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Liverpool University Hospitals - End of Life volunteer service

Insight and Impact Report

Headline Findings

- Volunteer support helps staff to deliver good care to patients
- Staff are satisfied with volunteer support
- Volunteers benefit from volunteering

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Volunteers are crucial to the NHS’s vision for the future of health and social care by working in partnership with skilled staff to perform a variety of roles that support patients and staff.

The aim of the Volunteer Innovators Programme (VIP) is to develop and assess impactful volunteer innovations that can be refined and shared with other UK trusts looking to adopt effective volunteer services. These innovations were chosen given their potential to make the most impact and their ability to be tested and scaled in other NHS settings. The aim of our Insight and Impact work has been to assess the impact of each innovation on staff, patients, volunteers and the system.

The End of Life volunteer service provides a presence and companionship to patients that may otherwise be alone and isolated in the latter stages of dying. The volunteers also support families, carers and loved ones who are unable to visit, or those who are emotionally exhausted and are in need of a break, but are reluctant to leave their loved ones alone.

Volunteers provide a service that complements the role of the clinical staff. Volunteers provide additional emotional support, the time to actively listen and be there when needed, and if necessary, feedback any concerns to the clinical staff.

“This gentle soul had a wonderful family and yet she appreciated my few hours spent with her. She told me she loved me and kept thanking me. I was so humbled, I just tried to impart as much peace as I could, I did nothing special, I was just there!” - Volunteer

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The Impact and Insight work for the project was focussed on assessing the impact of this service on staff and volunteers. It was felt at the outset that there was a sufficient amount of existing research carried out by the trust on the impact of the service on patients and their families/carers. Therefore, this was not a focus for the programme.

At the beginning of this project, there were seven (7) End of Life volunteers across one palliative care ward with 12 beds. By the end of the project, the service had scaled to three (3) wards supported by 21 volunteers.

B) Methodology & Sample

Key evaluation questions for the project:

- 1) Does the End of Life volunteer service support staff in delivering good care to patients?
- 2) Does volunteer support contribute to staff wellbeing?
- 3) Do staff feel satisfied with the support provided by End of Life Volunteers?
- 4) Do End of Life volunteers feel that volunteering has had an impact on their wellbeing?

Staff

Responses from Staff were collected using the VIP Staff Survey which was administered every quarter during the innovation. See Appendix A for a copy of the VIP Staff Survey. **Total number of responses to VIP staff survey:** 32 responses, this consists of 11 Nurses, 9 Doctors, 8 Healthcare Assistants, 2 Project Leads, 1 Volunteer Services Manager and 1 Clinical Nurse Specialist. Staff pay bands for this sample range from Band 2 - Band 8a and are distributed as: Band 2 (n=6), Band 3 (n=2), Band 5 (n=4), Band 6 (n=4), Band 7 (n=5), Band 8a (n=2), Undisclosed (n=9).

Volunteers

Responses from volunteers were collected using the VIP Volunteer Survey which was administered every quarter during the innovation. See Appendix B for a copy of the VIP Volunteer Survey. **Total number of responses to VIP Volunteer Survey:** 20 responses, 8 Female and 7 Male (5 undisclosed), age range 51 years and over.

C) Key findings

Total activity

Total number of volunteers recruited during VIP: 14 volunteers and 9 volunteers in training

Total number of volunteer hours during VIP: 321 hours

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Total number of patients supported during VIP: 182 patients supported

Total number of family/carers supported during VIP: 8 families/carers

Frequency of volunteer visits per month: 89% of volunteers reported this to be once a week and 6% reported 'Less than one month'

1) *Does the End of Life volunteer service support staff in delivering good care to patients?*

Based on the analysis of the VIP staff survey for the trust, the key findings include:

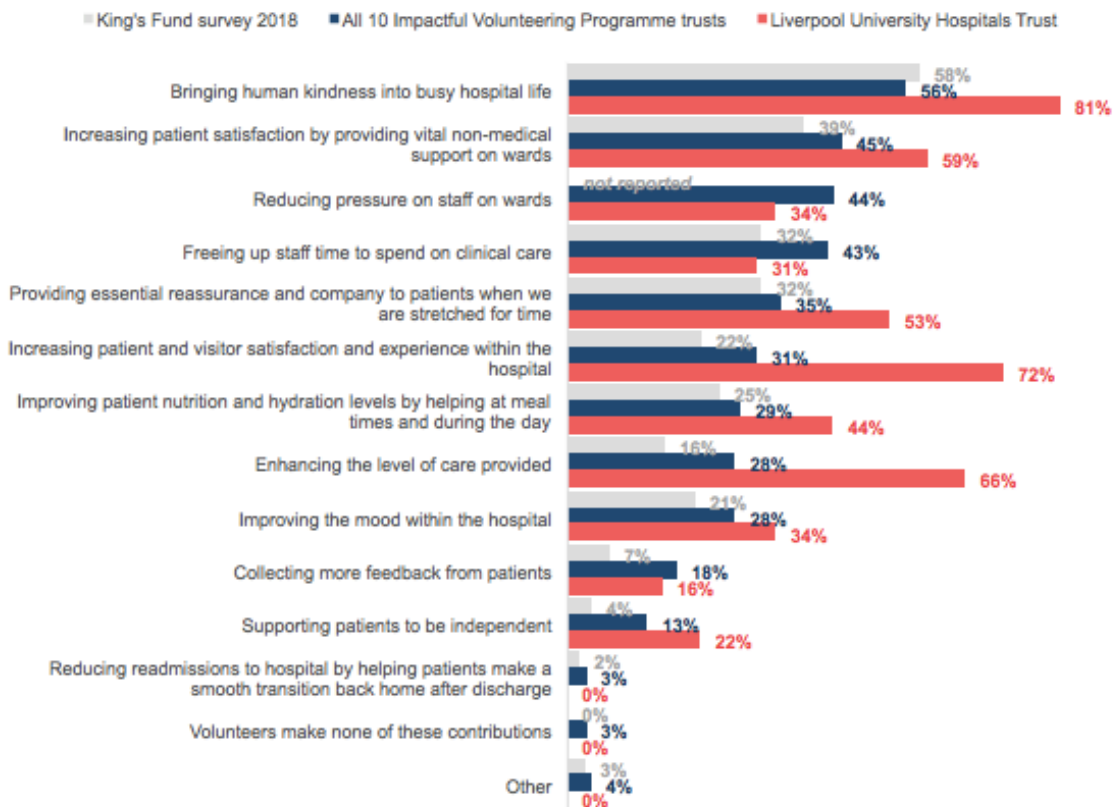
Volunteers are supporting the delivery of quality care and patient/family experience

The majority of staff (81%) agree that volunteer support is helpful in allowing them to have enough time to deliver good care to patients. In fact, when some staff (n=29) were surveyed prior to the start of the programme, it was found that the majority of the sample (96%) felt unable to spare as much time as they would like to support patients either regularly or sometimes.

As well, 72% of staff feel that volunteers contribute to increasing patient and visitor satisfaction and experience within the hospital, and 66% feel that volunteers enhance the level of care provided. See Graph 1 for volunteer impacts based on staff perception. (NOTE: For comparison, the list of impacts were similar to the list used by the King's Fund in their 2018 research on 'The Role of volunteers in the NHS: Views from the front line'. The survey allowed staff to pick the top three ways in which volunteers contribute to the hospital. It's clear that the staff who completed the VIP survey at Liverpool feel more strongly on a number of dimensions related to quality and experience of care compared to the King's Fund respondents and indeed, other staff in the VIP programme).

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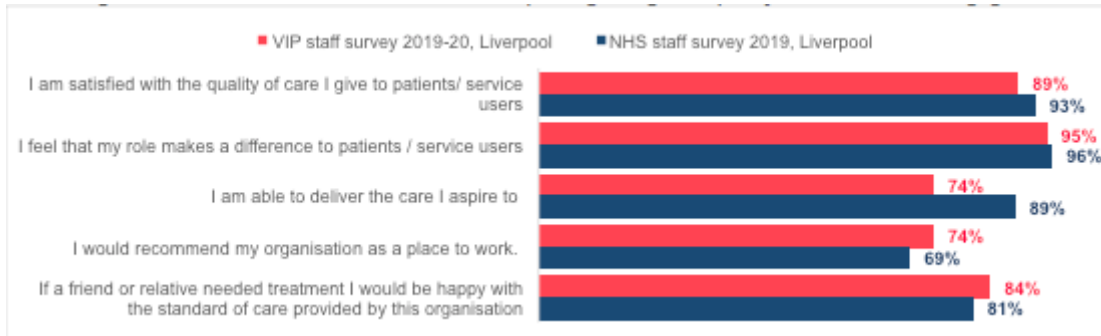
Graph 1 Volunteer impact observed by staff at Liverpool



Furthermore, in order to see how feedback from staff working alongside VIP volunteers compares to usual staff feedback, analysis was completed against NHS staff survey (2018/19) results for similar staff groups (nursing and health care assistants) at Liverpool. Although the findings do not indicate much difference in relation to questions related to the quality of care delivered by the individual member of staff, they do appear to suggest a marked increase in staff satisfaction with their organisation and the quality of care that it delivers as a whole. See Graph 2.

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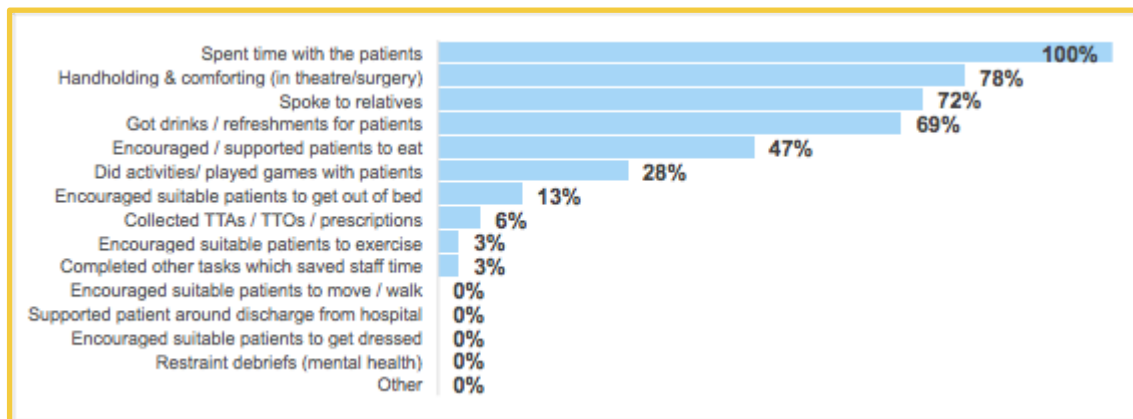
Graph 2 VIP staff survey (nurse and HCA responses) vs NHS staff survey (nursing and HCAs only)



Volunteers are contributing in many different ways on the wards

Volunteers are ready to support wards and they do so in a number of ways including: spending time with patients (100%), handholding and comforting (78%), speaking to relatives (72%) (NOTE: survey allowed staff to pick all activities that applied. The above activities were the top three selected by staff at the trust. See other activities selected by staff in Graph 3).

Graph 3 Volunteer activities observed by staff at Liverpool



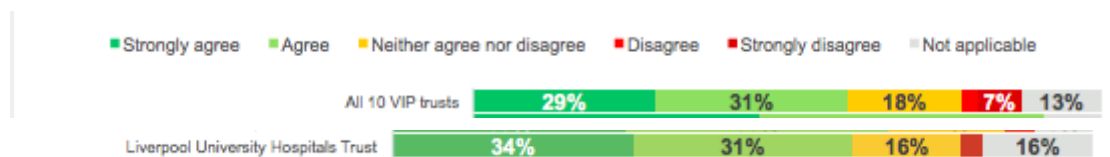
2) Does volunteer support contribute to staff wellbeing?

Volunteers are contributing to staff wellbeing and morale

65% of staff at Liverpool agree/strongly agree that volunteers help staff feel less stressed when the wards are busy. This scores higher than the combined VIP trusts scores (See Graph 4 for comparison).

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Graph 4 Comparison of scores on ‘When wards are busy or short-handed volunteer support helps me feel less stressed’



3) Do staff feel satisfied with the support provided by End of Life Volunteers?

Staff are satisfied by the support they receive from volunteers

The vast majority (91%) of staff agreed that volunteers are seen as a key part of the ward team and 88% of staff were ‘**very satisfied**’ with the support they received from the volunteer service.

50% of staff also felt that their experience with the volunteers had been more positive than what they had expected. One member of staff commented:

“Their involvement is immense. I always support the idea of volunteers, I have been in the trust for over 35 years and we have used them before so I was aware of the difference they can make, this time round they seem much more enabled, more patient focused rather than tasks”. - Member of staff

When asked about challenges with the volunteer service, 63% of staff believe that there are no challenges. This is a good score particularly when compared to other trusts in the programme and when compared to the Kings Fund’s research on staff in 2018. However, nearly 4 of 10 staff did feel that some more clarity is required over volunteer roles. See Graph 5 for a list of challenges of hospital volunteering.

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Graph 5 Challenges of hospital volunteering at Liverpool



4) *Do End of Life volunteers feel that volunteering has had an impact on their wellbeing?*

Based on analysis of the VIP Volunteer survey results for this trust, the key findings are: (NOTE: Small sample size so findings should be approached with caution)

Volunteering increases the wellbeing of volunteers

Volunteers at this trust are highly satisfied with their experience of volunteering at this trust. All volunteers (100%) in this sample would recommend volunteering at this hospital to friends and family looking to volunteer (67% extremely likely). Volunteers also feel that volunteering has had a positive impact on their wellbeing with 85% of volunteers reporting that volunteering has given them a sense of purpose. As well, 84% of volunteers felt that volunteering has increased their confidence.

Volunteering increases interest in a career in the NHS

Most volunteers (70%) felt that their volunteer role had increased their interest in working for the NHS with 1 volunteer reporting that they had recently taken steps to take up a career in health and care.

D) Conclusions

The key findings from the insight and impact work adds to the evidence base on Liverpool University Hospital’s End of Life volunteering service. This work unpicks staff perceptions on the volunteering service and shows that volunteers can make a valuable contribution to take

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pressure off staff, and improve patient and family experience. It was almost unanimous that volunteers are being seen as a key part of the team and staff are happy with the support they provide.

Acknowledgements

Helpforce would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the volunteers and staff who supported patients during their time of need and provided insight into this important volunteer role.

References

The Kings Fund (2018):

https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/Role_volunteers_NHS_December_2018.pdf

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Appendices

Appendix A - Staff Survey

Liverpool staff survey

Short Staff Survey - Please tell us about your experience of working with volunteers? (max. 2 minutes)

Thank you for taking part in this survey. This information sheet explains why this research is being carried out and what it will involve. We would be grateful if you could read the following information.

What is the purpose of this survey?

This survey is aimed at better understanding the impact that hospital volunteers may have on staff and patients. The findings may also help us to further improve our volunteer services at the hospital.

Who is organising this research?

This research is organised by Helpforce (www.helpforce.community), a not-for-profit organisation that aims to raise the profile of volunteering in health and care across the UK, in close collaboration with this hospital.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you take part, your consent is implicit. This means that you give your consent by filling in this survey and submitting it. However, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason by contacting us.

The survey consists of questions about staff time and your experience of working with volunteers.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The participation of all those taking part will be entirely confidential. Your survey responses will not affect your employment in any way. All data from surveys will only be available to the internal hospital team and the HelpForce research team and its research partners for analysis purposes only. It will be securely stored and will be treated as confidential at all times.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The data will be analysed and written up as a report. This report will be made available to the hospital. It may also be made available to the public through Helpforce or any of its partners such as NHS England as well as through the internet or other publications. Participants will not be in any way identifiable in any way.

If you have any questions or wish to provide any feedback about this survey, please contact: Dr. Allison Smith, Head of Research, at as@helpforce.community

Thank you again for taking part in this study.

1) About You

Please tell us which ward you are on: _____

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Job role: (please circle)

Nurse / Physiotherapist / Healthcare assistant / Doctor / Midwife / Other (please specify)

Agenda for change or band?

- Band 1
- Band 2
- Band 3
- Band 4
- Band 5
- Band 6
- Band 7
- Band 8a
- Band 8b
- Band 8c
- Band 8d
- Band 9
- Don't know

2) **Volunteer activities:** What did the volunteer do? (Please tick all that apply).

- Spent time with the patients
- Spoke to relatives
- Got drinks/ refreshments for patients
- Encouraged suitable patients to get out of bed
- Encouraged suitable patients to get dressed
- Encouraged suitable patients to move/ walk
- Encouraged suitable patients to exercise
- Encouraged / supported patients to eat (e.g. snacks, mealtime)
- Supported patient around discharge from hospital
- Did activities/ played games with patients
- Restraint debriefs (mental health)
- Handholding & comforting - in theatre/surgery
- Collected TTAs/TTOs/prescriptions
- Completed other tasks which saved staff time - e.g. prepared patient for discharge, talked with patients relative to arrange discharge, etc
- Other (please tell us what the volunteer did):.....

3) Have your views about hospital volunteers changed at all since your first interaction with a hospital volunteer?

- No, my experience with them has been very much what I had expected.
- Yes, my experience with them has been **more negative** than what I had expected.
- Yes, my experience with them has been **more positive** than what I had expected.

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If your views did change, what exactly was different in your view?

.....
.....

4) We are interested in what difference having volunteer support on your ward has made to you. Please tell us how far you agree or disagree with the following statements.

My overall experience of the volunteers on the ward:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Volunteer support is helpful in allowing me to have enough time to deliver good care to patients						
The volunteers in the area I work in the hospital have been sufficiently trained for their roles						
When the wards are busy, the volunteers' support helps me feel less stressed.						
Volunteers are seen as a key part of the ward team						

5) Satisfaction with volunteers

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the volunteer support you have received. Please circle one number from the scale below.

Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Unsure	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

6) If you answered 'very unsatisfied'/'unsatisfied' - why do you feel this way?

.....
.....

7) In your opinion, which of the following do hospital volunteers contribute to? Please choose your **top three** options

- Reducing pressure on staff on wards
- Freeing up staff time to spend on clinical care
- Increasing patient satisfaction by providing vital non-medical support on wards
- Improving patient nutrition and hydration levels by helping at meal times and during the day
- Providing essential reassurance and company to patients when we are stretched for time
- Bringing human kindness into busy hospital life

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- Enhancing the level of care provided
- Improving the mood within the hospital
- Collecting more feedback from patients
- Increasing patient and visitor satisfaction and experience within the hospital
- Reducing readmissions to hospital by helping patients make a smooth transition back home after discharge
- Supporting patients to be independent
- Volunteers make none of these contributions
- Other (please specify) [free text] _____

8) What are the challenges of hospital volunteering? Please choose up to three options.

- Volunteers take up too much staff time
- There is a lack of clarity about volunteer roles
- There is too much variation in how volunteers do things
- Volunteers are unreliable
- Volunteers change too often
- None of the above
- Other (please specify) [free text] _____

9) Do the following statements apply to you and your job? (from NHS annual staff survey)

Tick or put a cross in the box	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the quality of care I give to patients/ service users					
I feel that my role makes a difference to patients / service users					
I am able to deliver the care I aspire to					
I would recommend my organisation as a place to work.					
If a friend or relative needed treatment I would be happy with the standard of care provided by this organisation					

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Appendix B - VIP Volunteer Survey

Short Volunteer Survey - Please tell us about your volunteer experience? ... 2 minute survey

Volunteer participation information sheet

We are very pleased that you have agreed to complete the survey. This information sheet explains why the survey is being carried out and what it will involve. We would be grateful if you could read the following information carefully. Please contact us if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this survey?

This survey is aimed at better understanding the your volunteering experience and the impact volunteering may have on you. The findings may also help us to further improve the volunteer services in healthcare settings.

Who is organising this research?

This research is organised by Helpforce (www.helpforce.community), a not-for-profit organisation that aims to raise the profile of volunteering in health and care across the UK, in close collaboration with the hospital you volunteer at.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. If you take part, your consent is implicit. This means that you give your consent by filling in this survey and submitting it. However, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. The survey consists of questions about your volunteering activities, experience, and how you are feeling.

Will my taking part in the survey be kept confidential?

The survey team will follow ethical practice. The participation of all those taking part will be entirely confidential. Your survey responses will not affect your volunteer role in any way. All data is anonymised, securely stored and treated as confidential at all times.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The data will be analysed and written up as a report. This report will be made available to the hospital. It may also be made available to the public through Helpforce or any of its partners such as NHS England. Participants will not be identified at any point. The data collected is for research only, it will not be used for any other purpose. If you have any questions or wish to provide any feedback about this survey, please contact: Dr Allison Smith at as@helpforce.community

Thank you again for taking part in this study.

YOUR VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

1. How often are you currently volunteering in the hospital or for the hospital?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week but at least once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

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--

2. Approximately how many hours do you currently spend volunteering in the hospital or for the hospital in an average month?

hours

3. What activities do you undertake when you volunteer in the hospital or for the hospital? Tick all that apply

- Helping to mobilise patients, e.g. to get dressed and move around
- Helping out on wards during mealtimes, e.g. encouraging patients to eat, passing them a drink
- Providing companionship or mental stimulation to patients, e.g. visiting people for a chat, play cards, share music/books
- Supporting patients to leave hospital and settle back at home
- Supporting staff or patients with tasks, e.g. picking up prescriptions, moving patients around within hospital
- Leading activities and social activity groups to support patients with long-term conditions, e.g. dementia, stroke
- Restraint debriefs (mental health)
- Handholding & comforting - in theatre/surgery
- Other (please specify):

4. How likely are you to recommend volunteering at the trust to friends and family if they wanted to volunteer? Tick one

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither likely or unlikely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely | <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Unlikely | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

5. We would like to better understand aspects of your wellbeing. There are no right or wrong answers. For each of these questions I'd like you to give an answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".

a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d. On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. On a scale of 1-10, (where 1 is disagree and 10 is agree) please rate how you feel about the following at the moment. Please circle.

	<u>Disagree</u>										<u>Agree</u>	N/A
a. My volunteering gives me a sense of purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
b. My volunteering has increased my confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
c. My volunteering has increased my ability to get paid work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
d. My volunteering at the hospital has increased my interest in pursuing a career in health and care	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
e. My volunteering at the hospital has increased my interest in working for the NHS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	

7. How interested are you taking up a career in health and care/NHS? (Please circle)

A. I have recently taken steps to take up a career in health and care (e.g. job search, job applications, discussions with key professionals)

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B. I have not yet taken any steps to take up a career in health and care (e.g. job search, job applications, discussions with key professionals) but plan to shortly
C. I have not taken steps and have no intentions to do so in the near future
D. Not applicable

8. To what extent did your volunteering in this hospital motivate you towards a career in health and care/NHS? (Please circle)
A. I am not considering a career in health and care
B. To some extent although my main motivation came from elsewhere
C. My volunteering was the main motivator towards a career in health and care
D. Not applicable

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We would like to know a bit more about you so that we can compare the experiences of different types of volunteers.

7. About you					
a. Sex:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		
b. Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual/s straight	<input type="checkbox"/> Gay/lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
c. Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 61-74
	<input type="checkbox"/> 75-84	<input type="checkbox"/> 85 and over			
d. Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other				

8. What is your ethnic background?		
White	Asian/Asian British	Chinese and other ethnic background
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic background <i>(please specify)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	
Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background	
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean	Black/Black British	
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean	
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> African	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background	

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9. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions, disabilities or illnesses that have lasted or are expected to last for 12 months or more?

Yes

No

I would prefer not to say

Thank you again for taking part in this study.