

Involving Volunteers

- a guide for CNTW staff



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Background

The Voluntary Services Department was established in 1989 and is responsible for promoting and managing voluntary involvement across the Trust.

Volunteers are recruited from a diverse range of backgrounds and bring with them skills, time, ingenuity and enthusiasm to enhance the experience of our patients and their carers.

Our patients are at the forefront of everything we do. Volunteers can have a positive impact on the patient's experience, we ask our volunteers to be mindful of this and use the opportunity pro-actively by being reliable and consistent with their values and attitude.

Volunteer contribution is complementary to the work of our staff. **Volunteers must not undertake a role which should be financed, used as job substitution (vacant posts or covering staff absence) or to combat staff shortages due to financial pressures.**

The Voluntary Services team

The Voluntary Services Department is based at St. Nicholas Hospital and provides a Trust-wide service.

The department currently consists of four staff:

- Wendy M Spratt, Voluntary Services Manager
- Rebecca Goodburn, Voluntary Services Co-ordinator
- Billy Anderson, Voluntary Services Co-ordinator
- Joanne Hanlon, Voluntary Services Administrator

and is line managed by David Muir, Group Director.

Involving volunteers - commonly asked questions



How can volunteers benefit the service?

Volunteers bring a diverse range of talents, ingenuity and experience to provide valuable care and support by complementing the work of paid staff. Volunteers can help to personalise services, gather feedback, offer a fresh perspective, bring new ideas and skills, assist with research projects or simply spend time with a patient in a social activity without the competing demands of paid staff.



What type of roles do volunteers undertake?

All roles at Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust are developed to meet the needs of patients. Examples include:

- **Social and therapeutic support**
On a ward or department, e.g. listening and chatting to patients, participating in board games, arts and crafts, quizzes etc. and in some cases offering support by having the opportunity to share lived experience where appropriate.
- **Providing a warm welcome**
Meeting, greeting and sign-posting patients, carers and visitors attending chapel services, library and knowledge centres and wards and departments within the Trust.

- **Providing practical assistance**
Volunteers offer assistance in the St Nicholas Hospital shop.
- **Gardening / Woodwork**
Volunteers assist and encourage patient participation with gardening and woodwork initiatives as part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service at Hopewood Park and the Woodwork Team at Northgate.
- **Gathering feedback**
Gathering feedback through assisting patients / carers with the completion of Points of You, our Trust-wide questionnaire, helping to shape and develop services through patient and carer involvement.
- **Community Befriending**
Provide social and emotional support in the community through Community Befriending to those people who have become socially isolated as a result of their mental health problem or learning disability.

? **Are there restrictions on what a volunteer can do?**

- Volunteers should not undertake the same role as paid staff and there needs to be a clear difference in their roles and responsibilities. Volunteers enhance and do not replace paid roles.
- Volunteers should NOT be used as job substitution or to combat staff shortages.
- Volunteers should NOT be asked to undertake additional roles during times of industrial action.
- Volunteers are NOT permitted to undertake clinical duties, i.e. patient observations, feeding patients or domestic and housekeeping duties.
- Volunteers will NOT be granted access to manual and computerised systems (including Rio).

? **Who is responsible for the day-to-day management of volunteers?**

This will vary between wards and departments and a member of staff within each department will be identified as a 'Project Lead' for the volunteer who has responsibility for management of the volunteer role. The Project Lead may delegate to other staff when appropriate e.g. a Ward Manager may be the Project Lead but request the Activities Co-ordinator to offer day to day management of volunteer involvement. The Voluntary Services Co-ordinator will arrange periodical support meetings with volunteers and appropriate staff to monitor progress.

? **Do volunteers have a Role Description?**

All volunteers are issued with a Role Description that has been devised and agreed with the Project Lead and Voluntary Services Manager. The Role Description ensures there is a clear outline of accountability, expectations and required tasks. Volunteers should not undertake activities outside the boundaries of their role as this could impede patient care, pose risks and may not be covered by insurance.

Role Descriptions detail:

- Location of the voluntary role
- Accountability
- Time and duration

- Role and tasks of the volunteer
- Skills, knowledge and experience required
- A commitment to understand and adhere to Trust Values
- Key working relationships



Is it safe to involve volunteers?

The following steps are undertaken to minimise the risk:

- Volunteer screening includes values-based references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. DBS checks are renewed every three years.
- Risk assessments are undertaken with Project Leads for volunteer roles and updated as and when necessary, i.e. when new tasks are identified and introduced reflecting the agreed changes to the volunteer role.
- Project Leads to ensure that any voluntary activity within their service is considered and incorporated where necessary through various assessments carried out by healthcare professionals to ensure volunteering remains safe and effective.
- Project Leads or a designated member of the ward / department team to complete a volunteer induction checklist (issued by the Voluntary Services Department) with the volunteer on their first day of volunteering and return to the Voluntary Services Department for inclusion in the volunteers personal file and for volunteer database to be updated accordingly.
- CNTW photographic volunteer ID badges identify individuals as volunteers, their role and location (ID badge has an expiry date of one year).
- Training sessions (including statutory and mandatory training) are delivered by Voluntary Services staff and help to assess an individual's understanding and attitude to Trust Values and motives for volunteering with CNTW.
- Volunteers sign a Code of Conduct at Volunteer Induction Training which is held on their personal file with the Voluntary Services Department and a further copy is retained by the volunteer for their records.
- Volunteers may only participate in agreed roles at agreed times in agreed wards and departments as outlined in their Volunteer Role Description.
- Support and supervision monitors the volunteers' compliance to boundaries, can help to determine attitudes and values and offers the opportunity to share ideas, good practice, troubleshoot problems and offer thanks and appreciation.



What is the cost of a volunteer?

While volunteers offer their time freely they are not a free resource. There are some costs to involving volunteers, including agreed travel costs (predominantly paid centrally by the Voluntary Services Department). It is important that staff invest appropriate time with each volunteer to both supervise and support volunteers.



Are volunteers reliable?

Most volunteers are very reliable if the role they are undertaking is purposeful and they are properly supported and appreciated. As with paid staff, domestic issues, holidays or study pressures can impact on availability or they may move on to paid employment.

There can be times when an individual's poor health or confidence impacts on their reliability and they should be supported through this in collaboration with Voluntary Services staff.

Voluntary Services staff encourage our volunteers to take short breaks from time to time just as staff do. We ask that volunteers make a 6 month commitment and we find that most volunteers stay much longer.

? **How do I manage a volunteer?**

All volunteers are different and the amount of time that you will need to spend supporting someone will depend upon the role and capabilities of the volunteer. Initially you may need to invest time to induct, supervise and possibly debrief a volunteer, but as they become more confident and competent in their roles you should reap the benefits of their involvement and less management time may be required. Where possible, some new volunteers may be buddied with experienced and competent volunteers who can offer guidance and ease some of the burden on management time.

? **Are volunteers covered by employment law?**

Volunteers are not 'employed' and have a non-contractual relationship with the Trust. Therefore volunteers are not covered by employment law. It is essential that terminology such as 'roles' and 'tasks' are used rather than 'job' or 'work' in documents and in general conversations with volunteers to avoid terms that would imply employment rather than volunteering.

Volunteers are covered by Health and Safety legislation and the Data Protection Act. There are a range of legal implications around payment and treatment of volunteers and advice can be sought from the Voluntary Services Department if there is any uncertainty.

? **What support can I expect from the Voluntary Services Department?**

The Voluntary Services Department are responsible for the safe and effective recruitment, training and placement of volunteers and organise reimbursement of agreed travel expenses. The Voluntary Services Department will continue to work collaboratively with the Project Lead to establish voluntary projects and achieve the successful integration and management of volunteers including support group sessions. Voluntary Services staff can offer advice, assistance or mediation should difficulties arise. Voluntary Services may also work with staff to establish mechanisms to evaluate the impact of volunteering with the patient group.

Volunteer recruitment and training

How are volunteers recruited?

Potential volunteer contacts the Voluntary Services Department by email: volunteer@cntw.nhs.uk or telephone: 0191 246 7287 (answerphone)

A Volunteer Registration Form is sent to be completed and returned to the Voluntary Services Department

Potential volunteer attends a 1-to-1 interview with Voluntary Services Co-ordinator virtually via *Teams / Zoom* or in a Covid secure workplace

Once a role is identified, the prospective volunteer is invited to Volunteer Induction Training remotely and receives a Volunteer Handbook and Code of Conduct (also invited to any additional project training required).

When a vacancy arises in their chosen role the potential volunteer will be invited to complete an online Disclosure and Barring Service check (completed remotely)

...wait for receipt of two satisfactory value-based references and satisfactory DBS check...have a photograph taken for CNTW volunteer ID badge...

Meeting arranged for volunteer to meet with Project Lead accompanied by Voluntary Services Co-ordinator who will issue a CNTW volunteer ID badge and volunteer uniform

Start date agreed - welcome letter and Volunteer Role Description sent to new volunteer

Voluntary Services Co-ordinator to introduce new volunteer to ward / department / Befriender on first day - start volunteering!

Volunteer training

All volunteers are required to attend Volunteer Induction Training prior to volunteering. This includes:

- Welcome to volunteering
- CNTW Trust Values
- COVID-19 - Trust guidance PPE / social distancing etc
- Maintaining boundaries in volunteer role
- Information governance / data security awareness
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)
- Health and safety
- Moving and handling (not including patient handling)
- Equality, diversity and human rights
- Safeguarding adults (and safeguarding children if volunteering within CYPs Service)
- Support and supervision
- How to get the best out of your volunteering

We understand that some volunteers may feel apprehensive or nervous about attending training and we aim to keep the sessions as relaxed and informal as possible. Tailored training can be delivered where appropriate but only when Voluntary Services have the capacity to facilitate this.

A Volunteer Handbook is forwarded electronically where possible, to the volunteer after successfully attending the Induction Training session containing relevant Trust information and good practice guidance.

A Code of Conduct is explained, issued and signed by the volunteer at Induction Training. A copy of the signed Code of Conduct is held on the volunteer's individual file and is held securely within the Voluntary Services Department.

Additional training

The Voluntary Services Department organises further training as follows:

- Fire safety and prevention awareness.
- Control of infection (where appropriate).
- If volunteers have contact with minors in their role they will complete safeguarding children training prior to volunteering.
- Volunteers involved with food handling will be required to attend food hygiene training. This is arranged by the Voluntary Services Department and our Catering Manager within Facilities.
- Volunteers have the option to attend in-house Dementia Friends Awareness sessions. This training is required for some volunteers who are wishing to volunteer within older people's services but is open to all volunteers who would benefit from this training.
- Volunteers are not permitted to access all training and Project Leads should check with Voluntary Services should further in-house Trust training be considered.

Training updates in some statutory areas will be offered annually or every three years in line with the CNTW Volunteer Involvement Policy.

Support and recognition

It is essential that all volunteers receive adequate support to enable them to undertake their role safely and effectively, to ensure they are meeting the needs of the patients and to receive recognition for their time, energy and commitment.

- Ongoing regular support is provided to all volunteers by the Voluntary Services Co-ordinators and / or Voluntary Services Manager and Project Leads.
- Volunteer projects may operate support group meetings between peers within their project, which enables volunteers to celebrate successes together in a constructive and relaxed atmosphere and raise issues or troubleshoot difficulties.
- Volunteers receive a monthly newsletter from the team to keep them up to date with Trust news.
- Recognition events are held periodically to celebrate the contribution of volunteers, as well as articles on wellbeing and celebrating peer successes.

- The profile and recognition of volunteers is raised during National Volunteers' Week which takes place 1st - 7th June each year.
- There is a Positive Impact / volunteer category in the Trust annual Staff Excellence Awards where volunteers can be nominated.

Volunteer expenses

Volunteers are entitled to agreed out of pocket expenses in line with the Volunteer Expense Policy. This is approved and facilitated by the Voluntary Services Department.

I have identified a role for volunteers in my ward / department, what do I do?

Contact the Voluntary Services Manager to discuss the viability of the role you have in mind and to have further discussions on how to proceed with volunteer involvement.

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