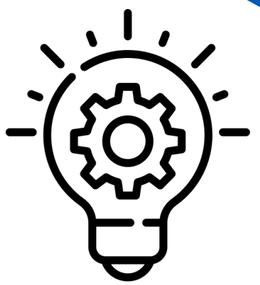
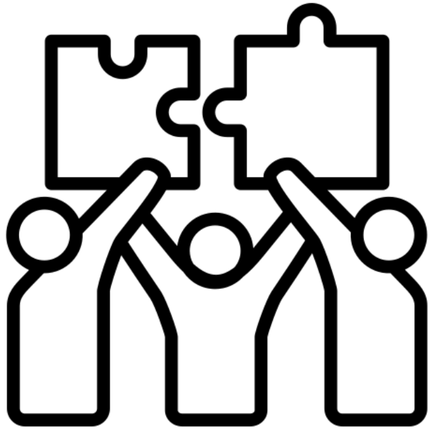
Diversifying volunteering opportunities to widen participation

Volunteering for Health
Learning into action guide







Volunteering for Health

Volunteering for Health is a national programme being delivered by a partnership between NHS Charities Together, NHS England, and CW+ (the official charity of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) to test and build volunteering infrastructure in health and care.

It is funding 15 local partnerships to deliver volunteering infrastructure projects in their geographies over three years. Local partnerships include organisations across:

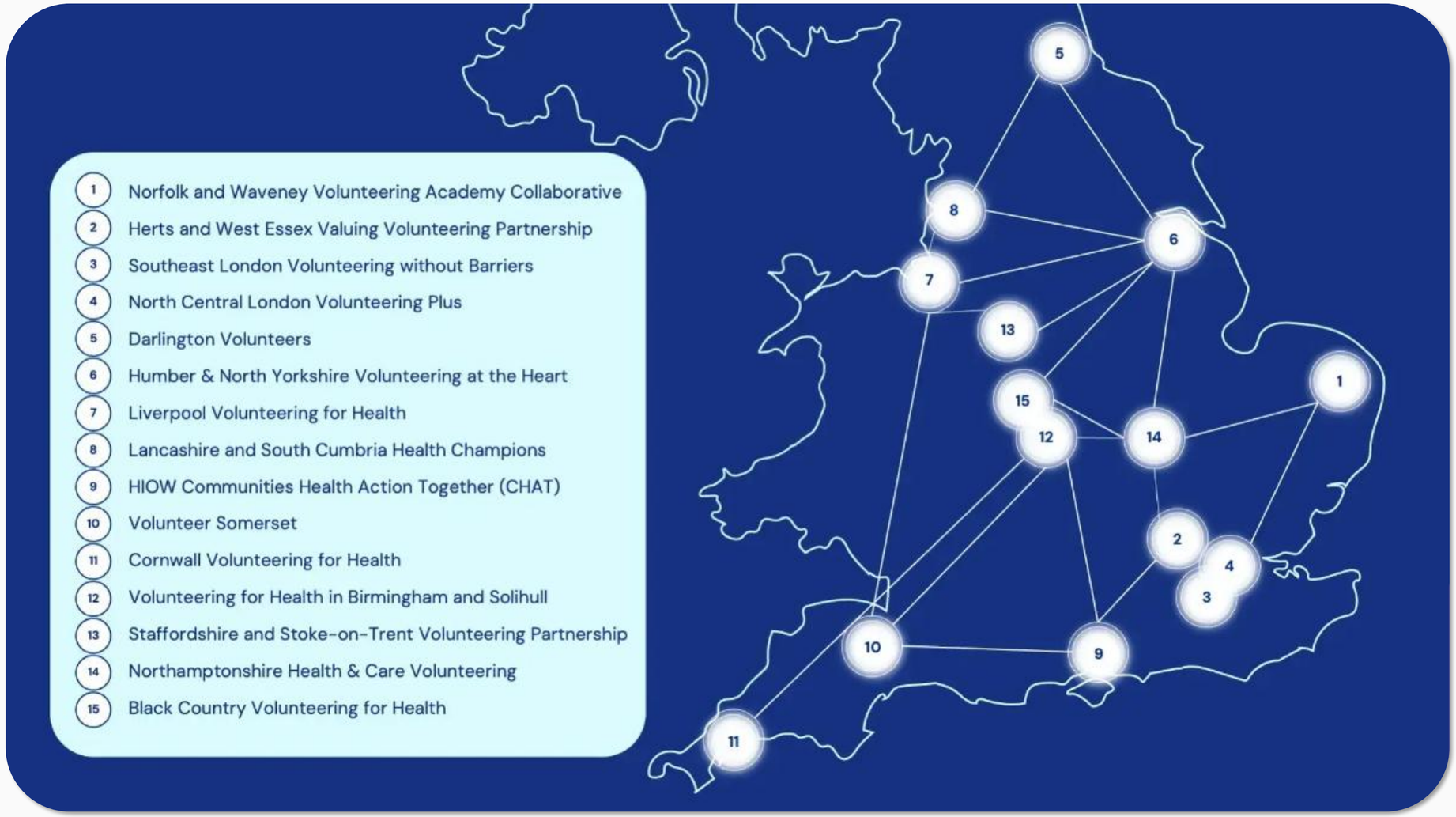
- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)
- NHS trusts
- NHS charities
- The voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector including local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) which support local VCSE organisations to foster partnerships, build capacity and develop volunteering opportunities.

"Volunteers are crucial to the NHS's vision for the future of health and social care. 72,000 volunteers support NHS Trusts alone, while thousands more support healthcare in other parts of the NHS and within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector."

NHS Volunteering webpages, NHS Business Services Authority



Volunteering for Health – 15 local partnerships

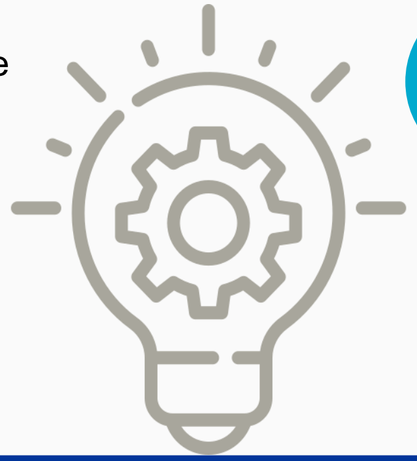


Supporting health and care services through Volunteering for Health

Sharing learning from the programme is vital to help grow and strengthen volunteering in health and care systems. This learning can improve equity of access to services and support better outcomes for everyone.

The theme of this learning into action guide is **Diversifying volunteering opportunities to widen participation**

This guide is one of five covering key areas of focus for the programme, presenting innovative approaches that are being taken by the local partnerships and how they can inform volunteering strategies.



The learning into action guide follows a ‘what’, ‘so what’, ‘now what’ structure:

WHAT? What is the background to diversifying volunteering?

SO WHAT? What are local partnerships doing to diversify volunteering?

NOW WHAT? What actions can health and care system leaders take to help diversify volunteering?

WHAT?

What is the background to diversifying volunteering?

The Department of Health and Social Care's 10 Year Health Plan identifies NHS organisations as 'anchor institutions', with a role in developing a sustainable supply of locally recruited staff, supporting the health of communities and reducing inequalities.

NHS organisations can add social value by recruiting more people from their local communities to both paid and volunteer roles. A diverse volunteer workforce that includes people from local communities can enhance patients' engagement with health and care services.

"Those who are marginalised in society benefit disproportionately from volunteering… the improved social connectivity and social capital derived from volunteering is especially beneficial for those who are subject to exclusion and disadvantage."

Adding Value Through Volunteering in NHS Trusts, The Kings Fund

Volunteering for Health aims to diversify the volunteer base and make volunteering more inclusive to a wider range of communities. This involves ensuring that a range of community voices and people with lived experience inform how volunteering roles and infrastructure are designed and delivered. This includes making roles more accessible to people from diverse backgrounds, addressing structural barriers to becoming a volunteer and recognising the value of a wider range of skills and experiences to volunteering opportunities.



SO WHAT?

What are local partnerships doing to diversify volunteering?

Working with local partners to understand barriers to volunteering

In Herts and West Essex partnership there has been a focus on making volunteering more accessible for young people.

The partnership has hosted workshops with VCSE partners and young people to discuss barriers to volunteering and potential solutions. All feedback has been systematically collected and analysed.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership has found that engaging with community organisations to understand barriers to volunteering has helped them to understand what they need to do to make volunteer roles more accessible to a wider range of people.
Further information here.

Mapping demographic data of volunteers

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight partnership is focusing on improving its understanding of current volunteer demographics.

The partnership is reviewing demographic data on their current volunteers to understand where they have gaps and where they should target volunteer opportunities.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership plans to use the review to develop a diverse volunteering programme that offers volunteering opportunities that are inclusive and reflective of the communities its local organisations serve.
Further information here.

Widening engagement through targeted outreach

Birmingham and Solihull partnership has developed projects with the aim of recruiting younger people as volunteers, such as opportunities supporting community research projects.

Communication with local schools and community networks has been key to engaging younger people in volunteering. Targeting recruitment at young people by offering micro-volunteering roles has been beneficial in removing a key barrier for young people volunteering, enabling access to shorter, more flexible opportunities.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership has found that collaborating with organisations that work with young people has allowed them to develop their volunteering offer and recruit more young people into health and care roles.
Further information here.

NOW WHAT?

Actions for health and care system leaders

The local partnerships have shared emerging learning to how their programmes are supporting a more diverse volunteer workforce.

Based on this learning, it is recommended that leaders across health, local government and VCSE organisations consider the following actions to ensure health and care systems make best use of the activities of the partnerships.





Action 1:
ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should collect and review data on the demographics of existing volunteers to understand which communities are underrepresented



Action 2:
ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should co-design volunteer roles with local communities



Action 3:
Organisations that involve volunteers in health and care roles should work together to develop and adopt shared local principles for volunteer management

NOW WHAT?

Action 1: ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should collect and review data on demographics of existing volunteers to understand which communities are underrepresented

Understanding which communities are underrepresented in volunteering roles enables targeted efforts to widen participation.

ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should **collect and review demographic data on existing volunteers and identify opportunities to increase diversity** in volunteering programmes. This intelligence can be used to engage LIOs to **explore opportunities for increasing engagement in volunteering roles** (see Action 2).



NHS trusts report on the number and demographics of NHS volunteers through workforce data returns. The NHS Volunteering Taskforce report recommended widening data collection to improve understanding of volunteer diversity across system partners. NHS trusts, local authorities and LIOs should build on the data already reported and agree a localised and proportionate approach to the collection and review of demographic data.

Where is this happening now?

Norfolk and Waveney

Norfolk and Waveney partnership has reviewed the demographics of its current volunteering workforce to identify underrepresented groups, with the aim of widening access to volunteering. The approach has helped the partnership to identify priority cohorts to target through recruitment and funding of community volunteering projects.
Further information here.

Questions to test progress against Action 1:

- Does the system understand which of its local communities are underrepresented in volunteering roles?
- Does the system have relationships with LIOs to explore opportunities for volunteering with VCSE organisations and local communities? Do other partners need to be involved to facilitate engagement, for example, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), schools and colleges?

NOW WHAT?

Action 2: ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should co-design volunteer roles with local communities

Working directly with local communities can identify potential opportunities for volunteer roles and start to address barriers to volunteering.

ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should build on the relationships developed in Action 1 and work with LIOs and other relevant partners to **co-design roles with communities underrepresented in volunteering programmes**.



Take time to understand motivations for volunteering, as well as barriers, to create engaging and appropriate roles that people want to volunteer for. Pilot the roles before recruiting to them more widely.



Consider the best routes for recruitment. Build on the relationships developed through the co-design process to facilitate recruitment to the volunteer roles.

Where is this happening now?

Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire partnership engaged stakeholders from across the VCSE sector to understand barriers to volunteering and how it could enhance volunteer diversity.

In response, it has funded test and learn pilots in collaboration with local community organisations to develop volunteering models and roles which are more accessible and attractive to wider group of people.

Further information here.



Questions to test progress against Action 2:

- Has the system included local communities and system partners in the design of volunteer roles?
- Are there plans to pilot the volunteer roles with volunteers and system partners?

NOW WHAT?

Action 3: Organisations that involve volunteers in health and care roles should work together to develop and adopt shared local principles for volunteer management

People that give their time to health and care organisations should be well supported to have a good volunteering experience.

NHS organisations, local authorities and LIOs should work together to **develop shared local principles for volunteer recruitment, retention and development** and ensure these are adopted by people who manage volunteers.



Volunteer management processes will vary between organisations due to the size or focus of the organisation and the tasks required by the volunteering role. Shared principles allow for variation within a framework of best practice, making volunteer management processes proportionate to the volunteering role and adaptable to meet the needs of diverse communities, addressing barriers to volunteering.



The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) provides best practice guidance on involving volunteers and Investing in Volunteers offers a framework to assess and improve volunteer management practice.

Where is this happening now?

North Central London

North Central London partnership has developed standards and resources for volunteer management by collating best practice from across its organisations. This includes learning around: providing equitable access to roles; induction processes; and appropriate training. The partnership has shared these resources through its website and volunteering networks to help volunteer managers improve accessibility and support for diverse cohorts of volunteers. Further information here.



Questions to test progress against Action 3:

- Are there shared principles in place for volunteer management across health and care organisations within the system?
- Are people involving volunteers trained and supported to co-design more inclusive volunteer roles with diverse communities?

NOW WHAT?

For more information

This is one of a series of five learning into action guides.

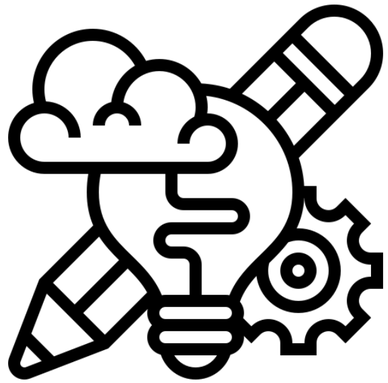
All the guides in this series provide specific examples of how volunteering can support system ambitions. System leaders should consider the actions across all of the guides in support of their volunteering strategies.

- Embedding volunteering within neighbourhood health
- Developing the health and care workforce through volunteering
- Training and development for people who manage volunteers
- Developing volunteer passporting across partners
- **Diversifying volunteering opportunities to widen participation**.

The full series of learning into action guides is available to access on the Volunteering for Health website.



Contact us



https://www.cwplus.org.uk/volunteering-for-health/

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Volunteering for Health Programme group



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This guide was prepared by The Strategy Unit.

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