

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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Governance or Assurance Committee	Area Partnership Forum
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VOLUNTEERING POLICY

CONTENTS

- i) Consultation and Distribution Record
- ii) Change Record

1. INTRODUCTION
2. AIM, PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES
3. SCOPE
4. PRINCIPAL CONTENT
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
7. COMMUNICATION PLAN
8. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – MONITORING AND REVIEW
9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
10. SUMMARY OF POLICY / FAQs
11. REFERENCES
12. CHECKLIST

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

CONSULTATION AND DISTRIBUTION RECORD	
Contributing Author / Authors	- E, Martin, Volunteering Services Manager, , Previous - M, Fraser, Head of Human Resources
Consultation Process / Stakeholders:	- Joint Policy Forum Members - Volunteering Governance Group
Distribution:	- NHS Lanarkshire Intranet - NHS Lanarkshire Public Website

CHANGE RECORD			
Date	Author	Change	Version No.
January 2010	Voluntary Services Manager Head of Patient Affairs	Revised Volunteering Policy to incorporate Vision of Volunteering and Volunteering Strategy	1
30 October 2012	Voluntary Services Manager	Amended front sheet Amended Stakeholders Improved accessibility of document	2
28 December 2012	Head of Patient Affairs	Improved accessibility of document	2
18 March 2013	Voluntary Services Manager	Amend to include comments from engagement exercise	3
23 October 2015	Voluntary Services Manager	Amended front sheet Amended stakeholders Highlighted fast track review	4
19 October 2016	Voluntary Services Manager	Continuation of sections that needed to stay Referencing of PIN Policy Updating of NHS Lanarkshire Volunteering Priorities	5
16 November 2016	Voluntary Services Manager	Updated following engagement with Stakeholders	6
May 2018	Deputy HRD	Policy reviewed against GDPR legislation – no change required	6

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

November 2018	Voluntary Services Manager	Change of responsible director following move of volunteering to HR	6
December 2019	Voluntary Services Manager Head of Human Resources	Regular Policy Review Additional Appendix on Staff Volunteering and the parameters for that Updated section on appropriate volunteer roles in light of STUC / VDS agreement reinstating statement on industrial action	7
January 2023	Voluntary Services Manager	Regular Policy Review Updated following engagement with Stakeholders	8
January 2026	Volunteering Services Manager	Regular Policy Review Removal of appendix on staff volunteering and volunteer procedures and signposted to where to find these Roles and responsibilities information added Quality improvement detail added	9

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Volunteers make a key contribution to the life and work of NHS Lanarkshire and the wider community it serves. The Scottish Government's National Framework for Volunteering defines it as

"A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary." (Volunteering for All, Our National Framework, Scottish Government, 2019)

The National Framework recognises that volunteering exists on a spectrum ranging from neighbourliness at an individual level to formal volunteering with an organisation at the other end. This policy is intended to demonstrate how NHS Lanarkshire will meet its obligations as a volunteer engaging and supporting organisation at the formal end of the spectrum.

Volunteers play an essential role in supporting the work of NHS Lanarkshire and enhancing the wellbeing of the communities it serves. Both Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire's *Volunteering Vision for North Lanarkshire* and Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire's *Volunteering Strategy* emphasise volunteering as a freely chosen contribution of time, skills, and compassion that strengthens community health, resilience, and connection. These strategies recognise volunteering as a broad spectrum—from informal acts of neighbourliness to structured roles within organisations such as NHS Lanarkshire. This policy outlines how NHS Lanarkshire fulfils its responsibilities as a host organisation operating at the formal end of that spectrum, ensuring volunteers are supported, valued, and able to make a meaningful impact within healthcare settings (Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, 2023 and Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire 2024).

- 1.2 While successful implementation of this policy will ensure compliance with current legislation and national policy, NHS Lanarkshire also recognises both the moral and business case for maintaining good practice in relation to the involvement of volunteers within the organisation.
- 1.3. Volunteering in NHS Lanarkshire happens in a number of ways: the majority of volunteers are engaged directly by NHS Lanarkshire but others volunteer via a voluntary organisation. NHS Lanarkshire expects volunteers from voluntary organisations to follow the spirit of this policy and ensure that robust systems are in place to support safe, effective and person centred volunteering regardless of the source of recruitment.

2. AIM, PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

The purpose of this policy is to:-

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

- Establish NHS Lanarkshire as an organisation which is welcoming to volunteers.
- Recognise that the role of volunteers within NHS Lanarkshire (whatever role they carry out) is complementary to the role of paid staff and does not substitute for it.
- Set out the expectations of NHS Lanarkshire for NHS Lanarkshire staff volunteering within the organisation in addition to their substantive posts.
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- Define the roles, rights and responsibilities of the organisation and its volunteers.
- Recognise that volunteering can benefit the health and wellbeing of the individual volunteer and has real benefits to the local community.
- Encourage and enable the involvement of volunteers from socially diverse backgrounds, recognising the pivotal role that NHS Lanarkshire has as anchor organisation in order to positively influence the health and wellbeing of the communities it serves.
- Establish a relationship between Voluntary Organisations in Lanarkshire and NHS Lanarkshire in order to improve the volunteer experience, ensuring there is robust governance in place to safely involve volunteers

NHS Lanarkshire has a Strategic Improvement Plan for volunteering which was last updated in October 2022 following input from stakeholders.

The main Strategic Aims are:

Volunteering is 'owned' by all of those who have an interest in it.

Volunteering in Lanarkshire puts patient and volunteer safety at its heart and is volunteer centred

Volunteering activity is actively evaluated to demonstrate the impact that it has on volunteers and patients

3. **SCOPE**

3.1 **Who is the Policy intended to Benefit or Affect?**

The Volunteering Policy, principles and accompanying procedures are intended primarily for use by NHS Lanarkshire employees and volunteers. The policy uses a risk management approach which facilitates volunteer involvement but ensures the safety of individual volunteers, NHS patients and staff.

3.2 **Who are the Stakeholders**

A commitment to these principles is expected from voluntary organisations whose volunteers have a role within NHS Lanarkshire. NHS Lanarkshire respects the independence of these voluntary organisations and recognises that they are responsible for the management of volunteers working on specific projects.

3.3 **Public Partnership Forums (PPFs) involve local service users, carers and the public in the improvement of health services and are facilitated by NHS Lanarkshire. Due to the completely different nature of involvement in PPFs, traditional approaches to**

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

volunteering and volunteering management are not always appropriate and they therefore do not come under the auspices of the Volunteering Policy.

- 3.4 NHS Lanarkshire will work closely with its Local Authority Partners to provide a co-ordinated approach to volunteering within the Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- 3.5 NHS Lanarkshire takes care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.

4. PRINCIPAL CONTENT

- 4.1 There are many benefits derived from volunteering: to the organisation; to the patient; to the individual volunteer; and to the wider community. Volunteers improve the quality of patients' experiences: giving patients the opportunity to spend time with volunteers allows staff to devote more time to professional roles. Patients, in particular those who are socially isolated, benefit from volunteer input and friendship. The wider community benefits greatly from an NHS which is more reflective of, and reactive to, the needs of local people.

However, the greatest benefit of volunteering should be to the individual volunteer. Volunteering brings a range of health benefits, particularly to the mental health and wellbeing of the volunteer. It increases self-confidence, develops and renews skills and provides a sense of belonging. NHS Lanarkshire therefore strives to provide a high quality volunteering experience.

- 4.2 NHS Lanarkshire believes that volunteers are complementary to the role of paid staff and do not substitute for them. We are committed to ensuring that:
- Tasks carried out by volunteers do not replace the work of paid employees.
 - All volunteer opportunities offered by NHS Lanarkshire will have formal volunteer role descriptions which are endorsed by the NHS Lanarkshire staff side as appropriate tasks for volunteers to undertake using the following principles:
 - o Volunteers are not permitted to take on tasks formerly undertaken by paid employees or to work in ways which facilitate a decrease in paid employment.
 - o Volunteers do not take on tasks which have been identified as necessary for the delivery of clinical care but are not currently part of the funded establishment. This includes administrative support roles.
 - The management of the volunteers should take place at as close a level as possible to where the volunteers are placed. This means that :-
 - o Staff at all levels and those who use the service are clear about the role of volunteers so as to foster good working relationships between staff, patients, service users and volunteers.
 - o Training and support is provided to those working alongside volunteers.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

o Staff at ward and operational levels take an active role in introducing and supporting volunteers into their new roles.

- The safety and wellbeing of patients, users of the service and staff are paramount. The standards of care and conduct for volunteers must be of the same high quality as that for paid staff.
- At times of industrial action within the organisation, volunteers should not be asked to take on any of the duties that would otherwise be carried out by a member of staff who is on strike.

- 4.3 NHS Lanarkshire works closely with a wide range of voluntary and community organisations, including service-providing charities, formal partners, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, and other community planning bodies. While recognising that these organisations are independent, NHS Lanarkshire expects them to follow comparable standards for volunteer recruitment, selection, and vetting. Formal agreements will outline these shared expectations when volunteers support NHS services indirectly. NHS Lanarkshire also values the key role VANL and VASLan play in promoting volunteering locally and helping connect volunteers with opportunities across the health service.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Executive Lead for Volunteering – Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate, Governance and Culture & Director of HR

- The Executive Lead for Volunteering has overall governance responsibility for NHS Lanarkshire's volunteering programmes, and updates the HSCP Chief Officers on new policies or Government directives that directly impact volunteers.

5.2 Strategic Lead for Volunteering - Head of Human Resources - Operations

- NHS Lanarkshire's Strategic Lead for Volunteering responsibilities include:
 - o Communication and engagement with the Volunteering in NHSScotland programme
 - o Escalation of important issues to the Executive Lead
 - o Influencing local strategy in keeping with national policy
 - o Sharing and developing local practice to support the development of volunteering.

5.3 Volunteering Service

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

- The Volunteering Service sits in the Human Resources Directorate, comprising of one Volunteering Manager and one Voluntary Services Programme Assistant
- The Volunteering Service:
 - Implements local policy and procedure in keeping with national and local policy, guidance and their role scope and remit
 - Contributes to the national Volunteer Managers Network and the Community of Practice
 - Recruits, inducts, trains and supports volunteers in NHS Lanarkshire in line with the principles and standards outlined in this policy
 - Liaises with and advises named contacts so they can support their volunteers in line with the principles and standards outlined in this policy.

5.4 Named Contacts – Responsible for Hosting Volunteers

- To help develop services, staff such as clinical leads and operational managers are encouraged to contribute to designing suitable, purposeful and effective volunteer roles. Before any recruitment takes place, the Volunteering Service will meet with the relevant staff to confirm that volunteers are genuinely required and that the service has the capacity and resources to support them. A clear and agreed role description will be created in advance of any volunteer involvement. Each volunteer will also be given a designated point of contact—a member of NHS Lanarkshire staff within the service they are supporting—who has the appropriate skills and experience to guide, support and develop them in their role.

5.5 Volunteers

- Volunteers are expected to :-
 - Complete any required induction or training
 - Comply with all relevant board procedures and policies
 - Complete appropriate Disclosure Scotland criminal record checks depending on the role requirement
 - Sign a volunteer agreement and confidentiality statement
 - Be aware of immunisation protocols recommended by the board
 - Wear NHS Lanarkshire ID badges at all times and return to Voluntary Services at the end of volunteer placement
 - Undertake volunteer duties and agreed days and times
 - Inform their named contact or voluntary services team if they are unable to attend their volunteering placement
 - Give as much notice as possible if they wish to cease volunteering
 - Raise any issues of concern with their named contact or voluntary services team

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

- Inform the voluntary services if any changes in personal contact details
- Inform the voluntary services team of any changes to their health
- Carry out their volunteer role within the scope and boundaries set out in the volunteer role description

5.7 Health and Safety

5.7.1 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Under the Health and Safety etc. Act 1974 there is a duty of care imposed upon NHS Lanarkshire as the employer as well as a duty on the volunteer to take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and others.

The duty extends to the provision of such information, instruction and training as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of employees, including volunteers.

Volunteers have a duty to co-operate with NHS Lanarkshire so far as is necessary to enable the employer or any other person to comply with a duty or requirement imposed by health and safety law. NHS Lanarkshire's Volunteer Procedures and Protocol for Involving NHS Lanarkshire Staff as Volunteers is accessible here [NHS Lanarkshire HR Policies](#).

5.7.2 Volunteer Roles

All volunteer roles have a written role description and risk assessment carried out for the tasks that the volunteer would be expected to undertake. This will ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to provide a safe/ healthy and effective work experience. Additionally, all volunteers will be expected to receive Occupational Health clearance in order to volunteer with the organisation. This will require all volunteer roles to have a Job Analysis Framework completed based on the role description and risk assessment.

5.7.3 Risk Assessments

Careful attention must be paid to the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997, which were incorporated into an amendment of the Management of Health and Safety at work regulations in 1999.

Where volunteers under the age of 18 are involved, the Voluntary Services Manager is required to refer to Section 3B of the Health and Safety Control Book to complete a risk assessment evaluation of the potential risks to any young person. This should include physical and psychological risks. Any other relevant risk assessments should be completed as appropriate.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

5.7.4 Infection Prevention and Control

It is important that volunteers follow the same policy guidance on infection control as all NHS Lanarkshire employees. Volunteers are advised of infection prevention and control guidance during their induction. At periods where wards are closed for infection control reasons, volunteers are not expected to attend. When individual rooms are closed for infection prevention and control reasons, volunteers are able to attend but not to access rooms where patients are isolating.

If there are any issues around infection control during the volunteering then the local contact will raise this with the Voluntary Services Department who will liaise with the Infection Control Team.

5.7.5 Confidentiality: Patient consent / Volunteer information

Volunteers must work within the NHS Lanarkshire Information Security Policy. Information on the importance of confidentiality is included in the the confidentiality statement together with an understanding agreement.

Personal information provided by volunteers will be used only for the purposes of registering the volunteer and ensuring a safe volunteering experience. This information will be stored according to the NHS Lanarkshire Information Security Policy.

Disclosures / Protection of Vulnerable Groups

Volunteers are expected to undergo the appropriate level of disclosure for the volunteer role that they will be carrying out. This may mean that the volunteer is expected to become a member of the Registered Workforce through applying for a PVG check. Volunteers are expected to update PVG about changes to addresses etc to keep their PVG registration current.

If the volunteer role is not appropriate for PVG registration then the volunteer will be expected to undergoan appropriate level of disclosure depending on the role. .

The methods of determining which level of check is appropriate and the organisational approach to dealing with criminal convictions disclosed through the recruitment process is outlined in the Once for Scotland Employment Checks Policy and these will apply to volunteers.

Health checks

All volunteers undergo NHS Lanarkshire Pre-Placement Occupational Health Screening and will not be able to commence volunteering until clearance has been received.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to have immunisations recommended by the Occupational Health department.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Insurance

NHS Lanarkshire is a member of CNORIS and is effectively self-insuring for anything other than major incidents.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

The reporting procedure for all NHS Lanarkshire staff should also be used for volunteers. In addition to this the staff member making the report should inform the Voluntary Services Department.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

NHS Lanarkshire recognises that the development of a high quality volunteering programme requires investment of both staff time and resources. No volunteer should be financially disadvantaged by contributing their time to NHS Lanarkshire.

NHS Lanarkshire will resource the costs of volunteering such as marketing, recruitment, vetting, training and support.

NHS Lanarkshire will set out the arrangements for reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for volunteers as part of a separate policy which will be reviewed annually in line with appropriate HMRC and Scottish Government guidance on out of pocket expenses.

7. COMMUNICATION PLAN

The policy and procedure will be communicated via the NHS Lanarkshire Internet and Intranet. Articles referring to the policy will be carried in the Pulse and staff briefs.

8. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Voluntary Services Manager. The policy will be reviewed through the NHSL Volunteer Governance Group before going through the Joint Policy Forum and staff governance for final ratification

8.2 In addition to established governance processes, the HIS volunteering service encourages all health and social care organisations that work with volunteers to take part in an annual HIS volunteering review. As part of this process, volunteers and staff within NHS Lanarkshire will be invited to share their experiences to ensure these align with the principles and standards outlined in this policy.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Alongside these measures, we will continue to track the level of volunteer involvement across our hospitals. It is important to emphasise that this monitoring is not intended to be used for performance management.

The purpose of collecting this information is to help us understand and recognise the value volunteers bring, as well as to identify any notable changes in volunteer numbers or the nature of their contribution.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy meets NHS Lanarkshire's EQIA

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(tick box)

9.1 Access and Equality

A Flexible Approach to Volunteering within NHS Lanarkshire:

NHS Lanarkshire recognises that individuals may want to volunteer with our organisation in different ways. They may want to get involved at a particular hospital, in a particular role or with a particular public health campaign. Therefore volunteers may stay with the organisation for a prolonged period or may only want to be involved in a time-limited campaign. It is important that the volunteering programme is flexible enough to allow this to happen.

However, all volunteers need to undergo the same recruitment and selection procedure regardless of whether they intend their volunteering to be fixed term or on-going.

Given the cost to the organisation of resourcing the volunteer recruitment process, NHS Lanarkshire will expect a minimum commitment of at least one session a week for at least 6 months from every volunteer.

NHS Lanarkshire does not operate a minimum or maximum age for volunteering opportunities. For opportunities where a criminal record disclosure or PVG membership is required there is a minimum age of 16 in order to carry out appropriate levels of screening.

Older volunteers should be treated as individuals with the only measure of suitability being their capability to carry out duties in a safe manner and in line with the organisation's policies and procedures. Where older volunteers are no longer able to conduct their duties, consideration should be given to changing their role or to redeployment elsewhere in the organisation. Where this is not possible the volunteer should be supported to retire with dignity. This may include taking on another voluntary role with other organisations. Advice should be sought from SALUS on the suitability of a volunteer for a particular role based on their own personal risk factors.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

NHS Lanarkshire welcomes volunteers from all parts of Lanarkshire and will not make any assumptions about volunteers being able to afford to subsidise their volunteering. No volunteer should be expected to be out of pocket for volunteering.

10. SUMMARY or FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

10.1 Summary

NHS Lanarkshire recognises the vital contribution volunteers make to patient experience, staff support, and community wellbeing. Volunteering is defined as a freely chosen activity that complements—not replaces—the work of paid staff. The organisation follows national guidance, including the Scottish Government's Volunteering for All framework and the NHS Scotland Volunteering Strategy.

Volunteering takes many forms, from visiting patients in wards to welcoming people to our hospitals. NHS Lanarkshire aims to provide a safe, meaningful, and rewarding experience for all volunteers, ensuring that volunteering benefits the individual as much as the organisation and its patients.

Volunteers must follow NHS Lanarkshire policies, complete appropriate checks, attend training, and work within agreed role boundaries. Staff working within voluntary services are responsible for creating appropriate volunteer roles, supporting volunteers, and ensuring safe practice.

Further information on volunteering including procedures, recruitment, conduct and staff wishing to volunteer please visit: Human Resources – NHS Lanarkshire Policies | NHS Lanarkshire

11. REFERENCES

Volunteering for All, Our National Framework, Scottish Government, 2019
North Lanarkshire Volunteering Strategy 2023 – 2026
Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (2024) Enabling. Facilitating. Championing: VASLan Strategy 2024–2027

12. CHECKLIST

To be sent to Corporate policies:-

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Copy of completed policy
Copy of EQIA
Copy of assurance process document for all policies
Copy of fast-track document if applicable

Uncontrolled when printed