



Youth Volunteering Summer Programme 2023 Impact Report



Foreword - Caitlin Nisbet, Voluntary Services Manager (Youth Volunteering)



Watching volunteers push themselves out of their comfort zones, surprise themselves with their capabilities and develop their self-confidence over the 4-week programme has been a real privilege!

I firmly believe in the power of volunteering and the potential that the right opportunity has to change the trajectory of someone's life. A varied and supportive volunteering placement in one of our NHS sites, enriched by the one-to-one support provided by our experienced volunteers and staff, has given the young people involved a glimpse into the wealth of opportunities available to them and within their reach. This programme has allowed these individuals to see that they are capable, multi-faceted young people who can make connections with people from all walks of life, be responsible and take initiative. They can be confident in their abilities and in their communications, reliable and are extremely valuable to their local communities. They have witnessed first-hand what a person-centred approach looks like and have been able to contribute towards patient care and recovery by providing thoughtful and attentive conversation, stimulation through taking part in activities, a warm welcome and directions to appointments, a well-timed cup of tea or coffee or even just some quiet company. It's been a joy to watch this cohort of young people flourish and learn more about themselves. Whether they remain in health care as some have intended or take a different path I wish them every success!



Overview of Delivery

The Youth (16-25) Volunteering Summer Programme has been developed and delivered by NHS Lothian's Voluntary Services Team in response to an identified need to provide inclusive taster sessions and to showcase to young people who may not ordinarily volunteer what it's like to be involved within the NHS.

This year's programme has seen recruitment undertaken via a range of methods including social media promotion, referrals from our core applicants who were better suited to this programme, and through extensive networking with a variety of external partners (see page 14). Four selection days were successfully held from the end of May through to the end of June. These selection days were designed to be informal, inclusive and NHS values-based and included ice breaker tasks, getting to know you activities and a 1:1 chat with a staff member. Voluntary Services staff used these sessions to identify the candidates that really displayed NHS Lothian's values.

As the aim of this programme was to provide opportunities to young people with barriers who wouldn't ordinarily think to volunteer, staff also used these days to identify young people who would get the most out of this type of opportunity. Other young people who were unsuccessful in this instance were redirected to our core programme where appropriate or to their local Volunteer Centre for a better suited opportunity.



A welcome day was held for successful applicants at the Western General Hospital on 17 July where the new volunteers were inducted into NHS Lothian, given full training by five Voluntary Services staff members and issued necessary paperwork, ID badges and uniform. The Welcome Day was also attended by the

Overview of Delivery

Patient Experience Team who delivered training on how to carry out Patient Experience Surveys with patients in wards. The volunteering programme then commenced from 18 July and ran until 11 August when a closing day was held. All volunteers were scheduled at least 8 volunteering days and were provided with a bespoke volunteering timetable, created by the Voluntary Services Manager on site with the intention of giving each volunteer a real insight into the goings-on within the hospital. Volunteering was carried out across a wide range of areas and wards across hospitals, including (but not limited to) renal wards, medicine of the elderly, maternity, stroke, orthopaedics, general medicine, dialysis and oncology. As well as volunteering as ward helpers, volunteers also spent time as welcome guides, gardening volunteers, meaningful activity volunteers, clothing store volunteers, patient experience volunteers and therapist volunteers.



By the end of the programme, 150 days' worth of volunteering (around 750 hours) were completed. Volunteers gathered 91 Patient Experience survey responses through supportive conversations with patients and family members across the sites, gaining information on the care and support they received from NHS Lothian. The responses gathered by volunteers will feed into how we improve our services and care, putting patients points of view at the centre of it all.

Our Summer Programme Volunteers

We received 75 applications and from this invited 43 applicants to our selection days. From 38 selection day attendees we recruited 24 volunteers. Out of the 24 volunteers recruited, 23 of them carried out their volunteering placements, with 19 completing volunteering until the end.

Widening access to NHS Lothian Volunteering was a priority and as such we were keen to encourage applications from young people from all walks of life who may face barriers in their next steps. Of the 24 applicants offered a place on the programme:

2 were Ukrainian refugees

1 was the dependent of a refugee

9 disclosed a mental health condition

9 disclosed a learning difficulty, learning disability or long-term health condition

6 stated their health was fair or bad

4 described themselves as care-experienced

4 described themselves as carers

8 were living in an area ranked in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as 1 and 2 (within the top 10% and 20% most deprived areas in Scotland).



Programme Impact

The volunteers were asked to complete a pre and post-evaluation survey on the welcome day and then once the programme had reached completion in order to measure the impact the programme had made.

Of the volunteers that completed the post-evaluation survey:

86% reported an increase in confidence

The largest increases were seen when asking how the volunteers felt about meeting new people (of the volunteers that completed the survey, 92% reported an increase) and how they felt attending new places (75% reported an increase)

50% reported an improvement in communication skills

The largest increases were seen when asked how good the volunteers were at understanding and following instructions (of the volunteers that completed the survey, 43% reported an increase)

43% felt they had improved their self-management skills

43% were feeling better prepared for the future

“I have learned that sometimes you need to put yourself out of your comfort zone and talk to strangers. It helps improve your resilience to talk to new people. If I could go back in time to the welcome day I would tell myself that I can do anything that I want to do as long as I try.”



When the volunteers were asked what went well with the Summer Programme, the four main areas that were identified were experiences with staff/existing volunteers, the experience of being within a hospital, personal development/getting to try new things and also meeting new people.

It gives us opportunities to branch out our options

Seeing behind the scenes of the hospital

I loved being able to work on an actual ward

Experienced and learned many different things

Gaining an insight into hospital care

The staff are lovely and keen to help and I really enjoyed my time with my experienced volunteers. I have learned a lot through them

Meeting patients and having the opportunity to spend time with them

I enjoyed helping with teas and coffees and interacting with patients

Very lovely and welcoming staff made an open and safe space

The diversity going round different wards and doing different jobs

Good length for summer programme

It helped us learn about ourselves

Staff and volunteers - they were so good and nice to me

It was an emotional feeling when I got to meet the therapist and see how he contributes to the patients [experience] on a ward

It gives us the confidence for future work

It was really interesting I met so many new people

Like to feel part of the team

I loved how all the members staff would help if you needed it

The staff were really nice, helpful and always checked up on us

I enjoyed everything as for someone who would like to study nursing, it was great to experience behind the scenes of what a day is like and what a volunteer can do

Future Improvements and Looking Ahead to 2024

Some constructive suggestions were also gathered in the feedback session revolving around programme length, types of activities undertaken and organisation of elements of the programme pertaining to communication with wards and the volunteer briefing. These suggestions will be helpful in future planning sessions for the programme, scheduled to occur in Mid-October.

There is ongoing discussion about the structure and dates of the programme, whether it should continue to run between mid-July and mid-August or if it should be aligned with other dates to allow for the holidays of experienced volunteers and staff. We are also considering whether we should stagger the involvement of the sites in order to alleviate general pressure on Voluntary Services staff during the programme period. The feedback from Summer Volunteers was that in fact they would have liked more hours and for a longer programme duration. This is something we will be mindful of so not to reduce the programme from its current offering.

The Summer Programme has had previous iterations however this year was run under the instruction of the newly appointed Youth Volunteering Services Manager (YVSM) and the new Head of Voluntary Services, with this being their first experience of the programme. With the YVSM post being filled in January, time was required to develop an understanding of NHS processes and the sites and programmes in place, as well as time to build relationships with colleagues and external partners. As such organisation of the programme and volunteer recruitment took longer than is expected for future versions of the programme. It's expected that preparations for the programme next year will start earlier in January, allowing for longer lead in times for recruitment and coordination of the various departments, sites and staff members involved.

Next steps for volunteers

Since completing the programme, six of the Summer Volunteers have signed up to NHS Lothian's Modern Apprenticeships mailing list, with two having submitted applications to the September intake and the other four intending to apply to a future intake of the programme.

Five of the volunteers have expressed an interest in our supported volunteering offering and are currently exploring their options with the Youth Volunteering Service Manager.

Two of the volunteers have submitted applications for our core volunteering programme.

In terms of encouraging more young people into volunteering within the NHS, eight attendees from the welcome day who were redirected to our core programme have since completed their induction training to join the core volunteering programme.

“My favourite moment was listening to patients and being grateful to be a part of their recovery and make their day. I definitely improved my communication and teamwork skills and I gained insight into working in hospitals in Scotland”



Change Story - P

P initially applied to us through our core programme but through interview it was identified that P would need further support to volunteer. Due to their challenges with anxiety and despite being passionate about a future in healthcare and volunteering in the hospital, it was out of their comfort zone so the Summer Programme felt like a natural fit. In the lead up to the Welcome Day, remote communication with P was hard to establish and most arrangements had to be made through their parents. The Welcome Day was a challenge for them and despite successfully completing the training, P had to complete elements of it in a 1:1 conversation with a staff member as the group training became overwhelming. P persevered and attended all their sessions within their assigned hospital, quickly learning the layout of the site and being able to point patients in the right direction. P became responsive to calls and texts from staff and was more willing to share their thoughts and engage in conversation.

At the end of the 4-week programme P actively took part in a group evaluation session and was forthcoming with sharing their thoughts and experiences. One of P's personal highlights from their experience that was a connection they made with a patient over a jigsaw – something that staff remarked was rare as this patient rarely let anyone take part in that activity with them.

“I learned that the hospital environment is where I want to be. I learned how to communicate with different types of people and how happy people are just to speak to you.”

In an evaluation survey completed before and after the programme P reported considerable improvements in their confidence, initially scoring an average of “really not confident” across 6 statements, but this increased by two points to “okay” by the end of the 4 week period.

PRE		1	2	3	4	5
		Really not confident	Not confident	Okay	Confident	Very Confident
How do you feel when meeting new people?	Confidence	X				
How comfortable are you attending new places?		X				
How comfortable do you feel making eye contact when speaking to others?		X				
How do you feel about your conversational skills? (outwith your family and friends i.e when volunteering / college)			X			
How do you feel working in a group?			X			
How comfortable are you with taking the initiative in new situations?					X	
Any other information or comments?						

P’s pre-programme evaluation survey results - confidence is a soft skill that P struggles with and was really keen to develop through the experience.

POST		1	2	3	4	5
		Really not confident	Not confident	Okay	Confident	Very Confident
How do you feel when meeting new people?	Confidence			X		
How comfortable are you attending new places?				X		
How comfortable do you feel making eye contact when speaking to others?			X			
How do you feel about your conversational skills? (outwith your family and friends i.e when volunteering / college)					X	
How do you feel working in a group?					X	
How comfortable are you with taking the initiative in new situations?						X
Any other information or comments?						Overall score (1-5) 3

P’s post-programme evaluation survey results - P reported an increase in confidence across all of the statements, with the biggest changes being around meeting new people and attending new places!

P is about to embark on a new volunteering arrangement as a welcome guide within the site that they were placed in for the summer programme and can’t wait to continue their journey developing their skills and confidence with NHS Lothian.

Engagement of existing volunteers and NHS staff

The involvement of our existing volunteers was essential in ensuring the success of the programme. Each Summer Programme Volunteer was matched with an experienced volunteer or a staff member for every volunteer shift, allowing them to learn throughout their placements from those who know the wards and sites best and to provide some encouragement and support as they carried out their volunteering roles. We wanted this to be a mutually enjoyable experience for the experienced volunteers, and hoped that this opportunity to mentor a new volunteer in a role would provide an added sense of fulfillment and satisfaction as they watched the summer volunteers grow in confidence and develop their skills.

Western General Hospital

25 Volunteers
6 Activity Coordinators
1 Ward Assistant
1 RSPB staff member

St. Johns Hospital and Maple Villa

25 Volunteers
2 Activity Coordinators
1 Senior Charge Nurse
1 Receptionist

Royal Infirmary Edinburgh

19 Volunteers
5 Housekeepers and Clinical Support Workers
1 Occupational Therapist

Royal Hospital for Children and Young People

6 Volunteers
4 Play Specialists
2 ECHC staff members

East Lothian Community Hospital

6 Volunteers
1 Activity Coordinator

In total 81 Volunteers and 20 staff members were directly involved in supporting our Summer Volunteers to volunteer. We can't thank them enough for all they have done to help this programme thrive!

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with the young people . It gives an old chap like me an insight in to their world, their interests, their views and their challenges. The three young people should be commended on stretching themselves and I hope they got a fair bit out of their experience and encouraged them to use their learning points and commitment to form part of their personal statements / job applications when the time comes along.

- Ed, SJH

I like the way that the Summer Programme introduces the potential volunteers to the hospital environment so that they can see how the volunteers make a difference and how they will get a lot back from being a volunteer.

- Dorothy, RIE

Every volunteer who has visited the stroke unit have walked in with the biggest smile on their faces and full of enthusiasm to make a difference. The volunteers have helped with many duties within the unit including patient questionnaires, book trolley and general day to day tasks . Our patients and staff are very grateful to the volunteers for their friendly chats and listening skills delivered with care and compassion. It has been a privilege to meet you all and we thank you.

- Sam (Senior Charge Nurse) and the Stroke Unit team, SJH

It was an absolute pleasure having the company of the three young people in the transplant ward. They all proved to be very inquisitive about the ward routines and were not shy about speaking with the patients and getting stuck in to the role of a Ward Helper. I'm back on my own this week and I'll miss them.

- Moray, RIE

It has been a pleasure having such enthusiastic young people, who have wanted to be involved in the NHS Lothian volunteers youth programme. All my young volunteers have expressed a big interest in having a career in the NHS in the future. Nurturing young people is so so important, whatever path they choose.

- Len, Ward Assistant, WGH

It has been interesting and fun to get to know some of the young people this summer. The highlight for me was today when I asked R how were their exam results. Although they admitted they really had not worked hard last year this experience has made them determined to work much harder next year. Why? Because they have just discovered what they want to do with their life. R has been inspired to become a nurse. How worthwhile is that?

- Isobel, SJH

With thanks to our funders



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Strong partnership working was instrumental in ensuring the success of the programme. With thanks to referral partners:

DYW, SDS, Croft Street Hub, Volunteer Edinburgh, Volunteer Midlothian, Move on, Princes Trust, Volunteering Matters, Barnardos Works, Carers of East Lothian, West Lothian Council Employability, Palm Cove Society

