

1. Introduction

This paper provides an update to the National Group for Volunteering on progress of the Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme.

2. COVID-19

(a) Omicron / Winter Pressures Volunteering

In late 2021, the NVC Hub intended to expand its offer to supply volunteers into hospital settings, and sent a letter to CEO's of all NHS boards making this offer. However, a lack of governance around the offer led to confusion about the role of the NVC Hub and extra pressure on volunteering teams to take up the offer.

The situation was escalated to Tom Steele, Chair of the National Group for Volunteering, who agreed along with John Burns, Chief Operating Officer of NHSScotland and Karen Reid, CEO of NES that a governance group be set up to put in place the necessary governance arrangements to provide clarity on the role of the NVC Hub and delineation of responsibility between the NVC Hub and volunteering teams in NHS boards.

As a result a paper outlining the governance arrangement has been produced, and has received favourable feedback from the governance group and NHS boards.

Feedback was received from both Volunteer Edinburgh and Voluntary Health Scotland asking for clarity on the role of TSi's, and highlighting to us the risk that without context that the paper may not be well received by TSi's. Extra communication around the context of the paper, reiterating that the NVC Hub should be viewed as a 'back up' option for NHS boards should they not be able to access enough volunteers through their existing arrangements locally with TSi's has been developed and sent to TSi's.

The governance group was also asked to consider how volunteering may be able to support bridging the gap between discharge from hospital and home. This was tabled by colleagues in NES, who have identified a potential gap and developed an SBAR proposing a 'community responder' volunteer role. The SBAR was reviewed by the governance group. The decision was more scoping and mapping was required to understand the landscape for any community based volunteering in this space. However, agreement was made that there could be potential for a volunteer role based within NHSScotland, linked to discharge teams who would telephone patients assessed as requiring some extra support (and who agreed to participate). Volunteers could discuss the patients wellbeing, any health or practical concerns that they have and make appropriate referrals into local

services. NHS Tayside agreed to test the concept of this idea and have had positive initial discussions with the discharge team to scope how this might operate in practice. NES are partnering in this work to develop a training package to support the volunteer role.

Next steps are to initiate a project group who will develop operational processes, risk assess the role; agree on data collection and evaluation measures.

(b) Volunteering activity

Below is a snapshot of volunteering activity by NHS Board during December 2021. Volunteering levels continue to be significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There are a number of complex reasons for this – the significant pressure on NHSScotland during the omicron / winter period slowing the restart of volunteering. Volunteer managers reporting that a proportion of volunteers who were stood down in 2020 chose not to return, others are still worried about their own safety.

In the period October 2021 – December 2021 volunteering levels were as follows:

Number volunteers involved: 5784 (*note - this number refers to the total over a 3 month period, not 5784 individuals*)

Number of hours of volunteer activity: 52,615

NHS Board	Number of Volunteers Involved in BOARD ACTIVITY	Number of Hours For BOARD ACTIVITY	Number of Volunteers Involved in OTHER* ACTIVITY	Number of Hours for OTHER* ACTIVITY
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	53	162.5	0	0
NHS Borders	37	79	0	0
NHS Dumfries &	85	979.25	14	32
NHS Fife	19	109	9	98
NHS Forth Valley	69	836	33	289
NHS Grampian	43	487	79	100
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	299	4285	46	195
NHS Highland	70	440	0	0
NHS Lanarkshire	121	740	23	120
NHS Lothian	549	6588	15	90
NHS Orkney	0	0	12	12
NHS Shetland	6	6	11	11
NHS Tayside	50	457	165	1767
NHS Western Isles	80	80	200	200
Totals	1481	15248.75	607	2914
			*OTHER ACTIVITY is defined as volunteers working in HSCPs, Specialist Services, etc	

(c) National Volunteering Hub

The hub continues to be a successful partnership approach to filling gaps in volunteer deployment during emergency periods.

In its first year the Hub has deployed over 7000 volunteers across Scotland, translating to more than 54,000 volunteer hours.

A ministerial visit by the Cabinet Secretary for Health is planned for 24th February 2022, at Volunteer Edinburgh Offices. The event is intended to say thank you to volunteers and to celebrate the considerable contribution that volunteers make in our society. The event will be attended by volunteers and staff from Volunteer Edinburgh, NHS Lothian and Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme.

3. Volunteering Information System

(a) Future of the Volunteering Information System (VIS)

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting on 22nd February 2022.

(b) Deployment

The system is in use in 19 of 22 NHS organisations.

The roll out of the new online Volunteer Application Form has not been able to progress as we are awaiting the IT team at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital (GJNH) reviewing the System Security Policy. The initial approach was made to review the policy in June 2021, we have not received the reviewed policy document despite considerable efforts.

The cost of hosting the VIS on GJNH servers is £7,500 per year.

(c) User Group

The user group will be reconvened when appropriate.

(d) Training and webinars

Introductory webinars continue to be delivered monthly by the programme team. NHS Boards are reminded once more than new users must complete an introductory webinar prior to being issued with user accounts.

The advanced webinar and COVID specific webinar are both available on the Community of Practice website, both are pre-recorded sessions.

The following have been delivered between December 2021 – January 2022:

Webinar	Webinars	Users trained
Introductory	3	3

Dates and links to online booking forms for future webinars are provided to volunteer managers via the Bulletin.

4. Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme Strategy

Strategy proposals are due to be discussed at HIS Community Engagement's directorate management team on 16th February 2022. An update will be provided to the national group verbally at the meeting on 22nd February 2022.

5. Volunteer Managers Network

The format of bi-monthly peer support sessions and regular practice development sessions for Volunteer Managers are being well attended and positive feedback received.

Volunteer Managers Network membership	87 members
Themed peer discussion session x1 (January session cancelled due to illness)	12 participants

We communicate regularly with the network via a bulletin, which has received positive feedback. We have tightened our processes to ensure all volunteer managers and strategic leads have been offered the chance to join the network and plan to develop a 'welcome pack' for new volunteer management staff to ensure they have the access to the support of the network.

6. Support to NHS Boards

The Programme team supports NHS Boards on volunteer management matters.

14 instances of support have been provided during December 2021 and January 2022. The low number recorded is a reflection on the festive holidays and communications to volunteer managers that the programme team were working on winter pressures volunteering activity as a matter of priority.

7. Helpforce – Insight & Impact

5 organisations have been working with Helpforce to think about their evaluation needs and how the Insight & Impact Service might be useful. These are:

NHS Borders
NHS Tayside
NHS Lothian / Volunteer Edinburgh
NHS Forth Valley
Beatson Cancer Charity

Conversations are at varying stages, some volunteering staff have attended training courses hosted by Helpforce on the service, others have begun to explore which roles they might like to evaluate.

One unexpected delay has been that where volunteering teams have determined which volunteer role(s) they would like to evaluate that for some they have not yet restarted this

volunteer role. This means there will be a delay in these NHS boards collecting the data for evaluation.

8. Other activity

Staffing

The programme is now fully staffed, with 0.8 WTE Programme Manager, 0.6 WTE Project Officer, and admin support. We have experienced staff shortages due to sickness during January 2022, which delayed some aspects of the winter pressures volunteering activity.

Education & Training

The digital build for the new 'once for Scotland' volunteer induction for new NHSScotland volunteers is complete and we are in our final review stages before the 'launch' of the new resource. This work has been delayed due to the winter pressures volunteering activity.

When complete, a working group tasked with the development of new education and training modules and courses for volunteers and volunteer management staff will be set up. A paper will be submitted to this group in due course.

Inclusive Volunteering

Janice continues to lead the national development of a 10 year action plan for Scotland to drive forward the Inclusive Volunteering Agenda, which will form part of the Scottish Government's [Volunteering for All](#) Action Plan, due for publication in June 2022.

The programme team are currently planning to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for volunteering in NHSScotland. It is anticipated that the EQIA will form the basis for an action plan to improve the inclusiveness of volunteering across NHSScotland.

A project group is being established to take forward this work, the inception meeting for this work was delayed due to winter pressures volunteering work taking priority over other work areas.

Networking / connections

The creation of the governance group for winter pressures volunteering and the associated activity has resulted in increased awareness of the Volunteering in NHSScotland programme and of volunteering amongst CEO's of NHS boards, Health Resilience Team in Scottish Government, COSLA and Health & Social Care Partnerships.