



The Royal Wolverhampton  
NHS Trust

# Voluntary Services Annual Review 2022

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust



**Patient Experience**

Safe & Effective | Kind & Caring | Exceeding Expectation



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## Introduction

Royal Wolverhampton Voluntary Services, based within the Patient Experience Team, oversees recruitment, placements, and support to its own volunteer workforce, and provides a centralised advice point to other organisations and services in the Trust who wish to recruit volunteers (further details on these groups can be found in section 9). This 2022 annual review provides a guide to highlights during 2022 (January – December) of all voluntary activity within the remit of the Patient Experience Team.

# VOLUNTEERING



## Legacy of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Clinical Volunteers

The commencement and duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, from early 2020, transformed NHS Voluntary Services. Nationally, we saw the large NHS Responders volunteer workforce form, which had a pivotal role in supporting communities with befriending, and companionship to people at a crucial time when socialising was not allowed, and support at large scale events such as vaccination centres and Covid testing sites.

Within Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, at the start of 2020, we realised that we needed urgent support in our clinical areas if possible, due to staff shortages and the changes we were quickly witnessing in our care systems. Unfortunately, the existing volunteer workforce in place at the time were unable to volunteer due to health concerns of the volunteers affected. Plus, many non-urgent volunteer services were suspended.

The clinical volunteer role was formed and a rapid recruitment process was underway. By May 2020 we had recruited an additional 120 Clinical Volunteers (CV's).

The role of the Clinical Volunteer was to undertake ward duties such as patient mealtime assistance, bed making, PPE stocks, face time calls with loved ones, errand running for staff, and tasks later developed into more therapeutic type activities with patients, such as simple companionship (essential in times of no patient visits allowed), and activities such as puzzles, games, exercise and gentle arts and crafts.

Individual risk assessments were carried out with the volunteers and they were not placed in areas at high risk of Covid-19 transmission, however in rehabilitation areas, some medical wards, and the Acute Stroke ward.

As opposed to what previously occurred with ward based volunteers, where a volunteer was always assigned to the same ward, the Trust developed a 'Shift booking system' in which a list is sent out to volunteers periodically to select the area in which they will go to volunteer – so that we can respond appropriately to urgent requests for volunteers where needed. Software was acquired to manage this process, and also offer the additional safeguard of tracking volunteer attendances and hours completed for each volunteer. Therefore we can provide better assurances around not only records of volunteer attendance, but also provide the right kind of voluntary support, in the right place, at the right time, to suit the needs of the Trust.

Since 2020, the success of the Clinical Volunteer programme has continued to grow and develop and is still delivered in 2022, with enhancements to the role including support at a Covid swab hub, extension of the Patient Activities programme, marshalling support in RWT Vaccination hubs, support on wards with answering calls from families during times of restricted visiting, and the Inpatient Visiting Hub during 2022.



*Clinical Volunteers who have offered their support during 2022:  
(L-R) Isobelle, Gautam, Polly, Kuldip, Lucy and Debbie.*

## Funding

We are grateful to external funders without whose help we would have been unable to offer the full extent of the voluntary support we did during this period. These include NHSE/I Voluntary Partnerships, and the Pears Foundation, in partnership with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Funding support was utilised in the following ways:

### **NHSE/I Voluntary Partnerships – Winter Volunteering Programme 2021**

The Trust secured short term funding from NHSE/I Voluntary Partnerships in late 2021 to run volunteer programmes with three key objectives:

- Impact – reducing and relieving pressures on staff
- Improving patient / carer experience and patient wellbeing
- Provision of quality and meaningful opportunities for volunteers

Funding provided staff resource for additional Band 3 admin support from temporary staff bank, and also purchase of volunteer uniforms, stationary, publicity materials, and bespoke volunteer management software subscription.

We chose to focus on the following workstreams within this funded programme:

- Continuation of recruitment, training and support of Clinical Volunteers
- Piloting the use of volunteers in Emergency Department (Same Day Emergency Care)
- Volunteers supporting with initiatives around bringing together patients and their loved ones (Messages to Loved One Service, Facetime calls with loved ones, answering ward telephones to give family members updates in their loved ones, Inpatient Visiting Hub, and Patient Activities Programme to enhance wellbeing of inpatients during hospital stay).

Following success of the volunteer initiatives, volunteers have continued to support in these roles, (some services have wound down before the end of 2022) hours provided can be seen on page 5.

### **Pears Foundation, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and National Lottery Community Fund Funding – #iwill Youth Volunteer Programme**

Between 2021-2022, the Trust was fortunate to receive funding from The Pears Foundation, in partnership with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and National Lottery Community Fund to deliver a 12-month programme for young volunteers.

Using feedback generated from young volunteers (age 16-21) themselves with a Co-design approach throughout, the programme was designed around enhanced support, training and supervision, with a focus on confidence building and career pathways. The programme aimed to engage with young people who may be further from educational or career opportunities for various reasons to offer this opportunity.

The funding was used for a full time Band 5 Volunteer Co-ordinator, celebration events, volunteer uniform, publicity materials including printing of the RWT Young Volunteers Reflective Log Book.

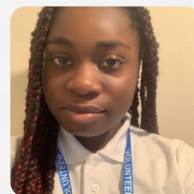
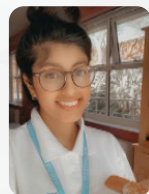
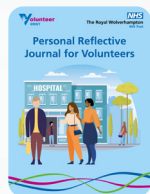
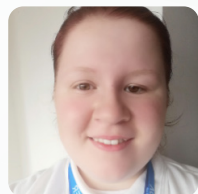
During the 12 months of the programme, 114 young people were provided with a supportive placement through the programme. (The target number in our proposal was 50). And engagement (virtual presentations and attendance at events), was carried out with a number of organisations including local schools, and colleges, The Way Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton City Council Looked After Children's Team and Youth Services, and Black Country Talent Match.

A Youth Volunteer Ambassador was appointed, who's role it was to represent RWT Volunteering internally and externally from the viewpoint of a Young person, and to help promote the programme and support other volunteers.

In addition a network of Peer Mentors was created – young volunteers who through the competencies and skills they developed, were able to mentor newly recruited volunteers to develop in the same way.

A Reflective Log Book was designed and printed – a tool for the young volunteer to record their whole volunteer journey from start to finish- reflecting on their changing ideas and perceptions and how their skills and confidence hopefully increase towards the end of their placement.

The Youth Volunteering Programme ended in April 2022, with the legacy that the Trust will continue to carry out the recommendations from the programme when working with young volunteers, including, regular reviews and reflective log book, recognising career progression as an important aspect of volunteering for young people, access to a network of peer mentors, and enhanced training, supervision, support and reward initiatives. We continue to work with the community partners formed during the programme to continue to recruit more young volunteers, including offering volunteer opportunities to sectors not previously reached.



*Left to right: Young Volunteer Ambassador Eve Adams, Personal Reflective Journal for Volunteers, bookmarks produced with young volunteers and patients, volunteer Dhavina with homemade truffles as part of patient activity, and Clinical Volunteer Adelina.*

## Quotes from some of our young people engaged on the programme:

"The patients are very grateful, one told me; "The volunteers are great. We need more of them. They help us with the little things and free up the nurses to get on with other important tasks". I feel as though I make a difference!" – Niraj

"I initially started to volunteer as a way of gaining experience. Now, it is more than that to me. It is the sheer excitement of helping those who need help, being able to talk to patients and find out who they are aside from why they are in hospital. This is something I wasn't expecting to get out of volunteering but I genuinely look forward to each day I am volunteering" – Adelina

"I had originally applied for a degree in medicine and wanted to get some experience working within a healthcare setting to ensure it was the right decision for me. I have gained lots of new skills from volunteering across several different wards and getting opportunities to speak and work with many different people including doctors, nurses and physiotherapists really showed me the different avenues you can take into a career in healthcare. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to patients across different wards and helping improve their day just a bit even just with a cup of tea and some biscuits. I have really enjoyed volunteering at the trust and was welcomed by every ward I volunteered on which made the experience better" – Isobelle

"Volunteering has changed my whole career path and I am so grateful for being supported as much as I have. I feel a sense of belonging with the hospital and it has played a vital role in shaping my future" – Lewis

"Volunteering has helped with me getting paid employment with the Trust as it allowed for me to gain experience which then helped with my CV" – Mohammed

Proudly supporting youth social action



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport



COMMUNITY  
FUND

Pears  
Foundation



### Projects and Workstreams

During 2022, a number of different projects and workstreams have been covered by Clinical Volunteers support. These include:

#### Covid Swab Hub

Volunteers supported the Covid Swab Hub at New Cross Hospital acting as a 'runner' for staff to take urgent items between the hub and the Pathology labs. 100 number of volunteer hours was provided to the hub between January 2022- July 2022

#### Virtual Covid ward

Volunteers supported the Virtual Covid ward based at the Science Park in admin roles. 149 number of volunteer hours was provided to the service between January 2022-August 2022

#### Vaccination Hubs (New Cross Hospital, Alfred Squire Medical Practice, Penn Manor Medical Practice)

Clinical volunteers have supported the RWT staff vaccination hub, and also community hubs in our Primary Care network GP practices. 114 number of volunteer hours was provided to the hub between January 2022-September 2022.

#### General ward support

Clinical Volunteer support has continued on our inpatient wards. 2612 number of volunteer hours was provided to the wards between January 2022-December 2022

#### Patient Activity Programme

As previously discussed, the patient activity programme has continued during 2022. 336 number of volunteer hours was provided to rehabilitation wards at West Park Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital between January 2022-December 2022.

In September 2022 additional funding has been provided by the Trust Charity for activity resources for elderly care wards C18 and C19.

#### Inpatient Visiting Hub

The inpatient visiting hub was set up in March 2022 to facilitate restricted bookings for carers to visit their loved ones. The hub in the Heart and Lung Centre, is staffed 7 days per week. Volunteer support this facility as an extra pair of hands to relieve the pressure of paid staff, and also a meet and greet guide to the service. 557 number of volunteer hours was provided to the hub between March 2022-December 2022.

#### Same Day Emergency Care

We have piloted a volunteer support role within the waiting area of SDEC to relive pressure on staff and provide regular updates and reassurance to waiting patients. 184 number of volunteer hours was provided to the hub between January 2022-December 2022.

#### Endoscopy Waiting Room

This role was established in August 2022 upon request from a Senior Sister. Volunteers relieve pressure on staff by providing regular updates and reassurance to waiting patients and where permitted, refreshments. 83 number of volunteer hours was provided to the service between August 2022-December 2022.





## Volunteers and Career Progression

As highlighted earlier in this review, volunteer feedback indicates that support with educational and career progression is important, especially with the younger cohorts, but also in some degree, to all volunteers of working age. Volunteers tell us that not only does volunteering make them feel good about themselves by supporting the Trust and their community, it provides them with the following benefits:

- Insights into what it's really like working in the NHS and exposure to the variety of job roles
- Enhancement of skills including communication, interpersonal skills with patients and staff, confidence, and creativity and opportunity to bring along their ideas
- Experience, essential for careers in the NHS, but also job applications within other sectors, and University and college applications
- Access to inhouse training, and out software to record their hours and gain recognition awards and certificates
- Opportunity to increase their social networks and make new friends

We have been able to support several volunteers with gaining the next step in their career progression in the following ways:

- In 2022, 3 volunteers joined the Temporary Staffing Bank as Health Care Assistants
- In 2022, 3 volunteers joined the Temporary Staffing Bank as admin support
- 3 volunteers gained acceptance for medical degrees at University
- 2 volunteers gained paid work elsewhere
- 3 volunteers gained substantive paid positions within the Trust

### National Case Studies

We were able to celebrate the success with our volunteers gaining employment nationally through case studies shared through the NHSE/I network.

During Careers Week in March 2022, within the 'We Are The NHS' campaign, championing roles across Healthcare Support Workers, Nurses and AHPs, one of our young volunteers Deborah, was selected as she had gained a post on the Trust temporary staffing bank as a HCA from gaining the skills she acquired as a volunteer. Deborah spoke to communications staff from NHSE/I about her story, and her personal motivation for joining the NHS. Deborah has since commenced a medical degree at University. Deborah's story was shared during National Careers Week by NHS England.

### NHS Cadets

In 2020, the Trust signed an agreement with NHS England and St Johns Ambulance that we would host NHS Cadets volunteers from the Foundation Programme (14-16 years), and Advanced Programme (16-18 years). The NHS Cadets programme is a training programme for young people offering skills training and information on various careers within the NHS, with the opportunity for volunteer placements for cadets on the Advanced programmes. 2021 was our first cohort of cadets and following the end of the training in summer 2022- 7 Advanced cadets were interested in extending their programme to volunteering placements. The 2nd NHS cadets Cohort has now started in the Autumn of 2022 with further volunteers being placed with us in 2023.



*Deborah, who gained a position as a Bank HCA using the skills she acquired as a Clinical Volunteer. Her story was featured nationally as part of NHS Careers Week.*

## Reward, recognition, and Thanks

Volunteer services offers opportunities for volunteers to be rewarded for their hours completed which can be generated via the Better Impact software- Bronze, Silver and Gold awards are issued at specific points and the volunteers may collect certificates. In 2022 we also introduced 'Volunteer of the month' which is a recognition scheme aimed at highlighting volunteers who have gone above and beyond for that particular month. The volunteers receive a printed certificate which we feature with a photo of them having received it, on social media.

During Volunteers Week 2022 the theme was 'A Time to Say Thanks'. We wrote to all volunteers to thank them for their time and enclose a signed thank you card from Chief Executive and Chairman of the Trust, and also a hot drinks voucher. We featured several volunteer case studies over Trust social media during the week, culminating in a live 'Instagram takeover' of Niraj, a young volunteer on shift at C21, our acute stroke ward. 7 posts were uploaded as part of Niraj's shift, which between them gathered an impressive 448 likes and 14 comments!



*Pictures from Niraj's 'Instagram takeover' shift on our Acute Stroke ward, featured as part of Volunteers Week 2022*

## Engagement

During 2022, engagement with our community has continued, we have proudly delivered presentations to or attended events about our volunteering service, at the following:

- Helpforce – Connecting to Communities- Insight into engaging with volunteers age 16+ - March 2022
- Wolverhampton 'Wolves at Work' Youth Summit at the Way Youth Zone, March 2022
- RWT Trust wide Recruitment event – July 2022
- 'Give Back, Get Ahead' – Black Country Consortium, as part of Careers Week
- National Care Leavers Event – Wolverhampton City Council
- Wolverhampton City College – attended Freshers Week events and Employers Breakfast Meeting
- South Staffordshire College – Freshers Week events
- Cannock Chase High School – presentations to 6th Form students



## Statistics

- 107 volunteers joined in 2022 from 3 cohorts
- Total number of active volunteers at end of 2022 – 248
- 100 left due to various reasons including change of circumstance and professional development
- Latest recruitment in September had 155 expressions of interest of which 118 applications were made in which 103 were successful past interview stage
- 4051 volunteer hours given in 2022, covering New Cross, West park, Cannock Chase and the community
- New requests for Volunteer Support: 12 areas, including:
  - ED
  - Alfred Squire Vaccination
  - B4
  - A5/6
  - Respiratory centre
  - HR and Survey Packs
  - C26/C41
  - Cardiac Rehab
  - Fair oak at CC Hospital
  - Beynon Centre
  - C12 Discharge Lounge
  - Staff Wellbeing Hub



## Other Voluntary Services

Other Voluntary services in RWT not contained within this report have continued to flourish in 2022, including Therapy Services activity groups at West Park Hospital, and Breastfeeding peer supporters.







Designed & Produced by the Department of Clinical Illustration,  
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