



Volunteer to Career

Volunteer to Career Programme

Findings report

Central London Community Healthcare NHS
Trust

June 2021
funded by NHS
England

in partnership
with
helpforce



Our VtC Career Pathway

- 1. Impactful volunteer roles:** The volunteer roles are mapped to local recruitment needs to help the volunteer to develop the required skills, experience and exposure. The role was designed with teams to ensure it was clear, meets the needs, and enables the volunteer to move through the pathway.
- 2. Effective communications and engagement plan:** Clearly advertising our offer to existing volunteers initially and then externally. Clearly explaining our pathways to employment, eligibility and expectations.
- 3. Initial career goals discussion/interview:** The career conversation is important to have early on with the volunteer to establish their career ambitions. Working with the project lead, the volunteer will identify their career goals and agree on the steps needed to support them to achieve them through the VtC pathway.
- 4. Mentoring and ongoing career support:** Ongoing opportunity for volunteers to receive a mix of information and more structured career-based conversations with relevant identified mentors and the VtC project lead.
- 5. Work experiences through volunteering:** Volunteers attend volunteering shifts in the clinical environment, approximately 60 hours over a period of around 6 months. Support and mentoring are available from Healthcare professionals.
- 6. Employability support:** Provision of employment skills such as interview techniques and CV writing will be offered to volunteers on a 1 to 1 basis from VtC project lead.
- 7. Securing employment or education:** Volunteers will be supported to undertake applications to identified relevant employment opportunities or further education.

Specific roles identified

Advertising

Career conversations

On-going support

Practical experience

Employability support

Career goal achieved!

Programme overview

The **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.

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust's programme overview and objectives :

- **Encourage more people in Nursing and AHP careers:** Some CLCH teams have as high as 37% vacancy role for Community Nursing roles and as high as 50% for Allied Health Professionals. As part of our project, we aimed to recruit volunteers to the role of Ward Befriender or Community Befriender to give them a sense of the environment, the role and the skills needed for this role. We targeted volunteers in our local communities who express through the on-boarding process an interest in these particular careers.
- **An overview of the VtC programme.** The VtC programme enables volunteers to explore these specific career interests, while providing them with an opportunity to gain experience of volunteering within a Health and Care environment. They will be updated about career opportunities within and outwith our organisation and supported to apply for relevant opportunities.
- **Our role as an Anchor organisation:** The VtC programme was also designed to result in several positive benefits for the communities our organisation serves. As part of our commitment to being an anchor organisation, we want to make sure we're nurturing our local communities, attracting talent and offering training and support to empower them to reach their goals.

Our VtC programme objectives

The VtC programme began in March 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.

- Deliver a sustainable VtC Pathway that is ready to scale to address wider workforce needs by the end of the 12-month project
 - Measure: Increase in overall VtC self-assessment score by 10% with improvement across all 6 excellence measures, but in particular around career pathway (section 9)
- Set up of 2 volunteer roles that provide the experience, exposure, skills and confidence building needed to develop a pipeline of volunteer interested in Nursing, AHP or other health and care careers
 - Measure(s): Role live, evidence of the role positively impacting volunteer career goals
 - Recruit at least 20 volunteers to go through the programme
- Set up of an active steering group to support the delivery of the project.
 - Measure(s): Steering group in place, Terms of Reference, evidence of value to the project
- Identify and establish key community relationships/ partnerships to support the delivery of the project
 - Measure(s): Grow number of Community organisations as a source of volunteers feeding into the project, provision of employment support
 - Recruitment numbers will show if this has been successful
- Integration of new VtC pathway components into existing career pathways
 - Measure(s): Opportunities available to other pathways made available to volunteers e.g. access to internal vacancies, employability support, Volunteer inductions recognised and supported by workforce teams and clinicians as standard.
- VtC Pathway data incorporated into operational/ workforce plans
 - Measure(s): VtC within operational meeting agenda's, other clinical teams requesting VtC pathways
 - Regularly attending divisional workforce meetings
- Organisational agreement to sustain the existing VtC pathway and scale to support wider workforce gaps
 - Measure(s): VtC built into workforce strategy and people planning, funding secured for resource to support the pathway, VtC pathway processes embedded into business as usual.
- Improving patient experience through volunteer roles in ward and community settings
 - Measure(s): Uptake in positive FFTs for Community Nursing and Inpatient Units
 - Reduction in complaints

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.

- What was 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 Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust's Volunteer to Career team.

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 end of the VtC project.

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

10

volunteer pre-surveys were submitted

10

volunteer post-surveys were submitted

6

staff post-surveys were submitted

Volunteering activity

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

17

volunteers were recruited

527

patients were supported by
VtC volunteers

282

staff were supported
by VtC volunteers

VtC volunteers supported over 500 patients and staff within the 14-month initial delivery period. This support was delivered by 17 volunteers undertaking their Community Befriending and Ward Befriending volunteering role, delivering over 280 hours of volunteering support.

Staff and patient support tasks included:

- Provide company to patients under the direction of the Occupational Therapy/Nursing team
- Help with group activity sessions lead by therapists and rehabilitation assistants working on the ward and encourage patients to participate
- Help get activity spaces ready for the groups and clear them following activity groups
- Spend time with patients and their families engaging them in activities such as reading, crosswords puzzles, etc.
- Help patients with tasks such as getting newspapers, toiletries, refreshments
- Show family members and visitors around the ward

///

- Ensure patients have a warm welcome from visiting staff during their appointments
- Provide company to patients under the direction of the nurse in charge
- Spend time with patients and their families engaging them in conversation and activities where appropriate
- Assist patients and carers with completion of questionnaires where appropriate

Evaluation findings: volunteers

At the time of evaluation, 12 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 10 of the 12 volunteers securing employment, into roles such as health care assistants, admin assistants, rehab assistants. The remaining two volunteers secured places on further education courses related to health and care, including a Nursing Associate Apprenticeship.

11

volunteers have taken up
employment in the NHS

2

volunteers secured further
education or training
related to health and care

100%

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

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

"[The] team have gone above and beyond in supporting me achieve my goals. This has been a wonderful experience for me especially coming from a place where such things don't happen."

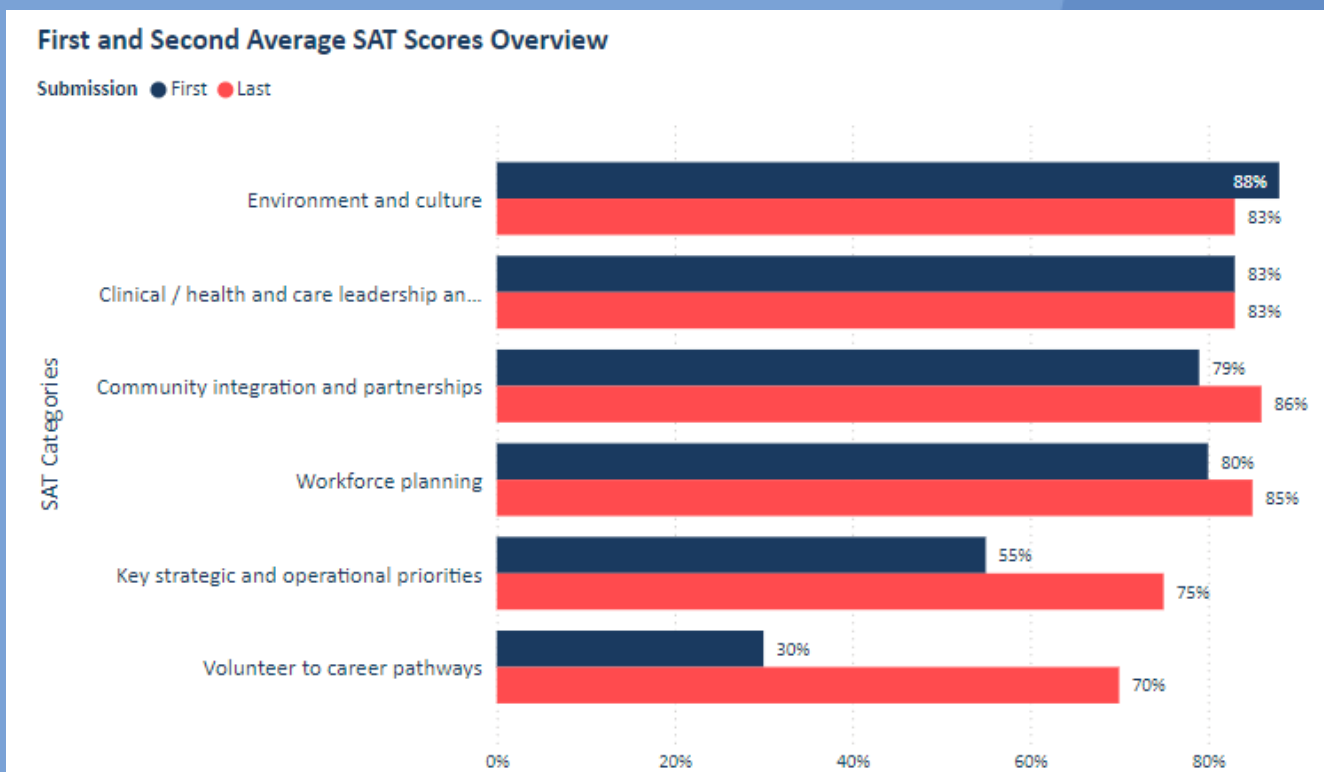
"It is a good experience that I would encourage everybody to join."

Evaluation findings: organisation



After completing the VtC programme, there was an **increase in the overall SAT score, which improved from 71% to 81%.**

Similar to the positive change in the overall SAT score result, **we have observed an improvement in the scores for four of the individual elements of organisational improvement for volunteering.**



Highlights:

- Improved working relationships
- Establishment of Widening Access Steering Group
- Working with community partners

Challenges

- Recruiting project lead
- 121 support requires dedicated time
- Understanding visas and eligibility

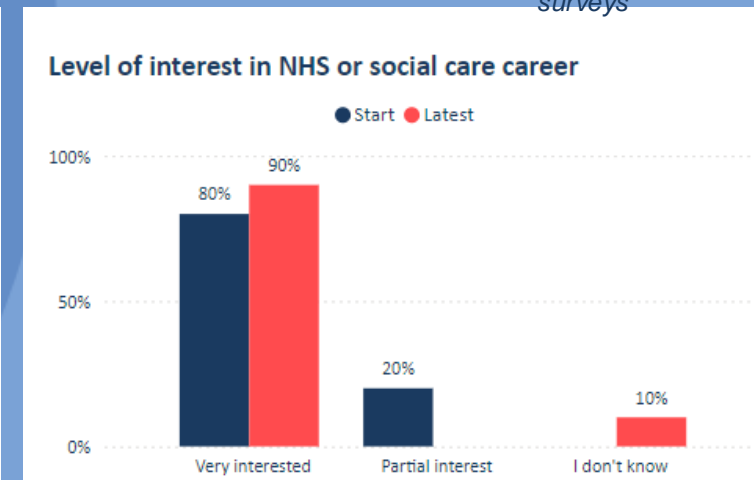
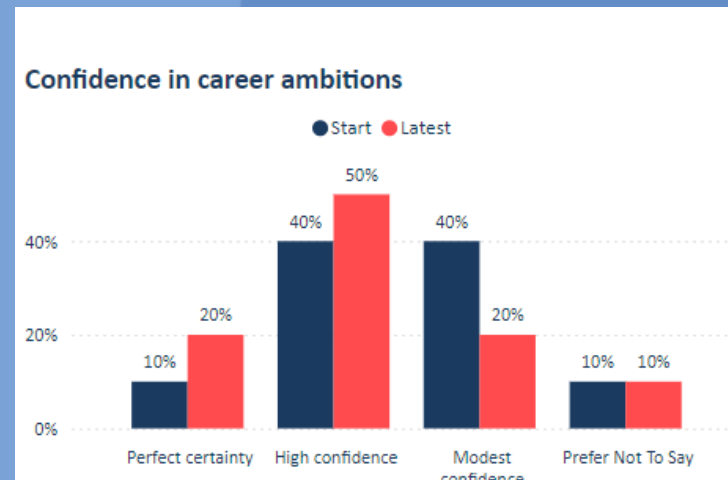
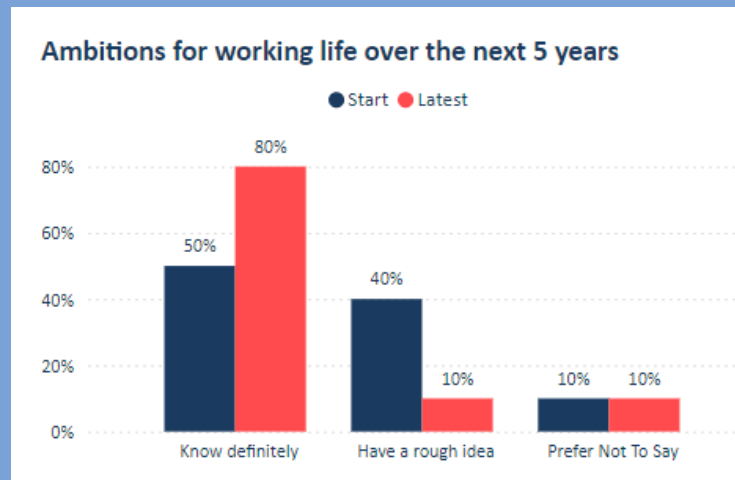
Evaluation findings – Volunteers

After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who **knew definitely what they wanted to do with their working lives increased from 50% to 80%**. Additionally, **100% of volunteers maintained or increased their certainty** in their ambitions through the VtC programme.

The proportion of volunteers who had **perfect certainty in their career ambitions slightly increased by 10%** by the end of the programme (10% to 20%). In addition, 89% 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 increased from 80% to 90%**. **100% of volunteers either maintained or increased their interest** in this career pathway as a result of participating in the VtC programme.

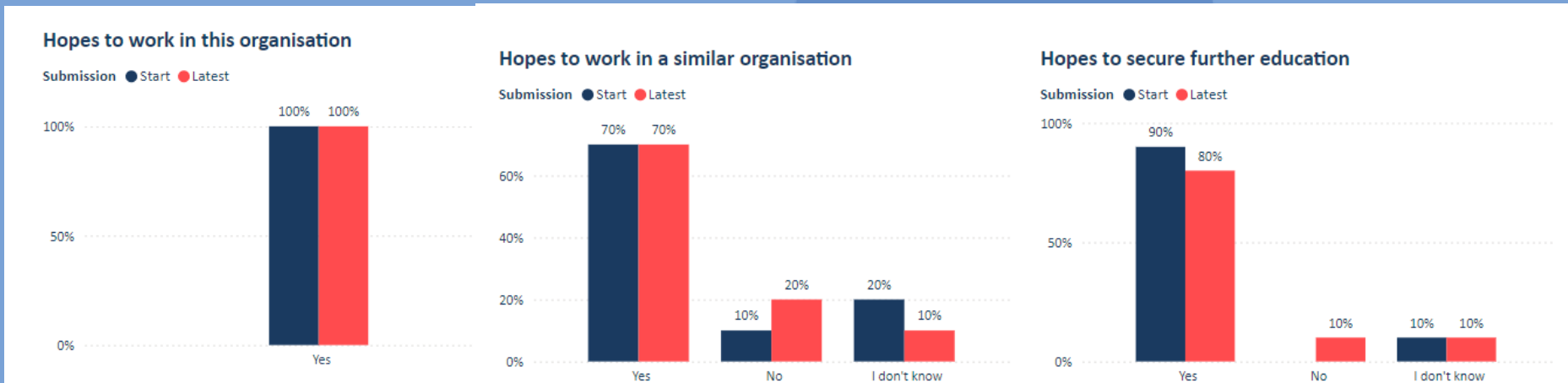
N= 10 pre- and post-surveys



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:

- **10 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.
- **8 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to further education aligned to their career goals.



N= 10 pre- and post-surveys

Evaluation findings: Volunteer case study - Ben

Ben, a Volunteer at Edgware Hospital, was asked about his experience of participating in the VtC programme.

How long have you been a volunteer at CLCH?

I started volunteering in April last year. I started in the PPE stockroom at Edgware Community Hospital with another volunteer. The second position I do is with the Diabetes team as an Appointment Reminder volunteer.

Why did you sign up to do the VtC programme?

I saw it through one of your [Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust] newsletters. I didn't originally apply to volunteer because I wasn't looking for any particular career within the NHS, but as I continued volunteering, I thought 'well that looks like a fantastic opportunity' so I applied for it. I think I waited a couple weeks and thought it over because I like to think things through before I commit but I thought ultimately it would be a really great opportunity to go for it and there's no harm in applying.

Tell me about the support that you got during VtC

In total it's just been a really positive experience. The support has been really good. The Volunteer team and also the staff who have been working in the teams where I've been volunteering have been really, really good as well. So, it's been overwhelmingly positive.

What has been the outcome of VtC for you?

In early March you [the VtC staff team] got in touch about the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship programmes that were available. I ultimately applied for it and fortunately was successful. I received that news in the last couple weeks or so. So that's the outcome, which I'm very pleased about. It's going to be amazing. It's something very, very different to what I've done in the past, but yeah, really looking forward to it.

Would you recommend the VtC programme for other people who might be thinking about an NHS career?

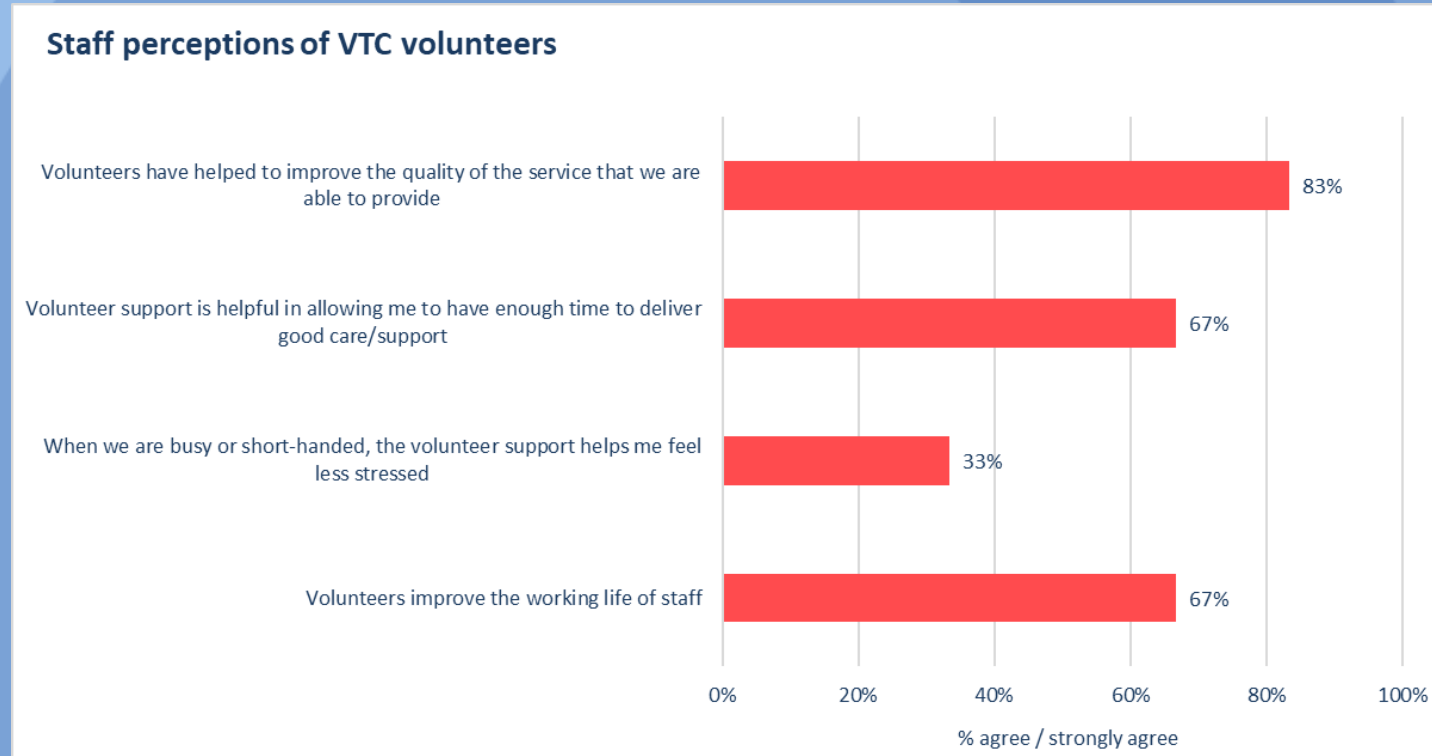
Yes, of course. I think it's always better to try something out before jumping straight into it. So, if the opportunity is there, then I would definitely recommend at least volunteering a little bit, seeing if it is the right thing for you before actually making that decision to apply for a position.

Gaining that experience is really important and it might also in the long term save a lot of time, maybe it's not the right thing for you, but at least you know.



Evaluation findings: staff

The VtC programme illustrated positive staff perceptions of the impact volunteers can have for them and their organisation.



n= 6 surveys

Evaluation findings: Staff case study – Specialist OT

Vanessa, a Specialist Occupational Therapist at Barnet Hospital was asked about their experience of the VtC programme.



What did you know about volunteering before VtC?

I didn't have experience of managing them. They used to appear on the ward in my last role, but I was never really sure what they did.

Why did you want to get involved with VtC?

It's a great opportunity for them and it's really nice. We've had such great experiences with people who are medical students coming here and then obviously going on with their careers. I just think it's a great opportunity for them and it's nice to help people get into the NHS. We need as many people as possible!

It's been our first time with this project, how did you find it?

It's been really good. We've had two quite different characters. One of them has been very motivated and really wants to be in the NHS in any shape or form and does get involved in all sorts of things. When he chats to patients, they really enjoy his company. The other mentee is a bit different but wants to be what he was doing in his home country which can't happen yet. He's not so involved with the patients, and we had to really nurture him a bit more and we haven't got as much time to do that. Generally, it has been a good experience.

How have you found the support from the Volunteering team with the project?

The team are great. You're there if I need you and I think it's enough. As long as I know who is coming and when, it's great. Actually, I think I'll be even better at the induction, I've got a good idea of what they need now. Our patient file is our main thing, and we need to make sure we're all aware of that and using it as it has resources and activities in it they can use if they're a bit stuck.

It is a bit daunting, especially for some of the younger ones, they can find it difficult to just sit and chat to the older patients.

Would you be involved again in the future?

Yes absolutely, why not? They have been an asset.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- The implementation of the VtC programme in Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust has been successful in organisational improvement related to volunteering, maintaining volunteers' interest in working for this organisation and demonstrating positive 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 relevant paid employment in the NHS and volunteers securing further education.

Recommendations:

- Our next steps are to:
 - Continue the programme as business as usual – third cohort in recruitment
 - Being more specific with the roles and targeting advertising
 - Creating centralised support for all volunteers needing career support/advice.

Acknowledgements:

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

Helpforce has helped us set up and deliver this programme and has supported analysing the data and setting out the impact evidence of this programme.

All findings, conclusions and recommendations are from the Volunteering Team at Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

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.



Volunteer to Career

Thank you



in partnership with
helpforce



Analysis completed by Helpforce, 2023.