



nfpSynergy

helping non-profits thrive

Who volunteers?

Volunteering trends: 2000-2007

A briefing from nfpSynergy
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Methodology, research limitations and statistical significance

Methodology

- This analysis comprises several waves of research of the Charity Awareness Monitor which surveys the general public by telephone.
- Each wave of research sampled 1,000 respondents age 16+, in Britain, representative in terms of age, gender, social grade and region
- The analysis combines three waves conducted in a year into produce a sample of 3,000 respondents.
- Fieldwork was carried out on behalf of nfpSynergy by TNS

Research limitations

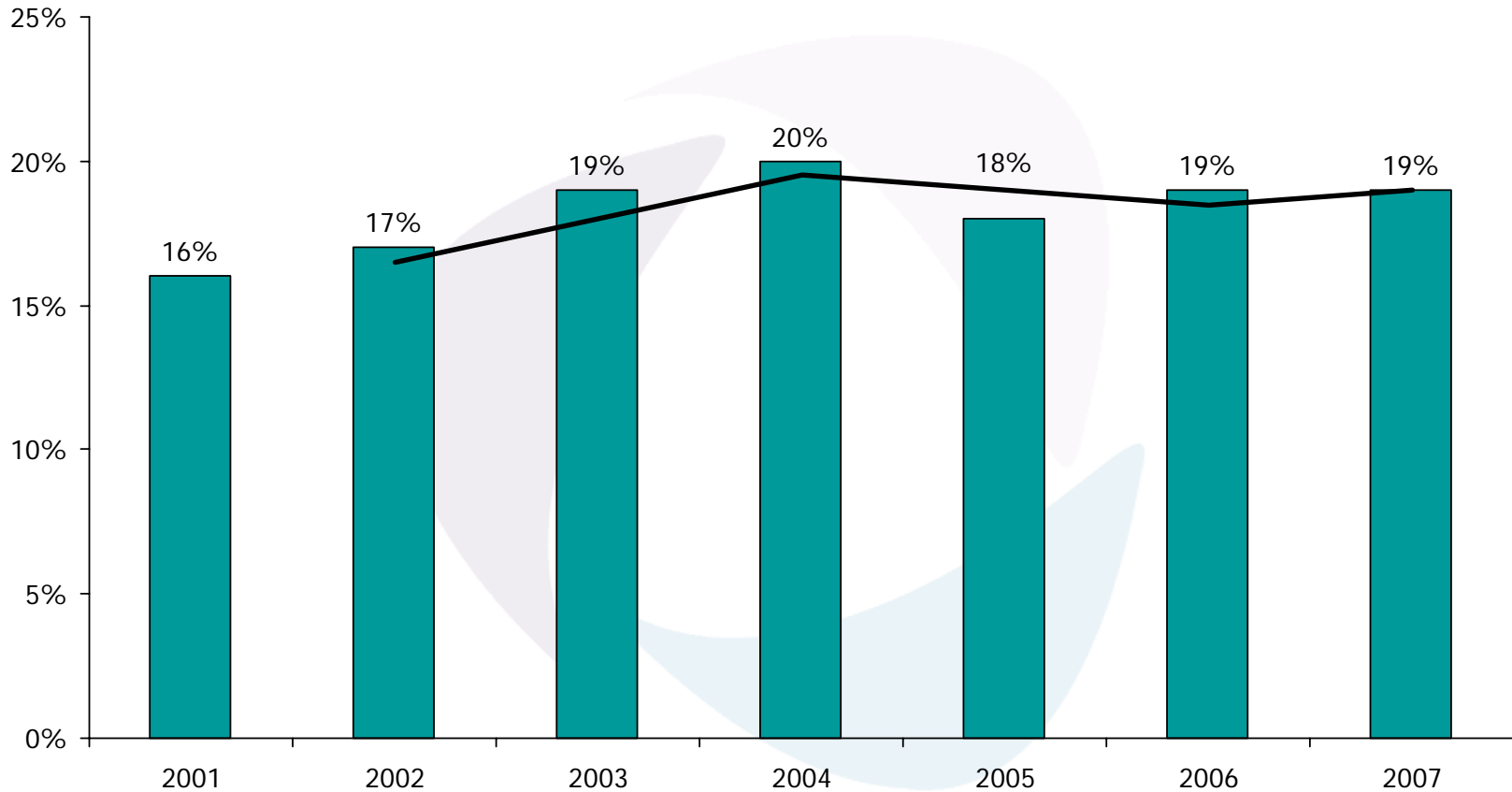
- The results are based people's own perceptions of whether they have volunteered. This carries with it the twin biases of the frailty of people's memory and the 'social desirability bias' in asking about issues, like volunteering, which people may perceive they should have done – even if they haven't. Our research has used consistent methodology over time and so any biases are likely to be consistent as well

Statistical significance

- Each year of data is based on at least 3000 interviews (in three or more separate waves). We can be 95% confident that any changes greater than 3% are significant.

Chart 1: Levels of volunteering 2000-2007

"Have you given time as a volunteer in the last three months, to a charity or other organisation, or in your local community?" Yes

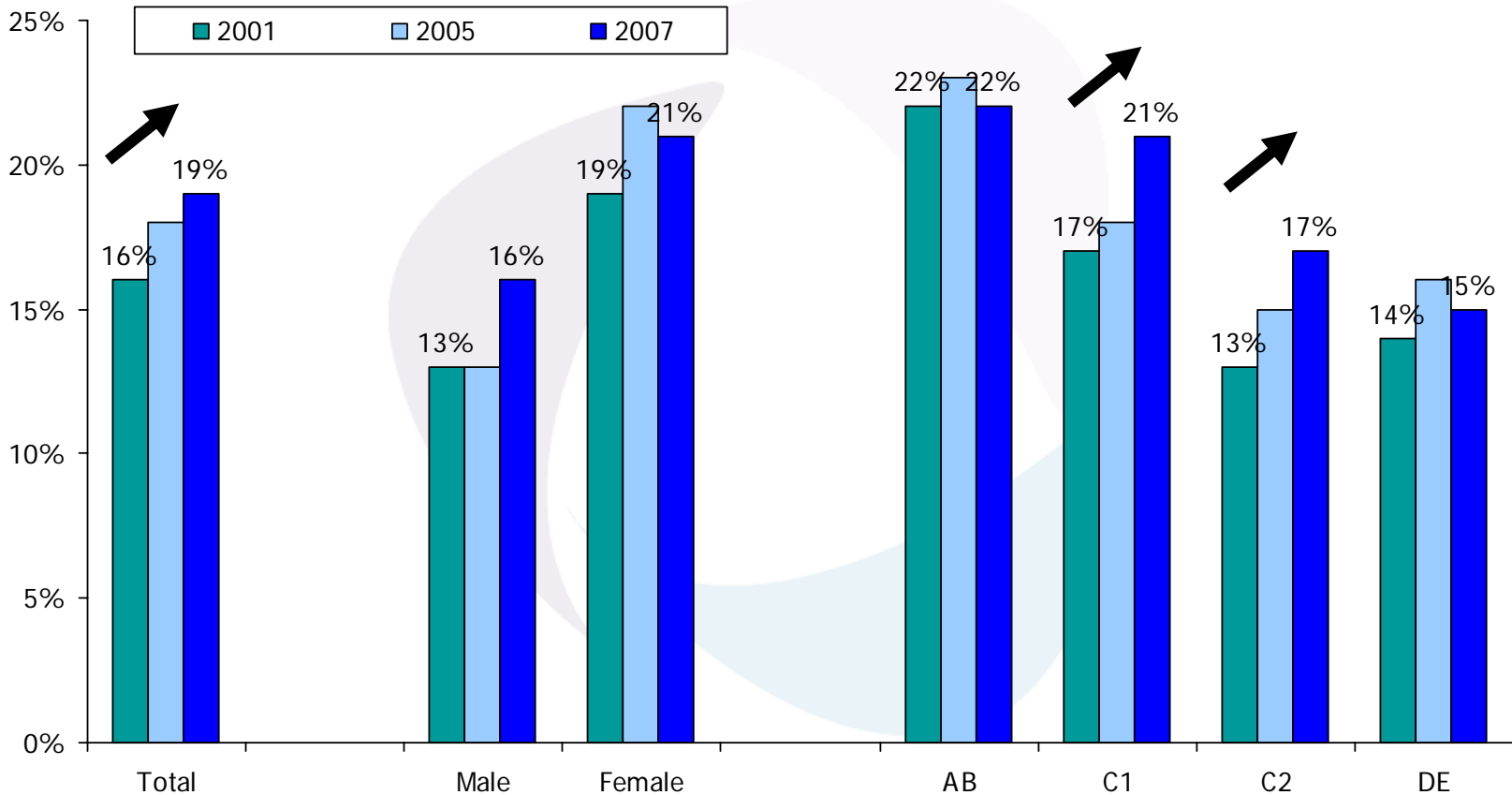


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 2: Volunteering by gender and social grade

"Have you given time as a volunteer in the last three months, to a charity or other organisation, or in your local community?" Yes

By gender and social grade

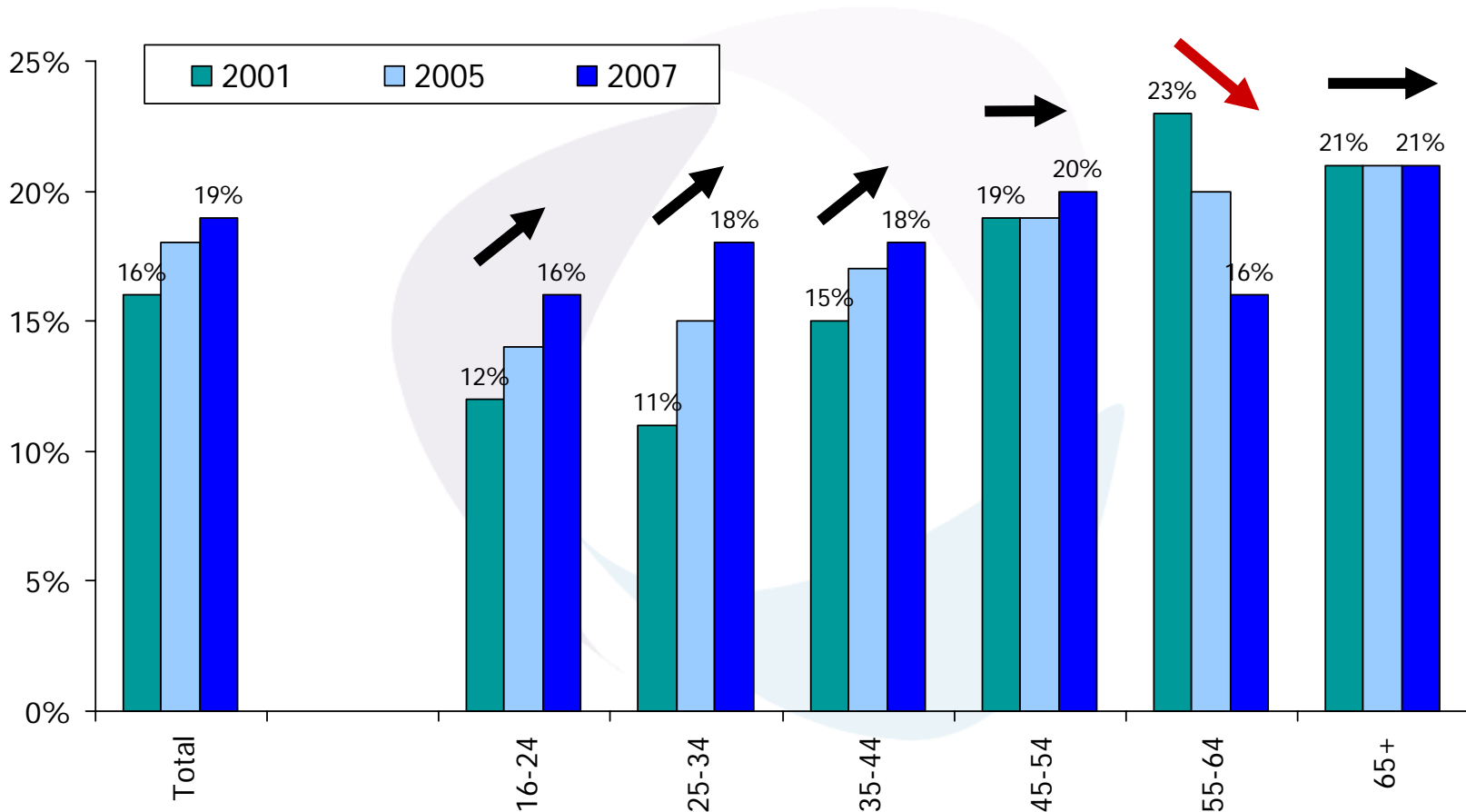


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 3: Volunteering by age

"Have you given time as a volunteer in the last three months, to a charity or other organisation, or in your local community?" Yes

By age



Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

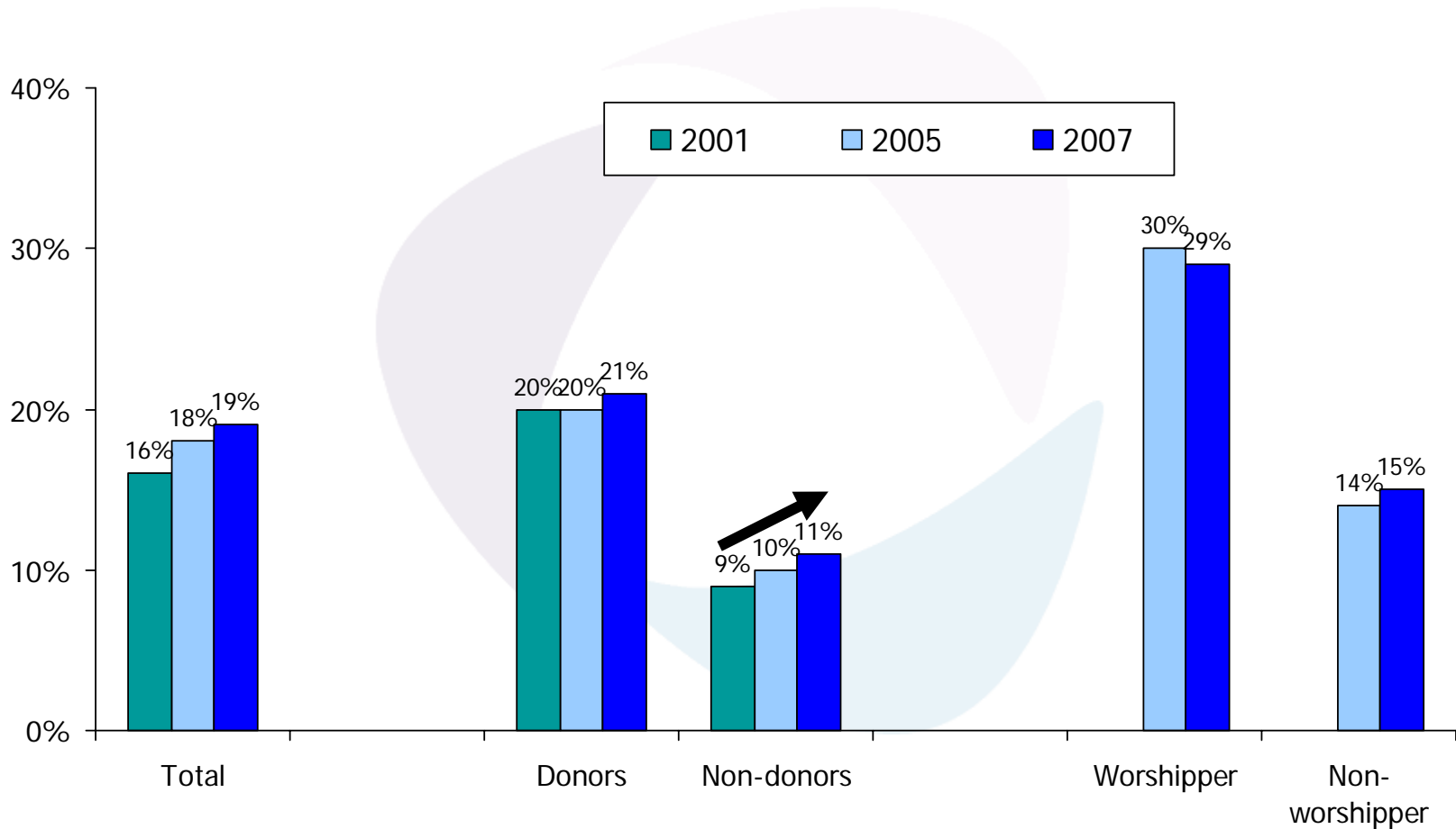
Demographic shifts in volunteering

- Over the past six years volunteering levels increased from 2001 to 2003 (from 16% in 2001 to 20% in 2004) and then have hovered around the 19% level since then – with the peak at 20% in 2004 (chart 1)
- This small increase overall however masks some much more pronounced increases and decreases in volunteering across different demographic groups:
 - Women are still more likely to volunteer than men (16% vs. 21%) and there has been little change in this gap since 2001
 - Among different social grades, ABs are still the most likely to volunteer, though other social grades have begun to catch them up – with CDEs having shown greater increases in volunteering from 2001 to 2007 than ABs (Chart 2)
 - Volunteering has increased among 16-44s and levels have remained flat among 45-54s and 65+s. Notably 45-54s is the only age group among which volunteering has shown an overall decrease. Consequently, the clear linear correlation age apparent in 2001 has since gradually flattened (Chart 3)

Chart 4: Volunteering by donors and worshippers

"Have you given time as a volunteer in the last three months, to a charity or other organisation, or in your local community?" Yes

By donors and worshippers



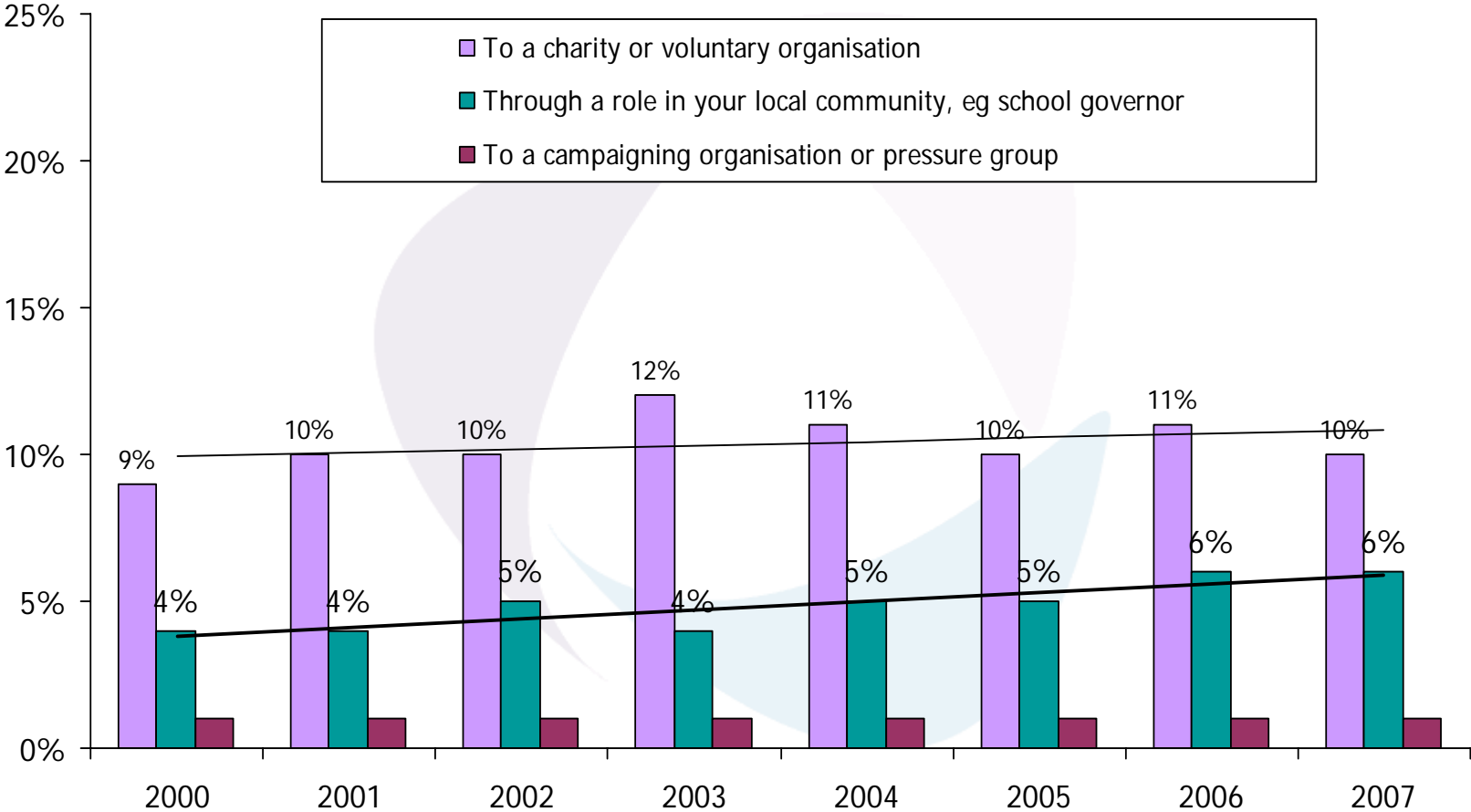
Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Other patterns in volunteering

- While it is likely that volunteers may be at different life stages to those who just donate money, in terms of time pressures and disposable income. It should be noted, however, that volunteering does not appear to be something people do instead of giving money – charity donors are much more likely to volunteer than non-donors (Chart 4).
- Other groups more likely to volunteer are those who define themselves as regular worshippers, who are almost twice as likely to volunteer than non-worshippers (Chart 4).

Chart 5: Ways in which people volunteer

"Was this...?"

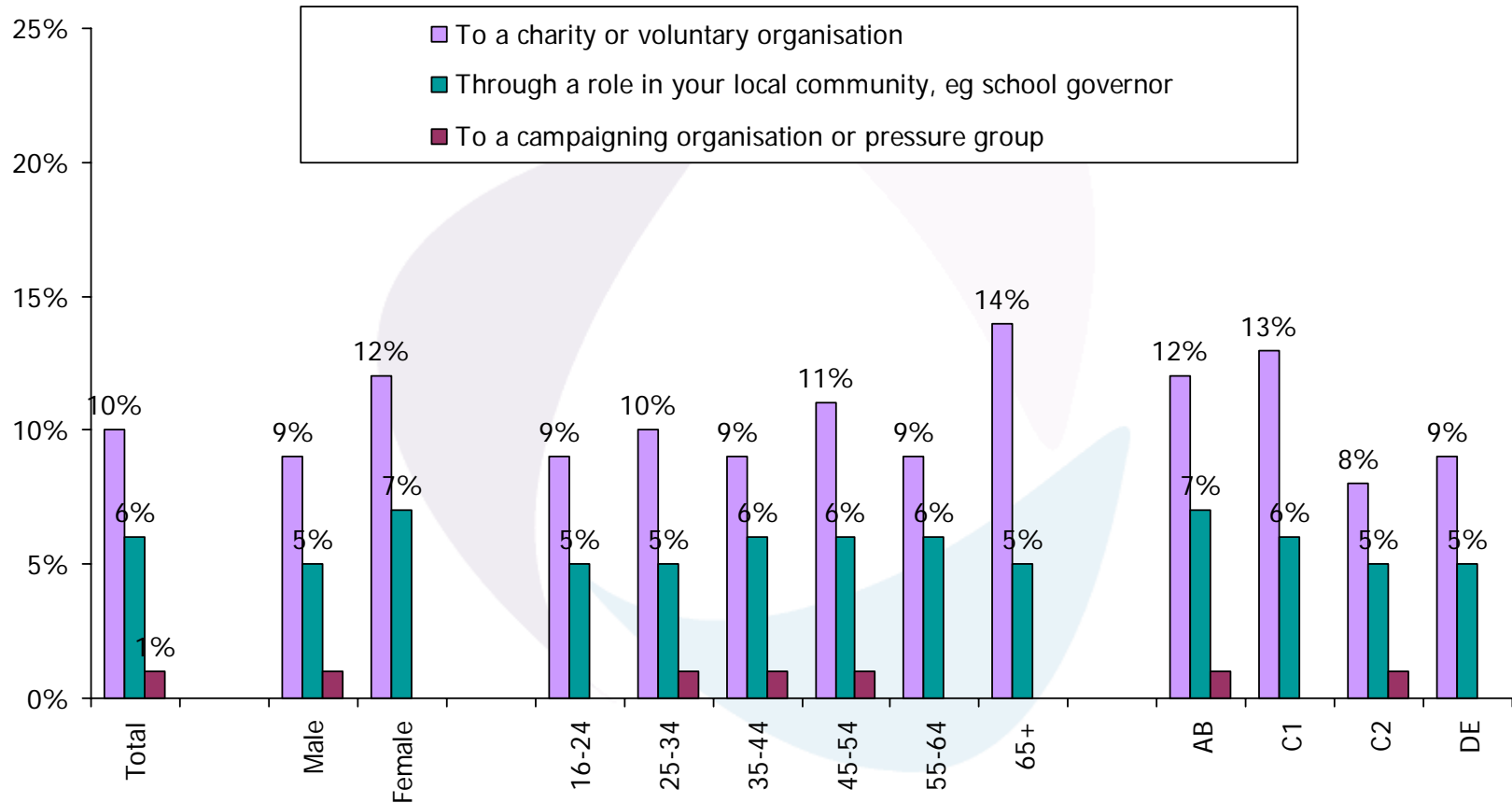


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 6: Ways in which people volunteer

"Was this...?"

By gender, age and social grade

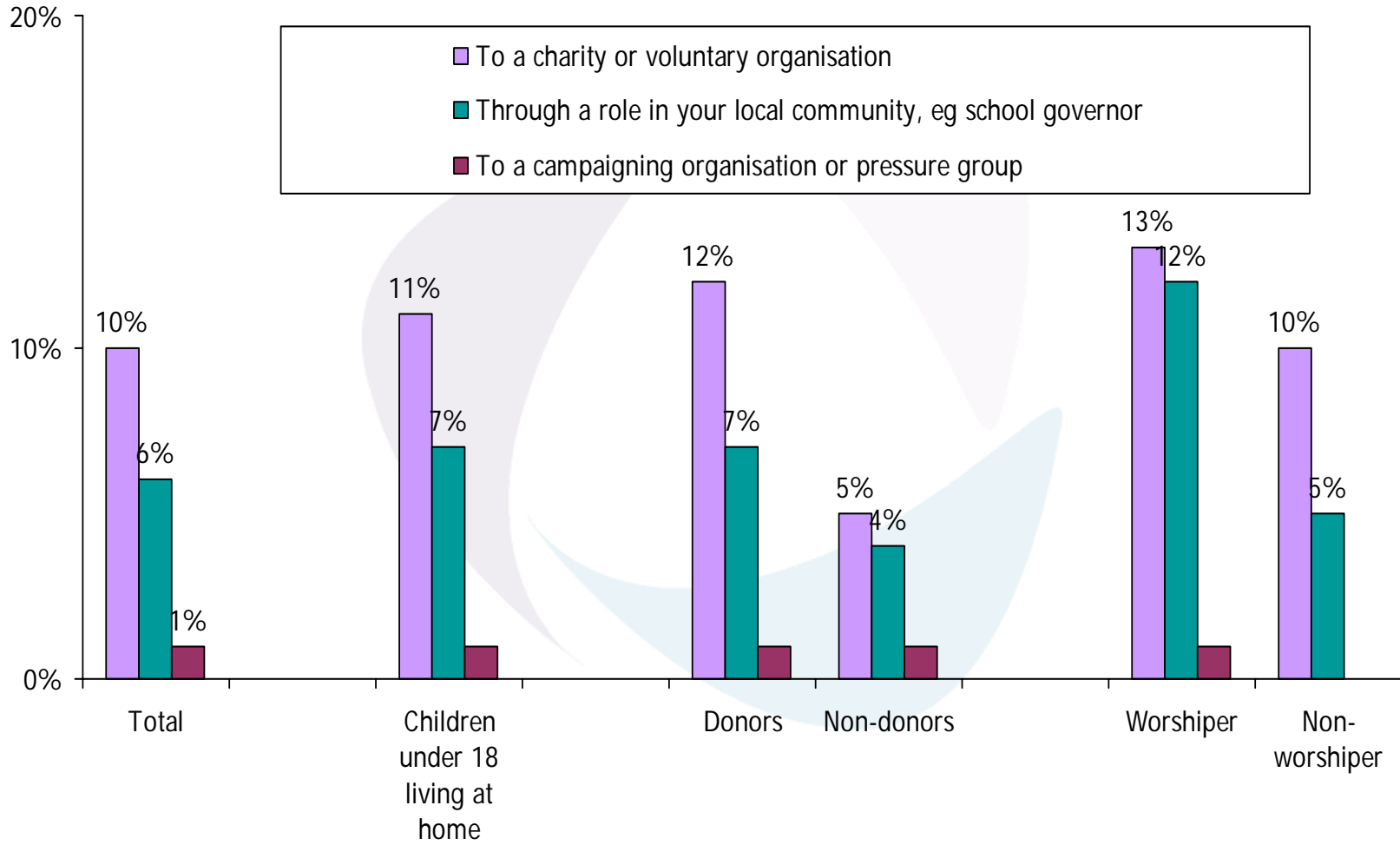


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
 Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 7: Ways in which people volunteer

"Was this...?"

By parents, givers and worshipers



Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

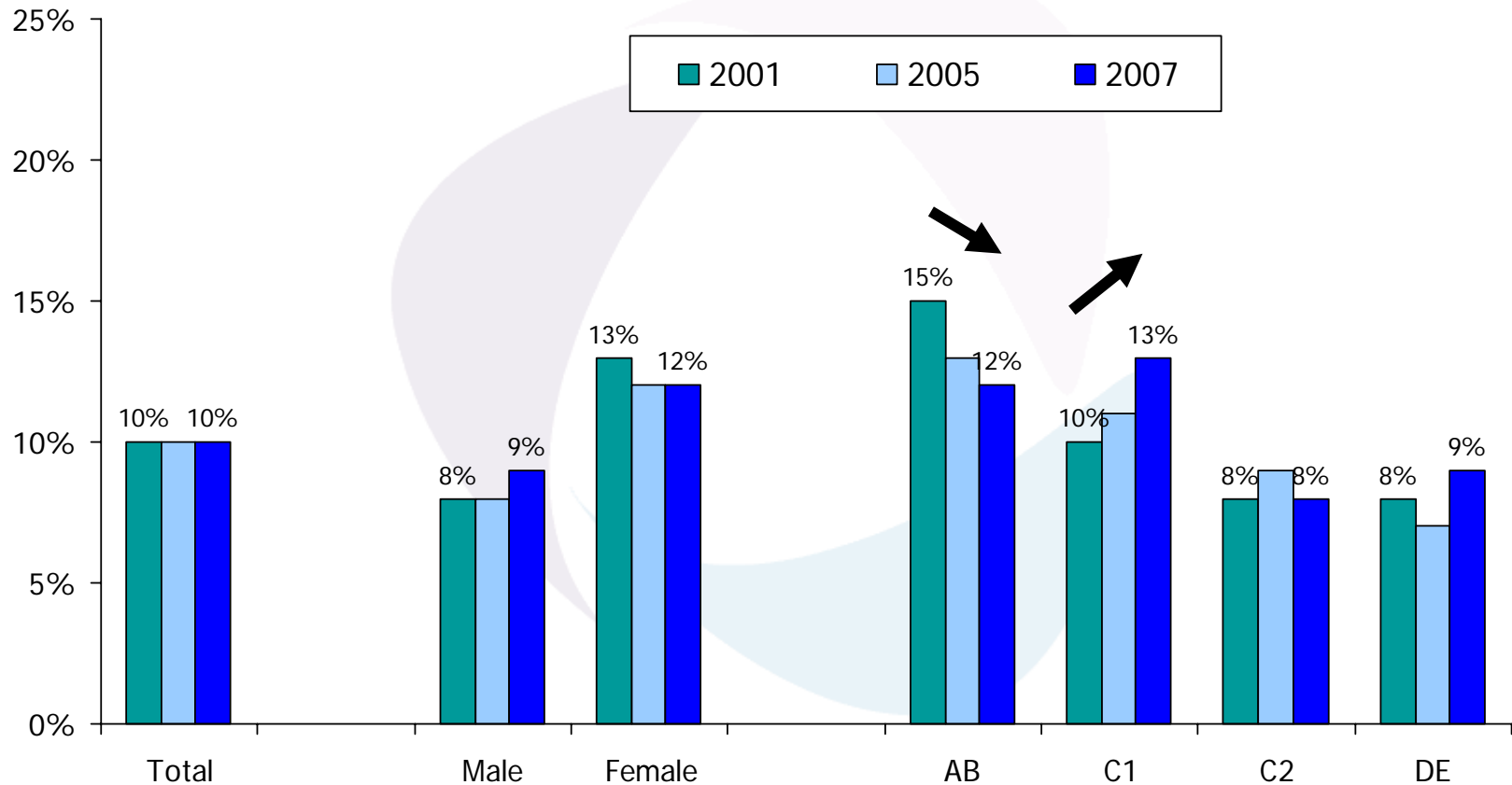
How people volunteer

- The main type of organisation people volunteer for is a charity or voluntary organisation, followed by a some kind of community role such as a school governor
- It is noticeable that the number of people who say they have volunteered for a community organisation has steadily increased since 2001 from 4% to 6% (chart 5)
- There is little variation in the demographic pattern between each type of volunteering with the exception of;
 - 65+s are much more likely to volunteer for a charity than a community role compared to other age groups
 - Worshipers are more likely to volunteer both in a community role and for a charity than non-worshippers, however the gap is much larger for the former compared to the latter

Chart 8: Volunteering for charity

"Was this... to a charity or voluntary organisation?"

By gender and social grade

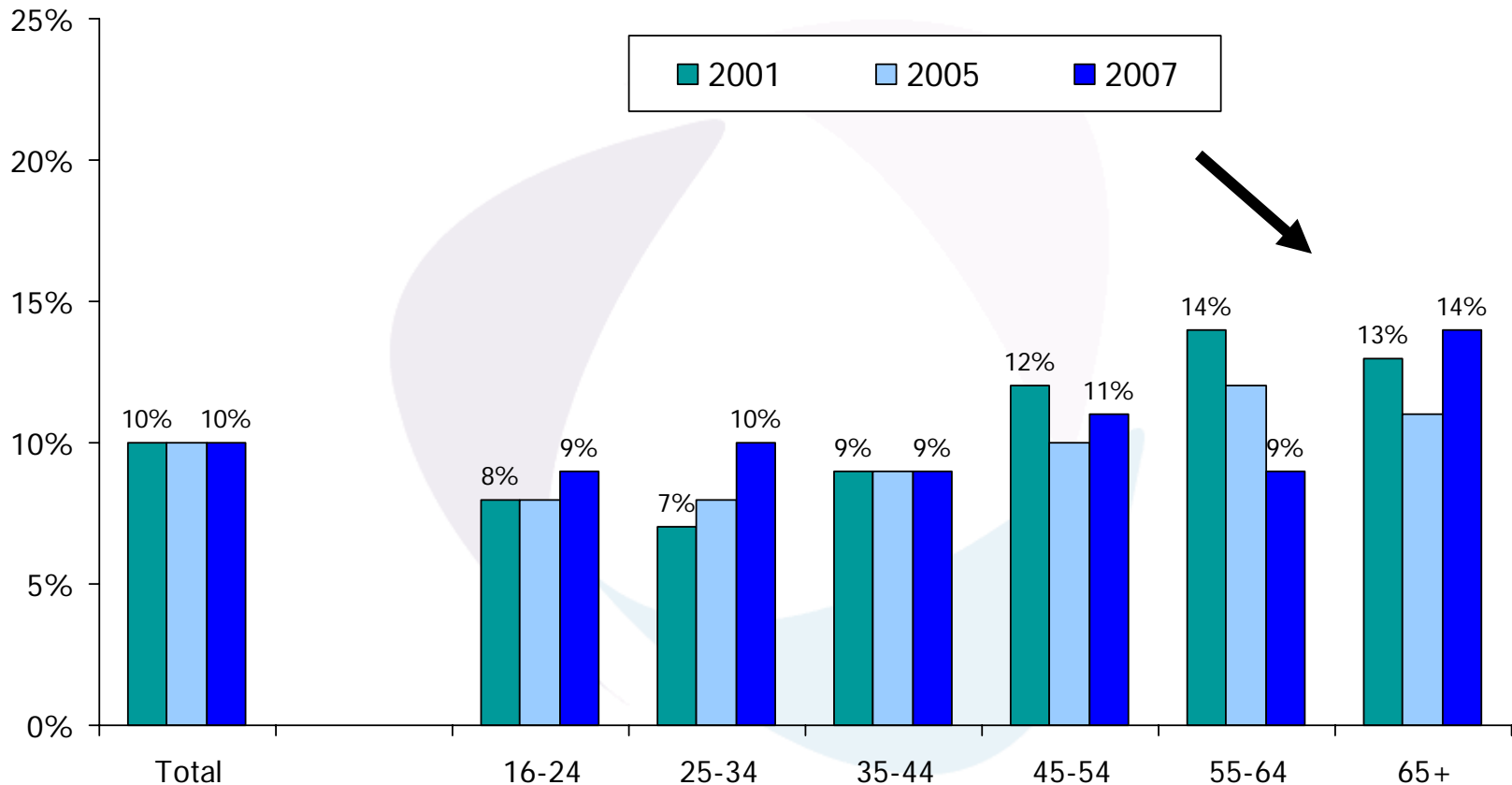


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 9: Volunteering for charity

"Was this... to a charity or voluntary organisation?"

By age

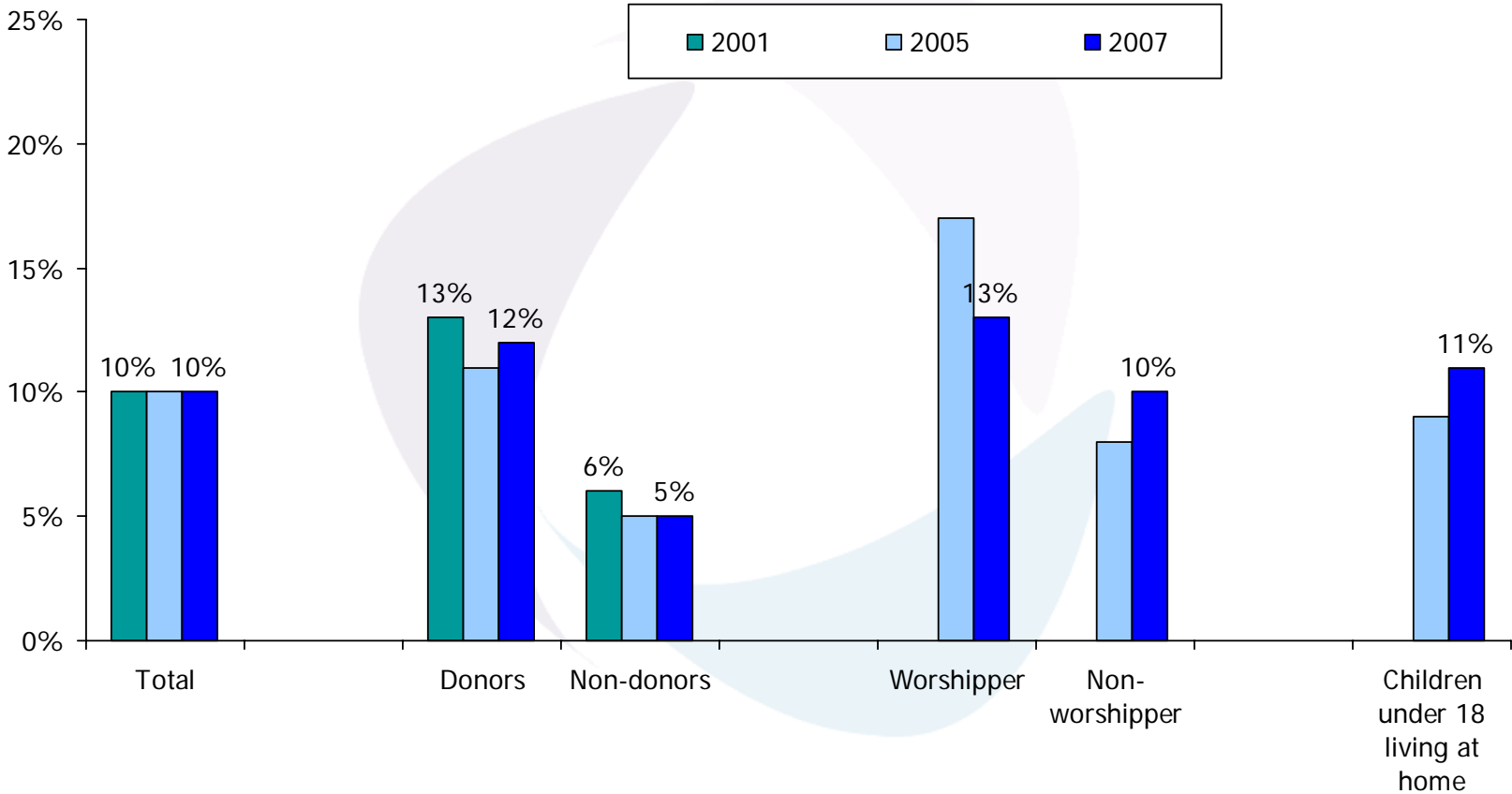


Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 10: Volunteering for charity

“Was this... to a charity or voluntary organisation?”

By donors, worshippers and parents



Base: 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Demographic shift in volunteering specifically for charity

- Demographic changes in specifically volunteering for charity are similar to that of volunteering overall – the age and social grade segmentation has begun to flatten as increases among the lower age groups and lower social grades have been steeper compared to older ages and higher social grades (Charts 8 & 9)
- In addition the gaps between worshippers and non-worshippers have begun to decrease as volunteering for a charity has increased among non-worshippers and in fact decreased among worshippers (Chart 10)

Chart 11: Number of days given by the average volunteer

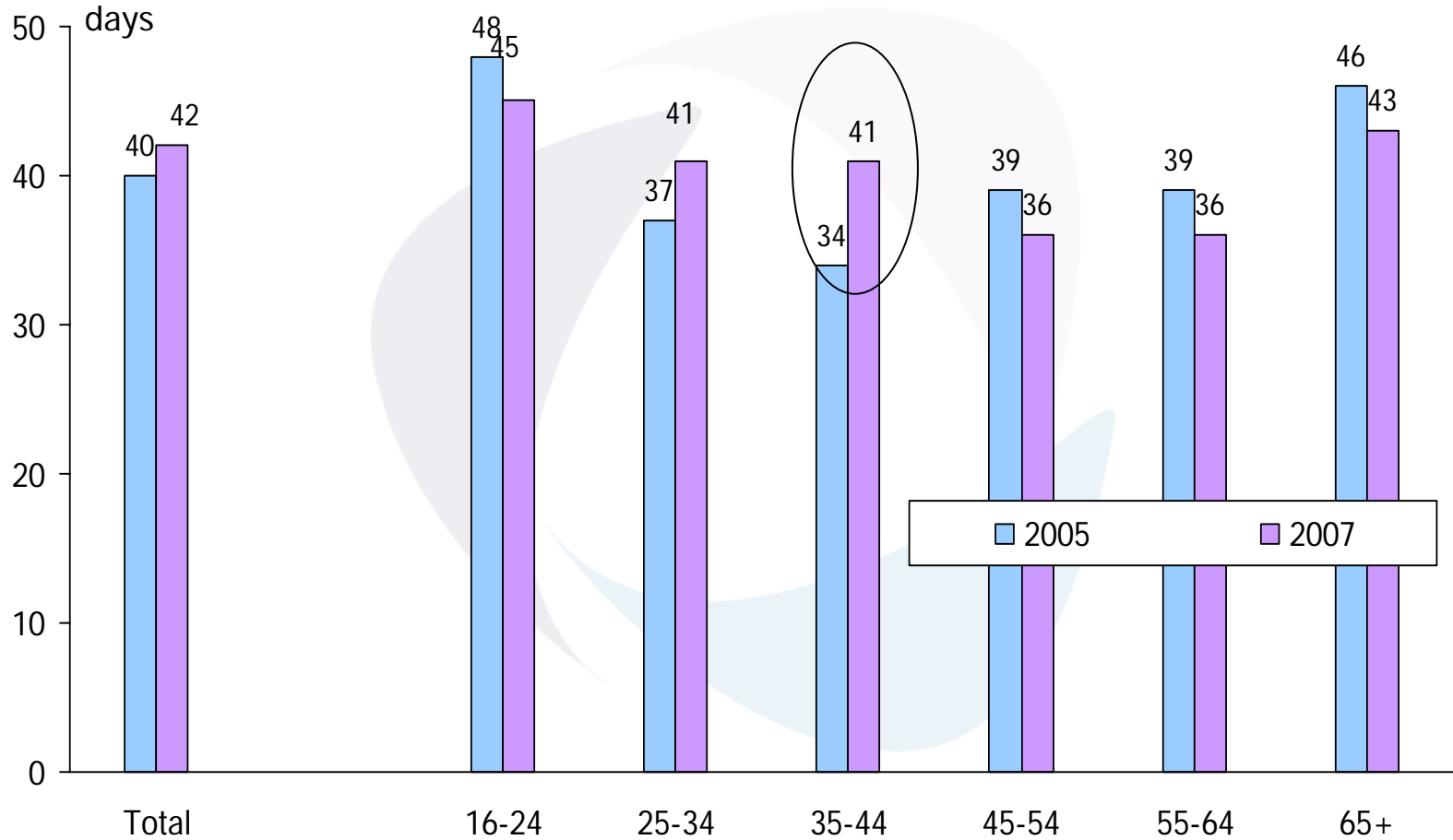
"How often did you volunteer...?" Prompted
By gender and social grade



Base: All those who volunteered (573) among 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 12: Number of days given by the average volunteer

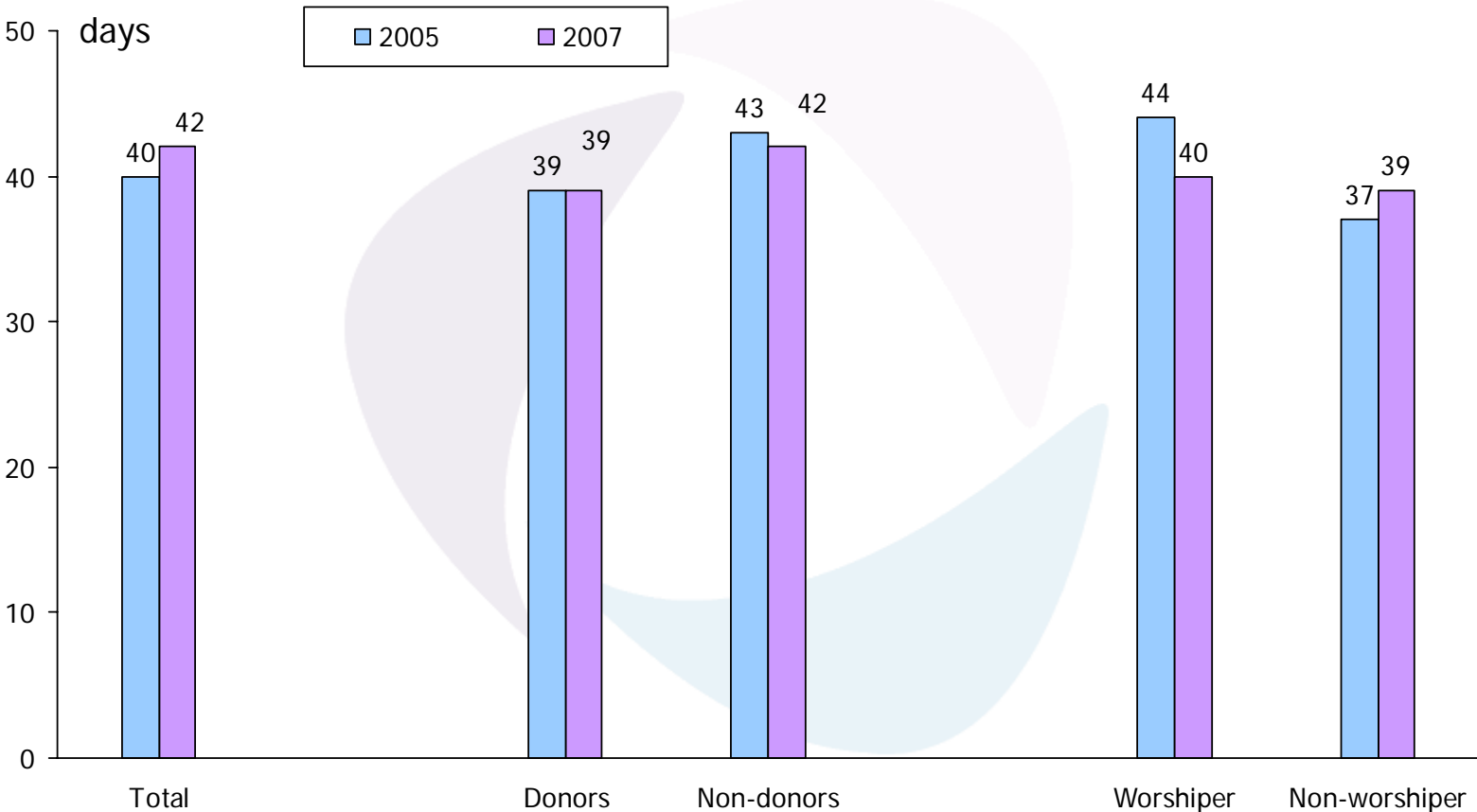
"How often did you volunteer...?" Prompted
By age



Base: All those who volunteered (573) among 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

Chart 13: Number of days given by the average volunteer

"How often did you volunteer...?" Prompted
By givers and worshipers



Base: All those who volunteered (573) among 3,000 adults 16+, Britain, 2007
Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfpSynergy

How much time volunteers give?

- In addition to their likelihood to volunteer at all, different demographic groups also vary in how much time they give as volunteers
- On average volunteers gave 42 days during 2007 – 2 days up 2005 (Chart 11)
- This slight variation overall however hides larger movements among different demographic groups
 - ABs gave more days in 2007 than 2005, DEs gave less (Chart 11)
 - Younger ages gave more days, older ages less (Chart 12)
 - Non-worshippers gave less days, worshippers gave more (Chart 13)

5 Key points

- 1) Almost one in five people volunteered their time 2007, most likely for a charity/voluntary organisation, followed by a community role
- 2) Women, higher social grades, older age groups, donors and worshipers are more likely to volunteer
- 3) However most demographic differences are not as pronounced as 2001, as volunteering among younger age groups, lower social grades and worshipers has increased faster than on average
- 4) The 54-64 year old is the only demographic group among which volunteering has decreased
- 5) Overall the number of days given during 2007 was higher than 2005

What does it all mean for government investment in volunteering?

- It is striking that the biggest increase in volunteering was up until 2004 and after that volunteering levels have been static.
- It is perplexing (even worrying) that the volunteering levels have been static since 2003/4 despite the heavy level of investment in volunteering by government.
- It is also concerning that some of the traditional bulwarks of volunteering show either static or falling level of volunteering (decline in the case of the baby boomer generation, 55-64 year olds, and static in the case of the over 65s).
- It is equally perplexing that groups who have not been explicitly targeted in volunteering initiatives (eg the 25-34 year olds) have increased faster than those who have been targeted (eg the over 55s with the Experience Corps)
- The relationship over time between levels of volunteering and investment is very weak. The lowest year for volunteering in our study was the year of the volunteer in 2005 and despite increased investment in volunteering since then volunteering has been static since 2005.
- The evidence from our research shows little evidence that government investment in volunteering is working (we will focus on 16-24 year olds in a forthcoming briefing).
- Overall we believe that this research demonstrates the need for better evaluation of what does and doesn't work in increasing levels of volunteering. At the moment substantial amounts of public money are being spent on volunteering with little evidence of successful returns on investment through increased volunteering.