

Volunteer Development Framework Update 2023-2024

What is the YAS Volunteer Development Framework (VDF) and why is it important?

The YAS VDF sets out our commitment to supporting and enhancing volunteering. This is in recognition of the significant benefits volunteering brings to our patients, staff, communities and to volunteers themselves.

The VDF identifies how we will achieve our ambitions of having:

- a robust **infrastructure** to enable, sustain and enhance current and future volunteering opportunities.
- an organisational **culture** that values, encourages, promotes and supports volunteering.
- volunteer programmes that maximise volunteer **contribution** and represent the **diversity** of our communities.
- collaborative **partnerships** with other health and care providers, voluntary, community and third sector organisations to further enhance our care offer through volunteering (partnerships).

Our progress during 2023-24

Infrastructure

We have:

- Reviewed all e-learning modules for CFR and PTS volunteers to ensure the e-learning they are required to complete is relevant/proportionate to their role.
- Launched the first Trust-wide volunteers' survey to increase volunteers' feedback and to understand whether they feel valued at YAS and where we could make improvements to enhance their volunteering experience. Results showed that our volunteers feel supported and feel their contribution is meaningful and rewarding. The biggest opportunity for development is communication; both about the wider Trust and between volunteer and manager/lead contact.
- Established a Volunteer Services Peer Support group; a forum where staff across voluntary teams can share best practice, challenges, opportunities, and support one another.
- Established a Volunteering Development Steering Group offering senior leadership support to volunteering across YAS.
- Secured funding for, and recruited, a permanent Volunteer Development Manager to continue to lead the delivery of the YAS Volunteer Development Framework.

Culture

We have:

- Ensured that volunteers had opportunity to feed into the YAS Together programme which aims to ensure YAS is a place where everyone can care, lead, grow and excel, for the benefit of patients across Yorkshire.

- Ensured that volunteers had opportunity to feed into the new YAS Trust Strategy.
- Included volunteers/volunteering in our Trust Strategy, which demonstrates that volunteers are a valued part of our organisation, both now and in the long-term future.
- Increased communication regarding the impact and contribution of volunteering to internal and external audiences through participation in the development of a national ambulance volunteering dashboard.

Contribution and diversity

We have:

- Evaluated a pilot project where existing Community First Responders (CFRs) have been offered additional training and equipment to respond to patients who have fallen. Watch this space for the Trust's decision on next steps.
- Established the Community Engagement Volunteer programme as a new voluntary and developmental opportunity for existing staff and volunteers.
- Completed a diversity census amongst existing volunteers and ensure that we collate diversity information during the recruitment of new volunteers. This will help us to understand our baseline and begin working towards improving diversity.

Partnerships

We have:

- Worked collaboratively with a local hospital to understand whether hospital volunteers can support our Patient Transport Service (PTS) and PTS patients.
- Worked collaboratively with the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) to understand whether RVS volunteers could support ambulance staff welfare at times of high demand/service pressures.
- Worked collaboratively with several local organisations whose staff were looking to volunteer some time to benefit their local communities. These volunteers supported the YAS Green Plan by creating green spaces at several YAS sites.

Next steps

A key area of focus in the coming months will be working towards the Investing in Volunteers reaccreditation, the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. A small team of staff and volunteers have been working through the assessment process. In July we will be hosting an Investing in Volunteers assessor and expect to receive detailed feedback and the result in September 2024.

During the next 12 months we plan to increase volunteer impact and contribution to patient care by focusing on how we support our existing and future volunteers, and how we recruit volunteers in a way that supports and reflects the diversity of our communities.

The national picture

YAS is supporting the [Association of Ambulance Chief Executives \(AACE\) National Ambulance Volunteering Strategy](#), which aims to offer national leadership and facilitate continuous developments across volunteering in the ambulance sector. Phase two of the strategy will be launched in summer 2024.