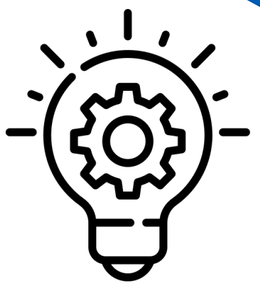
Developing the health and care workforce through volunteering

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:

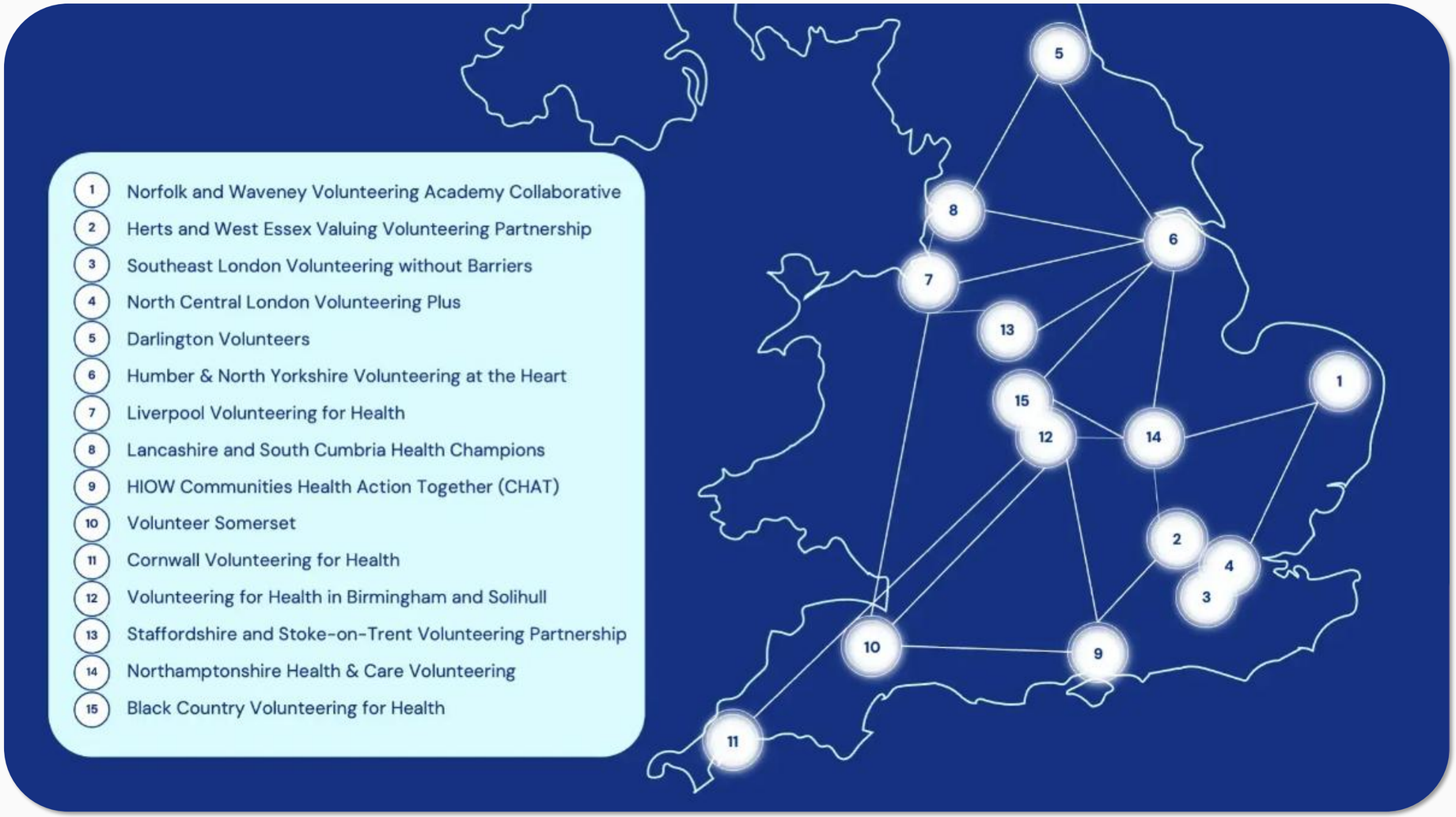
- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)
- NHS trusts
- NHS charities
- The voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector including local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) which support local VCSE organisations to foster partnerships, build capacity and develop volunteering opportunities.

"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

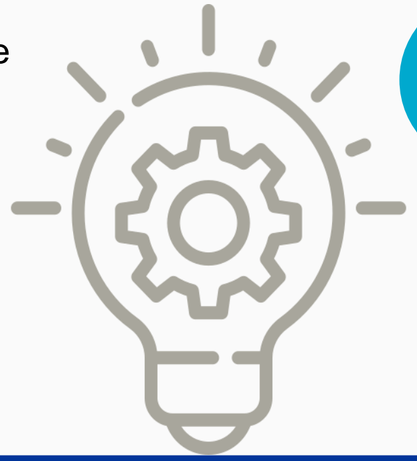


Supporting health and care services through Volunteering for Health

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 **Developing the health and care workforce through volunteering**

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 role of volunteering in developing the health and care workforce?

SO WHAT? What are local partnerships doing to develop the healthcare workforce through volunteering?

NOW WHAT? What actions can health and care system leaders take to make best use of existing work around volunteering to support wider system priorities?

WHAT?

What is the role of volunteering in developing the health and care workforce?

The NHS Volunteering Taskforce Report highlights the importance of volunteers and their support for the wider NHS workforce.

Volunteering is also increasingly being recognised as a route into NHS employment as volunteers gain useful skills and experience in the health and care sector, making them good candidates for NHS roles.

"Volunteers should be part of workforce planning, but there should be clear boundaries between volunteer and paid roles – volunteers enhance the work of staff, they don't replace them"

NHS Volunteering Taskforce Report

The Volunteering for Health programme aims to support the development of the health and care workforce by building volunteering infrastructure. Approaches taken by local partnerships include: tailored pathways for volunteers to develop skills and experience in health and care roles; targeted projects with young people interested in a health and care career; and collaboration between NHS and VCSE organisations to advertise health and care roles across a system.



SO WHAT?

What are local partnerships doing to develop the health and care workforce through volunteering?

Defining what volunteers can bring to the health and care workforce

In North Central London partnership, VCSE organisations are working with the ICB and NHS trusts and charities to define the role of volunteers in the wider health and care workforce.

An LIO has worked with system partners to develop a website and digital brochure to support organisations to embed volunteering within their workforce strategies. NHS stakeholders can access: strategic support to explore how volunteering can strengthen work on system priorities; advice on building volunteering into workforce plans; and tools to develop volunteering programmes.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership expects that strategic and operational support will build collaboration between VCSE and NHS organisations and develop volunteering infrastructure across the system. Further information here.

Supporting health and care staff through volunteering roles

In Hampshire and Isle of Wight partnership, a pilot project has embedded volunteers in a hospital ward to support staff to improve patients' experience of care. Volunteers spend time with patients and their families to discuss personal preferences and priorities for their care and communicate this information to ward staff.

Volunteers record information on 'What Matters to Me' boards which are visible at the patient's bedside. Staff reported that the volunteers had brought additional resource to the ward team and enabled higher quality conversations with patients about their care. The pilot is being expanded to other wards within the hospital.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership has found that volunteers are improving patient experience of care and supporting ward staff to offer more personalised care to patients. Further information here.

Developing pathways to employment for volunteers

South East London partnership is developing structured volunteering pathways specifically designed for people interested in working in health and care. Volunteers are offered accredited training for their roles and supported to develop relevant skills and experience for a future career in health and care.

The programme is being run in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local schools and colleges. It involves hosting volunteering open days to promote opportunities and supporting volunteers to complete relevant qualifications as necessary. The programme will develop further as more career paths are identified to meet local need.

Benefits of the approach

The partnership anticipates that pathways focused on career development will offer tailored support for volunteers and develop the local health and care workforce. Further information here.

NOW WHAT?

Actions for health and care system leaders

The local partnerships have shared emerging learning on how their programmes are developing the health and care workforce through volunteering.

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 should ensure a volunteering strategy is included within their workforce portfolio

Action 2:
ICBs should work with system partners to widely promote health and care volunteering opportunities

Action 3:
ICBs should support system partners to develop pathways to employment for people who volunteer in health and care roles

NOW WHAT?

Action 1: ICBs should ensure a volunteering strategy is included within their workforce portfolio

Volunteers help systems to meet workforce challenges and enhance services for patients, but this potential is not being consistently realised.

ICBs need to **understand how volunteer roles and the development of volunteering infrastructure** can enhance the system's health and care workforce and **link volunteering with other system priorities**, such as neighbourhood health.



Some ICBs do not have leads for volunteering within their place and provider teams, hampering the coordinated approach necessary to support workforce development.



Some organisations are developing workforce programmes in silos and not as part of a joined-up approach.

Where is this happening now?

Humber and North Yorkshire

The ICB has appointed a senior leader to strategically align volunteer involvement across the system. Strategic alignment with workforce is supported by an innovative workforce transformation programme.
This has informed the design of neighbourhood health services, embedding volunteering into work on priorities across the system.
Further information here.



Questions to test progress against Action 1:

- Has the ICB developed a volunteering strategy – within a wider workforce strategy – and is this integrated with other system priorities which require building workforce capacity?
- Is enhancing volunteering infrastructure included as part of the system workforce strategy?

NOW WHAT?

Action 2: ICBs should work with system partners to widely promote health and care volunteering opportunities

Health and care volunteering opportunities are available across a wide range of organisations, not just in the NHS.

ICBs should view the health and care **workforce as system-wide and cross-sector.** People interested in volunteering in health and care should have **easy access to the range of roles available** to them. Roles can be promoted on a range of media, including the national NHS volunteering platform, local brokerage platforms and through LIOs.

Local partnerships have found that NHS organisations often have a surplus of volunteer applicants, while VCSE organisations may find it more challenging to fill health and care roles.

Volunteers give their time for a wide range of reasons and cannot simply be 'allocated' to a role to meet a workforce need. However, raising the profile of volunteering opportunities outside of the NHS can make them more attractive to people who want to volunteer.

Where is this happening now?

Birmingham and Solihull

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council has developed a digital brokerage platform that signposts people to health and care volunteering opportunities across NHS and VCSE organisations in one place. The platform advertises various volunteering opportunities, providing people with a 'one stop shop' for health and care volunteering and helping to address workforce priorities across the system.
Further information here.

Questions to test progress against Action 2:

- Are system partners committed to sharing volunteer capacity? Have barriers to achieving this been identified and addressed?
- Is the system using a shared platform to promote its health and care volunteering roles?

NOW WHAT?

Action 3: ICBs should support system partners to develop pathways to employment for people who volunteer in health and care roles

Some volunteers give their time to develop skills and experience for a future health and care career.

System leads should **include pathways to employment in volunteering and workforce strategies** to support the development of the future health and care workforce. ICBs should work with system partners to **design roles that support health and care volunteers to gain relevant skills and experience for future careers**.

Pathways to employment should be developed within a wider volunteering offer whilst recognising that there are various reasons that people volunteer in health and care; not all volunteers are seeking a career.

Roles that offer pathways to employment should be co-designed with volunteers and system partners to ensure they build-in training and development that is valuable to both individuals and health and care organisations.

Where is this happening now?

Herts and West Essex

Herts and West Essex partnership has implemented a structured pathway to employment for volunteers at one of their acute trusts. It focuses on department-specific volunteer recruitment and training and ongoing monitoring and support for volunteers within their role. The pathway has successfully resulted in volunteers in several clinical departments moving into paid roles. Further information here.

Questions to test progress against Action 3:

- Does the system have a clear view of where capacity is required in its future health and care workforce? Have opportunities to build this capacity through pathways to employment for volunteers been considered?
- Have volunteer roles been co-designed with volunteers and system partners, to ensure they respond to the various motivations for applying for a role in health and care?

NOW WHAT?

For more information

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

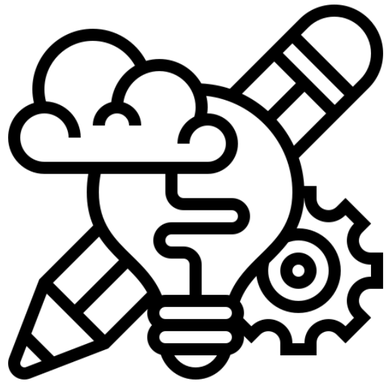
All the guides in this series provide specific examples of how volunteering can support system ambitions. System leaders should consider the actions across all of the guides when developing their volunteering strategies.

- 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



Acknowledgements

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This guide was prepared by The Strategy Unit.

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