The future of volunteering in the NHS: a national perspective

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Questions

• Do we know enough about the volunteering resource currently supporting the NHS?
• Are we getting the most from the people who already give their time?
  - in terms of impact on outcomes;
  - in terms of ‘lifetime value’;
• Are we engaging the people who stand to gain most from volunteering?
  - In terms of local populations?
  - including NHS staff?
• Are we maintaining and developing our collective investment in volunteering?
The Impact Challenge

• Plenty of innovation going on;
• Evaluations show a number of high-impact volunteering roles – but spread is limited;
• NHS as ‘anchor institutions’ that provide ‘ladders of opportunity’ in more disadvantaged communities;
• Challenge to connect volunteering in organisations with volunteering in community;
• Lack of measurement/evaluation can be a problem.

Centre for Ageing Better, XXX, 2018
The Diversity Challenge

‘Civil society in the UK is currently heavily reliant on a “core” of highly engaged individuals, who are mainly older, wealthier and white. According to the most recent statistics, this group – which has been dubbed the “Civic Core” - constitutes less than 10% of the population and contributes between 24% and 51% of total civic engagement (Mohan and Bullock, 2012). And their image – middle class, female, older – pervades perceptions of what it means to be “a volunteer”.

However, looking to the future, there is no room for complacency around older people’s participation. The older population is changing – in future the older population will be more ethnically diverse, and more people will be living with long term conditions, often for longer. Yet these are the groups currently more likely to be excluded from many formal volunteering opportunities.’

Centre for Ageing Better, Review of Community Contributions in Later Life, 2018
The Sustainability Challenge

- Mixed priority afforded to volunteering in NHS organisations;
- Investment bringing returns but also evidence of disinvestment;
- Move to embedding volunteers in clinical teams proceeding at varied pace;
- Crucial support from NHS charities but overall picture mixed.
NHS England’s commitment

- At NHS Expo Sir Malcolm Grant, Chair of NHS England called for organisations to renew their commitment to volunteering:
- Support activity to recognise volunteering strategically in the NHS;
- Develop the infrastructure for volunteering;
- Encourage spread of good practice;
- Focus on growing volunteering by highlighting the impact and benefits of volunteering:
  - To patient experience;
  - To staff;
  - To services;
  - To volunteers themselves.
What are we doing? - Tools and resources

• Published guidance on the Recruitment and management of volunteers in the NHS
• Developing the national picture of volunteering through data collection and survey, working with partners understand the landscape, identify opportunities and gaps to inform our respective work programmes
• Developing a tool – PowerPoint business case template - to help volunteer managers raise awareness and share the impact, benefits and contribution that they and volunteers make
What are we doing?- Partnerships

• Increasing Social Action and Volunteering by young people working in partnership with Step up to Serve’s #iwillcampaign – as part of our #NHS70 commitment

• Increasing volunteering amongst our own staff (NHS England and Improvement) working with health and care providers

• Working with NAVSM, NCVO and other national bodies through a volunteering action group to raise issues to the fore; promote the importance and impact of volunteering and to take action as a collective
What are we doing? – support to Helpforce

- NHS England working in partnership with Helpforce – supported by a grant for £2.3 million over 2 years:
  - to help health organisations to better align volunteering activity to strategic priorities;
  - to create a wider range of opportunities for people who want to give back to the NHS and make a real difference to the care and experience of patients while in hospital and at home;
  - currently around 78,000 people volunteering in hospitals across the country – HelpForce is working to double that number by 2021;
  - Focus on high impact roles that can be developed into models that can be spread easily.
- Call for **expressions of interest** (by 8/10/2018) to work with Helpforce to test innovative ideas and increase the number of effective roles that can be more widely applied across the NHS.
Helpforce vision

Patient

“I get more…”
- Time, attention & care
- Company and conversation
- Information
- Assistance so I do not get weaker in hospital
- Help getting out of hospital and back home quicker

Staff

“What I am seeing is…”
- Patients better supported
- Staff can focus on core role
- Volunteers part of the team
- More feedback on patients and how system is working
- Role of volunteers valued and our ‘right hand’
- Colleagues proposing new volunteer roles

Volunteer

“We feel we have…”
- Fulfilling, supported roles with purpose and impact
- A range of opportunities
- Smoother processes for joining, vetting & matching
- Strong relationships with patients & staff
- Greater recognition
- More of a voice & say

Provider

“Our organisation has…”
- Volunteering integral part of our strategy
- Seen measurable benefit from investing in volunteer services
- Improvements in patient & staff satisfaction
- A greater connection with our local community
Alignment at national level to strengthen volunteering

- NHSI and NHSE are already co-working on all our volunteering programmes;
- Currently most volunteering is within hospitals – NHSI lead;
- But there are important volunteering programmes developing around General Practice too (and elsewhere);
- The Long-Term Plan for the NHS has considered volunteering as part of the thinking on workforce;
- And it gives an opportunity to link volunteering into different priority programmes.
(1) Life course programmes

- Prevention, Personal Responsibility and Health Inequalities
- Healthy Childhood and Maternal Health
- Integrated and Personalised Care for People with Long Term Conditions and Older People with Frailty (including Dementia)

Some examples of Volunteer Roles supportive of the programme:

- Peer to Peer Support Groups
- Maternity Voices Partnerships
- Dementia Volunteers
Profile of a Maternal Health Volunteer

- **Name:** Simran Seera
- **Role:** Ward Befriender - Maternity Ward

**Describe what you do:** In Maternity, I aid the in nurses changing beds or attending to patients, be it for dinner if they have just given birth or emotional aid. I often help with sterilising bottles and provide care for both mothers and babies, by serving as a medium between patients and staff. I actively try to ensure the mums and little ones are warm and comfortable enough in the cold periods and ensure they always have enough water! Occasionally I help the mealtime workers in busy periods, or may be asked to visit the labs to drop off samples.
(2) Clinical priorities

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular and respiratory
- Learning Disability and Autism
- Mental Health

Some examples of Volunteer Roles supportive of the programme:

- [Cancer information centres](#)
- [C and R community Clinics](#)
Profile of a mental health volunteer

- **Name:** David Biggs
- **Role:** Volunteer Recovery Coach

**Describe what you do:**
I give a monthly talk to all new staff as part of their induction week. I share my own lived experience of mental health challenges, my coping strategies and how the recovery pathway is becoming embedded within the service.
(3) Enablers

- Workforce
- Digital and Technology
- Primary Care
- Research and Innovation
- Clinical Review of Standards
- System Architecture
- Engagement

Example of Volunteer Roles supportive of the programme:

- Primary Care: [Altogether Better](#) work together to activate the full potential of Community Health Champions to improve the health and well being of their communities.
Profile of an Engagement Volunteer

- **Name:** Njoki Pratt

- **Role:** Involvement Team Member

- **Describe what you do:** We co-produce things like survey questionnaires, give feedback about our opinion on the wording used. We give opinion on marketing materials, help in events and pilot studies. We also meet up to discuss projects and other opportunities where help is needed and also to get to know each other better.
Common Challenges

• Priority and investment. Need to do more to establish strategic significance of volunteering to system?
• Diversity. Is public perception of volunteering in the NHS too limited? Scope to address this through social media? Shared #Hashtag
• NHS Charities. Is there interest in doing more to support the strategic development of volunteering?
• Integrated Care. How should volunteering in NHS organisations connect with volunteering & other contributions in the community.
Common principles

- Flexible and responsive
  - It fits around my life
  - When life changes, I can change adjust my commitment without feeling I’ve let anyone down
  - I know how to get involved, what I’m being asked to do, and how to stop
- Enabled and supported
  - I receive practical help with access, expenses, and any training that I want and need.
  - I feel supported – I know who I can turn to with any questions
- Sociable and connected
  - I have opportunities to meet and spend time with other people, including people from different backgrounds and age groups
  - It makes me feel a part of something
- Valued and appreciated
  - The value of my effort is recognised, and people regularly let me know I’m valued – through what they say and do
  - I feel like people appreciate what I do
- Meaningful and purposeful
  - The work I do means something to me and feels purposeful
  - I feel that what I do is worthwhile
- Makes good use of my strengths
  - It allows me to use the skills and experiences I’ve built up during my life, and gives me opportunities to try out and learn new things
  - I feel like my experience is respected and valued

Centre for Ageing Better, Review of Community Contributions in Later Life, 2018

www.england.nhs.uk
Future of volunteering in the NHS?

- Ambition is significant – across whole long-term plan;
- Supporting volunteering as an entry route to careers in health and care;
- Reduce pressure on staff, aiding staff retention;
- Replicating high-impact roles which influence outcomes;
- Closer partnerships with the voluntary sector;
- Developing volunteering in the community, integrated with NHS;
- Increasing diversity of our volunteer-base.
Working together

• Helpforce programme currently open to applications
• How can we raise awareness together e.g. # on twitter?
• Demonstrating impact;
• Collecting evidence / metrics;
• Thoughts on continuing the conversation? – send to england.voluntarypartnerships@nhs.net
I'm working to improve experiences of care

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