



Supporting the third sector and NHS to develop clear pathways for safe, effective and person centred volunteering in health

Who we are

VHS is the national network for Scotland's voluntary health organisations. We promote greater recognition of the voluntary sector as an essential partner in the transformation of health and social care services, public and mental health, and health inequalities.

The project

Clear Pathway is a new, collaborative project led by VHS. It aims to support safe, effective and person centred volunteering in NHS settings, with the focus on volunteers recruited and managed by third sector organisations.

The need

The extent, nature and contribution of third sector volunteering in NHS settings across Scotland is currently unknown and needs to be better understood and learning shared. NHS boards vary widely (including within a single board) in how they engage with third sector organisations deploying volunteers and in how they require risks to be managed and opportunities developed. Better coproduction and a more systematic process would improve the effectiveness of the volunteer contribution and the care and safety of patients.

Clear Pathway is a direct response to recommendations for action made by the National Group for Volunteering in NHS Scotland (September 2015). Its development was also informed by a meeting held by VHS, Scottish Government and Scottish Health Council with a group of charities that routinely engage volunteers in patient facing roles (July 2015).

Project overview

Clear Pathway will strengthen engagement between NHS Boards and the third sector, providing leadership and support for the co-production of clearer processes for partnership working around volunteering. Practical work (from May 2016) includes mapping of existing third sector volunteering and processes in NHS settings, engagement work in selected NHS Board areas, and the development of guidance and case studies.

Who else is involved?

Clear Pathway has been designed in collaboration with the national *Volunteering in NHS Scotland* programme (Scottish Health Council) which supports health boards in their own deployment of volunteers. With its focus on third sector volunteering in NHS settings, *Clear Pathway* complements the existing national programme. The project is funded by the Scottish Government's Directorate of Population Health Improvement for one year. A project

reference group of key stakeholders from health boards and the third sector will inform the development of guidance and case studies.

Outcomes

The project is designed to achieve the following outcomes:

Short term: NHS Boards, staff and third sector partners will be supported to engage, collaborate and exchange knowledge and learning about both benefits and risks of deploying third sector volunteers in NHS settings. NHS and third sector partners will be better able to work co-productively to manage risks.

Medium term: NHS Boards and third sector partners will have access to guidance supporting them to introduce consistent measures to better enable volunteers to contribute to safe, effective and person centred care.

Longer term: the effectiveness of the volunteer contribution to the delivery of health outcomes will be enhanced.

Project outputs

The project will develop guidance and case studies for the use of health boards and third sector organisations.

Clear Pathway will include the following activities:

- Facilitate engagement events in selected health board areas, supporting NHS and third sector participants to identify their current levels of engagement around volunteering, as well as gaps and opportunities for improving partnership working around volunteering. The Engagement Matrix tool will be promoted to support local facilitation as appropriate.
- Conduct an electronic survey of third sector organisations to capture information about the nature and extent of third sector volunteering in NHS settings, including challenges, current practice and opportunities.
- Hold a focus group of third sector volunteers deployed in NHS settings
- Engage through other stakeholders including local Third Sector Interfaces who may already working with their NHS board and/or Integration Authority on volunteering matters
- Scope and draft guidance, taking cognisance of existing legislation and guidance.

Further information

To find out more and to sign up to be kept informed or get involved, contact Lesley Munro, Project Manager: lesley.munro@vhscotland.org.uk or 0131 474 6154.