

West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership – OUR KEY PRINCIPLES FOR INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS – Updated July 2024

Context

The volunteer landscape has seen significant changes over the last few years; from the rise of community response and emergency micro volunteering, coupled with many well-established volunteer programmes put on hold, or volunteers standing down due to health reasons or as a result of the pandemic. At times, volunteers have been viewed as the solution to address vital issues such as workforce capacity within health and care settings. Nationally the [Vision for Volunteering](#) recognises these fundamental changes and the need to put the volunteers (rather than what they can do for us), at the centre of our policy decisions to tackle long-standing inequalities. As Volunteer Management professionals, we are committed to high quality and inclusive volunteering.

These Volunteer Principles articulate our agreed, shared standards and ways of working for the benefit of volunteers, staff, our partners, and our communities. They aim to bring a shared approach and clear framework for all the volunteering across our Partnership ensuring all our volunteers are supported, safe and have meaningful, appropriate volunteering roles, alongside giving us all confidence that volunteering is accessible, inclusive and delivered to high standards across West Yorkshire.

These principles form the basis of any future strategic decision making and developments in relation to volunteer programmes across West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership.

Who we are

These Volunteer Principles have been shaped by the Integrated Volunteering Approaches (IVA) Group for West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. The IVA group supports collaborative working that will embed, value, and raise the profile of volunteering across all partners working in Health and Care. New members working in volunteering are welcome to join this group if their organisation share our Volunteer Principles.



Organisations signed up to these Volunteer Principles:

Age UK Wakefield District
Auntie Pam's (Kirklees Council)
Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust
Bradford Hospitals Charity
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
British Triathlon Federation
Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust
Community Action Bradford and District
Eden's Forest CiC
Forget Me Not Children's Hospice
Healthwatch Kirklees and Healthwatch Calderdale
Healthwatch Leeds
Healthwatch Wakefield
Home-Start Kirklees
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Locala Health and Wellbeing
Nova Wakefield
South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
S2R Support to Recovery
The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Third Sector Leaders Kirklees
Voluntary Action Leeds
Voluntary Sector Infrastructure (VSI) Alliance (Calderdale)
Wakefield Hospice
West Yorkshire ICB
Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust



What is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who chooses to spend their time, without being paid, to help a person, community, place, or organisation (outside of their family relationships). Our key principles are in relation to formal volunteering – e.g. volunteering for the NHS or a registered charity or constituted group in West Yorkshire.

What a Volunteer isn't

- × A volunteer is not a work placement or work experience student.

Although these often come under the remit of a Volunteer Manager, it is important that we acknowledge they fall outside of these volunteer principles and will have separate procedures and protocols.

Our principles

Our principles are set out below, to be upheld by all our partners in relation to the commissioning and delivering of our volunteer programmes.

	Our principles	What this means
Volunteer Experience	V1) Voluntary	Volunteers will not replace paid staff or have expectations placed on them similar to an employee contract. Volunteers will not be wholly responsible for delivering a service and it will not cost volunteers money to volunteer.
	V2) Meaningful	Volunteers will add value and enhance services. Volunteers will clearly understand their role and purpose.
	V3) Inclusive	Volunteers will reflect the diverse communities of West Yorkshire. We will work collectively to break down barriers to volunteering, inspiring people in all communities to access volunteering.
	V4) Flexible	Our volunteering offer will be as accessible and flexible as possible to suit people's lifestyles and needs. We will work in partnership, so volunteers know about and can access a wide range of volunteering opportunities.
	V5) Impactful	We will collect evidence and gain insight into the impact of volunteers. Volunteers will know and understand the impact they are making through their volunteering.
	V6) Fulfilling	Our volunteer roles will provide positive and rewarding experiences.



		<p>We will support volunteers to reach their potential. Volunteering will enhance the health and wellbeing of those volunteering.</p>
	V7) Safe and Supported	<p>Volunteers will receive appropriate training and development opportunities. Volunteers will receive regular support and guidance and roles will be risk managed to keep patients/service users, staff and volunteers safe.</p>
Volunteer Management	M1) Supporting Recovery	<p>Our volunteer programmes will support individuals with their physical and mental recovery both in physical settings and in the community. Those recovering from illness will be welcomed into volunteering to aid their recovery.</p>
	M2) Future workforce	<p>Volunteering will provide a positive progression for those looking for a career in health and care services and will inspire young people. Volunteering will enhance our services to patients/service users and provide clinicians/professionals with an opportunity to focus on supporting the patient/service user.</p>
	M3) Relationships	<p>We will work with national and local partners and programmes where they meet our volunteer principles and benefit volunteers. We will work collectively and identify who is best placed to develop a volunteer programme - acknowledging our strengths and weaknesses and working collaboratively rather than competitively.</p>
	M4) Advocacy	<p>We will showcase what we do well and embrace opportunities with national and regional partners that add value. We will be advocates for high quality volunteering and share learning across the partnership to improve our practice and ensure Volunteers who want to support health and care services receive a quality experience.</p>
	M5) Health inequalities	<p>We will address health inequalities through our volunteer programmes, both in the programmes we develop and the volunteers we recruit. We will be agile and respond to emergency and long-term need- identifying who is best placed to deliver.</p>
	M6) Capacity and Consistency	<p>We seek to ensure a consistent level of opportunity to volunteer across West Yorkshire. We will campaign for volunteer management professionals to be recognised and invested in within all sectors.</p>



Our Principles are supported by robust and inclusive volunteer policies, procedures and approaches. Our good practice checklist is outlined below (this list is not exhaustive):

- ✓ Volunteer Policy
- ✓ Volunteer Role Description
- ✓ Volunteer Agreement/ Expectations
- ✓ Volunteer Risk Assessment
- ✓ Volunteer Handbook
- ✓ Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- ✓ Volunteer Problem Solving Procedures
- ✓ Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan
- ✓ Volunteer Expenses Policy
- ✓ Volunteers covered by organisation's Insurance
- ✓ Volunteer adverts promoted via Volunteer Centres
- ✓ Volunteers have named contact
- ✓ Volunteers offered regular support and supervision
- ✓ Volunteers share their feedback
- ✓ Support in place for volunteers with additional needs
- ✓ Data collected on Volunteer impact and experience
- ✓ Volunteers supported with their next steps

For examples from our checklist please contact the Chair of the IVA group: becky@tslkirklees.org.uk

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES:

Volunteer Management: <https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/>

NCVO Safeguarding Toolkit <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding>

Health and safety and Volunteers: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/employer/index.htm#article>

Helpforce Resource Centre: <https://helpforce.community/connect/resource-centre>





QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT:

Investing in Volunteers: <https://investinginvolunteers.co.uk/>

Kirklees Volunteering Quality Award: <https://tslkirklees.org.uk/what-is-kvqa/>

Leeds Volunteering Quality Mark: <https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/leeds-volunteering-quality-mark/#:~:text=The%20Quality%20Mark%20is%20a,ensure%20that%20standards%20are%20maintained.>

Community Action Bradford & District Quality Mark: <https://cabad.org.uk/volunteering-standard/>

Calderdale Quality Mark - Contact: charlie.johnston@vsialliance.org.uk

