



NHS Fife

Volunteering Annual Report

2023-2024

Foreword

As the Head of Patient Experience at NHS Fife, I am delighted to present the 2023/24 Annual Volunteering Report, which highlights the remarkable contributions our volunteers make to our organisation and the communities we serve. Each day, our volunteers embody the values of compassion, dedication, and service, profoundly impacting the experiences of patients, their families, and our staff.

Volunteers at NHS Fife are committed to improving the experience of patients using our health services is invaluable, enriching the overall health and well-being of our community. The act of volunteering not only benefits those they serve but also offers volunteers the chance to develop new skills, forge meaningful connections, and find a sense of purpose in their roles.

The past year has presented challenges for our volunteering services, and I am grateful to our volunteer service who worked diligently to adapt roles and create opportunities for our volunteers and services. Their efforts have ensured that our volunteers remain informed, supported, and excited to contribute.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building upon our successes and expanding our volunteer programs. We recognise the significant value our volunteers bring to NHS Fife, and we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that encourages more individuals to join our mission. Together, we can continue to enhance patient experiences and strengthen our community ties through the power of volunteering.

Siobhan McIlroy

Head of Patient Experience

Introduction & Summary

This Annual Report for NHS Fife Volunteering Service covers the financial period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The report highlights the remarkable volunteering activities and initiatives undertaken throughout the year, showcasing NHS Fife's commitment to making a positive impact to patient experience.

During this period the Volunteering Service has not only continued to plan, grow and develop new programmes but has also experienced a significant increase in volunteer enquiries. This increase reflects the growing desire among individuals to contribute their time and skills to support their local NHS Fife Service. It is exciting to share the stories of dedication and service that have defined this year, as well as the ongoing efforts to enhance and expand the volunteering programmes. Together, building a stronger, more connected community through the power of volunteering.

National Guidance & Policy

Volunteering within NHSScotland is supported by Scottish Governments, Volunteering for All, Our National Framework, April 2019. The Framework sets the direction for Scotland's approach to volunteering over the next decade by focusing first and foremost on the volunteer, rooted in our national values of kindness, dignity and respect. It highlights and recognises the changes required to break down barriers to volunteering and to create more diverse and inclusive opportunities for everyone to engage in throughout their life.

Scottish Governments Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan, June 2022, seeks to build upon the Volunteering for All Framework; the Action Plan seeks to maximise the impact of volunteering. It aims to create an environment and a community of practice in which volunteering can adapt to changing priorities and continue to thrive. It seeks to establish accountability for ensuring that the needs of volunteers are at the centre of future decision-making.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland published the document Volunteering in NHS Scotland, Exploring best practice in September 2023. This guide was developed to provide staff working in volunteer management in NHS Scotland with a range of templates, information, and advice on best practice in volunteer management. It is intended to be a resource which you can refer to as required if you are an experienced volunteer manager, or to help you to build your own knowledge, skills and confidence if you are new to volunteer management. This has been an invaluable document, providing a range of checklists and templates that we have adapted for use within NHS Fife.

NHS Fife's policy has been reviewed in April 2024, and is currently going through the various stages for approval by EDG. NHS Fife Volunteer Expenses Procedure is also being reviewed following the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Volunteer Programme guidance which

advocates for boards to increase the mileage rate for volunteers, as this has not been amended by Scottish Government for over 12 years and to move to best practice of 45p per mile in line with HMRC figures. Volunteer Leads are conscious of the impact of the increased cost of living on our volunteers, and apprehensive that this may become a barrier to entry for some.

Workforce & Support to Volunteering Services

At the beginning of the year the team comprised two Volunteer Leads (1.8 WTE) supported by one full-time administrative assistant (1.0 WTE). Due to vacancies the 0.8 WTE Band 6 post is currently being temporarily filled by a 0.8 WTE Band 4 staff member. The service reports directly to the Head of Patient Experience (HoPE).

The Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme, delivered by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), drives forward the volunteering agenda in NHSScotland through effective leadership, governance, consultancy and expert advice for volunteering across NHSScotland. They have a range of publications providing information, guidance and good practice. The programme offers a package of support to volunteer managers with peer networking sessions, practice development sessions and access to their 'volunteering helpdesk' for support, alongside a virtual Volunteering Community of Practice.

NHS Fife Volunteer Leads continue to participate in various development groups with the programme to influence outcomes with the proposed new Volunteer Information System (VIS) and review of the NHSScotland Volunteer Induction Module hosted via TURAS.

Fife Voluntary Action (FVA) are the local Third Sector Interface (TSI) who provide good practise guidance, training and networking opportunities for the volunteering team and are a means of promoting volunteer opportunities and recruitment locally.

Programmes and Initiatives

Therapets have increasingly become a valuable resource within health and hospital settings, providing therapeutic support and comfort to patients across various demographics. These specially trained therapy animals offer companionship and emotional relief, which can significantly enhance the healing process. Interactions with Therapets have been shown to reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, and improve overall mood, making them particularly beneficial for patients undergoing stressful treatments or recovery. Additionally, the presence of therapy animals can foster social interactions among patients, encouraging communication and engagement in therapeutic activities. Ultimately, the integration of Therapets into

healthcare environments not only supports the emotional well-being of patients but also contributes to a more compassionate and holistic approach to care.

The Volunteer Lead continues to collaborate closely with colleagues from the Infection Prevention and Control Team to reinstate the Therapet service into Community Hospital settings. Initial plans have been developed to implement the initiative, with the intention of eventually expanding the program to other suitable areas within the Acute Setting. This strategic approach aims to enhance patient care and well-being through the therapeutic benefits of animal assisted interactions.

A new volunteer role has been introduced and a dedicated pool of Simulation Patient volunteers established. These volunteers play a crucial role in healthcare training by realistically portraying the characteristics of actual patients. This provides students and professionals with valuable opportunities to enhance their understanding of patient interactions, improve teamwork, and practice essential clinical skills in a supportive environment. By engaging with Simulation Patient volunteers, trainees can gain confidence and competence, ultimately leading to better patient care in real-world settings.

A new Patient Experience role has been established to enhance the collection and analysis of patient feedback, particularly regarding Care Opinion. This role is dedicated to actively engaging with patients and their families who are unable to tell their story and to gather insights and experiences related to their care. By facilitating open communication, the Patient Experience Volunteer will encourage patients to share their stories, which will be instrumental in identifying areas for improvement and celebrating successes within our services. This focused approach not only empowers patients to voice their opinions but also ensures that their feedback directly informs practice and policies, ultimately fostering a culture of continuous improvement and patient-centred care.

Volunteer Demographic

NHS Fife Volunteering Services presently has 120 volunteers across 6 sites (Victoria Hospital, Queen Margaret Hospital, Adamson Hospital, Cameron Hospital, Glenrothes Hospital and St Andrews Hospital) along with 7 public partner volunteers currently engaging with groups across NHS Fife. This year volunteering recruitment has presented challenges due to vacancies within the team. With the interim Band 4 (0.8WTE) now in place the primary focus will be on the recruitment and placement of volunteers. There are currently 206 volunteers on the system who have enquired about volunteering or who are going through the recruitment process.

Collecting equality data from volunteers is crucial for ensuring volunteer services accurately reflect the diverse community we serve. Unfortunately, the national Volunteer Information System (VIS) has not been able to effectively record this vital information, leaving NHS Fife

unable to capture any equality monitoring data for several years. Currently, Healthcare Improvement Scotland's National Volunteer Programme is developing a new Volunteering Management System, but this will take time to implement.

In the interim, NHS Fife are committed to gathering anonymous equality data from all active volunteers on an annual basis. While these results provide only a snapshot of NHS Fife's volunteer demographic at a specific time, the Volunteer Service will robustly analyse the data and take necessary actions to enhance our volunteer service's inclusivity. By prioritizing the collection of equality data, NHS Fife can better understand and address the needs of the community, ultimately fostering a more equitable and representative volunteer program.

The data for 2023/24 indicates that our results are largely consistent with the previous year, revealing that NHS Fife continue to be underrepresented in our volunteer cohort, particularly among males and individuals in the age group 26-35, 36-45 and 46-55. The volunteer service will seek to engage with colleagues in FVA and our Equality and Human Rights Team to understand and address these gaps.

Service Activity and Development

As part of a national reporting exercise to the Scottish Government, in the period between April 2023 and March 2024 (inclusive), NHS Fife recorded an average of 50 volunteers delivering over 10,300 hours of support across Acute and Community Hospitals.

2023-24 quarter 4 (Jan-Mar 2024) figures

Number of new enquiries received	114	Total number of orientations conducted	19
Number of application forms Returned	45	Total number of new volunteer placements	16
Total number of interviews conducted	32	Total hours of volunteering delivered	16

NHS Fife is an anchor institution; a large organisation connected to our local area and community. Providing volunteering opportunities for the people of Fife enhances their own health and wellbeing, and supports access to education and employment. Employability can be increased by volunteers learning new skills and building their confidence to either enter or re-enter the workforce. It can also be the first step in the career pathway for those looking to pursue careers specifically within healthcare and the NHS. The volunteer service is actively building on this, with linking with colleagues to attend high school career fayres and working with council partners engaging with employability clients.

The Volunteering Strategy Group continues to meet regularly with the purpose to;

- ensure that volunteering national policies, guidelines and best practice are implemented across NHS Fife and followed consistently.
- influence policy and practice in order to ensure that the volunteering service is adequately resourced and supported. To identify and resolve any obstacles to this.
- champion the volunteering service at both an operational and board level, recognising and celebrating the contribution of volunteers throughout NHS Fife.
- maximise the number of volunteers engaged with NHS Fife; striving to have a volunteering cohort reflective of the communities we serve.

Volunteers & NHS Fife Community Listening Service

NHS Fife's Community Listening Service continues to go from strength to strength, providing an important service to people across Fife who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Over the last year Community Listening volunteers, who are managed by the Department of Spiritual Care, have operated across 14 General Practitioner practices in Fife, providing an active listening and therapeutic service.

Additionally, the volunteers have worked alongside Fife Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (FICJ) and supported mental health patients, referred by mental health nurses in the community.

A total of 19 Community Listening volunteers are currently working across services, supporting individuals to make sense of their circumstances during periods of transition and change, and helping them to recognise and use their own and communal assets with a view to proactively developing their wellbeing.

Community Listening Service – Key Facts:

- 1st April 2023 -to31st March 2024 - 1270 listening sessions.
- 721 sessions provided in GP Practices
- 571 telephone sessions provided for Fife Improving the Cancer Journey Service
- 32 telephone sessions provided following referral from NHS Fife Mental Health Services. "

Celebrating Volunteering

Volunteer Week 1 to 7 June 2024

Celebrating Volunteer Week is an essential opportunity to recognise and honour the invaluable contributions of volunteers within our community. This week-long event highlights the dedication, compassion, and selflessness that volunteers bring to various causes, showcasing their vital role in enhancing the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. By celebrating Volunteer Week, we not only express our gratitude but also raise awareness about the importance of volunteering, encouraging more people to get involved. Acknowledging the efforts of volunteers fosters a sense of community, strengthens relationships, and inspires others to contribute their time and talents. Ultimately, this celebration serves as a reminder of the profound impact that volunteerism has on creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

To celebrate, thank you cards were sent to every volunteer and a series of social media posts showcasing and thanking volunteers for the vital impact they have on patient and staff experience.

Celebrating Christmas

Christmas provides a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude to our volunteers. In early December 2023, we hosted a special event where volunteers gathered to share stories and celebrate their contributions. Alongside a festive-themed quiz, the primary focus of the gathering was to personally thank each volunteer for their unwavering support throughout the year. As a token of our appreciation, all volunteers received a small gift, generously funded through NHS Fife Charities. This event not only fosters a sense of community but also reinforces the vital role our volunteers play in our organisation.



Moving Forward 2023-24

Strategy – A strategy and associated action plan is required to mobilise and realise our Volunteer Policy and reflect the aims of Volunteering for All, Our National Framework, April 2019 .

The Volunteer Service will collaborate with colleagues to enhance recruitment strategies, with consideration given to develop targeted outreach programs to attract a diverse range of volunteers, especially from underrepresented communities.

Developing roles – working with colleagues and volunteer candidates to develop volunteer roles that are meaningful and purposeful, and allow people to get involved and stay involved. Increasing volunteering participation for all and to addressing inequalities is vital to continuing to expand opportunities for more people to volunteer. Without taking action to engage and support people of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer, communities will lose out on their talents.

Associated Documents/Links

- Volunteering in NHSScotland Programme Annual Report 2022-23;
[Volunteering in NHS Scotland Annual Report 2022-23 | HIS Engage](#)
- NHS Fife Volunteering Policy;
[Volunteering Policy | NHS Fife](#)
- Volunteering for All: National Framework;
[Volunteering for All: national framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan;
[Volunteering action plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- NHS Scotland Exploring Best Practice;
[www.hisengage.scot/equipping-professionals/volunteering-in-nhs-scotland/guidance-and-resources/exploring-best-practice/](#)