



a Helpforce programme

Volunteer to Career

Volunteer to Career Programme

Findings report

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

June – 2024



Lewisham and Greenwich
NHS Trust

funded by NHS England

in partnership with
helpforce

Our VtC Career Pathway

1. Volunteer induction and resource pack: Volunteers are met on the maternity ward for an informal meet and greet. They are introduced to the clinical lead, informed about the VtC role, the organisation and the pathways available to them. Volunteers are handed a Welcome resource pack and are encouraged to ask any clarifying questions about the process.

2. Initial career goals discussion/interview: A formal meeting is held with the volunteer where we establish their goals for engagement regarding their potential career choices. This is to develop an idiosyncratic plan, highlighting the necessary steps needed to support them in achieving their goal through the VtC pathway. We agree on scheduled dates for reviews to track progress and problem solve any difficulties.

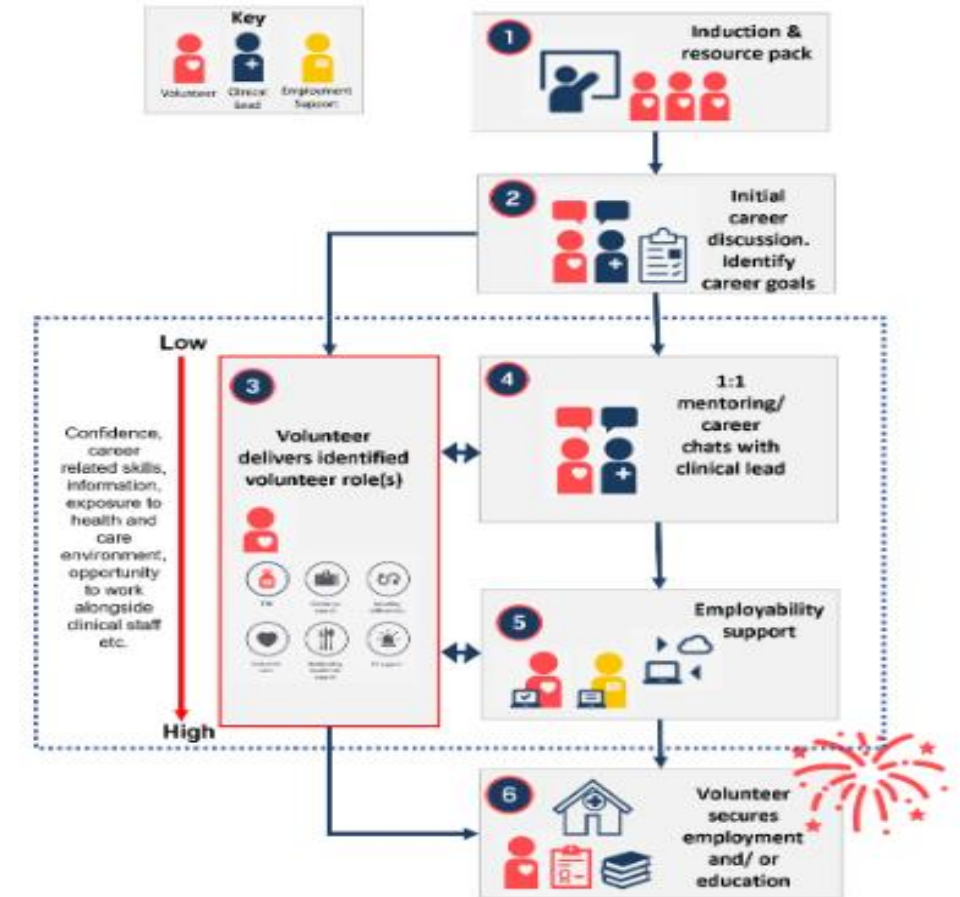
3. Impactful volunteer roles: The volunteer role is tailored to suit the end goals of the VtC pathway. The aim is to identify and develop the necessary skills, experience and exposure. The clinical lead liaises with the head of resourcing (Bank team), Evaluation, Engagement and Wellbeing team, The leadership and development team, ward managers and maternity recruitment midwives. Dependent on the Volunteers needs, this provides a well-tailored role enabling the volunteer to move through the pathway.

4. Mentoring and ongoing career support: Volunteers are provided with an open forum clinic to provide an opportunity to discuss queries, receive more information and encouragement to engage in more structured career-based conversations with relevant mentors and the VtC Clinical Lead.

5. Experience through volunteering: Volunteers attend volunteering sessions in the clinical environment, approximately 2-4 hours over 3 to 6 months. Support and mentoring are available from Healthcare professionals.

6. Employability support: The clinical lead assists in the provision of employment skills such as interview techniques, and CV writing. Volunteers are also sign posted to the Leadership and Development team for more in-depth support for roles outside the clinical leads remit or scope of knowledge.

7. Securing employment or education: The volunteers are supported to undertake applications to identified relevant employment opportunities or further education



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** - LGT 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.

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust's programme overview and objectives :

- **The volunteering role(s) VtC volunteers undertook and what this involved, Maternity ward volunteer:** Volunteers in the VtC pathway took on roles in the maternity ward, offering non-clinical support to patients. Their duties included providing companionship and helping to maintain a clean and tidy environment, which allowed the ward staff to focus more on their clinical responsibilities.
- **An overview of the VtC programme:** The VtC program allows volunteers to explore their career interests in health care while gaining valuable experience. The volunteers have the chance to shadow midwives and healthcare professionals, observing procedures and patient interactions. This experience was designed to give them an understanding of clinical workflows and patient care processes. Volunteers were supported by the VtC clinical lead to work alongside existing staff, learning about their roles and career opportunities within our organisation..
- **An overview of the benefits you anticipated the programme would have for the organisation:** This program has been pivotal in shaping and delivering career pathways for volunteers. It has enabled the Trust to better integrate volunteering into workforce strategies and has facilitated the development of effective career pathways for volunteers, leading to relevant paid employment in the NHS and further educational opportunities. Additionally, the program has helped us highlight the value of volunteering within our organization, reinforcing our role as an anchor institution in the community.

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 project. Success measures included: addressing the gaps in recruitment, enhancing the retention of clinical staff., promoting the retention of volunteers, expansion of recruitment and educational opportunities for volunteers, supporting the trust in areas of need and to also support the local community.

- 1. Produce and distribute an advert for the volunteer role** that will provide the experience, exposure, skills and confidence needed to develop a pipeline of volunteers interested in a health and care career. Success measured included: The initial cohort comprised of a mixture of 6th form college students and general community with an interest in working within healthcare. During the Covid-19 pandemic people were negatively impacted and missed valuable work experience and learning opportunities. Our proposal focused on progression and purpose, giving them valuable practical experience in maternity wards. Helping transform health services and in addition enhance the experience for patients and the wider public.
- 2. Steering group (Task and Finish Group) in place** to support the delivery of the project. Success measures included: steering group in place, evidence of value to the project demonstrated and documented. The task and Finish group included members from Workforce, Clinical, Voluntary Services as well as Training and Development. Building these connections with stakeholders early was invaluable in identifying beneficial employment routes for the volunteers. This in turn ensures the Trust has an effective Strategy/policy in place which is delivered with its key principles embedded across the Trust.
- 3. Identify and establish key relationships/partnerships** to support the delivery of the project, including internal and external connections. Success measures included: community organisations established as a source for recruiting volunteers to the pathway and Trust advertisements, provision of training and employment support by clinical lead
- 4. Organisational agreement to sustain** the VtC pathway following the completion of the initial delivery period, with ambitions to scale the programme to support wider workforce needs. Success measures included: The volunteering agenda is well integrated within our organisation's HR and / or workforce strategies. The implementation of the VtC programme in Lewisham and Greenwich NHS 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.

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 Lewisham and Greenwich 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 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:

24

volunteers were recruited

3,600

patients were supported by
VtC volunteers

91

staff were supported
by VtC volunteers

VtC volunteers supported 3600 patients and 91 staff within the 9-month initial delivery period. This support was delivered by 24 volunteers undertaking their volunteering role , delivering approximately 3000 hours of volunteering support.

Staff and patient support tasks included:

- Tidying the patient's bedside table
- Offering support with conversation and company to patients who may feel isolated from friends and family
- Assisting with mealtimes by taking food to patients, and ensuring food and drinks are within easy reach of the patient
- Talking/engaging with relatives and carers
- Offering refreshments and support to woman and relatives (sometimes women need their jugs of water replenished or a cup of tea)
- Helping staff with stock replenishment
- Distribute and collect Friends and Family Test surveys for patients when they are due to be discharged from the ward
- Helping to put together postnatal packs.

Evaluation findings: volunteers

At the time of evaluation, 22 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 4 of 22 **volunteers securing employment**, into roles such as health care assistants. Additionally, ten **volunteers secured places on further education courses** related to health and care, including Medicine, dentistry and midwifery.

4

volunteers have taken up employment in the NHS

10

volunteers secured further education or training related to health and care

64%

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

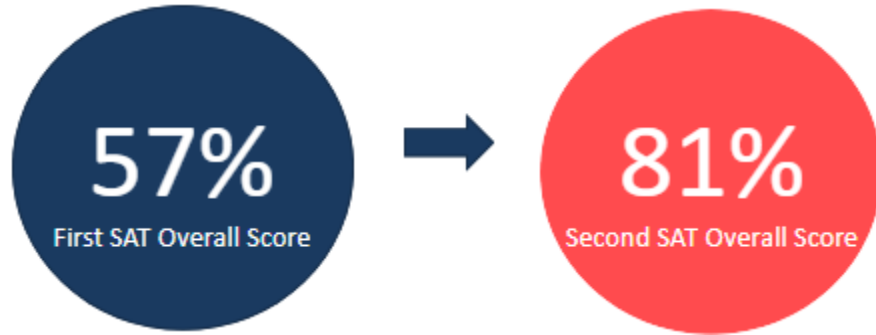
Volunteers provided some additional insights into their experience of being a VtC volunteer...

"I believe this has been a great opportunity for me and I believe I would not be employed by the NHS if it wasn't for my volunteering."

"Very excited to finally start a new role and it was all achieved by volunteering."

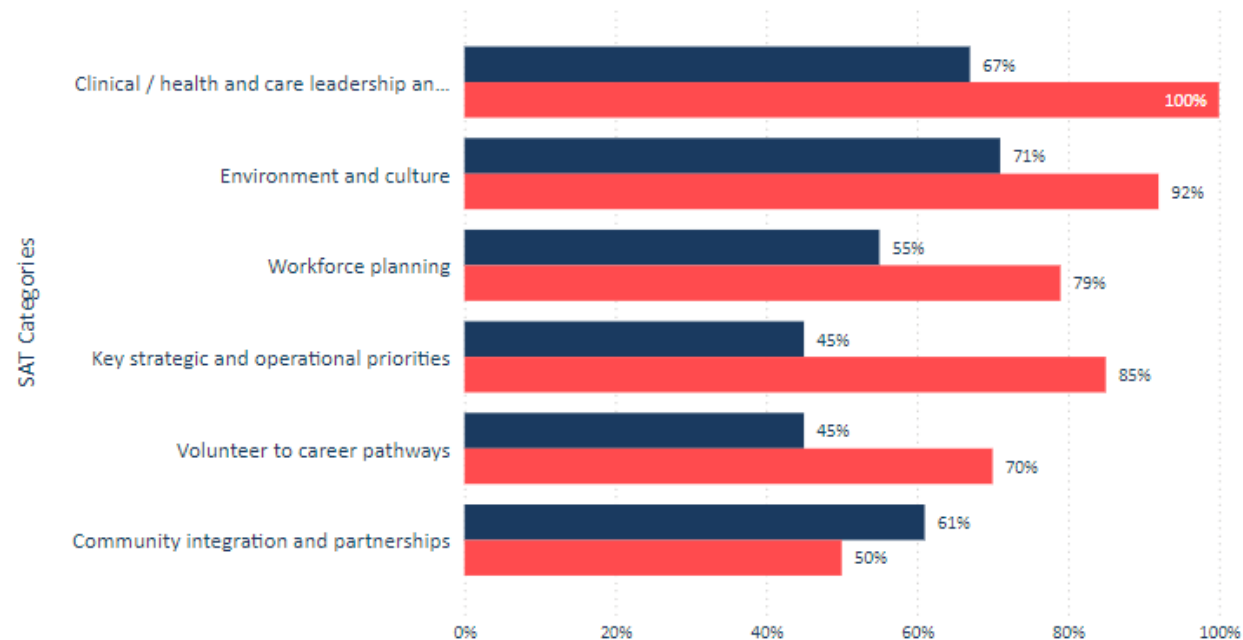
"It has given me confidence to go after the job that I want and get it. The staff has been very inclusive and helpful."

Evaluation findings: organisation



First and Second Average SAT Scores Overview

Submission ● First ● Last



After completing the VtC programme, there was an **increase in the overall SAT score, which improved from 57% to 81%.**

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

Evaluation findings – Volunteers

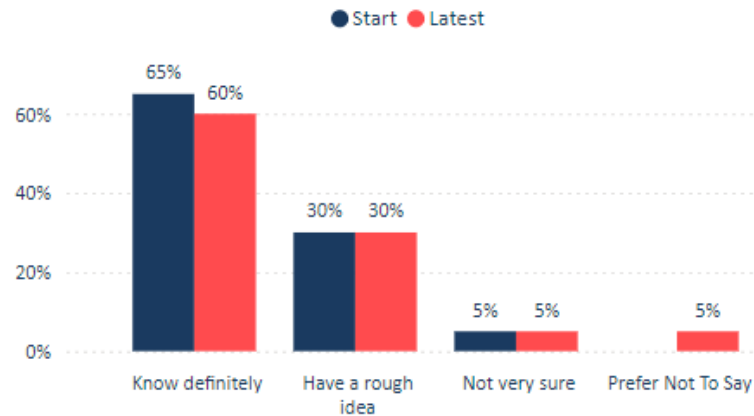
After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who **knew definitely what they wanted to do with their working lives slightly decreased from 65% to 60%**. Additionally, **95% of volunteers maintained or increased their certainty** in their ambitions through the VtC programme.

The proportion of volunteers who had **perfect certainty in their career ambitions slightly increased from 10% to 15%** by the end of the programme. In addition, **84% of volunteers maintained or increased their confidence** in achieving these ambitions through the VtC programme.

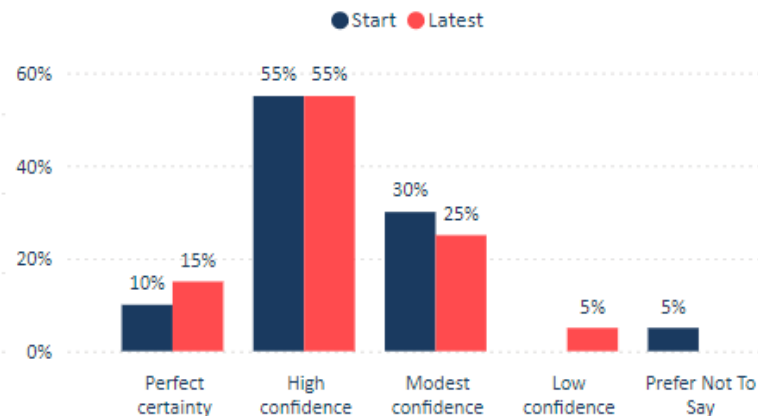
After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who were **very interested in an NHS or social care career increased from 85% to 95%**. **100% of volunteers either maintained or increased their interest** in this career pathway as a result of participating in the VtC programme.

N= 20 pre- and post-surveys

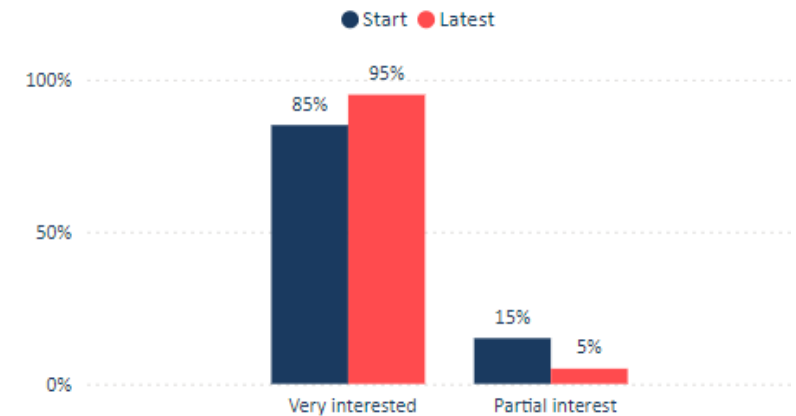
Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years



Confidence in career ambitions



Level of interest in NHS or social care career



Evaluation findings – Volunteers

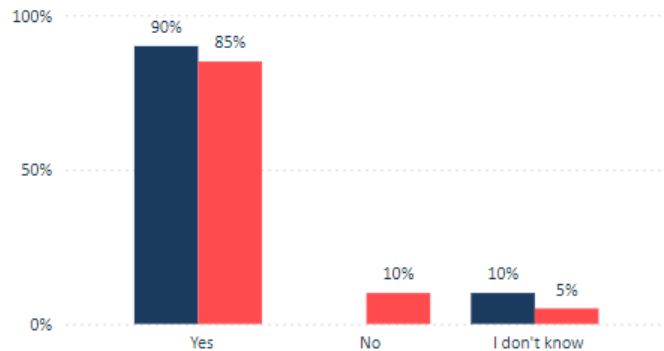
Volunteers were also asked about their hopes and if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training:

- **17 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to employment with our organisation.
- **16 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to employment in a similar health or care organisation.
- **18 volunteers** hoped their volunteering role would lead to further education aligned to their career goals.

N= 20 pre- and post-surveys

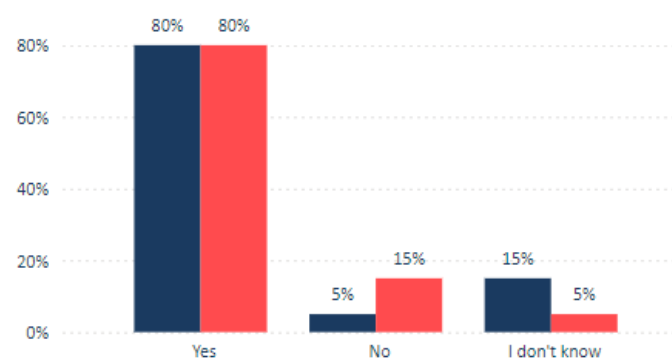
Hopes to work in this organisation

Submission ● Start ● Latest



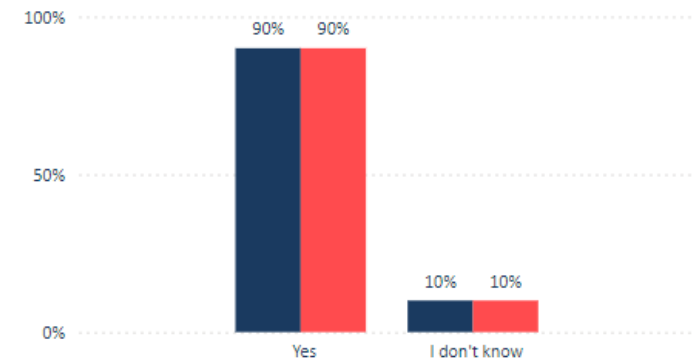
Hopes to work in a similar organisation

Submission ● Start ● Latest



Hopes to secure further education

Submission ● Start ● Latest



This is a positive outcome as a high proportion of volunteer responses fall within the 'Yes' category, signifying optimism and certainty among volunteers.

Evaluation findings – Volunteer case study



“

Sue – Joined LGT Volunteer to Career pathway and secured a role at trust in January 2024. Sue is a mum who was made redundant from her office job in July last year:

“Advice is to create an account with Trac and keep looking every day. Also, on Indeed they sometimes advertise open mornings to help progress with a career in the NHS and help you fill out an application.

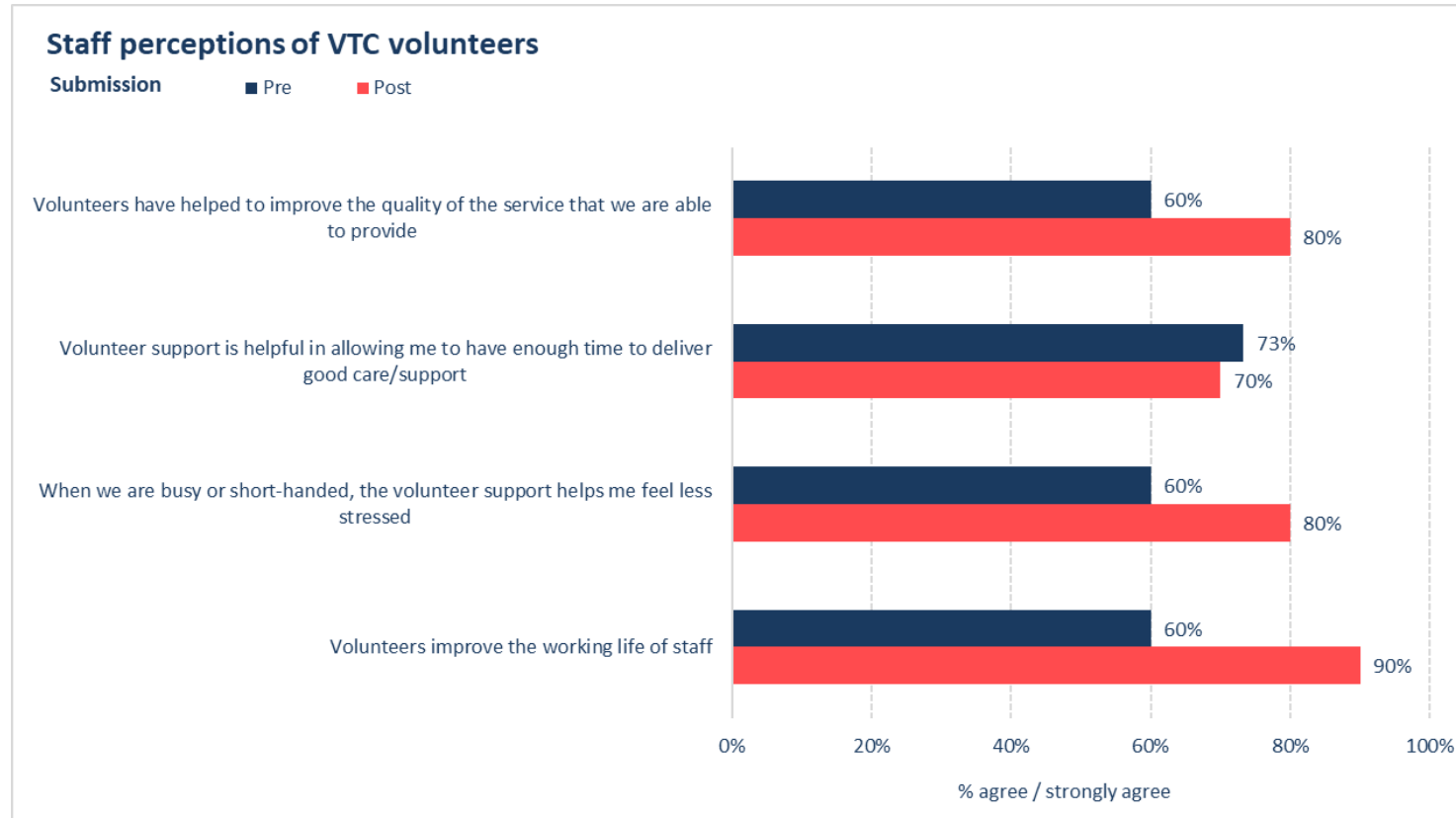
When doing your shift within a ward keep yourself proactive, talk to staff let yourself be known to them and always keep asking if there is anything they can help with. Ask to shadow them when doing rounds so you gain more knowledge. Ask volunteer services if there any programs coming up in the near future. Being consistent and good time keeping!

As the saying goes "if you don't ask you don't get"

”

Evaluation findings: staff

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



n= 15 pre-surveys, 10 post-surveys

These scores show an increase on the positive impact on staff perceptions about volunteers and volunteering as a result of the programme.

A staff member reflected upon the difference VtC volunteers had made to patients and staff...

“A volunteer was very enthusiastic and proactive in making beds so patients could be transferred from labour ward without delays and my student ended up showing her some of the things they learn while at work. It would be great to work with her as a staff member “

Krasi, Junior midwife, Postnatal ward

Evaluation findings: staff case study

“I thoroughly enjoyed my role as the Clinical Lead/Project Officer for the volunteers. Despite my background in midwifery and research, managing the project mostly independently was a new and rewarding experience that has significantly contributed to my professional growth as a leader. I am delighted that several participants secured jobs as a result. The connections I made with stakeholders and volunteers have been invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for their collaboration. A special thanks goes to the Helpforce team, Margarita Vidiella, Head of Charity and Volunteers and Sarah Carroll, Voluntary Services Supervisor, for their unwavering support, which was instrumental in the success of this project. Knowing that we made a difference for individuals who might not have otherwise known how to progress in their healthcare careers has been incredibly gratifying.”

Chidera Nwokedi, Volunteer to Career Clinical Lead/ Project Officer



Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- The implementation of the VtC programme in Lewisham and Greenwich NHS 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 relevant paid employment in the NHS and volunteers securing further education.
- LGT is still seeking sustainable funding for the continuation of this programme and are exploring alternative funding avenues. LGT is looking at the evolution and devolution of the pathway into the trust as a global project, especially with the potential involvement of the nursing side to enhance its success.

Recommendations:

- Engage and consistently update senior management and department heads from the project's inception.
- Establish early connections with stakeholders.
- Consider developing meaningful new roles in the future to enhance volunteer experiences.

Acknowledgements:

Our Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme was carried out in partnership between 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, setting out the impact evidence of this programme.

We'd like to thank all those involved in this programme and especially:

- The Helpforce team: Mark Burrett, Programme Manager and Beth Hughes, Project Coordinator for all their guidance, encouragement and support throughout this programme.
- The members of our Task and Finish Group
- All the Maternity team at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust for supporting this initiative

All findings, conclusions and recommendations are from the Voluntary Services at Lewisham and Greenwich 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.

Thank you

Team *lgt*

in partnership with
helpforce



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Analysis completed by Helpforce, 2023.