



Volunteer to Career

Volunteer to Career Programme

Findings report

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust

June 2024



Liverpool Women's
NHS Foundation Trust

funded by NHS England

in partnership with
helpforce

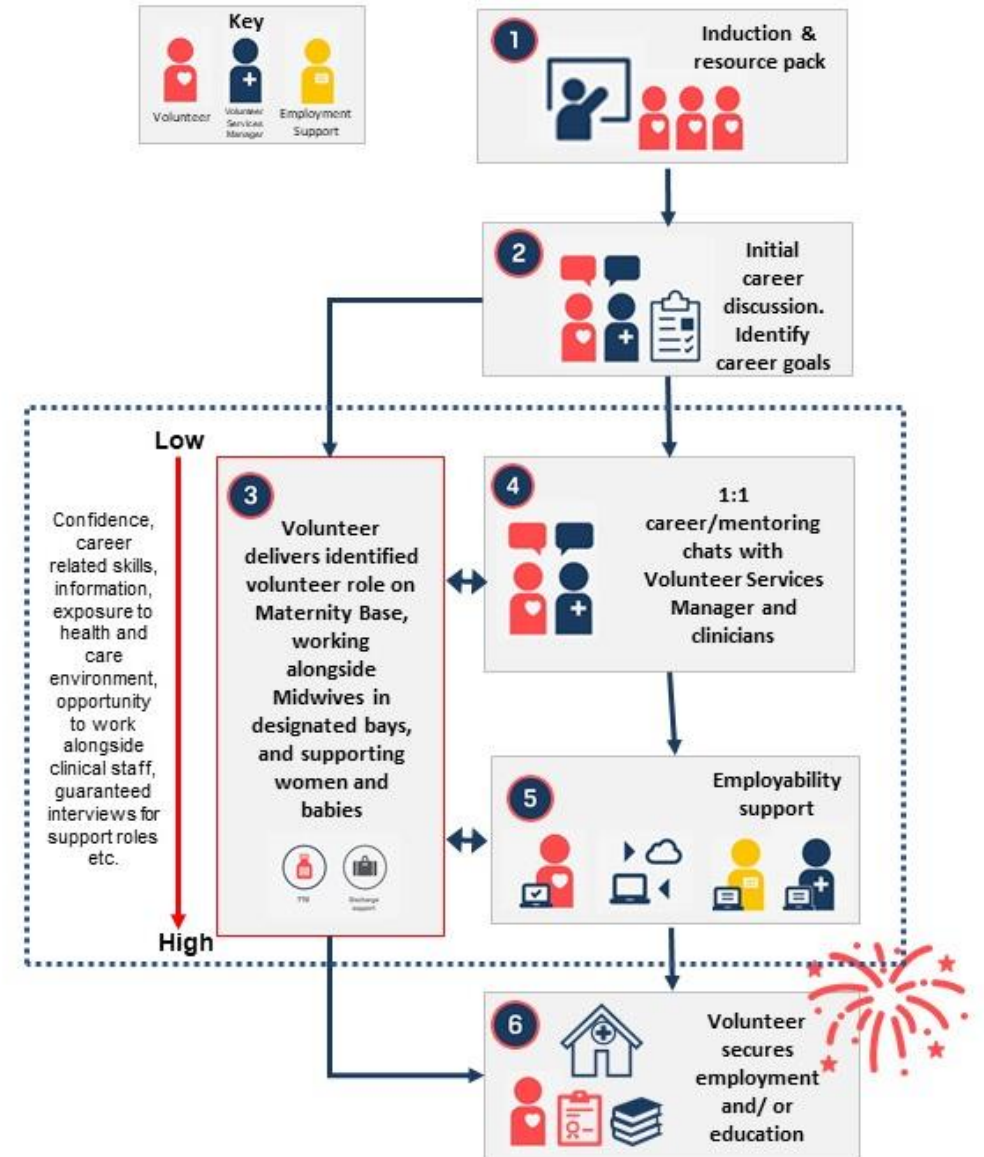
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Our VtC Career Pathway

- 1. Recruitment:** Volunteers already onboarded or in the recruitment process attended an information session to make an informed decision to apply for the VtC Career Pathway. Expressions of interest received, and individuals met for an informal chat and conversation to establish their career ambitions.
- 2. Volunteer induction and resource pack:** Provide a local induction on Maternity Base with Ward Manager/Shift Leader. Opportunity for the volunteers to meet their peers, receive uniform and portfolio.
- 3. Impactful volunteer role:** The Maternity Base Bay volunteer role is mapped to local recruitment needs to help volunteer to develop the required skills, experience and exposure. HR, OD, clinicians and support workers are collaborated with throughout the role design process to ensure the role is well designed, meets the needs and enables the volunteer to move through the 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 Lead.
- 5. Work experience and training:** Volunteers attend volunteering sessions in the clinical environment, approximately 60-100 hours over a maximum of 12 months. Volunteers complete the National Volunteer Certificate and Care Certificate (excluding observations). Volunteers are encouraged to complete a list of observations with a clinician while attending a volunteering session.
- 6. Employability support:** Provision of employment skills such as interview techniques and CV writing are offered to volunteers through HR, OD and local community providers.
- 7. Securing employment or education:** Volunteers are supported to undertake applications to identified relevant employment opportunities or further education. The Trusts HR policies updated to guarantee volunteers interviews for support work roles in clinical areas.



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.

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust Hospital programme overview and objectives :

- **The volunteering role(s) VtC volunteers undertook and what this involved**, Volunteers participating in the Volunteer to Career pathway, undertook a ward support volunteer role. This role was designed to assist and support Midwives and support staff on the Maternity Base inpatient ward to meet the needs of patients and to enable ward staff more time to carry out their clinical duties. To undertake the volunteer role, individuals must go through a structured application, vetting and training process.
- **An overview of the VtC programme**. The VtC programme enables volunteers to explore their career interests, while simultaneously providing them with an opportunity to gain experience of volunteering within a Health and Care environment. Volunteers are provided with experience of working alongside existing staff as they are supported to understand their volunteering role. They will be made aware of career opportunities within our organisation and supported to undertake extensive training delivered by our OD team and the volunteer to career lead."
- **An overview of the benefits you anticipated the programme would have for the organisation**. The VtC programme was also designed to result in several positive benefits for our organisation. Alongside building a skilled and diverse volunteer workforce who can provide support to our staff and service users, it aims to build a skilled potential workforce for our organisation and/or the wider health and care sector.

Our VtC programme objectives

The VtC programme began in June 2023, and the initial programme ran until June 2024. With programme management and evaluation support provided by [Helpforce](#), we implemented and delivered our VtC programme to achieve these programme objectives.

- 1. Deliver a sustainable VtC Pathway** that is ready to scale to address wider workforce needs by the end of the project. Success measures included: an increase in positive volunteering culture, integration of volunteers within workforce planning strategies, clinical sponsorship of volunteering programmes, community integration and partnerships, integration of volunteering within strategic and operational priorities, and volunteer to career pathways. All these measures will be assessed via the VtC self-assessment tools (more details on this are provided within the evaluation approach slide).
- 2. 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: role live, successful recruitment of volunteers, evidence of the role positively impacting volunteer career goals.
- 3. Steering group** to support the delivery of the project. Success measures included: steering group in place, evidence of value to the project demonstrated and documented.
- 4. 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, provision of training and employment support by internal colleagues.
- 5. 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: VtC built into workforce strategy and people planning, funding secured for resource to support the pathway after the initial delivery period, VtC pathway processes embedded into business as usual.

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 Liverpool Women's NHSFT 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:

16

volunteer pre-surveys
were submitted

16

volunteer post-
surveys were
submitted

14

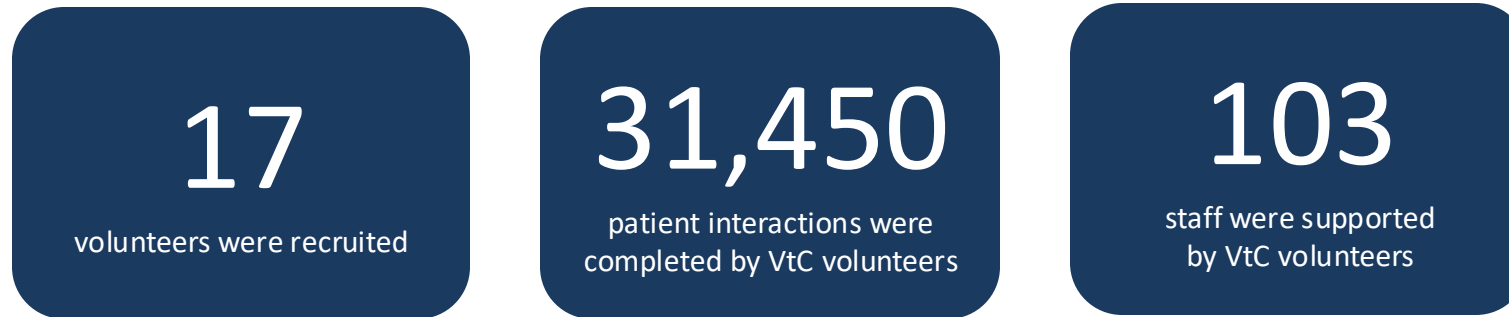
staff pre-surveys were
submitted

19

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:



VtC volunteers supported 103 staff and completed 31,450 tasks and/or patient interactions within the 6-month initial delivery period. This support was delivered by 17 volunteers undertaking the Maternity Base Bay volunteering role, delivering 810 hours of volunteering support.

Maternity Base Bay Volunteer Role

Role purpose:

The role will support the obstetrics multi-disciplinary team to help provide better care to women by alleviating certain tasks, allowing staff to dedicate more time to clinical duties and training, thus improving and reinforcing the current workforce. It provides the volunteer with an opportunity to learn about the different roles that multi-disciplinary team play within an obstetrics inpatient environment whilst gaining valuable training, insight and experience for potential career development if desired.

Ultimately the role focuses on enhancing our patient, visitor and staff experience, and to provide our volunteers with an enjoyable, rewarding and worthwhile experience. The staff on Maternity Base welcome volunteers from all walks of life, experience and backgrounds and value the contribution they make to the care of our women and babies.

Some Key tasks:

- *Spending time chatting to patients – huge benefit of feeling valued and listened to*
- *Making midwives and other staff aware of any patient concerns*
- *Assisting staff in preparing rooms and bed areas for new patients, and supporting staff during the admittance procedure*
- *Assisting in transferring women from Delivery Suite to Maternity Base*
- *Supporting mothers who: have difficulty lifting and holding their babies, are having ‘skin to skin’ contact with their babies and watching over babies if requested by patients whilst they take showers etc. Make tea and toast for patients when directed by ward staff.*
- *Supporting high staff pressures areas i.e. chasing discharge summaries, medication errands, gathering patient feedback, patient info leaflets and signposting, welcome to ward, and transport arrangements*

Evaluation findings: volunteers

To date 12 volunteers completed the pathway out of 17 volunteers recruited.

Through the VtC programme and the career support provided, volunteers applied for jobs and attended interviews. These applications resulted in **6 volunteers securing employment**, into roles such as Ward Clerk, Neonatal Assistant, Healthcare Assistant, Midwifery Support Worker and Research Administrator. A further **6 volunteers secured places on further education courses** related to health and care, including Midwifery Degree and Health and Social Care Level 2.

6

volunteers have taken up
employment in the NHS

6

volunteers secured further
education or training related
to health and care

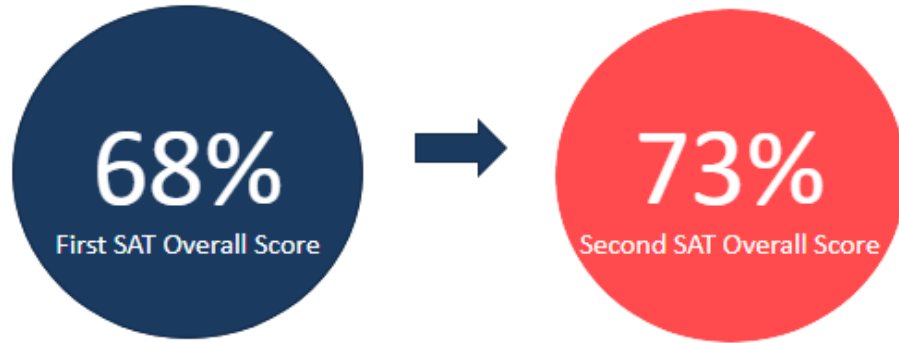
91%

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...

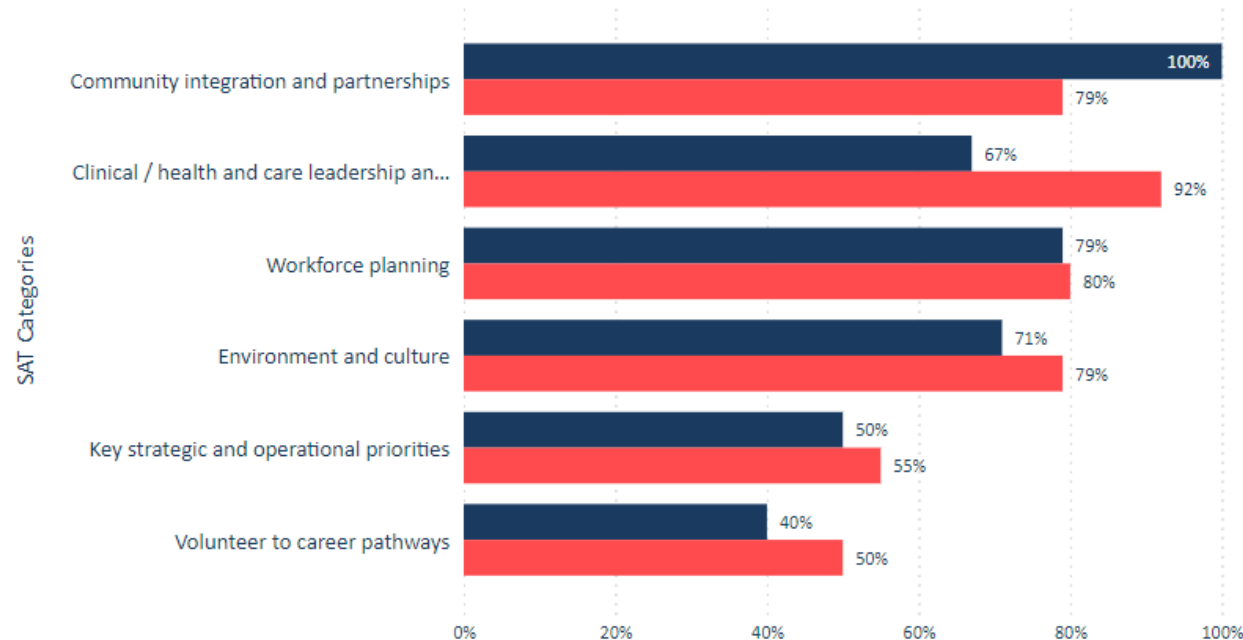
“English isn't my first language, and volunteering has built my confidence in communication and understanding the culture of the NHS, and the procedures for applying for jobs.”

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 slightly improved from 68% to 73%.**

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.**

The scores improved could be attributed to:

- Increased communication with clinical leads, and support to those staff that are supported by volunteers.
- Aligning the Volunteer to Career Pathway with workforce planning strategic ambitions.

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 56%**. Additionally, **80% of volunteers maintained or increased their certainty** in their ambitions through the VtC programme.

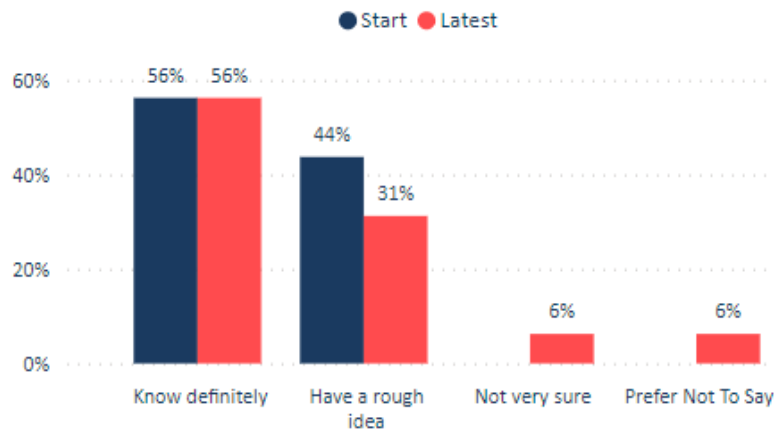
The proportion of volunteers who had **perfect certainty in their career ambitions increased by 7%** by the end of the programme (6% to 13%). **87% of volunteers maintained or increased their confidence** in achieving these ambitions through the VtC programme.

After the VtC programme, the proportion of volunteers who were **very interested in an NHS or social care career remained the same at 94%**. **94% of volunteers either maintained or increased their interest** in this career pathway because of participating in the VtC programme.

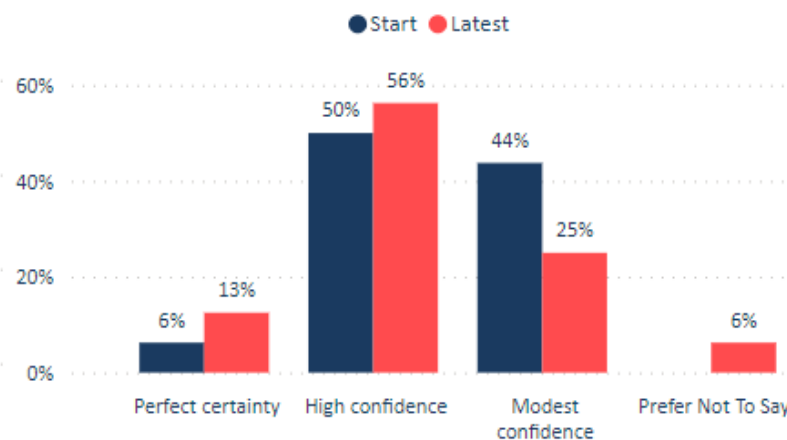
A shift in ambitions for working life over the next 5 years and confidence in career ambitions is likely to have decreased because of changes in two volunteers' circumstances.

N= 16 pre- and post-surveys

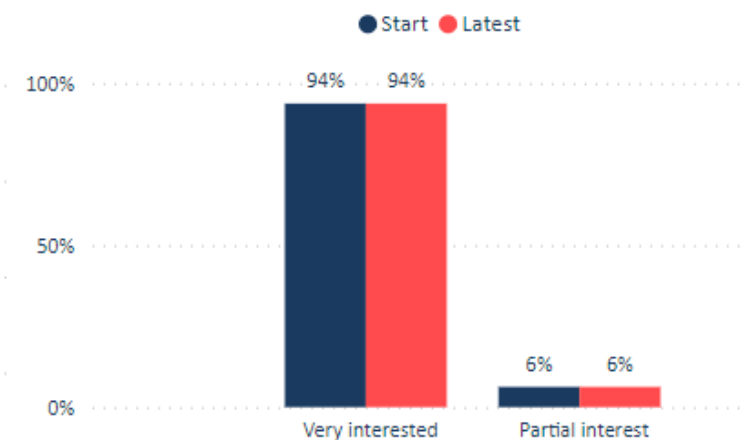
Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years



Confidence in career ambitions



Level of interest in NHS or social care career



Evaluation findings – Volunteers

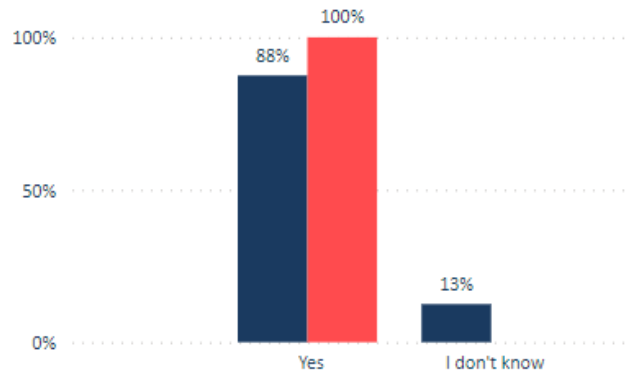
Volunteers were also asked about their hopes and if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training. At the end of the programme:

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

N= 16 pre- and post-surveys

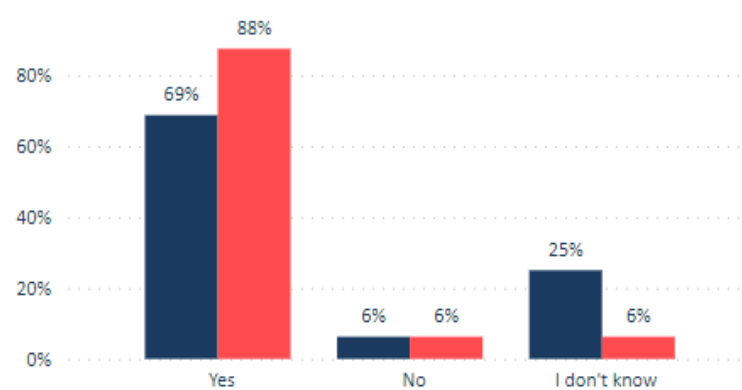
Hopes to work in this organisation

Submission ● Start ● Latest



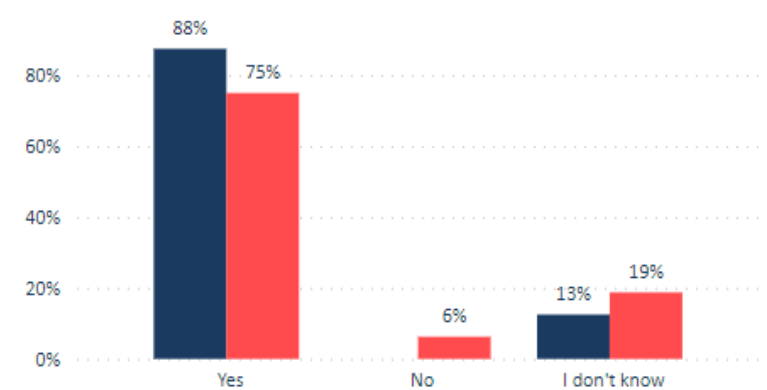
Hopes to work in a similar organisation

Submission ● Start ● Latest



Hopes to secure further education

Submission ● Start ● Latest



All the volunteers on the VtC programme have expressed a positive experience whilst volunteering at the hospital, this is demonstrated in the increased desire to work at the hospital or similar organisation. Reduction in hopes to secure further education is contributed to a small number of volunteers experiencing change in their personal circumstances.

Evaluation findings – Volunteer case study



“

It is so interesting being part of the Volunteer to Career programme at the Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. I have learned a lot of new skills, and gained experience of what it is like to work in the NHS. The most I enjoyed is the training section and particularly the Care Certificate (excluding observations).

I had no reservations about joining the VtC programme, the Volunteer Manager explained it very clearly and it was too good an opportunity to miss.

English is not my first language and I've found that challenging at times, but it didn't detract from the invaluable experience of working alongside the midwives on the Maternity Base inpatient ward, and accessing all the training that's been offered and completing my portfolio, provided as part of the programme.

The programme has helped me gain employment, firstly as a support worker in the community, which unfortunately I had to stop, and secondly as a Neonatal Support Assistant at the Liverpool Women's Hospital.

My new job is only part-time so I plan to continue volunteer at the hospital for as long as possible.

”

Naw Paw Lel – VtC Volunteer

Evaluation findings – Volunteer case study

“

I wanted to participate in the VtC scheme to help facilitate a career change into more patient facing roles. I'd worked at the University of Liverpool for just over 16 years in various administrative roles supporting clinical research, and I'd just started a new part-time role as a research administrator for the Children Growing up in Liverpool study (C-GULL) at LWH. I'd been volunteering at LWH to get some patient facing experience and having enjoyed that I thought that the VtC scheme would be a great way of building on this.

There was also the potential for the scheme to provide the training I would need to work in a more patient facing role on the C-GULL study. In the longer term I felt that the scheme could also help me apply for Healthcare Assistant roles with the possibility of moving into Assistant Practitioner, Research Practitioner or Healthcare Science Assistant/Associate roles in the future.

The opportunities and training the VtC scheme provided have really helped build my confidence and enable me to successfully apply for roles at the hospital. The time on the maternity ward has given me the chance to be able to demonstrate some of the key skills and experience required for patient facing roles, and completing the volunteer version of the Care Certificate has been really helpful and a great thing to add to my CV and evidence on job applications. I've been shortlisted for two jobs so far, and I've been offered a secondment on the C-GULL study which has more of the patient facing elements that I've been looking for.

It's been a great programme and I'm really grateful for the support I've been given.

Thank you!

Beth Taylor – VtC volunteer

”



Evaluation findings – Volunteer case study



Volunteer Feedback on the VtC Programme

What's it like to be part of the VtC programme? What do you enjoy most about it?

"The VtC programme is great, I have found it to be fantastic and have gained confidence in a health care setting as well invaluable experience. Spending time in the hospital getting to help the patients has been my favourite thing."

What is the best thing about VtC?

"The best thing about VtC is the amount of support and training you get. So far, I have not encountered any challenges."

How has volunteering benefitted and helped you?

"Volunteering has benefitted me massively. I wholeheartedly believe that being on the programme has meant that I was offered 3 places to start university in September. I have also gained confidence in a health care setting and interacting with new people. Everyone that has helped me with the programme, from the volunteer co-ordinator and manager, and staff running training sessions, has tailored their support towards helping me get into university rather than getting a job."

What skills have you learned through volunteering?

"I have completed the care certificate which has given me so many hospital-based skills but have also learnt about interacting with the public and people from a wide range of backgrounds."

Would you recommend VtC to other people thinking about volunteering?

"Absolutely! It is such a great way to gain experience in the sector that's hard to get into without experience. It might seem daunting at first being in such a big hospital but everyone there will support and help through everything!"

"The VtC programme has been extremely rewarding and I have loved the experience so far."

Rosemary Orme – VtC Volunteer

Evaluation findings: staff

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

Staff perceptions on the VtC volunteers

Submission ● Pre ● Post



The positive increase in scores is likely attributed to the development of the New Maternity Base Bay volunteer where volunteers on the VtC programme can be supervised and directed by midwives to offer a range of support to them and the patients they care for.

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

“As a manager of a service, they do not support me directly, but they do support the team I manage to deliver the best service and care possible for our patients and visitors. The service would not run as smoothly without their invaluable support, and they absolutely improve our staff’s wellbeing and relieving stress, particularly when we have staff shortages or on very busy shifts.”

Evaluation findings: staff case study

“

Maternity Services was undergoing a comprehensive improvement transformation, and volunteers were to play a part in the transformation plan at Liverpool Women's Hospital. It was fortunate, that the VtC programme coincided with the formation of a new volunteer role on Maternity Services that could directly support some of maternity's high pressure areas, whilst providing valuable experience for individuals considering careers in the NHS.

The new Maternity Base Bay Volunteers have been extremely well received by staff and patients on our 52-bed inpatient ward. Their help has been invaluable in relieving pressures on staff so they can focus on providing clinical care. Simple actions like the volunteers answering the buzzers and being able to support the mums with what they need or informing the midwives when it's a clinical need. We have quite a few midwives who were former volunteers, and they were keen to help develop the volunteers participating in the VtC programme. Consequently, embedding the new volunteer role in Maternity Base was quite straight forward.

It's fantastic that the trust recognises the volunteers as part of talent pool programme to support and help grow our workforce. Volunteers on the VtC programme have the knowledge and experience of working in our fast-paced environment, coupled with the training provided as part of the programme, i.e. Care Certificate (excluding observations) makes them worthy and strong candidates when applying for clinical support role positions at our hospital, therefore it is good practice to guarantee them interviews for these positions when they come up.

Our volunteers are important team members, they help us deliver positive patient experiences, and can help relieve pressures on our staff.

Gillian Walker - Matron for Patient Experience at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust

”



Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- The implementation of the VtC programme in Liverpool Women's Foundation Trust has been successful in organisational improvement related to volunteering, increasing volunteer's confidence in their career ambitions, volunteers securing employment and further education, and improving staff perceptions of the impact that volunteers can have.
- While improvements were seen in five of the SAT elements, a notable decrease was seen in the community integration and partnerships indicator. However, it is important to note that the Trust scored 100% on this indicator at the start of the programme.
- 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.

Recommendations:

- Identify further funding to sustain the programme
- Offer the VtC programme to target groups
- Further improve integration and partnerships in the community

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.

Special thank you and acknowledgements go to individuals and organisations who supported the VtC programme:

- Sheenah Shah from OD, Anne Bridson & Jaymi Whitehead from HR, Joanne Wilson Lead HCA
- Ward Manager's, Midwives and Support staff from Maternity Base
- Gillian Walker, Patient Experience Matron, Rachel London, Deputy Director of HR, and Nasha Elliah, Deputy Director of N&M
- Transforming Lives Company

All findings, conclusions and recommendations are from the Volunteer Service at Liverpool Women's NHSFT.

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



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in partnership with
helpforce



Analysis completed by Helpforce, 2023.



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