

Response Volunteers

University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire

April 2025

Service overview

- With the support of Helpforce, the Response Volunteer (RV) service at University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire (UHCW) was launched in December 2022, at the University Hospital site.
- The volunteers are trained to respond to tasks in real-time and have the fluidity to move around and adapt what they do in line with the daily requirements of the Trust. The role initially involved staff members calling or bleeping volunteers to indicate support was required, but has now moved towards a model where volunteers 'sweep' the hospital to seek out tasks that they can support with.
- This includes tasks such as collecting and delivering To Take Out (TTO) medications, pathology samples and phlebotomy samples, supporting patient transfers and housekeeping tasks, among others.
- The service was initially launched to support a set number of wards, but following a successful pilot it was opened up to the whole hospital site and has been running consistently ever since.
- Helpforce provided programme management support to UHCW to set up, scale and maintain the service, as well as evaluation support with ongoing monitoring of activity to help facilitate continuous improvement.
- This report is an overview of all of the activity which has taken place across just over two years, from December 2022 to the end of December 2024.

Volumes and completion of tasks

13,424

tasks identified for RVs to complete

13,349

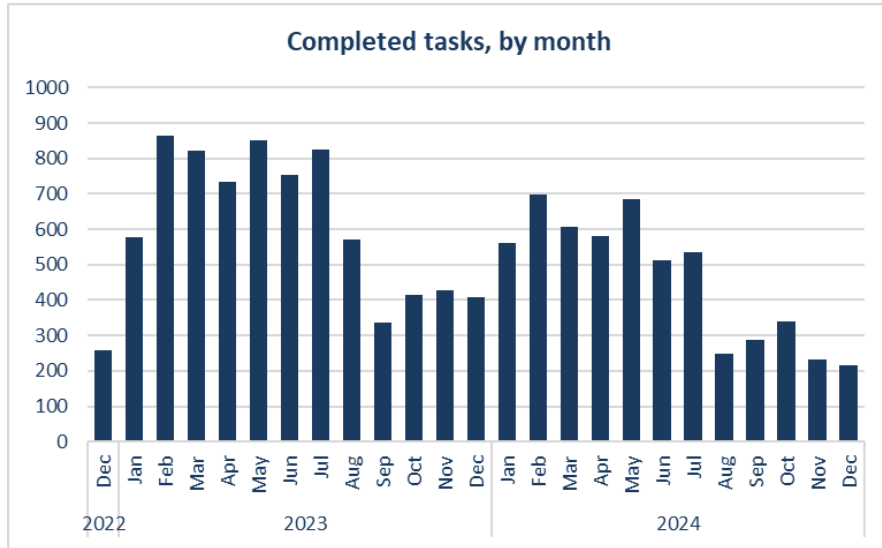
tasks completed

99%

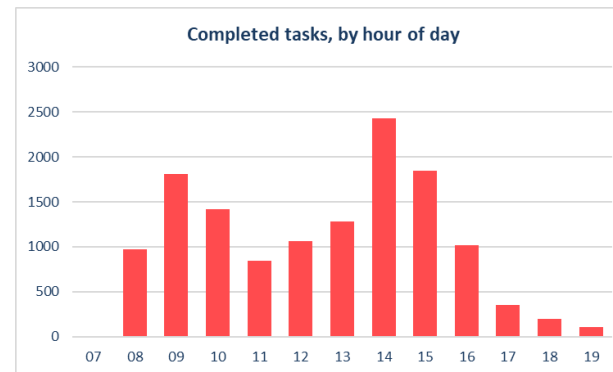
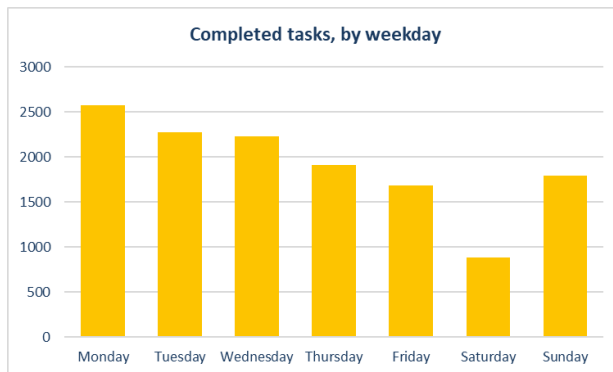
task completion rate

- In the 25 months between December 2022 and December 2024, over 13k tasks were identified that could be completed by volunteers, either through staff requesting them or volunteers sourcing them through sweeps of the hospital.
- A total of just 75 weren't completed during this time, mostly due to there not being a volunteer to fulfil the task (e.g. due to none being on shift, those on shift already being busy with other tasks, or not having training to complete the requested task). The remainder were due to an issue with the request, e.g. it was cancelled by the original requestor because it was no longer needed, had already been completed by a staff member or the related paperwork / samples were not there to complete the TTO / pathology run.
- Most of these appear to have been initial teething issues, which occurred during the initial months of the role. The completion rate has consistently been at or very close to 100% from month eight of live service onwards.

Tasks over time



- Following launch, the volunteers' activity scaled rapidly, increasing from 258 tasks completed in the first month to an all-time high of 863 tasks in the third month. On average 534 tasks have been completed each month.
- Following periods of lower task volumes, the volunteering team have reviewed the service and taken action in line with any identified issues.
- For example, following September to December 2023 when average tasks per month reduced to an average of 396, the volunteering team identified that they were working with a smaller volunteer base and that volunteers may not have been as visible to staff. A recruitment push took place along with re-engagement of ward and senior staff, leading to tasks increasing to a monthly average of 597 in January to July 2024.



- Tasks tend to be well spread throughout the week, although with reduced numbers on Saturdays.
- There are peaks and troughs throughout the day, with more tasks completed 9-10am and 2-4pm, likely in line with the start of volunteer shifts.

Organisational benefits



4,874

hours of productivity gains

Volunteers have delivered an equivalent of **130 working weeks'** worth of productivity gains to the Trust.

Over the time of the role being active, this would be the same amount of active time to **1.4 full time equivalents**.



36,936

patients supported

Almost **37k patients have been supported** by the RVs.

84% of these were supported via pathology sample runs and 5% (the next highest proportion) via TTOs. This shows that the majority of volunteers' time has been spent on **tasks which aim to improve patient flow and efficiency**.



93

active volunteers

While 93 volunteers have contributed across the lifespan of the service, an average of **18 have been active during any one month**.

Volunteers were active for an average of five months, but one volunteer was active for all 25 months during the reporting period.

Key points

- UHCW has successfully implemented and sustained a well-functioning response volunteer service, with volunteers completing over 13k tasks and supporting nearly 37k patients across 25 months.
- The work put into developing and planning the service prior to launch led to an effective pilot, which subsequently enabled them to scale to supporting the whole hospital at speed.
- While the volume of activity across the lifespan of the service has sometimes been variable, the team has been responsive to this and put continuous improvement measures in place to counteract any issues impacting on activity.
- Volunteers have contributed 4.9k hours of productivity gains to the Trust, with the active time spent on tasks being equivalent to 1.2 full time equivalents. Additionally, the tasks completed have largely been focussed on pathology and TTO runs. Therefore, it is hoped that the volunteers have been supporting more efficient patient flow.
- Positive engagement has also been seen from volunteers, with each one being retained for an average of five months.

help*force*

Thank you

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