

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

NHS Lothian Volunteering Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028

Introduction

NHS Lothian has a long history of involving volunteers spanning nearly 100 years. 'Volunteering Well – NHS Lothian Volunteering strategy 2018-2023' set out plans to enhance and improve volunteering across Lothian. During the period April 2018 - March 2023 significant progress was made in ensuring volunteer efforts were focused where they could make greatest impact in supporting the efficiency or effectiveness of services, or to improve patient experience and outcomes while ensuring meaningful and impactful experiences for volunteers.

Since April 2018, 2621 individuals have volunteered with NHS Lothian with the vast majority making a commitment of at least 2 hours a week for 6 months or more. From early 2019 NHS Lothian has consistently maintained a team of 500+ active volunteers at any given time. Volunteers have been recruited and trained to take on a variety of roles ranging from Ward Helper to Driver, to Meaningful Activity Helper, to Welcome Guide. From March 2020 onwards volunteers have provided significant support as NHS Lothian responded to the pandemic and made a major contribution to the vaccination roll out.

NHS Lothian has developed good working relationships with the Third Sector locally and with key national organisations and works closely with the local TSI's. These positive links and recognition of specific expertise has led to 30 Voluntary Sector Organisations providing services in NHS Lothian's Acute and Community Hospitals through approximately another 500 volunteers in roles such as Barista, Radio Host, and Welfare Rights Advisor. The links also support the promotion of NHS Lothian's volunteering opportunities both generally and to those groups who find it harder to engage.

'Volunteering Well' enabled the establishment of strong foundations upon which Fit For the Future will build, employing approaches and practices which ensure that volunteering really is transformational for all. Fit For the Future recognises the principle that volunteering should be beneficial to all parties and makes a commitment to enhancing benefits for volunteers, as well as beneficiaries. To respond to the diverse nature of the community NHS Lothian serves, and hopes to support through, or as volunteers, Fit For the Future sets out plans to widen and enhance our volunteering offer and how it is communicated. In doing so NHS Lothian will become an example of best practice and will become a hub for individuals wishing to volunteer.

Fit For the Future recognises the expertise of colleagues, within and without NHS Lothian, and states a clear intention to work in partnership with colleagues to achieve our goals and maximise resources. Developing partnerships and working collaboratively with others will identify the right support for individuals as they progress through their employability, wellbeing or patient journey. Best practice and good relationships will ensure smooth transitions for individuals as they progress to the next stage of their journey e.g. from patient to volunteer or from volunteer to employee.

NHS Lothian's recognition that volunteers and Voluntary Sector Organisations make a unique and valuable contribution, and are an essential resource in helping the Board achieve its goals, supports a culture of creativity and innovation which Fit For the Future will draw on, facilitating the maximisation of outcomes for patients, their families, volunteers, staff and the wider community and ensuring that NHS Lothian's volunteering activities are agile, sustainable and Fit For the Future.

Key Achievements of Volunteering Well

Over 2000 volunteers since 2018

In 2022...



72.4%
of volunteers reported an increase in their confidence.



66.8%
of volunteers reported an improvement in mental wellbeing.




35.7%
of volunteers reported an improvement in their physical wellbeing.



81.5%
of volunteers reported an improvement in their skills or knowledge.

81.7% of respondents rated their overall experience as excellent or very good 

29.3% of volunteers moving on from volunteering were doing so to take up employment. **12.1%** reported that their employment as in a field related to their volunteering with NHS Lothian. 

33.3% of volunteers moving on were doing so in order to study. **22.2%** reported moving on to study in a field related to their volunteering with NHS Lothian. 

A demand led approach has been used to work colleagues to develop over 35 volunteers roles.



Interactive group training developed to standardise and enhance induction for all volunteers.

A programme of 15 optional learning and development events has been designed and delivered on rolling basis.



Introduction of volunteer uniforms to make the volunteers more visible/identifiable on site – uniform is a purple t-shirt and for some roles a fleece,



Staff team has increased from **3** full time equivalents pre strategy to **10 and a half** full time equivalents now

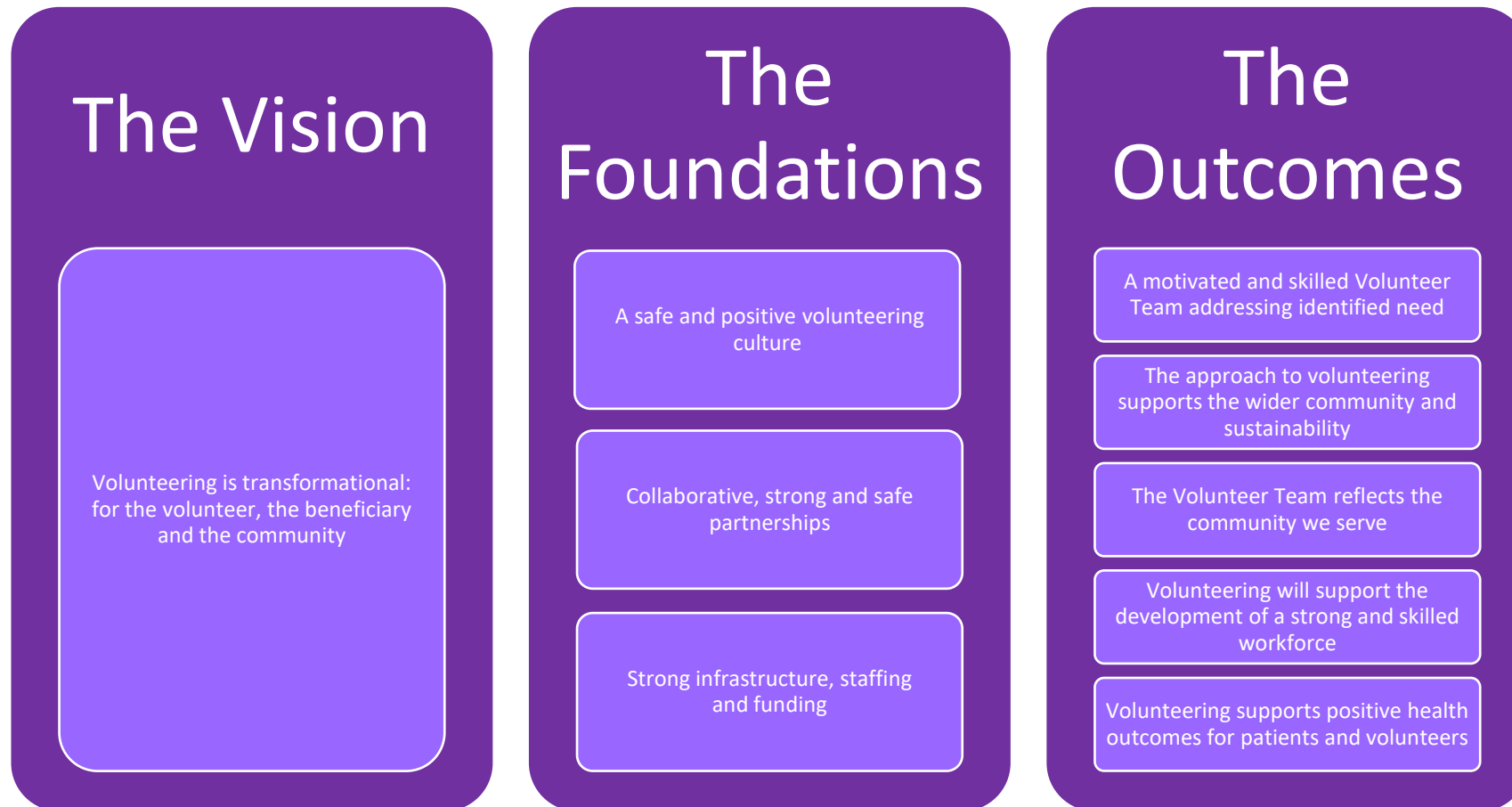


New record keeping system and integrated online application form launched.



NHS Lothian volunteers have won awards – young scot volunteer team of the year and Helpforce Volunteer of the Year and NHS Lothian volunteers have been positively featured on STV news and BBC news website.

NHS Lothian's vision for volunteering will be achieved by sustaining and strengthening the foundations of volunteering, enabling the achievement of impactful outcomes.



Volunteering is transformational: for the volunteer, the beneficiary and the community.

The vision set out is ambitious in its three fold nature and recognises the importance of mutual benefit within volunteering. To achieve the three fold benefit NHS Lothian must work with patients, carers, visitors and frontline staff and managers to identify need, develop meaningful roles that stimulate and develop volunteers enabling maximum impact for volunteer, beneficiary and the community.

The Foundations

Three key building blocks will form the robust foundations required to allow for growth, creativity and innovation in volunteering;

- **A safe and positive volunteering culture.** Establishing and maintaining a culture in which every staff member and service user recognises and respects the added value volunteers bring is fundamental in ensuring volunteering is transformational for all. When this culture is established, the staff and the public view a volunteer as another member of the team and their contribution will be valued equally.
- **Collaborative, strong and safe partnerships.** Developing and delivering volunteering opportunities in partnership with internal and external colleagues will be key to achieving transformational volunteering. NHS Lothian's Voluntary Services Team will have multiple partners in the effective recruitment, co-ordination and support of volunteers. Our approach to partnership will prioritise patient safety, best practice in volunteering and support innovation.
- **Strong infrastructure, staffing and funding.** Sustaining a skilled Voluntary Services Team with clear remits working within a robust policy framework, serviced by a strong infrastructure which supports good working practices and record keeping will be instrumental in the development of the other building blocks and the achievement of the outcomes.



The Outcomes

Fit For The Future's desired outcomes compliment and sustain each other. The approaches, practices, tools and partnerships that will assist in the achievement of one, will support progress towards others forming a 'virtuous' circle with positive change facilitating or maintaining another positive action.



Putting Strategy into Action

To deliver Fit for The Future, a quality management approach will be adopted and person-centred evaluation measures used to support our understanding of and to maintain progress. The action plan below details a number of key actions through which we hope to achieve and sustain the vision that volunteering with NHS Lothian is transformational for all. As the outcomes compliment and draw on each other so do the actions, with certain actions supporting our progress in several areas.

A Motivated and Skilled Volunteer Team will address identified need	
Maintain a demand led approach to volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with frontline staff, managers and colleagues to better understand where volunteers can add value. • Widen the range of demand led volunteering roles. • Working towards an ambition of a volunteer in every ward every day by increasing the Volunteer Team to at least 1,000 active volunteers • Develop and deliver a Volunteer Champion Programme to enable frontline staff to better understand the role of volunteers and to identify where volunteers may add value. • Work more closely with QI colleagues to support them to better understand the role of volunteers, enabling them to consistently consider where volunteers might add value in QI projects
Improve volunteer offer to attract and retain volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen the range of demand led volunteering roles. • Increase the volume and range of optional training and peer learning opportunities for volunteers. • Increase the volume of 'thank you' and social events e.g., coffee mornings, annual conference. • Promote and support national reward schemes e.g., Young Scot points. • Explore the expansion of the staff benefits scheme to include volunteers. • Enable volunteers to access NHS Lothian wellbeing support e.g. wellbeing lounges, yoga, listening support. • Accreditation for volunteering hours and selected training
Development opportunities for volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen the range of demand led volunteering roles. • Increase the volume and range of optional training and peer learning opportunities for volunteers. • Design and issue bespoke local induction packs • Accreditation for volunteering hours and selected training • Promote and support volunteers to engage with national recognitions schemes e.g., Saltire Awards, DofE • 'Lead Volunteer' team developed with opportunities for existing volunteers to support the onsite induction of new volunteers, to give presentations and talks about NHS volunteering and more. • Strengthen the Volunteer Reference Group

The Volunteer Team reflects the community we serve	
Accessible information and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a person-centred approach to volunteer recruitment, placement and support. • Work with Third Sector Partners to promote volunteering and NHS Lothian's opportunities. • Maintain multiple application routes e.g., online application form as well as paper and digital application forms. • Maintain multiple communication routes e.g., social media, phone, email. • Ensure that information about volunteering and processes is in plain English and in accessible formats. • Volunteer information will be displayed in our sites and will be accessible to staff and patients e.g., Volunteer noticeboards in every ward. • Strengthen and diversify the Volunteer Reference Group • Increase engagement with annual and exit surveys and implement learning. • Develop a broader range of case studies and present in a variety of formats e.g., films, podcasts, to highlight the benefits of volunteering
Targeted promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the volume and diversity of demand led volunteering opportunities. • Identify communities (geographical, demographic or economic) under-represented in our Volunteer Team • Build relationships with key partners to support the communication of volunteering opportunities and their three-fold benefit. • Development of a team of 'lead volunteers' to support promotional activity e.g., distributing posters, attending recruitment and community events, and giving talks.
Supported programmes and flexible volunteering opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to support potential volunteers to become 'volunteering ready'. • Widen access through a range of volunteering programmes e.g., programmes for under 16s and supported programmes. • Develop a Volunteer Bank creating volunteering opportunities for those who are unable to take on a commitment to volunteering at the same time, same place. • Work with front line colleagues to identify fixed term or flexible volunteering opportunities. • Continue to gather and analyse data on the volunteer community and stay up to date with the latest research on barriers to volunteering and how to mitigate them
Volunteering will support the development of a strong and skilled workforce	
System wide recognition of the value of volunteering and transferable skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation for volunteering hours and selected training • Work with Workforce Development and Recruitment colleagues to enable understanding of volunteering within and out with NHS Lothian e.g., volunteer awareness training. • Work with Workforce Development and Clinical Education colleagues to create joined up pathways for volunteers who are considering a career with NHS Lothian e.g., interview guarantees for those who meet the essential competencies and commitments of their volunteering.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Workforce Development and Clinical Education colleagues to promote employability programmes and employment opportunities to volunteers e.g., use of Volunteer News, volunteer Facebook pages or participation in the supported volunteer programmes. • Develop a Staff Volunteering Policy that enables staff to actively engage in volunteer activities and take learning and other benefits back to their teams while negating risk
Volunteer Champion Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design two/three Volunteer Champion training programmes (of different lengths and for different audiences) to offer as CPD opportunities for staff of all grades. • Establish a network of 100+ Volunteer Champions across NHS Lothian • Provide regular updates and support to Volunteer Champions
Closer integration with Workforce Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-location of the Voluntary Services Manager within the Workforce Development Team • Regular meetings between the strategic leads for Workforce Development and Volunteering to ensure a shared approach to common work streams and avoid duplications. Draw on common links and partnerships to widen access to volunteering. • Work with Workforce Development and Clinical Education colleagues to create joined up pathways for volunteers who are considering a career with NHS Lothian e.g., interview guarantees for those who have completed 6 months volunteering
Volunteering supports positive health outcomes for patients and volunteers	
In patient volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of programme of volunteering opportunities offered for patients at the REH. • Explore the development of volunteering opportunities for patients in other services e.g., CAMHS and AAH, MOE
Widening access through supported volunteering and flexible opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to support potential volunteers to become 'volunteering ready'. • Enable those who have received the support of a volunteer to become a volunteer, especially in the community projects. • Develop supported programmes for volunteers with health barriers to volunteering e.g., micro volunteering, home based volunteering, volunteer bank. • Develop a team of 'Lead Volunteers' to support the local induction and support of volunteers with barriers to volunteering. • Enable volunteers to access staff wellbeing support e.g., counselling service. • Increase the volume and range of optional training which many volunteers report is assisting them out with their volunteering roles. • Increase opportunities for peer interaction for volunteers
Demand led roles with a focus on wellbeing, prevention and patient care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue and expand community volunteering projects focused on wellbeing and prevention e.g., Carer Relief Companions and Befrienders • Explore how NHS Lothian volunteers can support hospital discharge by providing a bridge/link to volunteer services provided by TSIs and Third sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop roles specifically to support the quickening of hospital discharge e.g., Flow Centre Drivers or Pharmacy Runners
The approach to volunteering will support the wider community	
Volunteering will be environmentally friendly and support sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of volunteering processes and practices to ensure they are paper light. • Review Volunteer Expenses Policy and Procedure encourage that environmentally friendly travel. • Ensure the waste from used T-shirts and ID badges is minimised, reusing and recycling where possible. • The Voluntary Support Team provide appropriate support to environment and sustainability initiatives
NHS Volunteering will support activities within the community, beyond our sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of guidance for staff who volunteer or wish to volunteer which acknowledges and supports the benefits of NHS staff volunteering in a wide variety of roles out with the organisation. • The Voluntary Services Team will work with partners to signpost them to appropriate volunteering opportunities out with NHS Lothian • The Voluntary Services Team and NHS Lothian volunteers will have a presence at appropriate community events and support the raising awareness of key topics e.g., NHS Lothian services, the benefits of volunteering. • NHS Lothian will be an exemplar of good practice in volunteering and will share its experiences and learning through multiple methods e.g., national and local events, support to colleagues in other Health Boards, participation in the National Volunteering Group, case studies, media, etc.
Recognise and safely engage with the expertise provided by external organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and further develop positive relationships with Third Sector Partners and local TSIs. • Adopt a demand led approach to identifying partners to support NHS Lothian's work and goals. • Raise awareness of NHS Lothian's responsibility for patient and colleague safety when working with partners • Work with NHS Lothian colleagues to ensure a comprehensive understanding of all partners. • Work with colleagues to create an easy to navigate, yet robust process to ensure all appropriate checks are complete prior to engagement with organisations to ensure compliance with appropriate procedure and governance

Fit For the Future aligns with and supports strategic priorities of other relevant bodies including Scottish Government, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and local TSIs.

With thanks

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Special thanks are given to:

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