

Pushing the boundaries

How to develop safe and innovative volunteer roles

Webinar
26th September 2024

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in Helpforce



Northern Care Alliance
NHS Foundation Trust



Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



Yorkshire
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NHS Trust

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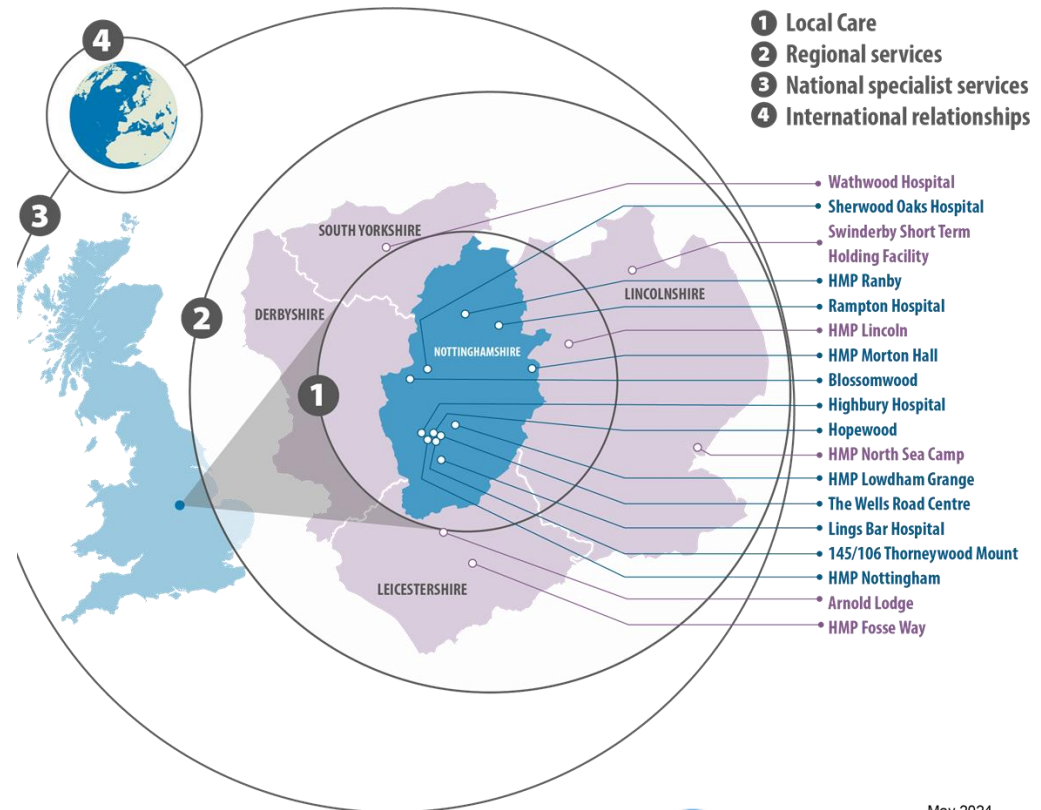
Managing Risks Around Volunteer and Patient Safety

Strategies and Practices at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS
Foundation Trust




Introduction


- Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
 - An NHS Trust providing integrated healthcare services, including mental health, learning disability, and physical health services.
- Importance of Volunteer Roles
 - Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing patient care and experience, particularly within high-security settings like Rampton Hospital.




May 2024



 Foundation Trust membership
 c **18,500**

 Provider collaborative lead
 (IMPACT)


 Combined population circa **1.1 million**


 Services provided from
123 sites


 Institute of Mental
 Health

 **166** Volunteers
 **17** Volunteers


 **71** Wards
1,060 Beds

 **£682m** Income

 **3 Clinical care groups:**
 Mental Health, Community Health,
 Forensic

 National, regional and local
 services

 **2.5 million** Patient contacts

 Provide care in prisons

 over **11,200** Staff

 Involvement
 Experience
 Volunteering

Volunteer Roles at Rampton High Secure Hospital

- Care Dog Volunteers
 - These volunteers provide friendly interactions with patients, helping to alleviate feelings of isolation and improve emotional well-being.
- Patient Experience Volunteers
 - Volunteers collect feedback from patients and their families to help improve the quality of healthcare services provided
- Volunteer Visitors
 - Provide companionship and emotional support to patients, especially those who may not have regular visitors, helping to enhance their social engagement.



Risk Management Strategies



Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

- Comprehensive Onboarding & Training
 - Full recruitment process is undertaken, including Enhanced DBS check.
 - All volunteers undergo extensive training before working with patients, ensuring they understand safety procedures and risk management.
- Regular Risk Assessments
 - Safety protocols are regularly reviewed and updated based on ongoing risk assessments to mitigate risks to both patients and volunteers.
- Care Dog Assessments
 - Care Dogs are assessed by an accredited dog assessor from Canine Concerns or through written confirmation from an approved dog trainer to ensure they are fit to interact with patients.
- Visitor Security Procedures
 - All visitors to Rampton, including volunteers, must be booked in through a key holder at least 24 to 48 hours in advance. Identity checks (e.g. passport, driving license) and fingerprints are recorded during the first visit. Visitors pass through airport-style detectors and undergo a pat-down search, with strict limits on what can be brought into the hospital (e.g. no spiral-bound notebooks).
- Close Supervision
 - Volunteers are closely supervised, with support systems in place to address concerns or issues as they arise.



Detailed Risk Assessment

- Patient Risk Assessments
 - Risk assessments are conducted for individual patients to ensure volunteers are placed in environments where both their safety and the safety of patients are prioritised.
- Area Risk Assessments
 - Assessments are also performed for the specific areas where volunteering takes place, identifying potential hazards and adjusting protocols accordingly.
- Continuous Risk Monitoring
 - Risk is monitored continuously throughout each volunteer visit or interaction, allowing for a dynamic response to any changes in the environment or patient behaviour.



Impact of Volunteering at Rampton High Secure Hospital



Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

- Care Dog Volunteers
 - Provide emotional support and comfort to patients, as physical contact with staff or visitors is not permitted. Dogs offer a form of companionship that patients may miss due to being away from family, friends, or pets.
- Patient Experience Volunteers
 - Collect honest feedback from patients, which is especially valuable given current challenges at Nottinghamshire Healthcare. Volunteers offer a safe and neutral space for patients to share their experiences, helping to improve services and care.
- Volunteer Visitors
 - Offer companionship to patients who may not have regular visitors. They are not made aware of the patient's diagnosis or offence, enabling them to interact with the patient solely as a person, without preconceptions or judgement.



Involvement
Experience
Volunteering

Conclusion

- Summary of Key Points
 - Effective risk management and volunteer support are essential to ensuring both patient and volunteer safety in high-security healthcare settings.
- Ongoing Support
 - Continued efforts in training, supervision, and risk assessments will maintain high safety standards and volunteer satisfaction.



Dining Companion Volunteers

Mitigating and Overcoming risks through training and co-production



CARE
APPRECIATE
INSPIRE

Be the difference.

Introduction to the role of a Dining Companion

Dining Companion volunteers were introduced to support patients to eat and drink at mealtimes on our wards. They support patients in a wide variety of ways from

- Making mealtimes more enjoyable by offering companionship and a friendly face
- Encouragement and reminding patients to eat and drink, offering alternatives to the food and drink provided
- Supporting patients to eat independently by providing hand over hand feeding and spoon feeding for patients who are unable to feed themselves.



CARE
APPRECIATE
INSPIRE

Strategies used to develop the role

Once we identified the aims and objectives of the role, the volunteer services team spent the first few weeks testing the role on the wards, using the **plan, do, study, act** strategy to identify what went well and what didn't, and plan how to improve the process for the next shift.

Using this technique not only created a meaningful role for the volunteers, patients and ward staff, it also shaped the training that was required and identified potential risks that needed overcoming to allow us to deliver the service safely.



Training

All Dining Companion volunteers complete a robust training module. This has been designed in partnership with speech and language therapists, dietitians, nursing colleagues and the Dining Companion Coordinators.

The training includes the importance of good nutrition and hydration, choices and restrictions, modified diet and fluids, signs of struggling, arriving on the ward, getting ready to help your patient and communication.

Menu

Welcome to the Dining Companions Volunteer Training

On this site we'll cover:

- Types of patients and how to get to know them,
- Good nutrition and hydration – how you can help,
- Swallowing difficulties and changes to the consistency of food and drink,
- Assisting the patient and tips for how you can support them,
- Communication difficulties and how you can help.

★ May's Story

When Pam, the dining companion, came to help me with my meal I was feeling very down. The chats I had with her really picked me up. I felt so good and back on a high. I was hardly eating anything last week and having Pam and the other volunteers come to help me has helped me feel better. Now I am laughing and joking with the staff, eating three meals a day and I feel ready to go home. My confidence is restored thanks to the dining companions and staff on TS.

May – patient on TS Oldham

Getting started

About dining companions
Read more →

Nutrition
Read more →

Hydration
Read more →

Choice and restrictions
Read more →

Modified diet and fluids
Read more →

On the ward
Read more →

Your patient
Read more →

Communication
Show accessibility tools

Test your knowledge

Example of training videos on the learning module



On the ward

Menu

Arriving on the ward



Video transcript

Patient's Bedside Board

When you have located your patient make sure you take the time to have a look at the patient's bedside board. This will have key information such as what name the patient would prefer to be called. The board will also have symbols to identify risks to the patient, such as falls risk or identifying that the patient has a cognitive impairment. During your local induction with the Dining Companion Coordinator, they will explain what these symbols mean in more detail.

The board will also have an area for the patient to tell us 'What matters most to me today'. This gives them an opportunity to tell us what is important to them. Sometimes it's the smallest details that make the biggest difference and have a real impact on their care and recovery.



[Back to Dining Companion Volunteers](#)

Menu

Getting ready to help your patient

- Alertness – Is the patient awake, alert and ready to eat? Ask healthcare assistant to help if unsure
- Position in bed or chair. Are they sitting comfortably? Always ask healthcare assistant to help. Do not move patients yourself.
- Ensure table is clear and uncluttered
- Ensure correct cutlery / condiments are available
- Table positioning – height / over bed or in front of chair
- Is there a drink available – does it need to be thickened? Ask healthcare assistant to help
- Offer your patient an opportunity to wash their hands
- Sit at the patient's level – get a chair
- Check the food that arrives is what was requested and what the patient wants to eat
- Show and tell them about the meal.



Feeding assistance

- Small amounts on fork / spoon at a time
- Let the patient see what you are going to give them
- Offer food to lips – is the temperature ok?
- Give them enough time to chew and swallow
- Ask / check if their mouth is clear before giving more
- Offer a drink every few mouthfuls if preferable
- Look out for signs of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties



Show accessibility tools

Processes introduced to minimise risk and overcome challenges.

- Creating a SOP to provide clear processes, roles and responsibilities for the Dining Companion volunteers, coordinators, ward staff and key stakeholders in identifying patients suitable for support with feeding.
- Introducing Dining Companion Coordinators to ensure volunteers were well supported, trained and supervised in their role. They also acted as a link between the ward and the volunteers team.
- Developing a feeding competency checklist. The volunteers need to complete at least three competencies before being able to volunteer independently.
- Changing our standard blue uniform to a bright yellow t-shirt , which was easily identified by colleagues ensured volunteers were visible on a busy ward.

Risk vs Gain

Potential risks identified

- Feeding patients with Dysphagia
- Choking
- Feeding competencies should be signed off by a trained nurse

Potential gains identified

- Risk of malnutrition and not eating / drinking enough is higher than the risk for those who need feeding and take a long time to feed, when nursing staff don't have enough time to give the patient the time they need.
- Patients experience is improved
- Time released back to nursing staff to concentrate on clinical duties

“The Dining Companion program has had such a dramatic effect on my ward. It has improved patients' health & well-being. Being a colorectal ward, my patients can be really low in mood post surgery and may not want to eat, so this has a huge impact on their mental health.

To have someone with the time to sit and chat, assist with their dietary needs, and have a listening ear to hear how they are actually feeling has helped us free up my staff and relieve the pressures on them to do other duties.

The Dining Companions are now a structured part of our team and we welcome them gratefully.”



Julia - Ward Manger on Ward T5 - Oldham

“In November of 2021 I contracted Covid. I was in a coma for over 2 months. After coming out of the coma I was unable to breath alone and so was fitted with a trachotomy which I struggled with for 4 months before being able to breath on my own. As a consequence of this, I now suffer from Neuropathy causing muscle waste, nerve pain and being unable to move from the neck down.

Dining Companion Volunteers have made a big impact on my ongoing recovery. As well as the volunteers making sure I receive the best nutrition and hydration support, I was shocked at how much we had in common and enjoyed their company.

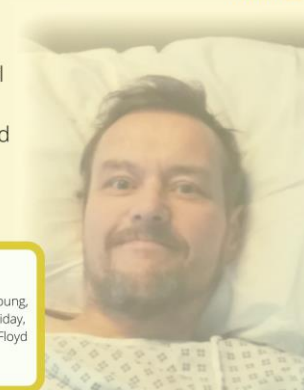
Spending time with the volunteers really breaks up my day and has filled some of those long hours having to just lay in bed looking at the same four walls and watching repeat programs on TV.”



Cristina Wright - Patient on Ward C2

I am originally from Romania. I came over to the UK to study contemporary photography and went on to study Architectural Design. Whilst at university I met the love of my life, my wonderful husband and decided to settle in England. 10 years on, we were married and found our perfect home together and we were enjoying our life before my illness.

“I have really enjoyed the company of the Volunteer Dining Companions who support me at meal times. One of the volunteers also called John tells me stories of his motorbike, he is always good company and makes me laugh.”



John - Patient on L1

My name is John and I am currently a patient on L1 Trauma Rehabilitation Unit, I am 47yrs young, since leaving school I have always worked on building sites as a labourer, I love going on holiday, new adventures and my favourite place was Spain. My other love is my English Bull Terriers Floyd and Oscar who I have had to put in kennels when I came into hospital 4 months ago.

“When Pam, the Dining Companion came to help me with my meal, I was feeling very down. The chats I had with her really picked me up, I felt so good and back on a high.

I was hardly eating anything last week and having Pam and the other volunteers come to me has helped me feel better. Now I am laughing and joking with the staff, eating three meals a day and I feel ready to go home.

My confidence is restored thanks to the Dining Companions and staff on T5.”



May - Patient on Ward T5 - Oldham