

Maternity Base Bay Volunteers Evaluation Report

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust

May 2024 [v3]

helpforce



Liverpool Women's
NHS Foundation Trust

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Executive summary

The project

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust has been delivering established volunteer support on the maternity inpatient ward since 2002. More recently, a new Maternity Base Bay Volunteer role was introduced in June 2023. The service involves volunteers providing support to patients and staff of the bays within the Maternity Base inpatient ward, including providing refreshments, company, running errands and answering bell calls. Volunteers support staff by undertaking housekeeping, restocking activities, orienting patients to the ward and escorting patients to clinic.

Evaluation approach

Using its established [Insight & 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.

Key findings

Volunteers appear to have made a positive difference to patients' moods and wellbeing during their stay in maternity base bay, as well as their overall experience. Additionally, volunteers appear to have made a positive difference to family members/carers' emotional wellbeing.

Volunteers also made a positive impact on staff perceptions, with some reporting that volunteers had helped them improve productivity and their working lives, and all staff respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the support they received. Volunteers themselves also reported gaining personal benefits through volunteering, with the vast majority feeling satisfied with their experience.

Conclusions

The findings from the evaluation of the Maternity Base Bay volunteering project demonstrates the positive impact of volunteer involvement in the department, suggesting that the volunteering role has benefits for patients, family/carers, some staff members and the volunteers themselves.



Service Overview

- The NHS maternity services in the UK strive to provide comprehensive care through prenatal, labour, delivery, and postnatal stages, focusing on safety and personalised support for mothers and their babies.¹
- Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust has an established volunteering role to support patients, families and staff during their time in the Maternity Base Ward, with the hope of improving their experience and wellbeing whilst in the department. Volunteers engage in a variety of activities, including:
 - Assisting patients with refreshments, aiding good nutrition and hydration;
 - Providing companionship to promote their well-being;
 - Assisting patients with language barriers by providing translation support;
 - Supporting the Discharge process;
 - Answering buzzers and;
 - Supporting staff or patients with tasks, e.g. picking up prescriptions, collecting equipment, running errands.
- Between June 2023 and May 2024, there were 11 active volunteers delivering the role, who completed 387 volunteering hours.
- During this time, a large amount of maternity base bay volunteer activity was reported.² In total...

3,422

patient interactions
completed

200

staff were supported

¹ NHS Digital. (2022). NHS Maternity Statistics, England, 2021-22. <https://digital.nhs.uk/pubs/maternity2022>

²Interactions include volunteers providing support to patients with i.e. providing fresh water, hot and cold food, operating a lamp/bed, at discharge, changing/making beds, moving cots to within reach.

Evaluation approach: Outcomes

Helpforce's approach to evaluating...

Using its established *Insight & 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 we collect the necessary data to prove and evidence the outcomes.

Evaluation of the maternity base bay volunteers project at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust was completed using data captured from patients, family/carers, volunteers and staff members. We were looking to answer the following questions about the project:

- What difference have volunteers made to the patients' and family/carer's hospital experience?
- What impact have maternity base bay volunteers had on staff and their perceptions towards volunteering?
- What impact has volunteering had for the volunteers themselves?

The maternity base bay volunteering role aims to achieve a multitude of positive **patient, family/carer, volunteer, staff and organisational outcomes.**



Evaluation approach: Methodology

The evaluation consisted of five different collection methods:

- **Patient surveys** completed following their interaction with maternity base bay volunteers, asking questions regarding their experience of receiving support and outcomes achieved.
- **Family/carer surveys** completed following their interaction with maternity base bay volunteers, asking questions regarding their experience of receiving support and outcomes achieved.
- **Staff surveys** completed as a one-off snapshot survey, asking questions about their experience of working alongside maternity base bay volunteers.
- **Volunteer surveys** completed by volunteers after delivering the role for some time, asking questions regarding their volunteer experience and perceived role impact.



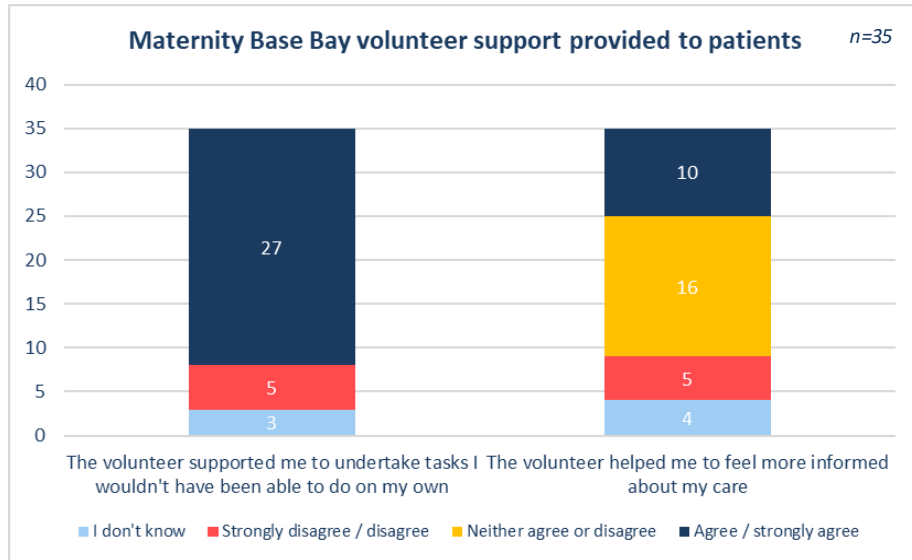
Throughout the report, data findings are linked back to the data collection method using icons at the top right-hand side of the screen. Evidence strength is also rated with icons. These icons are as below.



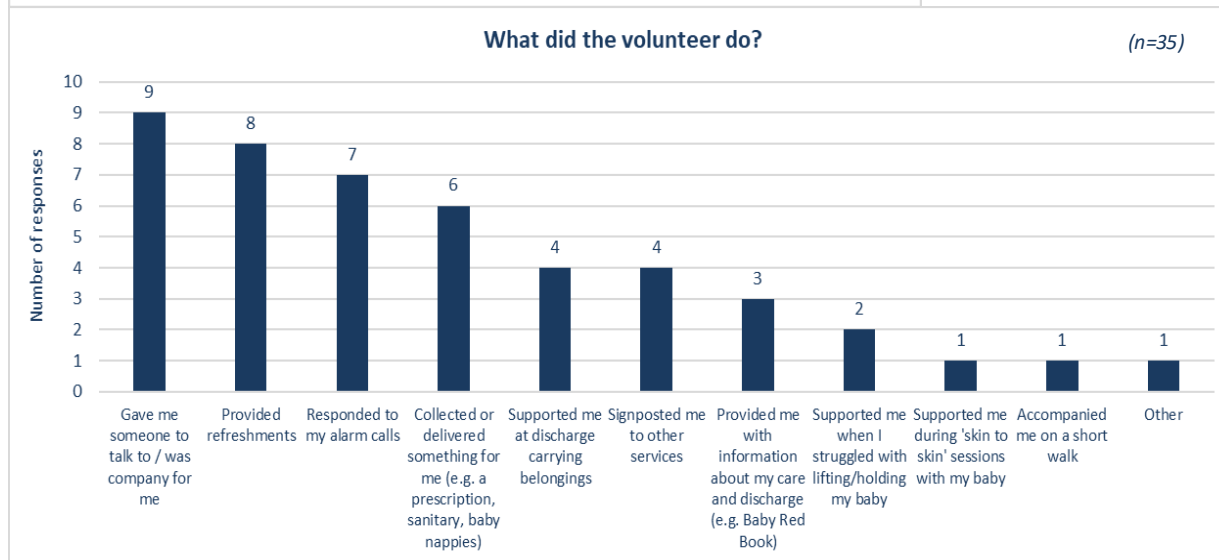
Insight: Support provided by volunteers



Patients were asked to reflect on what support the Maternity Base Ward volunteers provided to them, detailing the activities completed by volunteers.



- For many patients (27 out of 35), volunteers appear to have **provided support to undertake tasks that patients wouldn't be able to do on their own** during their time in the maternity base bay.
- However, when asked if volunteer support helped patients to feel more informed about their care, 16 of 35 patients were neutral suggesting this may not have been a key outcome of volunteer's support.
- Five patients disagreed/strongly disagreed with both statements. However, these respondents did not provide any further insight as to why this was the case. Further, respondents provided positive responses to other survey questions with one explaining "they have been amazing", so it is possible these responses were in error or that the patients were provided with other types of support.

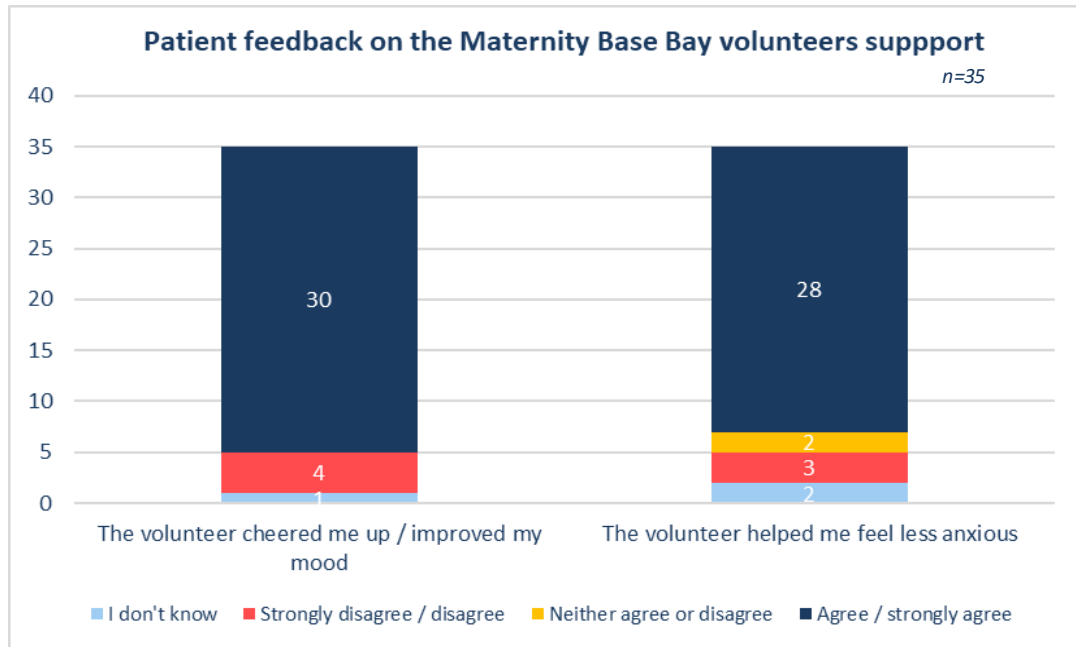


- The most common tasks provided by volunteers included giving company and providing refreshments, with nine and eight patients reporting this respectively. Practical support activities like responding to alarm calls and delivering necessary items were also prominently reported.
- However, specialised or personal support tasks such as help with baby care or accompanying walks are less frequently reported, suggesting these are not the primary focus of volunteer support.
- This data highlights the key role of volunteers in providing both emotional and practical support for patients in the maternity base bay.

Impact: Patient wellbeing



Patients were also asked about the difference that the support provided by the volunteers at the Maternity Base Ward made to their wellbeing.



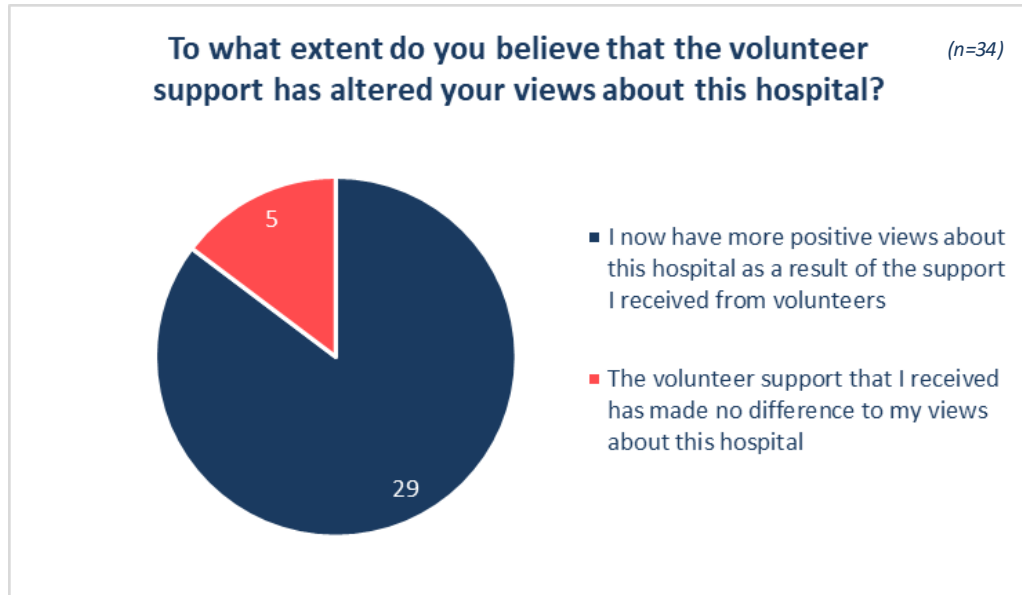
- 30 of the 35 patients agreed or strongly agreed that volunteers **improved their mood** whilst in hospital.
- Additionally, 28 patients agreed or strongly agreed that volunteer support **helped them to feel less anxious**.
- Four patients disagreed/strongly disagreed that volunteers improved mood and three disagreed they positively impacted their anxiety. However, as seen previously, these respondents did not give any further insights and provided positive responses to other survey questions.

These findings suggest that the provision of volunteer support to patients has helped to improve their emotional wellbeing whilst in Maternity Base.

Impact: Patient experience



Patients provided feedback on the impact volunteers had on their view about the hospital.



Additional feedback provided by patients on the support provided by maternity base bay volunteers...

"Absolutely fantastic."
Patient

"Lovely supportive volunteers."
Patient

"They have been amazing."
Patient

"Great manners and approach, not overtly in your face or way."
Patient

- 29 out of 34 reported having more positive views about the hospital as a result of the support they received from volunteers.
- However, 5 patients shared that volunteers made no difference to their views

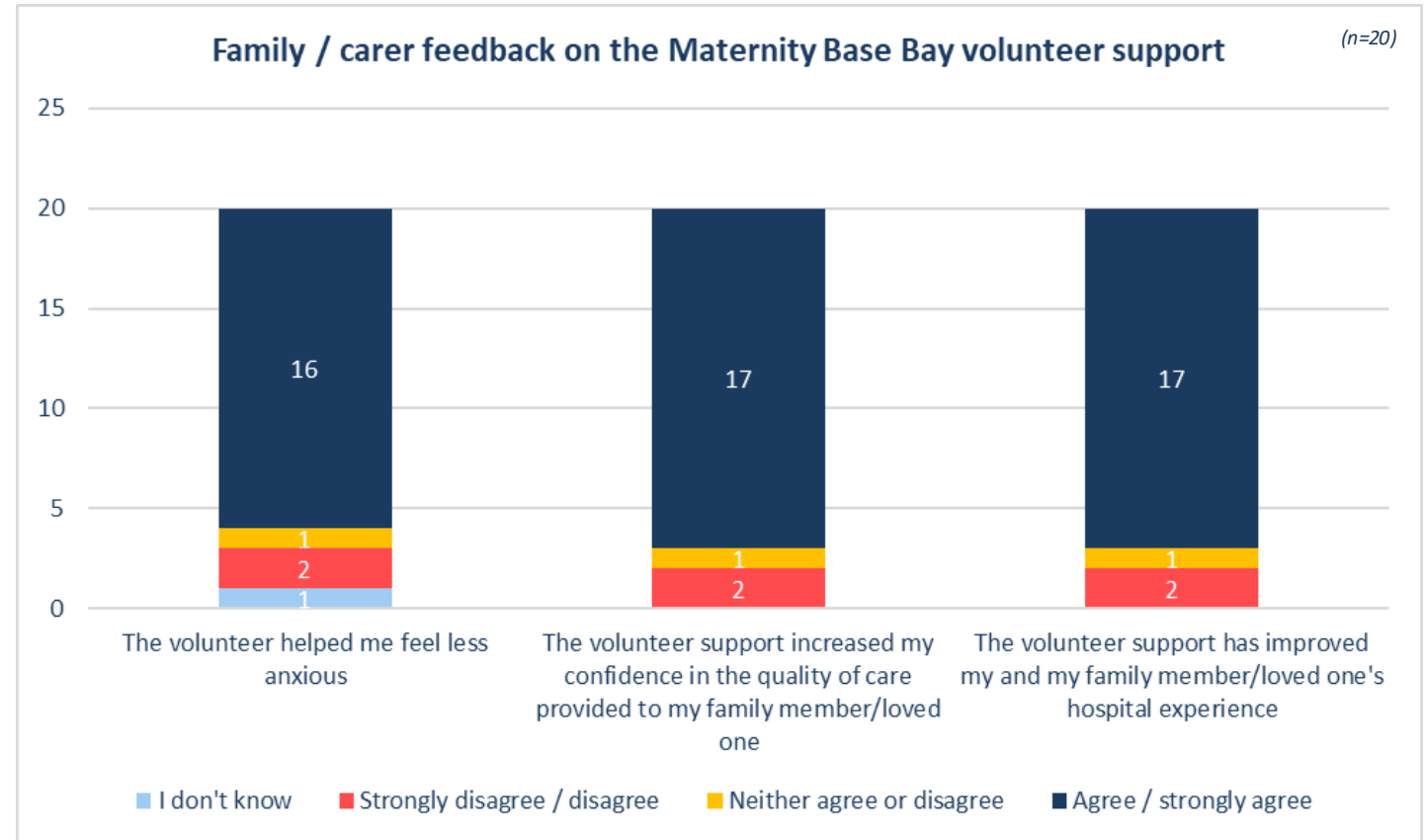
Impact: Family/carer wellbeing and experience



Family members and carers were asked to reflect on the difference volunteer support had made to their emotional wellbeing and experience.

- Volunteers appear to have had a positive impact on family members/carers' emotional wellbeing, with 16 of 20 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that volunteers **helped them to feel less anxious**.
- 17 family members/carers agreed or strongly agreed that volunteer support **increased their confidence in the quality of care** provided to their loved one.
- In addition, 17 of 20 family members/carers also felt that the volunteer support **improved their family member's hospital experience**.
- As was seen in the patient survey, two respondents strongly disagreed / disagreed with all three of the survey statements. Again, no additional context was provided, and they responded positively to other survey questions.

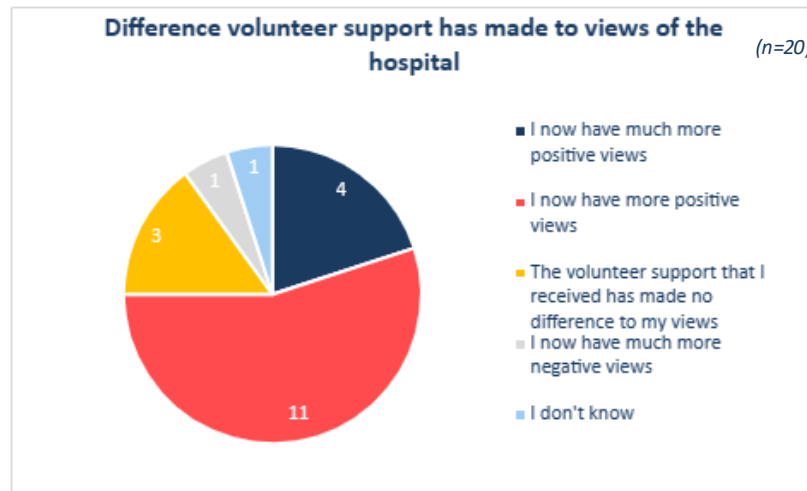
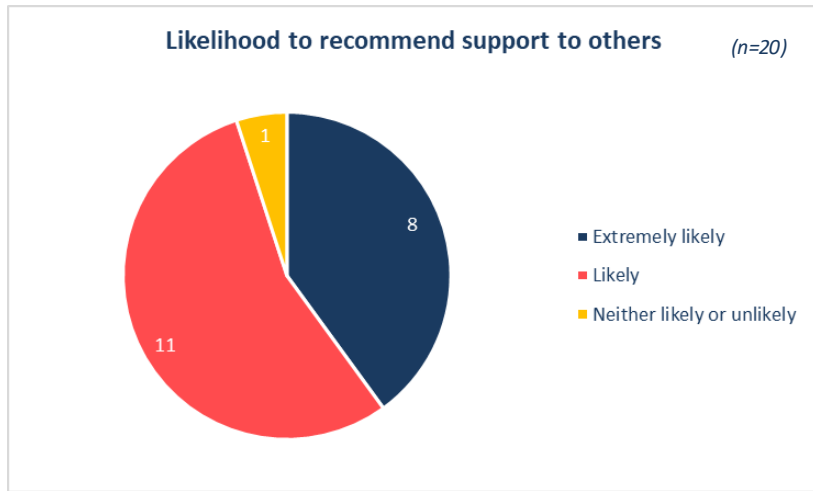
These findings suggest that as well as patients, volunteers had a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of their loved ones.



Impact: Family/carer experience




Family members and carers were also asked if they would recommend this support to others and if the support had made any difference to their views of the hospital.



- 19 of 20 family members/carers reported that they are **extremely likely or likely to recommend the maternity base bay volunteering service** to others. Of those, 8 family members/carers said they were extremely likely to recommend.
- Additionally, **15 out of 20 family members/carers reported having more positive views about the hospital after receiving volunteer support**, and four of them reported having much more positive views.
- One individual reported having more negative views and provided no further context, but still recommended the service as 'Likely'.

Additional feedback provided by family/carer further illustrates the difference maternity base bay volunteers made to them and their loved ones...

 ***“Excellent support.”***
Family / Carer

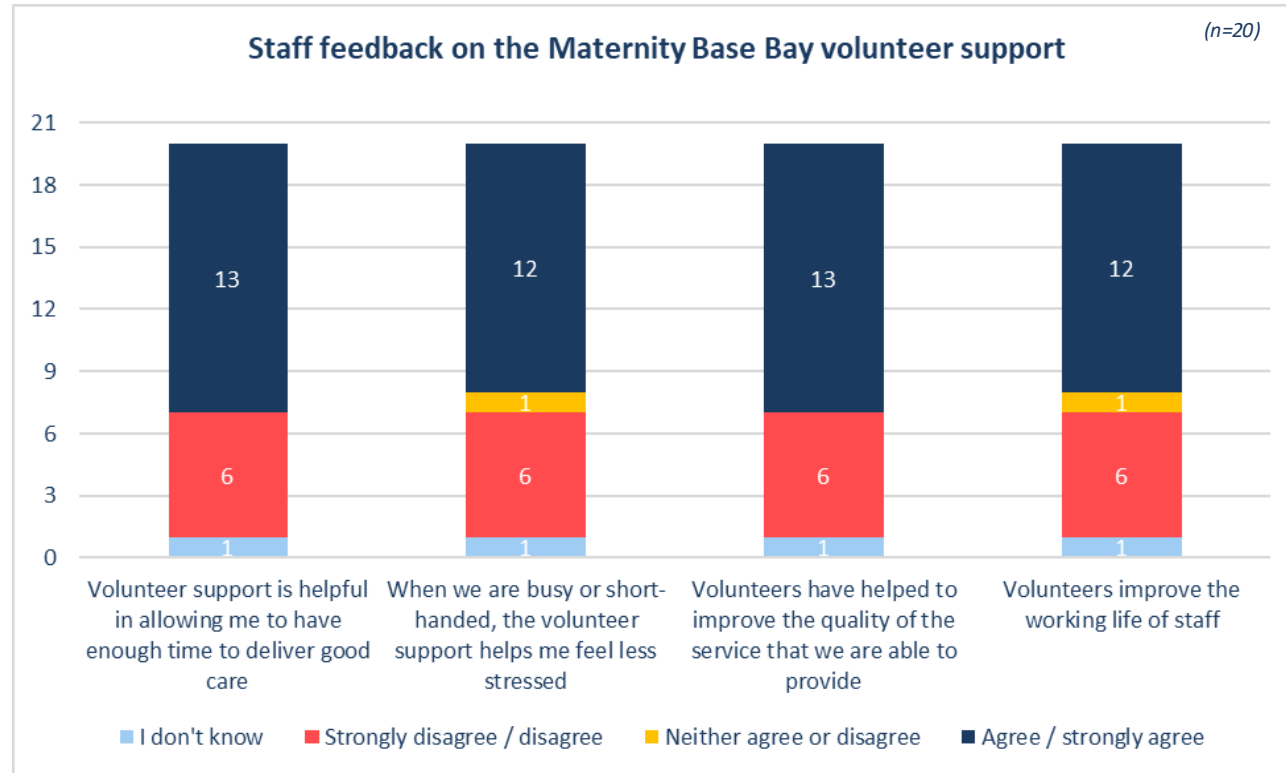
 ***“All volunteers are brilliant in my experience, always there for reassurance or just to point you in the right direction.”***
Family / Carer

 ***“They are very helpful and respectful lovely people.”***
Family / Carer



Impact: Benefits for staff

Staff members were asked to reflect on their experience of working alongside volunteers. Overall, the feedback indicates some positive staff perceptions of volunteers.



The majority of staff reported that they work with volunteers regularly.³

Of the 20 staff members who participated in the survey...

- 13 agreed or strongly agreed that volunteer support is **helpful allowing them enough time deliver good care**.
- 12 agreed or strongly agreed volunteer support **helps them feel less stressed**.
- 13 agreed or strongly agreed volunteers have **helped improve the quality of care / service** that they are able to provide to patients.
- Additionally, 12 of 20 staff members agree or strongly agree volunteers **improve the working life of staff**.

This feedback highlights that volunteers positively impact the working lives of certain staff members.

However, six respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with all statements, while others remained neutral or unsure. These individuals did not offer additional context, though some did acknowledge the positive impact volunteers had on their work and reported satisfaction with the support received.

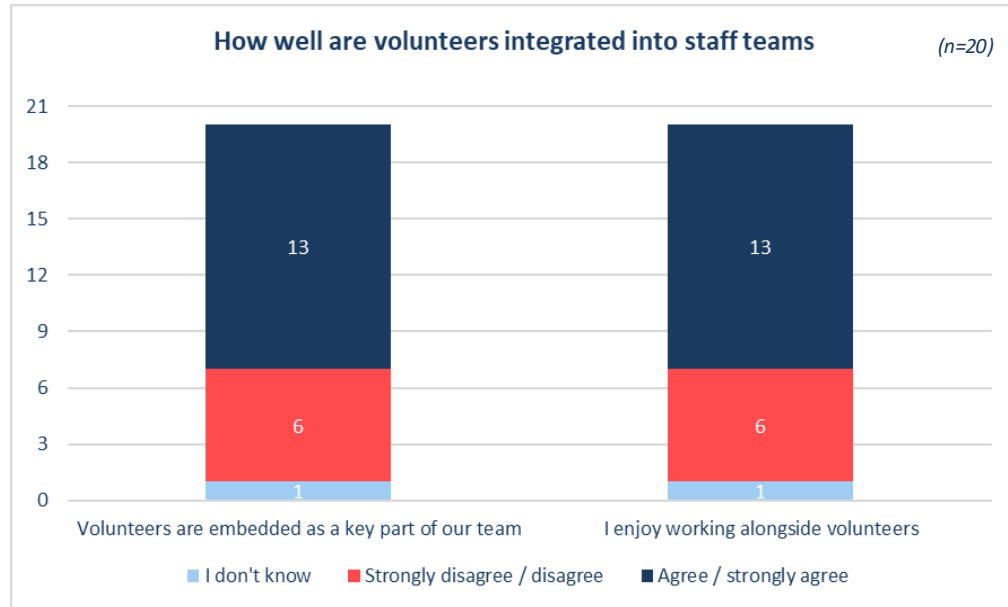
Therefore, it is recommended that further investigation into these differing perspectives within staff members could prove beneficial.

³Of 20 staff respondents, 10 reported they work with volunteers regularly (at least once every other week), 8 reported they work with volunteers routinely (on most shifts), and 2 reported they work with volunteers occasionally (less than once a month).

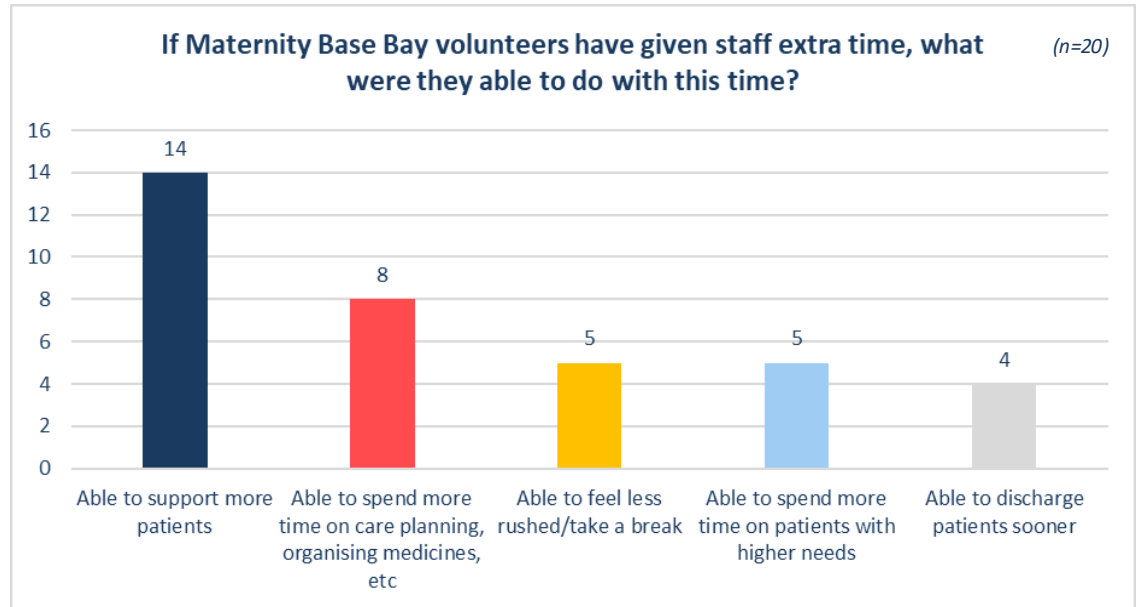
Impact: Integration and staff productivity



Staff members were asked to reflect on their experience of working alongside volunteers, including how well they were integrated into their teams and their perception of any impact volunteers had on their productivity.



- Of the 20 staff respondents, 13 stated they **enjoyed working with volunteers** and felt that volunteers were **embedded as a key part of their team**.
- Six staff reported feeling strongly disagree or disagree for both statements and did not provide further context. However, two staff members further commented on the volunteer support being helpful for their work, suggesting that these individuals' negative responses might have been an error.



- 16 of 20 staff members felt **volunteer support had freed up some time for them**.
- The remaining four staff reported that volunteers had no impact on their time, and none reported that volunteers generated extra work for them.
- These individuals were further asked what they were able to do with this additional time, with the majority reported they were **able to support more patients and spend more time on care planning**.

Impact: Staff satisfaction



Staff members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the volunteer support they had received. Overall, the feedback indicates positive staff perceptions of volunteers.

Of the 20 staff survey respondents:

- 19 reported having **positive experience with the Maternity Base Bay volunteers**. Further 14 of those staff shared that their experience with the volunteers had been more positive than expected.
- All staff respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, suggesting **high levels of satisfaction with the volunteer support** they had received.
- 18 of 20 staff reported that they were **likely to recommend the Maternity Base Bay volunteers to other colleagues within their organisation**, with **16 of them feeling 'very likely'**. However, two individuals reported feeling very unlikely to recommend. Of these, one provided positive feedback about volunteers, while one did not provide any further context.

Staff members provided additional feedback...

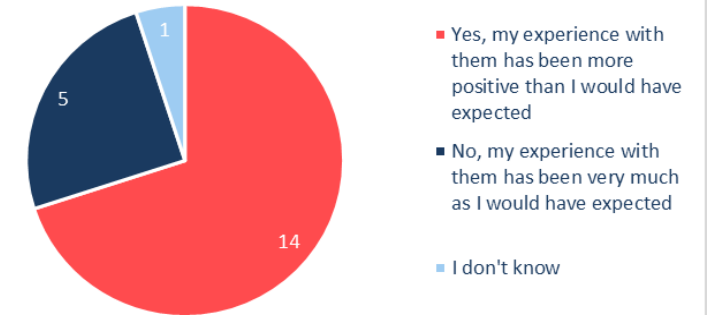
 *"They are helpful, makes my work easier and somewhat less stressful"*
Registered Nurse/Midwife

 *"Really appreciate their contributions."*
Registered Nurse/Midwife

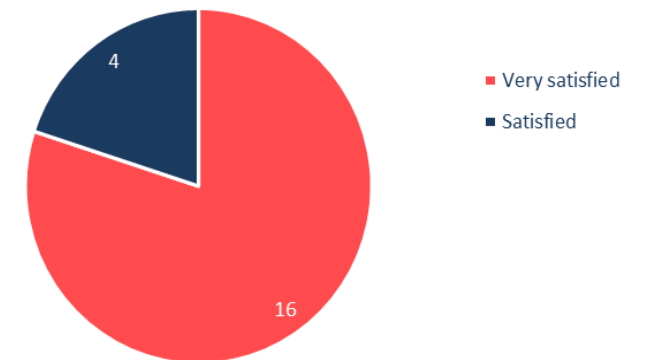
 *"All great."*
Food Assistant

 *"The volunteers are so helpful in helping me to complete tasks such as bringing patients to FMU, for scans etc. This helps me to free up my time and prioritise my workload more appropriately which leads to a better working environment for me and better outcomes for my patients."*
Registered Nurse/Midwife

Have the recent interactions with Maternity Base Bay volunteers altered staff views about impact volunteer can have? (n=20)



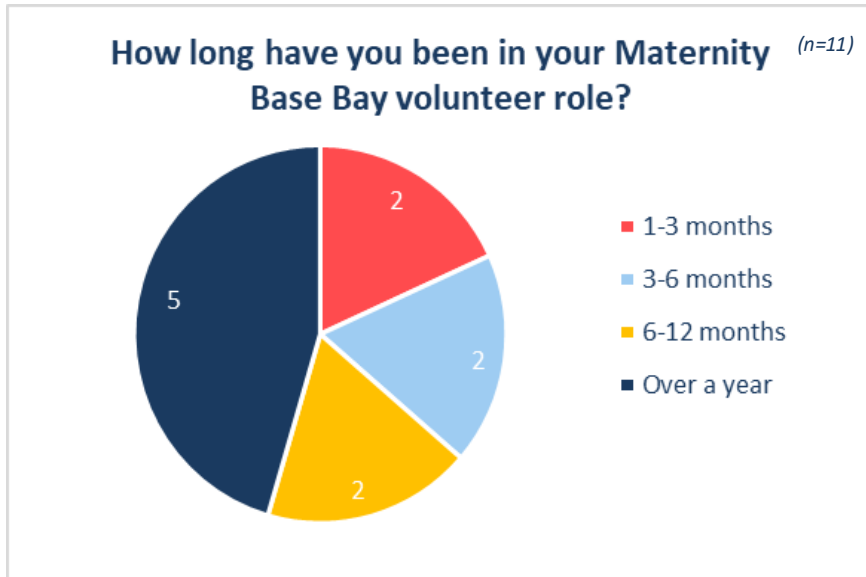
How satisfied staff are with the volunteer support overall? (n=20)



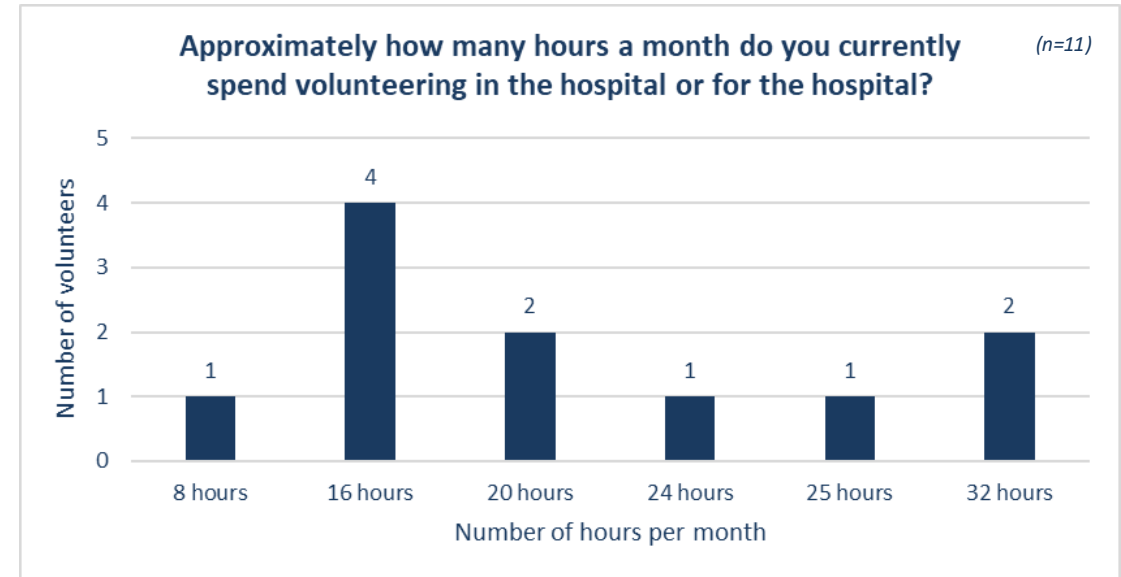


Insight: Volunteer support

11 volunteers completed the feedback survey after their experience in the maternity base bay volunteer role. They were asked about the duration and frequency of their volunteering...



- The volunteers had varying levels of experience in the maternity base bay volunteer role, but the majority had been **volunteering for over a year**.



- 10 of 11 volunteers reported they **volunteered at least once a week**, with one volunteering at least once a month.
- They also reported different monthly volunteering hours per month, with volunteers most commonly saying that they **average 16 volunteering hours per month (4 of 11 volunteers)**.

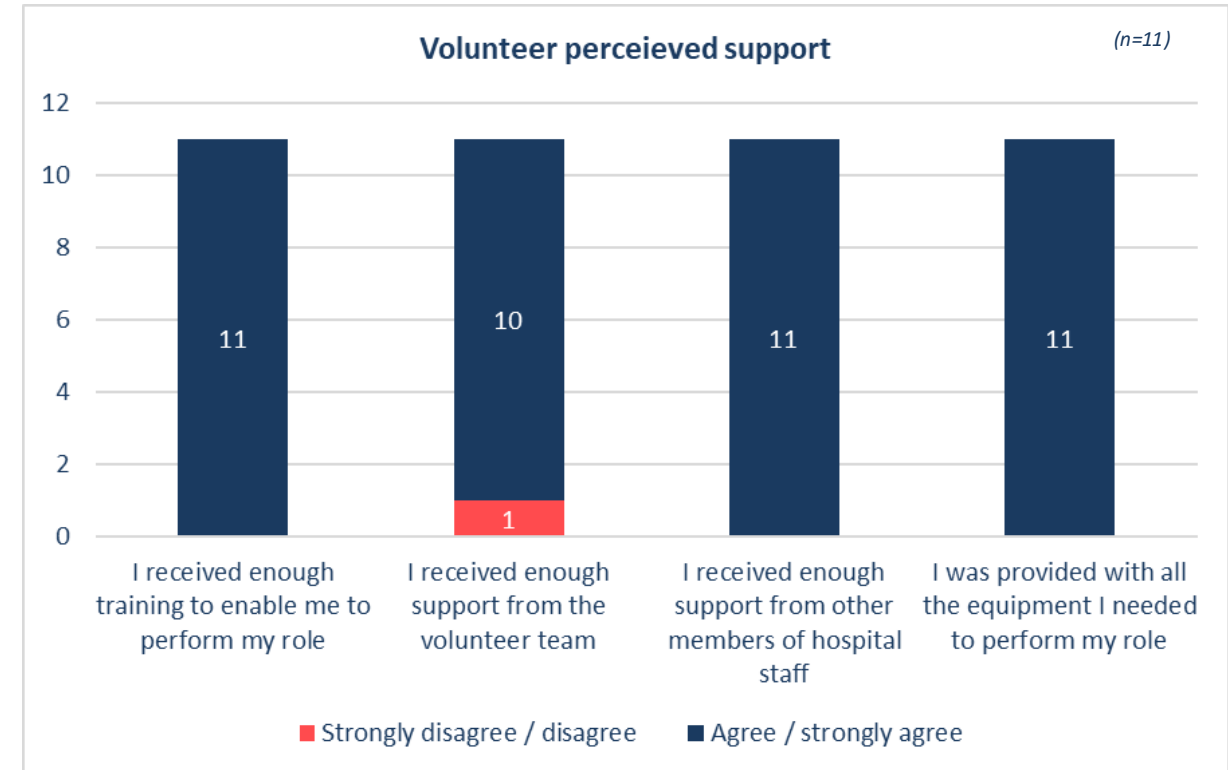


Insight: Perceived support received

Volunteers were asked to reflect on how supported and equipped they felt throughout their volunteering experience to deliver their roles.

- All of the volunteer respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:
 - they **received enough training** and were **provided with all equipment needed** to enable them to perform their roles,
 - they received enough **support from other members of hospital staff**.
- 10 of 11 volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that they **received enough support from the volunteer team**. One volunteer reported strongly disagreeing with this statement but did not provide any further information. However, this volunteer also reported being 'very satisfied' with their volunteer experience.

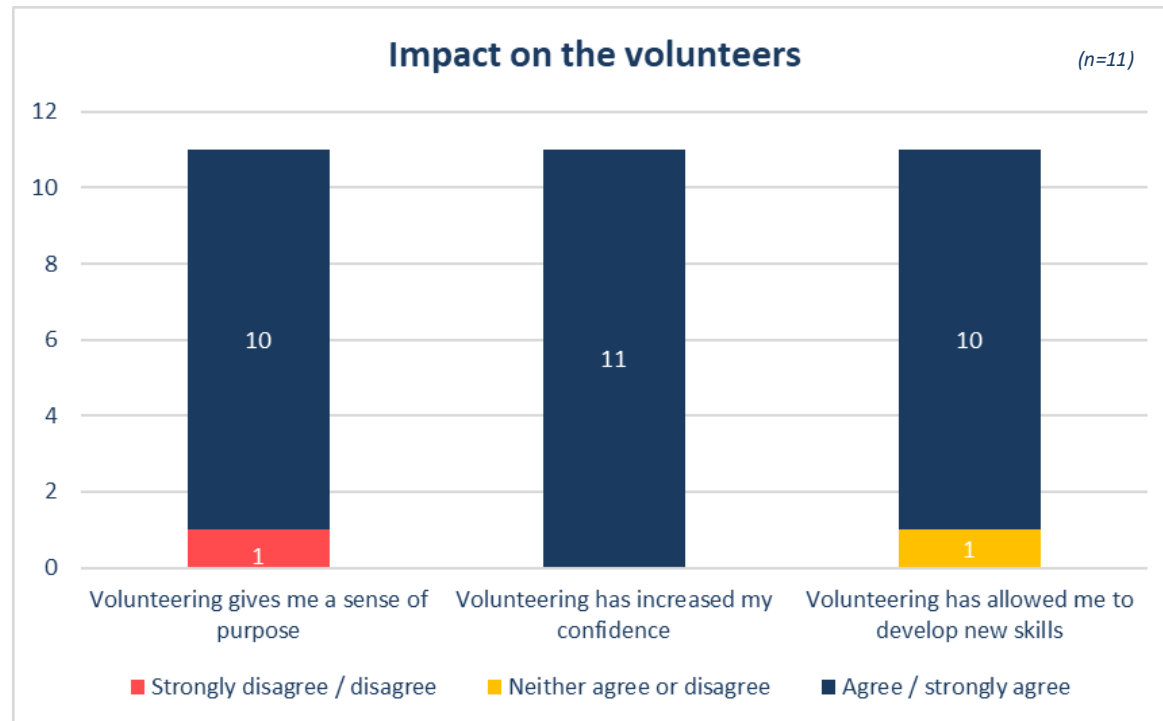
Overall, it was highlighted that the majority of volunteers felt well supported in performing their roles.



Impact: Benefits for volunteers



Volunteers were requested to reflect on the difference volunteering has had for them as individuals. Findings indicate that there have been benefits to taking on their role for Maternity Base Ward volunteers.



- 10 of 11 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their **volunteering had given them a sense of purpose**. One volunteer reported strongly disagreeing, however, did not provide any further information as to why they felt this way.
- All of the volunteer respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their **volunteering had increased their confidence**.
- 10 of 11 volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that their **volunteering has allowed them to develop new skills**, while 1 volunteer reported being neutral.

In reflecting upon their volunteering experience, one respondent stated...

"It's a very good thing to get involved with."

Maternity Base Bay volunteer

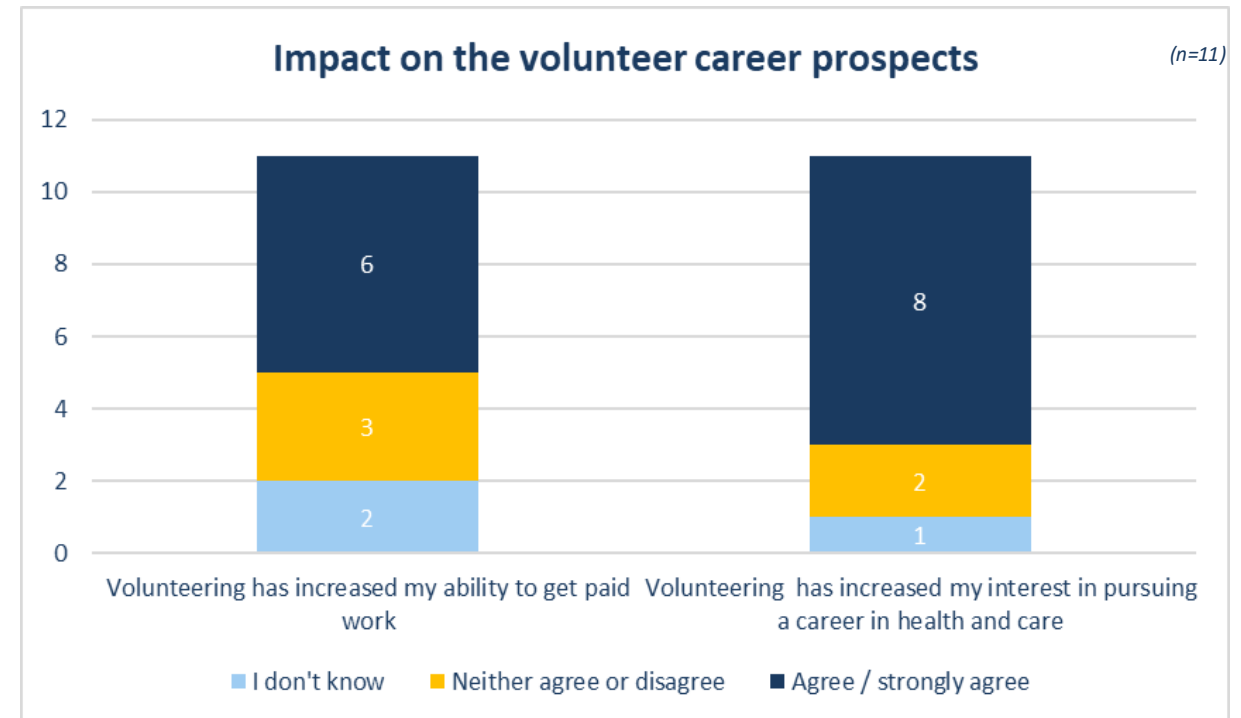
Impact: Benefits for volunteers



Volunteers also provided feedback on the difference volunteering has had on their career prospects.

- 6 out of 11 volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that **volunteering has increased their ability to get paid work**. However, three individuals remained neutral, and two reported 'I don't know'.
- 8 of 11 volunteers reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that **volunteering has increased their interest in pursuing a career in health and care**, while two remaining neutral and one reported 'I don't know'.

The findings indicate that **for some volunteers, volunteering has had a positive impact on their career prospects**, while for others, they may not have seen this benefit or it may not have been applicable to them.



Impact: Volunteer satisfaction



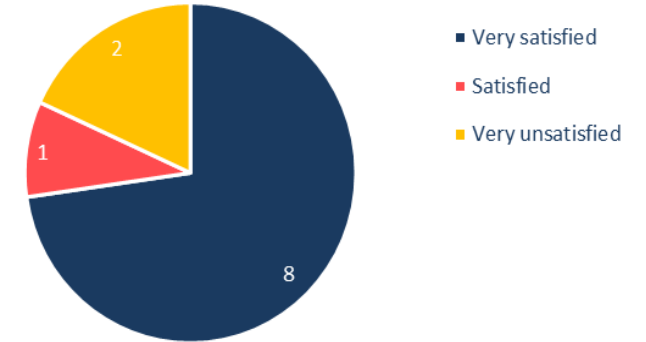
Finally, volunteers provided feedback on their overall satisfaction with their volunteering experience.

- 9 of 11 volunteers were **satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteering experience.**
- Two volunteers **were very unsatisfied** with their volunteering role. One individual provided further feedback, commenting on the positive experience of their volunteering role, suggesting that this could have been selected in error. The other individual did not provide further feedback.
- All volunteers reported that the **maternity base bay volunteer role has either met or exceeded their expectations.**

Overall, this suggests positive experiences for the majority of the volunteers at the maternity base bay.

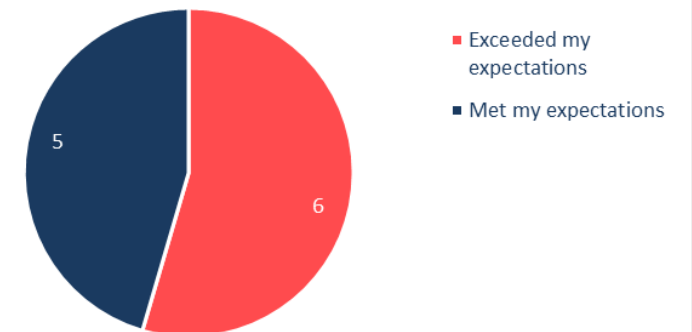
Volunteer satisfaction with the Maternity Base Bay volunteer role

(n=11)



To what extent has the Maternity Base Bay volunteer role met volunteer expectations?

(n=11)



Conclusions and recommendations

In Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust, the Maternity Base Ward volunteers have played a significant role in providing support to patients, family/carers and staff.

The findings indicate that Maternity Base Ward volunteer support has resulted in positive outcomes for patients' and family members/carers' emotional wellbeing and hospital experience.

Volunteers appeared to have made a positive impact on staff perceptions, some reporting that volunteers had helped them with productivity and improved their working lives. Further, all staff respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, suggesting high levels of satisfaction with the volunteer support they had received. However, further investigations are recommended to better understand how the volunteering support could be improved. Additionally, exploring ways to integrate it more effectively into staff teams would be beneficial.

The majority of volunteers reported to have enjoyed their volunteering experience and felt well-supported through their volunteering by staff teams. Evidence also suggests that additional benefits had been achieved for volunteers, including an increased sense of purpose, skills and confidence.

Acknowledgements

Helpforce would like to pass on our thanks to **Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust**, and in particular to Gina Barr, Volunteer Services Manager. We also share our appreciation to the patients, family/carers, staff and volunteers who participated in providing their feedback.

Data limitations

As mentioned throughout the report, there appears to have been instances where respondents have mistakenly selected their level of agreement in likert scale questions (strongly agree to strongly disagree scale). The date these responses were submitted aligns with a format change in Microsoft Forms (the survey platform used by Helpforce) which more prominently presented negative response options over positive ones. Whilst we cannot say for definite that these responses were selected in error and/or that the format change was the cause, this should be taken into account as contextual information.

helpforce

Thank you

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