

Volunteer to Career Project

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Evaluation Findings - June 2023

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Introduction

- The Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme is designed to support volunteers to pursue a career in health and care. Funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, Helpforce has worked alongside several NHS Trusts to set up and implement volunteering projects which incorporate career pathways for volunteers.

The VtC programme has been designed to support organisation 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 & 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/ enable volunteers to use this as a route to a career in the NHS.
- The University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust run a Dementia Ward Support role and Rehab Support volunteering role as part of the programme.

- The evaluation sought to answer three key questions: what was the impact of the VtC programme on:
 - Corporate buy-in towards volunteering
 - Enabling individual volunteers to progress towards a career in health and care
 - The attitudes of front-line staff towards volunteer services



Evaluation approach

Data Collection Mechanisms

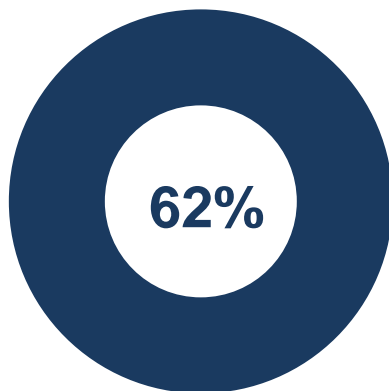
- A **'VtC Self Assessment Tool' (referred to as SAT)** was completed by the project's clinical / health and care lead at the start and then again near the end of their project. The tool measures the organisation against a series of identified categories and questions associated with their volunteering 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 two times; both at the beginning of their volunteering and at a later period. In the University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, **nine volunteers** completed the volunteer survey at the start of their role and two volunteers completed the survey at a later period.
- Although the VtC programme had strong support from senior leaders, the Healthcare of the Elderly team and Voluntary Services experienced difficulty in recruiting a clinical lead which set the project back in its first few months. With a change in direction, it was found that the embedding of career support through the Voluntary Services team would be successful and as a result recruited Lucy into post. Despite this set back, Plymouth have been able to embed the programme with a wider range of volunteers as they could offer elements of it to the full volunteer cohort, it also allowed for a systemic change for the whole service. There are volunteers specifically on the pathway, but opportunities have been offered to more roles and more individuals as a result.
- **Staff surveys** were completed at the start and near the end of the VtC project (referred to as pre and post surveys). In the organisation, **15 staff members** completed the pre survey and **16 staff** completed the post survey.



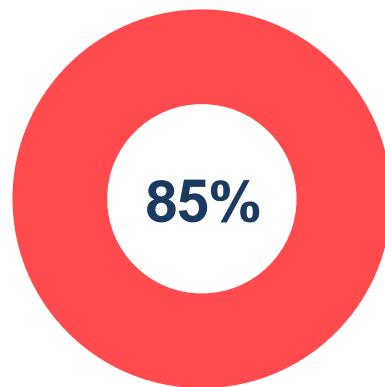
Evaluation Findings - Organisation

What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on corporate attitudes towards volunteering?

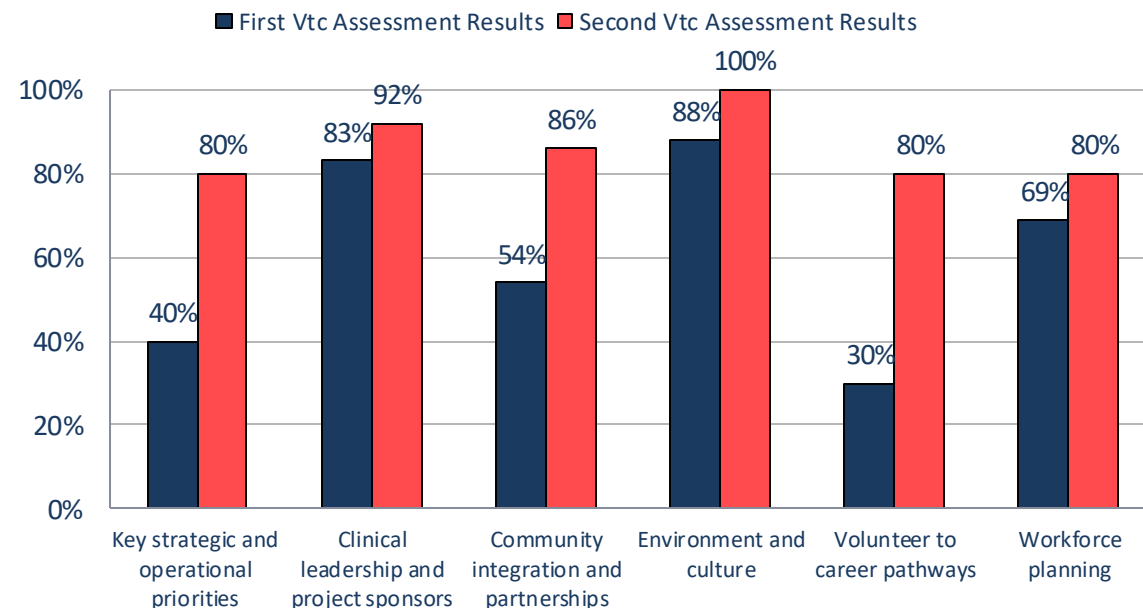
First SAT Overall Score



Second SAT Overall Score



First and Second SAT Scores Overview



- After completing the VtC programme, the University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust has shown an **increase in the overall SAT score, improving from 62% to 85%**. Similar to the positive change in the overall SAT score result, **we have observed an improvement in the scores for all the six elements of organisational improvement for volunteering**.
- Whilst the results are hugely positive and highlight change as a result of the programme, there are key areas to continue to develop such as continued alignment to the strategy ([See Next Steps Slide](#)).

Evaluation Findings - Staff Members

What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on front line staff members' view of volunteer services?



“Excellent addition to the workforce - they have reintroduced the 'human' element to our service.”

Staff member



“Volunteer input has helped me to complete daily tasks to support patient care. This has given me time to complete other work.”

Staff member



“They have surpassed my expectations and regularly provide a gold star service to our department. This has allowed us to free staff to carry out a specialist clinical activity which we otherwise struggle to maintain.”

Staff member



“Patients have reported how kind and thoughtful ICU rehab volunteers have been. Patients have reported they feel listened to and are supported with ongoing physio exercises/ excursions. They have been instrumental in helping facilitate trips off the ward and helping make them feel 'normal' by doing normal activities.”

Staff member

Staff Member Feedback



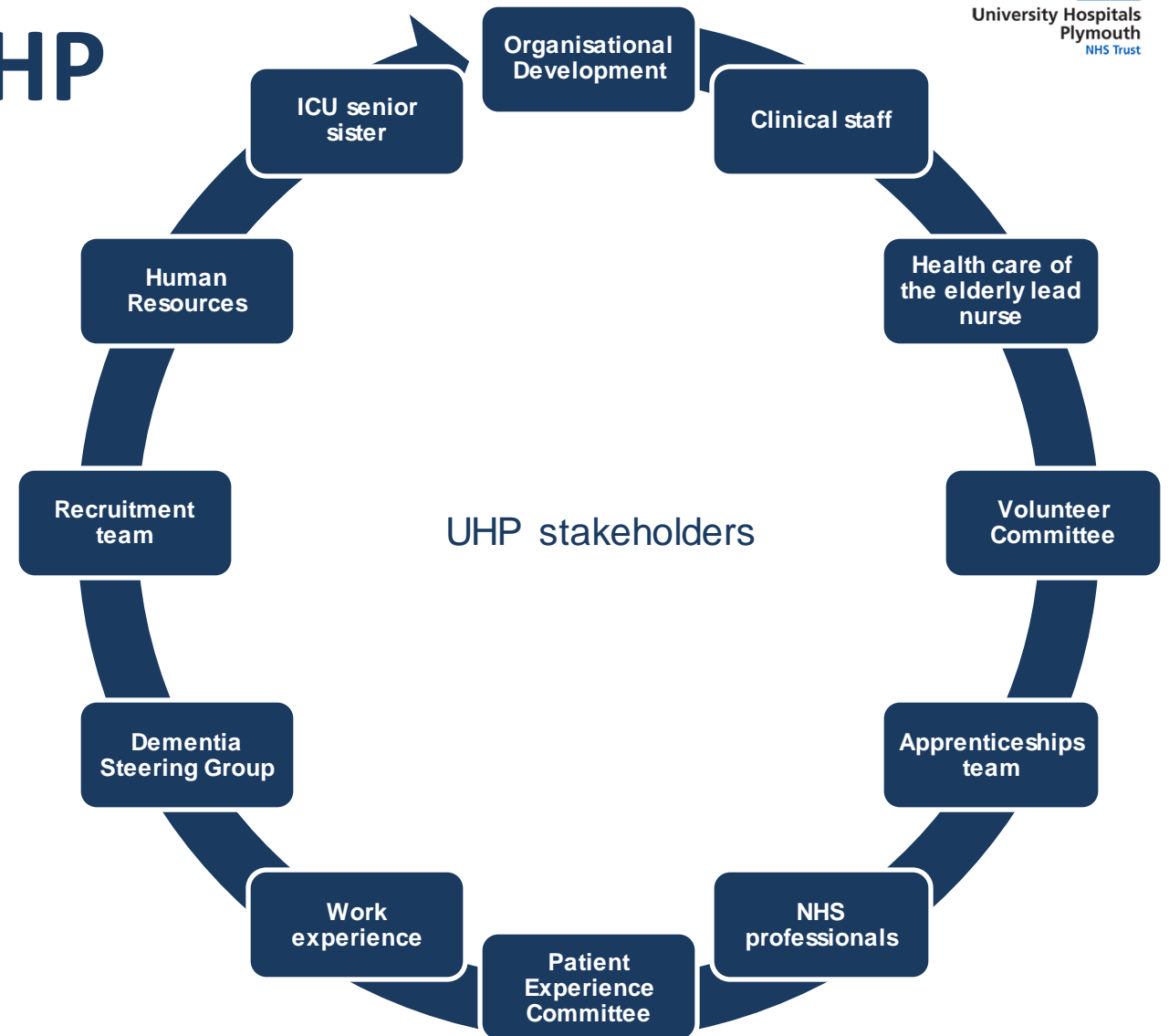
“The Volunteer to Career programme has allowed us to really focus on how we can support volunteers in their career journey. Whether they are looking to join us as a career change or to rejoin the workforce, or at the very start of their career journey, we’re able to support them and give volunteering opportunities that sit alongside additional training and support. The programme integrates with our existing strategy and has provided the resource we have needed to really look at our connections and relationships with internal colleagues and external partners.

Our volunteers are fantastic – they have the drive and enthusiasm to help our patients and gift us their time whilst working on their own development and aspirations. We initially worked with Dementia Support volunteers and then broadened the programme reach to other roles. These volunteers have improved patient experience, spent time with patients and their loved ones, assisted with rehabilitation and worked alongside clinical staff. We know how valuable volunteers are as they approach their roles with kindness and compassion and we’re always grateful for their time.

All of the work that has been carried out with individuals has had a wider impact on the rest of the volunteering team as we offer more training, experiences and chances to get involved in the wider Trust, thus allowing us to develop voluntary services and improve volunteer experience. Awareness and appreciation of volunteers have improved as a result, with their support and potential recognised across the hospital. We want our volunteers to be included in University Hospitals Plymouth’s #1BigTeam and this programme has certainly played a significant role in that work.”

Becky Smith, Voluntary Services Manager

Stakeholder map at UHP



Strategic Priorities

The Volunteer to Career programme aligns with the priorities in UHPs 2021 – 2025 volunteering strategy as outlined below. By creating the pathway for volunteers to follow we have been able to work with stake holders to improve training (goal 1), ensure a great volunteering experience (goal 2) and respond to the future workforce needs of UHP (goal 3).



Source: Volunteer Strategy 2021 – 2025, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Insight – Volunteer Onboarding

Volunteer recruitment at Plymouth is carried out by Voluntary Services, followed by a whole-trust induction by UHP Organisational Development followed by an in-person induction in the clinical area by the ward manager, Healthcare of the Elderly Lead Nurse or ICU Senior Sister.

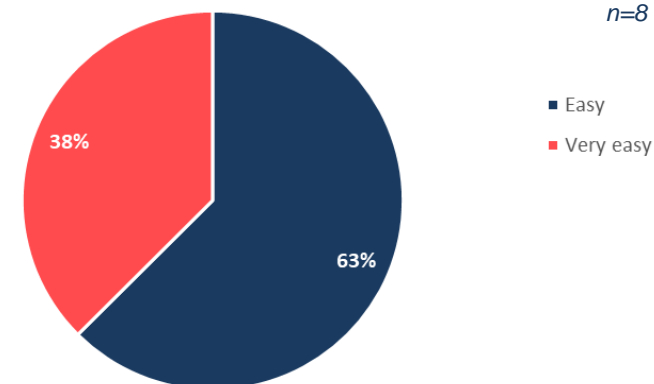
Within the pre-survey, volunteers were asked to reflect on their application experience. Many appeared to have had a positive experience.

- **38% of volunteers** found applying to become a volunteer **very easy**, while **63%** of them said **it was easy**.
- Volunteers who had a positive experience explained that *“the process and application was very clear and easy to understand”* and that *“all staff were very helpful and knowledgeable”*.

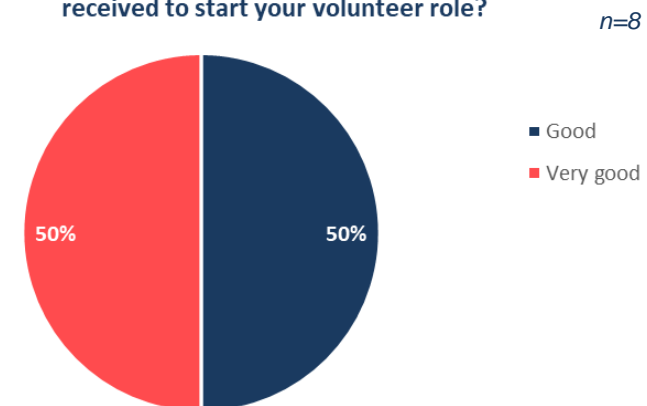
Volunteers were also asked to provide feedback on the induction and onboarding training they received.

- **100% of volunteers** rated their **induction/training as very good or good**. They shared that the induction *“staff were welcoming and the information provided was clear to understand”*.

How easy was it to apply to become a volunteer?



How would you rate the induction / training you have received to start your volunteer role?

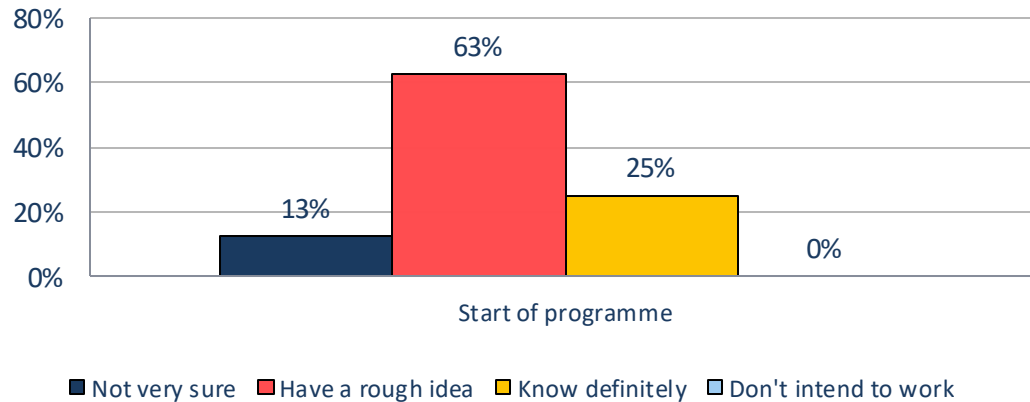


Insight – Volunteer Motivation

- After completing their inductions, volunteers were asked to reflect on their ambitions for working life and confidence in these ambitions. Volunteers reported...

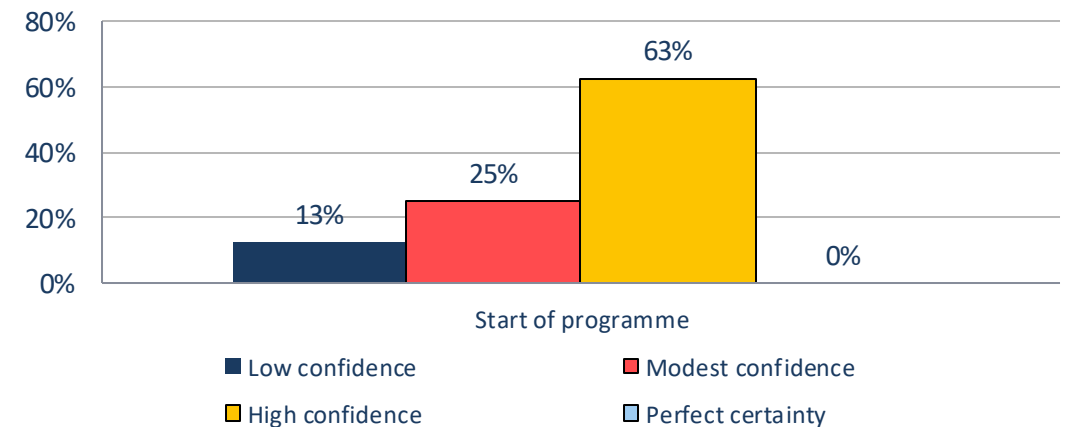
Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years

n=8



Confidence in career ambitions

n=8

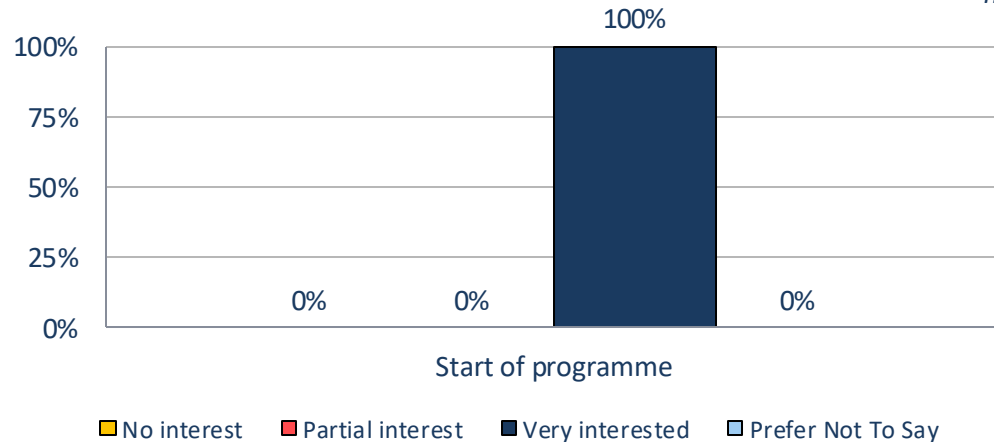


Insight – Volunteers Motivations

- At the start of the programme, volunteers were asked about the level of interest in NHS or social care career, as well as their hopes if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training. Volunteers reported...

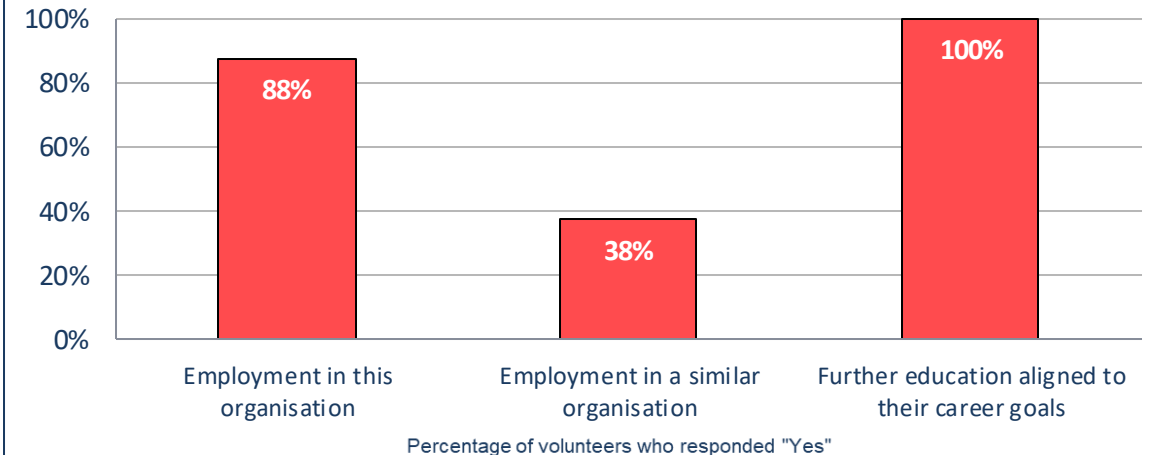
Level of interest in NHS or social care career

n=8



Hopes that volunteering role will lead to...

n=8



Volunteer Feedback



“Having the privilege of visiting and working alongside some amazing, inspirational patients and feeling part of, and valued by the incredible ICU team is something I will always be grateful for. Over the last 6 months I’ve grown personally, developed, and learned skills I will use for the rest of my life, all thanks to the amazing volunteering team at UHP. Thank you!”

Rehab Legend Volunteer

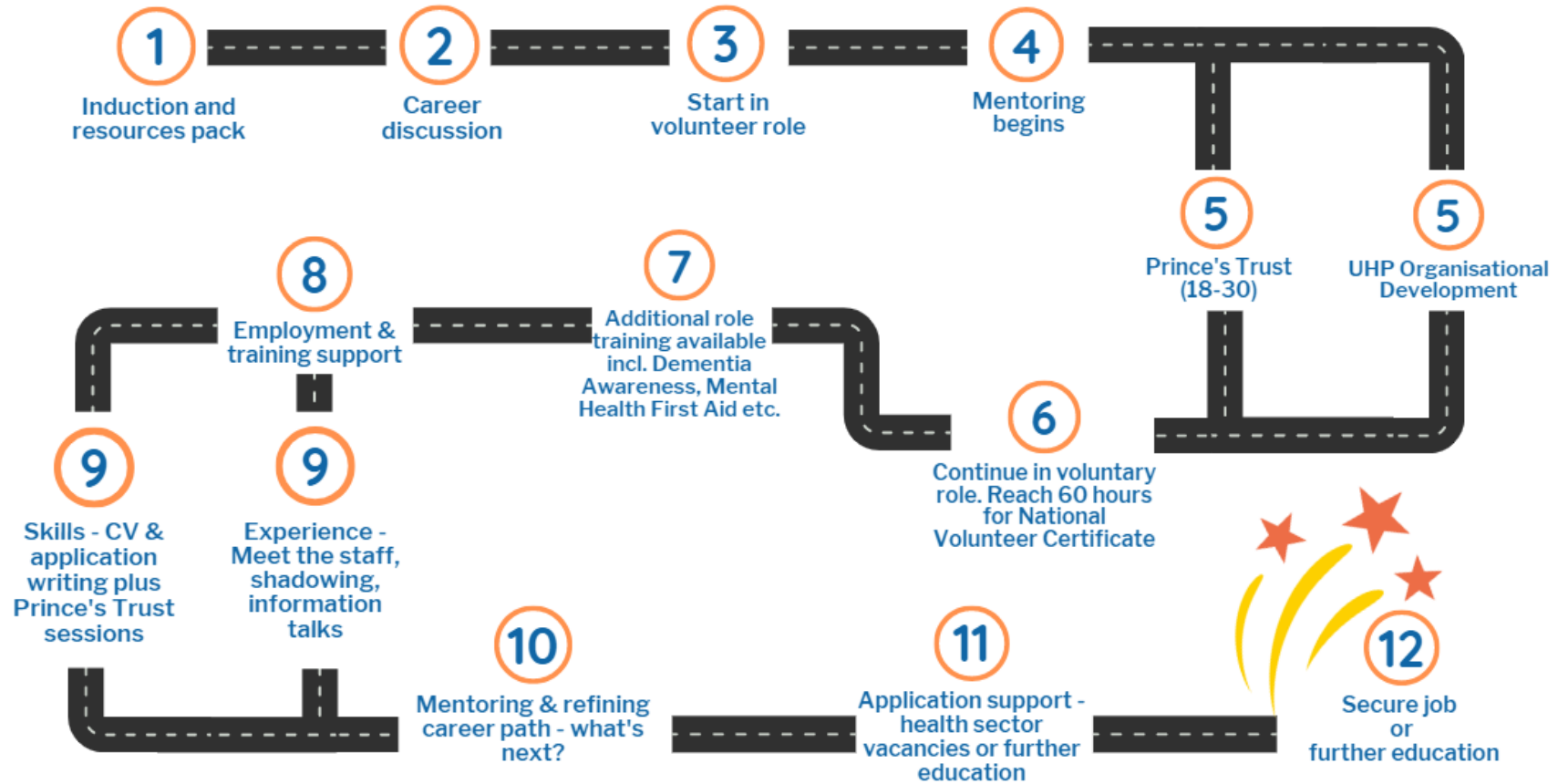


“Volunteer, Susan, started last week in Rehab Legend role, said she’s loving helping in this area and gets “a real buzz” from her voluntary work. She was astonished at the progress some patients have made since her first visit and she’s rethinking her career plans “just put in a late application to Plymouth Uni for Occupational Therapy and / or Physiotherapy.”

Rehab Legend volunteer

Volunteer to Career Pathway

VOLUNTEER TO CAREER PATHWAY



Next Steps

The next steps for UHP Voluntary Services after the Volunteer to Career programme evaluation will involve:

- 1 Developing a toolkit to support staff with how to incorporate volunteering into their workforce plans, as a wider Voluntary Services outcome.
- 2 Incorporating meet the staff into the career pathways giving volunteers the opportunity to chat with department leads to explore optional pathways and to learn from the experience of others.
- 3 Helping talented and motivated people into NHS careers through volunteering opportunities.
- 4 Revitalising the Dementia Support role to support clinical demand on the ward and align with the career aspirations of volunteers.

Acknowledgements

Helpforce would like to pass on our thanks to **University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust Voluntary Services team**, and in particular to **Rebecca Smith, Voluntary Services Manager** and **Lucy Cleaver, Volunteer to Career Coordinator**. We also share our appreciation to the volunteers and staff who participated in providing their feedback.

Contact

Volunteer to Career inbox at UHP: plh-tr.volunteertocareer@nhs.net

Volunteering website at UHP: [Volunteering at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust | University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust](#)

helpforce

Thank you

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