



Healthcare
Improvement
Scotland

Community
Engagement

The impact of COVID-19 on volunteering in NHSScotland

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Volunteering in NHSScotland
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Scottish Government
Règionair na h-Alba
gov.scot

Volunteering for All Our National Framework



“Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one’s own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary.”

[Volunteering for All](#), Scottish Government 2019

Volunteering in NHSScotland

Volunteering in NHSScotland

- Around 6,000 volunteers directly-engaged by NHS Boards at any one time
- Estimated 2,900 enquiries per year
- Government guidance dating back to 1970
- 2008-2011 Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering
- 2011-present Volunteering in NHSScotland programme seeks to support NHS Boards to develop sustainable programmes towards coproduced national outcomes



Volunteering in NHSScotland outcomes

1. Volunteering contributes to Scotland's health by:
 - (a) enhancing the quality of the patient experience, and
 - (b) providing opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of volunteers themselves
2. The infrastructure that supports volunteering is developed, sustainable and inclusive.
3. Volunteering, and the positive contribution it makes, is widely recognised, with a culture which demonstrates its value across the partners involved.

Structures in NHS Boards

- 22 organisations: 14 regional health boards, 6 special health boards, 2 health bodies
- Each NHS Board has:
 - Executive Lead for Volunteering – usually a director
 - Strategic Lead for Volunteering – senior management
- Mix of ‘volunteer manager’ roles, e.g.
 - Voluntary Services Manager
 - Volunteer Coordinators
 - Other staff who manage volunteers within a service (e.g. Public Involvement, Chaplaincy, Breastfeeding support, Play specialists)

Current Programme workstreams

- Developmental and strategic support to NHS Boards
- Volunteering Information System
- Communications
- Streamlining the volunteer recruitment process
- Pilot of a volunteer supporter role
- Embedding of evaluation throughout volunteer engagement programmes
- Develop and spread new and innovative volunteer roles
- National overview of volunteering across NHSScotland
- Support the delivery of volunteering projects in end of life care
- COVID-19 shared practice and guidance

Impact of COVID-19 on Programme

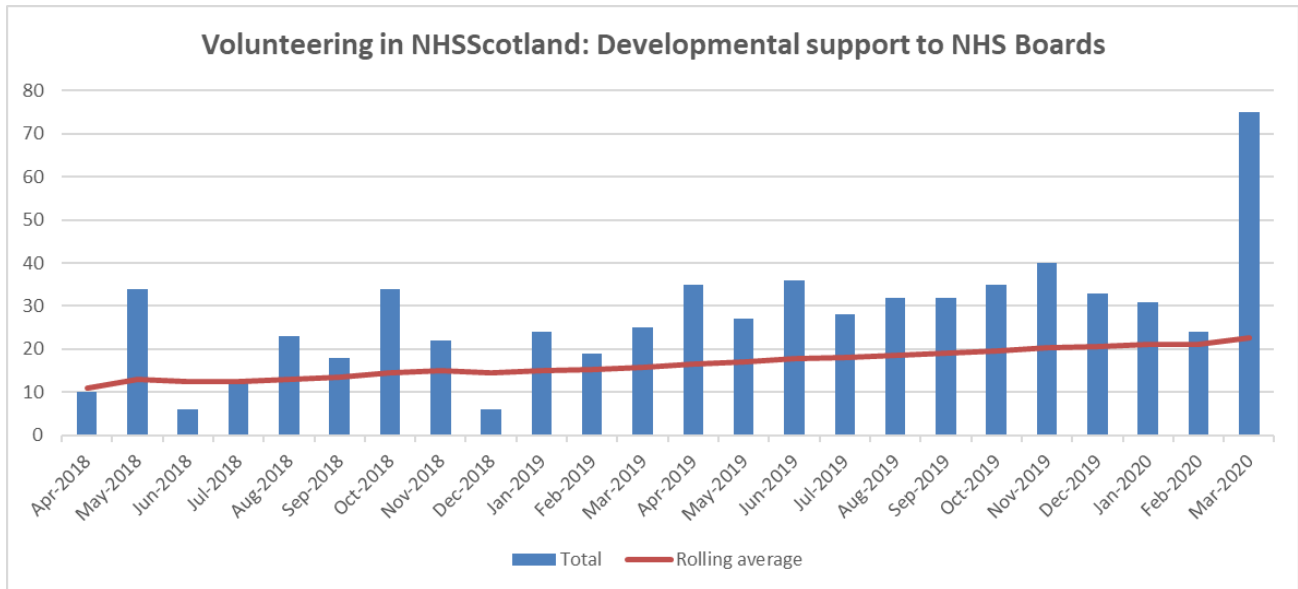
Reprioritisation of current programme and new work

- Urgent guidance to NHS Boards to ensure safety of volunteers
- Rapid spread of practice – online and monthly updates to guidance
- Online induction module collaboration with health boards and NHS Education for Scotland
- Fast-tracking volunteer recruitment guidance - improvement project findings accelerated
- Contribution to the development of the UK Emergency Volunteering Leave Scheme (Emergency Placement Scheme)

Impact of COVID-19 on Programme

Increased demand on the Development Support and Advice project

- 123% increase in inbound requests for support and information in March 2020 (based on 2019/20 rolling average)



Impact of COVID-19 on NHS Boards

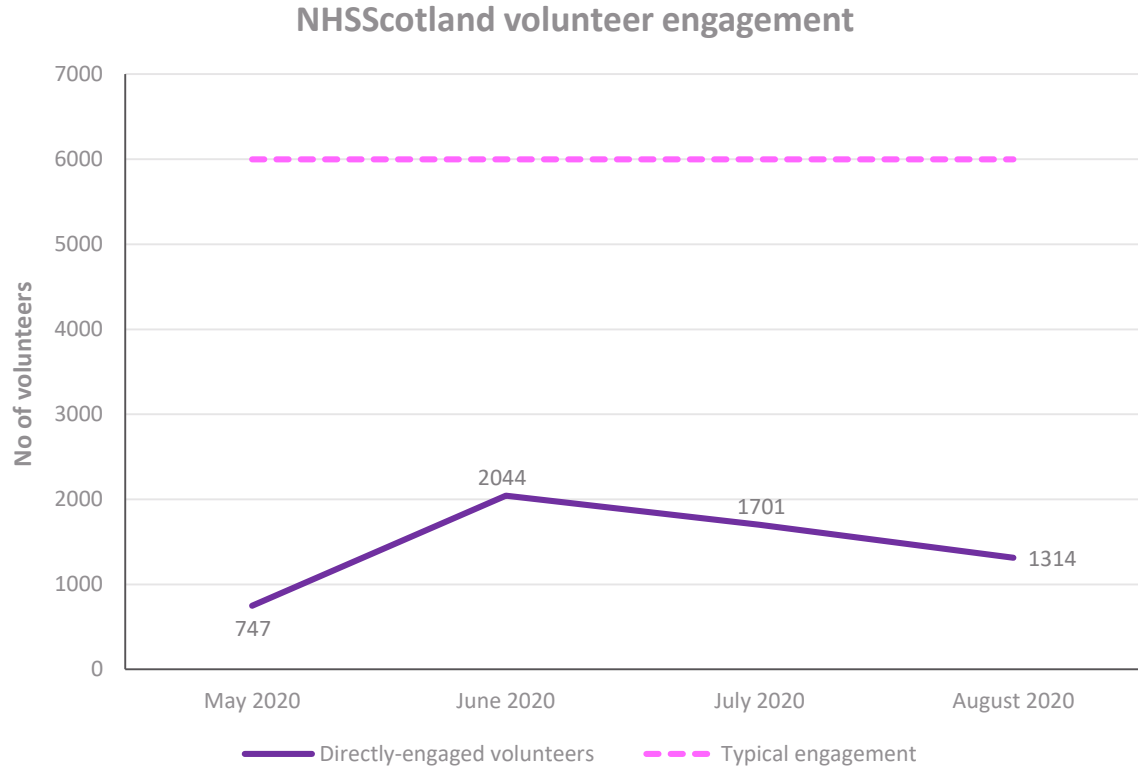
- National recruitment campaigns led to a large increase in unsolicited enquiries from members of the public in addition to the defined pathways
- Unprecedented volume of applicants – led to adaptation of recruitment and induction processes:
 - Fast-tracking of recruitment
 - Removal of bureaucracy from recruitment process
- Increased focus on risk assessment of roles and specific activities within roles
- Unprecedented positive media coverage

Impact of COVID-19 on NHS Boards

- Adaptation of some roles to offer services in a different way:
 - Spiritual care
 - Breastfeeding peer support
 - Listening services
 - Public involvement/engagement roles connecting virtually
 - Guide/wayfinding roles with increased focus on hand hygiene
- New roles:
 - Donation/belongings transfer and collection
 - Generic ward roles (e.g. supporting staff hydration)
 - Community-based roles (prescription delivery, shopping)



Impact of COVID-19 on NHS Boards



Beyond the NHS

UK-wide open letter to volunteer engagers:

- Invest In volunteer engagement
- Communicate with your volunteers
- Anticipate the need for flexibility
- Think in new ways

[External link](#) to letter



Scottish
Volunteering
Forum



Key learning for all

- Engagement with stakeholders (services) is vital in the planning stages of recruitment campaigns
- Supply does not necessarily create demand
- Clarity in language – assume nothing
- Volunteers are not expendable and do not replace the work of staff
- Volunteers support needs to be planned ... and available
- Robust and sustainable volunteering programmes require adequate investment

Impact on volunteers

"Being a volunteer during the pandemic has really pushed me out of my comfort zone and I've gained a lot of confidence just by speaking to people. Volunteering has helped me to connect with Scottish people and I have made so many new friends. "

Salar Mohammad Rassoul
Volunteer at NHS Dumfries
and Galloway



[External link](#)

Impact on families and patients



1 hr · 🌐

▶ Paisley



I don't know if this is allowed but my Dad was taken into the RAH on Saturday morning. He is now settled on Ward 8. I handed personal items etc. into the hospital today which were delivered safely to him by Ward Volunteers. The point of me posting is to say a massive thank you to the volunteer who delivered to my Dad and also let him use their own personal mobile to call me. We haven't seen or spoken to my Dad since Saturday and the kindness shown to him by this volunteer meant the absolute world to me. It may not seem like much but to us it was everything 🥰

👍❤️🥰 You and 529 others

36 comments · 11 shares



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Care
Opinion

What's your story?

"Volunteers spreading positivity and light during hard times"

About: Glasgow Royal Infirmary

📌 Posted by **Tina A** (as a carer), 3 weeks ago

My mother is in Glasgow royal at present and I have only been able to drop in things that are very important to her. There are volunteers at the door who can't do enough to help you and I want to thank them for taking things to my mum and always spreading positivity and light during a very hard time. Thank you for all you do.

