

Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project Final Report



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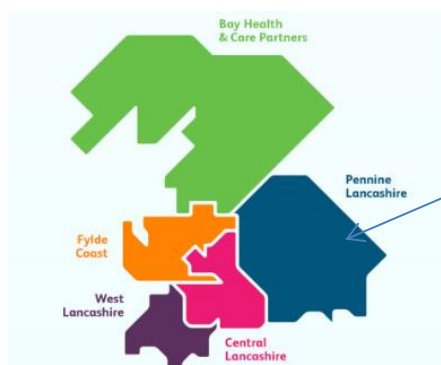


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1.0 Introduction

The Pennine Lancashire Volunteer project is an initiative of the 'Together a Healthier Future' (TaHF) Integrated Care Partnership. TaHF is a partnership between organisations in three sectors: the voluntary, community and faith sector, the NHS and Local Authority, (fig. 1) with the aim of transforming health and social care in Pennine Lancashire. TaHF is one of five integrated care partnerships within Lancashire and South Cumbria making up the overarching 'Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System' (<https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/>).



- East Lancashire Hospital NHS Trust
- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Blackburn with Darwen CCG
- East Lancashire CCG
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector (VCFS)

Fig.1: Together a Healthier Future Partners

The volunteer project was initiated in 2017 by Kate Quinn (Director of HR & Workforce at East Lancashire Hospitals Trust) who following the Lampard review, and recognising the value placed on the VCFS in supporting delivery of new models of care, wanted to specifically focus on Volunteering in Health and Social Care (H&SC). This was to support the aspiration within the Pennine Plan for 'One Workforce' which includes a greater and more effective use of the VCFS to support health and social care within the community.

The project was subsequently funded by Health Education England (HEE) with the specific aim of reviewing volunteer services across the three sectors to develop a holistic approach. Volunteering plays a huge role in bringing communities together and improving health and wellbeing of volunteers as well as service users. Twelve organisations opted to join the project working group, (Table 1 below) representing thousands of active volunteers deployed across Health and Social Care in Pennine Lancashire.

Organisation	Sector
Advocacy Focus	VCFS
Age UK	VCFS
Community CVS (Blackburn)	VCFS
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Local Authority
Blackburn with Darwen Healthwatch	VCFS
Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS	VCFS
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	NHS
Families, Health and Wellbeing Consortium	VCFS
Hyndburn & Ribble CVS	VCFS
Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust	NHS
Lancashire Volunteer Partnership	Public Services
Shelter	VCFS

Table 1: Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project Partners

2.0 Volunteering Under the Spotlight

2.1 **The Lampard Report**¹ found that adverse incidents involving volunteers of third sector organisations had exposed the poor governance of volunteering programmes. How risks were managed was inconsistent across NHS Boards and in some cases, even within the same Board. This situation exposed volunteers and others to unnecessary risks. It was recommended that all NHS Trusts should review their voluntary services arrangements and ensure that:

- They are fit for purpose;
- Volunteers are properly recruited, selected and trained and are subject to appropriate management and supervision;
- All voluntary services managers are provided with development opportunities and are properly supported;
- All NHS Trusts should ensure that their staff and volunteers undergo formal refresher training in safeguarding at the appropriate level at least every three years;
- All NHS Hospital Trusts should undertake DBS checks (including, where applicable, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) list checks) on their staff and volunteers every three years. The implementation of this recommendation should be supported by NHS Employers.

2.2 **The King's Fund** in their 2018 review 'The Role of Volunteering in the NHS'² made the following recommendations:

- Ensure there is a formal volunteering strategy in all NHS Acute Care Trusts;
- Any volunteering strategy needs to be adequately resourced, and volunteer managers supported, for example through membership of the National Association of Voluntary Service Managers (see www.navsm.org);
- Trusts should be proactive in considering how to extend the range of volunteering roles;
- Trusts should ensure implementation of the good practice guidance for recruiting and managing volunteers in the NHS;
- Ensure frontline staff (in all groups and at all levels) are empowered and trained to have supportive working relationships with volunteers;
- Develop clear lines of communication between hospital volunteer services and frontline staff teams;
- Raise the profile of volunteers in hospitals. Volunteers can be overlooked or not seen as a 'part of the team' by staff;
- Board members and senior managers should play an important role in ensuring volunteers are recognised for their unique contributions to the working of hospitals and rewarded for the time they give up;

Clearly the Lampard and the King's Fund recommendations should apply equally to the VCFS and Local Authority as a matter of course.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/407209/KL_lessons_learned_report_FINAL.pdf

²https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/Role_volunteers_NHS_December_2018.pdf

2.3 **The Five Ways to Wellbeing** (fig 2 below) are a set of evidence-based³ public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population:



Fig 2: The Five Ways to Wellbeing

Give - Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

Be active - Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting wellbeing.

Learn - Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Connect - There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. It is clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

Take notice - Remembering to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances self-understanding and allows positive choices based on individual values and motivations.

The five ways to wellbeing are well known to be strongly associated with volunteering. A recent study by the NCVO⁴ found that the main reasons for volunteering were the physical and mental well-being benefits.

This report indicates how each of the eight project workstreams contribute to the five ways to wellbeing: **'Connect'** **'Be Active'** **'Take Notice'** **'Learn'** **'Give'**

³ They were developed by the New Economics Foundation as the result of a commission by Foresight, the UK governments futures think-tank, as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing.

⁴ https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Summary.pdf

2.4 **The NCVO report: 'Time Well Spent'**⁵ comprised a survey involving over 10,000 volunteers. The survey found that 96% who had given time over the previous 12 months said they were 'very or fairly satisfied with their volunteering experience'. The survey findings overall indicated that most volunteers enjoy the experience, feel well supported and that they felt recognised for their volunteering.

The survey findings show the constantly changing landscape of volunteering with people moving in and out of participation over their lifetime. The vast range of volunteer journeys means that organisations have to manage many expectations. For example; around 23% of young adults said that 'they expected the process of getting involved to be quicker', compared with just 9% of those aged 55 and over.

Over two-thirds said that volunteering helped them feel less socially isolated. However this was largely from people in the higher socio-economic groups and there appeared to be less involvement from lower socio-economic groups who are in turn more likely to need H&SC services. Such data should help inform volunteering recruitment campaigns in targeting those groups less represented to ensure better diversity.

The report identified eight key factors (fig 3 below) that make up a quality volunteering experience. This is useful for practitioners and policymakers thinking about how they can support volunteers.

It is clear that many people stop volunteering due to changing circumstances, and most importantly the survey findings also highlight that the quality of the experience matters for future involvement. A good quality volunteering experience for an individual is likely to encourage them to come back to volunteering over their lifetime.



Fig 3: Time Well Spent – contributory factors

⁵https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Summary.pdf

3.0 Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy.

A working group representing the twelve partner organisations was formed in November 2017. The group identified eight volunteer project workstreams (Fig 4 below) set out in the Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy⁶ launched in August 2018.



Fig4: Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project Workstreams

Five strategic project outcomes were identified:

- Ensure that volunteers are consistently trained, recruited and supported in Pennine Lancashire and receive a quality volunteering experience;
- Raise the profile of volunteering and the associated benefits;
- Support communities and vulnerable people in their health and wellbeing; either directly from services or through volunteering itself;
- Ensure that appropriate support, resources and guidance is available for the management of volunteers, including sharing challenges, sharing good practice and ensuring the supporting infrastructure is fit for purpose;
- Support the future supply to the health and care workforce.

The first year of the project was largely focussed on developing the strategy and sourcing a platform provider for the Volunteer Learning Passport as well as preparing material for the first six modules. In order to progress the other workstreams small ‘task and finish’ teams were initiated and commenced in January 2019. The teams were created by involving colleagues from the partner organisations, with contributions from other specialists in the community as the project network developed.

This report presents a final review of the outcomes and current status with recommendations for further work and scaling up where possible.

⁶<http://togetherahealthierfuture.org.uk/pennine-lancashire-volunteer-strategy-launched/>

4.0 **Workstreams progress**

4.1 **Volunteer Learning Passport**

*Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, **Learn**, Give*

Strategic aims:

Co-design Volunteer Learning Passport with key organisations

Launch Volunteer Learning Passport available to all volunteers in Pennine Lancashire

Evaluate Volunteer Learning Passport

What success will look like:

Volunteers are consistently trained, recruited and supported regardless of organisation or sector

How progress will be measured:

Number of volunteers trained and using the Passport

Number of organisations signed up to key principles

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

In creating the Volunteer Learning Passport it was considered a priority to develop an on-line training package to widen volunteer access to high quality mandatory training. The aim was to create a Volunteer Learning Passport that was portable, generic, available to all volunteers in all sectors and free to access. A further aim was to enable organisations to monitor compliance and to reduce unnecessary duplication in face to face induction and refresher training time.

A survey across the project partnership was undertaken to establish the baseline provision of existing training. It was subsequently identified that six modules of basic mandatory training should be developed as a pilot and an e-learning provider identified to deliver the programme. E-Learning for Health (e-LfH) were chosen as the provider of choice and work to create appropriate generic content commenced in August 2018. Volunteers from across Pennine Lancashire attended workshops to test the product and contribute to the overall design.

In January 2019 the Volunteer Learning Passport, was launched as a pilot allowing volunteers to work across multiple organisations without having to repeat the same basic training. The participating organisations agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to accept the passport's validity and portability. The modules have been aligned to the certificate standards thereby creating a **National Framework for Volunteering** shown in Table 2 below.

It is recommended that the modules are mandatory in all cases except where indicated.

Volunteer Learning Passport modules:	Volunteer Certificate Standards:
Health and Safety	Certificate Standard
Data Security Awareness	Incorporated in 'Communications'
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights	Certificate Standard
Safeguarding Adults	Certificate Standard
Safeguarding Children	
Fire Safety	Incorporated in 'Health & Safety'
Prevent Radicalisation	Incorporated in 'Safeguarding'
Basic Life Support (optional)	Certificate Standard
Mental Health Awareness	Certificate Standard
Communication skills	Certificate Standard
Conflict Resolution	Incorporated in 'Communications'
Moving and Assisting (optional)	Certificate Standard
Fluids and Nutrition (optional)	Certificate Standard
Child Sexual Exploitation (optional)	Incorporated in 'Safeguarding'
Your Role and Responsibilities	Certificate Standard

Table 2: National Framework for Volunteers

Access – Protected Characteristics

In order to support more diversity in volunteering a pilot training scheme was facilitated in partnership with IMO Charity to target people from the BME community. Two tutor-led programmes of induction (including completion of the first six Volunteer Learning Passport modules) ran for six months and involved 60 delegates. Support was given for language and IT needs. An outcome of over 50% of delegates in volunteering or in work roles in Health & Social Care within a few weeks of completing the course was achieved.



Pictures: IMO students proudly showing their Volunteer Learning Passport certificates.

A further tutor-led version has been developed by the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Adult Learning team for learners requiring this additional support. The course is free of charge and following evaluation will likely be incorporated into the proposed 'Volunteers into Health & Social Care Scheme' (see 5.4 Develop Career Progression Pathways.).

The Volunteer Learning Passport website can be accessed in this link:
<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/volunteer-learning-passport/>

There is scope to scale up the Volunteer Learning Passport nationally. In the first five months after launch there were over 5000 registrations with over 3000 pass certificates. A wide range of over 400 organisations registered; including chemists, GP practices, dentists, army, Specsavers, and the NHS.

Issues:

There have been some issues with user registration onto the e-LfH hub to access the Volunteer Learning Passport which has meant that the process is not as smooth as it should be. The matter has been escalated and while a full resolution may not be available until 2020, a revision of the process has worked in some way to resolve matters.

Going forward, data reporting will need a refresh as it is based to a large extent on free text entry. Organisation compliance reporting is under development due to the sheer volume of potential registrations from health and social care.

4.2 Create Learning and Development Opportunities for Volunteer Managers and Coordinators

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, **Learn**, Give

Strategic aims:

Establish the learning and development requirements of Volunteer Managers and Coordinators
Launch training for volunteer Managers and Coordinators
Evaluate Volunteer Manager training

What success will look like:

Demand outstrips provision and 50% Volunteer Managers in Pennine Lancashire receive training

How progress will be measured:

Evaluation feedback forms

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

‘Volunteer Managers’ were very broadly defined to encompass a range of skills supporting the ‘volunteer journey’ such as recruitment, supervision, deployment and training. The cohort comprised paid and unpaid workers, part time and full time and sometimes where the role was an extra add-on to someone’s job.

The skill sets for people who manage volunteers roughly split into three levels:

1. Coordination, administration, recruitment, induction
2. Supervisor - deployment, training, management
3. Senior Manager/CEO; bid writing, strategic planning

The first two ‘Volunteer Managers’ groups were the focus for this workstream on establishing the learning and development needs. The third group was considered outside the scope of the project because they were working at strategic level. This piece of work is being developed by one of the project partners; the Families, Health and Wellbeing Consortium in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN).

A half day training needs analysis workshop was held in March 2019 to start identifying learning and development requirements that were specific to people managing volunteers. The workshop focussed on the *Investing in Volunteers Framework indicators*⁷ to aid discussions, and was attended by 36 delegates from 23 organisations across the three sectors. It was deemed a great success with 100% positive feedback. A follow up e-survey to ask about types of learning interventions, supported the outcomes. The top learning needs were:

- Safeguarding in recruitment;
- Managing difficult conversations with volunteers;
- Integration with organisation strategy.

⁷<https://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/about/the-nine-indicators>

A second full day workshop was held in June 2019 with a similar mix and number of people from across Pennine Lancashire and a variety of experience in volunteering. This event focused on delivering two of the key learning topics; 'safeguarding in recruitment' and 'managing difficult conversations with volunteers' as well as looking at future networking tools.



Picture: Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Managers share learning across sectors

A third event in October, focussed in smaller groups on 'Influencing for Impact'.

Work is underway to develop a rolling self-managed programme of quarterly workshops supported by a social media networking tool such as Facebook Workplace.

4.3 Raise Awareness of volunteering in Health and SocialCare **Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give**

Strategic aims:

Develop supporting materials to collectively promote volunteering in Pennine Lancashire
Develop online platform to showcase volunteering, signposting to infrastructure organisations (TaHF website)
Evaluate success of promoting volunteering in Pennine Lancashire at face to face events
Launch online platform

What success will look like:

Pennine Lancashire residents are aware of the volunteering options available to them in the area and the numbers of volunteers increase
A suite of supporting information is developed, showcasing volunteering

How progress will be measured:

Feedback from events and careers fairs attended; Number of visits to online platform
(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

This workstream has focused on raising the profile of volunteering for many different groups – the public, paid employees, volunteers, service users and senior management.

Work has included the production of comprehensive volunteer pages for the new 'Care Academy' website which is being developed as a partnership between the NHS and the Further and Higher Education sector in Pennine Lancashire. The 'Care Academy' will signpost people on many pathways from education to employment and careers all focused on Health and Social Care and Well-being.

The project contributed to activity during *Volunteers Week 2019* and facilitated partners in shared recruitment presence at East Lancashire Hospitals Trust main sites and Blackburn Market.

‘Pennine Lancashire Volunteer’ merchandise was sourced such as pop up banners and ‘Thank You Pennine Lancashire Volunteers’ bracelet giveaways were provided as well as leaflets and posters all promoting volunteer partnership working.

Other publicity opportunities included formal presentation of the project at the Lancashire *EPIC* Conference on innovation and submission to the National Association of Voluntary Service Managers (NAVSM) Conference poster competition. Training material was made available for organisations wishing to raise awareness with employees about working with volunteers to support integration.



Picture:
Volunteers Week at Burnley General Hospital

Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project

TOGETHER A HEALTHIER FUTURE
The Integrated Health and Care Partnership for Pennine Lancashire

Funded by Health Education England, the two-year project was commissioned to develop volunteering services in partnership between the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS), the NHS and public services in Pennine Lancashire.

This project has shone a light on volunteering over three sectors, with the ultimate aims of transforming the delivery of health and social care and enhancing the wellbeing of the people who live and work in Pennine Lancashire.

The project is comprised of eight work streams and each involves a small cross sector team to deliver objectives.

Benefits and Rewards
Volunteer Learning Passport
Volunteer Manager Training
Volunteer Peer Support Framework
Volunteer Project Work Streams 2017-2019
Promoting Volunteering in H&SC
Digital Infrastructure
Corporate Social Responsibility
Career Progression Pathways

114,000 volunteers aged 16+ in Pennine Lancashire

Twelve organisations comprise the partnership supporting shared work outputs involving volunteers as much as possible. The project has evolved through relationship building connecting expertise from local business leaders and professional leads from all sectors, which has been invaluable.

Contact:
ELCCG.Togetherahealthierfuture@nhs.net

Key milestones:

- April 2018 – Partnership created and eight work streams were identified.
- August 2018 – Volunteer Strategy was published and widely shared across the region.
- January 2019 - Volunteer Learning Passport launched; the first six e-learning mandatory training modules designed for volunteers. The passport is free, portable and suitable for any volunteer, in any sector.
- March 2019 – Hosted the first learning and development workshop which was attended by 22 organisations across the three sectors. It was a high energy event with lots of sharing and networking opportunities.
- April 2019 – Successful completion of the transfer of 200+ volunteers from an NHS Trust to the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership database. A great example of the voluntary sector going digital.
- May 2019 – Preparing for Volunteers Week – There will be a huge emphasis on partnership working and raising the profile of volunteering.

Picture:
Poster entry for the NAVSM competition

4.4 Develop Career Progression Pathways **Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give**

Strategic aims:

Scope existing pathways for volunteer placements
 Develop coordinated volunteer placement pathways in collaboration with local colleges, higher education, VC&F organisations, and public sector organisations
 Advertise and promote via Pennine Lancashire Care Academy website

What success will look like:

All organisations are aware of volunteer placement process and are sign posted as appropriate
 Anyone wishing to volunteer for career experience knows where to go and has a wealth of opportunities across all sectors available to them

How progress will be measured:

Numbers of placements filled as part of structured programme
 (Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

The ‘Care Academy’ website is being launched in partnership with the Higher and Further Education sectors for those looking for a career in health and social care. This will include Volunteering pages signposting volunteers to opportunities as well as using Volunteering as a career pathway to employment.

A further development has been the initiation of a ‘Volunteers into Health & Social Care Scheme’. The scheme will support people into volunteering and ultimately job roles in health and social care through an assisted programme centred upon individual needs (fig 5) The scheme is being developed in partnership with DWP, NHS, Local Authorities and VCFS. This work has also garnered support from the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to run alongside the existing Access to Employment Scheme and possibly with ESF support.

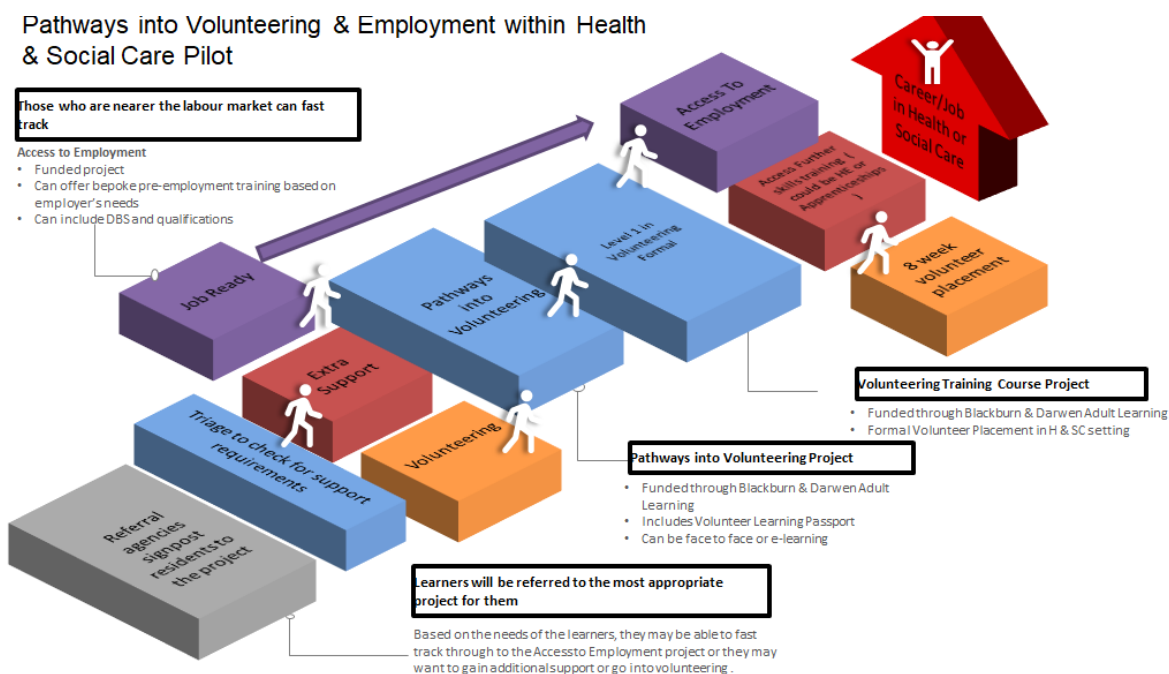


Fig 5 – proposed Volunteers into Health & Social Care Scheme

The scheme was presented to health and social care employers locally in Blackburn and at a LEP recruitment event in October to consult and garner support for future placements. It is likely the scheme will be launched post-project. Project recommendations are that pre-employment schemes which offer placements and more in-depth insight and preparation for work should be the 'go-to' option for Health & Social Care recruitment especially hard to fill vacancies, rather than e-recruitment such as NHS Jobs. Pre-employment schemes can detect barriers to working in health & social care and have the flexibility to adapt to changing skills requirements.

A further workstream initiative has involved the project in targeting young people through attendance at a school's career fair to promote the Voluntary Sector as a career option. This is an area requiring development as the sector appears to be under-represented.

4.5 Develop Corporate Social Responsibility Programme (CSR)

Connect, *Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give*

Strategic aims:

Scope corporate social responsibility programme models

Launch corporate social responsibility programmes in conjunction with local organisations, public sector and VC&F organisations

What success will look like:

Employees that volunteer through a corporate social responsibility programme are matched appropriately to a local volunteering opportunity to create real impact e.g. working together to transform a local green space

How progress will be measured:

Number of employees signed up to a CSR programme

Number of organisations signed up to CSR programme

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

CSR is defined here as 'when businesses donate money or skills to charities, or work in partnership to invest in local community projects – the emphasis usually on community sustainability'.

Discussions with local business leaders, helped develop thinking around strategic planning to fit with the sustainability and transformation agenda. It was decided to target the VCFS and local businesses to support partnership working, thereby attracting funding for the voluntary sector and offering something back to business.

Aside from financial funding, there are many examples in Pennine Lancashire of employees being released by local business for 'volunteering days', however it may be that smaller grass roots organisations need help to access this support. Some VCFS organisations reported being frequently contacted by some of the large corporations and offered employees for a few days, and although this is well intended, in reality it is quite impractical. The individuals have to be supervised at all times and there isn't always a garden to be dug or wall to be painted within the charity. Something more strategic is needed that fits with community and business needs.

It is clear that the VCFS need to be smarter in aligning themselves to business demand and specific sectors. The match of CSR supply and demand is all down to relationships and the skills needed to develop them. CSR activity works best when place specific e.g. Blackburn and Burnley have a very

strong sense of place.

There have been many discussions and proposals and there does appear to be an appetite to action this workstream. However progress has been slow as the project network has relied on access to key people who have limited capacity. Project activity has been around fostering relationships:

- Good working connection with The Hive in Blackburn with Darwen. The Hive Business Network launched in autumn 2016, uniting businesses, organisations and individuals across the area in a powerful group to help develop and promote the town, challenge perceptions and raise the profile of the area. The main area of mutual interest has been to try and address the problem of beggars in the town centre. This has involved Community CVS and latterly the Health Innovation Campus at Lancaster University.
- Activity during Volunteers Week 2019 led to work with the Canal & River Trust in Blackburn with Darwen. This resulted in two local businesses getting involved through the Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project to support specific projects on the Leeds & Liverpool canal.



Examples like this could showcase business and voluntary sector partnership with impact on community sustainability.

4.6 Develop Supporting Digital Infrastructure **Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give**

Strategic aims:

Launch public sector offer through Lancashire Volunteer Partnership
Scope the need to develop existing third sector volunteer centre databases
Evaluate public sector volunteer management system

What success will look like:

All organisations who requested them, have updated data management systems, which transforms ways of working.

All volunteer data including hours worked, and courses attended are easily accessible supporting both organisations data and volunteer profiles

How progress will be measured:

Volunteer and staff feedback survey
Data collection from project lead
Return on investment from data collection

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

The project has facilitated East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust becoming an affiliated member of Lancashire Volunteer Partnership (LVP). This has required the transfer of circa 250 paper based volunteer records, in line with GDPR and following full consultation with volunteers. The transfer was completed successfully on target and has seen the transformation of Voluntary Service management at the Trust to a new level that is digitally enabled. Real time trend analysis is readily available and the volunteer experience has been greatly enhanced by enabling real time communication with volunteer coordinators.

LVP was established in 2016 between public services who wanted to provide one gateway into public service volunteering. The aim is to make volunteering for public services rewarding and to provide opportunities for people to make a real difference in their local communities. LVP utilises the 'Better Impact' database to manage volunteers. The benefits of the LVP model as a hub of expertise to volunteers and volunteer management are many. Reports on activity to assess compliance are easily produced and volunteers can manage their own profiles and seek roles across the many member organisations without having to repeat recruitment processes. LVP has achieved significant benefits working alongside its partners to improve the lives of people who receive the service and in supporting their volunteers.

Whilst the cost of running the partnership has decreased by 10% in the second year, the social return has doubled meaning that for every £1 invested there was a social return of £9.97. Efficiencies have been gained through the reduction of administration costs by 50%. Lancashire Volunteer Partnership aimed to increase the number of public service volunteers in the county. In 2018 the number of public service volunteers within the partnership had increased by over 80% to 4,212 volunteers.⁸

The LVP model is ideal, but unfortunately is not available to the VCFS as it was funded and created by and for public services. This workstream is therefore exploring how such a model could be implemented in partnership for the VCFS. This will create a more responsive resilient and digitally enabled voluntary sector by embedding digital across their services, strategy and governance.

4.7 Review Current Peer Support Models and Scope Development of a Standard Model

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give

Strategic aims:

Scope peer support models including linking to the peer support model framework being developed by Health Education England

Implement peer support model to complement existing provision

What success will look like:

Any peer support model which is implemented has a sustained impact on the local community

How progress will be measured:

Case Studies

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

⁸<https://lancsvp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/LVP-EVALUATION-SUMMERY-REPORT.pdf>

The effectiveness of Peer Support programmes in supporting health outcomes and recovery is well established. Peer support has proven beneficial in many schemes across the UK, in particular, a Practice Health Champion model in Yorkshire⁹ stated that 94% of patients surveyed had improved mental health and wellbeing when Health Champions were used. Most importantly, peer support has potential to have a sustained impact on the local community aligned to Social Prescribing which is huge growth service provision. Social prescribing is when health professionals refer patients to support in the community, in order to improve their health and wellbeing. The concept has gained support in the NHS well as in Ireland and the Netherlands.

We conducted an extensive literature review and concluded that peer support has been implemented in many physical and mental health settings. It was found from project partners that peer support working was increasing in popularity in Pennine Lancashire linked to the growth of Social Prescribing. It was also clear that models shared common design attributes and would be easily replicable.

Organisation-led v. Volunteer-led services

Organisation-led services are generally shaped by regulation, compliance, and by profit making or as public services focussed on value for money. They focus on providing the best healthcare and health outcomes for communities and patients backed by infrastructure, systems and processes. Volunteer-led services are also required to regulate and comply but are more driven by service user need and likely to be powered by passion and commitment. Responsibility will lie with the Board of Trustees, which is usually unpaid and there is usually a low staff/high volunteer ratio. Volunteers will lead service provision by being involved in setting vision, strategy, policy and deciding on how volunteers are engaged, perhaps as representatives of the charity's beneficiary group or customer base. Funding is a constant pressure and employees often over-stretched.

Employee - v - Volunteer Peer Support Workers?

There is a significant difference in skills and motivation between paid Peer Support Workers (PSWs) and Voluntary Peer Support Workers (VPSWs). The latter are probably the higher risk insofar as they may have drifted into the role and need intensive training and supervision around boundary skills and ability to self-evaluate.

It was therefore decided to create guidance for smaller volunteer-led organisations with scant resources using VPSWs. Our aim was to produce generic and pragmatic guidance for Pennine Lancashire that advocates an *invisible thread* approach. This means that bureaucracy is kept in the background. It should be a light touch but robust. It should allow freedom but be controlled.

Appendix 1 contains the 'Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Peer Support Working guidance'

⁹South West Yorkshire NHS Trust (2018)<http://www.altogetherbetter.org.uk/>

4.8 Develop Volunteer Benefits

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give

Strategic aims:

Explore options for rewarding volunteers
Test rewards with a pilot group of volunteers

What success will look like:

Volunteers feel appreciated and reward scheme is accessed by at least 50% of volunteers in each organisation

How progress will be measured:

Number of volunteers accessing reward scheme
Level of retention of volunteers

(Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Strategy August 2018)

'... it is in giving that we receive' (St Francis of Assisi c. 11th century)

The National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO) survey report ('Time Well Spent', January 2019) gives clear evidence that 'enjoyment' 'mental and physical health' 'making a difference' rank high as part of 'rewarding'. Excellent communications and involvement in decision making are key to good volunteer experiences as well as clear boundaries being set.

In line with the ethos of St Francis of Assisi and being wary of any tax implications, it was decided that best practice guidance should be produced based on good examples from other organisations. e.g. Pennine Lancashire Volunteer of the Month perhaps nominated by other volunteers. The aim would be to enable consistency in practice and with shared 'celebration' events.

We also looked at the Time Credits model which works simply. Volunteers earn Time Credits for time contributed per hour to their community or service. These Time Credits can then be spent on accessing activity across the national network, such as local attractions, training courses or leisure, or gifted to others. It is not considered to be a fiscal worth by HMRC.

Time Credits, as a specific approach, also supports system change through three distinct but highly interconnected series of changes: working with individuals to realise their assets (their time), enabling organisational improvement and capacity and enabling community and sharing power. These in turn support the development of a range of outcomes for organisations, individuals and communities that sustain those changes and indicate further shifts that will happen over time. The difference is that the Volunteer can receive rewards which are of perceived value to them.

Time Credits create opportunities for people with additional health and care needs to build stronger social connections, and to feel part of their local community

This system can have a strong pull factor for some volunteers and be of little interest to others. The Time Credits can be collected and/or given to friends and family. Where Time Credit strengths lie is in attracting volunteers into hard to recruit roles. For example Age UK report difficulties in getting people to volunteer as Dementia Buddies and the reward of time credits could make a difference to attracting volunteers. The challenge could then be in making sure the volunteers motivated by reward had the right attitude and aptitude for the role. It was concluded that while a Time Credits

system can be of value in certain circumstances it is a 'nice-to-have' rather than essential and can be costly to administer so would need a strong business case to justify.

Appendix 2 contains the 'Recognising Pennine Lancashire Volunteers' guidance document

5.0 Challenges

Following the Lampard Review, and recognising the value placed on the VCFS sector in supporting delivery of new models of care, the project has focussed on Volunteering in Health & Social Care. In the 'Road Ahead'¹⁰ (NCVO January 2019) we are reminded that for the VCFS, despite the phase of decided uncertainty that our country enters, the key message is that the VCFS will be critical in holding the order together in the short term, and finding solutions to renewing and reforming it to ensure its survival in the long term. The health and social care sector have high expectations of the voluntary sector and want to see a reflection of their values in everything they do. Meeting these expectations and demonstrably raising their standards will continue to be one of the most important steps to take over the coming years. How the VCFS go about making a difference will be just as important as what that difference is.

To date within the Pennine Lancashire Project we have developed strong working relationships with colleagues from across the sector and have delivered a number of outcomes such as:

- a comprehensive Volunteer Strategy;
- Volunteer e-Learning Passport (mandatory training);
- Learning and Development for Volunteer Managers;
- a digital solution for the safer management of volunteers;
- Generic 'Volunteer Peer Support Worker' and 'Recognising Volunteers' guidance documents.

The project has also started to develop a 'Volunteers into Health and Social Care Scheme' and fostered relationships with the business community.

The main challenges locally have been influencing and progressing work through co-production across multiple organisations. There has been therefore a reliance on the considerable good will of colleagues from the partner organisations to contribute to the workstreams and this has been challenging because of their competing priorities.

There is significant potential for the learning from this project to be scaled up across a wider footprint and we would be keen to do this.

All the project aims have been met through completion of the eight workstreams. Some of the issues and ideas that are emerging are outside the scope of the project and are in the recommendations section 6 below.

¹⁰<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/strategy/the-road-ahead>

A challenging note to end on – ***Change the Tune!***

This year's theme for the International Volunteer Managers Day (2019) was '***Change the Tune***' based on current thinking that organisations who use volunteers would benefit from ***thinking more strategically*** for example:

- harnessing the insights of volunteers (they see and hear it all) as well as the enormous array of talents and skills they bring to the organisation
- integrating volunteer activity within the strategic plan and involving volunteer management in strategic planning

There can sometimes be an understandable prioritisation of ***fund-raising over friend-raising***. Volunteer-led organisations need stable financial support to focus on developing partnerships which attract income. Developing business acumen in creative ways would impact on community sustainability, impact on local business and attract funding through partnership.

There is also the notion that it takes ***a whole village to raise a child***. Volunteer Managers can only realise the full potential of effective volunteer engagement if that responsibility sits with the entire staff team and all stake holders. That village is more likely to see the full benefits of volunteers in their community.

Part of the issue is that we tend to talk about the voluntary sector as though a homogeneous group and a challenge is to chunk it up into more meaningful clusters that reflect the distinctions between organisation-led and volunteer-led services and by funding type. This will help to focus future research and development.

6.0 Recommendations

The Volunteer Learning Passport will be launched nationally in January 2020 as part of the National Framework for Volunteers, and as many organisations as possible should be encouraged to use it as high quality consistent basic mandatory training. The training should be portable and organisations need to be encouraged to make a policy decision to accept the portability of the training. This needs high level communication across all Integrated Care Systems.

Registration access is not as smooth as it should be and some volunteers have struggled to register. The host platform have committed to remedy this, however, this could take many months as they are developing a new hub. A revised registration process will be introduced for the launch of the next 9 modules in January 2020. Clear performance metrics should be implemented.

A rolling programme of Learning and Development for VSMs is essential in order to meet the Lampard recommendations and to support neighbourhood integration of shared care services.

Raising the Profile of Volunteering is an on-going workstream and needs to be targeted in a multi-faceted approach towards the public, volunteers, senior teams, and employees. More website content and use of social media should be encouraged to promote co-production.

Career Development pathways are still at the embryonic stage and should be developed in

conjunction with other access to employment programmes to encourage people into volunteering roles and ultimately into employment within H&SC. A system of evaluation would be hugely beneficial in shaping future schemes. Pre-employment schemes should be the 'go to' recruitment pathway for hard to fill vacancies, to compliment electronic recruitment such as 'NHS Jobs'.

Corporate Social Responsibility projects between the business sector and local voluntary bodies have a lot of potential to create partnerships, to attract much needed funding and to achieve mutual benefits that support community sustainability. There seems a big appetite for this but it needs managed facilitation to realise outcomes and to Change the Tune.

Digital Infrastructure has been shown to make a substantial positive impact. In the case of ELHT, they went from one end of the spectrum of having no real-time data with many associated risks in the system to the 'opposite end of the scale' where data is readily available and the safer deployment of volunteers is managed. Volunteers report an enhanced volunteering experience through real time communications and there is a social benefit calculated in a recent evaluation study at £10 for every £1 invested. Clearly the inclusion of other NHS Trusts in this model of working can only be of benefit.

There is a case for development of a similar hub model for the VCFS which should be scoped as a pilot.

The Peer Support Worker research data has been useful because it sets out how this model should work in practice as well as demonstrating how to gather evidence linking into Social Prescribing. There is however, scant reference to the specific needs of Volunteer Peer Support Workers who are generally more vulnerable and need a significantly lighter-touch approach to recruitment, supervision and the monitoring of outcomes. Evaluation to understand more of the outcomes and what works best would be of great benefit.

Volunteer recognition has been one of the less complex workstreams as we have been able to gather a great deal of evidence from many organisations around how they say 'thank you' to their volunteers. Further research to measure the impact of various initiatives on retention would be good to build on the NCVO survey at micro level and by sector.

Acknowledgments:

Grateful thanks to the following Project Partner organisations and colleagues who contributed to the workstreams. The project has relied entirely on their goodwill and the hours and hours of their time, which has been invaluable in gaining insight to the issues and being able to develop some of the high level thinking behind the project.

Volunteer Learning Passport

Chloe Dobson	Healthwatch (Blackburn with Darwen)
Darren Harris	Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
Julie Sumner	Lancashire Volunteer Partnership
Kate Lee	Community CVS (Blackburn)
Lorraine Collings	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Lynn Hackett	East Lancashire Hospitals Trust

... and our partners:

Andi Blackmore	e-Learning for Health
Karen Walker	e-Learning for Health
Kay Fawcett OBE	Helpforce
Kim Higgins	Helpforce

... and our volunteer focus groups.....(too many to list here – see website):

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/volunteer-learning-passport/>

Learning & Development for Volunteer Managers

Carol Port	Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS
Chloe Dobson	Healthwatch (Blackburn with Darwen)
Kate Lee	Community CVS (Blackburn)
Lorraine Collings	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Raising Awareness of Volunteering in Health & Social Care

Angela Harlow	East Lancashire CCG – Communications team
Catherine Curry	Hyndburn & Ribble CVS
Farzana Kauser	Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
Tracey Noon	Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS

Developing Career Pathways through Volunteering

Helen Hindley	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Lorraine Collings	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Nicola McIntyre	Advocacy Focus

Corporate Social Responsibility

Donna Talbot	Community CVS Blackburn
Elaine Jennings	Age UK (Blackburn with Darwen)
Peter Dunn	Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS
Sarah Johns	Healthwatch (Blackburn with Darwen)

Digital Infra-structure

Julie Sumner	Lancashire Volunteer Partnership
Katie Taylor-Rossall	East Lancashire Hospitals Trust

Peer Support Working

Christine Blythe	Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS
Darren Harris	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Emma Garner	Shelter
Farzana Kauser	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Steve Foden	Community CVS Blackburn

Recognising Volunteers – Benefits and Rewards

Carol Port	Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS
Elaine Jennings	Age UK Blackburn with Darwen
Helen Hundley	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Linda Guise	Age UK Blackburn with Darwen

And thanks as well to support from:

Kate Quinn	Operational Director of HR and Workforce at East Lancashire Hospital Trust
Angela Allen	Volunteer Project Board Chair and Families, Health and Wellbeing Consortium
Lorraine Collings	Volunteer Project Board member and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Nicola Canty	Project Lead 2017/8 Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project
Suzanne Lang	Pre-employment Programmes Manger at East Lancashire Hospital Trust
Denise Gee	Fundraising Manager, East Lancashire Hospitals Trust
Sue Jones	Trainer and Coach at 3b The Mental Well-being Company
Ian Brown	Chairman, The Hive, Blackburn
Gary Wilkinson	Volunteer Manager, Canal & Rivers Trust
Katie Affleck	HR Manager, Precision Polymers Engineering
Alison Thompson	Senior Lecturer in Health & Social care at Blackburn College
Mohammed T Sidat	IMO Charity, Blackburn
Victoria Toiviainen	Communications Officer, TaHF
Sharon Carter	Programme Support Officer, TaHF
Sara Gaskell	Strategic Partnership Manager – Adults at Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Rob Jackson Consulting	‘Change the Tune’ Blog (summarised and paraphrased for this report)

Health Education England Project funder.
Adult Learning team at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Scottish Recovery Network
Transformation team at Together a Healthier Future
NHS Transformation Unit Draft Peer Support Framework
Tempo Time Credits
Department of Work & Pensions (Blackburn)

APPENDIX 1


Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Peer Support Working Guidance



Join the conversation

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 [HealthierPennineLancashire](https://www.facebook.com/HealthierPennineLancashire)

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Foreword:

The Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project 2017 – 19 set out a Volunteer Strategy¹¹ for the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) that contained eight workstreams, one of which was to “*Review current peer support models and scope development of a standard model*”. The effectiveness of Peer Support programmes in supporting health outcomes and recovery is well established. Peer support has proven beneficial in many schemes across the UK, in particular, a Practice Health Champion model in Yorkshire¹² stated that 94% of patients surveyed had improved mental health and wellbeing when Health Champions were used. Most importantly, peer support has potential to have a sustained impact on the local community aligned to Social Prescribing.

The Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project working group conducted an extensive literature review and concluded that peer support has been implemented in many physical and mental health settings. It was found from project partners in the NHS, Borough Council and VCFS that peer support working was increasing in popularity in Pennine Lancashire linked to the growth of Social Prescribing. It was also clear that models shared common design attributes and would be easily replicable.

Organisation-led vs. Volunteer-led Services

Organisation-led services are generally shaped by regulation, compliance, and by profit making or as public services focussed on value for money. They focus on providing the best healthcare and health outcomes for communities and patients backed by infrastructure, systems and processes. Volunteer-led services are driven by service users need and likely to be powered by passion and commitment. Responsibility will lie with the Board of Trustees, which is usually unpaid and there is usually a low staff/high volunteer ratio. Volunteers will lead service provision by being involved in setting vision, strategy, policy and deciding on how volunteers are engaged, perhaps as representatives of the charity’s beneficiary group or customer base. Funding is a constant pressure and employees often over-stretched.

Employee vs. Volunteer Peer Support Workers?

There is a significant difference between paid Peer Support Workers (PSWs) and Voluntary Peer Support Workers (VPSWs). The latter are probably the higher risk insofar as they may have drifted into the role and need intensive training and supervision around boundary skills and ability to self-evaluate.

It was therefore decided to create guidance for smaller volunteer-led organisations with limited resources using VPSWs. Our aim was to produce generic and pragmatic guidance for Pennine Lancashire that advocates an *invisible thread* approach.

**Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project
September 2019**

¹¹https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/application/files/7915/4504/6517/Pennine-Lancashire-Volunteer-Strategy-1_1.pdf

¹²South West Yorkshire NHS Trust (2018)<http://www.altogetherbetter.org.uk/>

Guidance

Why use Peer Support?

The first thing to consider starts at the end.

Before anything else think about evaluation. Broadly speaking, common reasons for introducing peer support are around service user requests, recognising the value of lived-in experience, engaging with communities, preventing isolation and most importantly a wonderful personal meaningful approach to care. This all makes sense, but to introduce volunteer peer support working (VPSW) first of all ask yourself as an organisation:

1. **What are your VPSWs trying to achieve?** What difference are they trying to make?
2. **How will you measure the changes or the outcomes?** How will you know what success looks like?
3. **How will you collect your information?** Who do you need to take part? When are you going to collect information from them? Who will be responsible? How will you support VPSWs to provide the information? Think about what rewards/ motivators VPSWs will get from the role.

Make sure you know the answers to these three questions before introducing peer support working.

The Invisible Thread

What does it mean? It just means to manage governance, compliance, regulation and evaluation in the background. VPSWs are likely to be vulnerable people who choose to do a potentially difficult role to often little understood standards. The management of VPSW needs a light touch. The language and systems of management could be a real barrier to vulnerable VPSWs and potentially inhibit their freedom to concentrate on the values and behaviours needed to develop relationships. Management needs to be coordinated silently and held together by an *invisible thread*. It should be a light touch but robust. It should allow freedom but be controlled. Where possible minimise onerous forms to complete, and find the most straightforward way to evaluate outcomes which takes account of VPSW motivators.

What is Volunteer Peer Support Working? (VPSW)

Because who knows better about recovery than a person who has been there....

Peer support working is generally understood to be a relationship of mutual support where people with similar life experiences offer each other support, particularly as they move through challenging or difficult experiences. VPSW is an emerging role within health and social care. Peer workers are individuals with personal experience of health problems (mental or physical) who are trained to support others. Paid or voluntary, in all cases the work involves:

- Developing mutually empowering relationships.
- Sharing personal experiences of recovery in a way that inspires hope.
- Offering help and support as an equal.

VPSW is a potentially powerful way to support and develop recovery-focused practice. Peer support and recovery-focused practice are underpinned by common sets of values that guide and inform their approaches. Recovery in this context means that a person has recovered from their illness or is *in* recovery, meaning they are still on the recovery journey which for some can be a lifetime.

1. Experience

VPSWs draw from their own life experiences, especially experiences of distress, poverty, and oppression, on the one hand, and experiences of recovery and resilience, on the other. These experiences have led them to have a body of knowledge that is extremely useful to service users and enables meaningful connections.

2. Approach

VPSWs need to be able to contact service users in a way that is respectful and calm, encouraging engagement without pressure. They need to be able to reassure service users that interaction is about them only and not about the VPSW or the organisation. There is no 'authority' in the background. Confidentiality needs to be offered and accepted.

3. Presence

VPSWs need to be able to be with service users in a way that demonstrates genuine concern. They need to be able to listen actively and pay attention. Their responsiveness and kindness reinforces their integrity. This presence comes from good self-awareness and quiet confidence.

4. Role model

VPSWs are living proof of recovery or being able to live in recovery or recovery in action. They provide "someone to look up to" for service users who are seeking ways of living that will help them to meet their goals. Role modelling is something that happens naturally.

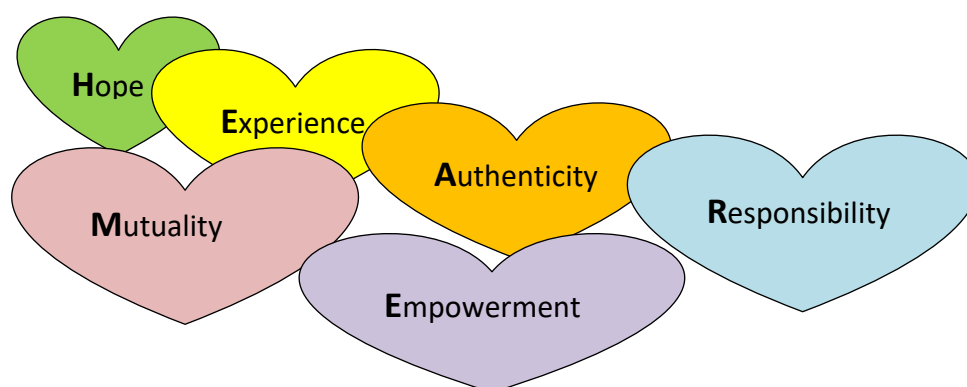
5. Relationship building

In almost of all of their activities, VPSWs are working with other people, either service users or staff in multiple settings. They need to be able to work independently and garner the cooperation of others by promoting the work they do and information sharing, finding allies and so on. On the other hand understanding boundaries between services and when to limit their involvement is equally important.

These personal qualities are essential and while no-one will have all of them 100% perfect they are the core of what makes a VPSW effective.

Values and Behaviours

VPSWs need to work to a set of shared values. Here are some values and behaviours that demonstrate them. These values have the acronym HEAR ME – easy to remember.



What behaviours demonstrate these values?

- ✓ Encouraging peers to challenge themselves and to understand potential risks.
- ✓ Intentionally sharing experiences and stories of hope and recovery, where appropriate.
- ✓ Accepting peers where they are at, avoiding judgement and interpretation.
- ✓ Demonstrating and modelling relationship skills through attitudes, interactions, behaviours and use of language.
- ✓ Being alongside and partnering peers – not 'doing to' or 'for them'.

- ✓ Help peers explore and broaden personal identity and different perspectives.
- ✓ Encourage responsibility for self-care, wellness and recovery.
- ✓ Take a strengths based approach focusing on hopes, aspirations and self defined goals
- ✓ Respect rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality.
- ✓ Respect diversity and have cultural awareness.
- ✓ Be a reflective practitioner and learn from experience.
- ✓ Encourage peers to make informed choices.
- ✓ Work with boundaries that are responsive and flexible
- ✓ Empower people to build social supports and make community connections.

Volunteer Peer Support Worker – what’s the journey like?

As a general rule peer support work begins with the interest of the person who wants to do the role. There then needs to be careful recruitment and induction processes, through learning and development, excellent supervision and in-the-role experience. Consolidating this experience may then lead into other similar roles ultimately benefitting the VPSW as well as those they have supported. Some VPSWs might need expert support all the way through the process and even in working as a peer worker. This may need to be addressed through elements of clinical supervision dependant on role.

The peer support journey should look something like this below and stitched together by the *invisible thread* - making the support gentle but robust e.g. interview – yes, but keep it relaxed and informal.

Stages of the Peer Support Worker Journey						
	1. Enrolment or register interest	2. Start in the role	3. Developing in the role	4. Coaching in the role	5. Working or volunteering in the role	6. Advanced practice/next steps
Support available at any stage	Find out what’s involved	Induction	Mandatory training	Objective setting	Team meetings	Support to apply for other roles
	Workshops/ shadowing	Shadowing	Personal development training	Specialist support	Organisation communications	Support to peers stages 1 – 4.
	How to apply	Peer learning	Access to accredited learning	Coaching in the role – dealing with challenges	Self-assessment and reflection	Coaching employees
	Interview and feedback	The values				Celebrating the journey
	DBS and references	Record keeping				

Fig XX: Adapted from ‘GROW Trainee Peer Mentor Journey (Shelter 2018)

Training and Supervision

Good training enables developing VPSWs to reflect on the characteristics and develop their personal strengths. A free resource to help train VPSWs can be found in this link: <https://bit.ly/2ktN35P>

Good training and refresher training and support are essential for the safety and well-being of both the VPSW and the service user.

Once VPSWs have completed initial training and have started in their role, making sure that they are well supported is essential for successful integration into the wider workforce. This needs to be done sensitively and according to individual needs and always with the *invisible thread*. Maybe the training needs to not look and sound like training. Think about it. What’s best for the person?

Training and awareness for other staff or colleagues

It's a good idea to make sure other work colleagues know and understand and value peer support working. This can be done through team meetings, access to background reading, and awareness training workshops delivered by active peer support workers.

Understanding the impact - back to the start – thinking about evaluation.

It's always worth taking time to evaluate VPSW services. It's essential to understand the impact of what you do to help improvements and share successes. Research has shown that peer support can improve many areas of people's lives, however, people have different ideas about what the most 'important changes' are – someone involved in giving and receiving peer support might have different ideas to someone who is providing funding. This means that it can be difficult to know what to measure and how. Always include where you can VPSW in the process helping to raise their awareness and understanding helping to prevent any de-motivating factors.

This does not need to take a lot of time or resources. There are five key questions suggested by *MIND: Developing Peer Support in the Community – a toolkit*.

1 What are VPSWs trying to achieve? What difference are they trying to make?

2 How will you measure the changes or the outcomes? How will you know what success looks like?

3 How will you collect your information? Who do you need to take part? When are you going to collect information from them? Who will be responsible?

4 How will you interpret what you've found? Once you've collected your information, what are you going to do with it? How will you know what it's telling you?

5 How will you share your learning with others? How are you going to share your learning with others who might be interested?

Final note – success stories

This is Joe's story. Joe went to his local Community CVS in Blackburn after being released from prison. He was in a really bad place. He said that his mum didn't want anything to do with him because of his past behaviour. He was addicted to cocaine and wanted to come off it. He said that he wanted to do some volunteering work and go to university. He wanted to eventually have a relationship with his mum again and knew it would be hard work to achieve this. Joe said that he felt really lonely as he has no contact with his former friends who were all in addiction and he wanted to move away from all of that. Joe was living in Salvation Army accommodation which he didn't like because there were lots of people there in addiction and this had triggers for him.

Joe signed up to 'Inspire' to get help for his addiction, he did pod work and became clean from drugs. Joe's relationship with his mum got better, they are in regular contact via phone and Joe hopes this relationship will get back to what it should be. Joe completed a Peer Support Worker training course with Community CVS and applied to university. He applied for housing help from Shelter. Months later Joe started his degree course, sorted out his student finance, and has a bedsit. He is now mentoring vulnerable individuals at VOICE family club. He says he really values being able to give something back to Community CVS and help others who are going through the same as he did.

This is a quote from a VPSW, Rob who has a carefully rehearsed speech that he greets his clients with:

“I’m not a nurse or a doctor. I didn’t go to medical school. I’m not an addictions counsellor – but we have counsellors who can help you out. I’m not a social worker – we also have social workers who are ready to assist you. But I have some of the same life experiences as you. I was addicted to alcohol and cigarettes for 25 years. For five years I injected cocaine and also smoked crack. So those are the experiences I’ve had. I just want to sit and have a relaxed conversation with you. Let’s see where you’re at and how you’re doing in life.”

Rob’s gentle and honest words tend to open up a lot of doors with his clients. Knowing that they are speaking with someone who has literally walked a mile in their shoes and had the same experiences with addiction and life on the streets usually breaks the ice very quickly.

Full story: <https://www.royalalex.org/our-stories/peer-support-worker-has-walked-mile-his-clients-shoes/>

Acknowledgements

Thank you Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project Working Group

In order to produce this guidance we have to thank members of the working group who helped to research best practice and the hours and hours of time spent talking and thinking and reading.

Thanks very much colleagues at:

Community CVS in Blackburn with Darwen,

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

IMO Charity (Blackburn)

Shelter (Blackburn)

Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS

Lancashire Care Foundation Trust

Lancashire Mind

We are also grateful to the following for kindly sharing advice and material and time:

NHS Transformation Unit – draft Peer Support Worker Framework (2019)

Mind Peer Support Toolkit <https://bit.ly/2jKpcOw>

Scottish Recovery Network

The Mental Health Foundation

McMillan's on-line Peer Support Tool

Recovery College, Lancashire <https://www.lscft.nhs.uk/lancashire-recovery-college>

Shelter (Blackburn) GROW Trainee and Peer Mentor Framework)

BMC Health Services Research Unit: 'What do Peer Support Workers Do?' <https://bit.ly/2Ak3C9m>

APPENDIX 2

Recognising Pennine Lancashire Volunteers



Join the conversation

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Recognising Pennine Lancashire Volunteers

Foreword:

The Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project 2017 – 19¹³ set out a Volunteer Strategy for the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) that contained eight workstreams, one of which was to ‘develop volunteer benefits by exploring possible routes to reward a volunteer’. Our aim in this workstream was to produce generic guidance for voluntary organisations across the ICP based on best practice. This was done through desk top research as well as discussions with all project partners.

‘... it is in giving that we receive’ (St Francis of Assisi c. 11th century)

The NCVO survey report (‘Time Well Spent’, January 2019) gives clear evidence that *‘enjoyment’* *‘mental and physical health’* and *‘making a difference’* rank high as *‘rewarding’*. Excellent communications and involvement are key to good volunteer experiences as well as clear boundaries.

We know that thousands of people volunteer in Pennine Lancashire and don’t expect any kind of reward, but it’s really important that your organisation or group shows in some way how much the work of volunteers is valued and respected. Even if it is just saying a simple ‘thank you’.

By acknowledging volunteers’ contribution it shows appreciation for their time and commitment. Most importantly volunteers will feel valued and supported which is likely to impact on retention. Good volunteers are worthy of thanks and this needs to be meaningful to them and regular and from all levels of the organisation. It’s important not to just favour a few. Everyone deserves recognition no matter how small their involvement.

Recognising and valuing volunteers is one of the cornerstones of good practice in volunteer management. With an estimated 14 million people volunteering at least once a month in the UK, it is clear volunteering has a huge impact on our communities and we should make every effort to recognise this.

**Pennine Lancashire Volunteer Project
September 2019**

¹³https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/application/files/7915/4504/6517/Pennine-Lancashire-Volunteer-Strategy-1_1.pdf

Let's say thank you to Pennine Lancashire Volunteers

It can be tricky. Not everyone wants public praise, but for some it's appreciated. It's better to thank people as individuals rather than just a blanket approach, although messages in Board reports or newsletters acknowledging volunteers is a positive approach. Even if volunteers don't want public thanks, they will want to know that their work is appreciated and noted. People volunteer by freely giving their time to help others. Sometimes this is in public view for example a busy hospital and for some it's 'behind the scenes' like befriending in people's homes. Some volunteers have been giving their time for many years and others are new to the role – all need to be offered recognition. Here are some ideas:

✓ First impressions – great recruitment

From the first point of contact by advert or other means of inquiry, make sure the prospective volunteer is fully informed of what to expect and that you take into account their expectations. In a large scale NCVO survey¹⁴ it was clear that younger people expected fast on-line recruitment compared to older people who expected longer processing times. Use the recruitment time to share information and give each party the opportunity to gain as much insight as possible to try and get a good match of person to the role. Deal with enquiries promptly and make sure the person knows how much you value their offer of time.

Each volunteer will be donating their time for a different motivation. Understanding these motivations is very important in being able to show your thanks in a way they will appreciate. A student volunteer might appreciate training opportunities more than a retired volunteer might, for example.

It might be stating the obvious but the first time a volunteer arrives to give their time, make sure everything is ready including a good welcome and induction and plenty for them to do. A bad initial experience could put them off for life!

Even if the task assigned is a simple one, take the time to explain it, demonstrate it, and mentor the volunteer through the first few hours. Provide a buddy (another volunteer who is experienced), to help the new one.

When training a group of volunteers, be sure to use adult learning techniques such as group involvement. Volunteers don't want to be lectured to. They want to participate in the training. Include in your training clear expectations for your volunteers. Let them know what the role entails and the quality measures that you will use to evaluate their work.

✓ Making a difference – make an impact

Keep volunteers up to speed with how the organisation or group is doing. Tell them often how their time is making a difference. Giving feedback on contributions that make an impact helps volunteers to know that their work is recognised. It could be anything from the number of hours given per week to help people get to health appointments to the sharing of good news stories or case studies when service users have achieved change in their lives for the better, with the help of volunteers. Share, share, share. For practical advice on how to measure impact of volunteers refer to this link: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/impact>

¹⁴https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Summary.pdf

✓ Building confidence

As volunteers gain experience and competence, try to offer them more responsibility or other roles to show that they are trusted and respected. It's another way to reward their contribution and everyone likes to feel more confident. It's a great feel good factor to know you are doing well and appreciated.

✓ Just say it – thank you

This can be verbal at the end of a shift of volunteering, a phone call, email or a birthday card or festive celebration card (make sure you have their permission to use personal data like birthday/home address and so on). Other ways are through newsletters, 'volunteer of the month' profiles and award ceremonies – the main thing is to make sure that this is all done fairly and consistently and no-one is made to feel 'left out'. On the other hand if it's perceived by volunteers that this is just done as a routine, people will soon detect it's not genuine.

✓ Great communications

Make sure all volunteers are kept up to speed on what is happening in the organisation. Enable them to understand 'what are the main challenges?'. If you have team briefs or team meetings invite volunteers so that they can hear staff speak and get a good understanding. Use social media or blogs and of course dedicated volunteer pages on websites are great. Remember though not everyone likes to use social media so be aware of people who prefer alternatives.

Highlighting a volunteer on your website or in a newsletter is a great way to show appreciation. You can do this in a number of formats, such as:

- A short story about a volunteer
- A Q&A interview with a volunteer
- A photo gallery of the volunteer in action (include captions)

✓ Logos and identity badges

Some volunteers are given identifiable tops to wear that help users and the public to know and appreciate volunteers. There are also simple name badges and statements under like 'I'm a volunteer...' that can help to promote the service.

✓ Social events

Hosting regular events can be a great way for volunteers to share experiences and get to know more about other roles and to meet staff. Just a central place to meet and some social activities like a 10-pin bowling night could be a winner in showing appreciation especially if for a mixed group of ages and backgrounds. It may even be possible to invite volunteers to bring a friend or family member to a picnic (bring and share) which also shows appreciation and could be good for recruiting new members! And it's another way to say thanks to volunteers in front of their family and friends.

Many volunteers' motivation for getting involved is to meet new people, something we have found increasingly in people with disabilities and retired people. Organising a volunteer social is a great way to bring all your volunteers together, and regular interaction with your volunteers helps to keep them inspired and motivated.

✓ Developing skills

If you can provide the opportunity and it's relevant to their role, it's good to offer training and development opportunities like workshops or seminars or even on-line. It could help the volunteer with their CV and job search and also help the organisation by boosting their skills and knowledge.

✓ Two-way feedback

If you are consulting on change – ask volunteers for their thoughts and likewise be ready and able to give feedback to volunteers on where they might need to change some aspect of their contribution. Be specific and honest and sensitive to how this is done. It's much better and usually appreciated to let the volunteer know and give them the chance to improve.

If you get the chance to feedback on service users views and forward their thanks, it's sure to make a difference.

✓ Award ceremonies

Some organisations nominate volunteers for their in-house award ceremonies and or regional awards. This could be for team effort, length of time in service, inspiring volunteers or even a life time commitment award. It is important if you chose to have awards that you find ways to recognise those who do not get nominated. You should also consider how to recognise volunteers who are not able to attend an awards ceremony.

Certificates showing how much the volunteer is valued by the organisation or group can be a great source of pride.

✓ Celebrate your volunteers all year round

Volunteers' Week (1-7 June) is a fantastic time to hold a celebration event but make sure you value and recognise your volunteers throughout the year, not only during Volunteers' Week

✓ Volunteers moving on

It's always good to take time to say goodbye especially if the volunteer is long serving. Take the opportunity to find out why they are going and get feedback if possible. Mark the occasion appropriately and be ready to provide a reference confirming start date and leaving date and what volunteer roles they did.

✓ Climate survey

Regularly (maybe once a year or every two years) conduct a survey and ask volunteers for their feedback. Ask them if they feel they are recognised for what they do and if need be, host focus groups to find out how things can improve.

✓ Integration

Make sure staff are aware of your recognition policy and have the chance to contribute, share praise and thank their volunteers. This needs to be from all corners and at every level of the organisation. A valued volunteer can become a great ambassador for your organisation and can help to attract new volunteers.

✓ Time Credits and Time Banks

'Time credits' are another more commercial way to reward volunteers. Time credits can be swapped for leisure time for example, 'volunteer for two hours picking up litter and get the equivalent time at a theatre'. The time credits can be given to family and friends. Rewarding volunteers with anything that has a tangible financial value or is a direct exchange has often proved controversial though. Many believe volunteering should only be done altruistically and without direct reward. However, rewards and exchanges are becoming more common and the community groups and charities that run them feel they're helpful, particularly for those who are economically less well-off.

A system like this can be costly to run as it needs administration but in certain circumstances where it is hard to recruit or to encourage communities to 'do good' for health benefits, it can be a way to reward and recognise the giving of time.

Other schemes such as 'Timebank' offer to train staff in businesses to be volunteers and deliver mentoring programmes in local communities. For more information see this link:

<https://timebank.org.uk/what-we-do>

A note of caution

Benefits and rewards - the pitfalls

You cannot under any circumstances pay volunteers in fiscal value. As soon as you start to give them any money, or any 'other benefits' with a tangible value, you run the risk that the relationship becomes contractual, rather than voluntary.

Benefits to avoid are those which are not directly linked to a volunteer's ability to carry out their duties. For instance, training that is not relevant to their volunteering role, such as first-aid training for a volunteer who has no first-aid responsibilities, or making free or subsidised childcare available to them at times when they are not volunteering. However, small tokens of appreciation such as badges or medals are unlikely to be a problem.

Reimbursing expenses is considered to be good practice as no one should be disadvantaged financially through volunteering. It is not considered a fiscal value as it is just covering out-of-pocket expenses, preferably supported by receipts. It would be acceptable, for example, to offer to pay a volunteer £5 for lunch on a day when they were actually volunteering if they were going to have to buy it at a local café. However, this level of expenses would not be reasonable if you had a subsidised canteen where lunch costs £2.50, or to pay it to a volunteer every day, regardless of whether they actually attended for volunteering duties over the lunch period. If in doubt about what to pay in expenses refer to this government website <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

Remember that a happy volunteer is a great ambassador for your project and organisation. If you haven't done so already...
thank Pennine Lancashire volunteers today!