

National Group for Volunteering in NHSScotland

Volunteer Representation SBAR

Situation

The National Group for Volunteering in NHSScotland provides strategic guidance to the Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme and is committed to the promotion of best practice in volunteering. To demonstrate this commitment in their own work the Group has previously noted an action to consider how best to involve volunteers. This paper is put forward by Healthcare Improvement Scotland's (HIS) Public Involvement Team to assess the situation and make recommendations which will support the implementation of volunteer involvement in the National Group.

The HIS Public Involvement Team provides advice and support to HIS colleagues on how to involve people accessing services in their work and leads on volunteering across the organisation.

Background

There are an estimated 6,500 directly engaged volunteers supporting the work of NHSScotland. The Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme aims to improve the experiences of people accessing NHS services and to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for volunteers.

A focus on involving people who are affected by decisions is a long-standing aspiration in national policy for health and social care (see [Patient Focus and Public Involvement](#) (2001), [Better Health Better Care: Action Plan](#) (2007), [NHSScotland Healthcare Quality Strategy](#) (2010) and [Public Service Reform Act](#) (2010)). Given the contributions of volunteers and the work undertaken by the National Group to improve outcomes for volunteers and the people they support, it follows that people volunteering in NHSScotland have a stake in the decisions being made and should therefore be involved. However, volunteers' involvement and experiences are very diverse and generally focused on one Board area or on one particular service or group of people within that area. Therefore it will be challenging to identify and implement actions to achieve meaningful involvement of directly engaged volunteers in the strategic level National Group.

Assessment

Volunteer involvement on the National Group could not currently be representative given the diversity of people engaged, the mix of voluntary roles undertaken, the location of volunteers across Scotland and a lack of any representative structure available compared to those that are open to paid staff. However, having one or more volunteers as members of the National Group would directly provide a volunteer perspective to the work. A volunteer or volunteers directly engaged in NHSScotland could challenge and support the Group to identify issues where further and wider involvement may be required in determining strategy for volunteering.

There are two key options for selection of volunteer members of the National Group. Selection could either be open to anyone volunteering in NHSScotland willing to participate, or based on agreed criteria such as appropriate knowledge, skills or membership of networks to support participation on the Group.

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Recommendation

It is recommended that the National Group consider first whether to select a member or members who are volunteers in NHSScotland.

If the decision to involve volunteers is agreed, an open process is recommended, followed by a random selection of those who put themselves forward. If selection based on agreed factors relevant to the role is preferred, then the selection process followed should be transparent and fair.

Selected volunteer members should be alert to issues that might require wider consideration by the volunteer community. Where issues are identified requiring wider input, the group must consider how best to do this. For example this could be achieved through establishing a volunteer network or by using the existing Volunteer Managers Network to engage with volunteers across health boards.

The Group should also consider what length of term a volunteer should have in such a role.

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