

Volunteer to Career Programme

Findings report- June- 2024

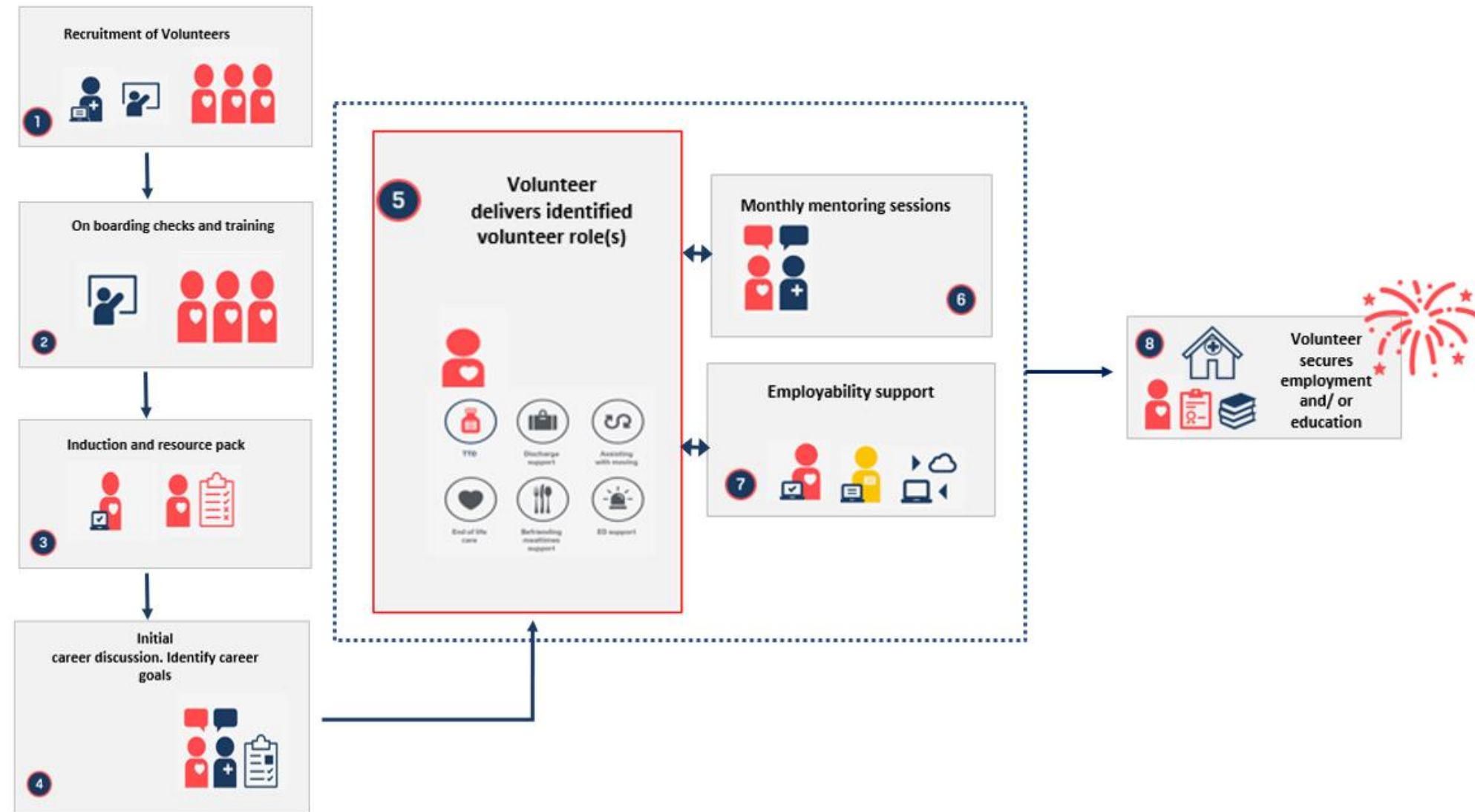
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation trust

Contents

Programme overview	3
Helpforce’s evaluation approach	8
Impact	9
Evaluation findings	11
Conclusion and recommendations	18
Acknowledgements	19



Our VtC Career Pathway



The RUH, where you matter

Our VtC Pathway continued

VtC Pathway Component	Description
Recruitment of Volunteers	Recruitment through channels such as career events/ career fairs/ local universities and colleges
Volunteer checks and training	Application process completed through Friends of RUH Charity
Volunteer induction and resource pack	Developed our own volunteer to career booklet with worksheets and reflection opportunities
Initial career discussion, identify career goals	For volunteers to identify 3 outcomes and express areas of interest
Volunteer impact roles	Volunteering completed in Children's Therapies role & Ward volunteer roles
1:1 Mentoring career chats with clinical lead	Monthly supervision moments
Employability support	Identified as volunteer required
Securing employment/ education	Volunteers go on to education or employment in health or social care sector

Programme overview

The **Helpforce Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme** is designed to support volunteers to take up a career in health and care. Helpforce has worked alongside health and care organisations to set up and implement volunteering projects which incorporate career pathways for volunteers. They have worked in partnership with organisations, such as ours, to implement the Volunteer to Career Pathway and to provide support in evaluating its impact. The VtC programme has been designed to support **organisational** improvement across **three key strategic components, identified as essential to achieving systemic change**:

- **Clinical/health and care leadership** - Developing a network of senior clinical/health and care leaders to harness their expertise to positively influence wider effective engagement, and ultimately adoption of, VtC projects.
- **Environment and culture** - utilise best practices to raise the value of the volunteer workforce in the health and care environment to enhance the likelihood of volunteers wanting to adopt a career in health and care.
- **Volunteer to Career Pathways** - Develop innovative and impactful volunteer roles and career pathways, linked to local recruitment needs, to encourage and enable volunteers to use this as a route to a career in the NHS.

Programme overview continued

- **The volunteering role(s) VtC volunteers undertook and what this involved:** The volunteers who were on the VtC pathway mainly completed roles on the wards where they supported the ward staff with tea and coffee rounds, stocking of supplies, completing menus with staff and befriending patients. This allowed the ward staff to focus on clinical tasks. The volunteers in the children's therapies team supported the team with many small maintenance tasks as well as support in assessment clinics. The Children's Therapies staff shared that having the volunteer support them during clinic allowed them to provide a better experience to parents and the child. They also reported that they felt less rushed at the end of the day.
- **An overview of the VtC programme:** The programme allowed volunteers to have hands on experience in clinical areas of interest, develop communication skills, and increase confidence. They were also put in touch with career ambassadors in Q & A sessions and other professional development opportunities were organised in line with the needs of the volunteer."
- **An overview of the benefits you anticipated the programme would have for the organisation.** For example: "The VtC programme was also designed to result in several positive benefits for our organisation. Through the VtC programme we have been able to raise the profile of volunteers in the Trust and are starting to notice a culture shift in the Trust. In addition we have also been able to set up a partnership with our local employment inclusion team and their Many Hands* project. We have also started to build other partnerships with the local job centre and Bath Spa University.

* 'Many Hands' is a project set up by BANES Employment Inclusion team which supports people with additional needs to develop employment skills through volunteering.

The RUH, where you matter

Our VtC programme objectives



The VtC programme began in September 2023 and the initial programme ran until May 2024. With programme management and evaluation support provided by Helpforce, we implemented and delivered our VtC programme to achieve these programme objectives.

- VtC pilot programme would become permanent sustainable program which will be part of the trust's Volunteer Strategy
- Volunteer to Career pathway to be well known and widely accessible within the Trust and the wider community
- Increase the number of younger volunteers below 40 years old who are volunteering in the Trust, from just below 20% to 40%
- Set up a working group alongside the current bi-monthly Volunteer Forum to focus specifically on the Volunteer to Career project. The aim of this group will be to increase awareness of the VtC pathway throughout the Trust and show staff the possibilities of volunteer support in many different areas.
- 59% of the VtC Volunteers embark on a career in health or social care or study a degree in Health or Social Care
- 80% of VtC volunteers who embark on a career in the RUH, remain employed for a minimum of 18-24 months
- Design and set up the Children's Therapies volunteer role with the Children's Therapies department so that there is a regular flow of volunteers

The RUH, where you matter

Helpforce's evaluation approach

Using its established ***Insight and Impact*** evaluation service, Helpforce follows a consistent methodology to determine the impact of volunteering roles on health outcomes. Target outcomes are identified across a range of beneficiaries representing the people and organisations involved, and then the necessary data is collected to prove and evidence the outcomes.

The evaluation sought to answer three key questions about the impact of the VtC programme on:

- Corporate behaviours towards volunteering
- Enabling individual volunteers to progress towards a career in health and care
- The attitudes of front-line staff towards volunteer services

The outcomes the evaluation aimed to measure included...



Note: The analysis in this report is provided by the Helpforce Insight and Impact team, and the contextual information has been provided by Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust's Volunteer to Career team.

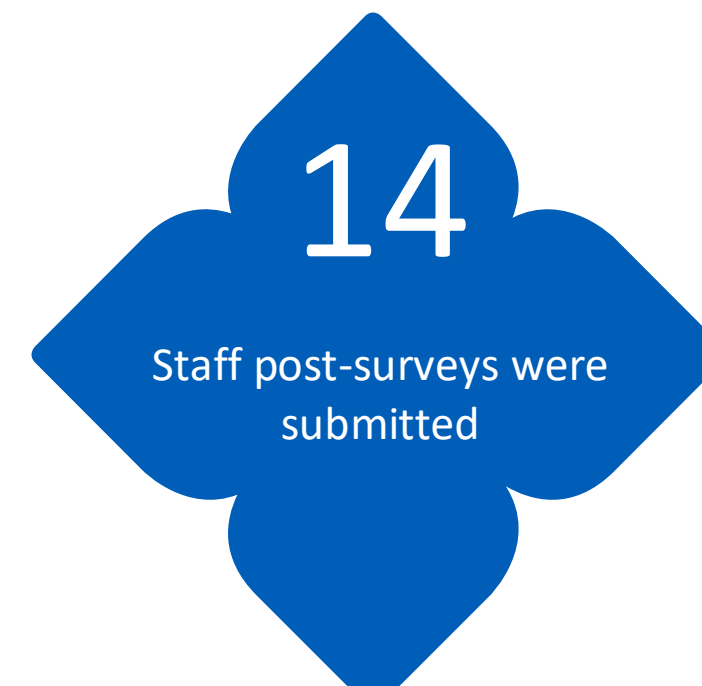
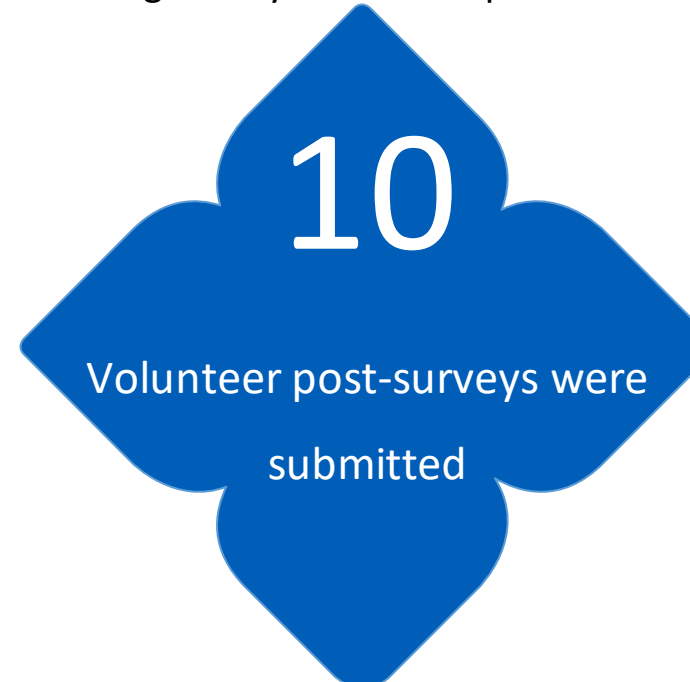
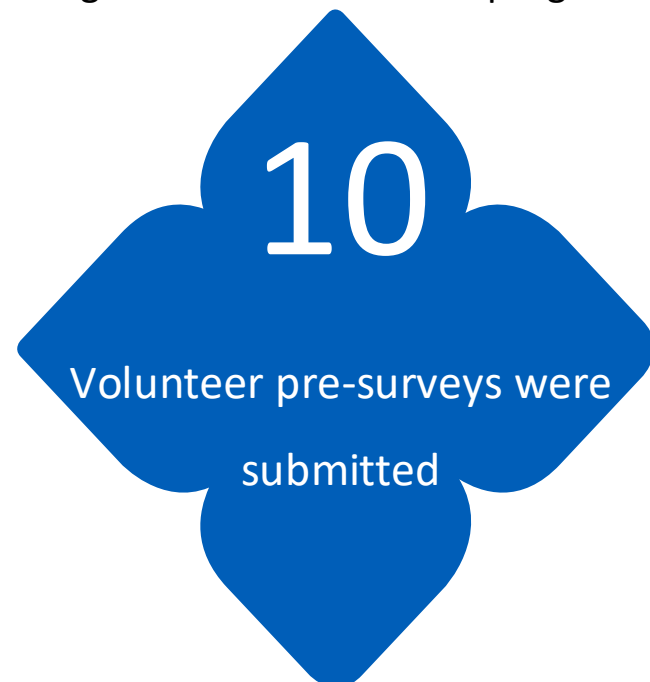
The RUH, where you matter

Evaluation approach: methodology

Within the VtC programme, Helpforce utilises three data collection methods:

- A **'VtC Self-Assessment Tool'** (referred to as SAT) was completed by the project's clinical/health and care lead at the start and then again near the end of the project. The tool measures the organisation against a series of identified categories and questions associated with their Volunteering Strategy. Also, as part of the SAT, volunteers and staff are invited to complete some additional feedback surveys to provide insight into their perceptions of organisational change.
- **Volunteer surveys** were designed to capture data around the volunteers' level of interest in a health/care career, how they are finding their volunteer role and the VtC programme. The surveys were completed twice, both at the beginning of their volunteering and at a later period (referred to as 'start' and 'latest').
- **Staff surveys** were completed at the start and near the end of the VtC project (referred to as pre and post surveys).

During the course of the VtC programme the following surveys were completed:



Volunteering activity

Across the duration of the initial delivery period, there was a great deal of volunteering activity within our organisation:



Evaluation findings: volunteers

At the time of evaluation, 9 volunteers had completed the VtC career pathway. Through the pathway and career support provided, volunteers applied for jobs and attended interviews. These applications resulted in 2 of the 9 **volunteers securing employment** within health and care. Additionally, 9 **volunteers secured places on further education courses** related to health and care, including a Masters in Psychology and nursing degrees. In total, all 9 volunteers secured an employment or education outcome.*

2

volunteers have taken up employment in the Health and Care sector

9

volunteers secured further education or training related to health and care

80%

of volunteers who completed the VtC pathway secured employment or FE/training

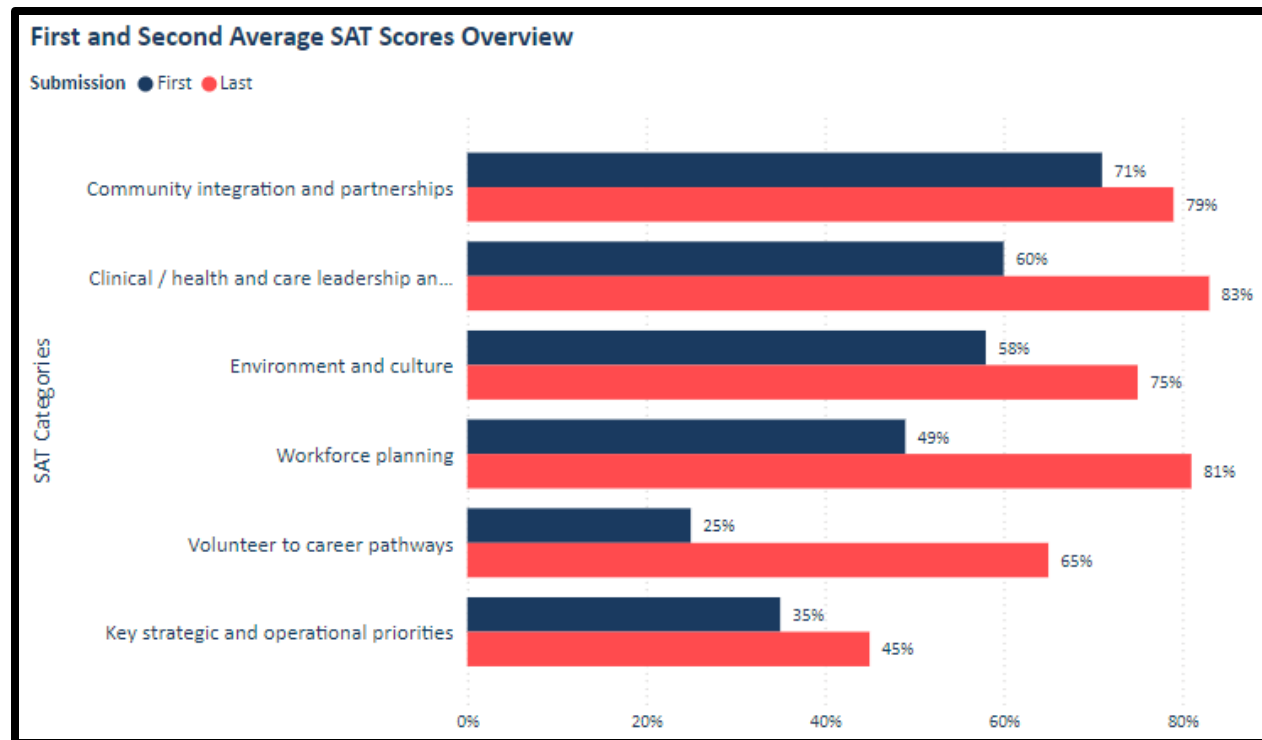
A volunteer provided some additional insights into their experience of being a VtC volunteer...

"I have had a really interesting time within the department learning about various careers and professions. Those I volunteer with are very happy to share their knowledge and it is very insightful - I also feel welcome when I volunteer."

*Individuals might have secured either employment or further education/training – they are not mutually exclusive

The RUH, where you matter

Evaluation findings: organisation

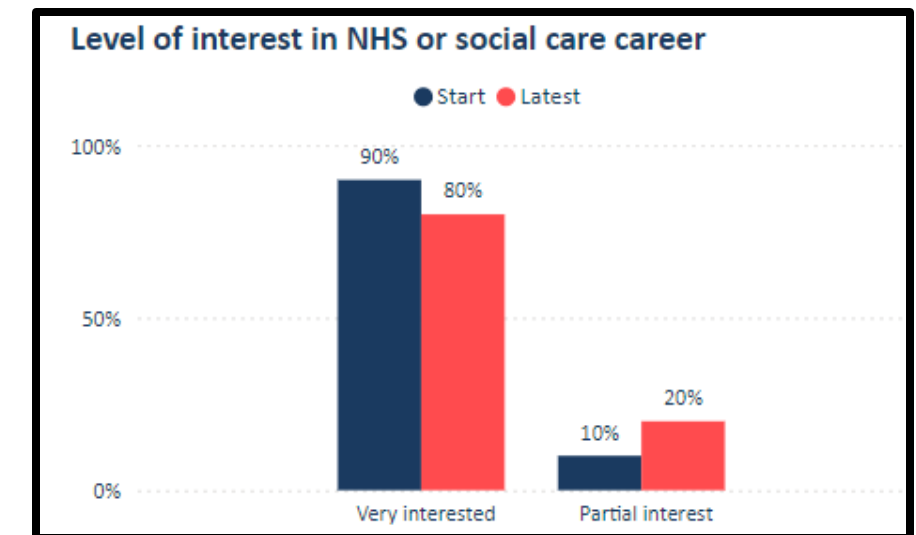
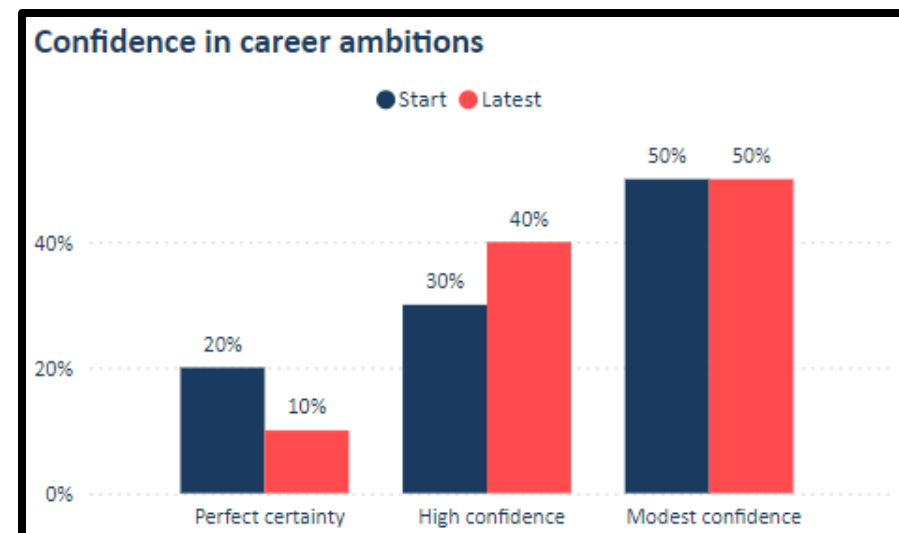
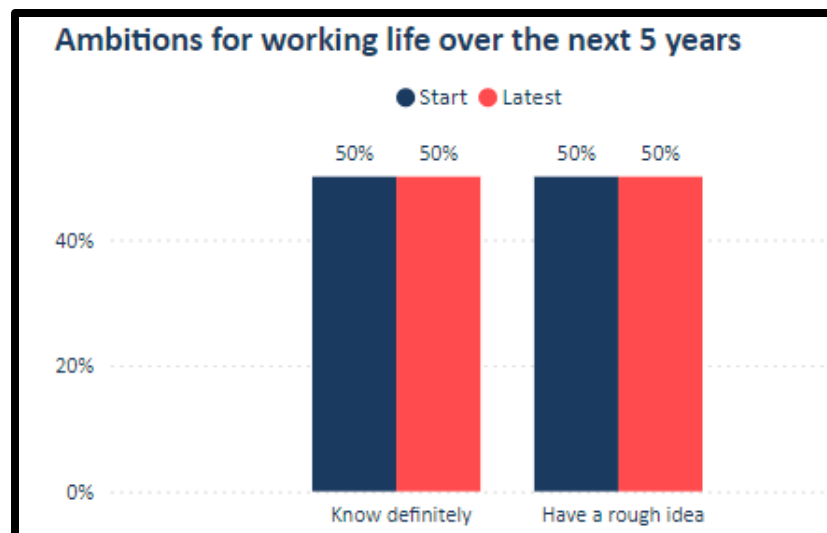


- After completing the VtC programme, there was an increase in the overall SAT score, which improved from 48% to 72%.
- Similar to the positive change in the overall SAT score result, we observed an improvement in the scores for all individual elements of organizational improvement for volunteering.
- The consistency of having a dedicated Volunteering Development Manager and a clinical lead – Volunteer to Career Pathway has allowed us to start making some changes in the areas highlighted
- Areas which have consistent volunteers generally have positive feedback for volunteers however there are still many other areas in the Trust that could benefit from volunteers, but they don't have many at all.
- We have started developing more links and partnerships with community organizations such as Bath university, Job Centre plus and BANES Council.

Evaluation findings- Volunteers

- After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who **knew definitely what they wanted to do with their working lives remained the same at 50%**. Additionally, **90% of volunteers maintained or increased their certainty** in their ambitions through the VtC programme.
- The proportion of volunteers who had **high confidence in their career ambitions increased by 10%** by the end of the programme (30% to 40%). In addition, 70% of volunteers maintained or increased their confidence in achieving these ambitions through the VtC programme.
- After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who were **very interested in an NHS or social care career decreased from 90% to 80%**. **90% of volunteers maintained their interest** in this career pathway as a result of participating in the VtC programme.

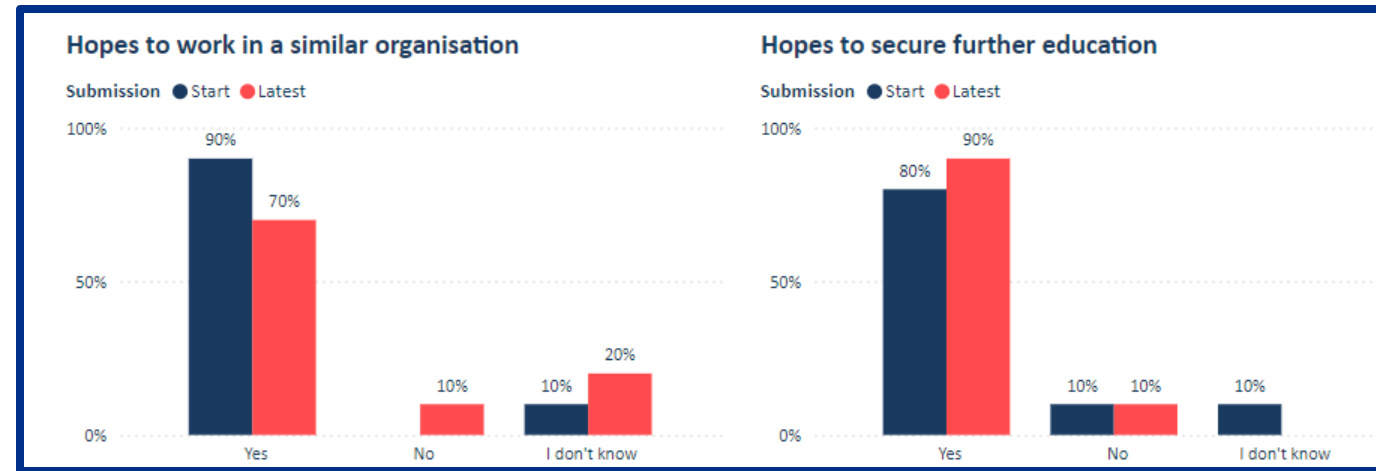
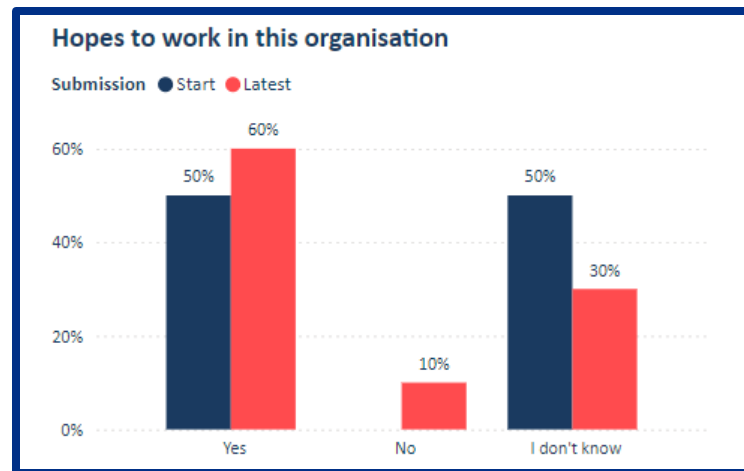
N= 10 pre- and post-surveys



The RUH, where you matter

Evaluation findings- Volunteers

- Volunteers were also asked about their hopes and if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training:
- **6 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to employment with our organisation.
- **7 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to employment in a similar health or care organisation.
- **9 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to further education aligned to their career goals.



N= 10 pre- and post-surveys

The VtC programme helped maintain or increase the volunteers' aspirations of working in our organisation. We also saw a positive increase in volunteers aspiring to secure further education.

The RUH, where you matter

Evaluation findings: Volunteer case study - Jenna

Jenna, a 21-year-old University of Bath psychology student, volunteers in the Emergency Department at RUH. Originally from South Africa, Jenna grew up in Singapore, and was inspired to explore volunteering whilst planning her next steps after her undergraduate degree.

She supports the Emergency Department team for one four-hour shift a week. She also signed up to the VtC programme to explore her career options within the NHS. Jenna's volunteer tasks include restocking the kitchen and non-medical supplies, serving meals and hot drinks, and checking in with patients and their companions to keep them company. She explains, *"It sounds cheesy, but I love making a difference. It feels really rewarding to take a bit of pressure off the clinical staff so they can focus on their role"*.

As Jenna approaches the end of her undergraduate degree, she is reflecting on what she has learnt as a VtC volunteer. She is planning to apply for a postgraduate qualification or apprenticeship, leading to a career in the NHS.

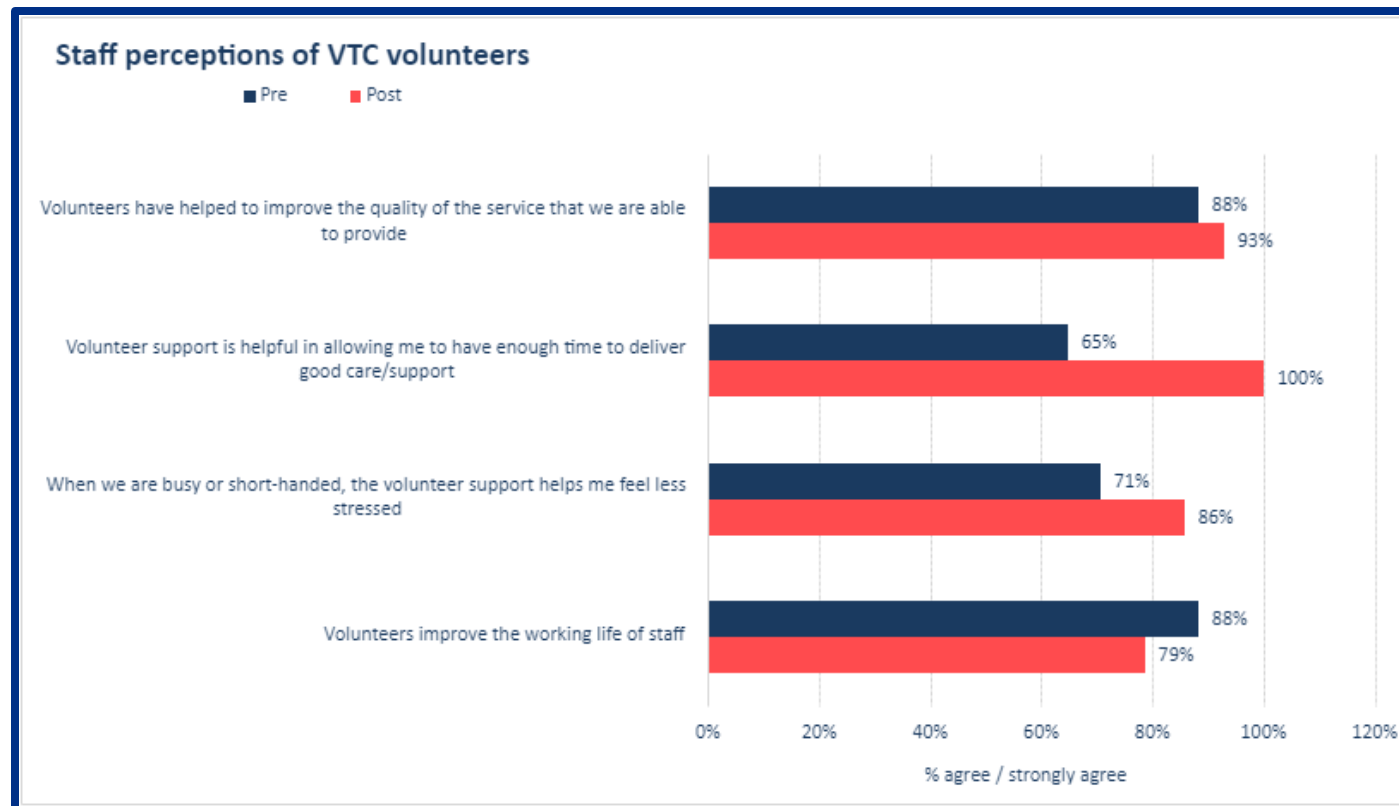
"My goal was to understand the NHS better and get exposure to a clinical environment, and I've definitely had that. I really wanted to volunteer in the Emergency Department as it's such a busy and changing environment. That's helped me to build the skill of taking my time to interact and being really present, despite what else is happening around me. I also enjoy meeting so many staff and talking to them about their jobs. They've given me some really great advice and now I'm looking for a career in the NHS"

The RUH, where you matter



Evaluation findings: staff

The VtC programme illustrated some improvements in staff perceptions of the impact volunteers can have for them and the organisation.



• *n= 17 pre-surveys, 14 post-surveys*

- The RUH is passionate about providing good care and support to our patients and service users. It is exciting to see how more staff have an increased awareness of how volunteers can support them in being able to provide excellent patient care.
- Volunteers can support patients and staff and these findings show that staff agree that volunteers can play an important role when feeling stressed.

The RUH, where you matter

Evaluation findings: staff case study



"Our team have used a volunteer to help with cleaning returned postural support and mobility equipment for some time which enables us to reuse many items. Some of the team were initially dubious about how we could use volunteers more widely in the department though. However, now that they have seen the type of help that volunteers can provide, we are regularly using volunteers to great effect to support clinics."

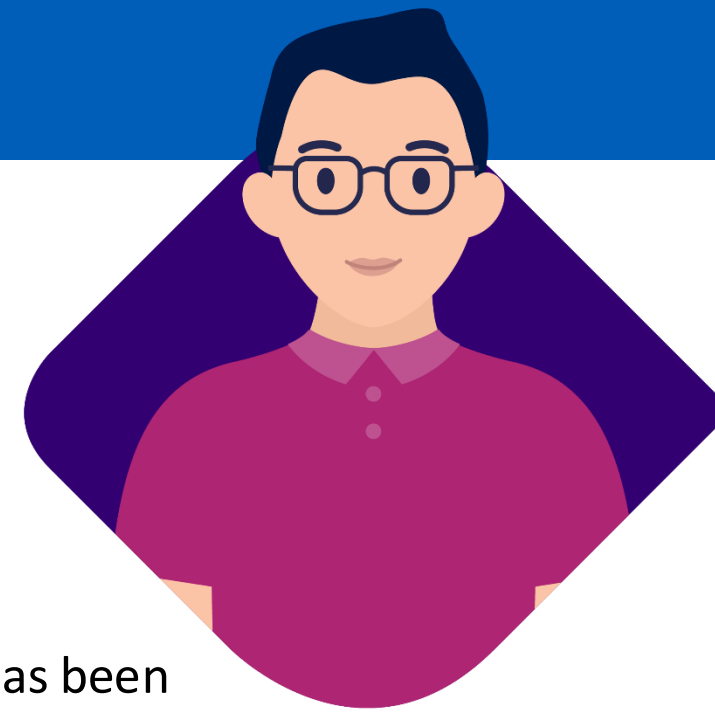
This also gives volunteers the opportunity to observe the type of roles available in the NHS. I think there is a much greater scope for use of volunteers within the Trust with mutually beneficial outcomes. Having a member of the team committed to being the point of communication for our volunteers has been essential for this to work well."

Emily Graham and the children's Therapies team - One of our VtC specific roles is with this team:

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions:

- The implementation of the VtC programme in the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust has been successful in **organisational improvement related to volunteering**, maintaining volunteers' interest in working for this organisation and improving staff perceptions of the impact that volunteers can have.
- The programme has helped the Trust to further **integrate volunteering into workforce** strategies and aided the development of effective career pathways for volunteers which have resulted in paid employment in the NHS and volunteers securing further education.
- The programme also increased the staffing levels in the volunteer team which allowed the volunteer team to increase attendance at **job fairs**, roll **out partnerships with the community** and work with the career engagement team to support the **NHS Cadets programme**.



Conclusion and recommendations

Recommendations:

- Continue with the VTC programme and **scale the numbers and cohorts** this will allow us to gather further data to demonstrate the benefits of the programme to the hospital and our local community
- Amend the **recruitment** from rolling to targeted timings
- Implement **set training sessions** which are in lines with the themes picked out from last cohort: trust values, job application skills, ways into the NHS , etc
- To include **professional outcomes** as a measure of success
- To continue to liaise with staff in the hospital to **increase the profile** of Volunteer to Career
- To continue to work with the communications team to increase the profile of Volunteer to Career in the Trust





Acknowledgements

Our Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme was carried out in partnership with our organisation and Helpforce, with funding from NHS England.

Helpforce has been an invaluable partner in helping us set up and deliver this programme and has also supported us in analysing the data and setting out the impact evidence of this programme.

We would also like to thank the following teams who we have worked closely with during this first year. :

- Members of the Talent Acquisition group
- Career and Engagement team
- Clinical personnel who supported the delivery of the programme such as the ward managers and staff on the wards and the therapists in the Children's Therapies team.

The findings, conclusion and recommendations have been identified by the Volunteer team with the support of the Patient Experience team at the Royal United Hospital.

About Helpforce:

Helpforce works with health and care organisations across the UK to accelerate the growth and impact of volunteering to keep people healthy in their communities and support them during treatment and after. It is an independent, not-for-profit innovator, focused on co-creating on and evaluating volunteering projects, and rapidly sharing insights and best practice. To learn more about the charity, visit www.helpforce.community.

The RUH, where you matter

Thank you!



in partnership with
helpforce



Volunteer to Career

NHS 75
Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

The RUH, where you matter