

## **1. Introduction**

Volunteers Week takes place annually from 1-7 June. It provides a platform to give thanks to volunteers in health and other sectors, and promotes awareness of the positive effects volunteering has in society.

There are approximately 6,000 volunteers directly engaged by NHS Scotland at any given time, across 22 health boards.

Volunteers Week 2020 was distinctly different due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. This affected the ability of health Boards to hold face-to-face events due to social distancing, meaning Volunteer Managers had to re-structure how their celebrations would be rolled out.

There was a shared concern from staff managing volunteers in health settings, that due to large volumes of volunteers being stood down as a result of COVID-19, many could be feeling isolated from the companionship and sense of community these volunteer roles bring.

It was therefore a priority to have a consistent message of sincere thanks to the volunteers who were stood down, as well as recognising the contribution of new and existing volunteers still in roles. Many volunteers supported the efforts of staff in health Boards and beyond specifically in relation to the pandemic, across Scotland.

It is of note that Volunteers Week overlaps Dementia Week (2-8 June), which can have an impact on visibility and focus, due to competing demands on social and wider media from both areas.

## **2. Scottish Volunteering Forum**

The Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme Project Officer sits on the Volunteers Week Working Group, a sub-group of the Scottish Volunteering Forum, as the representative for health.

The purpose of the group is to shape the theme and communications plan, and support the streamlining of the celebrations, to ensure a more visible and impactful Volunteers Week in Scotland.

The theme in 2020 remained 'time to celebrate' from 2019, and it was agreed that going forward this should stay the same annually. Information was gathered and shared between health and third sector around innovative ways to engage volunteers remotely, given social distancing.



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The relationship built with colleagues within third sector organisations as part of this group is valuable in the context of Volunteers Week, and evident in the support of promotion of content on social media by partner agencies.

Through this work, third sector colleagues involved in raising the visibility of Volunteers Week in Scotland have a greater awareness of the Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme, providing a useful gateway through which to share information with health boards. We have been able to share new and innovative ways to promote Volunteers Week with staff in NHS Scotland, and forward packs to support Boards to engage more with social and digital media.

### 3. Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Community Engagement activity

Community Engagement is a directorate of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Work was undertaken by the Volunteering in NHSScotland team in collaboration with Community Engagement staff, NHS health Boards and third sector organisations.

This included:

- Social media (Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Community Engagement) Twitter. Re-tweets from twelve health Boards.
- YouTube
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland Intranet
- Community Engagement Website
- Blog for SCVO Third Force News site

Content included:

- A [thank-you film](#) organised remotely, featuring clips from 12 health Boards of volunteering in action and NHS staff saying thank you.
- A [written case study](#), featuring a spiritual care volunteer from Stornoway, NHS Western Isles.
- A [blog piece](#) written for the Healthcare Improvement Scotland intranet and website by Valerie Breck, Engagement and Equalities Policy Manager for Community Engagement.
- A [blog piece](#) written for SCVO Third Force News by Alan Bigham, Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme Manager
- Children of NHS staff contributed [thank you drawings](#) and paintings, in the spirit of having to work remotely from home.
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland staff [volunteering stories](#) featured on the intranet.



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## Social Media Activity - Healthcare Improvement Scotland / Community Engagement:

Number of Tweets – 13  
Number of accounts reached – 28,108  
Engagement with tweets – 1,005  
Re-tweets – 90  
Likes – 113

### Digital Media:

Thank you film: 578 views on YouTube.  
SCVO Blog: 211 page views  
Blog – HIS Intranet: 68 views

## 4. Feedback on Volunteers Week content

The thank-you film in particular was incredibly well received by NHS staff managing volunteers and volunteers themselves, at what was a challenging time for NHSScotland.

### Comments included:

- *“This is a lovely piece, thank you so much for supporting us to publicise our volunteer programme”*
- *“The team have got the balance right with this film - good measure of dialogue and pictures etc. - it was short - to the point and the content of the film, I think, was perfect”*
- *“What an uplifting film, thank you”*
- *“A wonderful video, highlighting all the great things volunteers do in the NHS”*
- *“Great to see a joined up approach for NHS volunteering across different health Boards”*

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