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University Health Board

Volunteer to Career Project Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

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 health and care organisations 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 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board run an Active Ward 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 behaviours 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

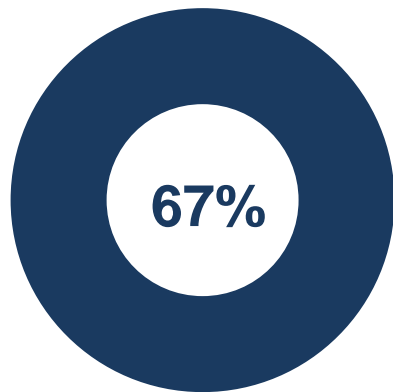
- A **'VtC Self Assessment Tool' (referred to as SAT)** was completed by the project's clinical / health and care lead at the start and then again near the end of their project. The tool measures the organisation against a series of identified categories and questions associated with their volunteering 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 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, **six volunteers** completed the volunteer survey at the start of their role and at a later date
- **Staff surveys** were completed at the start and near the end of the VtC project (referred to as pre and post surveys). In the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, **16 staff members** completed the pre survey and **13 staff** completed the post survey.



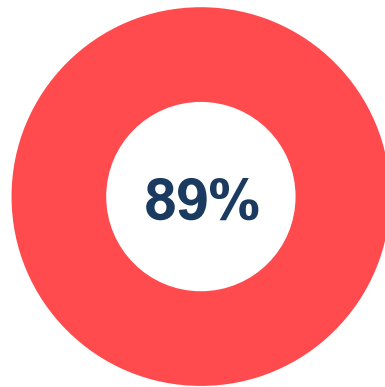
Evaluation Findings - Organisation

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

First SAT Overall Score

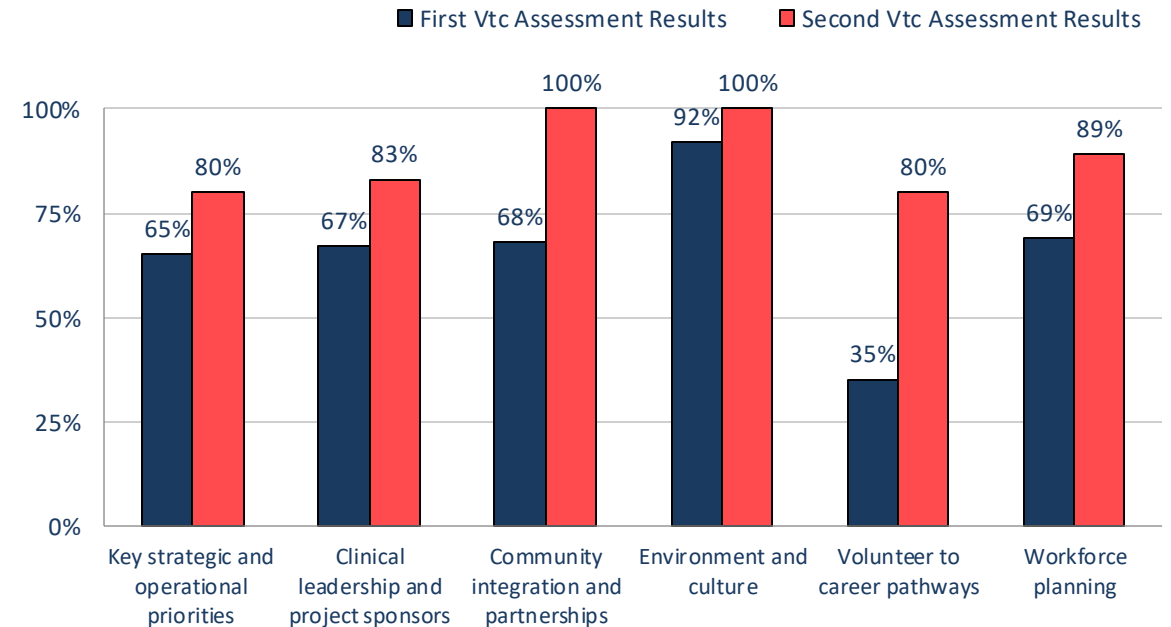


Second SAT Overall Score



- After completing the VtC programme, the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has shown an **increase in the overall SAT score, improving from 67% to 89%**. Similar to the positive change in the overall SAT score result, **we have observed an improvement in the scores for all six elements of organisational improvement for volunteering.**

First and Second SAT Scores Overview



Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



4

volunteers have taken up employment in the NHS



2

volunteers have taken up employment in different sectors



1

volunteer secured further education or training related to health & care

- Through the VtC programme and the career support provided, volunteers **applied for six jobs** and **attended six interviews**.
- These applications resulted in four volunteers securing jobs in the NHS, including roles such as **Pharmacy, Resource Bank and Health Care Support Worker**. Additionally, two volunteers secured work in other sectors, and one volunteer secured placement in an **Adult Nursing Course**.



"I started as a volunteer in July 2022 with a goal to develop from a volunteer to being successful in obtaining a career within the NHS. I **attended several courses that were made available to help me to progress myself** and **was successful in obtaining my Level 2 in Food and Safety**. Shortly after obtaining this qualification, a vacancy became available to volunteers for a Wellbeing Assistant.

I applied for the role very quickly and **was successful in being invited to attend an interview** and am pleased to report **I have got the job**. I am really looking forward to starting my role and develop myself further."

Rachel - VtC Volunteer



"I am pleased to tell you that **I have been accepted for the resource bank** mainly thanks to your help. Once again, thank you so much."

Beth - VtC Volunteer



Volunteer Case Study

Michelle's Story

Michelle was a police officer for 20 years. Disillusioned with harmful politics within the service, she left in 2018, burnt out and close to taking her own life. Therapy and a support group for ex-police officers helped Michelle to recover. And then an advert for an End of Life companion volunteer set her life toward a whole new career.

"I didn't expect to be treated so kindly, I didn't expect to be told I was fantastic..."

"I was with this lady at the Grange every day for a couple of hours for three weeks. Initially she didn't come through as end of life, she came to me through the Person Centred Team. She was born blind and only had a small amount of friends who came maybe once a week to visit her. It turned out she had cancer and it had gone everywhere in her body. She'd had therapy dogs throughout her life, so I arranged for some to come in and help keep her company. Within three weeks we became more than patient and companion; we became friends. It was a really humbling experience as I was her main support at the end."

In November 2022, Michelle's line manager, Kathryn Thomas, told Michelle about the Volunteer to Career programme developed by Helpforce and funded by NHS England. Through her volunteer role, Michelle believes she saw what the NHS is all about and how completely it differed from her perception when she joined.

"I thought it would be the same as the police. But it wasn't. I was treated with kindness, value, and care. And that was what made me think I could do this as a career."

After Kathryn had told her about the programme, it only took three months before Michelle found a job with Aneurin Bevan University Board as a Mental Health Support Care Support Worker. Since starting the role in March 2023, Michelle has had nothing but positive things to say about the job and the people she works with. As she was already using skills she'd learnt in the End of Life Companion role, for Michelle, it was really just about transferring the same skills into the new job.

"To be treated with value. That's what I felt as a volunteer, and that's what I continue to feel in my new role. We have domestic staff, healthcare support workers, junior nurses, doctors, consultants... nobody looks down on you or treats you differently to everyone else. There is no "them" and "us" culture. It's all just "us". Together."

Michelle has found the experience so rewarding, that she keeps pinching herself every day she arrives for work, afraid that it might just be a dream. When we asked Michelle if she was going to continue volunteering as an End of Life Companion on top of her new job, she flashed that warm half smile again.

"The thing is, we underestimate how much these patients help us all. How much they've really helped me. Having sat with the lady who was blind, I would walk out feeling blessed to have the gift of sight. This experience changed how I felt about the simple things in life. I love the End of Life Companion role. It is so rewarding!"

"Volunteer to Career is such a valuable tool to progress into a new career path within the caring profession. There are so many different avenues and directions you can take, and I would encourage anyone interested, to volunteer with the NHS and see where it leads you."

1

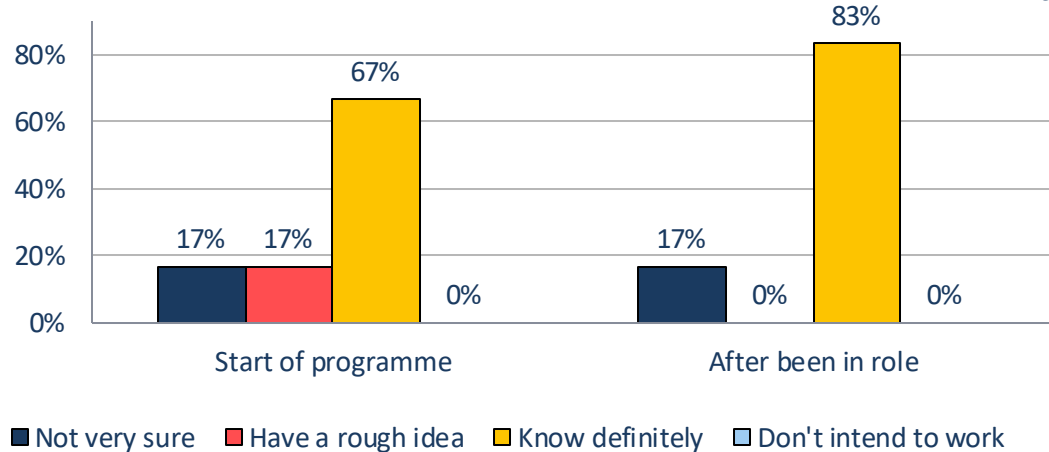


¹You can learn more about [Michelle's story here](#).

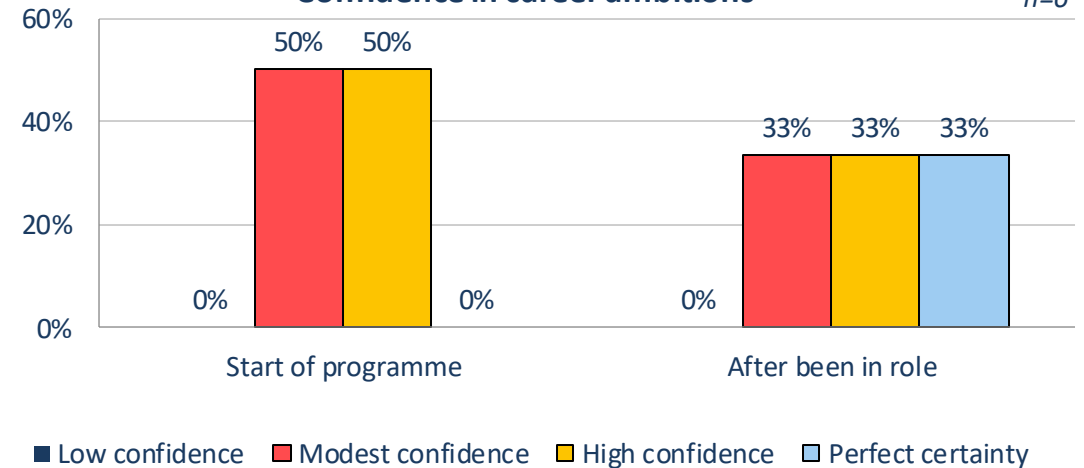
Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



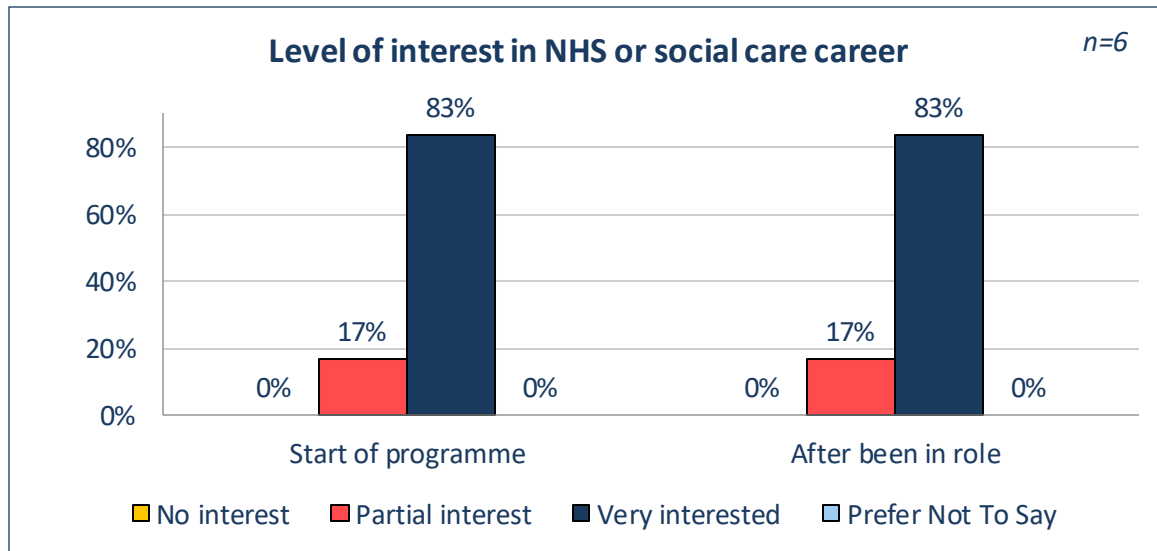
Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years *n=6*



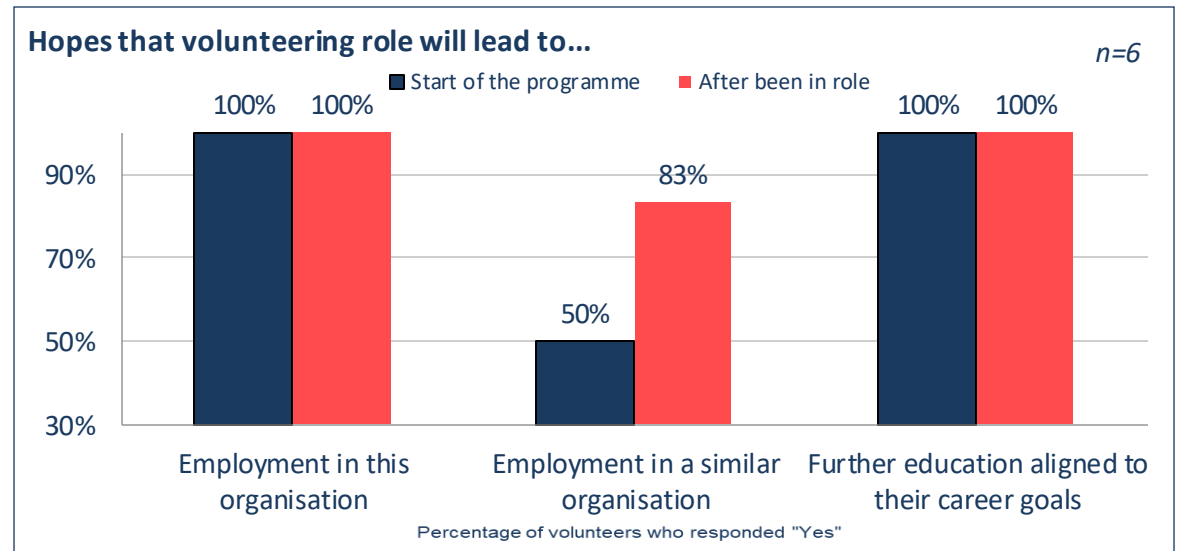
Confidence in career ambitions *n=6*



Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



- Volunteers were also asked about their hopes if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training. Volunteers reported...



Evaluation Findings - Staff Members

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



 "All the volunteers have been professional, caring and adaptable to what our patient's needs are."

Staff member

 "The volunteers provide an excellent service to lots of our patients as they communicate with all patients, some who don't have any visitors and are lonely and also to those who may have visitors but also enjoy chatting to a friendly face. The volunteers often pass on valuable information to nursing staff on how the patient may be feeling."

Staff member

Staff member feedback



"My name is Claire, and I am a Senior Nurse in the Person Centred Care Team at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Our team is responsible for the recruitment, management and governance of volunteers across the Health Board and are privileged to witness the positive impact and benefits that this service has on patients, relatives, volunteers and staff.

As a team we have always recognised that volunteering can be very beneficial for those people seeking employment or looking to change careers as it provides an opportunity to sense what it may be like to work in a health setting through a volunteer role. When the opportunity arose for us to work with Helpforce on the Volunteer to Career Project we were very excited as it gave us a structured approach to supporting people in their career options whilst also providing a meaningful benefit to patients through the variety of volunteer roles.

Since starting the project two of our volunteers have already secured paid positions on wards in hospital settings. Neither volunteer had a background in health and remarked that it was their experience of volunteering in a health environment that made the difference and not only secured them the job but also gave them the desire to apply for a job in health in the first instance.

As I approach retirement it is really heart-warming and reassuring to know that there is a structured process in place for people to explore their individual career options and that this may have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of staff in our very special NHS."

Senior Nurse at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



helpforce

Thank you

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