Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Involving volunteers in the COVID-19 vaccination programme

A practical guide for staff in healthcare settings

This document is intended to provide guidance and information for staff who may be involved in the management and supervision of volunteers as part of the COVID-19 vaccination programme – specifically in healthcare settings.

The size and scale of the vaccination programme means that staff who do not routinely involve or supervise volunteers may be required to do so. This guide is aimed at those staff and provides information and links to resources which may be helpful.

Recruitment and on-boarding

The National Volunteering Hub, managed by the British Red Cross can assist in the provision of volunteers for all NHS boards in Scotland. You can make contact with the appropriate contact to discuss your requirements:

Health board	British Red Cross Point of Contact
Highlands & Islands	NMort@redcross.org.uk Mobile : 07793369404
Tayside Grampian	richardguild@redcross.org.uk Mobile: 07543220117
Lothian & Borders Fife Forth Valley	jamescarmichael@redcross.org.uk Mobile: 07711470104
Greater Glasgow & Clyde Lanarkshire Dumfries & Galloway Ayrshire & Arran	ImmyUddin@redcross.org.uk Mobile: 07843343985

If you need to recruit volunteers, you may be able to access support from:

- Existing NHS volunteers supported by NHS volunteer managers, please contact his.volunteering@nhs.scot to be put in touch with your local volunteer manager

- Third sector interfaces are often able to provide a range of support

Robust recruitment and on-boarding processes for volunteers are crucial for any volunteering activity. These processes are key in mitigating against any safety or security risks identified as part of your risk assessment process, as well as ensuring that you place the volunteers with the right skills in the right role.

Volunteer recruitment and on-boarding steps

The following steps form current good practice and provide a robust process for the recruitment and on-boarding of volunteers:

- Application form

- Interview (in person or via phone / video call)

- References and/or identity check

- Criminal records check (role dependent)

- Volunteer induction and training

- Regular and ongoing access to a staff member in a supervisory capacity for support

Role descriptions

Role descriptions are important as it allows for both volunteers and staff to understand the boundaries of the volunteer role. Volunteers should be provided with a copy of the role description. Example role descriptions are available on the Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement website.

Disclosure and PVG checks

We recommend volunteers in the COVID-19 vaccination programme have the appropriate criminal records checks, if they are required, depending on the role that they will carry out.

Induction

An e-learning module for Volunteer Induction (COVID-19) developed as an online resource for volunteers recruited during the COVID-19 pandemic is available. It provides a generic, basic induction for volunteers working in NHS board settings.

To find the open access course please visit NHS Education for Scotland, you will need to create or login via your TURAS account.

Training

Volunteers will benefit from being offered some training or information on COVID-19 symptoms and on the vaccination to support them to carry out their role.

Basic training and orientation for volunteers should be provided on site, this may include a tour of the site, a named contact person on site to help with any problems, and boundaries of the role.

Risk assessment and safety

You may have support from others in setting up volunteering activity, but if you are responsible for this, it's important to carry out a risk assessment and to consider safety of volunteers, staff and patients. A number of example risk assessments are available on Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement website.

Management and supervision of volunteers

There are many things to consider when supporting volunteers to carry out their role, and it can be a daunting prospect if it's not something that you have experience of. The main thing to remember is to take a personal approach.

Some things to think about are:

- What will you do if a volunteer does not turn up, or cancels their shift at short notice?

- Being there at the beginning of their shift to welcome them to the venue and provide any information they might need.

- Ask volunteers to sign in and out for their volunteering shift to ensure you know which volunteers are on site.

- Ensure there is somewhere secure on site for volunteers to store their belongings.

- If volunteers are required to be outside, try to make sure there are at least two volunteers on site who can carry out this task to allow them to take turns in being outside especially in bad weather.

- Remember to advise volunteers where they can take a break, access any refreshments and where the toilets are.

- Check volunteers know what is expected of them and the boundaries of their role.

- Make sure volunteers know who to speak to if they have a problem or question.

- Ensure other staff are aware that volunteers are supporting the clinic, and introduce them if possible.

- Ensure staff know who to expect for each shift.

- Be there at the end of volunteering shifts to check in and to say thank you.

Communication

Take time to think about how you will communicate with your volunteers.

Some things to think about are:

- A short briefing at the beginning and end of each shift, if possible include volunteers in any staff briefing sessions.

- A communications book, for staff and volunteers to leave notes and messages, information and updates and to allow for the asking and answering of questions. Make sure that it's checked regularly by both staff and volunteers.

- Provide contact details for volunteers to get in touch with you if they are not able to make their shift, are running late or have something they need to discuss.

- Thanking your volunteers after their volunteering placement, this can be in person, a phone call or a letter.

- Ensure clinic staff know in advance that volunteers will be on site (and that they understand what roles they are there to carry out), similarly let staff know if no volunteers will be available on a particular day or time.

Problem solving

A big worry for staff who do not routinely involve volunteers is dealing with the potential problems, and raising them with volunteers. Usually these fall into three main categories:

- Capability: a volunteer's ability to undertake the role

- Performance: how well a volunteer is performing the role

- Conduct: behaviour when taking part in volunteering

Thankfully these types of situations are rare, but it's still important to consider how you might deal with any problems that arise. A useful reference guide from Volunteer Scotland is their Managing Challenging Volunteer Situations guide.

Some things to think about are:

- Make sure you have any conversations of this nature somewhere private.

- Stick to the facts and explain the issue clearly, think about what you want to say in advance.

- Stay calm.

- Give the volunteer time to respond and listen carefully.

- If possible, agree a way forward together to correct the issue or problem.

- If required, get support from another source – this could be your manager, or your local volunteer manager.

Further information

If you need any support or information, you can contact the Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme team on his.volunteering@nhs.scot

Further information good practice in volunteer management, you can access the Developing Volunteering Toolkit and Volunteering in NHS Scotland Handbook are available on Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement's website.

If required, you can also find lots of information on good practice in volunteer management and supervision on Volunteer Scotland's website, including information on getting started if you are new to involving volunteers, delivering volunteering on a day to day basis and thanking and recognition of volunteers.