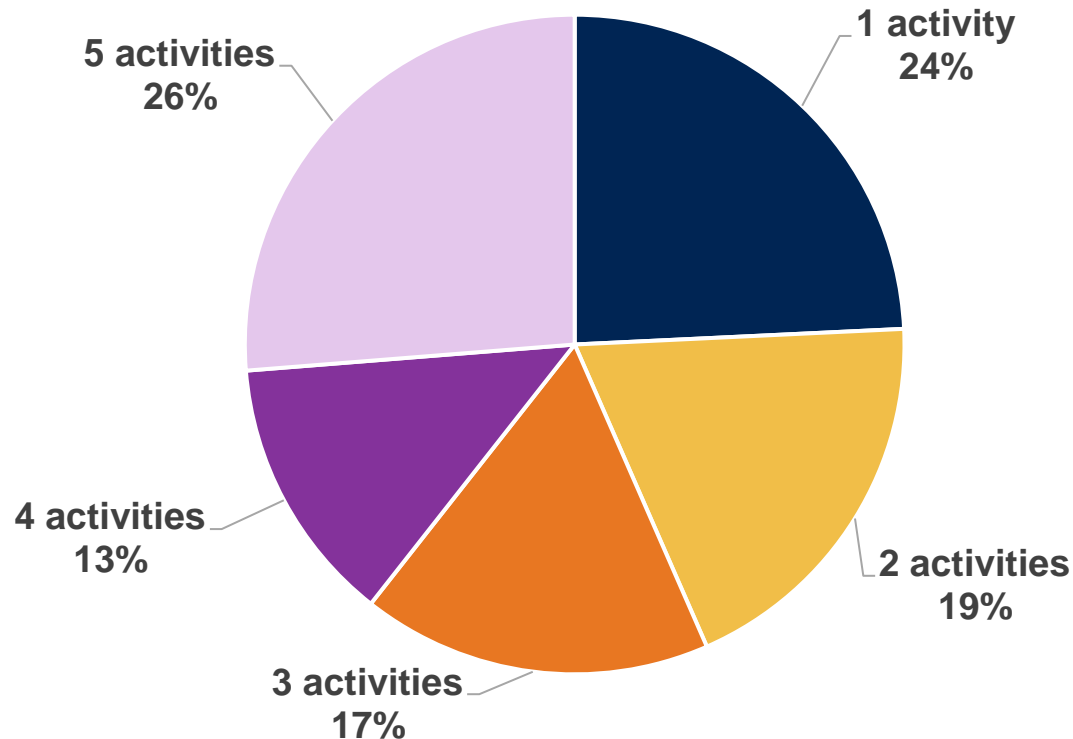
Q.2a And since COVID, have you helped someone outside your family, unpaid, in any of these ways?

Q.2b And since COVID, have you volunteered with any of these ways?

Base: All respondents aged 15+: 1,000

# NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PER VOLUNTEER

Number of activities per volunteer



- One quarter of respondents undertook one activity while a further one in five participated in two activities.
- A significant proportion of volunteers (57%) undertook three or more volunteering activities.

Q.2a And since COVID, have you helped someone outside your family, unpaid, in any of these ways?

Q.2b And since COVID, have you volunteered with any of these ways?

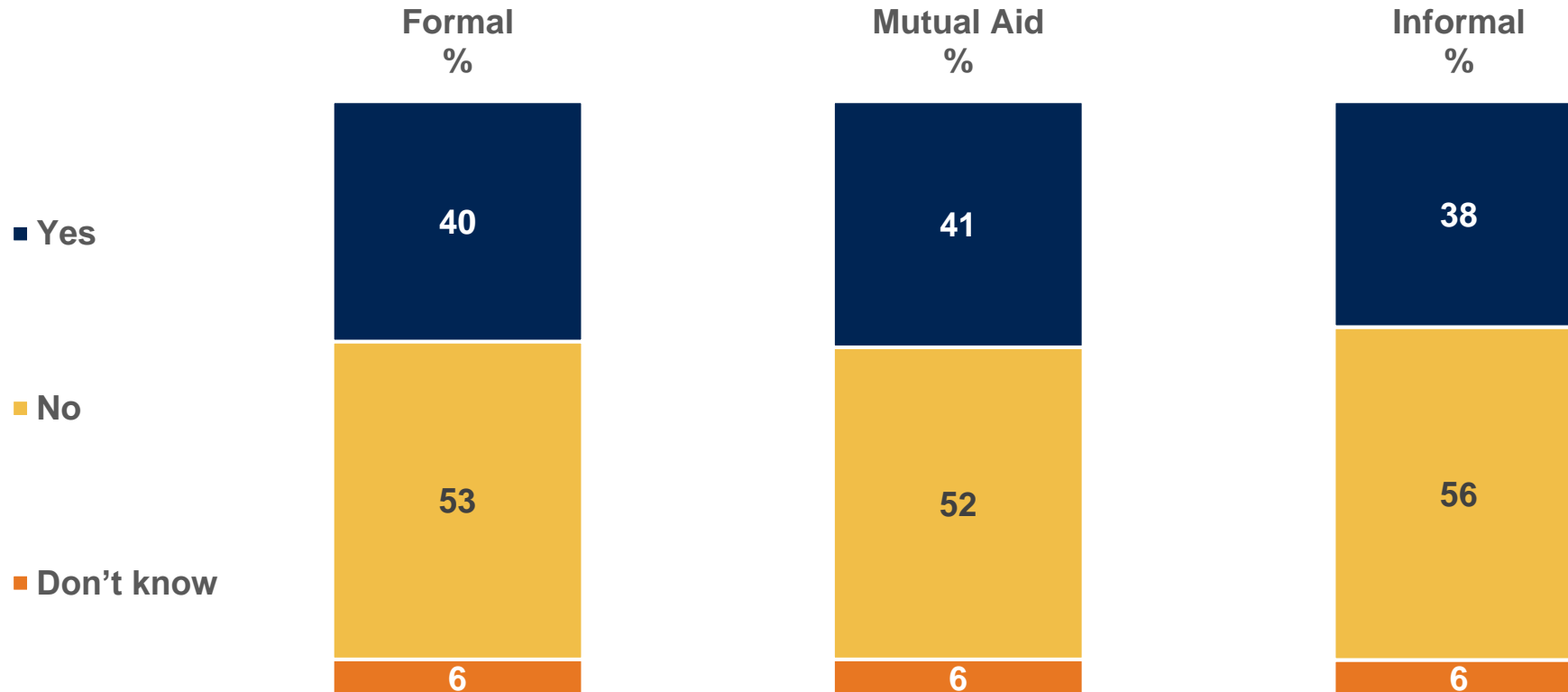
Base: All respondents aged 15+ who volunteered or helped someone outside of the family: 752

# EXPECTED VOLUNTEERING PARTICIPATION AFTER COVID



# INTENTION TO VOLUNTEER POST COVID

Over half plan to volunteer informally/mutually once the COVID crisis is over.

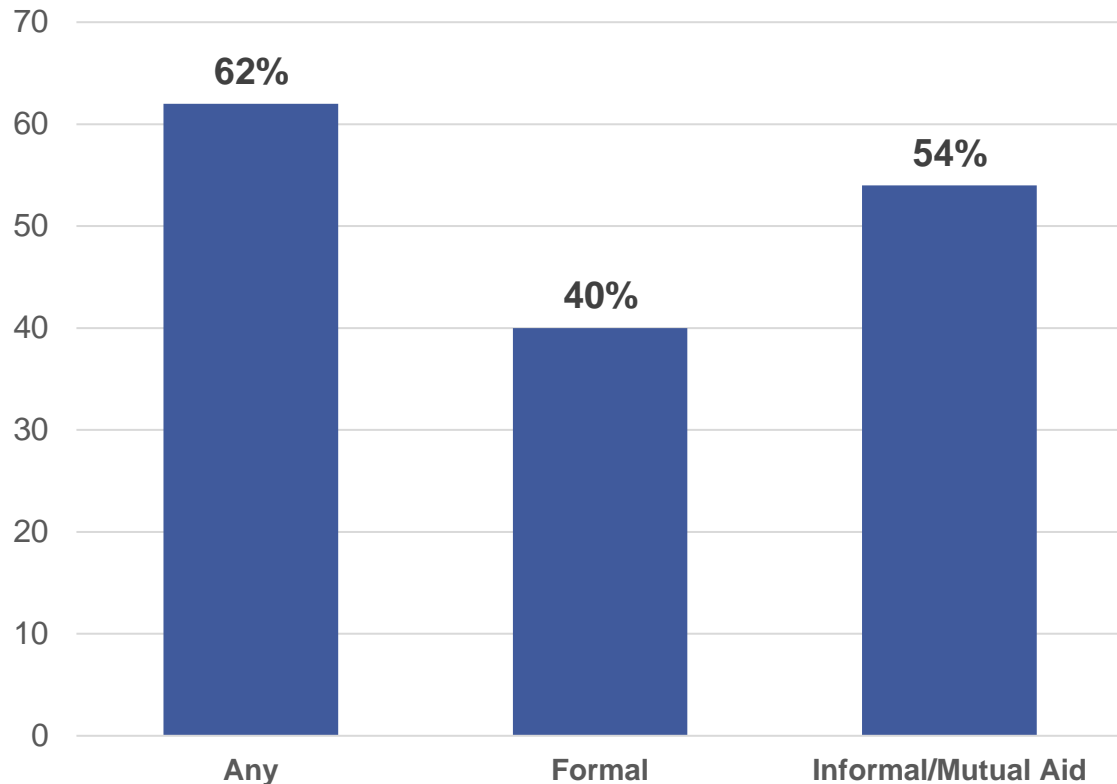


**Any Informal/  
Mutual Aid: 54%**

Q.5 Once the COVID crisis is over - that is, restrictions has been lifted and we are no longer in a pandemic – do you plan on giving any voluntary unpaid help in any of these ways?  
Base: All respondents aged 16+: 1,000

# EXPECTED VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION POST COVID - ANY

(Formal, informal/mutual aid – Post COVID)

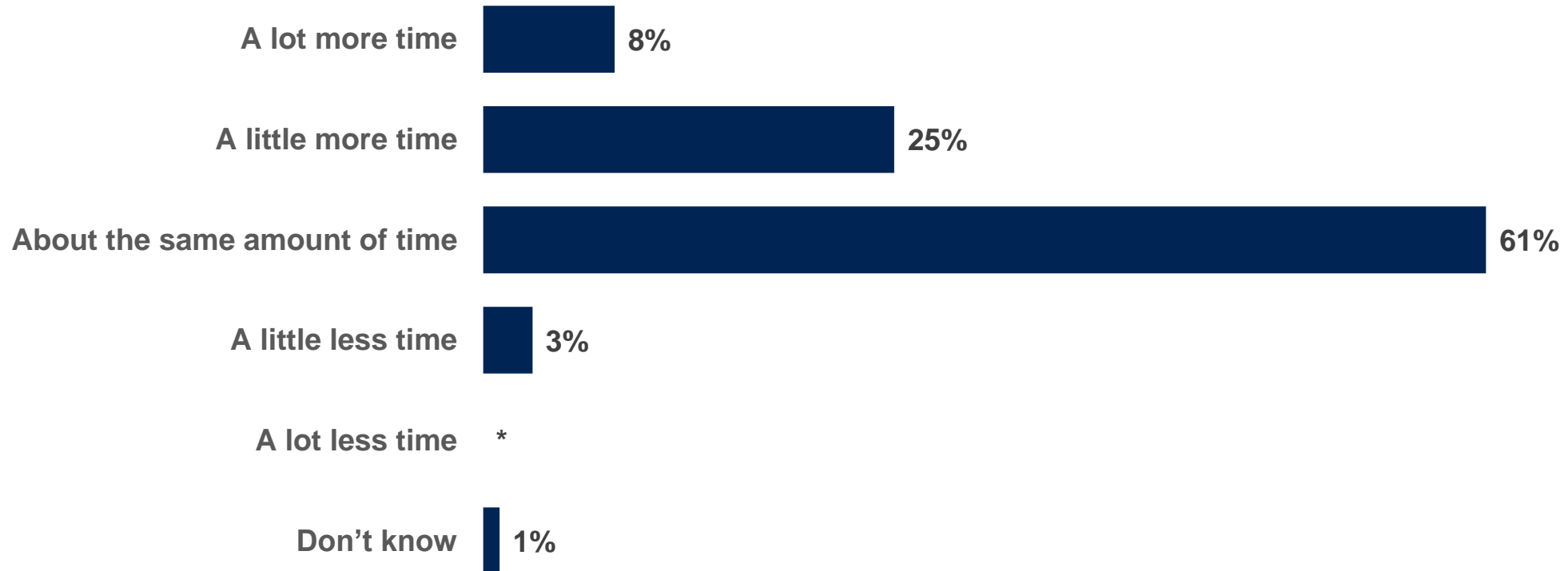


- Over six in ten respondents (62%) expect to volunteer post COVID compared to 43% pre-COVID.
- All forms of expected volunteer participation have seen a significant increase in rates:
  - 40% expect to volunteer formally vs. 27% pre-COVID
  - 54% expect to volunteer informally/mutually vs. 34% pre-COVID.

Q.5 Once the COVID crisis is over, that is, restrictions have been lifted and we are no longer in a pandemic – do you plan to give any voluntary unpaid help in any of these ways?  
Base: All respondents aged 16+: 1,000

# AMOUNT OF TIME INTEND TO SPEND VOLUNTEERING POST-COVID VS. PRE-COVID

The majority of respondents expect to volunteer “about the same amount of time” after the COVID crisis. A third (34%) expect to devote more time whereas just 3% will devote less time.



Q.6 Once the COVID crisis is over, do you plan to spend more time providing voluntary unpaid help, less time or about the same amount of time as you did before the crisis began?  
Base: All those who plan to volunteer once the COVID crisis is over: 638

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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# HIGHLIGHTS

## Before COVID

- **Just over four in ten respondents (43%) volunteered pre-COVID** (from March 2019 to February 2020).
- Among volunteers, weekly was the typical frequency of volunteering.

## During COVID

- Volunteer participation declined by six points to 37% during COVID (since March 2020).
- **Overall, three-quarters of respondents (75%) engaged in some form of volunteering (incl. non-assigned 41%) during the crisis.**
- **Grocery shopping (40%), befriending someone who was lonely (31%) and collecting prescriptions (29%)** were the main ways in which people helped others during COVID.

## After COVID

- **Over six in ten respondents (62%) expect to volunteer post-COVID** which is a **nineteen-point increase** on the measure obtained pre-COVID (62% vs. 43%).
- All forms of **expected volunteer participation have increased:**
  - 40% expect to volunteer formally vs. 27% pre-COVID
  - 54% expect to volunteer informally/mutually vs. 34% pre-COVID.
- **COVID is expected to have a greater impact on the number of people volunteering** than the amount of time they devote to volunteering once the crisis is over.

**THANK  
YOU**