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Emergency Department Volunteer Services
Webinar
6th December 2022

“Urgent and Emergency Care is under significant pressures with record numbers of A&E attendances”

Helpforce Capacity Building Support Group with a focus on Emergency Department Volunteers

- 10 participants from 8 NHS Trusts, plus participation with 2 Ambulance Services
- Sharing their experiences and learning
- Shared tools and resources, including ED Volunteer role descriptions
- Training and supervision
- Challenges and achievements
- Ideas on good practice in recruitment, induction and ongoing support for ED volunteers
- Improved engagement with ED Leads to better understand what support they need from volunteers
- Measuring Impact of ED Volunteers

What we learnt

- Trust Emergency Department are all very different - in terms of lay out 'ergonomics' but all are experiencing continued and escalating pressures
- Some ED staff are sceptical about how volunteers can support their work
- Can be challenging to gain feedback from busy ED staff plus patients
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers to support Emergency Departments
- Limited resources and capacity to provide day to day support for ED volunteers
- Benefits of having a dedicated Voluntary Service Co-ordinator (VCO) role supporting ED Volunteer service
- Interest on potential partnership working with local Ambulance Volunteer Service Leads
- Interest in potential collaborative working with local community and voluntary support services



St Helens and Knowsley NHS Foundation Trust

CHALLENGES

- Limited time/capacity for Voluntary Services team to support ED volunteers day to day
- High pressured environment
- ED staff handovers and change in staff personnel - lack of consistency for ED staff to recognise and understand role of ED volunteers - lack of time to connect with volunteers
- Volunteers report they “seem invisible to staff”
- Ideally we need 10 ED volunteers a day - 7 days a week and increased capacity to support this ambition

How Helpforce can help

- Participation with ED -CBSG for shared learning and connecting with other
- Consider using Hf I&I service to measure impact
- Contribute to ED Volunteer service business case to encourage having dedicated VCO for ED volunteers

Our Emergency Department (ED) Pressures and how volunteers support our ED

- Building good relationship with ED Matron who reviewed and revised our ED Volunteer role description
- New emphasis in patient facing support - including hydration and food
- Focus task to check patient ED cupboards ...helpful to prompt good patient engagement
- 10 ED volunteers with long term experience, available to ‘buddy’ new ED volunteers; All ED Volunteers given a tour of our ED
- Volunteers are visible to patients and recognised as valuable extra support to meet their needs

Emergency Department Volunteers Evaluation - Insight and Impact

- Emergency Department volunteering programmes can result in positive impact on staff members, patients and volunteers
- Evaluation reports can demonstrate that volunteers are beneficial and highly valued in emergency services; Helps Trusts to consider increasing resources and capacity for their volunteer services to support their emergency departments.
- Evidenced outcomes - improved staff productivity (saving staff time), improved staff morale; increased sense of purpose and increased social connections for volunteers; improved patient experience
- [NWA ED Volunteers project](#)
- Challenges / tips for data collection:
 - Snapshot surveys
 - QR codes - ED staff feedback
 - Qualitative questions - stories
 - Value of Volunteer feedback 'end of shift logs'
 - Data collection from patients

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"They are absolutely key to being an extra pair of eyes, ears and hands to support an incredibly demanding department and improve patient care and safety."

Staff member



"Great honour to have them in our ED"

Staff member



"They are really helpful in the department. Volunteers do a wonderful job with refreshment provision."

Staff member

'Beyond Basic' Volunteer support for Emergency Departments

Partnership working with Ambulance Volunteer Services - how can NHS Trust Volunteer services connect with Ambulance service to

- Help save time for your respective volunteers
- Share support to improve patient experience
- Trust volunteers providing 'well-being' support for Ambulance Staff/drivers
- Share volunteer training and induction and consider volunteers having a dual role
- Develop Volunteer to Career Programme -example - focus on Paramedics

Collaborative Working Opportunities with local Voluntary and Community Sector Support Services - sign posting to local (non Clinical) support

Example - Mental Health Support - volunteers with lived experience of using mental health support services
Improved understanding of local support services which could be of benefit, beyond primary care support
Shared training - for example - Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and Mental health 1st Aid/

Identifying frequent attendees and monitoring non clinical intervention support and signposting with extra support from volunteers who have a good understanding of local Voluntary and Community Support Services; improved connections with local services who provide support to people sleeping rough

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Thank you

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