

Public engagement during a pandemic

generation
scotland 

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What is Generation Scotland?

- Family cohort study
- Genetic and environmental influences on physical and mental health 24,000 volunteers in 7,000 families
- Recruited in 2006-2011
- Adults (18+) only up to now



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Next Generation Scotland

- Received Wellcome funding to double cohort size from 2019-2024
- Extend recruitment to **age 12 and up**
- Online questionnaires
- Postal samples for **genetics** and **biomarkers**
- Use linked health and administrative data to track **health and wellbeing** from **birth to death**
- Funding started in November 2019



Pandemic



- Adjustment to remote working
- Shift to focus on Covid-19 research
- Team expansion
- Increased public and participant engagement



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The CovidLife Projects

covidlife

- Study of UK **adults**
- 3 waves
- **9,022** volunteers in all three waves

teen
covidlife

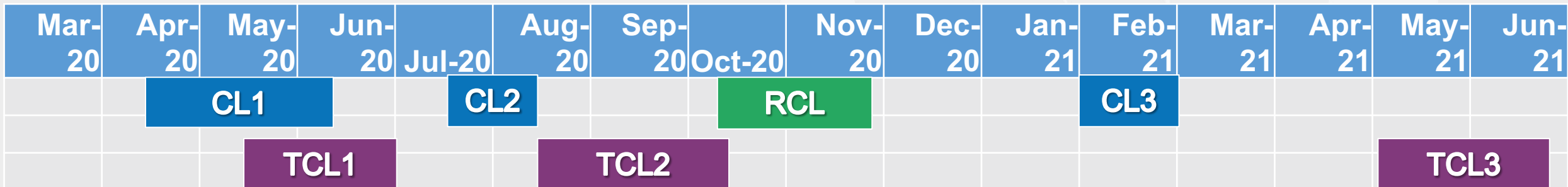
- Age **12 - 17**
- 3 waves
- **7,420** Scottish participants in total

rural
covidlife

- **3,080** volunteers from rural Scotland
- Designed **with** rural communities

Lockdown 1

Lockdown 2





RuralCovidLife

- Consultation with those living and working in **rural** communities with **expertise** in tourism, business & mental health
- PPI group formed and set up **remotely**
- At launch PPI members were **crucial** in promoting the survey within their communities
- Co-authors on paper – included all the way to publication



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OurGS



Funding from Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF), awarded to Dr Rebecca Dawson

Aim: to embody the diverse lifestyles and communities represented by GS volunteers from both urban and rural walks of life across Scotland.

Act as a springboard for online discussions about health data

OurGS

Invitations sent to 300 volunteers, 20 people randomly selected from each region of Scotland who agreed to be contacted regarding PE opportunities

Photographs taken on location to accommodate for COVID restrictions

Interviews conducted online over zoom

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Our Generation Scotland



Are we asking the questions that matter most to our volunteers? Read what they had to say here.





“

With the advances in medicine people are living longer. What health issues are going to face them?

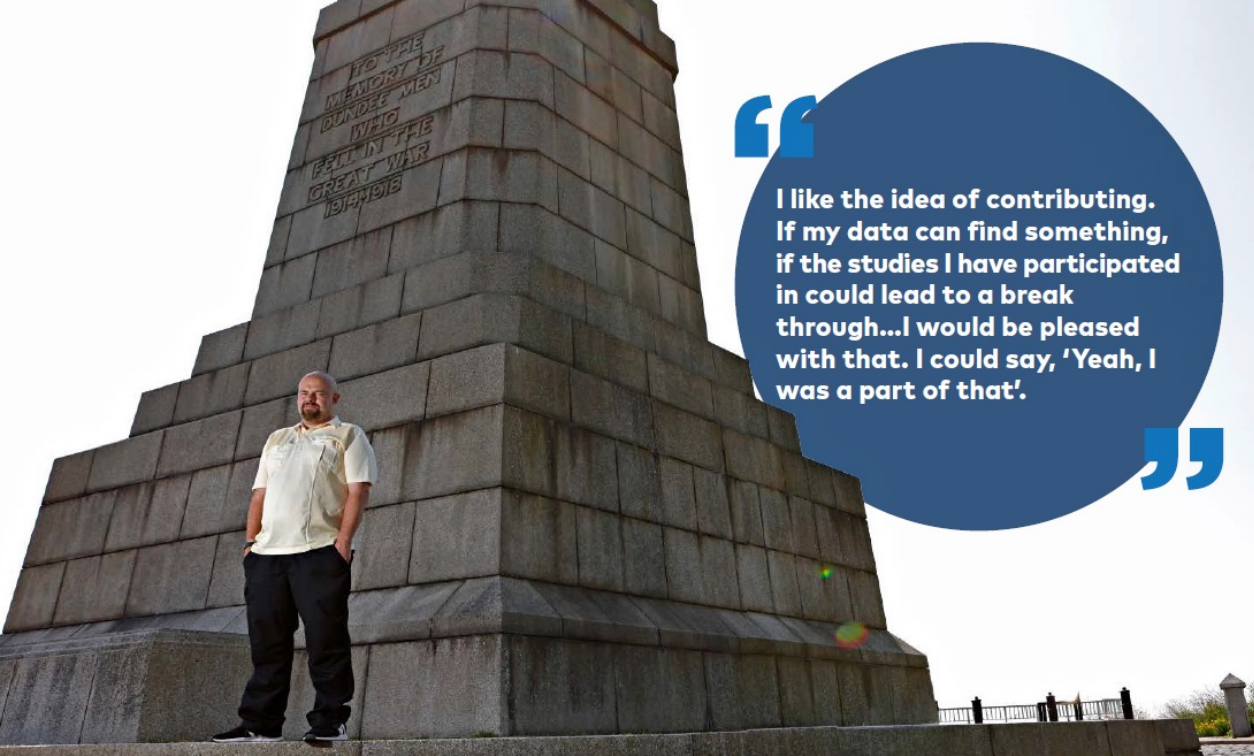
”



“

I've now got three sons, so if Generation Scotland can identify something, or see any trends in me and my past history, then hopefully it would help my sons and potential grandchildren in the future.

”



I like the idea of contributing. If my data can find something, if the studies I have participated in could lead to a break through...I would be pleased with that. I could say, 'Yeah, I was a part of that'.



There's also been a lot of suicides of young boys over the last year. Mental health and suicides in young 17-35's is where things have to be targeted.



“

Stroke is one of them, but I think just general health risks we see in Scotland. Are there biomarkers which explain them or is it when you actually look at them they're influenced by the environment?

”

“

Things that are going to affect my parents I'm particularly concerned about. Dementia, that kind of thing. People I love are starting to get to an age where these things are potential issues.

”





“

Just to pay it forward to the next generation. So whatever we can collect from my mum and dad's generation and then my generation, and going forward... Hopefully there will be continuity of people contributing.

”



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“

It is quite interesting because it does make you pause and think about where you are when you're doing the questionnaires. When you have a busy job and you have a family you don't often pause and go actually, 'How do I feel?' or, 'How is that affecting me?'

”



<https://www.ed.ac.uk/generation-scotland/volunteer/our-gs>

Or google 'Generation Scotland our GS' 2nd hit



Generation Scotland

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What research that we do matters most to you?

Mental Health

75%

Chronic Pain

10%

Heart Disease

5%

Other (comments)

10%

20 votes · Final results

11:58 AM · Nov 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

 View Tweet activity





What went well?

- We engaged with volunteers across rural and urban communities
- They enjoyed it!
- Demonstrated that PE can continue throughout COVID restrictions safely
- Evidence that enthusiasm for PE remains high despite the pandemic
- We did increase our social media following and volunteers got involved in online discussions



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Opportunities for learning

- Not many pictures of families
- Don't under estimate travel costs
- Logistically challenging
- Unused resources



Thank you for listening!



PI/Co-I's: David Porteous, Ian Deary, Caroline Hayward,
Andrew McIntosh, Riccardo Marioni, Cathie Sudlow

Team:

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Chloe Fawns-Ritchie
Cliff Nangle
Rebecca Dawson
Rachel Edwards
Drew Altshul
Stephanie Sinclair
Alison Forbes
Clare Dolan
Christie Levein
Charlotte Huggins
Anna Stevenson
Daniel McCartney
Matthew Iveson

Partners:

SHINE
SHARE
VIKING II
Wellcome Covid-19 Questionnaire
CLOSER
NHS Scotland
Children of the 90's

Funders:

MRC
HDRUK
Wellcome
UKRI
CSO
ISSF