

Volunteering strategy

2021-24

Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce our new volunteering strategy for 2021-2024.

COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on the role of volunteers across health and social care with many organisations now recognising the importance and impact of volunteering – it is not seen as a 'bolt-on' or 'nice to have' but an integral part of supporting service users, patients and carers. Our organisation has had a long tradition of championing volunteers, having worked extensively with local groups to deliver a wide variety of volunteer-led health and wellbeing activities over many years to support our local communities.

We recognise that volunteering gives individuals the confidence and skills to take on new opportunities, provide fresh perspectives and make a real difference to the NHS. Volunteers often provide a unique perspective and have the skills, time and energy like no other group. In developing the different strands of this strategy our staff have been overwhelmingly positive about the volunteering strategy and how we can help integrate this work into strategic planning at the Trust.



Prior to, and during, the pandemic we have developed our volunteering offer with partners such as St John Ambulance and Helpforce to embrace new opportunities (like our NHS Cadets and Volunteer to Career schemes) as well as refreshing existing programmes (such as our Well Together service, formerly known as Champions Show the Way). We have successfully recruited to our volunteering co-ordinator roles at both of our inpatient sites to enhance our therapeutic offer and enable those with lived experience to volunteer to support recovery and discharge. We have also refreshed our policies and procedures which support training and induction to help minimise any delays for people taking up volunteering offers as we know this can have a negative impact on longer term engagement.

Support at the most senior level of the organisation is crucial to the success of this volunteering strategy and the Trust Board has fully endorsed this approach. The five different service elements which form the basis of the strategy provide local people with the opportunity 'give back' to the NHS, support recovery and discharge, and grow our future workforce. It is an approach that is accessible, with opportunities to involve a diverse range of local people and as a Trust we look forward to both developing our existing volunteers and welcoming new ones to support the vital work of the Trust.

Paul Hogg, Director of Corporate Affairs



Background

This strategy replaces the 2015-18 volunteering strategy which delivered the vision: 'Volunteers and staff working together to develop innovative and creative roles which benefit the service user above all'. Three years after this strategy was launched, 143 volunteers have been recruited across 15 services with an average of 30-40 active at any one time. In addition, the Trust's Well Together service (previously known as Champions Show the Way) has maintained on average 150 volunteers, delivering approximately 70 health and wellbeing activities in the community every week. Volunteer recruitment has been diverse, from students to ex-service users. Systems and processes which support volunteering to ensure it is in line with Trust-wide policies have been reviewed and updated and staff have also been supported to create and embed volunteer roles within services they offer.

The Trust's 2019-23 vision *Better Lives, Together*, and within it the objective to support people to live to their fullest potential and be as healthy as possible, provides the foundation for volunteering within BDCFT. It focuses on working together with our communities to improve health, and to improve how we provide care to children and young people, people with learning disabilities and adults with mental health needs.

Our volunteers will support the Trust to improve therapeutic activity and recovery of service users/patients and provide more ways for people to get involved in Trust activity. This will contribute to making it a great place to work and inspire people to start a career in healthcare.

This strategy takes into account national guidance, including:

The NHS Ten-Year Plan:

- Encouraging NHS organisations to give greater access to help younger people volunteer
- Increasing focus on programmes in deprived areas and for those with mental health issues, learning disabilities and autism
- Doubling the number of NHS volunteers over the next three years

The Interim People Plan:

- Accelerating plans to create a flexible and adaptive work force which includes volunteers: "Volunteers play a valuable role, providing more time for our professionals to provide the high-quality care they have been trained to give" (Interim People Plan 2019)

The We are the NHS People Plan 2020-21:

- Identifies key volunteering areas for trusts and systems to focus in on, including NHS Cadets, the National Volunteering Certificate and volunteering as a route into employment

The Impact of COVID-19 on volunteering within the NHS

As a result of COVID-19, the majority of volunteering roles across the NHS were paused, with many still not active in the summer of 2021. NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) recognises that whilst volunteers are a critical part of the workforce for many Trusts, re-introducing volunteers is a complex and slow process, not least because many volunteers do not feel ready to return. It is recognised that some volunteers may never return. Conversely, COVID-19 has introduced a whole new cohort of people to the idea of volunteering with the NHS. What is yet to be seen is if these volunteers will continue in their roles after COVID-19.

In the summer of 2021, approximately 25 per cent of volunteers have returned to their role with BDCFT, with more waiting to restart when restrictions lift and they feel able to do so.

Volunteering Vision

Empowering people and the organisation to realise the full impact of volunteering within the NHS

The volunteering strategy for 2021-24 focuses on embedding an effective and supported volunteer culture so that the Volunteer

service will develop and increase new and existing volunteer opportunities across the Trust. It aims to help individual volunteers and the organisation realise the full positive impact of volunteering.

To do this:

- Volunteers will be supported to realise their full potential by establishing a volunteer pathway for each of them, whether this is to support recovery, for future career opportunities or for personal wellbeing
- The organisation will innovate, celebrate and embed the Volunteering service, ensuring that volunteering supports these priority areas:
 - Patient recovery - increasing the provision of therapeutic activity and making volunteering part of the recovery pathway for individuals
 - Future workforce – from inspiring young people to consider health as a future career option to providing volunteer-to-career opportunities for people ready for work
 - Post-pandemic – to support individuals and our communities back to health as we recover from COVID-19 through volunteer activity

Key objectives:

- Provide excellent, well-supported volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of the volunteer
- Ensure effective governance and management processes to ensure volunteering within BDCFT is safe, effective, high quality and to ensure its impact is measured
- Ensure volunteering is resourced appropriately with necessary infrastructure to support volunteering at scale across the organisation
- Ensure the impact of volunteering is celebrated locally, regionally and nationally

Key partners:

A number of organisations are acting as enablers for volunteering within BDCFT through funding, support, expertise, training and partnership working, including:

- Volunteering Bradford
- Integrated Volunteer Approaches (ICS Partnership)
- Helpforce
- NHSEI
- Health Education England
- Mental health and community Trust volunteer services
- St John Ambulance

For more information about this strategy or the Volunteer service, please contact Catherine Jowitt, Head of Charity and Volunteering on Catherine.jowitt@bdct.nhs.uk.



Volunteering to give back

“You can see the benefits and the increase in wellbeing of the individuals that are attending the Relaxation Group. It gives me a sense of satisfaction/happiness that I can help individuals with their health and mental issues. Delivering these sessions makes it feel worthwhile and motivates me to do more.” Champions Show the Way volunteer

Volunteering strategy 2021-24: Empowering people and the organisation to realise the impact of NHS volunteering

An organisational culture that embraces volunteering

Ensuring volunteers feel valued and have a good experience.

Ensuring staff have confidence in their volunteers and value their contribution.

Ensuring the Trust feels confident in the quality and governance of volunteer activity.

Ensuring the impact of volunteering is measured and celebrated locally and nationally.

Ensuring volunteer recruitment is inclusive and reflects the communities of Bradford and Craven.

Volunteer pathways of support

Volunteering to 'give back'

Supporting volunteers who want to give back to the NHS, are retired/unable to work and want to feel engaged and valued to benefit their own health and wellbeing.

Volunteering for recovery

Supporting current and ex-service users through a structured volunteering programme to gain skills and confidence to enable them to move away from services and into community-focused volunteer roles.

Volunteering for our future workforce

Supporting students and those wanting to get into work or change career to gain meaningful quality experience, that teaches our future workforce, makes BDCFT an employer of choice and prepares volunteers for employment with BDCFT.

Volunteer services

The Volunteer service

Enabling volunteers to be deployed across BDCFT services to enhance care and patient outcomes.

The Therapeutic and Recovery Volunteer programme

Enhancing the therapeutic offer at inpatient sites and enabling former and current service users to volunteer to support their recovery and discharge.

The Well Together service

Enabling individuals in our communities to be connected to people and activities that support their health and wellbeing.

Volunteer-to-Career

Enabling those interested in a carer within the NHS to gain experience and support to achieve this.

NHS Cadets

Enabling young people aged 14-18 to volunteer within the NHS to help inform their future career choices.

Volunteer impact

On the volunteer

1. Feel valued
2. Develop skills and experience
3. Improved health and wellbeing
4. Improved social connections
5. Improved employability

On the patients/service users

1. Increased access to therapeutic activity
2. Access to volunteer opportunities
3. Improved health and recovery outcomes

On staff

1. Supports creativity and innovation
2. Enhances the care offer
3. Increased capacity
4. Improved outcomes

On the organisation

1. Supporting Best Place to Work and Community Care Collaboration
2. Increased workforce capacity
3. Supporting recruitment and future workforce strategies
4. Positive return on investment
5. Supporting work streams including the green agenda

The community

1. Supports work with local care partners
2. Provides opportunities to engage in the organisation and staff health and wellbeing
3. Enables people to 'give back' to the NHS