

Volunteering with NHFT

Council of Governors Meeting 5th July 2016

Introduction

NHFT have commissioned VIN to provide a 'volunteer coordinator' which is me.

I started in March and have been getting to know the trust and the various volunteers and volunteering opportunities already going on in the Trust.

I have had a number of meetings with various members of staff involved with volunteers.

This initiative is, in part, a response to the Savile Inquiry and resulting recommendations (particularly for the NHS) but also to ensure we have appropriate and consistent policies, procedures, processes, structures and support for our existing, and new volunteers. VIN will also then go on to coordinate the recruitment of new volunteers.

A further component will be to develop appropriate support packages/training for managers so they can better support volunteers.

Where we are now

I have been gathering information on volunteers across the trust and have at the moment 63 on record.

Some of the roles they are carrying out are:

- Ward Assistants
- Library
- Charity Shop
- Café
- Hairdressing
- Gardening
- Group support
- OT and Physio Assistants
- Chaplaincy
- Forensic Psychology assistant
- Admin/clerical
- Zumba and metal work classes

Volunteers and the Trust

Volunteers help to provide a higher level of service than would otherwise be possible.

The Trusts approach to volunteering will strengthen its contribution to the local community through providing opportunities for volunteering and encouraging local people to contribute their experience, knowledge and skills to give something back to society.

Volunteering in the Trust will:

- Support social inclusion and vocational development for our service users – to help them live fulfilled lives, linking in with our vision, offering opportunities within the Trust or helping people find volunteer opportunities in the local community
- Act as a potential designated pathway into employment
- Raise awareness of a range of disabilities including mental health, learning disabilities, long term conditions, and to break down stigma by offering volunteer opportunities to the general public to 'reach in' to our services.
- Support service delivery through bringing in fresh expertise new skills, additional time and different perspectives.

Who can volunteer

- Members of the general public and paid members of the NHFTs staff can volunteer.
- No Volunteer can be accepted under the age of sixteen or eighteen if placed within a palliative care setting or mental health department. With the exception of Volunteer drivers, there is no upper age limit provided that the potential Volunteer can meet the required recruitment criteria.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are fully entitled to volunteer including those appealing against a decision to refuse them asylum and those who are registered with the International Organisation for Migration and awaiting return to their own country.
- There is no restriction on people from European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) countries coming to the UK to volunteer with the exception of those from Bulgaria and Romania who should check their eligibility to volunteer by contacting the UK Border Agency. The ultimate responsibility of all new and potential volunteers to check whether they are allowed to volunteer rests with the individual.
- People from outside the EU who have a visa to work or study in the UK may volunteer as long as they are still undertaking the activity stated on their visa. People on visitor visas are not allowed to volunteer in the UK.
- Claimants of Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), Income Support and Incapacity Benefit may volunteer without their benefits being affected provided they receive no more than the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. There is no hours limit in these three cases although JSA claimants must be available for and actively seeking paid work.

Definition of Volunteering

- The definition of a Volunteering is... “an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives”.
- Volunteers do not have a distinct legal status in the same way that paid staff do and are not covered by employment law. Care must be taken to avoid any circumstances which could be interpreted to indicate that Volunteers are employees.
- Volunteers should not find themselves financially disadvantaged as a direct result of their voluntary involvement.
- Volunteers must not be involved in clinical or medical care.
- Volunteers will not be used to fill vacant or temporary posts. Their activity should complement the work of paid staff, not be a substitute for it.

Requirements from a volunteer

Volunteers will be required to do the following:

- Attend an informal chat
- Complete a health questionnaire
- Complete a DBS check where appropriate
- Provide referees
- Complete 10 mandatory training modules in line with Skills for health requirements that the trust is signed up to by learning and development
- Preferably give a minimum of a 6 month commitment due to the investment in support for each volunteer.
- Sign a volunteer agreement that lays out expectations from the trust and what the volunteer can expect from us.

Where I am at the moment

- Written a protocol that has been finalised and is now being sent to those staff who will agree for it to be introduced
- Putting in place a structure for recruitment of volunteers
- Instigated a procedure for all volunteers to be added to ESR
- Agreed mandatory training requirements for volunteers, with a view to investigate how we can simplify these for volunteers.
- Have been set up to carry out DBS checks.
- Set up personal files for all volunteers
- Set up a database with current volunteers
- Plan to start recruiting from July although there are already a number of possible volunteers in the pipeline.

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