

Acute Volunteering Service



2024-25 Annual Report

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1. Foreword

"It is with great pride and heartfelt gratitude that I introduce the 2024-25 Annual Report for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC)'s Acute Volunteering Service. Over the past year, the dedication, compassion, and creativity shown by our volunteers have continued to inspire, not only within NHSGGC but across the communities we serve. Their generosity of spirit and steadfast commitment has enhanced patient, family and staff experiences, strengthened connections, and embodied the very best of collaborative care.

One of the year's most memorable moments was Volunteers Week, held in honour of our volunteers. I was deeply moved by the stories of support, resilience, and kindness shared over the course of the week. These stories were more than an accolade; it was a testament to the collective impact of volunteering—a vivid reminder of how individual gifts, when united, can shape a more compassionate and responsive health service for all.

Over the past year, our strategic focus has centred on strengthening governance structures and resources dedicated to volunteer support. By refining our oversight frameworks and securing further financial support from Glasgow Healthcare Charity, we have begun to build a more resilient foundation for volunteering. These enhancements will enable us to offer greater guidance, recognition, and opportunities, allowing volunteers to contribute confidently and effectively within an environment designed for their success.

Thank you to every volunteer for their invaluable contribution. Together, we are building strong, caring communities and a brighter future for health and wellbeing across Greater Glasgow and Clyde."

Fiona Smith, AHP Director, NHSGGC

2. Executive Summary

The 2024–25 Annual Report for NHSGGC’s Acute Volunteering Service celebrates a year of dedication, growth, and impact. Our volunteers have continued to inspire, bringing compassion, creativity, and steadfast commitment to patients, families, and staff across our acute sites. Their contributions have strengthened connections, enhanced experiences, and embodied the very best of collaborative care.

2.1 Key Achievements

- **Sustained Volunteer Engagement:** An average of 228 volunteers each month contributed over 38,800 hours of support—equivalent to 25 whole-time staff—across 10 acute sites. This represents a growing trend in both volunteer numbers and hours, bucking the national decline in volunteering activity.
- **Significant Societal and Economic Value:** The total estimated value of volunteering reached over £1 million, with £228,000 attributed to population wellbeing and £839,553 in economic value.
- **Diverse Volunteer Roles:** Volunteers played vital roles as Welcome Guides, ward companions, and in specialist functions, supporting patients, families, and staff in a variety of settings.
- **Robust Governance and Partnerships:** The service strengthened its governance through the establishment of the Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum, refreshed policies, and enhanced collaboration with partner organisations.
- **Volunteer Experience:** Survey results show that volunteers feel highly supported, valued, and purposeful, with NHSGGC outperforming or matching national benchmarks in most domains. Volunteers consistently report a strong sense of belonging, flexibility, and personal growth.



2.2 Challenges and Opportunities

- **Scope of role:** While overall experience is positive, there are gaps in the sense of ability to fully utilise their skills and experiences.
- **Practical Support:** Volunteers identified areas for improvement in access to resources, expenses, and amenities.

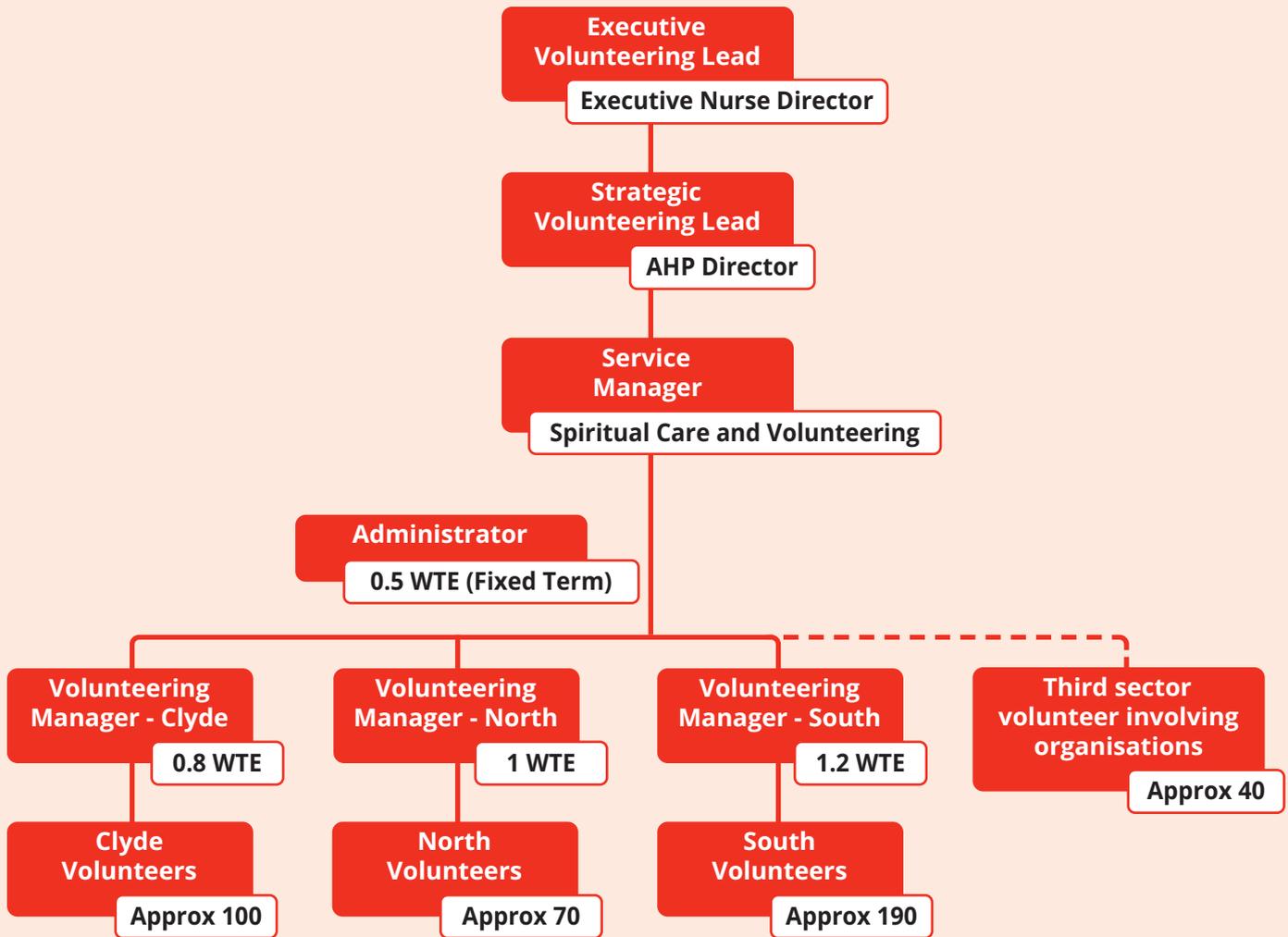
2.3 Looking Ahead

The Acute Volunteering Service is committed to enhancing practical support, fostering recognition, strengthening partnerships, and growing the number and diversity of volunteers. By focusing on these strategic priorities, we aim to ensure that volunteering continues to deliver mutual benefit for patients, families, staff, and volunteers, and that our service remains resilient, inclusive, and impactful in the year ahead.

3. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide assurance, oversight and an overview of the key milestones and achievements of NHSGGC’s Acute Volunteering Service in 2024-25.

The Acute Volunteering Service is hosted within the NMAHP (Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals) Directorate in NHSGGC. In 2024-25, the service’s staffing establishment was as follows:



NHSGGC volunteering supports delivery of local and national frameworks, including:

- [NHSGGC Volunteering Policy](#) (2024)
- NHSGGC Quality Strategy, [Quality Everyone Everywhere](#) (2024-2029)
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland's [Vision and Strategy for Volunteering in NHS Scotland \(2022\)](#)
- [Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)
- The Scottish Government's [Volunteering Framework, Volunteering for All: A National Framework \(2019\)](#)
- Volunteer Scotland's [Volunteer Charter](#) (2019)
- [Clear Pathway Guidance for NHS Boards](#) (2018).

Volunteering adds value and complements statutory service provision, enhancing the quality of patient, family and volunteer experience in NHSGGC. It does not replace staff roles, but supplements them.

Volunteering has mutual benefit – to the patient, family or staff member being helped, the service, and the volunteer themselves.

The Volunteering Service aims to deliver this mutual benefit to all, across the communities we serve.



4. Governance and Strategic Oversight

NHSGGC's Acute Volunteering Service continued to progress on their journey of assuring good governance and strategic oversight of volunteering in 2024-25.

Key achievements were as follows:

**June
2024**

- Internal governance review of volunteer background checks

**Sept
2024**

- Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum established

**Nov
2024**

- NHSGGC Volunteering Policy approved and published

**Jan
2025**

- Alignment with NHSGGC strategies and plans

4.1 Volunteer Background Checks

Volunteer background checks were reviewed across all acute sites and updated where required, ensuring organisational compliance with legislative and organisational requirements whilst not presenting unnecessary barriers to volunteering.

4.2 Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum

An Acute Third Sector Volunteering Strategic Oversight Forum was established in September, supporting assurance, visibility and oversight of partner organisations with volunteers on NHSGGC acute sites. Further information about this is provided in section 8 of this report.

4.3 Volunteering Policy

A refreshed Volunteering Policy for NHSGGC was published and approved in November 2024, setting a policy context for encouraging volunteering from all walks of life. Key policy improvements included:

- a collaborative Equality Impact Assessment, to ensure volunteering is as accessible to all members of the community as possible

- alignment with the principles in Volunteer Scotland’s [Volunteer Charter](#), to support legitimate and appropriate volunteering opportunities which add value and do not replace essential services
- uplift of mileage reimbursement rate to volunteers, so volunteers are not out of pocket and to ensure parity with volunteering reimbursement in other sectors.

4.4 NHSGGC Strategies and Plans

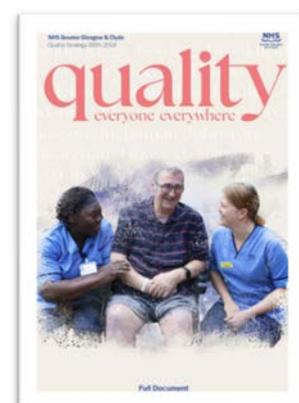
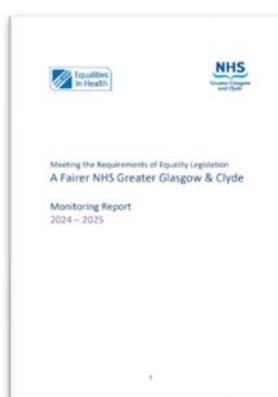
The Volunteering Service supported delivery of NHSGGC’s [Quality Strategy](#) in January 2025 through two key deliverables for the volunteering service, supporting the Quality Strategy’s objective to build strong connections with our partner organisations and communities:

We will develop a network of third sector volunteering services to share information, good practice, new developments, initiatives and learning via the NHSGGC Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum

We will widen participation and improve access to volunteering opportunities

In the 3 months between inclusion in the Quality Strategy and the end of the reporting period, progress on the two key deliverables included:

- One meeting of the Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum in March 2025, with 13 organisations represented. The meeting focused on the Disclosure Act, with Disclosure Scotland speaking about upcoming legislative changes and implications for volunteer involving organisations. Attendees found the session helpful to ensure their approaches were in line with legislation. Further information about this is provided in section 8 of this report.
- The Volunteering Service reviewed their approach to encouraging volunteers to report their equalities information, reported via the [NHSGGC Equalities Scheme](#). Learning from this review included:
 - » Incorporating equalities monitoring ask into volunteers’ induction
 - » Making equalities monitoring survey more prominent in recruitment process
 - » Encouraging volunteers to complete equalities information when responding to annual experience survey.



5. Volunteering Activity Overview

Volunteer Contributions 2024-25



228
VOLUNTEERS
PER MONTH



38,872
HOURS OF
SUPPORT



228,000
SOCIAL
VALUE



839,553
ECONOMIC
VALUE

£1,067,553

Estimated total added value

- **228 volunteers** every month
- equivalent in time to **25 WTE** across the year

**Volunteer
helpforce**



- **38,872 hours** of support
- **3239 hours** every month

**Time
Given**



- **£228,000** impact on population wellbeing
- **£839,553** economic value
- **£1,067,553** total value

**Societal and
economic value**

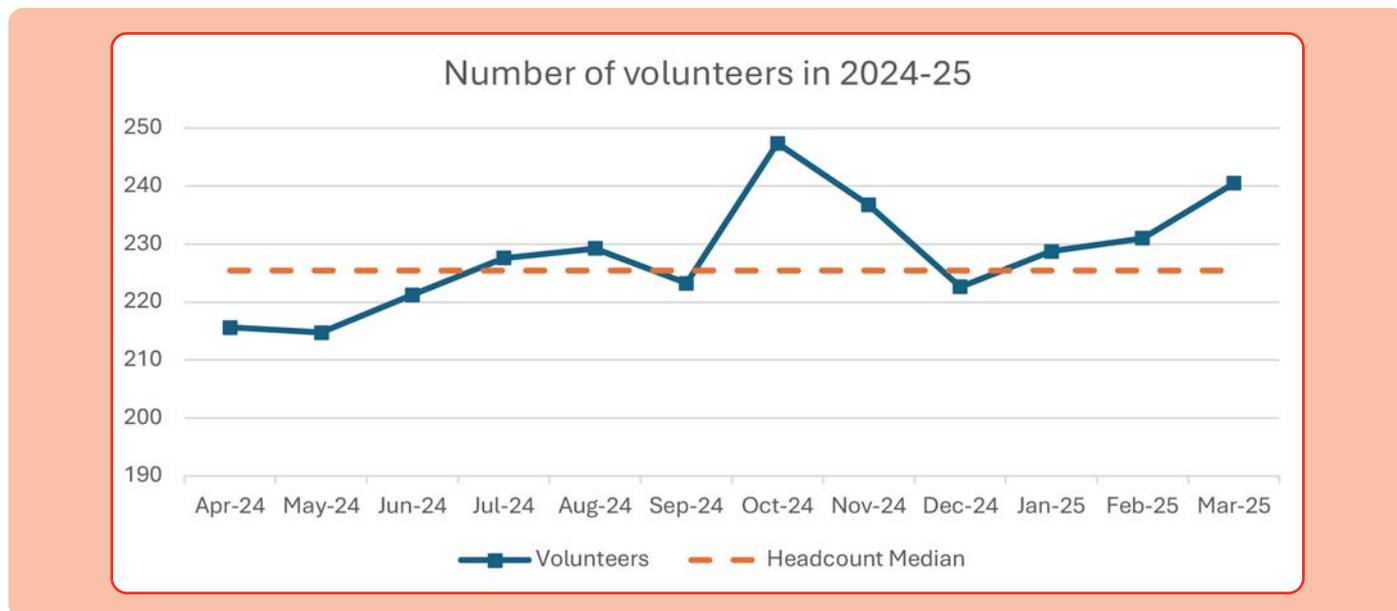


In 2024-25, approximately **228 volunteers each month** gave an incredible **38,872 hours** of support (an average of around **3239 hours each month**, equivalent to the contribution of **25 WTE**) to acute patients, families and staff. When looking at the **societal impact on the wellbeing** of the population for this volunteering¹, this is roughly equivalent to **£228,000** over the year. The **economic value**² of this volunteering can be estimated at **£839,553**, bringing a **total estimate value of £1,067,553**.

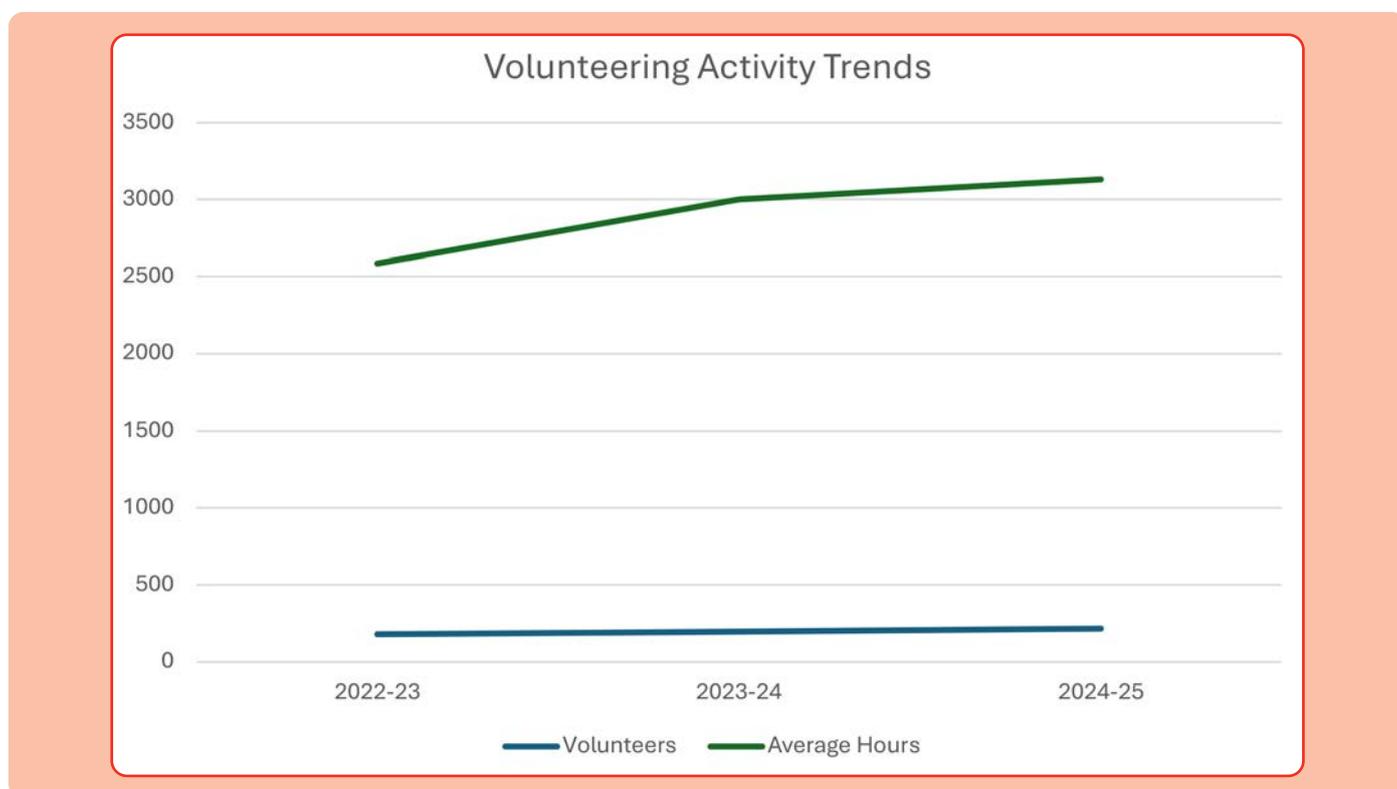
¹The-social-value-of-volunteering-in-Scotland---Technical-Report.pdf

²Calculating-the-economic-value-of-your-volunteers-Guidance.pdf

Despite staffing challenges, volunteering activity across 2024-25 remained relatively stable:



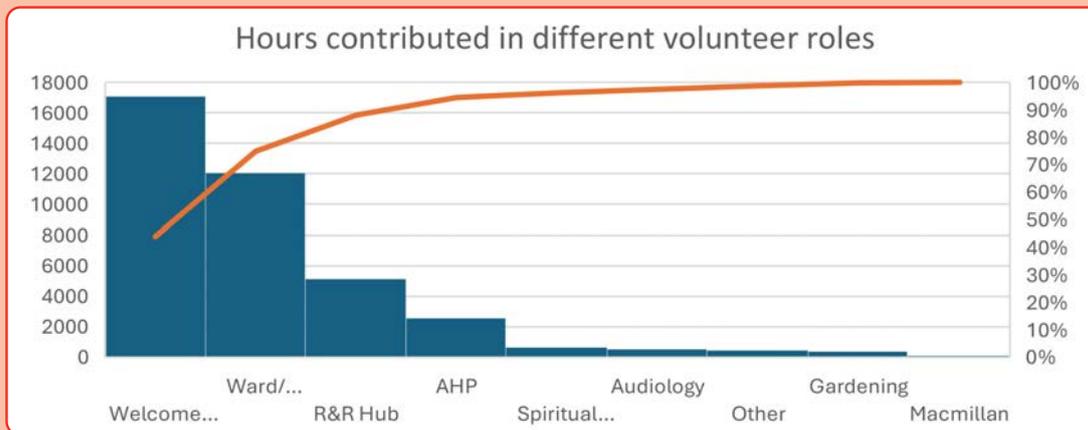
When looking at trends in recent years, a small but noticeable trend can be seen towards increasing numbers of volunteers, and the average hours they contribute each month:



Taken in the context of rapidly declining volunteering activity nationally³ and a period of recovery and rebuilding post COVID-19, this increase is an achievement.

³ [National Volunteering Profile - Volunteer Scotland](#)

Acute volunteers contributed across 9 main roles and 10 acute sites. Of those, 80% of volunteering activity was through welcome guide and ward/ clinical department volunteering roles:



5.1 Welcome Guides

High numbers of people walk through the front entrance of our hospitals on a daily basis, especially at peak times of the day. Some may require guidance to find their way around or have questions they wish to ask.

Volunteer Welcome Guides offer a friendly and helpful welcome to patients, families and visitors and guide them to where they want to go within the hospital. In total, **17,068 hours** were contributed by an average of **95 Welcome Guides every week** in 2024-25.

In 2024-25, a Welcome Guide service commenced in Stobhill Ambulatory Care Hospital, freeing up time for the Health Records department, and resulting in this valued service being provided and supported in 5 acute sites.

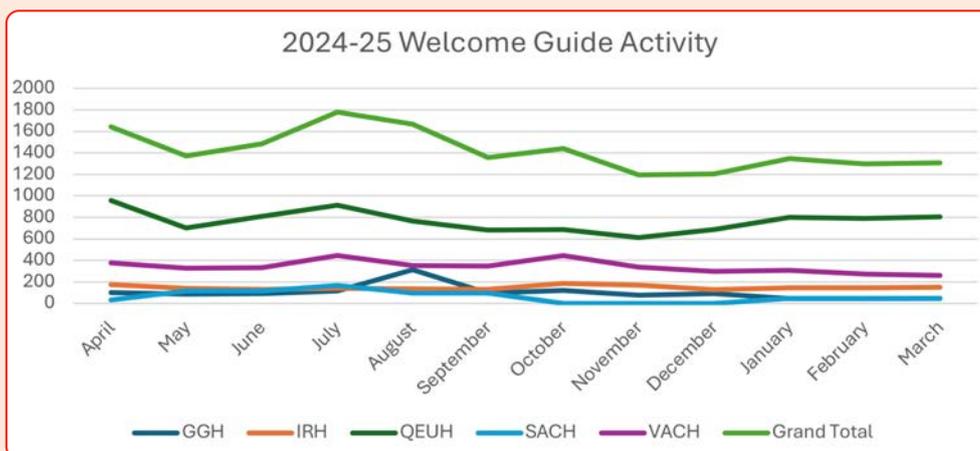
Welcome Guide activity fluctuated over the year; this was largely in response to staffing absences and vacancies in the Volunteering Service - illustrating how vital staffing resource is to maintain valued volunteering services.



17,068
WELCOME GUIDES
CONTRIBUTED
HOURS



95
WELCOME GUIDES
EVERY WEEK



5.1.1 Why Volunteers' Week at NHSGGC is pure poetry for David, 68

— Volunteer and poet David Henry.

...[Mary Nolan, Volunteering Manager, South Sector NHSGGC] said:

"In the past 12 months, our fantastic volunteers have clocked up an incredible 45,605 hours across our sites, and your work, your good humour and your commitment are appreciated by patients, visitors and staff alike."

David has been a volunteer at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital since it opened in 2015 – and it was his experience during a hospital appointment that inspired him to get involved.

"I had a problem with my heart and came to the old Southern General to get it investigated. When I arrived I was told I wasn't to go straight to my appointment, but instead I had to use one of the self sign-in machines.

"I had real problems with this and, while the care I received that day was wonderful, the one thing that blotted my visit was that experience signing in.

"A couple of weeks later, I came across an appeal for volunteers at the new hospital – they were looking for people to help with that very machine so I felt I had to get involved."

David was one of the new hospital's first volunteers, and every Tuesday morning since then he has been at his post in the entrance to the QEUH, greeting people as they arrive and helping them with directions, answers to questions or perhaps just a kind word of support.

"Volunteering here is so rewarding and I'd heartily recommend it," he said.

"The QEUH is a huge hospital and people who arrive here can sometimes find it a bit overwhelming or confusing. If we can make their experience a little easier and take some of the confusion out of coming here, then we've done our job.

"People are often very grateful, and I find it's often the small things that they really appreciate. We don't expect their thanks, but it makes everything worthwhile."

Harry Balch, Volunteer Manager, Clyde Sector, at NHSGGC, said:

*"...Volunteers such as David, and other all others who feature in this video, bring with them a whole range of experience and skills, and that's what makes **volunteering** such an important service. Not only do the volunteers provide support to patients, it can be a hugely rewarding – and sometimes surprising – experience for those who volunteer."*



To watch the video in full, click here:

[▶ NHSGGC – Volunteers Week 2024 \(youtube.com\).](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

5.2 Ward/ Clinical Department Volunteers

Our Ward Volunteers provide friendship and conversation for patients: some may be elderly, others may not have any visitors as they are far from home. The aim is to enhance their experience in hospital and potentially avoid them becoming frustrated, which can stem from prolonged periods of time where stimulation is lacking.

Ward volunteers are placed in a number of clinical areas throughout NHSGGC, including:

- Acute Receiving Units
- Dialysis rooms
- Discharge Lounges
- Emergency Departments
- Inpatient wards.



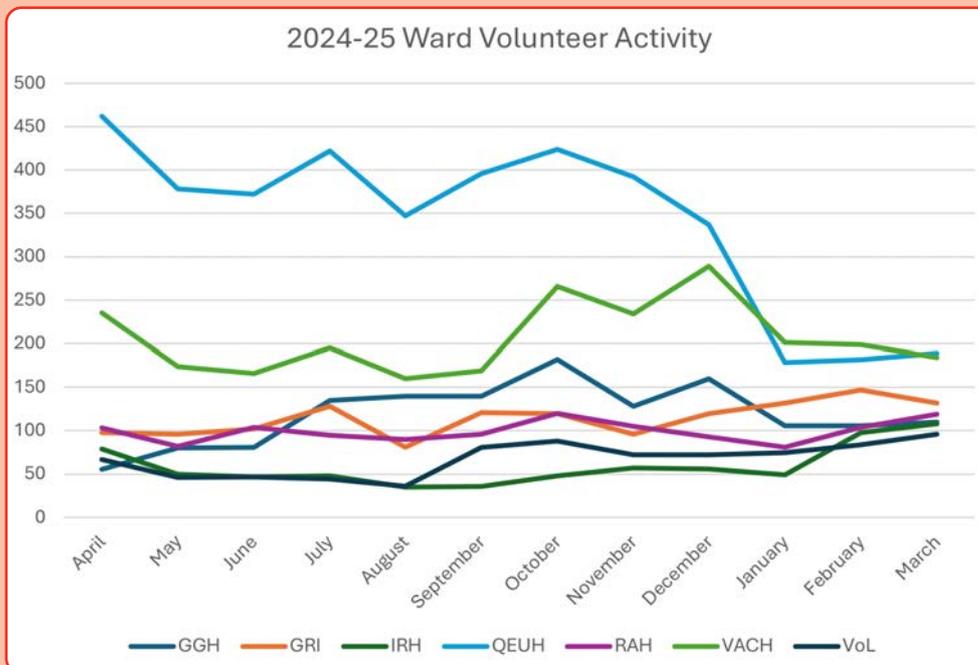
65
AVERAGE
VOLUNTEERS
PER WEEK



12,059
VOLUNTEER
CONTRIBUTED
HOURS

In 2024-25, Ward Volunteers contributed **12,059 hours** to these clinical areas, with around **65 volunteers on average coming weekly** across **7 hospital sites**.

Again, ward volunteer activity fluctuated in line with Volunteering Service staffing vacancies/ absences; this role is complex and requires consistent and high quality support from the Volunteering Service to support retention and mitigate potential risk.



5.2.1 Volunteer Alison swaps Hospitality for Hospital Welcome

B&B owner Alison Fraser knows just what it takes to make people feel welcome – and making somewhere feel like a home from home is exactly what she does as a volunteer at the Vale of Leven hospital.

Alison began **volunteering** at the hospital during the winter, when her B&B business in Drymen was less busy.



She said: “We usually cater for walkers on the West Highland Way, but obviously, there aren’t as many at that time of year, and as I’d been in the Vale in recent years, I decided to give something back after the care I’d had.”

From Bed & Breakfast to a friendly bedside manner might seem a bit of a leap, but Alison had no fear of swapping hospitality for hospital.

She added: “In the 1970s I trained as a nurse at Gartnavel General, so I had some idea of what would be going on and how things would be set up.

“I had the chance to volunteer in the shop but that meant there would be no interaction with patients and that’s really where I wanted to be.

“I had to provide a reference, and a few other checks in preparation, something I haven’t had to do in years, so I felt assured that the volunteer service was being run properly.”

Alison now volunteers on a regular basis in Lomond Ward at the Vale.

She said: “Obviously as the Vale is my local hospital, I’m going to say it’s a great place – but it is!

“The Vale has an atmosphere all of its own, mainly because it is a local hospital – it’s always very welcoming and people are proud of it.

“When you arrive for a volunteering shift, everyone is always pleased to see you – staff and patients.

“And you do feel really appreciated when you’re leaving and people are thanking you.”



Volunteer Manager Harry Balch said:

“... Volunteers such as Alison bring a whole range of experience and skills to the service and that’s what makes volunteering such an important service. Not only do the volunteers provide support to patients, it can be a hugely rewarding – and sometimes surprising – experience for those who volunteer.”



6. Recruitment, Training and Support

A significant proportion of Volunteering Service activity is dedicated to recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. In recognition of this, the financial resource required, and the complexity of volunteering in NHS acute hospitals, volunteers are currently asked to commit to at least 2-3 hours per week, for at least 6 months.

In 2024-25 the Volunteering Service was granted part time fixed term administrative resource. In addition to freeing up Volunteering Manager time by processing aspects of volunteer applications, the Volunteering Service were able to utilise this resource begin to measure and monitor the volunteer application process, to support consideration of improvement opportunities.

6.1 Volunteer application journey

Volunteering for NHSGGC attracts significant interest; the Volunteering Service strikes a balance between harnessing that interest, and ensuring that volunteering roles remain safe and well governed for patients, staff and volunteers.

NHSGGC Acute Volunteers are subject to a thorough, robust and resource intensive recruitment process; vital in the context of the complex and pressured environments they volunteer within. In 2024-25, the recruitment process was as follows:

Screening

- Interested parties are asked to meet the following criteria before applying:
- commit to weekly volunteering for at least 6 months
- over the age of 16
- live locally

Recruitment

- Online application form via webpage
- Interview
- 2 references
- Occupational Health check
- Disclosure Scotland check
- Visa verification

Onboarding

- Online induction
- In person induction
- Shadowing/ buddying
- Trial period
- Confidentiality and volunteer agreements

Management

- Regular support and review
- Ongoing encouragement and check ins to increase retention
- For Welcome Guides and R&R Hubs, coordination and management of the service being delivered.

2024-25 Volunteer Applications



As can be seen above, 144 people - approximately **17%** of those applying to volunteer with NHSGGC - were successful in being **offered a role** in 2024-25.

During 2024-25, on average volunteer length of service was **3.3 years**. On average **91%** of volunteers in this period stayed with us for at least 6 months (the minimum commitment asked of volunteers).

6.2 Training and support

In addition to comprehensive training and information provided to all NHSGGC volunteers at induction, the Volunteering Service provide and signpost to ongoing development opportunities for volunteers, such as British Sign Language (BSL) training and TURAS modules. The team also support individuals looking to progress with an NHS career, through provision of UCAS references, linking with clinical colleagues, and advising on the multiple pathways into the NHS workforce.

7. Volunteer Experience and Feedback

In Summer 2024, the Volunteering Service encouraged NHSGGC volunteers to participate in a Volunteering Experience Survey. Supported and coordinated by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, national results are also [available](#).

For NHSGGC, 85 volunteers responded – roughly a 45% response rate. Of those, 80% were in the three main roles offered by NHSGGC; welcome guides, ward volunteers, and R&R Hub volunteers.

Volunteers described to what extent their experience of volunteering with NHSGGC aligned to outcomes in the [National Framework for Volunteering](#). They were also asked to highlight their favourite moment from volunteering in NHSGGC in the last year.

The following percentages indicate the proportion of NHSGGC respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the national outcome statements:

Flexible and responsive

I can adjust my commitments or change my role when I need to

92% NHS GGC
91% NHS Scot

I can give my time on my own terms and around my life

95% NHS GGC
95% NHS Scot

I know what I'm being asked to do and how to stop if I wish

96% NHS GGC
97% NHS Scot

Enabled and supported

I enjoy taking part and feel good about my contribution

99% NHS GGC
98% NHS Scot

I receive practical help with expenses, access and training

76% NHS GGC
81% NHS Scot

I know who to ask for help if I need it

98% NHS GGC
98% NHS Scot

I understand the process of how I carry out my role and why it's necessary

98% NHS GGC
97% NHS Scot

Sociable and connected

I can meet and spend time with people if I want to

95% NHS GGC
92% NHS Scot

I enjoy the experience and feel part of something

99% NHS GGC
97% NHS Scot

I volunteer with or for people with common objectives

91% NHS GGC
86% NHS Scot

Valued and appreciated

I am valued for what I bring

95% NHS GGC
94% NHS Scot

I feel that my contributions are appreciated

95% NHS GGC
90% NHS Scot

I can see how my volunteering makes a difference to NHSGGC

91% NHS GGC
98% NHS Scot

Meaningful and purposeful

I feel that what I do is worthwhile

99% NHS GGC
98% NHS Scot

I know how to make a difference

93% NHS GGC
95% NHS Scot

I am contributing to something that resonated with what matters to me

99% NHS GGC
99% NHS Scot

Recognises diversity - NHSGGC Volunteering is a welcoming place for everyone

I feel 'volunteering' or being a 'volunteer' is something I can be involved in or be part of

68% NHS GGC
88% NHS Scot

I do not feel excluded from roles because of who I am

62% NHS GGC
86% NHS Scot

I feel like my knowledge, skills and experiences are respected and utilised

58% NHS GGC
69% NHS Scot

Volunteers were also asked to describe:

- Their favourite moment from volunteering in the last year
- What one thing they could improve about their volunteering experience
- If there is anything else they wished to say
- What they would say, if someone was thinking about volunteering with NHSGGC.

7.1 Key insights

- **Overall picture:** Volunteer experience at NHSGGC is **very positive**, especially for feeling supported, connected, valued and purposeful. In 13 of 19 outcomes, $\geq 90\%$ of volunteers responded positively.
- **Where we lead:** NHSGGC **outperforms or matches** the national benchmark in most domains of Flexible & responsive, Sociable & connected, Valued & appreciated, and Meaningful & purposeful.

7.1.1 Human Connection and Impact

Volunteers consistently highlight moments where they made a difference to patients, visitors, or staff. These include helping anxious visitors find clinics, providing companionship, and seeing the positive effects of their support.

“ Just knowing you were there for someone, to make their experience . . . better, and ease their stress ”

“ Helping a gentleman with no English to find his clinic . . . he was so relieved and grateful that I didn't give up. ”

“ She called me an angel . . . she would have missed those last few moments if I hadn't taken her ”

“ When I repair a hearing aid . . . and hearing is restored it gives me great satisfaction ”

7.1.2 Sense of Belonging and Being Valued

Many volunteers feel accepted as part of the team and appreciated by staff and managers. Peer support and camaraderie are frequently mentioned as highlights.

“ I have been accepted as one of the [team]. I just love what I do ”

“ Great support from [Volunteering Manager]. . . strong support ethos within the group ”

“ It's such a lovely environment with the other volunteers, it makes me feel at ease and comfortable ”

7.1.3 Purpose, Growth, and Wellbeing

Volunteering is described as rewarding, confidence-building, and beneficial for personal wellbeing. Volunteers recommend the experience for both retirees and young people.

“ Volunteering provides a multilayered sense of personal achievement, reward and purpose ”

“ It's done wonders for my wellbeing ”

“ You will enjoy being part of a team trying to give a little bit of brightness in a trying time ”

7.1.4 Flexibility and Supportive Management

Flexibility around life commitments is highly valued. Volunteers appreciate supportive managers and the freedom to shape their roles.

“
Shift time flexibility
is a good thing,
no pressure anywhere
”

“
At QEUH we have a good
manager. . . a great asset to the
hospital and the health board
”

7.2 Opportunities for Improvement

The most notable gaps are in **practical support (expenses/access/training)** and **sense of welcome, non exclusion, and use of volunteers' skills**. There is also scope for improvement to **help volunteers “see their impact on NHS”**:

7.2.1. Role Restrictions & Frustrations

Some volunteers reported feeling limited by policies that prevent them from assisting patients (e.g., with wheelchairs or physical support), leading to frustration and a sense of being unable to use common sense:

“
It's frustrating that we're
not allowed to touch wheelchairs
or indeed offer an arm to a solitary
elderly person. I wish we were
still allowed to use simple
common sense
”

“
Too many 'grey areas'
around what volunteers can do
in emergencies/ if the volunteers
abided by this and the person fell
to the floor what would the
press say about this?
”

Many volunteers bring with them a wealth of past skill and experience, sometimes clinical. However in order to ensure appropriate governance and support of patients, staff and volunteers, volunteers are unable to undertake clinical tasks, staff roles, or anything assessed as high risk. This unfortunately means in some circumstances volunteers are unable to use skills or experience gained previously.

7.2.2. Facilities & Resources

Issues with access to resources such as wheelchairs, parking, ID cards, and basic amenities (e.g., sanitiser, signage) are common.

“ Never any wheelchairs.
Sanitisers have been empty on
ground floor of QEUH for ten
weeks despite being
reported weekly ”

“ Better and more
car parking ”

“ I would appreciate
having my own ID card again
so that I don't have to collect a
communal one each week.
It is a minor issue
but frustrating ”

These issues are regularly fed back to Facilities.

7.2.3. Training & Support

Requests for more training, especially for new volunteers or those in specialised roles, and a desire for more volunteers to share the workload, were shared by some:

“ I would like more training
to help out in the ward ”

“ More training to keep updated
on newer/changes in hearing
aids and functionality ”

“ A few more volunteers
to help cover holiday periods
and to ensure that there are
3 volunteers each day with
each shift no longer
than 3 hours ”

Unfortunately due to capacity challenges in the Volunteering Service, on occasion volunteer recruitment was paused in 2024-25, sometimes leading to gaps in volunteer rotas. In addition, it meant the team were challenged to provide additional support, training and development opportunities for some volunteers.

7.2.4. Communication & Feedback

Some volunteers reported feeling underappreciated or ignored by staff in clinical areas, and there were calls from some for better communication and feedback mechanisms:

“ No appreciation from the ward staff, I have been ignored and not valued. I have not been informed if any of my patients pass away. It is good but no feedback from the staff of the ward, they are too rude ”

“ Wish I was allowed to be a bit more hands on i.e. help feed patients as staffing levels make finding time difficult ”

The Volunteering Service regularly liaise with volunteers and clinical colleagues to identify areas of potential improvement, and to ensure environments are welcoming and inclusive of volunteers; this will continue, acknowledging the pressured ward environments volunteers are often in.

As acknowledged previously, volunteers are unable to undertake clinical duties in order to ensure patient safety; this includes physically assisting patients with eating.

7.2.5. Information & Publicity

Some volunteers requested clearer information for themselves and for patients, and more publicity about volunteering opportunities:

“ Advertise it more widely so that more people are aware they can volunteer ”

As acknowledged previously, the Volunteering Service have paused advertising for volunteers on occasion in 2024/25, due to lack of staffing resource to support them appropriately.

7.2.6. Other Suggestions

Miscellaneous suggestions, such as requests for snacks, improved signage, or more social opportunities.

“ Please bring the biscuits back that we used to get during tea break!! ”

“ Improve signage ”

Where appropriate, the Volunteering Service encourage volunteers to suggest improvement ideas directly to the staff of the service they are supporting.

7.3 Conclusion

Volunteers at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde bring care, calm, and connection every day. Their feedback highlights both the strengths of the programme and practical steps to further enhance the volunteer experience.

8. Partnerships and Coproduction

In addition to volunteers managed directly by NHSGGC, patients, families and staff also benefit from support given by volunteers for third sector partner organisations.

2024-25 provided the opportunity for the Volunteering Service to strengthen oversight, governance and working relationships with these organisations.

Initial scoping of existing relationships and agreements with third sector partners surfaced the support for Acute services of around **40 volunteer involving partner organisations**.

In September 2024, the Acute Volunteering Third Sector Oversight Forum was established. Chaired by NHSGGC's Strategic Lead for Volunteering and with a remit to provide governance, strategic direction, and assurance to NHSGGC, its core responsibilities include:

- **Governance & Assurance:** Overseeing compliance with relevant NHSGGC policies, national volunteering frameworks, and statutory requirements (e.g. Disclosure (Scotland) Act).
- **Strategic Planning:** Setting priorities for service development, expansion, and quality improvement in line with organisational objectives.
- **Partnership Working:** Facilitating collaboration and co-production with third sector partners, ensuring their contributions are recognised and integrated.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Reviewing volunteer activity, impact, and feedback; monitoring key performance indicators and outcomes.
- **Policy & Procedure Review:** Regularly updating Service Level Agreements (SLAs), volunteer role boundaries, and operational guidance.
- **Risk Management:** Identifying and mitigating risks associated with volunteering activity, including safeguarding and compliance.
- **Reporting:** Ensuring transparent reporting to senior management and stakeholders, including the preparation of the annual report.

In the reporting period, the **Oversight Forum met 3 times**. In addition to providing updates on the establishment of key governance milestones, focuses included:

- Establishment of a virtual community of practice
- Opportunity for members to provide feedback on draft NHSGGC Volunteering Policy
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland's [**report on NHS Scotland staff experience of volunteer support**](#)
- Disclosure Scotland update on key changes in the Disclosure (Scotland) Act, and what this would mean for members and for NHSGGC
- Revision of approach and format of service level agreements between NHSGGC and partner volunteer involving organisations.

20-23 people accepted the invitation to participate in Strategic Oversight Forum meetings in 2024-25. A key improvement focus for 2025-26 will be to encourage organisations to participate in the oversight forum, to better enable it to achieve its aims.



40

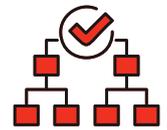
**VOLUNTEER INVOLVING
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

Members were also invited to contribute examples of their volunteering activity and impact in support of NHSGGC in 2024-25, for inclusion in this report. **6 organisations** chose to take up this opportunity, reporting support from around **501 volunteers** in total:



501
VOLUNTEERS
SUPPORT
IN TOTAL

6
ORGANISATIONS
TOOK THE
OPPORTUNITY

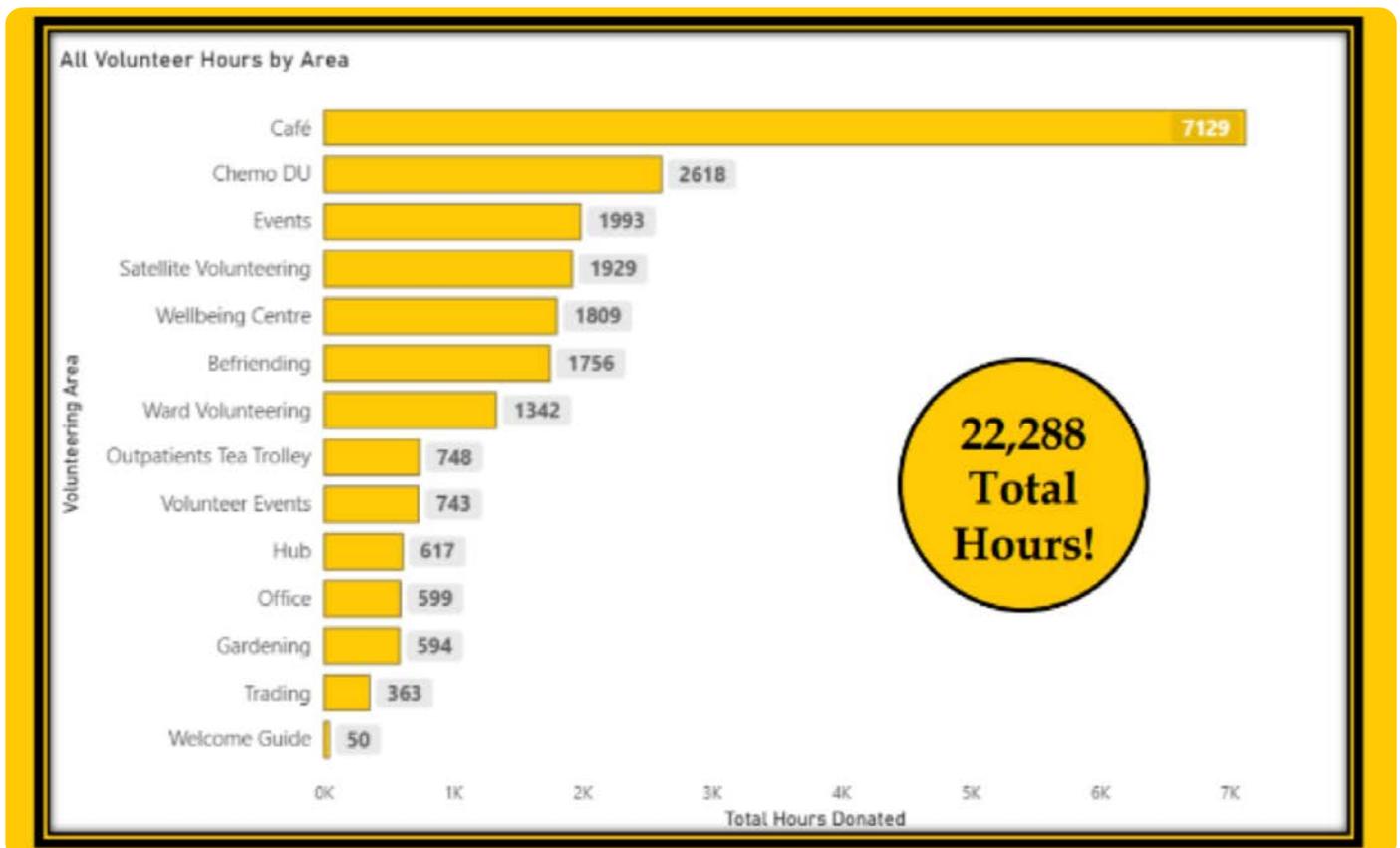


8.1 Beatson Cancer Charity

“Beatson Cancer Charity supports people affected by cancer, every step of the way. We make the journey easier by transforming the way cancer care is funded and delivered. We provide services, as well as funding specialists, research and education to invest in a better future for cancer patients and their families.”

In 2024-25, approximately **374 Beatson Cancer Charity volunteers** supported patients, families and staff at the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre.

8.1.1 Volunteer support provided by Beatson Cancer Charity



8.2 Finding Your Feet

“Finding Your Feet support families affected by amputation or limb absence”

In 2024-25, approximately **5-8 Finding Your Feet volunteers** supported NHSGGC acute hospitals, in group and 1:1 settings.

8.2.1 Volunteer support provided by Finding Your Feet

“Finding Your Feet Peer Support volunteers, who are amputees themselves, visit hospitals on a monthly basis – or if required more or less frequent as requested – to provide support to recent amputees or pre amputees in the hospital, to talk and listen to them and assure them there is life after limb loss.

They can tell them about the services and clubs that Finding Your Feet can provide and signpost and give advice to fellow amputees...

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to engage and help amputees in the hospital setting. The clinicians, consultants and nurses do a great job but having a fellow amputee makes such a difference.”

8.2.2 Challenges faced by Finding Your Feet volunteers

“On the whole we don't seem to encounter many problems as the staff know we are coming, we have been doing this for a while and have a great working relationship with both Westmarc and QEUH”

8.2.3 Feedback from beneficiaries of Finding Your Feet volunteer activities

“Overall the patients we have visited have been very thankful for our visits and some are now using our services and our clubs. Being able to speak with someone who has also experienced limb loss can be a huge benefit for new or pre amputees who don't know what life will be like after amputation.”

8.2.4 Future plans

“keep visiting QEUH and hopefully get more frequent visits set up at Westmarc, if you know of any other hospitals in NHSGGC area who would benefit from our service please let us know.”

The Volunteering Service will support Finding Your Feet to link in with service delivery colleagues in NHSGGC Acute hospitals.

Once Finding Your Feet's working relationship with NHSGGC has been formalised through the signing of a Volunteering Agreement, the Volunteering Service will support Finding Your Feet to offer the support of their Peer Support Volunteers across NHSGGC Acute hospitals.

8.3 Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity (GCHC)

"GCHC fundraise to ensure that every baby, child and young person treated at Scotland's largest children's hospital receives the extra special care they deserve"

In 2024-25, approximately **76 GCHC volunteers** supported NHSGGC Acute Hospitals.

8.3.1 Volunteer support provided by GCHC

- **Volunteer Drivers** - Supporting with the pickup/drop off of donor milk, respiratory equipment, breast pumps, heart monitors and patient transport across Scotland.
- **Welcome Guides** - Guiding families to the correct desk/department for their appointments.
- **Theatre Welcome Guides** - Guiding families to the correct desk/department for their appointments.
- **Gaming Volunteers** - Interacting with the children in hospital through gaming helping to relive boredom and anxieties.
- **Hub Volunteers** - Being the first point of contact for any queries relating to the charity and serving patients/families who wish to purchase products from the hub.
- **Play Volunteers** - Assisting the Play Team in play & arts & crafts activities."



76
GCHC
VOLUNTEERS

8.3.2 Feedback from beneficiaries of GCHC volunteer activities

"...Ayaan was hit by a car while crossing the road. He spent time in PICU before moving to the ward. Ayaan suffered a brain injury, broken leg and fractures in his pelvis. His left arm also had no movement.

I brought in his PlayStation controller and placed it in front of him, encouraging him to move his hand. Slowly but surely, his fingers began to move.

And that's when we met the hospital's Gamer-in-Residence, Steven."

"... Gaming made a huge difference in Ayaan's recovery. It encouraged movement in his fingers, made him feel happy, and gave him something to look forward to."



8.3.3 Challenges faced by GCHC volunteers

"Last minute requests to support NHS departments and wifi issues (Gaming Volunteers)."

These will be fed back to the NHSGGC/ GCHC Service Level Agreement signatory.

8.3.4 Future plans

GCHC plan to continue their established volunteering activity. In addition, they are looking to grow the volunteer support they provide to NHSGGC in maternity services in particular.

8.4 Horatio's Garden

"Our volunteers maintain the ¾ acre garden sanctuary year-round, keep our accessible garden rooms tidy and stocked with refreshments, we host regular social events and special seasonal events for patients, visitors and staff; facilitate arts, crafts and gardening workshops, as well as hold external events to raise awareness and funds to support the charities work."

Horatio's Garden are based in the National Spinal Injuries Unit which had **121 patients** in 2024-25. Horatio's Garden benefits their patients, as well as their many visitors and family members, and staff. Approximately **37 Horatio's Garden volunteers** supported NHS Acute in 2024-25.

8.4.1 Feedback from beneficiaries of Horatio's Garden

95% of people with spinal injury use the garden at least once or twice a week

100% people on bedrest report improved mental health from using Horatio's Garden



81% of people said their stress levels were reduced by visiting Horatio's Garden

"This is my sanctuary, in a world turned upside down, uncertain of the future, lives and future changed forever. The garden fills me with peace and a little bit of heaven. There is nothing more tranquil than enjoying both gardens at this time."



70% notice a distraction from their pain when they are in Horatio's Garden"

91% people are able to maintain and improve relationships with their family and friends



"As OT's we use the garden and many of the activities jointly with Horatio's Garden staff artists and volunteers, to create a therapeutic medium in which patients can explore and try new activities within the limitations of their spinal cord injury."

8.4.2 Challenges faced by Horatio's Garden volunteers

"Some volunteers struggle with getting parked and feel the advice on where they can park is vague and/or differing."

This will be fed back to NHSGGC's Car Parking team.

8.4.3 Future plans for Horatio's Garden volunteers

- *"Continue to maintain the garden to its high standard and run our calendar of events.*
- *We are working on expanding our volunteer support ... during evenings and weekends.*
- *It would be valuable to have NHS Ward volunteers to assist patients out into the garden."*

It is outwith the scope of an NHSGGC Ward Volunteer's role to assist patients out into the garden; however the Volunteering Service will work with Horatio's Garden to scope whether this can be incorporated into their volunteering portfolio.

8.5 Milk Bank Scotland



1600 +
BABIES RECEIVED
DONOR MILK

Supported by **5-8 Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity volunteers** and hosted by NHSGGC, Milk Bank Scotland covers the whole of Scotland:

"A milk bank provides screened pasteurised human milk to babies who have no or limited access to their own mother's milk. In 2024-25, **over 1600 babies received donor milk.**

GCHC volunteer drivers collect donated breast milk from all over Scotland and deliver pasteurised donor milk to all neonatal units across Scotland and to parents at home in exceptional circumstances.

Drivers go above and beyond often fulfilling deliveries at short notice. They also communicate with our donors to ensure smooth collection. Donors often comment on the ease of donation. Our volunteers are not just volunteers. They are integral to the smooth operation of the service."

"[Donating's] been the greatest honour and I'll definitely be doing it again in the future and continuing to encourage others. Ciara collected today and we got some photos – a smiling face but a heart full of all those feelings when a breastfeeding journey comes to an end. Thanks for giving me this opportunity."



8.6 WheelPower

"WheelPower provides opportunities for disabled people to get into sport and lead active lives."

In 2024-25, **1 WheelPower volunteer** provided support to NHSGGC – supporting approximately **240** patients with spinal cord injury, with the aim of getting and keeping them active.



WheelPower reported "a lot of the patients with spinal cord injury are elderly and not appropriate for sport/ activity." Notwithstanding, they fed back "the service was very well received and valued by patients. Our volunteers show them that there is life following a spinal cord injury and sport is still possible."

8.7 Health and Social Care Partnerships

The Acute Volunteering Service supported HSCP colleagues in a variety of ways:

- Inclusion in scope of draft NHSGGC Volunteering Policy
- Sharing best practice, tools and templates with HSCP colleagues
- Membership of Glasgow City HSCP's Strategic Volunteering Group
- Invitation to HSCP colleagues to participate in Strategic Oversight Forum
- Use of and support with NHSGGC's Volunteer Management Database (as appropriate).

8.8 Third Sector Interfaces

In 2024-25 the Volunteering Service continued to maintain and develop strong working relationships with the six Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) in Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

9. Finance and Resourcing

In 2024-25, the Volunteering Service was funded via two income streams:

- Staffing and staff expenses via NHSGGC core funds
- Volunteer expenses and reward and recognition via Glasgow Healthcare Charity.

The Volunteering Service achieved an underspend in 2024-25, due to staffing vacancies – this is unlikely to be repeated in 2025-26, primarily due to incremental drift and more effective vacancy management:

A key impact of NHSGGC's refreshed volunteering policy is the uplift of volunteer mileage rate (to be applied in 25/26); this will achieve parity with mileage rates for staff and volunteers in third sector organisations, and we are hopeful it will directly lead to an increase in volunteer satisfaction and experience. It also has an impact on required budgets/ bids.



10. Staff Governance

The Volunteering Service achieved good compliance with the majority of NHSGGC staff governance KPIs in 2024/25:

10.1 Statutory/ mandatory training

As of December 2025, staff in the Volunteering Service had achieved 100% compliance with statutory/ mandatory training.

10.2 TURAS/ PDP conversations

As of December 2025, staff in the Volunteering Service had achieved 100% compliance with a signed off appraisal and PDP on TURAS.

10.3 Absence management

A key focus in 2024/25 was managing turnover in a small team, with funding for two fixed term contracts coming to an end, one permanent employee leaving post, and two bereavements. Average team absence over the year was:

- Short term absence: 1.47%
- Long term absence: 6.75%
- Total absence: 8.22%

Whilst total average absence is higher than would be desired, this is in line with NHSGGC averages. Managing absence compassionately and in line with HR policy will remain a focus for 2025-26.

10.4 iMatter

The Volunteering Service achieved a 100% participation rate in iMatter in 2024, and 83% employee engagement, indicating Volunteering Service staff are:

- Well informed
- Appropriately trained and developed
- Involved in decisions
- Treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued
- Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and the wider community.

11. Strategic Priorities for Next Year

11.1 Advance Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Our aim is by April 2026 to improve the equalities monitoring process for volunteers to increase confidence that reports are representative of the demographics of volunteers. We will implement optional equalities monitoring across 100% of volunteer applications and review recruitment and support processes to identify and remove barriers to participation.

11.2 Enhance Practical Support and Volunteer Experience

By December 2025, we will ensure that 100% of volunteers have access to parity in mileage rates, with a streamlined process for accessing this support.

11.3 Expand Training, Development, and Support

We aim to review induction training and process for NHSGGC and partner organisation volunteers by March 2026.

11.4 Foster Communication, Feedback, and Recognition

- We will review feedback from the volunteer experience survey by October 2025 and consider if any practical improvements can be implemented based on this experience.
- Volunteer contributions will be celebrated at at least two formal recognition events.
- At least five volunteer stories will be developed and shared publicly to recognise the contribution of volunteers.

11.5 Clarify and Evolve Volunteer Roles

By March 2026, if service capacity allows, we will review 100% of existing volunteer role profiles, update boundaries where required, and pilot at least two new or expanded roles in partnership with third sector organisations.

11.6 Strengthen Partnerships and Governance

- We will increase third sector partner engagement in the Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum by 20%.
- All Service Level Agreements and operational guidance documents will be reviewed and updated by October 2025, with revised templates and guidance issued to partner organisations.

11.7 Grow Volunteer Numbers and Diversity of Roles

Team capacity will be reviewed and a plan made to achieve sustainability by March 2026.

12. Conclusion

The 2024–25 Annual Report for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s Acute Volunteering Service stands as a testament to the enduring spirit, dedication, and impact of volunteers across our acute sites. Over the past year, volunteers have continued to inspire through their compassion, creativity, and unwavering commitment, enhancing the experiences of patients, families, and staff alike.

Despite national trends of declining volunteering activity, NHSGGC has seen growth in both volunteer numbers and hours, with an average of 228 volunteers each month contributing over 38,800 hours of support—equivalent to 25 whole-time staff. The estimated societal and economic value of this contribution exceeds £1 million, underscoring the vital role volunteers play in supporting health and wellbeing across Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

This year has also marked significant progress in governance, strategic oversight, and partnership working. The establishment of the Acute Third Sector Volunteering Oversight Forum, refreshed policies, and strengthened collaboration with partner organisations have laid a resilient foundation for volunteering, ensuring robust support, recognition, and opportunities for all involved.

Volunteer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with high levels of satisfaction reported in areas such as support, flexibility, and personal growth. Volunteers consistently describe a strong sense of belonging and purpose, and NHSGGC continues to outperform or match national benchmarks in most domains. The report also identifies areas for improvement, particularly in practical support, diversity and inclusion, and the ability to fully utilise volunteers’ skills and experiences.

Looking ahead, the Acute Volunteering Service is committed to advancing diversity, inclusion, and accessibility; enhancing practical support and volunteer experience; expanding training and development; fostering communication and recognition; clarifying volunteer roles; strengthening partnerships and governance; and growing volunteer numbers and diversity of roles. These strategic priorities will ensure that volunteering continues to deliver mutual benefit for patients, families, staff, and volunteers, and that the service remains resilient, inclusive, and impactful in the years to come.

In closing, heartfelt gratitude is extended to every volunteer, partner, and staff member who has contributed to this year’s achievements. Together, we are building stronger, more caring communities and shaping a brighter future for health and wellbeing across Greater Glasgow and Clyde.