

Volunteer to Career Project Central and North West London NHS Foundation 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 Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust run clinical and non-clinical volunteering roles as part of the programme, one example of these roles was a ward helper volunteering role.
- It is important to note the short duration of the VtC programme, **which was only six months**, yet still achieved volunteer outcomes. However, implementing the program for a longer period would have resulted in significantly higher volunteer outcomes.

- 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 Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, **14 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 organisation, **17 staff members** completed the pre survey and **19 staff** completed the post survey.

21
volunteers recruited
to the pathway

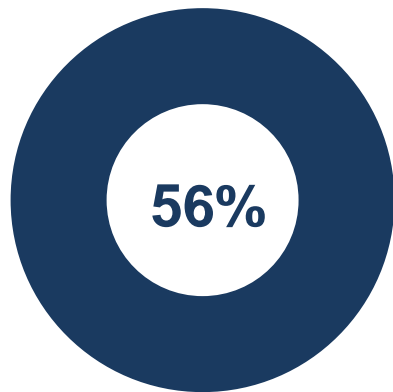
17
staff pre-surveys
completed

19
staff post-surveys
completed

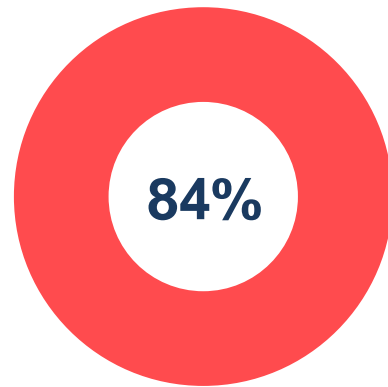
Evaluation Findings - Organisation

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

First SAT Overall Score

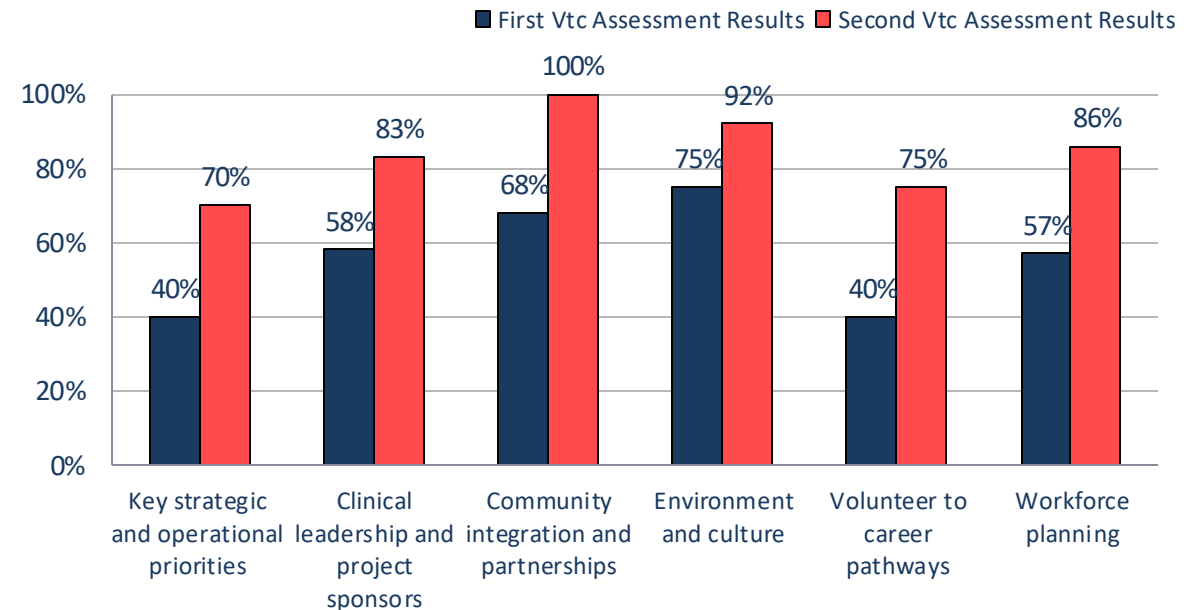


Second SAT Overall Score



- After completing the VtC programme, the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust has shown an **increase in the overall SAT score, improving from 56% to 84%**. 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.**

First and Second SAT Scores Overview



Evaluation Findings - Volunteers


8
volunteers have taken
up employment in the
NHS

- As part of the VtC programme, 11 volunteer to career support plans were in place and 29 volunteer to career support sessions were delivered.
- Through the VtC programme and the career support provided, volunteers applied for 35 jobs and attended 12 interviews.
- These applications resulted in eight volunteers securing jobs in the NHS, including roles such as **Healthcare Support Worker, Senior Performance Analyst, Assistant Psychologist** and **Mental Health Support Worker**.



“It has been an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience. The personal and professional support I have received so far has been incredible and priceless, I feel really supported and guided to achieve my career ambitions.”

VtC volunteer



“Having the opportunity to see first-hand how the NHS works and the professionalism of the staff, has motivated me to work for the NHS.”

VtC volunteer



“The role is exactly what I imagined it to be and it has given me a clearer idea of future career pathways.”

VtC volunteer



“I feel extremely satisfied with my role as a volunteer. It has been an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience. Not only have I had the opportunity to support and assist people in need, but also to receive personal and professional support myself to develop my skills and achieve my goals and ambitions. The career support has been incredible and priceless, I feel really supported and guided. The role has allowed to develop on my skills and gain new ones as well as joining an amazing team that encourages me to bring what makes me unique.”

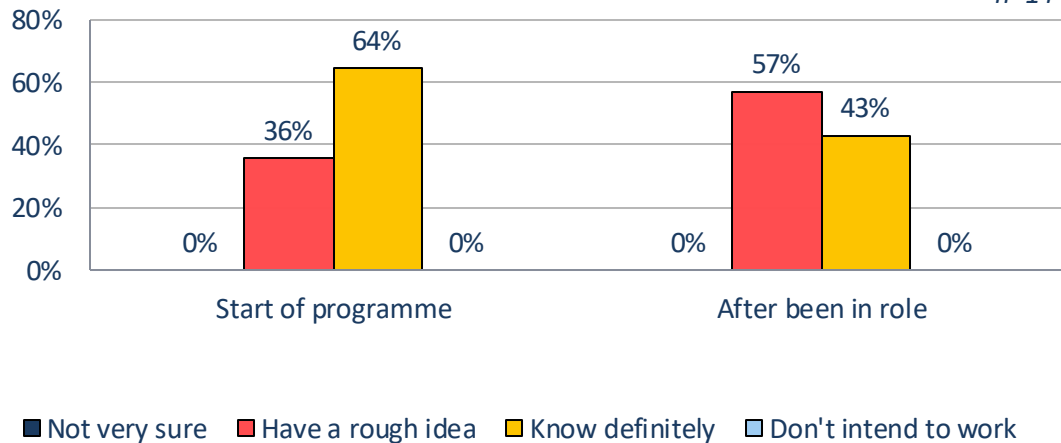
VtC volunteer



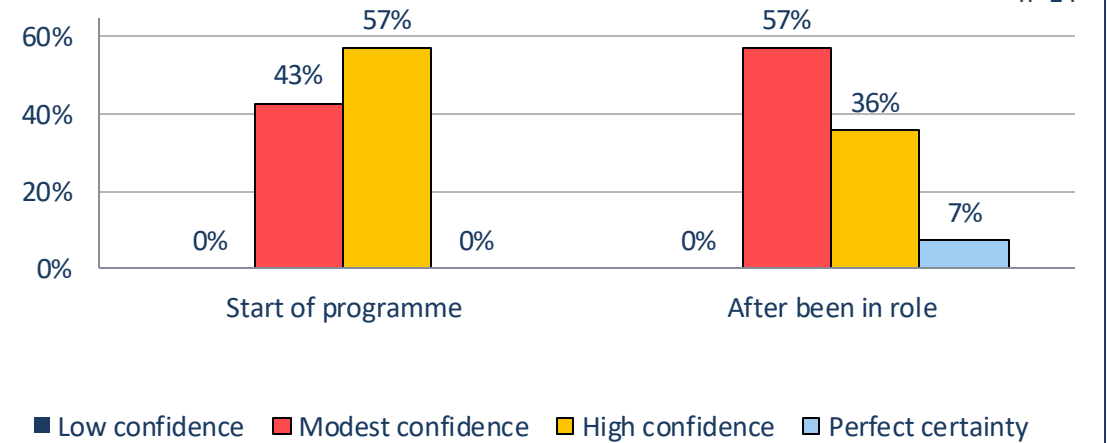
Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years n=14



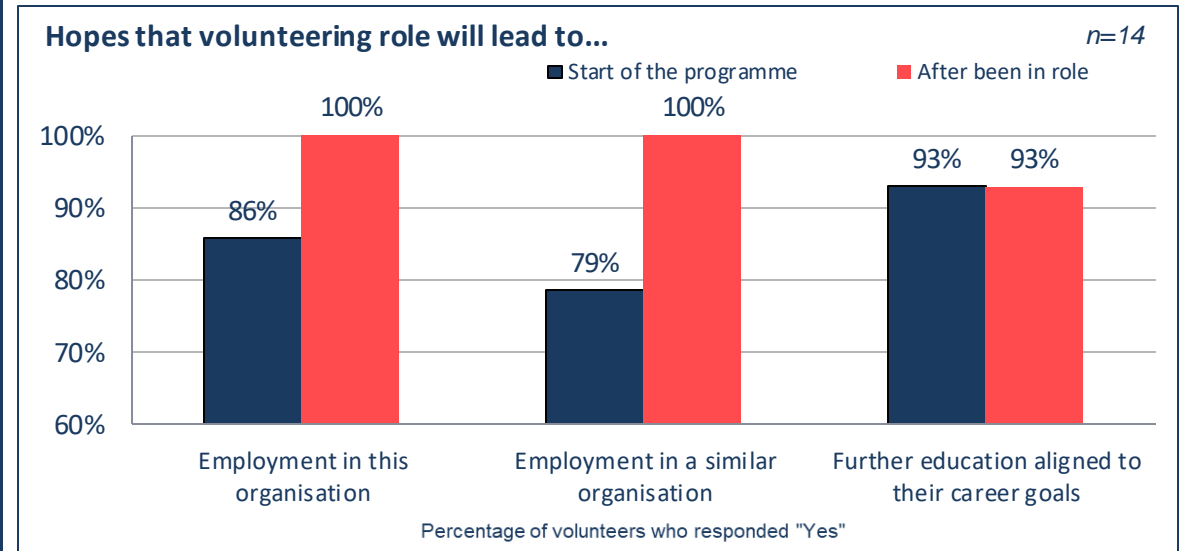
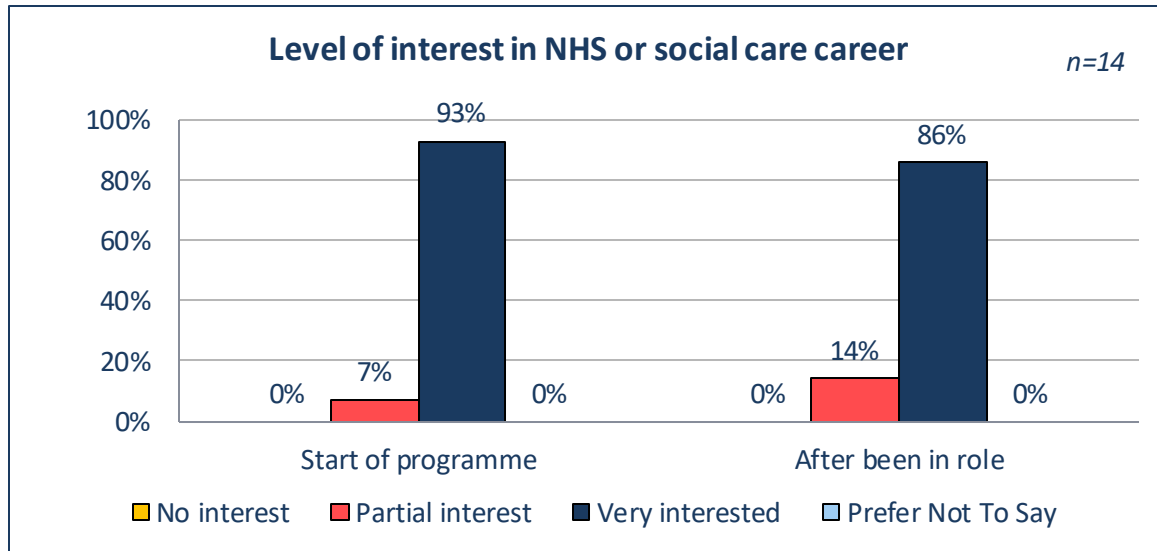
Confidence in career ambitions n=14



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...



Volunteer Stories

Andy's Story

Andy Hay's mental health took a hit in 2019. Unable to enjoy his job, Andy decided to take a break and engage in talking therapy. This decision led to the Volunteer to Career programme. Andy's journey has been remarkable, and we recently caught up with him to learn more about his experience.

I used to manage NHS laboratories and mortuaries looking after a lot of different personalities in pressurised environments. By August 2019 I wasn't enjoying work. It was really stressful, so I took early retirement and decided to focus on my mental health. Originally, I planned on travelling, but then Covid hit, and we all went into lockdown. I kept up with the therapy though and began thinking about what I could do next. So, I got very into learning about mental health and the ways it can affect us and got in touch with the Mental Health Foundation. That led me to Rania Adams, a volunteer manager with Central North West London NHS Trust and I started volunteering for the Check in and Chat service in February 2022."

"I joined Volunteer to Career around September - October 2022. At the beginning of October 2022, I applied for a job and two weeks later, I was talking to the service manager for the whole of palliative care in Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. He wanted me to join in a management role, but I said "No, I've done that, I want to do clinical!" Next week I had another phone call with a lady in the Palliative Care clinical team and started working as a care assistant as part of their bank staff in January 2023. I also convinced my new manager to let me carry on with the Check in and Chat with just one patient. It might not always work out, but we decided to give it a go and see."

The volunteer managers and clinical teams are amazing. I've had a lot of support and training from the clinical staff who were really welcoming and have helped me into my new role. Working with Check in and Chat made my whole experience so rewarding. They were so happy to have people helping out. They would send emails telling me how amazing I am and what a fantastic job I was doing. That meant a lot to me and helped rebuild my confidence.

This whole experience from volunteering to joining the volunteer to career programme has taught me things I didn't know I could do. Active listening and trusting my own abilities have been the two major things I've learned.

My experience has been great. It got me a job as a Care Assistant in the Palliative Care Team at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, kept me moving forward and opened my eyes up to the possibilities in volunteering. I would like to say a big thank you to the volunteering service at CNWL London for giving me a chance and showing me what I'm capable of."

Andy Hay – VtC volunteer



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

Volunteer Stories

Marlen's Story

Originally from Mexico City, Marlen has worked across the Americas, but when her husband got a job in the UK, she unexpectedly found herself at a crossroads, unsure about what to do next in her career. When she heard about the Volunteer to Career programme, Marlen discovered that there was more to life than finance.

"I've always been interested in healthcare and admire the NHS, but I feel I didn't have the qualifications to contribute. However, having an opportunity to see NHS staff treat their patients, inspired me to try volunteering. So, in August 2022, I signed up to the volunteer programme with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and have been volunteering with the Palliative Care Team. The experience has been amazing. Volunteering in palliative care really put things into perspective for me. My role is to support nurses who go to visit patients of all ages.

I never imagined that I would be applying for a role in the NHS. And yet, that's what's happened! In October 2022, I signed up for the Volunteer to Career Program, and my VtC manager played an instrumental role in identifying how my skills and experience in financial institutions could be applied to benefit the NHS in a paid role. That gave me the confidence to apply for a job that I believe will provide me with a new career path. I am extremely interested in data and analytics, which is why I have applied for a Data Analyst job with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. If I don't get the job, I will keep volunteering and applying for other roles at the Trust.

The biggest barrier to applying for a job in the NHS was overcoming my worry over my lack of healthcare experience. But with support from my manager in the Palliative Care Team and the VtC program managers, I realised I have a lot to offer the NHS. I am really interested in pursuing a career in the NHS and am open to exploring different roles.

I will continue to volunteer even after I start working. My managers have been amazingly supportive! They have taken great care of me which for someone new to the country, I really appreciated and I feel a responsibility to give something back to the country that has welcomed my husband and I with open arms. Volunteering has been an effective way for me to understand UK culture, explore a new career path, and to feel I like I belong in a place that one day, I hope to call my home.

Marlen – VtC volunteer



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²You can learn more about [Marlen's story here](#).

Evaluation Findings - Staff Members

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



“Volunteers have been a valuable resource in providing support and assistance to staff and patients.”

Staff member



“The demand for volunteers from patients highlights the need for more volunteers to support staff and patients, positively impacting the overall healthcare service.”

Staff member



“It has been inspiring hearing the volunteers’ journeys. I have been enjoying getting to know them and listening to their experiences on the ward. They are gaining good experience and will have a prosperous future in CNWL. The volunteers are caring, respectful, helpful and very responsive to patients. The support they provide through the VtC programme has greatly impacted our patients, who have experienced significant benefits from their empathetic approach. This has ultimately led to enhanced patient satisfaction and an enriched overall experience for everyone involved.”

Nicola Jhumat, St Charles Assistant Director for KCW Urgent Care and Inpatients

helpforce

Thank you

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