

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 10 August 2026
Title:	Patient Experience: Ruby's Story – Youth Volunteering
Responsible Director:	Jennifer Wilson, Executive Nurse Director
Report Author:	Stephanie Frearson, Interim QI Lead, Patient Experience

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This supports the following Corporate Objectives:

- Better Care - Improving your experience of care
- Better Workplace - Creating a great place for us to work
- Better Value - Delivering innovative and sustainable services for everyone

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

This story highlights the excellent, person-centred work of the Volunteer Service. It highlights benefits to patients and staff and describes how volunteers have opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and the chance to make a positive impact in their community.

The story includes the reflections of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran (NHSAA) Volunteer Manager and Ruby a volunteer who took on the role to gain first-hand experience of working in a clinical environment before making an informed decision about her future career.

2.2 Background

NHSAA has a well established volunteer service that aims to enhance patient care and support staff across various healthcare settings. The volunteer service is designed to enable people to undertake a wide range of rewarding volunteering

placements, providing valuable support to the organisation whilst also enriching the experiences of patients and their families.

The NHSAA Youth Volunteering Strategy was launched in 2024 and sets out NHSAA priorities for supporting the development and sustainability of volunteering opportunities for young people. The service provides young people with opportunities to gain practical experience in health and social care, develop valuable skills, and explore future career pathways while making a meaningful contribution to patient care and community wellbeing.

2.3 Assessment

Volunteers in NHSAA engage in a variety of roles, including:

- **Ward Volunteers:** providing companionship to patients and helping them with holistic activities to support their recovery, such as reading, arts and crafts, music therapy and much more.
- **Administrative Volunteers:** supporting the volunteer service, helping to engage other volunteers in decisions which directly impact on the delivery of the service.
- **Patient Experience:** undertaking inpatient surveys to ensure patients are enabled to share their experiences which will positively impact service delivery.

This story captures Ruby's experience and reflections of volunteering and demonstrates the positive impact that meaningful volunteering opportunities can have on personal development, confidence, and career decision-making. Through her volunteering role within NHSAA, Ruby gained valuable insight into patient-centred care, multidisciplinary teamwork, and the realities of working in a clinical environment, which strengthened her commitment to pursuing a career in nursing.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

Youth volunteers bring significant value to the NHS. They offer fresh perspectives and provide valuable companionship to patients who may be lonely, distressed, or anxious, helping to enhance the overall patient experience and episode of care.

2.3.2 Workforce

The volunteering service plays an important role in supporting the future NHS workforce and healthcare provision. To achieve this, we must broaden volunteer participation and provide meaningful, sustainable opportunities for young people. Youth volunteering benefits both staff and volunteers. Staff gain rewarding opportunities to support and mentor young people, while volunteers develop confidence, employability, and leadership skills, gain valuable workplace experience, and strengthen applications for further education, apprenticeships, and employment.

2.3.3 Financial

There are no significant financial implications arising from youth volunteering. Any costs associated with recruitment, training and supervision of youth volunteers are managed within existing resources.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

No identified risk

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

Impact assessment is not required

2.3.6 Best Value

Demonstrates the value of engaging young people in volunteering roles to enhance the patient experience and support positive outcomes for patients.

2.3.7 Other impact

Safe, Caring & Respectful

Supports our values by highlighting the positive contribution of youth volunteers in delivering compassionate, person-centred care throughout the patient journey.

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement, and consultation

This story is presented to raise awareness of the NHSAA Youth Volunteering Strategy and the contribution that youth volunteers make to our organisation.

2.3.9 Route to the meeting

This story has not been heard at any other meetings but has been shared with the volunteer and the service involved.

2.4 Recommendation

Members are asked to receive this story and recognise the valuable contribution that young volunteers make to our patients, staff, and services.