POLICY FOR MANAGING VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES IN NHS AYRSHIRE & ARRAN

Version: 06

Review Date:

Next Review Date:

Reviewer: Assistant Director of Nursing and Person Centred Care Officer - Volunteering

Monitoring Group(s): Area Partnership Forum and Volunteers Steering Group
1. Introduction

There is a well-established history of volunteering within Scotland with the Scottish Government’s National Statistics department stating that as many as 30% of adults participated in volunteering through organisations or groups in Scotland, contributing over 142 million hours per annum and representing an economic value of £2.4 billion to the Scottish economy in 2012 (http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk). Understandably, with these figures highlighting the social and economic impact that volunteers’ contributions have on local communities, in recent years there has been a great deal of emphasis placed on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and the coordination of volunteer activity.

In response to recognising the contributions of volunteers and to allow for a more formulated approach towards the rights, responsibilities and management of volunteers, Volunteer Scotland manage the Investing in Volunteers (IiV) Award which is “the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work” (http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/inyourcountry/iiv-scotland). This standard sets out to measure 9 indicators that organisations must be able to demonstrate evidence of in order to achieve the standard. Commitment to achieving this standard within an NHS setting was further promoted in the Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering in NHS Scotland (CEL 10, 2008) which stated that all NHS Boards must achieve IiV status by March 2011. NHS Ayrshire & Arran were awarded IiV status in 2010 and reassessed in 2014.

Broadly reflecting these national trends, locally, within NHS Ayrshire & Arran volunteers have always played an integral part in performing wide-ranging activities. In recent years there has been increased recognition of the importance of effectively managing volunteers to ensure both the volunteer and their beneficiaries get the most from their respective volunteering roles. As the largest employer in Ayrshire, NHS Ayrshire and Arran is committed to being an exemplar employer, working in partnership with communities serving and fulfilling the responsibility of promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity.

2. Purpose of Policy

In issuing this Volunteering Policy, NHS Ayrshire & Arran aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To formally acknowledge and support the role of volunteers
- Provide more definition around the role of volunteering within NHS Ayrshire & Arran with regards to roles, responsibilities, expectations and support.
- Act as a practical point of reference for all individuals concerned with volunteer coordination procedures to help ensure good practice is consistently carried out.
- Enable increased monitoring and governance to help evidence our volunteering procedures.
- Provide management with a more coordinated approach towards key operational activities to ensure effective volunteer management.

The overarching aim of the policy is to meet the specific requirements set out in the Scottish Government’s Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering in the NHS, with particular emphasis on maintaining the Investing in Volunteers (IiV) status.
3. Context of Policy

For the purpose of this policy it is important firstly to define the term volunteer.

“A person who gives freely and willingly of their time to help improve the health and wellbeing of patients, carers and users of Scotland’s NHS” (A strategy for Developing Volunteering in our NHS Draft. August 2007, Volunteer Development Scotland” (VDS)).

Within NHS Ayrshire & Arran approximate figures for the number of individuals who volunteer range from 1000 – 2500 individuals. These volunteers operate within a variety of roles, too many to mention within this policy, and across a number of service areas.

Volunteers can be divided by the terms managed and non-managed volunteers. The term ‘non-managed volunteer’ describes people who have volunteered to take part in public involvement, community engagement or health service improvement activities and participate as volunteers.

These volunteering activities may include (but are not limited to) participating in:

- Operational, strategic or service planning meetings
- Reference groups
- Working groups
- Consultation events
- Public panels
- Staff training and development
- Service evaluations or survey delivery
- Research studies
- NHS committees

The activities of “non-managed” volunteers is somewhat intangible in that often it is their thoughts, feelings and views that are sought rather than the performing of specific duties.

In contrast, the term ‘managed volunteer’ would be used to describe volunteers involved in activities that are supervised and defined by a named NHS contact, Volunteering Coordinator or NHS employee responsible for volunteering within a specific NHS service. These activities will often have a task description attached.

These volunteering activities may include (but are not limited to):

- Café services
- Chaplaincy support
- Hospital shop services
- Hospital welcoming
- Trolley service
- Volunteer driving

This policy applies to both managed and non-managed volunteers and in fact is designed to broadly apply to all volunteers within NHS Ayrshire & Arran, including paid employees who volunteer in their own time and volunteers who are involved on NHS Ayrshire & Arran premises through third party partners.
Although it is acknowledged and respected that third party voluntary organisations are likely to have their own independent policies and procedures there is an expectation that there will be a commitment to the principles outlined in NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s policy and volunteers will conduct themselves accordingly. The use of third party volunteers will be assessed on a case by case basis.

It is also important to highlight that although the context of this policy is designed to broadly cover all volunteering roles it is the responsibility of the individual coordinating the individual groups of volunteers to ensure that all relevant procedures have been tailored to their specific groups needs as the diverse nature of the volunteering roles dictates it would not be possible to write a fully comprehensive, prescriptive policy to cover all procedures for each individual volunteer.

The role of the volunteer within the Health Service is quite distinct from that of the voluntary contribution made by members of local or national support groups or external charities. NHS Ayrshire & Arran has no direct responsibility for such volunteers and the support groups/charities will have their own internal policies and procedures. This does not in any way diminish the valuable contribution made by such groups to Health Services within Ayrshire. For example a “Welcomer” at Crosshouse Hospital or a volunteer driver at Ailsa Hospital would be considered an NHS Ayrshire & Arran Health Service volunteer for the purpose of this Policy. Such volunteers provide a direct enhancement to NHS services and are responsible to NHS staff for the tasks which they carry out. NHS Ayrshire & Arran have direct responsibility for these volunteers who are expected to adhere to the organisational policies and procedures where applicable.

4. Benefits of Volunteering

There are a number of benefits that can be gained by individuals who volunteer in addition to those individuals who are impacted by the volunteers’ tasks/duties that they perform. There is a wide range of voluntary agencies and special interest groups active within NHS Ayrshire & Arran who provide a valuable reservoir of goodwill, knowledge, expertise and information to service users within the hospital or community setting.

Benefits to the organisation centre on the provision of additional support in caring for patients, users of services and carers. The benefits to service users are far-reaching and essentially volunteers complement the work of paid staff to enable NHS Ayrshire & Arran provide the best possible service.

Individual volunteers may benefit from a social sense of belonging to a group, an emotional/altruistic feeling of helping others or indeed increased self-esteem as a result of volunteering. Another benefit will be building relevant workplace experience and enhancing employment prospects. This should not be confused with individuals undertaking work experience. Although both are unpaid, work experience tends to be short term and working in a job or shadowing a member of staff with constant supervision.

5. Relationship with NHS Ayrshire and Arran Employees

NHS Ayrshire and Arran is committed to ensuring that:
- The activities/role of volunteers complements the work of our employees and will not be used as a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers will not take on tasks formerly undertaken by employees or to work in ways, which facilitate a decrease in paid employment.
• Volunteers are not asked to do the work of paid staff during times of industrial action; however at such times they may continue with their regular duties.
• Steps are taken to ensure that staff at all levels, are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster, good working relationships between staff and volunteers.
• Volunteer’s roles will be designed to foster mutual benefit.
• Training and support will be made available for those working alongside and managing volunteers.
• The safety and wellbeing of NHS Ayrshire and Arran patients and staff is paramount. The standard of care and conduct of volunteers will be of the same high quality as that of employees.

6. Organisational Expectations of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to:
• Participate in induction sessions and training relevant to their volunteering roles and placements.
• Comply with all NHS Ayrshire and Arran policies and procedures, particularly in relation to Confidentiality, Incident Reporting, Health and Safety, Disclosure Scotland and Occupational Health.
• Undertake their volunteering at agreed times.
• Inform the relevant member of staff, as soon as possible, if they are unable to attend, and if possible in advance.
• Give notice if unable to continue volunteering.
• Raise any issues of concern relating to their volunteering with their NHS named contact person, Voluntary Services Manager or appropriate other.

7. Recruitment & Selection

NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognise the importance of a strong recruitment strategy relating to volunteering as this essentially builds foundations for the future volunteering experience and helps to determine the success of the experience.

As volunteering within healthcare has specific issues arising relating to the need for privacy and confidentiality or the potential exposure to vulnerable people there is a need for a stringent approach to this area to protect all stakeholders.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s volunteering policy:
• Promotes equality of opportunity for all applicants.
• Ensures the recruitment process is fit for purpose.
• Allows volunteers to access advice and support from their designated point of contact at any point in the recruitment process.

8. Health & Safety and Risk Assessment

NHS Ayrshire & Arran is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of volunteers and those affected by volunteers’ activities. NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognises it’s legal and moral duty to ensure an environment and working practices, which are so far as reasonably practicable, free from danger.
Volunteers have similar rights to that of paid staff with regards to the right to operate in an environment that is as safe and supportive as is reasonably practical.

As volunteers carry out such a diverse range of tasks it is essential that there is monitoring in place to ensure such activities are not posing any harm to any of the parties involved in the volunteering experience. In order to assess these risks each NHS named contact will be responsible for ensuring a brief Generic Risk Assessment of the volunteer activity is conducted and storing this record.

With regards to Health and Safety, in addition to the volunteers receiving initial mandatory Health and Safety training they will be encouraged to attend any updated training courses or be briefed on any changes in policy that is relevant to their volunteering duties. As part of the Health and Safety training volunteers will also be given an overview of the Risk reporting system used locally within NHS Ayrshire & Arran and be made aware of who to inform in the event of any incidents or near misses. Volunteers should at all times follow health & safety policies and procedures and have a duty of care to themselves and others who may be affected by their actions. Volunteers have the right to request a copy of the Risk Assessment carried out for their specific volunteering activities.

9. Information and Training

In order for volunteers and the beneficiaries of volunteering activities to get the most out of the experience, ongoing information and training will be offered by NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran will commit to:
- Providing relevant mandatory training for all volunteers who are new to the organisation.
- Ensuring each volunteer has a named individual to contact for any required information.
- Providing appropriate ongoing training as determined by the volunteer groups and the volunteer’s NHS named contact.

10. Support and Supervision

Paid members of staff who are responsible for the coordination of volunteers are responsible for the day to day support and supervision of volunteers within their service areas.

It is important to recognise that volunteers may require different levels of support from paid staff and relationships with individual volunteers should be built with their NHS named contact and the teams they are working with to ensure they are receiving the required level of support.

11. Withdrawing from a Volunteering Role

NHS Ayrshire & Arran will respect a volunteer’s decision to withdraw from a volunteering role at any point throughout the volunteering experience. A volunteer leaving a role should be dealt with professionally and sympathetically by the named contact endeavoring to find out about the experience and reasons as to why the volunteer is withdrawing. References or a statement of achievement will be offered where requested and where deemed appropriate. Volunteers should also be made aware that NHS Ayrshire & Arran can withdraw a specific volunteering opportunity at any time and that as a volunteer they are
not guaranteed ongoing volunteer roles. NHS Ayrshire & Arran will endeavor to give as much notice as possible.

12. Employer-supported Volunteering from Other Organisations

In principle NHS Ayrshire & Arran supports employer-supported volunteering from other organisations.

Employer-supported volunteering has a number of benefits:
- It can lead to increased staff motivation.
- Enhance organisations’ image through positive publicity.
- Allows organisations to demonstrate active community involvement.
- Helps to build stronger links with service users.

Volunteers who fall in to this category will be offered support in the same way as all other volunteers with responsibility for these volunteers being shared by the volunteers own organisation and their NHS Ayrshire & Arran representative.

13. Funding

NHS Ayrshire and Arran recognises that investment is required to deliver on the aspiration of an effective volunteering programme. NHS Ayrshire and Arran is committed to identifying and meeting the costs of involving volunteers, for example, expenses, training and where appropriate designated posts to manage volunteers.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran will ensure
- Staff are aware that when embarking on a volunteering project it is anticipated that funding is generated from individual operational budgets and managed by the budget-holder.
- There is a clear, consistent, accessible and equitable system for claiming reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- Volunteers are adequately covered by insurance whilst they carry out their agreed duties both on NHS Ayrshire and Arran premises and in the community.

14. Application of the Policy

The Volunteer Steering Group will oversee the application of the policy. The Person Centred Care Team will provide practical support to developing volunteering across the service. A Staff handbook and a Volunteers handbook support the application of the policy in practice and can be found on AthenA: http://athena/patcommrels/volunteering/Pages/default.aspx.

15. Partnership working

There are a number of stakeholders concerned with the volunteering activities. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Local Community/Voluntary Groups
- National Voluntary Groups
- Patients/Service Users
- Public Sector Partners
NHS Ayrshire and Arran is committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure an integrated approach to volunteer development that promotes joint working and the sharing of best practice. NHS Ayrshire and Arran will actively develop volunteering at a local level with partners. This includes not only the development of volunteer roles within NHS Ayrshire & Arran, but also volunteer development within co-production projects.

16. Monitoring

The monitoring of volunteer activity is the responsibility of the Volunteers’ Steering Group chaired by the Assistant Director of Nursing (Person Centred Care).

The Assistant Director of Nursing is responsible for establishing the strategic development and monitoring of volunteer management.

Review of this policy will be undertaken by the Volunteers’ Steering Group no less than every two years.