

Careers in Healthcare

A Guide to Volunteering
in Healthcare Organisations



better **skills**
better **jobs**
better **health**

Acknowledgements

This resource has been produced by Skills for Health and we would like to thank all the contributors who helped with the featured case studies.

We would especially like to thank:

ABM Health Board www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/863/

Aintree Hospital Trust www.aintreehospitals.nhs.uk/careers_at_aintree/voluntary_work.asp

Association of Volunteer Managers www.volunteermanagers.org.uk/

Attend www.attend.org.uk

Beyond the Trolley and Tayside Health Board www.volunteerangus.org.uk and www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/

Department of Health www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm

Estuary League of Friends and Time for Health www.estuary-league-of-friends.co.uk/about.html and www.timeforhealth.org.uk/

George House Trust www.ghf.org.uk

Headway East London and Timber Wharf Time Bank www.headwayeastlondon.org/ and <http://timberwharftimebank.blogspot.com/>

Jobcentre Plus (Wales) <http://backtowork.direct.gov.uk/index.html?PRO=emc&CRE=Jobs>

Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust www.ldh.nhs.uk/Volunteering.htm

Marie Curie Cancer Care www.mariecurie.org.uk

Moose in the Hoose www.aceit.org.uk/moose/index.html

National Association of Voluntary Service Managers www.navsm.org.uk/

National Council for Voluntary Organisations www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/

NHS Forth Valley www.nhsforthvalley.com/

NHS South Birmingham www.sbpct.nhs.uk/selfcare

One25 www.one25.org.uk

Scope www.scope.org.uk

Skills – Third Sector www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/

St John Ambulance www.sja.org.uk and www.ni.sja.org.uk

Stockport PCT and Stockport CVS www.stockport-pct.nhs.uk/ and www.stockportcvs.org.uk/

Sue Ryder Care www.suerydercare.org/

The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability www.rhn.org.uk/volunteers

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations www.scvo.org.uk

The Stifford Centre and NHS Tower Hamlets www.stifford.org.uk and www.towerhamlets.nhs.uk/

Volunteer Development Agency (Northern Ireland) www.volunteering-ni.org/

Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk/

Volunteering England www.volunteering.org.uk/

Wales Council for Voluntary Action www.wcva.org.uk

Wellsway School www.wellsway.bathnes.sch.uk/

Western Health and Social Care Trust www.westerntrust.hscni.net/involving/Western%20Trust%20Volunteering.html

Thanks also to Annette Clark from Skills for Health who acted as reviewer and to Rosie Hopley (www.rosiehopley.com) who wrote the guide.

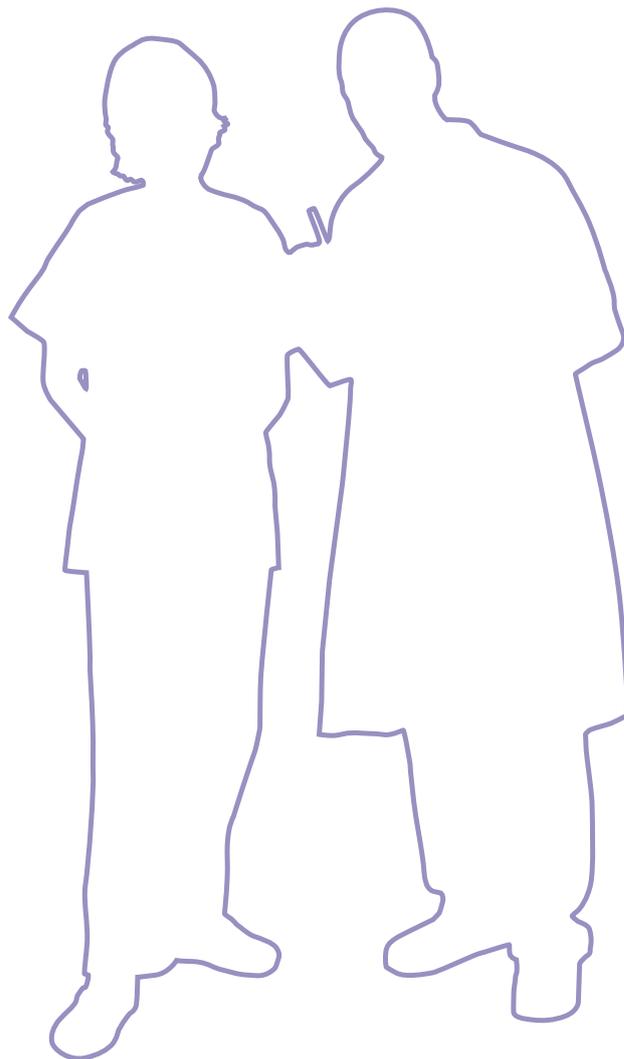
Overview

Welcome to 'Careers in Healthcare: A Guide to Volunteering in Healthcare Organisations' which has been produced for people advising on the range of volunteering opportunities in the health sector.

This guide contains a range of useful information including:

- Surprising facts about volunteering in the health sector
- Individual case studies showcasing personal stories of volunteering
- Organisational case studies detailing how volunteers make an impact on services
- Tips for successful volunteering
- Careers information
- Links to further information.

You will see examples of volunteering across community groups, voluntary groups, charities and the NHS and find out the difference it makes to patients and service users, staff and volunteers. There is also information to support career progression as a result of volunteering. We hope you enjoy reading these success stories, and will be inspired to help others consider the benefits of volunteering in healthcare organisations across the UK.



Introduction

It is estimated¹ that there are at least 3.4 million people volunteering in the health sector in England. This equates to almost 1 in 4 volunteers, plus countless others across the rest of the UK. Although the numbers involved can be difficult to quantify, the impact is felt far and wide. Volunteers provide more than ‘an extra pair of hands’, and yet a lot of their activity can be hidden².

This guide aims to show that volunteers have a lot to offer and how their activities and expertise can provide much needed expertise and capacity for healthcare organisations.

Volunteering can be defined as:

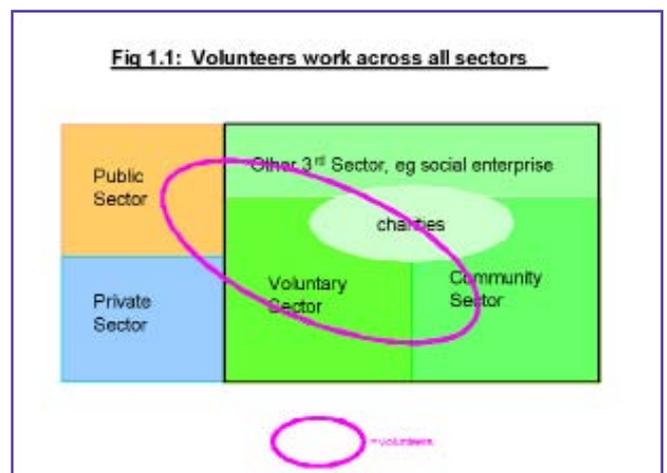
Any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, [or to benefit the environment].³

Volunteers perform a range of activities across the entire health sector, such as befriending or buddying, letter writing, helping with administration, supporting carers, eating with patients, fund raising, and much more.

*Volunteers make a difference in a whole range of settings as diverse as hospitals, hospices, community centres, GP’s surgeries, residents’ associations, social clubs, individuals’ homes and transport services.*⁴

Volunteering
England

The figure⁵ below illustrates how volunteer activities span the entire health sector:



This shows that opportunities to volunteer exist in most types of organisation – from smaller healthcare providers to large hospital trusts, and private healthcare organisations, to community based charities.

Volunteers bring an added dimension to healthcare service delivery, and are keenly appreciated by those receiving services, as the case studies that follow will illustrate.

Organisations have turned to volunteers for many years as a way to enhance their health services. Some offer structured volunteer programmes, and provide opportunities for individuals to enhance their skills and expertise.

For example, foundation trusts are built on a community driven ethos, and will seek to involve the local community in decision making. This can offer opportunities for people to join the board of governors in a voluntary capacity.

¹ Skills for Health, The ‘Hidden’ Workforce, Volunteers in the Healthcare Sector in England’, (2009)

² Ibid, page 4

³ Ibid, page 4

⁴ Skills for Health, [The Hidden Workforce, the role of health and social care volunteers](#), (2010)

⁵ Skills for Health, [The ‘Hidden’ Workforce, Volunteers in the Healthcare Sector in England](#)’, (2009), page 3

Equally important are opportunities for volunteering outside hospital managed settings, for example charity based organisations such as hospices, which use volunteers in a wide capacity of activities, from events and fundraising, to awareness raising and befriending.

Whatever the setting, it is not a question of replacing paid professionals. The opportunities are there in organisations that are embracing volunteers in services and so impacting the communities they serve.

There is greater recognition that volunteers need to be managed, and many employers have a Volunteer Services Manager responsible for volunteers. The Investing in Volunteers UK quality standard is widely recognised and helps organisations to demonstrate their commitment to volunteering.

The huge range of organisations which use volunteers is an important factor to consider when guiding people about the opportunities for volunteering. They are probably much more extensive than you may first think. However, not all organisations offer the same range of opportunity.

The benefits of volunteering

There are benefits to patients, healthcare organisations and volunteers. For example:

- Improved patient and service user experience with a more personal, caring touch
- Family and friends support
- Increasing volunteers' skills and experience
- Opening up pathways to work
- Freeing up staff time
- A user voice and expertise from former patients
- Innovation and a fresh perspective
- Health benefits for volunteers
- Reduced treatment costs where volunteers are former service users
- Supporting links with wider community and building community cohesion.⁵

Volunteering also brings other benefits. Measuring the contribution of volunteer activities can be a challenge. However, research⁶ suggests that every £1 invested in a volunteering programme gives a return of between £3.38 and £10.46. The amount of money it would cost hospices to buy the services provided free by volunteers has been calculated at £112 million each year.⁷ This equates to around 23% of running costs, representing a major contribution from the thousands of volunteers who give their time.

Individual organisations have quantified the level of return as running into tens, or even hundreds of thousands of pounds each year.⁸

⁵ To see further examples see [DH, Executive Summary, Volunteering: involving people and communities in delivering and developing health and social care services \(2010\)](#) page 11

⁶ Institute of Volunteering Research, *In Good Health: Assessing the impact of volunteering in the NHS* (2008)

⁷ Skills for Health, *The 'Hidden' Workforce, Volunteers in the Healthcare Sector in England*, (2009) page 24)

⁸ George House Trust calculates the 'in-kind' contribution of volunteers equates to over £72,000 a year to the organisation (calculated using the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit)

Social and Economic Drivers for Volunteering

Social reasons for volunteering are a crucial part of why volunteering is empowering in many ways. It can help to build closer links in communities, enhance social cohesion, and reduce isolation.

There is a greater national focus on the benefits of volunteering, with Government encouraging more people to volunteer in their local community. Health and wellbeing are also important factors when people volunteer. The Government Office for Science Foresight report *Mental Capital and Wellbeing*⁹ indicates that volunteering is among a key set of actions that can help people maintain well being. It also found evidence of the importance of social networks in promoting well-being, with volunteering being a successful way to achieve this.¹⁰

The current economic climate has seen a rise in numbers of people making enquiries about volunteering. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they are looking at volunteering to keep skills up to date, to gain experience or to give time, whilst looking for new employment.

The overall effect is that a wider group of people are considering volunteering, including those who might not otherwise have thought to do so.

The Department of Health (DH) published its strategy to support volunteering in the health and social care sectors in March 2010.¹¹ This strategic vision was developed in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, unions, local government and NHS Employers and it underlines the following:

“Our vision is of a health and social care environment in which volunteering is encouraged, promoted and supported wherever it has the power to reduce inequality, enhance service quality or improve outcomes for individuals and communities.”

The DH vision for volunteering highlights that volunteering can and really does contribute significantly to:

- Quality, choice and innovation in services
- Building social capital and reducing isolation
- Enhancing the capacity of preventative care
- Meeting the culturally specific needs of health and social care users
- Increasing the connections between people and the services they use.

The strategy recognises the importance of ensuring that volunteers are not used to undercut on cost by substituting paid jobs. The DH vision for volunteering does however offer a number of benefits in relation to workforce development and well being. In particular:

- Volunteering can provide a useful recruitment ground for people considering health and social care careers and professions. This includes the potential for volunteering to attract a wider diversity of people into these services thus improving the quality of the experience that diverse patients/ service users have of them.¹²
- Volunteering can provide career development opportunities for staff in a number of ways including employer supported volunteering and experience of managing volunteers – which is different from managing paid employees.¹³
- Volunteering can be part of succession planning for people in the transition to a full, active and healthy retirement.

⁹ New Economics Foundation, *Five Ways to Well-Being: the evidence* (2008)

¹⁰ Wheeler, JA, Gorey, KM and Greenblatt, B (1998) ‘The beneficial effects of volunteering for older volunteers and the people they serve: a meta-analysis’, *International Journal of Ageing and Human Development*, 47, 69–79, 72.

¹¹ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_113973.pdf

¹² See Community Health Champions project with NHS Tower Hamlets case study, which has helped to de-mystify the prospect of working in the health services.

¹³ See ABM case study of trauma team volunteering their time for disaster relief work in Haiti.

The strategy considers five overarching aims around

- leadership;
- partnership;
- commissioning;
- volunteer management; and
- support for individual volunteers.

Healthcare organisations are encouraged to take a strategic and enabling role, and it is timely that many of the examples which follow show innovative approaches to using volunteers and celebrating their contributions.

Another helpful point of reference is the NHS Employers volunteering pack¹⁴. Although aimed at the NHS other healthcare organisations may also find practical help in the resources which include advice on recruitment, training and induction, managing volunteers and problem solving.

In Scotland, Volunteer Development Scotland has a range of online resources to help organisations make the most of their volunteers, and has a dedicated portal for volunteering in the NHS.¹⁵

A further useful resource is the All Wales Trust Volunteering Network Toolkit – Putting Volunteer Schemes into Practice.¹⁶

Volunteering in health – some key facts:

- In the healthcare sector volunteering has been dominated by women
- Older people tend to volunteer more than younger people
- Age peaks amongst the 45-54 and over 65 groups
- Organisations are now directly targeting and recruiting younger volunteers
- Volunteers often prompted to do so by their own experience of healthcare, or that of a friend or family member
- Some (especially younger) people volunteer to help their careers
- Some organisations are run totally by volunteers
- For some smaller organisations, the numbers of volunteers match the number of staff
- The largest group of volunteers with limiting long-term illnesses volunteer in health and disability settings
- Volunteers tend to be involved in the general community, hospices, people's homes, health clinics as well as hospitals and nursing homes
- Volunteers with no qualifications are more likely to volunteer in health and disability settings than in any other.¹⁷

¹⁴ NHS Employers, [Volunteering in the NHS \(2010\)](#)

¹⁵ <http://www.vds.org.uk/ManagingVolunteers/VolunteeringintheNHS/tabid/342/Default.aspx>

¹⁶ <http://niah.com/Portal/microsites/CMSPageDisplay.aspx?CMSPageID=405>

¹⁷ Skills for Health, The 'Hidden' Workforce, Volunteers in the Healthcare Sector in England', (2009) page 16

How do organisations recruit their volunteers?

- Adverts
- Churches/religious organisations
- Links with local organisations e.g. schools, colleges, employers
- Local and national media
- Personal contact
- Promotional events/volunteer fairs
- Volunteer centres
- Website
- Word of mouth.

Wellsway School students shine as volunteers

Since October 2009, eleven health and social care students have undertaken a week's work experience at Vitalise, a holiday home for people with physical and mental disabilities, at Netley near Southampton.

Last week I went to visit three students and in the words of the manager: "Your girls are absolutely brilliant; they come here, join in and help the guests to have a lovely holiday".

One guest I spoke to said how wonderful it was that "Your girls look after me on the trips out and never fail to chat to me and make me laugh. I'm coming back for another week in the Summer – will they be here?" I didn't have the heart to say they were doing their exams so couldn't.

As a teacher it made me proud that these students had given so much joy and happiness to people. All the students feel it is a life changing experience

as well as helping them with their coursework, and all want to go back; a sign that young people of today are an asset to our community and really are outstanding.

Rachael Palacio, Teacher of Food and Health and Social Care, Wellsway School, Keynsham, Bristol.



Why Do People Volunteer?

The *Helping Out* survey¹⁸ (which covered all society, not just healthcare) reported the most common reasons for getting involved in volunteering as being:

- To improve things or help people (53% of volunteers)
- Because the cause was important to the volunteer (41%)
- Because they had spare time (41%).

When asked how they felt about their volunteering experience:

- 95% of regular volunteers said their efforts were appreciated
- 91% agreed that they had the chance to engage in activities that they liked.

Volunteers said that the main benefits of volunteering were:

- Getting satisfaction from seeing the results of their work
- Enjoyment of being involved
- Personal achievement
- Meeting people and making new friends.

These issues equally apply for volunteers in healthcare settings, and there may be even greater emphasis for those who ‘want to give something back’ after their own experience of healthcare, or that of a friend or family member.

What roles do volunteers have in healthcare organisations?

There are at least 110 roles that people can pursue within health and social care. Examples include:

Administration helper / medical records assistant	Shop assistant
Anti-coagulant assistant	Audiology Visitor (helping people use their hearing aids)
Befriending / buddying (in-patients and community)	Birds of prey (volunteers bringing birds to children’s units)
Breast Feeding Peer Mentor	Carer support
Clerical helper	Clinic assistant (baby/ well-being etc)
Dining Companion	Events helpers
Fundraising	GP patient participation group member
Governance & Trustees	Hand holders (for surgery etc.)
Home escorts for vulnerable patients	Information provider (e.g. in epilepsy clinic)
Letter writer	Massage and aromatherapy massage
Occupational therapy activities assistant	PAT dogs/ animal visits (e.g. in children’s wards, mental health units)
Peer educators (various projects)	Reading newspapers to people with poor sight
Skin camouflage	Speech and language volunteers
Teacher helping with schoolwork on children’s ward	Walking companions for people recovering from knee and hip operations

¹⁸ http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/research_and_statistics/third_sector_research/helping_out.aspx



In their own words...

Volunteers

*"My volunteering role at George House Trust has paved my way through to paid employment. I am very grateful to staff...for giving all the support that I needed."*¹⁹

George House Trust former volunteer

"As a Lone parent adviser I found this [volunteering] placement very interesting and informative. It gave me a better understanding of clients' problems and the support they need."

*Julie Davies, New Deal Lone Parent Adviser,
Jobcentre Plus*

Healthcare organisations

"I believe that volunteers can help Scope to make a real difference to our customers' lives and to society."

Richard Hawkes, Scope Chief Executive

"NHS Tayside is privileged to have input from approximately 1000 volunteers [taking part in activities] across a range of services to enhance the patient experience. We recognise that volunteering is a two-way process which carries benefits both for volunteers themselves and for the health service."

Sandy Watson, Chairman NHS Tayside

"Life to Years volunteers have given the active case management service much greater capacity when dealing with socially isolated groups."

Community Matron, Stockport PCT

Service users

"If it wasn't for One25 I wouldn't be where I am today – cleaned up, looking after my family and even going back to education! Without your support I definitely wouldn't be alive. You gave me hope when no one else cared about me."

Client, One25

"I think it is brilliant what the volunteers are doing here and that they want to do it. The whole attitude here from the doctors down has changed for better – they smile, you are acknowledged, they are candid with you."

*Margaret Williams, patient,
Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust*



¹⁹ As this example indicates, volunteering can, for some individuals, lead to employment opportunities

Surprising Facts About Volunteering in the Health Sector

Since much of what volunteers do in the health sector is hidden, you may be surprised to find out just how much they contribute to better patient care and services.

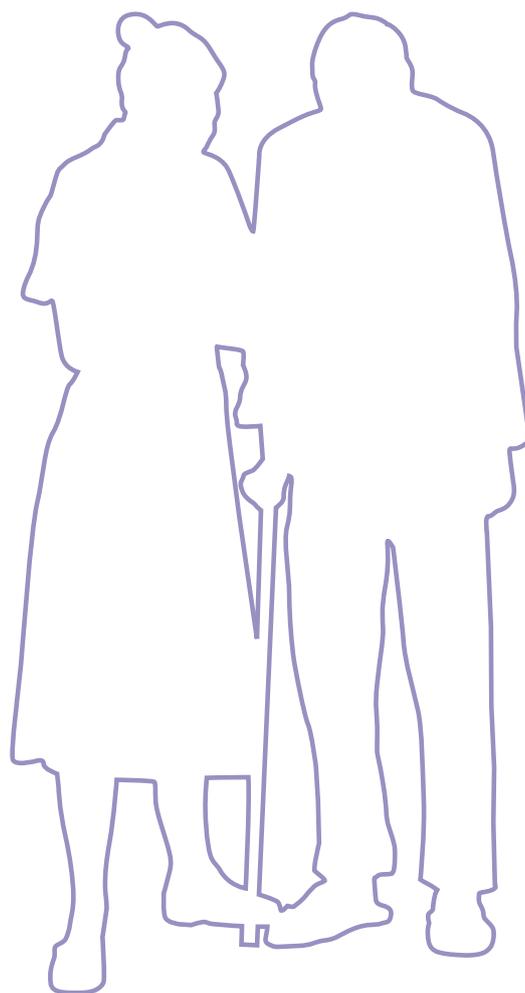
- Volunteers can be placed in front-line areas such as A&E departments, Outpatients Departments, breast cancer units, intensive care units, X-ray clinics.
- Volunteers can be provided with specialist training before they start, helping them to gain new skills e.g. first aid, manual handling, infection control, customer care.
- Some organisations will support their volunteers to achieve accredited courses and NVQs.
- Volunteers can use their professional expertise gained in other sectors to help organisations such as charities and social enterprises, which otherwise might not be able to fund certain activities e.g. strategic planning, marketing, ICT management etc.
- Many larger organisations use volunteering as a way to recruit staff into nursing and non clinical roles e.g. Aintree Hospital Trust. Since 2003 at least 700 volunteers have entered nurse training and 450 have gained other employment in the trust.
- People can volunteer full time without losing their benefits. They must remain available for interviews, but otherwise they can carry on their volunteer activities.
- Volunteering can help to support applications to oversubscribed Higher Education courses e.g. medicine, dentistry. For example Sue Ryder volunteers have used their volunteer experience to cite on HE applications.
- Volunteers from NHS Lothian act as simulated patients to assist the training of student nurses at Napier University.
- Many volunteers develop valuable skills which they can add to their CV, and take on to paid employment or higher education.

Tips for Successful Volunteering

When considering taking a volunteering role, people should think carefully about:

- What they want to achieve e.g. meet new people, get out more, develop new skills
- How much time they have to offer
- How regularly they can commit
- Whether they have particular skills / expertise which could be used
- What activities they would like to get involved with
- If they would like to work with patient or client groups?
- If they would prefer to be in a back office support role?
- Why they are choosing to volunteer e.g. to pursue an interest/passion/need to socialise.

Other useful sources of information for people considering volunteering are available online.²⁰



²⁰ <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/IWantToVolunteer>

Volunteering in the Health Sector: Workforce Development

Volunteering can offer a number of benefits in relation to workforce development and well-being. In particular volunteering can provide a useful recruitment ground for people considering health and social care careers and professions. A well developed strategic vision for volunteering in an organisation can:

- Help people, with little or no relevant work experience or qualifications, gain an insight into healthcare.
- Give people an opportunity to see the variety of roles needed to provide effective patient care and services.
- Attract a wider diversity of people into health and social care services.
- Provide career development opportunities for staff in a number of ways such as employer supported volunteering or experience of managing volunteers.
- Be part of succession planning for people in the transition to a fulfilling, active and healthy retirement.
- Utilise the professional skills of a wide range of volunteers. For instance, a volunteer with marketing expertise might offer support such as undertaking a communications audit and developing a strategy, or an HR expert might provide guidance around staff learning and development systems. People with fundraising or publicity experience may also find their skills highly sought after.



Volunteering in the Health Sector: Careers Information

Many NHS trusts and other health sector organisations offer the opportunity to undertake an unpaid placement either for a short time (a work placement) or perhaps for a longer period, as a volunteer. It is possible to find volunteering opportunities in charity, voluntary and community organisations, as well as public sector organisations.

Individuals who would like to know more can contact their local trust or local health employer directly, visit their local volunteering centre and investigate by visiting weblinks (Do-It, etc).

The availability and application procedures are determined locally. Restrictions may apply in some work areas for health and safety reasons and for patient confidentiality. Criminal Records Bureau Checks may need to be undertaken in some circumstances.

- See the [Direct gov](#) website which holds vacancies for volunteer roles across the UK
- Volunteering while on [benefits](#) – Find out the facts
- The [Volunteering](#) England site outlines some of the 111 plus volunteering roles within health and social care
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations ([NCVO](#)) supports voluntary organisations
- [Volunteer Development Scotland](#) – The Scottish national centre for volunteering
- [Wales Council for Voluntary Action](#) – Supports volunteering and the voluntary sector in Wales
- [Volunteer Development Agency](#), Northern Ireland – The development agency for volunteering in Northern Ireland
- [Profiles on volunteering](#) in health can give some ideas on volunteering options
- For an employer's perspective on volunteering and employer supported volunteering, look at [Employer supported volunteering](#)
- [Investing in volunteers](#) – The UK quality award for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work
- The [Do-It](#) website includes a database of vacancies for volunteer roles across the UK which is designed with young people in mind
- [CSV](#) – Find out about volunteering at the UK's largest volunteering and training organisation
- [Hospice Volunteering](#) – Information and advice on voluntary work in hospices
- [Reach](#) – Reach matches the skills of experienced people to the needs of voluntary organisations
- [NHS Employers](#) – Advice for employers
- [NHS Careers](#) – Information service for careers in the NHS in England
- [VSO](#) – Information on volunteering overseas
- [Raleigh International](#) – Find out about volunteering abroad a during gap year or career break.

Volunteer Training

Qualifications aren't necessarily for everyone, but for some they are important, enhancing their volunteering experience, developing skills, and gaining recognition of learning.

There are courses for volunteers and for volunteer managers. A number of voluntary agencies also offer established courses, such as customer care. They may not do the full qualification, but some units to give confidence and to take people forward. Certain health organisations have their own internal training, some of which may be available to their volunteers. The following are examples of volunteering courses available. Although not exhaustive, their inclusion offers a starting point for investigation. It is also useful to look at the national volunteering websites for each country as identified in the previous section.

- ASDAN have several Community Volunteering Qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3. These are aimed at anyone aged over 14 who chooses to give their time for the benefit of the community without payment, and can be applied in a wide range of organisations including health services. Information on the three levels can be found on the [ASDAN](#) site where it states UCAS points with a link to further information on the courses.
- ASDAN also do an [employability range](#) from levels 1 – 3 which includes customer care and team working.
- Various universities including the [Open University](#) also offer a range of courses and training.

The [Skills – Third Sector](#) site lists qualifications including distance learning for the voluntary sector, which can be the starting point towards a degree.

The [National Open College Network](#) have the following qualifications available:

- Level 2 and 3 in Managing Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Level 2 and 3 in Supporting people with a learning disability

- Preparation for event volunteering
- A range of essential skills courses including communication, ESOL and ICT.

[LearnDirect](#) have a range of courses. They can be first step type qualifications up to NVQs. The Beyond the Trolley service working with NHS Tayside uses the following learnDirect courses:

What is volunteering	Skills/Literacy support
Recruitment process including Disclosures	Introduction to Confidentiality
Introduction to Working Safely	Health & Safety
Working with Difficult Behaviour	Child Protection Awareness
Developing Volunteer Portfolios	Certificate in Community Volunteering
Blind Awareness	Deaf Awareness
Working with people with learning disabilities	Working with vulnerable adults

This Trust works closely with Jobcentre Plus and some of their volunteers go on to employment.

[Attend](#) has a range of accredited qualifications, including programmes tailored for young people, and volunteer management.

[Volunteering England](#) has a range of accredited qualifications and courses in volunteering management.

There are also accredited awards available through [Capacitybuilders](#) to support volunteer management skills development.

The [Royal Society for Public Health](#) offers courses in 'Understanding Health Improvement'.²¹

St John Ambulance in Northern Ireland and across the UK, provides 'statutory first aid at work courses' as required by employers under Health and Safety regulations.²² They also offer a wide range of training for organisations, members of the public as well as their [volunteers](#).

²¹ See how the training can be used in the Community Health Champions and NHS Tower Hamlets case study

²² For more information see the St John Ambulance case study

Case studies

In the next section, you will find a range of case studies, which show the many different ways that volunteers can contribute to better patient service delivery for patients. The case studies include examples of volunteering carried out through voluntary organisations, community groups, charities, public sector organisations, and NHS organisations.

These just give a brief picture of what can be gained by involving volunteers, and we hope they will prove to be inspiring and informative. They give an indication of what is available. There are so many opportunities in health across the UK and abroad that we are literally touching the tip of the iceberg!

If you'd like to explore more about how people can get involved with volunteering, see the links to further information section at the end of this document.

ABM Volunteers help to improve patient care – at home and abroad



ABM University Health Board has been running a very successful volunteer programme since 2006, which currently has 180 active volunteers working in many areas of the hospitals covering Swansea, Port Talbot, Bridgend and surrounding areas in Wales.

Paul Jones is Head of Patient Experience at ABM University Health Board, and he explains how the volunteer programme, now in its fourth year, makes a significant impact to patients in the hospitals:

“Our volunteers are mainly ward, unit and reception based in several of our hospitals and centres, each area having a defined volunteer role description. We recruit volunteers to ‘enhance patient experience’ – they are the ‘friendly face at the bedside’ who have the time to sit and chat with patients and listen to their stories.”

An integral part of the team

Not only do volunteers help to boost morale, they are always willing to run errands and support both staff and patients in little ways that can make a big difference. It’s no wonder that volunteers are seen as an integral part of the team, and very often it’s the little touches that have the biggest effect toward enhancing service delivery.

The Health Board is keen to share its best practice with other organisations, and is an integral part of the NHS Wales Volunteer Network, which is a partnership between the Welsh Assembly Government, NHS and Wales Council for Voluntary Action. The Network is chaired by Paul Jones who explains the benefits of networking in this way:

“With the benefits we have seen to patients, staff and the volunteers themselves we would definitely recommend that other organisations consider involving volunteers. Being part of the network means we can share experiences with others whilst working toward the same standard of delivery. It also provides people interested in a career in healthcare with the opportunity to find out what it is like to be involved in a hospital environment.”

Paul Jones
Head of Patient Experience at ABM University Health Board

Having achieved Investors in Volunteers in 2007, the Health Board is due to begin a pilot offering accredited training for its own volunteers. Although it already offers certificates to volunteers who give 50, 100, 200 and 500 hours service, the Health Board also wants to recognise their skills, and help with their progression into further or higher education or work should they wish to. Subject to successful trial, due to begin in mid 2010, it is hoped that similar accredited volunteer training programmes will be rolled out across other parts of the NHS in Wales.

CASE STUDY: ABM Volunteers

ABM team volunteer their time to treat earthquake victims in Haiti

Volunteering is not just the preserve of people from the local community. ABM staff have also been offering their skills and expertise for the benefit of people abroad. Four months after the catastrophic Haiti earthquake which killed an estimated 250,000 – 300,000 people and injured many more, a team of ABM consultants flew out to the Caribbean island and gave a week of their time to treat people who still desperately need care.

Orthopaedic Surgeon Ian Pallister, who specialises in trauma, explains how their time volunteering alongside American and Haitian doctors in the region's Sacré Coeur Hospital was an eye-opening experience:

The members of the surgical team were able to volunteer their time through the CRUDEM Foundation, an American organisation dedicated to helping impoverished people in the Milot region of Haiti. It was the surgical team's first time volunteering in an environment of such extreme need, which has high rates of HIV, malnutrition and infant mortality. Even though it was four months after the earthquake, they were able to help many people suffering with complications from trauma. At Morrision Hospital, plastic surgeons and trauma specialists often work together to maximise outcome, and this same team approach proved to be very important for their work in Haiti.

Consultant Plastic Surgeon Ian Josty explains that, as a result of Sacré Coeur Hospital's growing reputation, fifty per cent of their case load comprised patients with trauma injuries and cancers:



When the earthquake happened, we received a circular saying that if we wanted to volunteer in relief work, the ABM University Health Board would be sympathetic to that. As a result, our team of five from Morrision Hospital, home to the Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery, which included anaesthetists, a Plastic Surgeon and a junior doctor jumped at the chance.

Ian Pallister
Orthopaedic Surgeon

"The team's ability to move patients forward in their treatment journey – for example tackling tumours, congenital deformities, and results of major trauma – was satisfying, especially working on challenging cases. I was greatly impressed that among the great sadness and loss, there was tremendous resilience and a strong community spirit among the patients. Returning to the UK you realise the vastness of the health service here, and what a privilege it is to be able to access treatment at home."



Volunteering experience enriches the home hospitals

Ian Pallister picks up on other challenges the team faced:

"We had some difficult decisions to make and having the multi disciplinary team enabled us to make strong decisions. Having people who can be adaptable, work flexibly and who have a different perspective is incredibly important. This insight has been helpful for us, helping to enrich the way we

work in the home units and hospitals, and applying team work in a similar fashion.

The main requirement now in Haiti is for physiotherapy and prosthetics, and since our return we have been in touch with the ABM prosthetics team to find a way to staff the Sacré Coeur Hospital prosthetics clinic which was set up in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake."

To find out more about the ABM team's experiences go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF-mwFdfsB4>

To find out about volunteering at ABM University Health Board, visit <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/863/>

Aintree Hospital Trust: The Aintree Model – the value of successful volunteering



It seems that there's no age barrier to volunteering opportunities in one of the largest hospital trusts in the North West region. As long as people can commit to four hours each week, on a regular basis, younger and older people alike are welcome to join Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's Volunteers Scheme, which has a national and international reputation for its innovative approaches.

Support from the Trust comes from the Board and right across the organisation. Jim Birrell, Chief Executive Officer of the Trust says:

"The Trust Board places immense value on the input of the volunteers at Aintree. It is difficult to see how this Hospital would function without this service today."

An award winning approach

The volunteer scheme received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by a community group in 2005, and in 2006 the Volunteer Services Manager Terry Owen received an MBE for services to the NHS on Merseyside. The Volunteer Services Manager has been key to the development of the service, which draws people from all over Merseyside. Volunteers range in age from 16 to 85 years, with 60% women and 40% men.

Terry explains how the volunteers make a tangible difference to patients, relatives and staff:

Our volunteers come from all walks of life. They carry out a wide range of activities, from spending time chatting to patients on the wards, to offering alternative therapies to patients or helping support the staff at meal times.

Terry Owen
Volunteer Services Manager

In an average week, the volunteers give over 2800 hours of voluntary service to the Hospital. They provide many invaluable services such as tea and refreshments to patients and relatives, a library service, they run errands, act as 'meeters and greeters' in the Outpatient Departments at two hospitals, and provide massage services and beauty therapy treatments for breast cancer patients.

Volunteers really get to the heart of hospital services, and are even helping to highlight good hygiene practice by demonstrating alongside staff infection control prevention methods. A dedicated team of 108 regular volunteers provide tea and refreshments to patients, their relatives and staff in the A&E Unit, volunteering from 9am to midnight seven days a week.

CASE STUDY: Aintree Hospital Trust



From volunteer to employee

With the unemployment record in the area, the Trust has taken a proactive approach to pre-employment programmes. Volunteering is used as a training and recruitment ground for potential employees of the Trust.

In the past five years, 720 volunteers who have completed 100 hours (evidenced by a certificate) and shown their reliability and commitment have been accepted onto nurse training within Aintree Hospitals. A further 450 volunteers have found paid employment within the Trust in roles such as admin assistant, healthcare assistant, laundry assistant and porter.

Learning from Aintree's success

Dawn Grant (Lead Nurse for Support Workers & Volunteers) and Charlotte Mackenzie Crooks (Volunteer Services Manager) from Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust visited the Aintree Hospital in February 2010. They came to find out more about how the award winning volunteer service was run and to see whether the Aintree model of volunteering could be used in their Hospital.

2800 hrs

In an average week, volunteers give over 2800 hours of voluntary service to the Hospital

108

regular volunteers provide tea and refreshments to patients, their relatives and staff in the A&E Unit

This was an excellent visit that was very thought provoking and inspirational. It is incredible what the Volunteer Service has achieved at Aintree and much of what we learnt will be of great help to us. Chelsea & Westminster Hospital has a vibrant and active volunteer group but we are always looking at ways to expand our services. We want to thank everyone we met for making us feel so welcome.

Dawn Grant (Lead Nurse for Support Workers & Volunteers)

Charlotte Mackenzie Crooks (Volunteer Services Manager) Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust



In their own words...

"My experience as a volunteer building on my previous role as a full time minister in the Church of England and prior to that 11 years as a qualified nurse in the NHS has enabled me to gently progress back into employment, which has helped to give me back purpose."

Rev. Paul Taylor, Chaplain, Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

"The best thing about volunteering is that I feel we have this affinity with the A&E staff that makes us a whole team. And the patients appreciate the small things the volunteers do, like organising phone calls, arranging taxis or just chatting with them."

Eric Nall, A&E volunteer for 10 years

"I think it is brilliant what the volunteers are doing here and that they want to do it. The whole attitude here from the doctors down has changed for better – they smile, you are acknowledged, they are candid with you."

Margaret Williams, patient, Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

To find out more about the Aintree Volunteers Scheme please see http://www.aintreehospitals.nhs.uk/careers_at_aintree/voluntary_work.asp

Beyond the Trolley Service and Tayside Health Board



Beyond the Trolley is a new way of volunteering in partnership with community groups and the NHS in Angus. It was developed through collaborative working between Angus Community Health Partnership (CHP), Volunteer Centre Angus, and other organisations in health, education and community groups in Tayside, Scotland.

Volunteering has always been an important element of supporting healthcare, as Sandy Watson, Chairman NHS Tayside, explains:

“NHS Tayside is privileged to have input from approximately 1000 volunteers across a range of services to enhance the patient experience. We recognise that volunteering is a two-way process which carries benefits both for volunteers themselves and for the health service. These volunteers provide excellent and complementary services to our important work in Angus.”

Recognising the personal benefits of volunteering – such as increasing volunteers’ confidence, helping them gain new skills and current experience to put on a CV – local partners wanted to take these benefits further and tackle health inequalities at the same time.

And so began ‘Beyond the Trolley’ which enables more people to get involved in volunteering, and to broaden its appeal, especially in Healthy Living initiatives, local community settings, mental health and young people’s services.

“Beyond the Trolley’ offers a way to significantly increase the level of volunteering across health, including at community level, as well as fundamentally providing valuable support to people experiencing health inequalities to improve their lives through the experience of volunteering..”

Gary Malone
Manager of the Volunteer Centre Angus

Beyond the Trolley service began as a research report which Gary undertook on behalf of Angus CHP. The report has had a major impact on planning for volunteering in health not just in Angus but across the UK. It has also influenced the health equality strategy.

A growing body of evidence suggests that by participating in volunteering people can overcome isolation and loneliness, maintain good mental health and use their experience to access further and higher education and get a career in the NHS and other healthcare settings. Career opportunity is especially relevant to young people and NHS Tayside is keen to see many more young people as volunteers within health service provision.

Volunteering brings a better quality of life for everyone involved, as Gary notes:

“In Angus whilst most of us have a great quality of life, there are people who suffer barriers to employment and volunteering for a variety of different reasons. This includes homelessness and drug and alcohol misuse. By becoming involved as a buddy, volunteers could help tackle homelessness, or make a difference to a young person’s life or to anybody else who becomes homeless.”

CASE STUDY: Beyond the Trolley and Tayside Health Board



Rebuilding families and community

In 2008, Volunteer Centre Angus set up a Volunteer Academy. Since then, it has evolved into a full time volunteer skills centre and community project. This brings together young unemployed, others with disadvantage, and early retired volunteers for peer learning and mentoring. It also sees volunteer teams supporting elderly or people with disabilities in terms of maintaining their gardens and other suitable activities.

The Volunteer Academy is unique to Angus – it is the only one of its kind in Scotland. And it has already delivered impressive results. Over 100 people have taken part to date, with 20 individuals progressing into employment and many others continuing in volunteering. Eleven participants have stayed heroin free²³, thanks to support from staff, health professionals, fellow volunteers and family. Six of the volunteer centre staff progressed into their roles after completing their training at the Volunteer Academy. Anecdotally, participants have experienced an improvement in their mental health, as noticed by family members. The mother of one ex-heroin user said ‘thank you for giving us our daughter back’.

Support when taking the first step

For those who have been away from work for some time, it can be a massive step to apply for vacancies and start work again. Confidence can be low during unemployment and, for some, taking that step can be a challenge.

Volunteer Centre Angus partners with Jobcentre Plus to help address this issue, supporting people to take the step, and advising on how they can still receive benefits while volunteering. It also has a Learn Direct facility so volunteers can access online courses such as.

There are over 1000 volunteer opportunities people can choose from. Opportunities are sometimes in the voluntary sector, some are in the statutory sector, for example in health or Angus Council, but many more of them are volunteering opportunities that take place in communities, where people are working together to make things better for all.

Examples of volunteering opportunities:

- Sports Coaches/Assistants working with primary school pupils
- 50+ Health Volunteers specially trained to give information and advice on healthy living to other older people
- Gentle Exercise Volunteers organising activities for tenants of Sheltered Housing
- Drop-In Volunteers for provision of care to people with dementia and their carers
- Helping disabled riders
- Readers for talking newspaper
- Drop in volunteers for HIV support group
- First aid training.

What is volunteering	Skills/Literacy support
Recruitment process including Disclosures	Introduction to Confidentiality
Introduction to Working Safely	Health & Safety
Working with Difficult Behaviour	Child Protection Awareness
Developing Volunteer Portfolios	Certificate in Community Volunteering
Blind Awareness	Deaf Awareness
Working with people with learning disabilities	Working with vulnerable adults

To find out more about Beyond the Trolley and volunteering opportunities in Angus, see www.volunteerangus.org.uk

²³ For three months January to March 2010

Community Health Champions – helping NHS Tower Hamlets to promote better health



NHS Tower Hamlets has been running a highly successful community health champions programme since 2009, with the assistance of volunteers drawn from the local area.

Specially trained participants have been encouraging people to make positive changes in their lifestyle as part of an initiative to tackle health inequalities and promote healthy living. Thanks to the success in its first 12 months, which has seen dozens of people making the transition from volunteering to employment, the programme has been extended for a further two years.

The health champions help to promote better health awareness in partnership with an established team of Health Trainers who are qualified to support and motivate people to take steps towards a healthy lifestyle.

Friendly and accessible support

The volunteers are given the opportunity to gain new skills over a six month period, although some have chosen to continue volunteering for longer. They have quickly established a visible presence in the community, spreading the word about health promotion and healthy lifestyles in a friendly and accessible manner.

Salman Alam is Centre Manager at the Stifford Centre which delivered the pilot, and he explains how the project helps volunteers to build new skills and gain confidence:

“The health champions have shown how they are ideally placed to reach out and engage with people in Tower Hamlets. As a result, we have seen over 600 people attend healthy lifestyle sessions and many referred for one to one support from Health Trainers. The volunteers have benefited too from training and an opportunity to play a part in a new way of delivering a health promotion service in the community.”

CASE STUDY: Community Health Champions



Training as an incentive

Many volunteers were attracted by the prospect of training and, for some, taking part has helped to de-mystify the prospect of working in the health services. Participants were trained to the Royal Society of Public Health Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement. In addition, they received training in customer care, health and safety, diet and smoking cessation.

After initial training the volunteers are involved in promoting health living through:

- Attending local events and festivals
- Information booths in the community e.g. supermarkets, libraries, GP practices, markets
- Referring people to Health Trainers for further advice on healthy cooking, physical activity, alcohol consumption, smoking cessation.



“We can pass on the information as health champions and they can sign up, do a referral and a health trainer will point them into social things like the walking club, swimming, ladies gym and the healthy eating courses as well.”

Rose Jennings, Health Champion

Gateway to a future career in health

One of the outstanding features of the programme is how it has acted as a gateway to a career in health, as Salman explains:

“Thirty three people have successfully completed the accredited training programme, and this is just the beginning. In time it’s likely that some of these may potentially take up a career in health – future nurses, physiotherapists or healthcare scientists could have had their first taste of a career thanks to being an NHS Tower Hamlets Community Health Champion.”

So successful was the pilot programme that many volunteers have used their community experience as a stepping stone to health related work. Twelve of the first 15 participants went on to secure entry level jobs such as healthcare assistant posts in the NHS. One volunteer has already gone on to nurse training, and another is taking a degree in health promotion. For others, simply talking part and making an impact in the community is part of the motivation.

Mohammed Nurul Anwar, one of the community health champions, says:

“It’s my passion to work for the community and to help serve the community and to serve in a way that they are aware how to live the healthy lifestyle. Before I came into the position I did not have enough knowledge of what to do and being in a position now I see the difference, how I can serve the community in a different way.”

To find out more please see www.stifford.org.uk

Community Mothers in Stirling

Volunteering in Scotland's NHS can bring many benefits to patients, their families and carers, staff, NHS Boards and to the volunteers themselves. That's why all NHS Boards in Scotland are working towards the Investing in Volunteers Standard²⁴ by March 2011.



Several NHS boards have taken a proactive approach to make the most of volunteer support, from using volunteering opportunities to cater for people with mental health issues, to enabling volunteers to build new skills and progress into employment.

The Community Mothers Project in Stirling brings community volunteers and new mums together to support breastfeeding with funding support from NHS Forth Valley. Volunteers offer peer support, helping to give advice, a listening ear and provide extra support for new mums.

What does volunteering mean to those involved?

Helen Buckley is Quality Manager, NHS Forth Valley and she says that volunteers bring something extra to those they help:

When you work in a huge organisation like the NHS, lots of people say we're powerless to bring about any change. But I think volunteers are enormously powerful in that they can make the difference for individual people.

*Helen Buckley
Quality Manager, NHS Forth Valley*

The project started six years ago with funding from Volunteer Development Scotland, and is there for those who might benefit from extra support. Regular groups are held so that new mums can meet with others and the Community Mothers, as well as health professionals including members of the public health nursing team.

²⁴ To find out more about Investing in Volunteers Standard see <http://www.vds.org.uk/ManagingVolunteers/ImprovingWaysofWorking/InvestingInVolunteers/tabid/174/Default.aspx>

CASE STUDY: Community Mothers in Stirling



This gives plenty of opportunities to get ideas from other mums, to socialise and make friends, share their experiences, and to relax and have a coffee in an informal and friendly setting. It's a formula that works, as one mother, Vicky, says:

"I always think if someone's a volunteer you're more likely to open up to them. They know the subject so they can be just as much help as a health professional."

The volunteers undergo basic training over six weeks, covering aspects of breast feeding, physiology and emotional well-being, then they go out on antenatal visits to mums at home or in hospital, and on post natal visits when they are back home.



If the health visiting team identify a mum who is really struggling, they have the flexibility to call on the volunteers who can visit in the mornings, evening or weekends, outside the set working hours of the professionals. It has enhanced the service mothers were already being provided, and helped to bring a wider perspective and the benefit of others' own experiences.

Rachel, a mum who has benefited from the project, says: *"It's a bit of a community in itself, and you wouldn't have got that from just being in the hospital. It's something extra and if the service was not there it would be a lot lonelier."*

"It's very endearing to hear the health visitors and health professionals say that some of them regarded us as having more experience and more knowledge on this subject, although I felt very humbled by that. I want to do more to encourage the support, to help mums make the choice to breastfeed."

Linda Heberton
Volunteer Community Mother

The project has also enabled volunteers to benefit personally too. As well as giving something to the wider community, and having opportunities to meet new people, volunteers have grown in confidence and been able to pass on their own learning to others. In terms of her own personal development, Linda has not looked back since she started volunteering:

"Confidence skills, the listening skills, it's enhanced everything."

To find out more visit www.vds.org.uk/tabid/240/Default.aspx

Estuary League of Friends makes Time for Health



The Estuary League of Friends works in partnership with three local GP surgeries and other voluntary groups to develop independence and quality of life and reduce isolation among older people.

It is an example of a Time for Health²⁵ partnership between volunteers and health organisations. The Time for Health partnership provides a representative voice for all volunteers in health and enables greater collaboration between volunteers and participating organisations across the UK.

The Estuary League of Friends (ELoF) is a non enterprise organisation based in Topsham, Exeter, and works closely with other voluntary and statutory organisations from the region to enhance care for patients, friends and families.

It has grown significantly since it was formed in 1987, and today 11 staff supported by 70 volunteers work primarily with older people, as well as younger adults with autistic spectrum, mental disability, and those with diabetes or epilepsy.

Services include day centres, luncheon clubs, home support, group shopping trips and outings, and carer support. In 2010, it set up a memory cafe for people living with dementia and memory loss plus their carers. Activities are hosted at the GP surgeries, a local hotel and other community facilities and all helpers are vetted and trained.

Addressing dementia needs

Rachel Gilpin, Chief Executive of the Estuary League of Friends, is particularly proud of the new memory cafe, saying:

"This is the first Memory Cafe for this part of the county. We hope carers and their families will help us run future cafes, to ensure the sessions offer the maximum support, information and it becomes a wonderful social group."

One of its volunteers, David Light, has been a full-time carer for his wife Pam who has dementia and is now in a home. David co-wrote Dementia Carers' Pathways²⁶, published by the Devon Partnership NHS Trust, to help other carers find the information they need. The brochure helped to inform the Government's National Dementia Strategy providing key information on Memory Cafes.

²⁵ To find out more visit <http://www.timeforhealth.org.uk/>

²⁶ To read the Dementia Carers' Pathways report see http://www.devonpartnership.nhs.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Strategies_plans_and_reports/Dementia_Carers_Pathways.pdf

CASE STUDY: Estuary League of Friends



Partnership working is key to the ELoF's activities, and it is always keen to work with other organisations and charities. It recently set up a new gardening service in partnership with St Loye's Enterprises, part of a foundation which trains and supports the unemployed and disadvantaged through volunteering. Activities include clearing of gardens and paths, mowing lawns, weeding and pruning and the volunteers are happy to tackle anything from large gardens to communal open spaces.

Partnership working like this is exactly what the community needs. If we can work with any other group, whether NHS, charity or business enterprise, then we will do all we can to create closer links. Our aim is to ensure that we can make a difference to people in the area.

Rachel Gilpin,
Chief Executive of the Estuary League of Friends

Self referrals on the up

Volunteers are at the heart of services which also include assisted bathing, nail cutting service, transport, bereavement support, support at home, hospital companion visitors and wheelchair hire. The nail cutting is a new and much needed service for older people who cannot care for their own feet and have no relatives or friends who can help them. Since it was launched in 2009, 60 people have been accessing the service on a regular basis.

Around 80% of those who use their services are self-referred, indicating that people are keen to access the cheerful and friendly help that is available through ELoF. The team also works closely with healthcare professionals, and attends a core group monthly meeting with community pharmacists, matrons, district nurses and GPs to discuss those with complex needs and identify who might benefit from assistance from ELoF.

Attracting younger volunteers

The next step for ELoF is to attract younger people and to open their eyes to the benefits of volunteering, as Rachel explains:

Our aim is to have better links with local schools and colleges, so that the next generation coming through will see that whatever profession they go into, there are others working at all levels who are helping and can support their work. Creating better awareness will help us to show that volunteering is valuable for personal achievement and gaining a sense of pride and interest in your local community.

Rachel Gilpin,
Chief Executive of the Estuary League of Friends

Links with the charity Young Devon have already opened up opportunities for young people who are looking for volunteer positions, but the charity accepts help from adults of all ages

To find out more see www.estuary-league-of-friends.co.uk/about.html

Expert Patients Programme and NHS South Birmingham – Taking control of long-term conditions



The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is a self-management programme for people who are living with a chronic (long-term) condition. The aim is to support people who have a chronic condition by:

- Improving their quality of life
- Increasing their confidence
- Helping them manage their condition more effectively.

The programme is based on research which showed that people living with long-term illnesses are often in the best position to know what they need to best manage their own condition. Provided with the necessary 'self-management' skills, people can make a real impact on their disease and the general quality of their life.

NHS South Birmingham has been running Expert Patients Programmes since 2002. There are 105,000 people across South Birmingham living with a long-term condition, and the programme provides a way for individuals to build the skills and confidence to manage their condition and to be more in control of their lives.

The EPP is a workshop given over two and a half hours, once a week, for six weeks, in community settings such as community centres, libraries and hospitals. People with different long-term conditions attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with long-term conditions themselves.

Partnership work to improve long term conditions

In addition to running its own courses, NHS South Birmingham has commissioned other providers to deliver the programmes which all have the same content. Providers include Arthritis Care, The Terence Higgins Trust, and the Chinese Community Centre which runs courses in Mandarin.

The aim of the programme is to give people the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to better manage their long-term health condition. The sessions help participants to set goals, and develop strategies for coping with their condition, and manage related issues such as isolation, depression or anxiety.

CASE STUDY: Expert Patients Programme and NHS South Birmingham



The structured self help support programme is unique in its delivery because it is facilitated by trained volunteer leaders, who have previously been a programme participant. Up to twelve participants meet at each session, and the focus is on developing positive routines, gaining support around a range of topics such as:

- Techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation
- Appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals
- Nutrition.

Anyone who has completed the Expert Patients Programme can go on to complete an accredited two and a half day assessment course, and become a tutor themselves. To date NHS South Birmingham has supported ten people to become Expert Patient trainers.

Mark McTernan is Expert Patient Programme Team Coordinator at NHS South Birmingham. He explains how the programme helps people to break the cycle of isolation and fear, which can sometimes become an aspect of living with a long-term condition:

“People really do benefit from the Expert Patients Programme, both participants and the volunteer tutors. The tutors prove that it is possible to keep reasonably active and establish positive approaches to self management. The participants learn new skills and techniques which they can put into practice in everyday living.”

To find out more about the Expert Patients Programme see www.sbpct.nhs.uk/selfcare

After the six week programme, participants can join NHS South Birmingham’s Personal Health Forum, which is a social group for people with long-term conditions run by volunteers that meets on a monthly basis for lectures and lunches. Visiting speakers from charities and other public bodies help participants to stay informed and the forum is invaluable in helping provide longer term peer support.

Pauline Hartley, a recent participant who has gone on to become a tutor in South Birmingham, explains her experience of the Expert Patient programme:

“The EPP showed me that my life isn’t about what I CAN’T do but about what I CAN do. EPP gave me the tools to help me achieve what I want and need. I continue to learn as a tutor.”

What is the impact of the programme?

The EPP originally emerged from Stanford School of Medicine, and its research²⁷ shows that participants completing the programme demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, management of cognitive symptoms, communication with healthcare professionals, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations. Participants also spent fewer days in the hospital, with a trend toward fewer outpatient visits and admissions to hospital. Many of these results persist for as long as three years.

²⁷ Impact data sourced from Stanford School of Medicine <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html>

George House Trust volunteers help to shift attitudes



George House Trust is a charity which provides support services for people living with HIV in the north west of England. The charity was started by gay men in 1985, and now supports over 2000 men, women and children each year

With a core team of 16 paid staff, the charity relies heavily on the contribution of over 100 volunteers, and for the last five years has employed a Volunteer and Development Manager, to ensure that help is targeted where it is most needed.

Volunteers help with a range of activities, from assisting at drop in sessions, to providing short term mentoring and befriending, driving, counselling, and translating support, and all based on meeting individuals' needs.

Image: Graeme Vaughan graeme@photogas.com

The charity holds the Investing in Volunteers standard, which means that recruits are well supported, trained and matched carefully with service users. The volunteers provide support to complement the work of statutory services, and play a vital role in providing a holistic framework to tackle social exclusion and promote health and wellbeing. George House Trust takes referrals from a range of Health and Social Care professionals, including HIV Social Workers, Genito Urinary Medicine Clinics and other Primary Care Trust (PCT) staff.

Moving people back to independence

George House Trust has a strong track record of involving service users as volunteers. 40% of its volunteers are people living with HIV. Highlights from its 2008-2009 Volunteer Survey show:

- **82%** of volunteers said their confidence had increased
- **75%** felt they had improved social and communication skills
- **51%** had developed vocational/job related skills
- **49%** said their mental health and wellbeing had improved.

This is clear evidence that the Volunteer Programme not only benefits those who access support, but also impacts positively on the health, wellbeing and social inclusion of volunteers themselves.

“Volunteering has helped me to re-identify what being +ve is, and taught me that the glass is still half full.”

GHT Survey Respondent

“My volunteering role at GHT has paved my way through to paid employment. I am very grateful to staff...for giving all the support that I needed.”

GHT Survey Respondent

Laura Hamilton, the charity's Volunteer and Development Manager, explains how a recent impact report²⁸ has provided clear evidence of the value of volunteering, and shows that their service user involvement strategy works:

“The impact on volunteers can be really dramatic; we see people become more positive about their health and the possibilities open to them. We have seen people access our services, and then go on to become a mentor to then help other service users. People really do come on a journey.”

²⁸ A Positive Difference: The Impact of Volunteering at George House Trust www.ght.org.uk/about-us/22/volunteering

CASE STUDY: George House Trust

In the last two years, George House Trust has made some big changes to its volunteer-delivered mentoring and befriending programme with a greater emphasis on short term support that encourages a speedy return to independence. For some service users, becoming a volunteer themselves may form part of that journey back to a full life with HIV.

"We have volunteers here who then go on to volunteer in other organisations that are not HIV focused. We also do a lot of work in helping people to move towards independence so they get back to doing the things they loved before being diagnosed."

Financial impact of freely given time

The report also points to the level of 'in kind' contributions from those who help. In 2008-2009, volunteers at GHT gave over 7,000 hours of time. In financial terms, this amounts to a contribution over £72,000 a year to the organisation (calculated using the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit)²⁹.

As a result of effective volunteer management systems, staff are more confident in using volunteers in a variety of ways, ranging from 'front of house' activities so they act as first point of contact with service users, to helping with administrative tasks.

Volunteers also provide help with awareness raising, to challenge misinformation through George House Trust's Positive Speakers programme, and through distributing information and campaign literature at community events throughout the region. The impact of the positive speakers has been dramatic since the pilot programme began in 2008.

Thirty two sessions were delivered to a wide range of groups including schools, FE colleges, healthcare professionals and health and social care trainees. Evaluation showed that the speakers helped to shift attitudes among all audience groups. Evidence of any negative or stigmatising attitudes was almost completely eradicated amongst participants within a healthcare professionals group following the session. One delegate described what she had heard as:

"Excellent, great insight from client perspective. I will try to keep in mind the difference between appearing

empathetic and sympathetic. Also lead by example when it comes to treating patients without prejudice."
Qualified nurse, Manchester University

There was an equally powerful impact on the speakers themselves. When surveyed after the pilot, all speakers interviewed voiced positive perspectives on their HIV status, all felt more confident, and all felt more comfortable talking about HIV with people in their personal life than they were prior to becoming a Positive Speaker.

"Empowering, that's the only way I can describe it"
GHT Positive Speaker

Use of volunteers' professional skills

Volunteers have also been invaluable with providing strategic support. George House Trust worked closely with the Cranfield Trust, which provides management consultancy to eligible groups, by linking them with skilled managers from the commercial sector who act as volunteers. Staff made the most of being able to access free professional expertise including specialist HR support around advertising and recruiting a new Chief Executive. They are also looking to work with a Cranfield Trust volunteer around developing effective performance management systems.

The organisation has also drawn on the professional skills and expertise of its own body of volunteers. For example, a volunteer with marketing expertise has offered support around undertaking a communications audit and developing a strategy. Another volunteer has provided guidance around staff learning and development systems.

This gave the charity a useful insight into making the best use of volunteers' professional skills, as Laura concludes:

"If someone with specialist skills volunteers at George House Trust, we look at how we can match this with our strategic needs. Our recent experience with Cranfield Trust meant we could tap into some excellent HR expertise at no cost. Volunteers give us access to expertise and skills that we simply could not afford to buy in."

To find out more about GHT see www.ght.org.uk

For more information about the Cranfield Trust see www.cranfieldtrust.org

²⁹ www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projects+and+initiatives/Employer+Supported+Volunteering/Resources/Evaluation/VIVA

Headway East London and Timber Wharf Time Bank – the skills network



At Headway East London, people work together to solve problems, make progress and enjoy life following an acquired brain injury (ABI). There are many possible causes of ABI, including a fall, a road accident, assault and stroke. The charity supports anyone whose life has been affected by an ABI. This includes people with ABI, families, friends, carers and professionals.

Headway East London prides itself on its community approach where the members socialise and work alongside a dedicated team of qualified staff and trained volunteers. Shared experience and friendships underpin its collaborative approach to enhance people's lives.

Sharing skills through the Time Bank

Timber Wharf Time Bank is one of the charity's Discovery Programme projects in Hackney. It is one of a series of unique rehabilitation projects, where each is conceived and run by volunteers with an ABI.

Timber Wharf Time Bank is a free skills sharing network open to everyone over 16 who lives or works in Hackney. The premise is simple – all skills are worth the same and everyone has something to give.

The system rewards local people for sharing their skills and helping others. For every hour's help given, members receive an hour's 'time credit', which can then be 'spent' receiving help or skills from others; ironing, gardening, dog walking or a stress management or DIY workshop. It is driven and defined by skills the members want to give and receive. Members can also exchange credits for tickets for participating theatres, galleries and cinemas.

“After being a service user at Headway East London for a short period, I wanted to give something back and test out my cognitive skills in a working environment. Having carried out some research, I found that Time Banking provided a perfect way for members to be recognised for the skills they have in a reciprocal way and to develop new skills, boosting their confidence and wellbeing.”

*Matt McStravick
Timber Wharf Time Bank Coordinator and former volunteer with Headway East London*

The Time Bank has already attracted 60 volunteers and it enables people to network, use their skills, and reduce the effects of isolation and loneliness.

CASE STUDY: Headway East London and Timber Wharf Time Bank



Getting involved with the wider community

Ben Graham is a colleague at Headway East London and he leads the charity's Discovery Programme. Ben explains how volunteering through specially supported programmes like Time Bank enables participants to get involved in projects that they care about:

"We run a range of projects, each led by volunteers with ABI. All our projects offer career and skills building opportunities for the individual running the project, but they also bring benefits to the wider community."

There are many activities that people can get involved with, from simple tasks to more challenging activities – administrative help, telephone helpline, arranging activities for those with ABI, posting leaflets in their area, or organising outings and events.

The Discovery Programme projects include a music and events company, and a film company which is producing a feature length documentary about life after brain injury to raise awareness of ABI. Headway East London hopes that these projects will help others to understand more about ABI and that participant numbers will grow to 100 by 2012. Equally important is the long term support for each of the volunteers, as Matt explains:

"The value of these projects is in helping people to adapt to becoming a different person, to understand the differences and the new person they become, and to accept that it's okay – so they see what they have gained, instead of what they have lost."

To find out more about Headway East London see www.headwayeastlondon.org/
To read latest blogs see <http://timberwharftimebank.blogspot.com/> and
<http://discoveryprog.blogspot.com/>

Gaining qualifications whilst volunteering

Other volunteers have picked up qualifications at the same time as volunteering with Headway. Two volunteers were able to gain their NVQs with help from a government funding scheme as well as an initiative run by the charity. To read more about how they earned their NVQs while volunteering see www.learndirect.co.uk/newsfeatures/news/all/2009/june/charityNVQ/

Jobcentre Plus Wales



Jobcentre Plus promotes Community 5000³⁰, a Department of Work and Pensions initiative to give 5,000 hours of voluntary work each year to voluntary and community organisations. The scheme enables people working for the Department to gain a deeper understanding of clients and learn how to support them better, while at the same time make a real difference on behalf of charities and voluntary groups.

Early evaluation shows positive results:

- **100%** of participants find taking part a positive experience
- **81%** feel it increases their understanding of customer needs and issues
- **57%** are encouraged to consider taking a more active part in the local community.

Staff in Jobcentre Plus offices in Wales have the opportunity to spend a day volunteering in a wide range of organisations. Recent placements include the Royal National Institute of Blind People, Cancer Support Units, Age Concern and befriending services. When asked what they gained from volunteering, staff responses included:

- Gain a better understanding of help which is available for communities
- More appreciation of people's difficulties and what they face
- Better able to advise and signpost to other services
- Enables volunteers to build a better rapport with clients.

Supporting people living with cancer

Bryan Evans, Wales Fraud Manager, explains how his volunteer experience helped to shed light on partnership working in the community:

"For my Community 5000 experience, I chose to visit the Cynon Valley Cancer Support Unit in Mountain Ash.

³⁰ To find out more about Community 5000 see <http://supportforgroups.org.uk/funder/dwp-community-5000-volunteers-offer>

CASE STUDY: Jobcentre Plus Wales



"This charity provides a comprehensive portfolio of support for cancer sufferers and their families in the local community, and is expanding into the wider Rhondda Cynon Taff area with outreach facilities. This portfolio includes the provision of transport for patients and/or families to attend appointment and treatment sessions, professional counselling, awareness sessions, professional psychotherapy treatment, relaxation and therapeutic classes, and domiciliary visits. The organisation also runs a local charity shop, which is very well supported.

"After starting the day by meeting with the manager and talking about the aims, objectives and range of activities of the organisation I then spent the morning 'on the front line', helping to run the reception desk and dealing with personal callers and a range of telephone enquiries from customers and partner organisations.

"In the afternoon I had the opportunity to chat to a number of volunteers and drivers, who help to make the service work. At the end of the day I found myself thinking about the tremendous day I had experienced and the wonderful service these selfless people deliver to others less fortunate than ourselves. I would recommend this opportunity to anyone – it's well worth the time investment."

One to one support in the community

Steve Brewerton is a Job Centre Customer Service Manager. His placement was with SOVA, a project working one to one in the community with referrals from probation, housing, drug & alcohol services.

"My day with SOVA Rhyl was a real eye opener. I served dinner and afternoon tea. I also mingled with various customers, of which nearly all are known to me from my job as a customer service manager at Rhyl Job Centre.

"It gave me an insight into some of the problems that our customers have to live with. Most have either a drug or alcohol problem, others have various mental health issues. They are given opportunities to learn different skills and are advised on health issues.

"It is something that I would do again and I will be speaking with my line manager to see if there is any way we could work with the centre to make the idea of coming into the Job Centre less daunting to these people."

For information about Jobcentre Plus see
<http://www.jobcentrepplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html>

Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



A long tradition of over 70 years of volunteering has helped Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust add to the quality of care for its patients. Volunteers continue to make an invaluable contribution, complementing the work of the staff and providing extra help for patients and visitors in various wards and departments.

The Trust has over 330 volunteers regularly attending the hospital, and they provide many hours of service, giving their time and skills freely. Added to this are 100 volunteers who contribute through organisations such as the WRVS and The Friends of the Hospital of Luton and Dunstable.

The Trust Board is fully supportive of increasing the number of volunteers and recognition of their contribution. Volunteers are recognised alongside staff at the Trust's annual presentation day, where awards are presented for long service.



“ At the L&D volunteers make a huge contribution to the patient experience by enhancing services and complementing the work of staff. Volunteering brings opportunities for gaining new skills and insight into health related professions. Our volunteers are a real asset providing a link with the local community, time for our patients, and from their own varied backgrounds, a wealth of experience. ”

Professor Anthony Palmer
Acting Chief Executive Officer of Luton and Dunstable
Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Volunteers may have recently retired and have some spare time or be thinking of going into the health care professions. This is reflected in the volunteer profile – 36% are aged between 18-25 years; 33% 25-45 years and 29% are 45+. Each year around 360 people enquire about volunteering, and of these approximately 150 are taken on for a minimum of six months, although many choose to stay much longer.

Volunteering can also play a part in enabling people to acquire skills and experience which may support further study or employment opportunities. Although volunteering won't guarantee a job at the Trust, it does give the volunteers valuable experience to put onto their CV. Some have progressed into health related careers as a result of their volunteer experience. In 2009 nine people progressed into entry level roles such as healthcare assistant or porter, both in the Trust or in other healthcare organisations.

Volunteers also benefit from relevant training, starting with induction, an annual Health and Safety update, and other training as relevant.

CASE STUDY: Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Staff survey shows positive results

The Voluntary Service Department communicates regularly with staff to underline the benefits of having volunteers who can make a difference to the quality of patient care. It recently produced a set of guidelines for staff on wards working alongside volunteers to facilitate this. The Voluntary Services Department surveyed staff in 2009, and the input of volunteers was warmly welcomed, as these comments from Nursing staff indicate:

"We have a wonderful volunteer every Wednesday early shift on the ward, it makes such a difference. It would be great if we could have more volunteers on the ward at food time especially."

"The volunteer is a fantastic support for our staff. She works well with patients, staff and other volunteers. She is an excellent ambassador for the Trust and she is and always will be part of our team here."

Volunteer Roles

The patients also greatly appreciate the input of volunteers, who carry out activities such as greeting and directing patients, taking messages, providing clerical or admin support, and fundraising to buy equipment for patients. Volunteers also make themselves indispensable on the wards, and in Accident and Emergency. The WRVS run a shop, and also a trolley service for patients on the wards supplying newspapers and other items.

People appreciate having a friendly volunteer to escort them to their destination in the hospital, and many who use this service return to the reception on their way out to personally thank the volunteer that helped them.

Complementary therapies for cancer patients and carers

The Macmillan Cancer Unit at the Trust has a team of Volunteer Complementary Therapists who have been providing treatments since 2004. It offers aromatherapy, reflexology, head massage and facials within the unit, on the wards and in the community. Four free sessions are available to both patients and carers.

Hand holding in Eye Theatres

During cataract eye surgery the presence of a volunteer holding the patient's hand during the procedure can add a great feeling of reassurance. The theatre staff consider the hand holders part of the team as Theatre Sister Caroline Kavanagh says:

"These wonderful people are such a valuable part of our team and we look forward to working with them. The patients, surgeons and theatre staff all feel at ease when the volunteers come to theatres."

To find out more about volunteering opportunities visit www.ldh.nhs.uk/Volunteering.htm

For more on volunteering for Macmillan visit <http://www.macmillan.org.uk/GetInvolved/Volunteer/Volunteering.aspx>

Marie Curie Cancer Care



Volunteers are at the heart of what Marie Curie Cancer Care provides – in its shops, hospices, office and raising funds across the UK. Marie Curie is the biggest provider of palliative care in the UK outside of the NHS. Marie Curie Nurses provide free nursing care to cancer patients and those with other terminal illnesses in their own homes.

Over 5000 regular volunteers help to make this happen.

In Northern Ireland over 500 volunteers give their time and skills to keep vital services running. One hundred and ninety volunteers are involved with the Belfast hospice, plus its day therapy at three satellite units across the province, and a further 170 help in its network of retail shops.

A personal perspectives

Aidan began volunteering at Belfast Hospice after a lifelong friend spent his final days there. The recently retired businessman, who ran his own sales and marketing training company, explains how things started:

"I visited on a daily basis for five months. I was very taken by the support he received and after he passed on I thought about it a lot.

"One day I heard an advert for Volunteers Week which recommended that listeners give up a bit of time for a good cause. The next day I contacted Marie Curie."

Aidan began serving meals and washing dishes twice a week more than eight years ago, and it means a lot to him to be of service to people when they are ill and need the support:

"For me volunteering is about commitment on a regular basis from a busy schedule to an important task where others rely on me turning up as promised."

Aidan has also written and published a series of history books about the site of the Marie Curie hospice and the surrounding district. All proceeds from his books, around £50,000 so far, have been donated to the charity. He has also become a popular speaker giving talks to local community groups, and is able to put his sales and marketing expertise into practice helping Marie Curie coordinate activities of other volunteers.

CASE STUDY: Marie Curie Cancer Care



Remarkable people who give of their time

Aidan is just one of the thousands of remarkable people who give freely of their time to make a difference to the lives of those living with, or affected by, cancer. Volunteers help alongside staff in a range of retail and fundraising related activities such as stock preparation and customer service in its shops, mystery shopping and events management, as well as patient based services.

In the hospice, there are opportunities to get involved with a wide range of activities such as:

- Helping on reception desk (covering weekends and evenings)
- Escorting patients to treatments
- Serving lunches and refreshments
- Day therapy activities
- Armchair aerobics
- Assisting with clinical research
- Bereavement support
- Ward Clerk and Admin duties
- Complementary therapies such as aromatherapy, reflexology and therapeutic touch.

The charity has been fortunate to attract highly skilled volunteers, for example one volunteer at the Belfast hospice who is a retired nurse is able to check the stock lists of medical supplies, freeing up valuable staff time. Another is an anaesthetist who comes in to set up lines for patients.

Recently, a volunteer has had the opportunity to co-write research papers with Marie Curie's research teams, helping to build valuable research skills and experience.

Outstanding training for outstanding volunteers

Janna Moore is Marie Curie Cancer Care's Volunteering Manager for Northern Ireland, and she explains that the charity recognises the importance of ensuring its volunteers are well supported:

"Marie Curie runs flexible training for all new volunteers. Recruits benefit from a full induction programme. The training is of a high standard, giving volunteers an expert's view, for examples sessions are delivered by infection control nurses, and social workers. And as many volunteers work during the day, we provide training sessions during the evening as well, to make it as flexible and accessible as possible."

The training includes health and safety training, safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, load management, infection control, and patient confidentiality among other topics. Such training is invaluable for many of the younger volunteers who want to pursue a career in medicine, nursing or social work. At the same time as helping out, they also are able to develop vital skills such as thorough hand washing and communication with patients.

For others, volunteering becomes a lifelong experience as Janna explains:

"We had a volunteer who became a paid employee working as a ward clerk, then after retiring has become a volunteer again! There are many who have been volunteers with Marie Curie for 20 years plus, and we love to recognise their contribution through long service badges. The volunteers are very willing and are all here for the right kind of reasons."

To find out more see www.mariecurie.org.uk

Moose in the Hoose



Moose in the Hoose is a groundbreaking project that is helping to reduce isolation among older people by enabling them to access IT and open up a world of communication.

Moose in the Hoose has been running since 2005 and was developed by ACE IT (Age Concern Edinburgh Information Technology project).

Volunteers were recruited and trained by ACE IT on a 10 week training course before being introduced to the Council's Care Homes and Day Centres in Edinburgh. The project is partly funded and supported by City of Edinburgh Council's Health & Social Care Department.

Moose in the Hoose relies on volunteers over 50, who give their time and dedication helping to reduce social isolation and keep older people's minds active. A total of 20 volunteers have been trained and are supporting residents in six care homes and two day centres.

“The most important thing that we look for is individuals who enjoy talking to older people and hearing their life stories. We need those who have basic computer skills, but we do provide extra training so that volunteers can develop new skills. If you enjoy sharing your skills with others, and can give 2-3 hours per week during the day, we'd like to hear from you”

*Jenny Ridge
Chief Executive and Director of ACE IT and
Moose in the Hoose Project*

The training that volunteers receive is crucial to the project's success. In addition to IT skills, it covers dealing with potentially vulnerable older people, health and well being, confidentiality and regulations around care and responsibilities relating to this. All volunteers have enhanced disclosure checks, and are carefully matched with residents.

To date Moose volunteers have set up regular webcams with relatives overseas, promoted reminiscence and life story books and found a huge number of other ways to use the computer to enhance the lives of older people. The project is enabling residents to maintain weekly contact with family and friends from areas as diverse as South Africa, Australia, Canada, the USA and the Shetland Isles via web-cam and e-mail.

CASE STUDY: Moose in the Hoose



Award winning programme

In 2008 ACE IT won The Nominet Best Practice Challenge Award, and in 2009 Moose in the Hoose was awarded a Get Up and Go Award by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Tish Chalmers, one of the Moose in the Hoose volunteers, nominated the Moose project for the Get up and Go Award in the 'Ensuring the inclusion of older people in Edinburgh' category.

Tish said: "After engaging with residents, supported by staff, areas of interest can be pursued using the internet. Google Earth shows locations of relatives' homes in all parts of the world and email accounts allow communication with family and friends including receiving digital photographs. Webcam lets both parties see and hear each other regularly."

"Moose enlivens frail elderly residents in care homes, not to mention the volunteers themselves. It offers mental stimulation, and allows regular communication with friends and family, reassuring them of the resident's wellbeing. It forms groups within the care home who normally have little contact otherwise."

Staff have welcomed the positive effects of the project, and as one staff member pointed out:

"Emails and their photos can be held, shared and re-read – unlike phone calls."

It also enables families to reconnect, so that residents can retain their role and status in the family. One resident, whose daughter lives in Canada said:

“The webcam lets me feel I've never lost her...I just feel I could pull her out of the screen.”
Resident

A template for others to use

Moose was praised by the Care Commission regarding standards for care homes relating to 'private life', 'daily life', and 'staying in touch'. Dr Anna Dickinson, Royal Society Research Fellow on the Ageing Population at Dundee University, stated: *"The Moose in the Hoose' Project has achieved something that few organisations worldwide have managed with any success.*

"As other organisations seek to provide similar benefits for their care home residents, the Moose in the Hoose should be an exemplar, ideally a template."

To find out more about Moose in the Hoose see
www.aceit.org.uk/moose/index.html

One25 helps sex workers step away from the streets



One25 is an award-winning Bristol based charity helping women who are abused and trapped in a life of street sex-work. Over the past 15 years, the charity has been supporting women to break free and build new lives away from violence, poverty and addiction.

The majority of the women they see on the streets are homeless, malnourished and suffering from chronic ill-health and many have friends who tragically have died young as a result of this lifestyle. One25 encourages them to 'Step Away from the Streets' – whether it's for a brief respite in their outreach van, an afternoon at their drop-in centre, or permanently, with the help of one-to-one caseworkers and their mother and baby home Naomi House.

Joined up service provision

One25 employs 20 staff and is supported by 130 volunteers who help to facilitate the drop-in, van outreach and foot outreach services, casework and Naomi House. Staff include a trained therapeutic worker with a background in homeopathy, mental health outreach and counselling, a counsellor and case workers and they have built strong relationship with local doctors, nurses and therapeutic practitioners in Bristol.

Volunteers are aged between 18 and 82 years, and include women who have exited from sex-work and substance misuse. Volunteers bring their own range of skills such as creative writing, ceramics and pottery making, art therapy, massage, first aid training and occupational therapy. The women are enthusiastic about these therapeutic and educational courses as they are key to helping them maintain progress and build a sense of self-worth.

Working together, staff and volunteers offer a lifeline to women and have pioneered a unique joined up service provision for an extremely vulnerable group.

CASE STUDY: One25

Why do people volunteer at One25?

When asked why they volunteer³¹, respondents taking part in a recent research project say volunteering helps them to:

- Fulfil a desire to help others
- Give something back and make a difference
- Meet new people and build relationships
- Gain personal purpose and meaning
- Expand current occupational knowledge
- Gain new understanding and deepen learning.

Volunteers are involved with speaking and awareness raising, fundraising, supporting events, and cake baking. Volunteers also support, where appropriate and with the necessary training, main services to women. For example they join staff on the Night Outreach service offering food and drinks, condoms, and advice on healthcare services. They are also involved with the afternoon drop-in which provides a safe, women only space where clients can relax, enjoy a home cooked meal, access healthcare and use hygiene and laundry facilities. Volunteers are invaluable at events such as the Christmas party for mums and their children, and the summer outing to the beach or an adventure park.

Escaping from chaos

Typically, One25 sees around 200 different women every year, 170 of whom still work on the streets. Of these 170, all are socially excluded and trapped in a lifestyle of street sex-work, multiple chronic health needs, and addiction to heroin, crack cocaine and/or alcohol.

The casework approach and integrated health provision have started to make a radical impact, enabling women to talk, make and attend appointments, or to take steps to arrange detoxification programmes.

Of the 77 women receiving casework support in 2009, 14 stopped working on streets during that year, 15 maintained exit from street sex-work; 48 accessed drug treatment including 31 going into detox/rehab and giving up drugs/alcohol; 77 used health services; 28 accessed therapies including counselling, group work and massage; 30 were securely housed and supported to maintain that tenancy and 32 were involved in training, education or employment.

Making the break to a new life

After they have broken free from drugs and sex-work for two years and have built up enough self-esteem, some of the women return to the project to volunteer. They also help plan the improvement of the project and can sit on interview panels.

One volunteer is 'Jessica', a former client who with the support of One25 has exited sex-work and drug use and has her children in her care now. She helps out at the charity's summer trip and Christmas party and the support she has received has enabled her to become a volunteer fundraiser for another local charity. Jessica says ultimately she'd like to work at Naomi House.

Other clients tell of the impact of One25 and how staff and volunteers have made a life changing difference:

 *You taught me that it's the simple things that help, the normal everyday activities that most people take for granted. It's about being prepared to listen in a non-judgmental way.* 

Drop-in Client

 *The best thing about Naomi House is being able to keep my baby. I love her more than anything in the world. Last Christmas I wouldn't have dreamed I'd be here, caring for my baby and learning new things. I'm in control now and making life better for both of us.* 

Naomi House Client

For more information please visit: www.one25.org.uk

³¹ Lowen, Natalie and Dr Parker, Jennifer. (2010) Step away from the streets: Investigation into the psychological benefits on volunteers who work with sex-workers and exploration around the motivations of volunteers at the One25 project.

Scope for disabled people achieving equality



Scope has developed a reputation as one of the leading UK disability charities. It prides itself on its Inclusive Volunteering Programme (IVP), which has helped more disabled people take up volunteering opportunities across England.

The IVP has worked in partnership with over 500 supporters, who are committed to involving more disabled volunteers. Scope has also produced resources such as the 'Can do volunteering toolkit'³² to support organisations wanting to gain the benefits of involving more young disabled people as volunteers.

Volunteers are vital to Scope, and they give their time and commitment to the running of 260 charity shops and services across England and Wales, offices, fundraising campaigns and generally raising awareness and supporting Scope's mission.

“ I believe that volunteers can help Scope to make a real difference to our customers' lives and to society. ”

Richard Hawkes
Scope Chief Executive

Two volunteers from Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital tell us their stories.

Ken gets a tailor made role

Having volunteered for over 10 years, Ken explains how life as a volunteer at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital has helped him manage his Agoraphobia.

"I have had Agoraphobia for over 20 years until about 1996 when I needed to become a carer for my parents and aunt. They were so ill that I had to leave the house which caused me to have panic attacks every day."

Ken knew of volunteers from visiting the hospital but had no idea how it was organised. He got a leaflet and form and then applied, and found that it was quite straightforward. Ken talked to his Volunteer Managers, Sally and Linda, about what would be the best role for him.

³² <http://www.scope.org.uk/help-and-information/publications/can-do-volunteering-toolkit>

CASE STUDY: Scope



Scope currently has approximately

8,000 volunteers

and is hoping to reach its target of attracting one million supporters by 2012

Sally explained that Occupational Health had thought it would be best for Ken to start doing a different volunteer role before supporting patients on the wards, and Linda said:

"We have created a role for Ken so he is happy with what he does with us. We've 'mixed and matched' a few different roles together to make a very varied one, so what Ken does is unique."

What does Ken gain from volunteering?

Ken really enjoys his volunteering and feels he is gaining a lot from it.

"I've been doing the Meet and Greet role here which means I get wheelchairs for people and take people around the hospital, sit with them and look after them while they are here... sometimes I'll collect the post, taking letters, for example to Occupational Health or other departments."

"I'm happy here, it's one of the few places that I am happy. I am very self reliant because of my situation but volunteering has certainly helped me a lot and I know I will always get support here if I take on too much."

Christine takes on a new challenge and discovers hidden talents

Christine is also another very popular 'Meet and Greet' volunteer at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. Christine explains how she moved on to volunteering at the hospital after earlier volunteering experience at her local Chapel play group and a prison visitor centre:

"I came and had an interview with the Volunteer Services at the hospital...I was a bit unsure at first, it was pretty big, but decided I'd give it a go. Now I'm in my second year and I love it. I get such a buzz, everyone waves and says hello. They don't see this (gestures to wheelchair) and the staff are lovely!"

"In my role I take people to where they need to go. I find giving directions is ok but sometimes I take them...It is amazing, a lot of places stick in my mind. I get so much satisfaction from being able to help someone get where they need to go and I help the staff too. I always feel that I'm being useful... I came in after Christmas thinking that it wouldn't be busy as there are no clinics or visitors, so I went into inpatients and I was greeted with 'You're here! We've got jobs for you!' They were really pleased to see me!"

Overcoming barriers with support of Volunteer Managers

Linda and Sally, Christine's Volunteer Managers say Christine *"has made a huge difference as she tackles any barriers head on and doesn't let people ignore her. Christine has become an invaluable volunteer and she is educating people all the time."*

Linda added that Christine *"has overcome any wobbles and knows we will always support her...she has become a very strong and confident person."*

Scope currently has approximately 8,000 volunteers and is hoping to reach its target of attracting one million supporters by 2012.

To find out more about volunteering please contact Scope Volunteering Strategy Team on 0207 619 7109, email volunteering@scope.org.uk or see www.scope.org.uk

St John Ambulance



St John Ambulance teaches people first aid – about 800,000 in 2009 in England – so that they can be the difference between a life lost and a life saved.

St John Ambulance volunteers are well known for the hours they spend each year ensuring public events are safe. In 2008 alone, its dedicated volunteers devoted an astounding 5,260,222 hours of their time to provide first aid cover, emergency support and care in their communities.

It is also one of the leading first aid training providers in the UK and the third largest youth organisation.

From community first responder volunteers who attend emergency calls received by the ambulance service and provide care until the ambulance arrives, to volunteers providing first aid cover at public events, St John volunteers are right at the heart of service in their communities.

Its adult and young members – almost 43,000 people in the UK – provide treatment and care to some 125,000 individuals on an annual basis (many of whom are in life-threatening situations). With over 1,000 ambulance and support vehicles, the charity regularly provides a support service to the NHS Ambulance Trusts.

The organisation has a history stretching back over 900 years, but it is today very much rooted in the 21st century, with volunteering opportunities such as volunteer support, logistics, and youth leadership. The organisation also runs an extensive range of community programmes.

Making the difference in Northern Ireland

Since 1952, members have been giving years of service in Northern Ireland. Sixteen hundred volunteers – around 1000 aged 25 or under – ensure that people receive first aid in their local community. Many young people considering a career as a nurse, doctor, or paramedic choose to volunteer with St John Ambulance to gain valuable experience. It's an ideal setting which gives individuals a feel for first aid and the caring approach very early on. For others, who

simply want to ensure that no one dies for lack of first aid knowledge, the charity helps them to get vital first aid assistance to those who need it.

In recognition of the demands on the service, St John Ambulance volunteers receive invaluable training, from basic first aid to advanced first aid and beyond. All volunteers receive a personal record book and an induction booklet which outlines the professional approach to volunteering. Keith Smith, St John Ambulance Commercial Training manager, explains further:

“The St John Ambulance basic training for volunteers in Northern Ireland covers many of the things people would be doing at home already – minor injuries, cuts or bruises, falls, and bites stings. For those who want to take their knowledge and skills further, there are plenty of opportunities for additional training. For example, resuscitation skills, use of defibrillators, handling and moving patients, looking after an unconscious person and much more.”

“Many of our volunteers have achieved NVQs and City and Guilds qualifications, which is fantastic for them in that their skills are recognised and portable. It could also potentially help them to develop a career in healthcare through a vocational training route.”

CASE STUDY: St John Ambulance



This broad approach to training is vital since the volunteers are providing front line first aid services at public events, and operating 50 ambulances on behalf of the charity. These vehicles can be utilized to provide support to the statutory Ambulance Service, especially in times of emergency. They are also used to provide patient transport services, moving patients to a wide range of non-emergency medical appointments such as admissions to and discharge from hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and other medical facilities. The ambulance volunteers are specially qualified to PTA level (patient transfer attendant) or ETA level (emergency transport attendant) and a number of volunteers are registered paramedics.

It's a much welcomed service as Hazel Patton, Secretary of St John Ambulance in Northern Ireland, explains:

"There is always a very positive response to St John Ambulance, and much appreciation of the voluntary services provided. Our St John Ambulance volunteers often are the ones to step in when there is no one else. People can be amazed when they use St John services in Northern Ireland. They experience first hand the professionalism of the volunteers and the quality standards of St John equipment, defibrillators, ambulances and clinical governance. And underpinning all of that, the joy of charitable service willingly given."

In 2009, St John Ambulance (NI) volunteers treated over 1600 casualties through public duties and transported many more patients and casualties by ambulance helping to plug the gap for stretched services. The volunteers are on standby in emergency situations, and also provide cover for non urgent patient transfers during busy periods such as Christmas and New Year.

Hazel also explains how the organisation is able to fundraise in a unique way:

"St John Ambulance in Northern Ireland also is the leading provider of 'statutory first aid at work courses' as required by employers under Health and Safety regulations. We engage commercial first aid trainers on a sessional basis to deliver this service. We then use the surplus funds generated to support the volunteer side."

A personal perspective of volunteering

Ray Taylor has been a volunteer for 27 years. As well as volunteering on Saturdays, Ray has been involved in training other volunteers and members of the public. She explains the rewards that she reaps from volunteering:

"Coming from a background of nursing I have been able to further develop my management skills through volunteering with St John Ambulance and also channel my skills back to the wider community."

"Currently responsible for the district organisation of first aid training for volunteers in St John Ambulance throughout Northern Ireland, I still enjoy every moment of my interaction with volunteers and those in need of first aid or training who use our services."

To find out more about St John Ambulance see www.sja.org.uk or www.ni.sja.org.uk

Making the Difference – Volunteers make an impact through Stockport PCT & Stockport CVS partnership working



A winning partnership between an NHS Trust, a voluntary organisation and a group of volunteers has been making a difference in the lives of isolated elderly patients with long-term conditions in Stockport.

In 2007 Stockport Primary Care Trust's Active Case Management service worked with Stockport's Volunteer Centre to develop a successful community outreach project: the Life to Years Volunteer Scheme. The project was initially funded by the Queen's Nursing Institute.

Meeting a need

Stockport PCT staff noted that patients with long-term conditions use medical services disproportionately and benefit from the input of volunteer befrienders. Anecdotal evidence from Stockport PCT's Active Case Management long-term conditions service indicates that patients with long-term conditions attend Greater Manchester hospitals often due to social isolation and loneliness, rather than medical need.

The Life to Years Scheme has successfully delivered an invaluable service to this patient group, offering befriending and thereby increasing people's well-being, confidence and independence as well as promoting the development of better social networks.

Making it work

The Active Case Management team identify older socially isolated Stockport residents who would benefit from the scheme. The volunteers, working closely with the active case management care plan, are matched carefully and then allocated to an older person in their local community for twelve weeks. Volunteers then support that person to engage in a community based activity of the older person's choosing, such as attending a writing group and art classes, going for coffee, attending an eye test and sorting through old photographs.

Recruiting the volunteers

Volunteers for the Life to Years Scheme are recruited through Stockport Volunteer Centre part of Stockport Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) as well as church groups and other community groups across Stockport. The volunteers are recruited from a variety of backgrounds and age groups. This included 25% of volunteers being student nurses, enabling them to gain community experience and professional development.

The volunteers are asked to complete a CRB check and interview before taking relevant training in First Aid. The training is provided through a comprehensive one-day session delivered by Stockport PCT. Other training offered includes safeguarding vulnerable adults, wheelchair awareness and lone working good practice.

Volunteers are then ready to be matched with an older person. The first individuals were recruited in April 2008 and began their volunteer work from July 2008.

Recognising the importance of support, volunteers receive a mobile phone with direct access to an Active Case Manager in case of any emergencies arising whilst being with a service user. They also use this number to check in and out at the beginning and end of the activity to ensure everything goes smoothly. The volunteers also receive an official Stockport PCT identity badge.

CASE STUDY: Stockport PCT & Stockport CVS

Having a younger person as a friend

Frank had lost confidence since having a fall from his scooter. Low mood and poor mobility kept him isolated at home. Through simple giving of time the volunteer helped Frank to get out on his scooter in the local community and go along to an art and a writing group on his local estate. Over several weeks with his volunteer Frank built up the confidence to join the groups and continued to go along once the volunteer period had ended.

Assessing the impact – did they make a difference?

The partners used Volunteering England's impact assessment toolkit³³ to carry out an evaluation. They were particularly keen to find out the impact on all involved, i.e. volunteers, service users, Stockport PCT staff and the wider community.

Impact on Volunteers

- 33% felt their skills (teamwork, computer literacy etc) had increased as a result of the Life to Years Scheme
- All volunteers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the training they received
- 67% felt their appreciation of other people's cultures had increased as a result of the scheme.

When you can see the person you're helping appreciates your help it makes it worth all the effort.
Life to Years Service User

Impact on Service users

- 71% described their experience with a volunteer as very good or excellent
- Service users had between two and four (often incapacitating), long-term conditions
- 100% of service users lived alone and average age was 82.

For more information and to read the full impact report 'Making the Difference' see www.qni.org.uk/userfiles/file/Life%20to%20Years%20Final%20Report.pdf

I feel I've come alive and seen things I haven't seen for years.
Life to Years Service User

Impact on Stockport PCT and staff

- All staff questioned agreed that the scheme enabled them to do work they would not otherwise have time to do
- All staff disagreed with the statement that volunteers took up too much of their time and energy
- All staff agreed volunteers had increased the capacity of Stockport PCT as a whole.

Life to Years volunteers have given the active case management service much greater capacity when dealing with socially isolated groups.
Community Matron, Stockport PCT

Factors for success and sharing best practice

The Life to Years Volunteer Scheme has been successful in achieving its main aim to improve the lives of older isolated people in Stockport. Success has come as a result of careful targeting of service users, matching with volunteers and an interview process carried out jointly by Stockport CVS staff and Stockport PCT staff, giving two perspectives on the suitability of the volunteer. Another critical factor was the development of a volunteer policy for the PCT, which for the first time ensured risk was well managed and the profile of the volunteer service was raised to an official level within the PCT.

The scheme co-ordinators have also been consulted by the Department of Health about the integration of volunteers in health and social care. The project co-ordinators also presented the successful outcomes of the project to the National Long-term Conditions conference and the National Health Promotion conference in 2008.

³³ <https://ecommerce.volunteering.org.uk/PublicationDetails.aspx?ProductID=V309>

Sue Ryder Care Volunteers



Sue Ryder Care has a dedicated team of volunteers who help the charity to support people with specialist palliative, end of life and long-term neurological care needs.

Each year it provides four million hours of care to people living with cancer, multiple sclerosis, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, stroke and brain injury.

Over 8000 volunteers support the charity's work, helping with many important activities:

Administration	Befriending	Maintenance and gardening in its care centres
Coordinating activities for residents	Fundraising	IT buddying
Creative writing therapy	Mobility support	Creative and diversional therapies support
Holistic therapies	Providing complementary therapies	Ward assistance
Serving drinks and meals to patients	Supporting art and music therapy	Shop assistance

Taking time to care

Volunteer Nigel Robb travels twice a week to Sue Ryder Care – Hickleton Hall and helps out in the Recreational Therapy Unit. He works with residents spending time with them playing bingo, reading books to them and helping them in the different recreational activities organised daily. Nigel says:

“I was interested in doing something to help other people and give back something to the community. I came to visit the neurological care centre to understand which kind of services and care they were providing and I immediately felt that this was exactly what I was looking for.”

Nigel Robb, Volunteer

CASE STUDY: Sue Ryder Care



At Sue Ryder Care's Wheatfields Hospice, 250 volunteers help the 100 hospice staff to make life more comfortable for patients.

Helen Peel is Voluntary Services Co-ordinator and when asked why people choose to volunteer at the hospice she says:

"There are many reasons. Our younger volunteers are often looking for experience to cite on their CV especially if they plan to study for medicine or nursing, or another health based career. Older volunteers often want to give something back to community. They may have had a loved one in the hospice, and now they want to continue coming along and getting involved, but on the giving side, rather than on the receiving side."

Fostering links between the generations

Gaining experience and hands on skills is a big driver for many, but it's not the only reason that people decide to come to Wheatfields. *"When volunteers join us, they find that they come to a warm and friendly atmosphere because that's what we want our patients to experience. It's lovely to see old and young volunteering together, as they often strike up really good working relationships and get along extremely well."*

The hospice also welcomes pupils on school placement and many of these younger people – some aged as young as 14 – choose to stay much longer.

“ One of our volunteers started on a two week work placement four years ago, and he has returned each summer. ”

*Helen Peel
Voluntary Services Co-ordinator*

There are also people with a wealth of life experience who offer their skills to the hospice, from retired midwives to former teachers and bank managers. *"All we ask is that people can offer their time on a regular basis, and we will provide the training and support to help them become a valued member of the team."*

To find out more see www.suerydercare.org/

The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability



The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN) was founded in 1854 by Andrew Reed, a minister and one of the great 19th century philanthropists. Today it treats and cares for nearly 250 people from its site at Putney, south west London. Many residents stay for years in a warm and friendly environment that has become their home, others a few months. The medical charity provides a range of services including profound brain injury services, neurological rehabilitation, neuro-behavioural rehabilitation, respite care, and a home and community unit to support self care for those with long term needs.

Finding ability in disability

The RHN believes that all residents and patients should have the opportunity to enjoy an optimal quality of life. It knows that meaningful recreational programmes can make a huge impact on people's quality of life. There is a dedicated Recreation and Leisure team who work closely with 150 enthusiastic volunteers to help make this a daily reality.

Kathryn Parkinson, Volunteer Co-ordinator, set up the volunteer programme from scratch 21 years ago, and she explains how the volunteers make an enormous difference to everyday living at the RHN:

"Our volunteers can be very modest about the impact of their activities at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, and may see it as just giving a few spare hours a week. But their contribution goes much further than this. You only have to look at the patients' and residents' faces – they love seeing the volunteers, spending time with someone who is there to be with them, and prepared to listen, or help them enjoy life through activity."

Leisure and recreation adds more to life

The Recreation and Leisure team in collaboration with the multi-disciplinary team and volunteers provide a total of over 92 activities, and over 35 of these activities and services involve volunteers:

Weekend activities	Snack bar and shop
One to one befriending	Church services
Music activities	Gardening groups
Art and craft clubs	Fundraising
PAT dog visits	Reading/InterAct groups
Baking group	Computer sessions
Seasonal and cultural events	Boccia/sports clubs

CASE STUDY: The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability



The volunteers range in age from 16 – 90+, and many are students who are able to use their volunteer experience to support future study in medicine, psychology, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, music therapy, occupational therapy and nursing.

Growing friendships through gardening

Jane Sadr-Hashemi has been volunteering at the RHN for 18 months. Initially she thought this would support her MSc application, but then the volunteering took on a life of its own:

“Early on I decided that I was not going to pursue my studies. But volunteering provided a perfect way for me to keep up my skills and knowledge – I have a degree in psychology – and, now that my children have grown up, give a bit more now I have time to offer regular help.”

She has built a strong rapport with the residents and patients, and regularly pairs up with Tom Gardner for the weekly gardening club. He says:

“The best bit is getting out into the fresh air and the warmth. It’s nice to meet other people in the gardening group and see what they have grown – one of the other residents grows potatoes! I like telling other people about my family and having a chat.”

Art and laughter

Diana Rolfe has been volunteering for 10 years in a wide range of activities including a past lunch club, befriending, dance and music group and craft club. Diana has stayed with the charity for so long because it offers flexibility and an opportunity to try something new, as she explains:

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, please see www.rhn.org.uk/volunteers

“The RHN is very good at giving volunteers a new role if you need a change, as it can be quite full on and intense. Volunteering here really helps to ground you and put life in perspective. I love coming here – I can’t explain why, but I just do.”

Reaching people through pet therapy

Emma Charlton is a volunteer who helps with Pets as Therapy (PAT), and she has been volunteering on a weekly basis with her specially trained pet dog Billie Jean for the past five years. Emma explains how Billie Jean is able to reach people in a way that complements other therapies:

“When we go on our residency visits, the patients love seeing Billie Jean. Sometimes people cry, because touching a dog enables them to remember something special. It helps to unlock feelings, and I find that the residents may talk a lot more with me and Billie Jean – having a dog helps to break the barriers. Even though patients might be in splints, you’ll see a hand uncurl from the splint so they can touch Billie-Jean’s ears.”

Recognition of the worth of volunteers

Without the willingness of volunteers, many charities like the RHN would face challenges in providing a range and high quality of services, and it’s well recognised they make a valuable contribution to the multi disciplinary team approach. The staff see how the volunteers complement what they do in meeting people’s health and social needs and add a lot to the quality of patient care.

Western Health and Social Care Trust – an open approach to volunteering



At Western Health and Social Care Trust there are many volunteering opportunities which are open to anyone aged 16 and over with the time and enthusiasm to commit.

Anne Love is the Trust's Volunteer Manager and she says:

"We very much appreciate our volunteers who give practical help and support to patients and visitors and complement the work of paid staff within the Trust. They are a vital part of our service to 290,000 people living across the Western Trust which incorporates 5 District Council areas of Northern Ireland."

The Trust recognises the importance of engaging with those considering volunteering – whether that's people in schools, colleges or in the wider community – so that as many as possible are aware of the opportunities.



Adding the personal touch

The Trust is one of many public sector organisations in Northern Ireland responding to a greater appetite for volunteering opportunities in health. This reflects the findings in the *It's All About Time, Volunteering in Northern Ireland* report where 70% of organisations mentioned that volunteers can improve or increase services provided³⁴.

Anne sees that volunteers are ideally placed to pick up on the little things that paid staff don't always have time for or roles that are developed to support the functions of paid staff, e.g. Breastfeeding Network. The volunteers' contributions go a long way to complementing the delivery of care in the busy acute hospital setting:

"Volunteers bring a special quality to the services we provide. That includes time to befriend and chat, or helping with important everyday things like encouraging elderly patients to eat their meals, so supporting their nutritional and social needs."

³⁴ The Volunteer Development Agency, *It's All About Time, Volunteering in Northern Ireland*, (2007)

CASE STUDY: Western Health and Social Care Trust

Training to equip the volunteers

The Trust currently has 150 volunteers, and 75% are aged between 16 and 24 years of age. The younger age profile is driven by the fact that many see the career and education benefits of volunteering in a healthcare setting. Not only does volunteering help to inform future career decisions, it also enables individuals to develop important communication, team work and leadership skills.

At the other end of the spectrum, more mature volunteers approach the Trust as they might be recently retired or unemployed and have free time. These volunteers tend to stay longer term and provide a solid core to the volunteer team.

The organisation recognises that it needs to support those who choose to volunteer, whatever the motivations. The Volunteer Manager works closely with individuals to ensure they are placed in volunteer settings that meet their needs, and the Trust also provides training for volunteers to assist them in carrying out their activities, depending on where they are placed. After suitable checks all volunteers complete induction training which covers Trust policies, infection control, health and safety, organisational structure and other related topics.

Volunteers make a considerable contribution to the facilities and support available to patients and visitors, including:-

- Befriending
- Buddying at Children's ward
- Complementary therapies
- Entertainers – e.g. musicals, drama
- Escort volunteers
- Meeting and Greeting
- Outpatient clinic volunteers
- Ward volunteers.

Supporting skills development

In time, long standing volunteers can become an integral part of the Voluntary Services department, helping to deliver induction training to new volunteers or providing shadowing opportunities. Volunteers who show leadership skills can take part in Trust health promotion activities and other health awareness initiatives.

For example, student volunteers recently took part in the Bee Safe Accident Prevention scheme for primary school pupils. Over 450 children were guided around interactive accident themed scenarios during a week long event, designed to help them learn how to deal with everyday accidents and dangerous situations. The highly successful event was made possible through the participation of student volunteers who in turn benefited from useful work experience and an opportunity to put their knowledge and skills into practice.

The Trust is exploring opportunities for volunteering in community based settings, and potential new volunteer roles. Despite its success, the Trust is not resting on its laurels, as Anne's final point underlines:

"Western Health and Social Care Trust is massively committed to volunteering – we really want our community involved. We enjoy a strong track record in attracting lots of people interested in volunteering, and we see it as an important way of building stronger links across the community. But we are always ready to innovate, and have many more people involved!"

To find out more see www.westerntrust.hscni.net/involving/Western%20Trust%20Volunteering.html

Links to further information

Volunteering in the NHS	www.nhs.uk/Livewell/NHS60/Pages/Volunteering.aspx
111 roles for volunteers in health and social care	www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projects+and+initiatives/volunteeringinhealth/111+rolesforvolunteersinhealthsocialcare.htm
Summary of the 1997 National survey of volunteering in the UK	www.ivr.org.uk/researchbulletins/bulletins/1997-national-survey-of-volunteering-in-the-uk.htm
Search for volunteering opportunities across the UK	www.do-it.org.uk/
Learn how to self manage and take control of your health	www.expertpatients.co.uk
Resources for Managing Volunteers	www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/goodpracticebank/Information/vmresources.htm
Volunteering in health and social care – links to policy, research and case studies	www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projects+and+initiatives/volunteeringinhealth
Recognised award scheme for organisations committed to volunteering	www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/
A voice for all volunteers in health	www.timeforhealth.org.uk
National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers	http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/management_of_volunteers_standards/
National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers, for Trustees, and for Fundraisers	http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/management_of_volunteers_standards/
Bite size learning for those who manage volunteers	http://www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/EVM/evm.htm?knownurl=http%3a%2f%2fwww.volunteering.org.uk%2fresources%2fEVM%2f
New opportunities for volunteering in the local area in Northern Ireland	www.volunteernow.co.uk
Volunteering Wales	http://www.volunteering-wales.net
Opportunities for volunteering in Scotland	http://www.vds.org.uk/
Volunteering in the health sector	http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/developing-your-organisations-talent/careers-information-and-advice/Exploring-health-sector-jobs-and-careers/Volunteering.aspx
Volunteering abroad with VSO	http://www.vso.org.uk/volunteer/
Information about volunteering overseas Raleigh International	http://www.raleighinternational.org/our-expeditions/why-volunteer?gclid=CMPN-NKI3KICFdUB4wodwgEpxw
Careers information for people interested in paid or voluntary work in the voluntary and community youth sector.	http://www.ncvys.org.uk/UserFiles/Workforce%20Development/YP_Health_Worker.pdf

Who are Skills for Health?

Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for the UK health sector (the National Health Services, independent healthcare providers and voluntary organisations). Its purpose is to help develop solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.

It understands the importance of drawing new people into the healthcare workforce, and to support existing employees with high quality learning, development and qualifications.

That's why Skills for Health has developed a new, comprehensive careers resource specifically for the health sector. Called the Careers Information website, it is free and brings all the relevant information and data in a single place, giving users access to over 1000 links to further resources such as:

- Careers in health
- Information on professional development
- Funding guides for employers and individuals
- Searchable database of UK-wide and national data related to Careers Information and Guidance (CIAG)
- Information on developing careers advice and guidance skills for career guidance counsellors.

To find out more visit
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice



www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

Skills for Health does not claim responsibility for content and workings of other websites. The information and web links in this document are correct at the time of publication October 2010