



## West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership Board

21 January 2025

Summary report	
Item No:	11
Item:	<b>West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Strategy</b>
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Executive summary	
<p>This paper provides an overview of the newly developed West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Strategy which aims to increase collaboration across volunteering within our Integrated Care System (ICS) and build on existing good practice at Place and within organisations and sectors.</p> <p>The work on developing this strategy has been led by the West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Approaches group which comprises of volunteer managers from across our system, including NHS Hospital Trusts, the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS), the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) and Hospices. There has also been input from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and local authorities.</p> <p>The strategy and three priority areas have been shaped with the input of wider stakeholders across the Partnership, and through engagement sessions at place and at ICS level. This includes volunteers themselves.</p> <p>A supporting work plan will set out how we collaborate to deliver against this strategy, and that is currently in the final stages of development and being co-produced with key stakeholders and volunteering leaders across the system.</p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to seek endorsement from the West Yorkshire Partnership Board for the strategy.</p>	
Recommendations and next steps	
<p>Members of the West Yorkshire Partnership Board are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the work and engagement undertaken to date in the development of a West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Strategy.</li> <li>• endorse the strategy; and</li> <li>• commit to strengthening involvement and collaboration in taking forwards this work across our ICS.</li> </ul>	

## Context

1. In West Yorkshire (WY) we have an estimated 132,213 volunteers in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector alone and based on nationally estimated distribution of volunteers across sectors, around a further 22,440 volunteers in WY in the public sector (Mc Garvey et al 2020).
2. In West Yorkshire, we believe volunteering contributes to our ambitions to: create opportunities to become an active citizen; gain experience and potentially move into work; strengthen system resilience; improve patient experience; and health and wellbeing outcomes.
3. There are evident connections between volunteering and the Partnership's [mission, values and behaviours](#) and to supporting our [10 Big Ambitions](#), such as tackling inequalities and achieving a more diverse leadership.
4. The strategy contributes to the delivery of the NHS WY Integrated Care Board (ICB)'s [Joint Forward Plan](#) through; improving health and tackling health inequalities; delivering responsive joined up services; building and retaining our workforce; and strengthening and growing volunteering pathways into employment across the Partnership.
5. Volunteering in health and care can serve as a valuable pathway into employment by offering individuals hands-on experience, skills development, and networking opportunities within the sector. In West Yorkshire, this approach aligns with the [West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter](#), which advocates for fair treatment, job security, and opportunities for advancement. Through volunteering, individuals can gain relevant experience, earn qualifications, and build connections that may lead to paid roles in health and care and beyond. This not only supports personal career development but also promotes a more equitable and inclusive job market, reflecting the Charter's commitment to fair and sustainable work practices.
6. In West Yorkshire we believe volunteering makes a critical contribution to health and care, building resilience and giving the people of West Yorkshire access to additional support and services. We know volunteering can be a route into employment for the economically inactive, part of an individual's recovery journey, or a way for individuals to 'give something back' and gain a sense of purpose and fulfilment.
7. Volunteers are also an integral part of our work tackling health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for our population including the volunteers themselves.

## Progress to date

8. The WY Integrated Volunteering Approaches Group (IVAG) was established two years ago recognising the opportunity to transform volunteering across the

health and care system through cross sector collaboration. The group comprises of volunteer managers from across our ICB, including NHS Hospital Trusts, Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS), the VCSE and Hospices.

9. In 2022 we finalised our [West Yorkshire Volunteering Principles](#) which were endorsed by the People Board and have been widely adopted and implemented across WY and align with similar principles adopted in Humber and North Yorkshire ICB and South Yorkshire ICB.
10. The Strategy builds on these volunteering principles.
  - During 2024, the West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Approaches group has led the development of a West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Strategy for West Yorkshire's Health and Care System. The new strategy builds on work at place and within organisations in all sectors.
  - The strategy and priorities have been developed with the input of key stakeholders throughout the partnership, and through engagement activities at place and at regional level. This includes different sizes and types of organisations (i.e. Hospital Trusts, VCSE, YAS, Hospices) and volunteers themselves.
  - We recognise that across WY, different organisations, geographies and sectors have developed volunteering in different ways, and we want to build on this, aligning approaches to volunteering and working more collaboratively, building resilience and consistency across our system.
11. This strategy sets out our shared priorities for the next five years – those things we believe are better done together on a West Yorkshire footprint across our health and care system. It doesn't aim to capture all the great work we know is happening across West Yorkshire, or the many ambitions and priorities of different parts of the system. It does aim to complement existing volunteering programmes and activities in different organisations and sectors, building on this, identifying and sharing good practice and innovation, and maximising opportunities for collaboration.
12. Our volunteering strategy is based on shared values which are embedded in how we work across West Yorkshire, but the strategy also recognises differences at Place and across sectors.
13. When we talk about our system, we mean all size and type of organisations, all five places (Bradford District and Craven, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield District), all sectors (NHS, VCSE, Hospices, YAS, Hospital Trusts) and at ICB level – everyone who is part of delivering services and support across health and care. When we talk about volunteers, we mean all ages and all types of volunteering.
14. In September 2024 the Strategy was endorsed by the WY ICB People Board.

## The strategy

15. In line with feedback, we have chosen to set out the strategy in a simple one-page diagram – or as ‘a strategy on a page’ – see **Annex A**. This will be underpinned by a more detailed delivery plan setting out specific activities, clear timelines, and details of who will lead each aspect of the work.
16. We have taken a focused approach on what we believe is best done on a WY footprint. We will always try to align our work with Place-based priorities and approaches and will consider current context (i.e., financial, capacity etc.).

## Feedback on the strategy

17. Below are some examples of feedback we have received:

*'As the Healthwatch Volunteer Officer, I have reviewed the proposed strategy and fully support its well-structured and collaborative approach to addressing the volunteering needs in West Yorkshire. The concise, one-page format is particularly effective in conveying the key points clearly, and the context provided by colleagues has been invaluable.'* **HealthWatch Wakefield**

*'It would be good to have a joint approach with other organisations to make volunteering more accessible to all and improve volunteer experience'* **Leeds Mind**

*'We wish to be an active partner in this strategy. As an NHS Trust and Yorkshire-wide organisation, we would like to work with partners to increase diversity in volunteering, to provide fulfilling opportunities to volunteer, and to ensure that the value of volunteering is better understood'* **Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

*'The three themes of access/ inclusion, value/ recognition and experience are all equally important and relevant and relate to current volunteering challenges and experiences'* **Kirklees Council**

*'It aligns with the work we have been doing'* **The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

*'Love the simplicity of a one-page strategy'* **WY ICB Work and Health Board**

## Delivering the strategy

18. The strategy will be underpinned by a delivery plan and owned by the West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Approaches Group (WY IVAG).
19. The WY IVAG will report to the WY People Board.

20. In all our work, we will make sure we can demonstrate the difference we make using data, evidence and the feedback and stories of volunteers themselves, of the organisations they volunteer with, and the communities they connect with.
21. We also recognise the need to influence investment in volunteering across West Yorkshire, both in volunteering infrastructure and to ensure all volunteers receive reasonable expenses, line management and support, training and development.
22. We will review progress every year, including engaging with partners and volunteers, allowing us to adjust our approach and priorities if we need to.

### **Anticipated outcomes:**

23. We anticipate the following outcomes:
  - 1) **Improved volunteer experience** - Greater alignment of volunteering across the ICB leading to increased opportunities for collaboration, and a more consistent, accessible, and inclusive volunteer experience across WY. Easier movement of volunteers across organisations and sectors leading to improved volunteer experience, reduction in costs and increased system resilience.
  - 2) **Patient experience and health and wellbeing outcomes** - Harnessing the value of volunteering to improve patient experience and outcomes, through delivering the right support for patients, in the right place at the right time – whether that is in acute or primary care settings, at home or in the community – is at the core of this strategy.
  - 3) **Workforce transformation** - Through greater collaboration, sharing learning and resources, offering more inclusive pathways into volunteering and potentially into work, and building on good practice, our ambition is to contribute to system wide workforce transformation – including current workforce challenges, patient and volunteer experience, health and wellbeing outcomes for those experiencing the greatest health inequalities and building system resilience.
24. Overall, we anticipate this would lead to a more resilient volunteer network able to respond quickly to health and system emergencies (such as Covid, vaccinations, etc) in a coordinated way.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

25. In West Yorkshire, across our Partnership, we have a diverse range of size and type of organisations, at different levels of development and maturity in terms of volunteering and the resources available – both in terms of capacity and financial investment. This presents challenges, but also opportunities.

26. We recognise that whilst we have many examples of effective volunteering practice, it is fragmented and inconsistent across place, sectors, and organisations, and we are not realising the full potential of volunteering across our system.
27. We are committed to sharing learning, tools and resources, and we will identify opportunities for shared volunteer training and recruitment with the ambition of moving towards a more consistent approach to volunteering, including embedding the WY Volunteering Principles across the system. This will enable easier movement of volunteers within our system.
28. We are committed to working together to strengthen capacity and investment recognising the current financial context we are operating in, and where possible we will collaborate to attract funding and other resources to strengthen volunteering in West Yorkshire.
29. With no specific resource or capacity currently allocated to this work, we recognise this is a journey and progress is largely based on goodwill. But we believe we have already made significant progress and are committed to continue progressing this work.

### **Recommendations**

30. Members of the WY Partnership Board are asked to:
  - note the work and engagement undertaken to date in the development of a West Yorkshire Integrated Volunteering Strategy.
  - endorse the strategy; and
  - commit to strengthening involvement and collaboration in taking forwards this work across our Integrated Care System.

## Access and Inclusion

## Value and Recognition

## Volunteer Experience

### Our ambition

Volunteering is more accessible to a wider, more diverse population group.

Volunteering is better understood and valued across the system.

West Yorkshire is a great place for all to volunteer.

### The challenge

Across the system, there are known barriers that volunteers experience when accessing volunteering opportunities which risks widening the inequalities gap.

Across the system, there are significant discrepancies in the way volunteering is recognised, resourced, invested in and valued.

Across the system, there is considerable variation in volunteering experience due to differences in practice, investment, capacity, and how volunteers are valued.

### Making it happen

- Develop flexible routes into volunteering for those experiencing the greatest barriers and health inequalities
- Identify existing evidence-based good practice and scale across the system
- Produce a shared diversity data set.

- Develop an evidence base of current investment and costs for volunteering across the system
- Collaborate to bring additional investment into the system
- Build a network of volunteering advocates
- Deliver a system response to challenges faced by the volunteering community.

- Develop activity with volunteers to accurately understand current volunteer experience across the system
- Review, expand and embed the West Yorkshire volunteering principles
- Share good practice and identify opportunities for collaboration that can be utilised by all organisations.

### Made a difference

- Volunteers will report a better experience in accessing volunteering
- Increased diversity of volunteers which reflect our communities
- People will experience better care by connecting with volunteers they relate to.

Future volunteer-related decision making is informed by evidence and influenced by advocates.

- Volunteers will report a positive and rewarding experience
- Volunteers experience positive personal outcomes and achieve their personal goals
- The West Yorkshire volunteering principles will be widely embedded
- Good practice will be adapted and shared across the system.