

# **Working with Volunteers**

## **A guide for staff**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This guide is designed for those staff wishing to work with volunteers within NHS Lothian.

Volunteering is an important part of Scottish life, some 74% of people are involved informally in a wide variety of activities and almost a quarter of the adult population of Scotland volunteer formally. Volunteering has become an established and well-regarded part of the NHS.

Volunteers work side-by-side with many paid staff, complementing their work and adding value to it. Volunteers can also add that personal touch, which can make the world of a difference to many patients' experience. In some circumstances volunteers with particular medical conditions can provide empathy, understanding and support, sharing from their personal experience and complimenting professional staff in the delivery of their expert medical care. Volunteering is about helping and supporting the NHS to deliver its services. Volunteers can help shape the way the service is developed and provided and this can be achieved through volunteers participating in patient focus and public involvement activities.

NHS Lothian is committed to members of the public being involved in the work of their NHS. There are many opportunities for Volunteers within NHS Lothian and this guide will give a short introduction to this.

You can obtain further information about opportunities and resources from the Voluntary Services Manager (VSM) for your area on the intranet <http://intranet.lothian.scot.nhs.uk/Directory/InvolvingPeople/Volunteering/Pages/For%20Staff.aspx>.

Comments and suggestions are also welcome. For further information please contact: Volunteer.Enquiries@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

## **INDUCTION/TRAINING**

Applicants wishing to volunteer must obtain Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (also known as Disclosure Scotland) and Occupational Health clearance before being considered for formal interview with a Voluntary Services Manager. Successful applicants must then complete NHS Lothian induction and training prior to commencing their activities. This includes:

- Eating, Drinking and Food Hygiene (if relevant)
- Equality and Diversity
- Fire Safety
- Health and Safety
- Healthcare Associated Infection
- Information Governance
- Management of Aggression
- Manual Handling (non patient)
- Public Protection

Volunteers need to be able to carry out their duties in a way that is safe for them and

safe for those they volunteer with. The Health and Safety issues relevant to each area must be explained to volunteers and they should be aware of current policies/practice guidelines designed to keep people safe in your work setting. Additional Health and Safety training required by individual volunteers will vary according to their agreed tasks.

For example additional inputs might be required on:

- Moving and handling
- Lone working
- Supporting someone whose behaviour challenges the service
- Supporting volunteers with additional support needs

Information on boundaries, dress code etc are contained in the handbook for volunteers which can be found on the intranet.

A placement induction will be arranged to allow the volunteer to meet colleagues. A named support person will be identified once a firm offer of a placement has been made.

### **STAFF RESPONSIBILITY – include staff poster?**

#### **How will you welcome volunteers into your area?**

There will be a number of processes involved in establishing any new volunteer in their role and your team. Agree with your VSM who will take responsibility for:

- Developing a role descriptor with your VSM. It is important that it does not replace staff. The descriptor will include the skills the volunteer might need and the training they might need along with the core induction that all volunteers complete. All new roles are discussed with HR and Partnership colleagues.
- Getting the volunteer appointed (recruitment, application and induction processes). The volunteer will undergo the NHS Induction. Specific induction to the role should take place in department/local area
- Ensuring the volunteer knows what is expected of them (planning their role, volunteer agreement, and risk assessments)
- Identifying any training needs or additional personal support required to carry out the required tasks and provide support and supervision. Ensuring the volunteer is reimbursed for out of pocket expenses

### **Support and supervision for volunteers**

The aims of supporting volunteers are to:

- Encourage their development in their volunteering role
- Maintain their involvement in voluntary activity within NHS Lothian
- Enhance the quality of service provision
- Improve the patient experience
- Ensure they are valued as part of the team

Support is continuous and takes many forms. Volunteers are supported when they are given:

- ✓ A warm welcome
- ✓ Information about the team they are working with
- ✓ A named supervisor/member of staff who will be available to provide support/guidance/supervision
- ✓ Regular review of their role – after 4 weeks, after 3 months and annually thereafter.
- ✓ A clearly written description of their role
- ✓ Induction/training which helps them to acquire the knowledge and skills to do the tasks involved and ensures that the volunteer finds the role rewarding
- ✓ Reimbursement for out of pocket expenses

Supervision is an important component of support for a volunteer. It also has a function as an organisational mechanism for monitoring the standard of a volunteer's work. This includes reminding them of updating their learnpro e-learning when prompted to do so. A member of staff who accepts responsibility for supervising a volunteer should be sure that they will have time to do this. The VSMs are available to offer advice and support to staff involved in such work.

### **Handling problems with volunteers**

You must explain to your volunteers that they are volunteering with a statutory agency and we have a legal responsibility to maintain standards of practice, which determines how we deal with problems.

**If a volunteer has a concern about their volunteering or someone else has a concern about a volunteer or the services they provide. Refer to the Volunteering in NHS Lothian Policy for relevant procedures,**

Whilst NHS Lothian recognises the valuable addition volunteers make to the services it provides, it is important to ensure that the quality of help matches the standards required by the NHS.

As a matter of course the member of staff supporting a volunteer will meet regularly with them and be aware of the volunteer's role, providing opportunities for discussion and guidance on good standards of practice. This approach should enable any difficulties arising to be addressed at an early stage.

If you require any further guidance, assistance or clarification of any of the above please contact your VSM.

### **ASSESSING AND REDUCING RISK**

By encouraging volunteering within NHS Lothian, both opportunities and risks are created. Although opportunities and activities should be positive and desirable, they may contain some risk. Therefore any risk assessments for the role will extend to volunteer involvement. You should always encourage volunteers to tell someone if they feel they are being asked to do anything that makes them feel unsafe – for whatever reason, or if they feel that a service user is being put at risk.

## **VOLUNTEER EXPENSES**

Expenses must be agreed by the VSM prior to the volunteers starting. Where it is agreed that a particular project fund will pay the volunteer expenses directly, the process must be explained and appropriate forms provided.

Reimbursement of expenses should be as prompt and as easy as possible for volunteers. Staff need to think how they can make sure this happens. It is important to talk to individual volunteers about how best to pay their expenses.

Items that should be claimed include: -

- Travel to and from place of volunteering (excluding travel beyond the boundaries of NHS Lothian).
- Travel in the course of volunteering
- Refreshment costs where the span of duty has been in excess of four hours

Where it has been agreed that the volunteers' expenses will be paid through the NHS, volunteers must use the standard volunteer expenses claim form and be signed by someone who has worked with the volunteer in the area before sending to the VSM.

### **Volunteers' personal effects**

NHS Lothian cannot be responsible for volunteer's personal effects while they are volunteering. Volunteers should make every reasonable effort to limit the number of valuables brought in and to ensure that their essential personal effects are stored in a safe place e.g. a locked desk or cupboard.

## **VOLUNTEER REQUEST FORMS**

If you wish to have a volunteer please contact one of the VSMs to discuss your volunteering needs or complete a volunteer request form. The VSM may work with staff – if appropriate, with the project or team to draw up a role description from your volunteering request.

We hope you enjoy working with volunteers and find it an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

**PLANNING A VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT FORM**



Name of area .....

**Contact Name in Department:** ..... **Telephone Number:** .....

What will you call this volunteering placement? ... ..

Number of Volunteers Required: ..... Starting Date(s): .....

To whom will the volunteer be accountable? .....

Who will regularly supervise and support the volunteer? .....

Please give details of training and support provided:

.....  
 .....

What are the benefits of this volunteer placement?

.....  
 .....

What do you want the volunteer to do?

.....  
 .....

Where will the volunteer be based? .....

What time commitment do you want from the volunteer?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Mornings							
Afternoons							
Evenings							

What skills, knowledge, qualities or attitudes does the volunteer need to do the tasks?

.....  
 .....

What other requirements do you have?

.....  
 .....

Are your premises suitable for disabled volunteers? Yes  No

Would the volunteer be volunteering on their own? Yes  No

Would the volunteer/s be volunteering as part of a team? Yes  No

Do you have a budget for "out of pocket" expenses? Yes  No

Any further details which you consider relevant? .....  
.....  
.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

**Please return completed forms to your local VSM**