

Volunteer to Career Programme©

Final report – May 2023

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Executive Summary



Volunteer to Career

The project

The Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme, funded by Burdett Trust for Nursing, involved twelve health and care organisations divided into two cohorts. The first cohort ran from June 2021 to September 2022, and the second cohort ran from April 2022 to March 2023. The aim of the project is to positively impact NHS workforce recruitment needs at a local level through the design of a volunteer to career pathway.

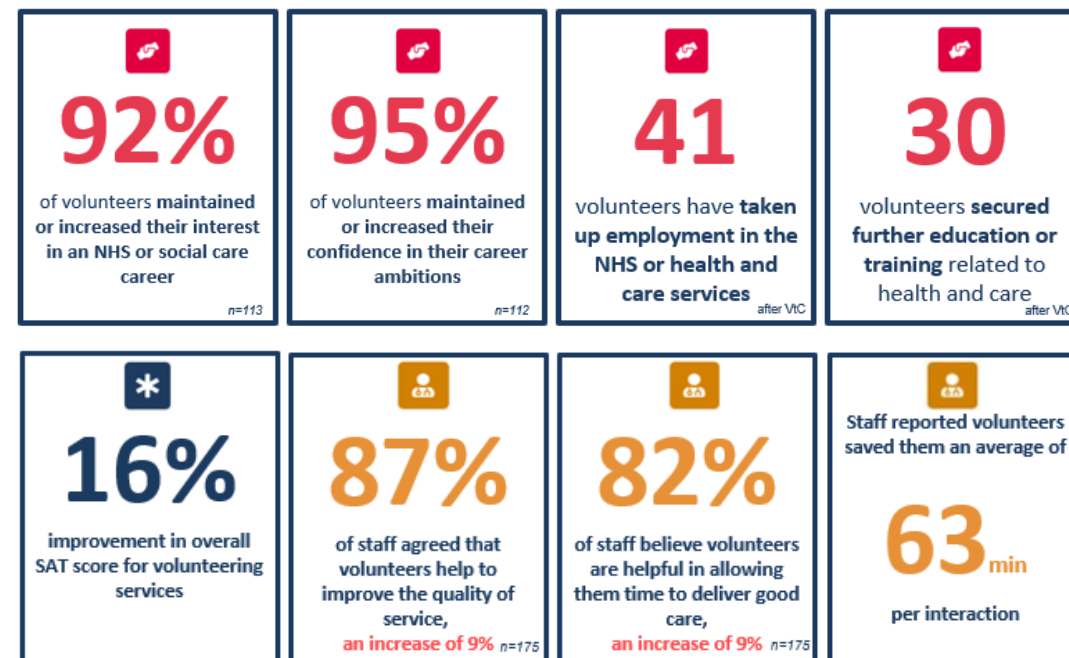
Evaluation approach

Using its established *Insight & Impact* evaluation service, Helpforce follows a consistent methodology to determine the impact of volunteering roles on project outcomes. Target outcomes are identified across a range of beneficiaries representing the people and organisations involved, and then we collect the necessary data to prove and evidence the outcomes. These include an increase in the number of volunteers who have an interest in pursuing a career in health and care and gaining employment, improvement in corporate behaviours towards volunteering and attitudes of front-line staff towards volunteer services.

Conclusion

The VtC programme has been effective in resulting volunteers securing job in the NHS or health and care, as well as securing further education or training related to health and care. Additionally, the programme has resulted in positive systemic change in participating organisations volunteering agenda, as well as changing staff member perceptions towards volunteering. **As a result, nine participating organisations sustained the VtC programme.**

Key findings



Outline of intention

- The Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme is designed to support volunteers to pursue a career in health and care. **Funded by Burdett Trust for Nursing**, Helpforce has worked alongside twelve organisations to set up and implement volunteering projects which incorporate career pathways for volunteers.
- These organisations were divided into two cohorts - the first involved five organisations and ran from June 2021 to September 2022, and the second involved seven organisations and was delivered between April 2022 and March 2023.
- **The VtC programme has been designed to support organisation improvement across three key strategic components identified as essential to achieving systemic change:**
 - **Clinical/Health and Care Leadership** - Developing a network of senior clinical/health and care leaders to harness their expertise to positively influence wider effective engagement, and ultimately adoption of, VtC projects.
 - **Environment & Culture** - Utilising best practice to raise the value of the volunteer workforce in the health and care environment to enhance the likelihood of volunteers wanting to adopt a career in health and care.
 - **Volunteer to Career Pathways** - Develop innovative and impactful volunteer roles and career pathways, linked to local recruitment needs, to encourage/enable volunteers to use this as a route to a career in the NHS.

- These organisations offer different volunteering roles involve tasks such as activities like assisting patients, providing companionship, and helping with administrative tasks. Some examples of these roles are Child Play Volunteers, Baby Clinic Volunteers, and Ward Helpers.
- The evaluation sought to answer three key questions: what was the impact of the VtC programme on:
 - Corporate behaviours towards volunteering
 - Enabling individual volunteers to progress towards a career in health and care
 - The attitudes of front-line staff towards volunteer services



Activities

- Helpforce Programme Manager provides a package of support to the partner organisations consisting of both full Programme management support across the Development, Delivery and Sustainability Phases. Please see detail of the Programme Core Components on slides 6,7&8.
- [VtC Service guide](#) outlines the steps for setting up a Volunteer to career Programme within a health and care organisation.
- The Helpforce Insight and Impact team collaborated with participating organisations to design the outcome and data model of the VtC project. They developed specific data collection tools for each outcome and supplied organisations with a data submission calendar. Ongoing support was also provided throughout the program to ensure effective data collection.
- A number of partner organisations have been identified to support the delivery of the VTC Programme to assist with both Referrals from the Community and the Career Pathway. I.e. The St Johns Ambulance Trust & Cadets Programme, Princes Trust, Talent for Care & Services and Health Care Academies.

Programme Core Components

Phase 1, development

1

VtC Self-Assessment Tool

Using the Helpforce **'VtC Self Assessment Tool'**, each organisation will measure themselves against a series of categories associated with best practice in volunteering and workforce (VtC) strategy e.g., ability to fulfil demand for specific roles, recruitment gaps, community engagement. A personalised report will identify priority focus areas.

2

Online capability modules

Helpforce provide a combination of online and facilitated skills and capability modules such as; strategy, project management, coaching, stakeholder engagement, influencing, building a network, measuring impact, service design, co-creating approach to developing services, processes, tools, resources etc.

3

Clinical Tutor / Mentor

Helpforce alongside expert clinical partners deliver of training sessions, facilitating of group discussions, individual mentor relationships with each of the clinical leads for the duration of the programme.

Programme Core Components

Phase 2, delivery

1

Clinical leadership role

Each selected clinical leader will;
Complete the 4 week 'Training and Support Package' | design, test and deliver a VtC project | measure the impact of their initiatives | develop a business case for project sustainment.

2

Impact and insight

Working with the Clinical Lead, the Helpforce Impact and Insight service will support the implementation a the VtC outcome model. The model will be aligned to each individual VtC project, with each organisation being responsible for the collection of activity and survey data etc.

3

Whole programme support

Based on individual needs, Helpforce provide a range of support for the clinical lead and their organisation throughout the life of the programme such as; mentoring, one to one advice and guidance, peer support groups, access to the Helpforce Network, resources and expertise.

Programme Core Components

Phase 3, sustainability

1

Systemic change

After 12-month delivery, completion of the **VtC Self Assessment Tool** for a second time will capture progress/improvement (across the VtC strategic categories) that have been made as a result of the VtC project.

2

Making the case

Helpforce Impact and Insight team can help produce a final evaluation report evidencing in more detail the outcomes achieved during the project e.g., volunteers moving into employment and/or education, evidence needed to make the case for project sustainment.

3

Scale and spread

To ensure your project will both sustain and scale locally, Helpforce will work in partnership with you to promote the impact of your project, grow your local engagement. We will promote your project and share learning and best practice across the wider health and care sector to strengthen the overall VtC agenda.

Dissemination

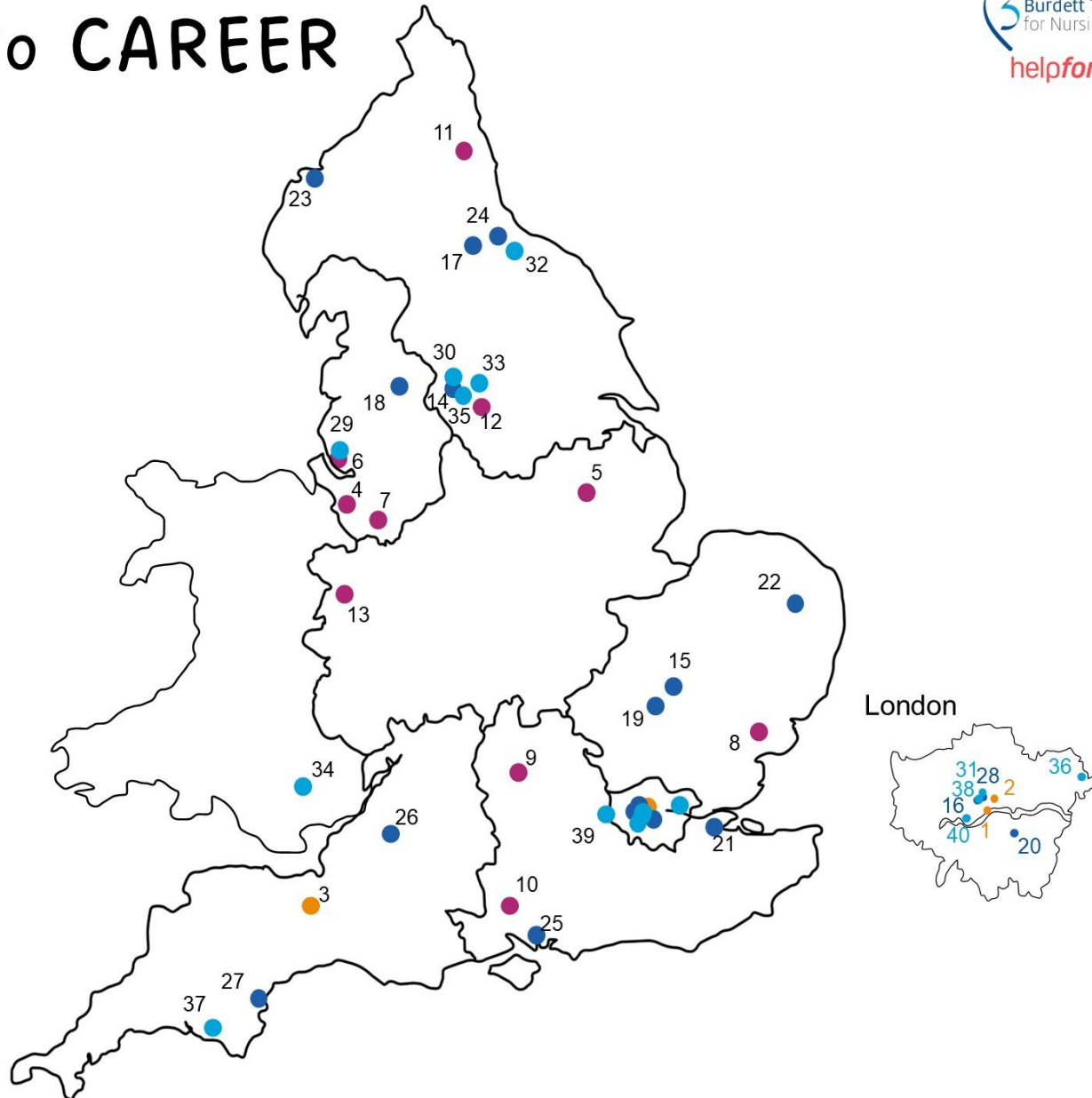
To enable scale Helpforce undertook several activities:

- Partnership opportunities promoted through Helpforce Network Members and wider via social media.
- National VtC Conference on the 19th October 2022, resulting in 102 attendees many of whom were decision makers. Our largest audience achieved at the time.
- Developed a network of Senior Management VtC Champions to promote the programme on our behalf e.g. Bob Champion (Chief People Officer, Bradford District Care NHS Trust) was a keynote speaker at the VtC Conference and has been a great advocate.
- Developed all nations steering committee to run proof of concept pilots in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.
- From presenting the VTC Programme at the National Hospice UK conference (the roads less travelled) on 25th April 2023 (representation of Workforce and Clinical Leads across 80 Hospices) we are hoping to grow the VTC programme further working in this care setting.

Dissemination Cont.

- From the activities undertaken and using the Interim evaluations and dissemination of findings
- Led to leveraging £890k from Health Education England for 28 more partner organisations to participate (see mapping slide) and attracting a wider range of partners - Ambulance Trusts x2, ICB's x 3, Hospices x 2, Community Health Care Trusts x 2, NHS Acute Trusts x19.
- We now have a further Pipeline of 80 Interested Organisations that we are following up with.

Volunteer to CAREER



NHS
Health Education England

Burdett Trust
for Nursing
helpforce

HEE Cohort 1

March 2022-
May 2023

- 1 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- 2 Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- 3 Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

HEE Cohort 2

October 2022-
November 2023

- 4 Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- 5 Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust
- 6 Liverpool Women's Hospital – transferred to cohort 3
- 7 Mid Cheshire Hospitals Charity
- 8 NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board
- 9 Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- 10 South Central Ambulance Service
- 11 St Oswald's Hospice
- 12 The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
- 13 The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

HEE Cohort 3

March 2023-
March 2024

- 14 Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership
- 15 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust
- 16 Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- 17 County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- 18 East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust
- 19 East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- 20 Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
- 21 NHS Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board
- 22 NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board
- 23 North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust
- 24 North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- 25 Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust
- 26 Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 27 Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust
- 28 University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Burdett Trust

- 29 Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- 30 Bradford District Care NHS Trust Foundation Trust
- 31 Camden and Islington NHS Trust
- 32 South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 33 The Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust
- 34 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- 35 Bradford Allied Health Professionals
- 36 Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
- 37 University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
- 38 Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
- 39 The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- 40 Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Volunteer to Career

helpforce

Challenges identified and addressed

- The length of time to recruit a Clinical Lead sometimes caused delays – we addressed this by making sure new participating organisations brought the recruitment process for the Clinical Lead forward (at the point of contract award) and we created a Job Description template for them to use.
- The way we were capturing data proved to be difficult and was resulting in incomplete data sets through the delivery period. To improve methods of data collection The VTC Evaluation Outcome Framework is now web based with all data surveys online.
- Some programmes struggled initially due to a lack of clinical support. Through the development of our Invitation to Tender document, we were able to stipulate that senior buy in was secured before submitting any application to participate. In addition, we asked that they speak to stakeholders to identify workforce needs pressures on health & care systems, as this enables the identification of volunteering roles for the VtC Programme.

Critical success factors identified

1. **Clinical Lead programmes have greater impact** compared to Volunteer Co-ordinator led as the Clinical Leads have been able to gain greater buy in at an organisational/systemic level and support to work through local barriers.
2. **Stakeholder engagement and good governance enable systemic change at organisational level** - engaging with Senior Workforce Leads & Clinical Leads to gain an understanding of demand at an early stage has proved to be very effective in gaining the support to ensure a successful programme and more importantly sustainment of the programme beyond the funding envelope.
3. **Robust Career Pathways** support volunteers to make an informed decision to embark on a career in the Health & Care Sector. Ensuring time spent with Clinical Leads and providing a pre-employability skills package has helped achieve training and employment outcomes for volunteers.
4. **Effective community engagement** has resulted in the formulation of new partnerships and a more diverse demographic of volunteer. When considering health inequalities and the Core 20 plus initiative, the VtC programme has proved to be popular for all stakeholder groups in the local community.

Evaluation to assess outcomes and impact

Data Collection Mechanisms

- A '**VtC Self Assessment Tool**' (referred to as **SAT**) was completed by the project's clinical/health and care lead at the start and near the end of their project. The tool measures the organisation against a series of identified categories and questions associated with their volunteering strategy. As part of the SAT, volunteers and staff are invited to complete additional feedback surveys to provide insight into their perceptions of organisational change.
- **Volunteer feedback** was obtained regarding their level of interest in a health and care career, their experience in their volunteer role, and their thoughts on the VtC programme. The feedback was collected at the beginning of their volunteering and at a later period.
 - In Cohort 1, **61 volunteers** completed the volunteer tracker at the start of their role and the final tracker;
 - In Cohort 2, **55 volunteers** completed the online volunteer survey at the start of their role and at a later date.
- **Staff surveys** were completed at the start and near the end of the VtC project (referred to as pre and post surveys). In these twelve organisations, **200 staff members** completed the pre survey and **175 staff** completed the post survey.

209
volunteers recruited
to the pathway

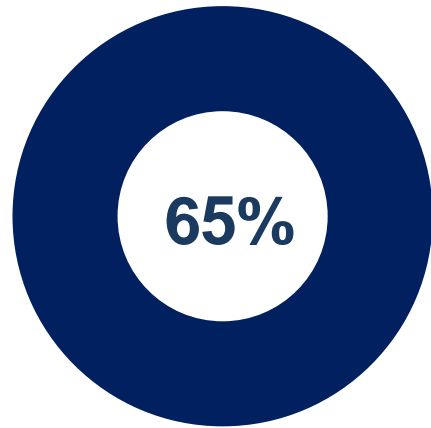
200
staff pre-surveys
completed

175
staff post-surveys
completed

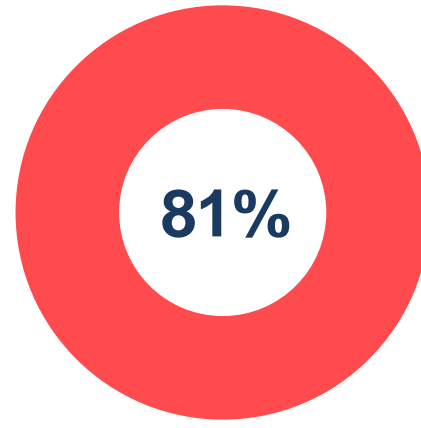
Evaluation Findings - Organisation

What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on corporate behaviours towards volunteering?

First SAT Overall Score

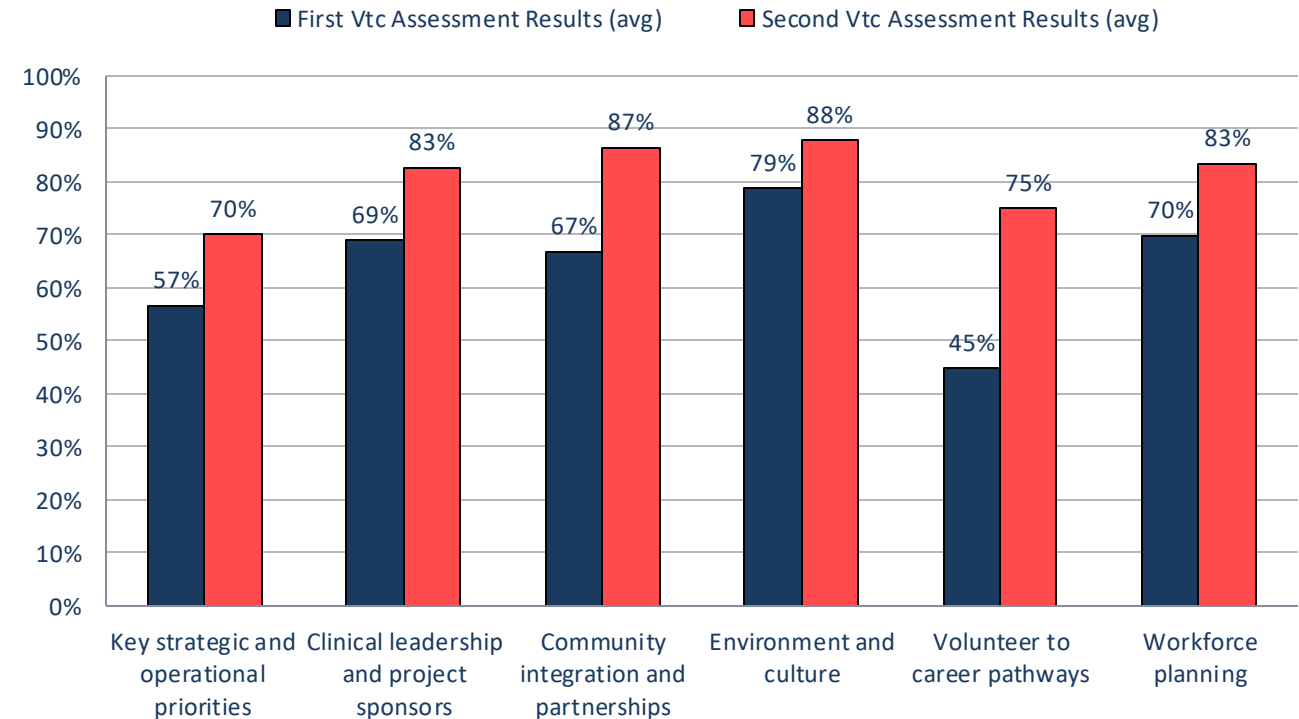


Second SAT Overall Score

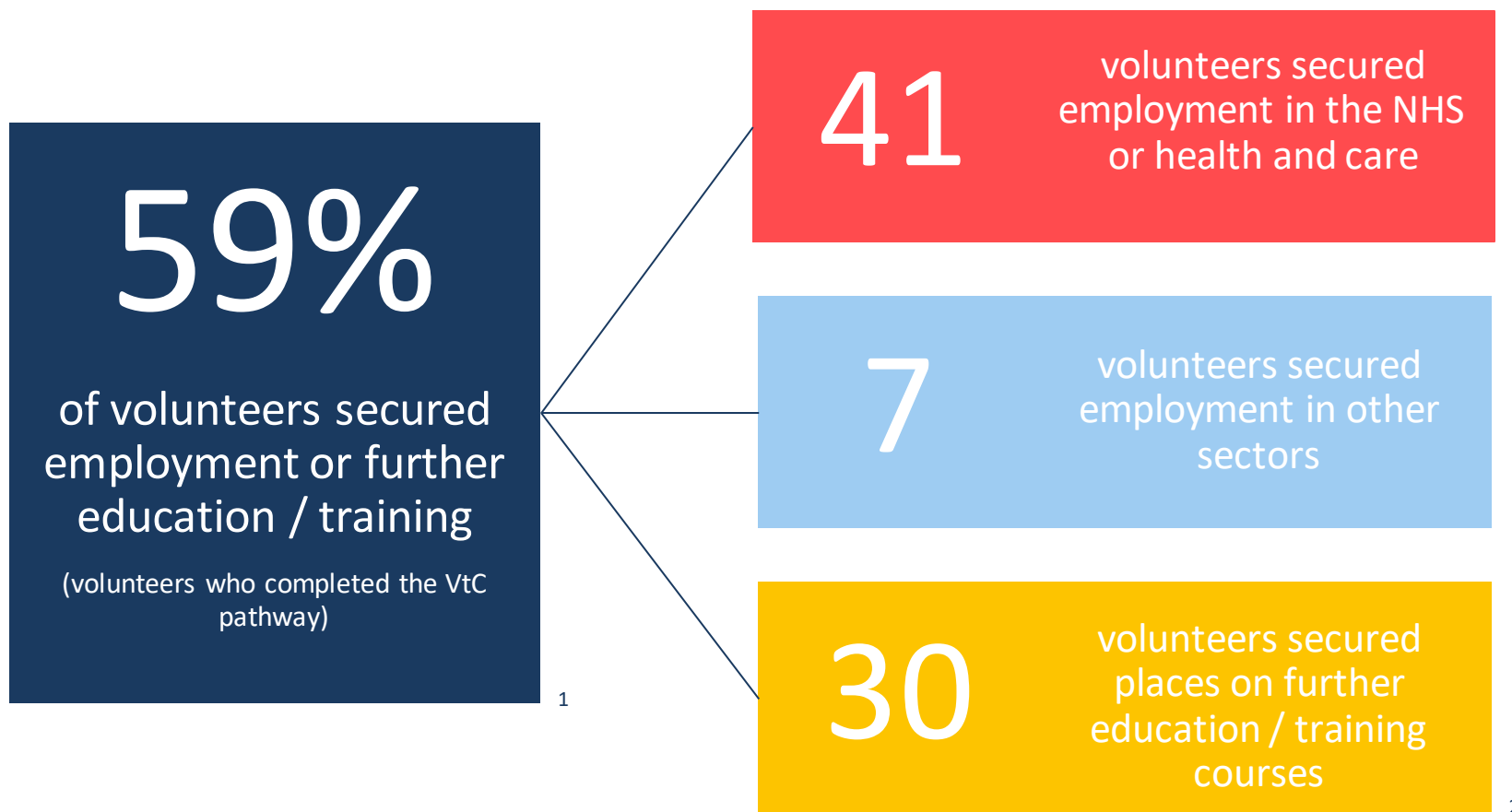


After completing the VTC programme, twelve organisations have shown an **increase in their overall self-assessment score**, the average **improving from 65% to 81%**. Similar to the positive change in the overall SAT score results, we have observed an **improvement** in the average scores for the **all six elements of organisational improvement for volunteering**.

First and Second Average SAT Scores Overview



Over the VTC programmes...



Roles have included:

- Wellbeing Assistant
- Mental Health Care Support Worker
- Healthcare Assistant Apprenticeship with training to Nursing Associate
- Healthcare Support Worker Apprenticeship
- Patient Access Administrator
- Digital Application Analyst
- Peer coach
- Lab technician

Training / FE courses have included:

- Psychotherapy Training
- Mental Health Nursing Degree
- BSc Biomedical Science
- Nursing Degree

¹N= 73 of 128 volunteers who have completed the VtC pathway.

²Individuals might have both secured employment and further education / training so the two are not mutually exclusive.

Evaluation Findings - Volunteers

- As part of the VtC, **72 volunteer to career support plans** are in place, **343 volunteer to career support sessions** have been delivered.
- Through the VtC programme and the career support provided, volunteers applied for **143 jobs** and attended **77 interviews**.
- Additionally, volunteers applied for **training/further education courses**, including Psychotherapy training, Mental Health Nursing Degree, Nursing Degree and BSc Biomedical Science courses.



"Since becoming a volunteer at the age of 16, volunteering at the hospital has given me confidence, experience, and qualities to pursue a career in healthcare. Being able to be part of such a remarkable team of volunteers all working together to support the hospital in clinical and non-clinical areas gave me the confidence to apply for a healthcare assistant role on the ward and apply to university to pursue my dream of becoming a paediatric nurse."

Amy – VtC volunteer



"Being a volunteer with the NHS has helped me attain my goal of finding a career with healthcare. I believe this as the opportunity has given myself an insight I wouldn't normally have had within healthcare. But also, has influenced my choices there on helping me to decide which path I would like to take. This chance has made me feel proud and useful in a role where I can assist where possible. All in all, being a volunteer has helped me get to where I wish to be."

VtC volunteer

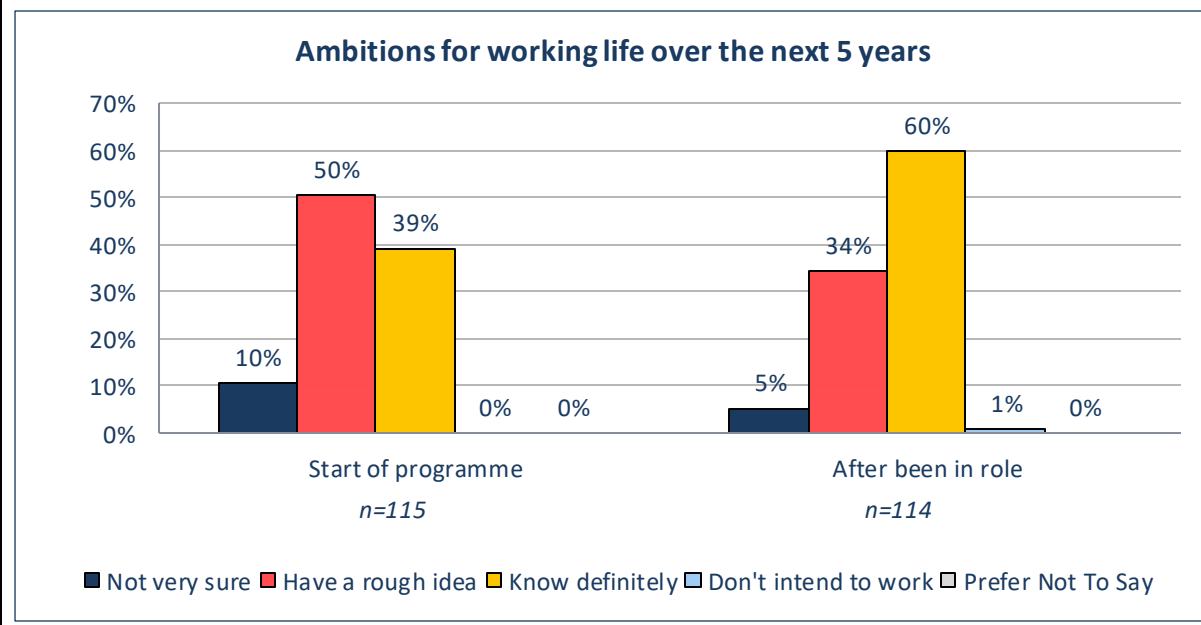


Evaluation Findings - Volunteers

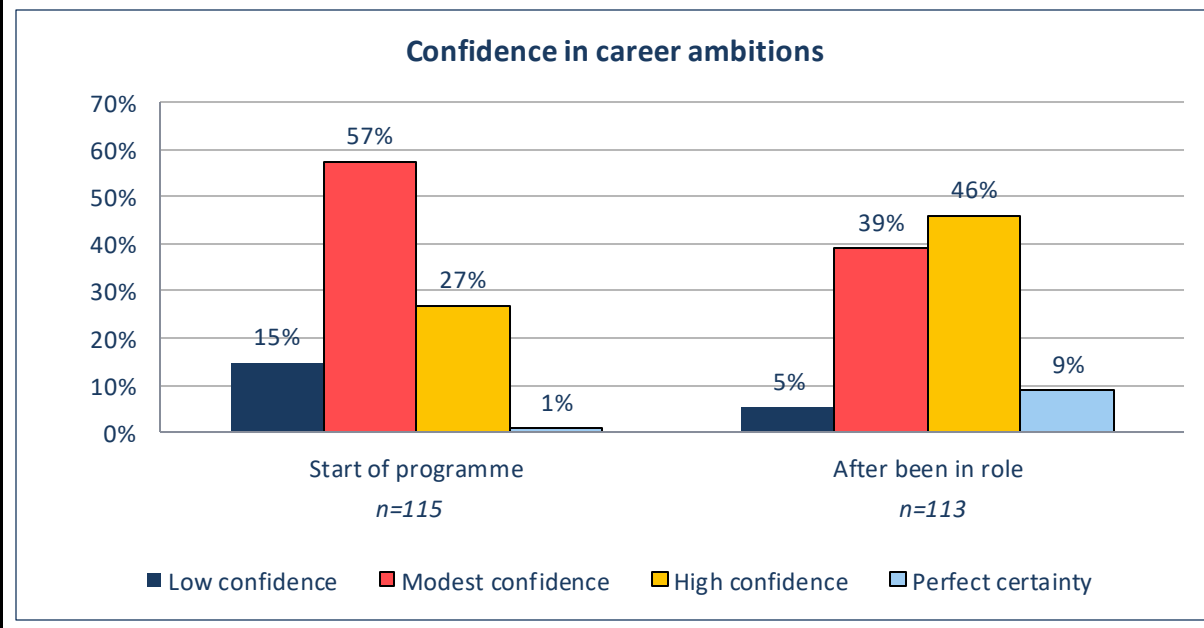
- During their VtC journey, volunteers were asked to provide feedback on their career ambitions for working life over the next 5 years.
- After volunteering, a higher percentage of **volunteers** reported that they **know exactly what career they would like to pursue** (39% to 60%).³
- **90% of those volunteers maintained or increased their ambitions** for their working life over the next 5 years.⁴

³ n = 115 pre, n=114 post

⁴ n = 112



Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



- Volunteers were also asked to rate their confidence in their career ambitions.
- After they had been in their volunteering role for some time, a larger percentage of **volunteers had a high degree of confidence** (27% to 46%) and **perfect certainty** (1% to 9%) in their career ambitions.⁵
- Through the VtC programme, **95% of those volunteers maintained or increased their confidence** in their career ambitions.⁶

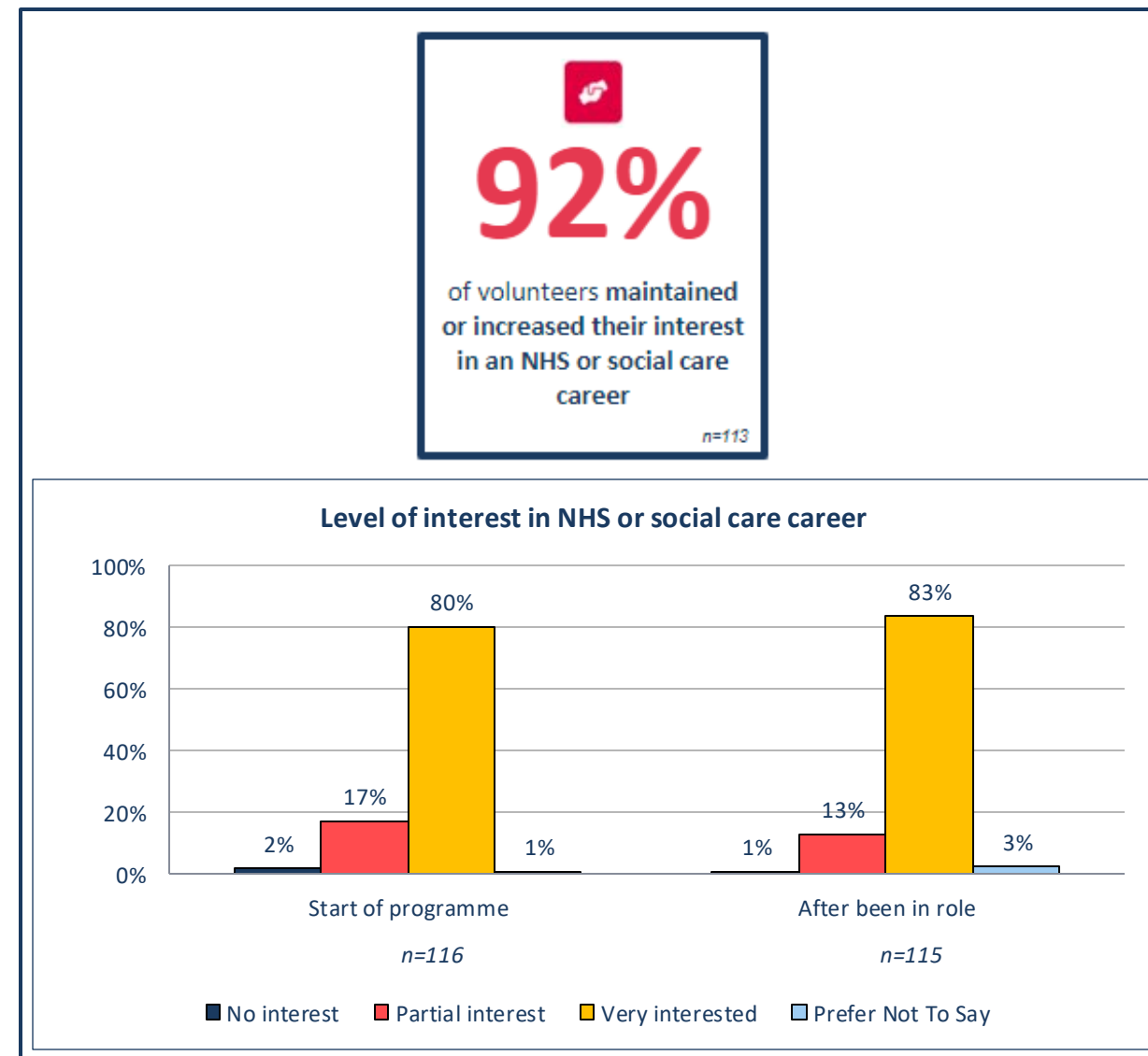
⁵n = 115 pre, n=113 post

⁶n = 112

Evaluation Findings - Volunteers

- Additionally, volunteers were asked to report on their interest in a health and care career both as they started in role and after they had been in the role for some time.
- An increased proportion of **volunteers became very interested in an NHS or social care career** (80% to 83%), while fewer had partial interest (17% to 13%) or no interest (2% to 1%).⁷
- **92% of volunteers maintained or increased their interest** in an NHS or social care career.⁸

⁷n = 116 pre, n=115 post
⁸n = 113



Evaluation Findings - Volunteers

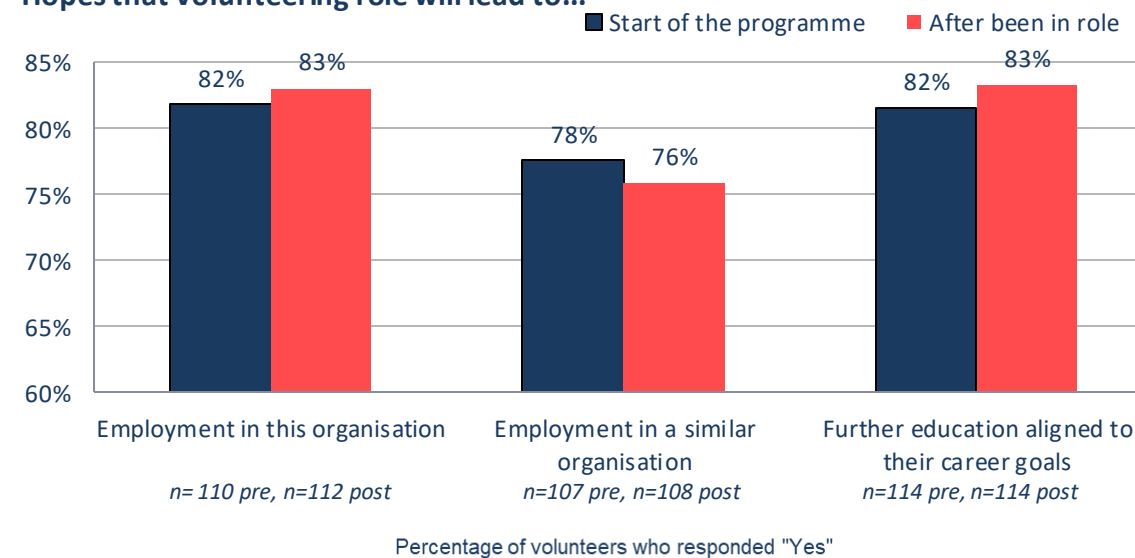
- Volunteers were also asked if they hoped that their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers and future education.
- Hopes for the volunteering role leading to employment or further education remained high throughout the programme.
- After being in the role, there was a **slight increase in the percentage of volunteers aiming for employment within the organisation they volunteer** (82% to 83%),⁹ and **further education aligned with their career goals** (82% to 83%).¹⁰ However, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of volunteers hoping to work in a similar organisation.
- Additionally, at the start of their VtC role, **84 volunteers** expressed an interest in attaining a **national volunteer certificate**. By the end of the programmes, **33 of these volunteers** had **achieved the certificate**, while 24 stated that they are currently working towards it.

⁹n = 110 pre, n=112 post

¹⁰n = 114 pre, n=114 post



Hopes that volunteering role will lead to...



Volunteer Feedback



"I've enjoyed going in, meeting with the patients and knowing I've made a difference to people's lives. It like gives you a warm feeling knowing that it makes the podiatrists lives easier. Time's been flying since I started it.

It's helped me build up useful experience and build connections. I'm hoping to do a masters as a Physician Associate next year and this has helped put me in a good position for that. But it's also been great knowing I've helped and made a difference. And to have a taste of what the NHS is like. I've learned a lot just from doing a couple of hours a week. I'd recommend VtC to anyone I know. A lot of people I know are struggling to find healthcare experience.

I met lots of different people. A lot have been in the NHS for 10 to 20 years, so I've got an insight into the NHS. The podiatry staff are so nice and friendly."

Amaan – VtC volunteer



"The VtC programme has given me exposure to different departments in the Trust which helped me understand what services we provide to our patients and how these services are being delivered. I was able to learn about the Trust's Cares Values which are: Communication, Attitude, Responsibility, Equity and Safety.

Volunteering has allowed me to gain confidence and experience at the workplace as well as improve my English skills. It has helped me overcome my language barrier and gain work experience in the Trust and it has allowed me to get a job in this field.

As a result of the volunteering I did, I was hired by the Overseas Manager as an Overseas Admin (Band 2). The second job I was able to find was at the hospital booking centre as a Patient Access Administrator (Band 3). My current job is as a Digital Analyst at the hospital (Band 5).

I would strongly recommend VtC to other people thinking about volunteering as it has helped me a lot with my career."

Indiana – VtC volunteer



Evaluation Findings - Staff Members

What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on front line staff members' view of volunteer services?



11



"Having volunteers support in our hospital make a real difference to our Dementia patients. The patients feel listened and valued. The volunteers get involved in Dementia friendly activities, such as assisting patients to access the Magic interactive table. There is positive feedback from staff and relatives. The volunteers also support patients known Dementia to complete 'This is me' leaflet, so nursing staff are aware of their personal life and preferences in order to provide high quality care to our patients. The volunteers are always flexible and ready to help if a staff member cannot be present for an event. One volunteer loved working in our hospital, and she successfully took a job as a health care assistant. Networking is a big thing in the healthcare sector, and it helps us a lot to make connections and learn from other people. There is no reason to hide that some volunteers have interest in a salaried position."

Antonia Samargiu - Dementia Clinical Nurse Specialist at The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust

¹¹ The average staff time saved by volunteers was based on staff perceptions.

Staff Member Feedback



"[Volunteer support] has enabled staff to prioritise tasks without it being detrimental to care."

Staff member



"My name is Claire, and I am a Senior Nurse in the Person Centred Care Team at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Our team is responsible for the recruitment, management and governance of volunteers across the Health Board and are privileged to witness the positive impact and benefits that this service has on patients, relatives, volunteers and staff."

As a team we have always recognised that volunteering can be very beneficial for those people seeking employment or looking to change careers as it provides an opportunity to sense what it may be like to work in a health setting through a volunteer role. When the opportunity arose for us to work with Helpforce on the Volunteer to Career Project we were very excited as it gave us a structured approach to supporting people in their career options whilst also providing a meaningful benefit to patients through the variety of volunteer roles.

Since starting the project two of our volunteers have already secured paid positions on wards in hospital settings. Neither volunteer had a background in health and remarked that it was their experience of volunteering in a health environment that made the difference and not only secured them the job but also gave them the desire to apply for a job in health in the first instance.

As I approach retirement it is really heart-warming and reassuring to know that there is a structured process in place for people to explore their individual career options and that this may have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of staff in our very special NHS."

Senior Nurse at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



Status of Sustainability of 12 Participating Organisations Post Burdett Trust for Nursing Funding

Name Of Organisation	Status	Activity
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Sustaining	Programme is led by Nursing Directorate and now part of Workforce Strategy
Barking, Havering and Redbridge Trust	Sustaining	Programme is now part of the Education Team Portfolio with a focus on Maternity Clinical Roles
Central and Northwest London NHS Foundation Trust	Sustaining	A further 12 months funding has been secured for VtC Volunteer Co - Ordinator
The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Securing	For continuation, sourcing support & funding Via NWL ICB
Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust	Sustaining	A FT Clinical Lead has been Recruited to expand the programme across Children Services, and now part of Workforce Strategy.
Bradford Allied Health Professionals	Sustaining	A further 12 months funding secured for Clinical Lead to expand VtC across 3 Sites in West Yorkshire
South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Sustaining	Lead Therapeutic Nurse and Work force Lead now expanding and part of Workforce Strategy
Alder Hey Childrens Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Sustaining	The Volunteer to Career Pathway is now been offered to all interested volunteers
Camden and Islington NHS Trust	Sustaining	The Volunteer to Career Pathway is now been offered to all interested volunteers
Leed Teaching Hospital NHS Trust	Sustaining	The Volunteer to Career Pathway is now been offered to all interested volunteers
University Hospital Plymouth NHS Trust	Securing	For continuation, sourcing support & funding via UHPNT
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Securing	For continuation, sourcing support & funding via NWL ICB

Conclusion

- The VtC programme and the structure of it along with the outcome evaluation framework has proved to be instrumental in evoking systemic change at an organisation level, helping to raise the perception of value that volunteers provide and seeing volunteers as the future work force.
- It has helped Volunteering Service Managers to broker conversations with Senior Clinicians that they previously had not been able to do and raise the profile and support of volunteering. Whilst we are tracking and still working with participating organisations, a number of programmes are continuing with further clinical funding being secured to expand the VtC Programme.
- As a result of the Burdett Trust for Nursing funding and the success of the VtC Programme, we now see the VtC programme as an enabler of Helpforce's volunteering programmes and will be bolting on VtC components to our work with ICS's, with ambitions for every Health & Care Organisation running a VtC Programme as part of their workforce strategy.

help*force*

Thank you

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