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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	23rd February 2021	Agenda Item	4.6
Report Title	Volunteer Service Report – Involving volunteers through the COVID-19 pandemic		
Report Author	Katie Taylor, Volunteer Service Manager		
Report Sponsor	Alison Clarke, Assistant Director of Therapies and Health Science		
Presented by	Alison Clarke, Assistant Director of Therapies and Health Science		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	To inform and provide assurance of the activity and outputs of the SBUHB Volunteer Service through the COVID-19 pandemic.		
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity of the Volunteer Service is accountable to the Volunteer Strategy Implementation Group which reports into the Quality and Safety Governance Group; providing bimonthly updates and a bi-annual report. • The Volunteer Service is currently supporting the Mass Vaccination Programme as well as coordinating the reintroduction of postponed volunteer roles and returning volunteers. Currently there are around 90 active volunteers (compared to 339 active volunteers in March 2020) with a further 96 new individuals going through training and recruitment checks. To date around 20% of SBUHB existing volunteer workforce has returned. • Around 100 individuals were recruited to a Field Hospital volunteer reserve pool; many of these volunteers have been redeployed into other priority roles across the Health Board (predominantly Mass Vaccination or Phlebotomy Meet and Greet). 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing volunteer roles were postponed at the start of the pandemic however a number of COVID-19 response roles were developed and have continued past their initiation along with some existing roles that have been reintroduced, and amended where appropriate, from August 2020. Ward based volunteering on acute sites remains postponed. Recruitment, induction and training processes and materials were updated and expedited in line with Workforce and OD recruitment changes where appropriate. Reset and Recovery - The Volunteer Strategy (2018-2021) is due to be reviewed and refreshed and operational plans developed for new financial year. 			
Specific Action Required <i>(please ✓ one only)</i>	Information	Discussion	Assurance	Approval
	✓		✓	
Recommendations	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive the report. Note the outputs of the volunteer service though COVID-19 pandemic to date. Assurance that the work of the volunteer service aligns with both organisational policy and national strategy. Endorse the receipt of an annual Volunteer Service report to the Quality and Safety Committee. 			

Volunteer Service Report – Involving volunteers through the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Current situation

Many of the pre-pandemic SBUHB volunteers continue to take time away from their existing volunteer roles, however some have continued in redeployed or amended roles due to COVID-19 response.

People currently have more time to give to volunteering after a lockdown was reintroduced in December 2020 and there has been an increase in the amount of days and time individuals are able to offer. However, this does fluctuate and will remain a changing picture over coming months due to ongoing changes in national guidance and restrictions e.g. furlough scheme, working from home, school closures and self-isolation requirements.

Volunteers are currently supporting several services (including Mass Vaccination, Pharmacy and Phlebotomy) predominantly in 'Meet and Greet' roles across the three main hospital sites, Bay Field Hospital, Margam Orangery, Gorseinon Canolfan Centre and Cefn Coed. On average volunteers undertake two, four hour shifts across a seven day week; see Appendix 8 for further information. Ward volunteering on acute sites remains postponed.

As more volunteer roles come back online and along with the need to support Mass Vaccination Centres and sustain a reserve list for Bay Field Hospital, new volunteer recruitment was opened up in January 2021. In order to fill priority roles, volunteers from the Field Hospital reserve list were redeployed along with returning SBUHB volunteers whose original roles had been postponed. However further volunteer recruitment was necessary to support the numbers required for Mass Vaccination and to fill areas where sufficient numbers of existing volunteers have not yet returned i.e. Singleton Front Desk. New recruitment is now on hold whilst applications are processed from the recent recruitment round and the on-boarding of new individuals initiated.

All current active volunteers in patient facing roles have been offered the vaccine. To date those who are currently taking time away due to the pandemic or those whose role has not yet been reintroduced have not been put forward for the vaccine.

2. Background

In response to the pandemic there were a number of changes implemented to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of our patients, staff, volunteers and the public. This impacted the Volunteer Service with many roles postponed in order to reduce footfall on site and therefore reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Many volunteers chose to take time away and some of those who wished to continue were temporarily redeployed into short term COVID-19 response roles or directed to external volunteering opportunities where appropriate.

Customary volunteer recruitment activity was suspended. However it was agreed that volunteers could play an essential part in the response to the COVID-19 crisis, enhancing workforce resource needed to respond to the pandemic and improving patient experience. Recruitment to the following roles took place (See Appendix 2 for role descriptions);

- Acute Pharmacy Departments – Medication Delivery Drivers
- Field Hospital – Ward Helpers, Ward Runners and Reception Support
- Mental Health and Learning Disabilities – Equipment and Delivery Drivers
- Antibody Testing Unit – Meet and Greet

Processes and risk assessments were developed and all necessary precautions were taken for safe and efficient deployment of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers have not been placed in situations which put themselves, patients or NHS staff at undue risk of exposure through the execution of their duties.

Areas that require volunteer support are identified and suitable opportunities are approved by the Volunteer Strategy Implementation Group. At the start of the pandemic a streamlined recruitment and on boarding process was developed, in line with Workforce staff processes, to allow for expedited recruitment where needed (see Appendix 1).

The Volunteer Service Team are responsible for coordinating the development and recruitment of volunteers at the Health Board and throughout the COVID-19 response have fed into the Workforce Silver, Training Cell, and Field Hospital Operational Groups. As part of the Covid Gold response a Volunteer Cell was established to support the coordination and reintroduction of volunteer activity and in September 2020 the cell was stood down and the responsibility restored to the Volunteer Strategy Implementation Group. A QIA was submitted and approved in August 2020 to reintroduce volunteers across acute sites in non-ward based roles; commencing with Morriston Desk and Morriston Phlebotomy from 24/8/2020. The overarching reintroduction of volunteer service plan (Appendix 3) and volunteer service risk assessment (Appendix 4) sets out the process for a structured and safe re-establishment of service.

3. Volunteer Recruitment Data

Volunteer Numbers Pre-COVID-19					
March 2019 – August 2019					
Total Enquiries	310				
Total Applications	111				
Total Recruited	72				
Active	339	Mr title 21.39%	Mrs/Ms title 78.61%	16-25	11.21%
				26-45	8.26%
				46-64	16.22%
				65+	64.31%
Volunteer Numbers COVID-19					
March 2020– August 2020 (as of 18.08.2020)					
Total enquiries	439				
Total applications	198				
Total recruited *not including redeployed volunteers	148	Mr title 56.47%	Mrs/Ms title 43.54%	16-25	16.22%
				26-45	24.32%
				46-64	53.38%
				65+	6.08%
Active	56				
Volunteer Numbers COVID-19					
August 2020 – February 2021 (as of 10.02.2021)					
Total Enquiries	208				
Total Applications	96				

Total Recruited	94	
Active *Data for recent recruitment period not complete	86	

- Pre-pandemic there were approximately 400 volunteers active and going through training at the Health Board. At the start of the pandemic 28 were redeployed into COVID-19 response roles. 47% of the existing pre-pandemic volunteer database were aged 70 or above and adhering to Welsh Government guidelines and not volunteering.
- There were 439 enquiries between March and August 2020 from individuals wanting to support the Health Board’s COVID-19 response, in comparison to the 310 enquiries for volunteering received in the same period in 2019. Enquiries dropped in the August 2020 - February 2021 period, this could be due to the changes in restrictions due to the pandemic and also as volunteer recruitment was postponed at the Health Board with existing volunteers and field hospital reserves deployed into roles prior to opening up new recruitment.
- There was also a difference in age range of those recruited for a COVID-19 response role to the existing volunteer workforce. There was an increase in all age brackets below 65 years of age. The most common age range for the existing volunteer workforce pre-pandemic was 65 years or older – making up over 64% of the volunteer numbers. This is in line with national data indicating that in 2018/19, 65-74 year olds were the age group most likely to volunteer on a regular basis (UK Civil Society Almanac, 2020). The COVID-19 response volunteers in the 46-64 years age bracket, made up over half of those recruited. Those of working age were most likely to volunteer, this could be partly due to the nature of the pandemic, and targeted recruitment at those not in an at risk category, and also as many people were likely to be furloughed or working from home during this time with greater flexibility and opportunity to volunteer.
- The national data also indicated that women were more likely than men to have formally volunteered at least once in the last year. With COVID-19 response recruitment there was an increase in the number of individuals using the title “Mr” than those in our existing volunteer database; 56.47% versus 21.39%.
- The conversion of enquiries and applications received to those recruited is subject to the same recruitment process as paid staff. Volunteers are asked to attend a recruitment Q&A, fill in an application form, attend interview, complete pre-employment checks and complete mandatory training before a start date can be

confirmed. This may explain the drop in numbers from those who enquired to those recruited and then active.

*Further information on national volunteering data for UK can be found at:

<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/>

4. Involving volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Clear recruitment and deployment records have been maintained and all requests for volunteer support documented. Each volunteer role has a corresponding role description and activity risk assessment. Volunteers are given training and induction appropriate to their role. All volunteers are asked to complete the All Wales Workforce Risk Assessment Tool and discuss the score with Volunteer Service Team prior to starting in role. All volunteer roles are covered by existing arrangements for indemnity within the NHS.
- Volunteers are involved in low risk activities and areas with limited direct contact with patients. Volunteers would only be involved in COVID-19 positive areas if the Health Board reaches designated “super surge” escalation level where there will be deployment to field hospital roles. Field Hospital roles are an enhancement to care provided and volunteer numbers are not included in essential staffing model figures. Volunteers do not provide personal care to patients.
- Volunteers have access to Swansea Bay University Health Board’s health and wellbeing services including Occupational Health and access to testing. Volunteers in patient facing roles, as part of SBUHB’s workforce, are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

5. Conclusion








Focus is now on the reset and recovery plan for the Volunteer Service taking into account the learning from the pandemic and activity over the previous 12 months. The Volunteer Service will be reviewing and refreshing the Volunteer Strategy (2018-2021) and developing the operational plan for the new financial year to meet the existing aims but also the demands brought to light by the pandemic.

- Through contributing to the development of the workforce model for the Field Hospital and supporting the mass vaccination programme, a lack of understanding around volunteer shift patterns and planning has been highlighted. For example, the expectation is often to calculate the numbers of volunteers needed in terms of whole time equivalent, however time commitments vary for each volunteer and often the

numbers of volunteers needed to cover a full time working week require higher recruitment targets and increased planning and coordination. A key aim for the service will be to ensure information and training for staff around volunteering is available.

- The streamlined volunteer recruitment, on-boarding and training processes have been reviewed and where appropriate will continue, e.g. use of technology to facilitate training and induction via Learning@Wales, to improve volunteer experience, encourage volunteer diversity and increase staff resource.
- Membership for the Volunteer Cell and Volunteer Strategy Implementation Group included representatives from the local Community Voluntary Councils. This partnership continues and provides positive challenge and scrutiny to volunteer service activity and approaches. There has been the development of a mutual critical friend relationship and an improved regional approach to volunteering.
- Paramount to realising the potential for volunteer services in SBU HB is digitalisation and the use of technology. Both will enhance patient and visitor experience and support staff in the workplace. It will encourage further diversity and inclusivity in the volunteer workforce.

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives <i>(please choose)</i>	Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
<i>(please choose)</i>	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
The volunteer service exists to enhance patient experience.		
Financial Implications		
N/A		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
N/A		
Staffing Implications		
N/A		
Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)		
N/A		
Report History	Volunteer Service Report – Involving volunteers during the first wave of COVID-19 response taken to Volunteer Strategy Implementation Group - Monday 19th October 2020	

	<p>Volunteer Service Report – Involving volunteers during the first wave of COVID-19 response taken to the Quality Safety Governance Group – Thursday 19th November 2020.</p>
<p>Appendices</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Accelerated Volunteer Recruitment and On-boarding Process through first wave</p> <p> Accelerated Volunteer Recruitme</p> <p>Appendix 2 – COVID-19 Response Volunteer Roles</p> <p> Appendix 2 - COVID-19 Response</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Swansea University Health Board Volunteer Service – Overarching Reintroduction of Volunteer Services Plan</p> <p> Plan for Reintroduction of V</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Volunteer Service COVID-19 Risk Assessment</p> <p> Evidence 1.1 COVID-19 Risk Asses</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Volunteer Handbook</p> <p> COVID-19 Volunteer Handboo</p> <p>Appendix 6 – SBUHB Volunteer Roles and Locations</p> <p> Appendix 6 - SBUHB Volunteer Roles anc</p> <p>Appendix 7 – Volunteer Deployment Process through COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <p> Appendix 7 -Volunteer Deploym</p>