

# Volunteer to Career in healthcare

A programme for the Armed Forces community\*

Empowering you  
to build a  
rewarding  
healthcare career  
through  
volunteering



\*The Armed Forces community includes:

- Regular personnel – any current serving members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army or Royal Air Force.
- Volunteer and regular reservists – Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, Royal Fleet Reserve, Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy (where individuals served on a civilian vessel whilst supporting the Armed Forces).
- Veterans – anyone who has served for at least a day in the Armed Forces as either a regular or a reservist, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.
- Families of regular personnel, reservist and veterans – spouses, civil partners and children, and where appropriate can include parents, unmarried partners and other family members.
- Bereaved – the family members of Service personnel and veterans who have died, whether that death is connected to their Service or not, including foreign and Commonwealth.

# Making a real difference while finding your next step

If you are passionate about helping others, the healthcare sector could be your perfect calling.

Understandably, you might feel uncertain about whether working in the healthcare sector is the right choice for you. You may worry if your skills are transferrable, or if you can connect with patients and healthcare colleagues.



*That's why volunteering provides a great opportunity to explore various roles, allowing you to find your niche without the immediate pressure of employment, while at the same time, **making a real difference to your local community.***

# What is Volunteer to Career?

**The Volunteer to Career programme for the Armed Forces community provides tailored volunteering opportunities at hospitals and hospices, so that you can:**



- ▶ Help people to get better
- ▶ Build up your employability confidence
- ▶ Identify a clear career pathway to fully achieve your potential

You will be able to support staff, patients and their carers in different ways, such as providing quick support in a fast-paced environment, doing exercises with hospitalised individuals to help improve their fitness, or lending a listening ear to ease anxiety.

This programme is designed with the intention of helping volunteers find employment in the healthcare sector. When volunteering, you will:

- ▶ Gain insights into what it's like to be working in the field
- ▶ Receive tailored support to help you to seek out career opportunities, navigate the recruitment process, or access further training
- ▶ Gain support to build up your confidence
- ▶ Be able to shape your volunteering experiences to align with your career aspirations
- ▶ Receive support with numeracy and literacy skills if desired
- ▶ Receive peer-to-peer support for mental health conditions



# How this programme works

This programme, supported by national charity Helpforce, is being run by 11 hospitals and hospices in England only, where they will provide tailored volunteering opportunities, depending on your career interests, skills and knowledge.

You can volunteer in clinical, non-clinical, or other health and care areas that interest you - always with nurturing support from staff.

*For example: If you are a radio operator seeking to leverage your expertise to become a radiographer, participating organisations can offer volunteer opportunities within their radiology departments to help you gain insights into what the career entails.*



**Generally, there are five key steps:**

... **Step 1**

Register your interest with one of the participating organisations.

... **Step 2**

You will be invited to an informal chat to explore volunteering opportunities that fit in your interest and career aspirations. The organisation will also discuss their recruitment process with you.

... **Step 3**

If you are happy with the volunteering opportunities and the organisation believes that you are a good fit, they will send you confirmation on your volunteering, including hours, training, where you will volunteer, who will be your mentor, etc.

... **Step 4**

During your volunteering at the organisation, you will be provided with employment support, including CV building, interviews skills, and opportunities to learn about job vacancies before they are advertised publicly.

... **Step 5**

Upon completing the programme, if you haven't secured a position, you'll receive continued support based on your chosen path—whether that's pursuing healthcare training or seeking employment. Regardless of your decision, you maintain the flexibility to either continue volunteering or conclude your volunteering commitment.

# Angie's story

**As a military wife for 20 years, Angie Duffin spent her life putting other people first. Despite her lifelong ambition of having a career in the NHS, Angie was never able to commit to that kind of job.**

Now, at the age of 49, she has finally achieved her dream through the Volunteer To Career (VtC) scheme at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and is about to start a paid role in Pathology.

In October 2024 she signed up to volunteer one day a week in the Emergency Department of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

“I was thrilled to be in the Emergency Department – I’d always had an idea that I’d like to be a paramedic working at the sharp end of things. My role was to relieve some of the pressure from the doctors and nurses by helping the patients with the softer side of things, chatting to them, making teas and coffees, making sure they understood what was going on. I loved it.”

In January 2025, a new opportunity came up and Angie was invited to apply for the Trust’s VtC scheme working in Pathology. Angie took to Pathology like a duck to water and loved the new opportunity. By rotating around the different labs she and her fellow volunteers got to see what went on in each area of the department.

“I can’t tell you the impact the VtC programme has had on my life. It’s been a really big deal for me, it has been life changing,” said Angie.

“The Pathology department is clearly the place where I belong. I really feel I’ve found my niche.



“I’ve learnt so much by talking to people and watching what goes on. And they can see I’m passionate about what I do.”

When a paid role as a Medical Laboratory Assistant came in the Preanalytical lab, Angie applied immediately.

She was overjoyed when she was not only offered the job, but offered flexible hours to suit her lifestyle.

**“I’ll be 50 this year and have spent the last 20 years as a healthcare assistant and military wife. This feels like a whole new chapter of my life: it’s time for me, for my career and my dreams. I’ve put everyone and everything else first for a long time – now it’s my turn.”**

# Career pathways from this programme

Current volunteering opportunities from this programme will enable volunteers to explore careers in:

- Business administration
- Corporate, such as IT, HR and Finance
- Dietetics
- Estate
- Health Sciences
- Midwifery
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Orthotics
- Pathology
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy



**Jenna, an Emergency Department volunteer at Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said:**

“My goal was to understand the NHS better and get exposure to a clinical environment, and I've definitely had that. I really wanted to volunteer in the Emergency Department as it's such a busy and constantly-changing environment.

“That's helped me to build the skill of dedicating time to interact with people and remain present, despite whatever is happening around me.

“I also enjoy meeting so many staff and talking to them about their jobs. They've given me some great advice and now I'm looking for a career in the NHS.”





# Frequently asked questions:

## Who can volunteer?

**Any one from the Armed Forces community and 18 years old and above.**

The Armed Forces community includes:

- Regular personnel – any current serving members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army or Royal Air Force.
- Volunteer and regular reservists – Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, Royal Fleet Reserve, Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy (where individuals served on a civilian vessel whilst supporting the Armed Forces).
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## Are my skills transferable?

You would be surprised to learn how many similarities exist between careers in the armed forces and healthcare.

Working in the healthcare sector requires clear and concise communication, strong resilience during periods of pressure, excellent team work to ensure people receive the best care possible, and great compassion for others.

# Frequently asked questions (cont'd):

## Who runs the programme?

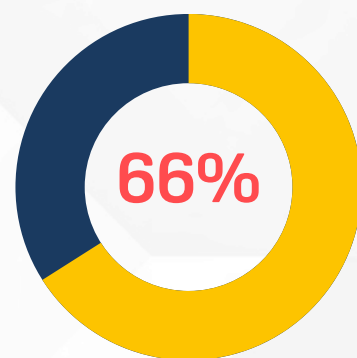
This programme is nationally overseen by Helpforce, a charity that supports health and care organisations across the UK to maximise the impact of their volunteering programmes.

There are 11 hospitals and hospices who directly deliver the programmes in local areas across England.

## How successful is this programme?

**66%** of volunteers completing the programme go on to health and care jobs, education or training

**88%** of staff say volunteer support helps improve the quality of service they can give to patients



## How many hours am I required to commit to this programme?

This depends on the organisation that you plan to volunteer with, so please check with them first.



# Frequently asked questions (cont'd):

## **Will my travelling expenses be covered by the organisation that I plan to volunteer with?**

Generally organisations will cover your travelling expenses, but you must check with the organisation first.

## **Does this cost me anything?**

No, this does not cost you anything. You won't pay for your training or any fees. You only need to volunteer your time at the organisation.

## **Questions you should ask the organisation that you plan to volunteer at:**

- What specific career pathways are they offering as part of the programme?
- How many hours at the minimum are you required to volunteer?
- What extra support can they give you as part of the programme?
- Will they be able to cover your travelling expenses?
- What happens if you have to move during the programme due to posting?

# Where this programme takes place and how to apply

Geography covered	Organisation	Potential careers	How to apply
Durham, Darlington, Teeside, York, and North Yorkshire	Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust	Non-Clinical, Estates, Corporate Roles \ ( HR Finance IT), Nurses, Medical Roles	Email your interest to: <a href="mailto:cddft.northeastvtcp.rogamme@nhs.net">cddft.northeastvtcp.rogamme@nhs.net</a> or Call 0800 7835774
	County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	HCA, Estates, Alliance Health Professions, Corporate Roles , Nursing/Midwifery, Non- Clinical	
	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	Working in estates, portering,nursing, catering, domestic, administration and corporate functions	
	South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Nursing & Midwifery, Health Science Services, Support Services, Medical & Dental	

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# Where this programme takes place and how to apply (cont'd)

Geography covered	Organisation	Potential careers	How to apply
Scarborough also covering North and East Yorkshire	Saint Catherines Hospice	Working in clinical and non-clinical areas, depending on volunteers' interests	Via <a href="https://www.saintcatherines.org.uk/volunteer-to-career/">https://www.saintcatherines.org.uk/volunteer-to-career/</a> Or By emailing - <a href="mailto:wvtc@saintcatherines.org.uk">wvtc@saintcatherines.org.uk</a>
Mid Yorkshire: Wakefield & North Kirklees	Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust – volunteering opportunities will be primarily at Pinderfields Hospital (Wakefield), Dewsbury Hospital and Pontefract Hospital.	Working in clinical and non-clinical areas, depending on volunteers' interests	Apply via website: <a href="https://www.midyorks.nhs.uk/volunteering">https://www.midyorks.nhs.uk/volunteering</a>
Mid Yorkshire: Wakefield & North Kirklees	Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust – volunteering opportunities will be primarily at Pinderfields Hospital (Wakefield), Dewsbury Hospital and Pontefract Hospital.	Working in clinical and non-clinical areas, depending on volunteers' interests	Apply via website: <a href="https://www.midyorks.nhs.uk/volunteering">https://www.midyorks.nhs.uk/volunteering</a>

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# Where this programme takes place and how to apply (cont'd)

Geography covered	Organisation	Potential careers	How to apply
West Midlands (Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, mid-Wales)	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	Project Management Office Nursing Therapies Portering Public participation Emergency Department Paramedics	Apply via website: <a href="https://www.sath.nhs.uk/working-with-us/volunteering/veterans-volunteer-to-career-programme-2/">https://www.sath.nhs.uk/working-with-us/volunteering/veterans-volunteer-to-career-programme-2/</a>
South East London, covering Greenwich, Lewisham and Bexley	Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust	Physiotherapy Occupational Therapy Allied Health Profession, Nursing/Midwifery Business Roles, Project Management Officer	Email <a href="mailto:lh.voluntaryservices@nhs.net">lh.voluntaryservices@nhs.net</a>

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# Where this programme takes place and how to apply (cont'd)

Geography covered	Organisation	Potential careers	How to apply
Somerset	Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	Becoming health care support worker  Working in Portering, Emergency Department and Dementia	Email <a href="mailto:VolunteeringSFT@somersetft.nhs.uk">VolunteeringSFT@somersetft.nhs.uk</a>
Dorset	Dorset County Hospital	Supporting in clinical and non-clinical areas, depending on volunteers' interests and linked with our Patient Experience team	Email <a href="mailto:volunteering@dchft.nhs.uk">volunteering@dchft.nhs.uk</a>
Plymouth, Devon	Livewell Southwest CIC	Working in clinical and non-clinical areas, depending on volunteers' interests	Expressions of interest should be emailed to <a href="mailto:livewell.volunteers@nhs.net">livewell.volunteers@nhs.net</a>



**Ready to explore more?**

Contact the participating organisation in your local area and unlock exciting new possibilities today.

**This programme is  
nationally overseen by**

**helpforce**

