

Acute Volunteer Experience

2025-26

Volunteer Experience at a Glance

Understanding feedback and driving improvement

95%

Positive across
all principles

103 

Survey
responses

41 

Ideas
to improve



Flexible **95%**



Supported **92%**



Connected **94%**



Valued **96%**



Purposeful **98%**



Inclusive **94%**

“

A patient was so grateful for my support and said she would never forget me. It is such a privilege to be involved with people who are feeling vulnerable.

1. Situation

The purpose of this paper is to summarise the key trends, successes and opportunities to improve the experience of those who choose to volunteer for NHSGGC acute hospitals based on a survey issued to all NHSGGC acute volunteers in February 2026.

2. Background

In February 2026, the Volunteering Service shared a short survey with those currently volunteering for NHSGGC in our acute settings – around 300 people in total.

The survey is based on a format used in previous years and supported by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, in order to support benchmarking where appropriate.

3. Assessment

3.1 Who did we hear from?

3.1.1 Response rate

The volunteer experience survey was distributed to 300 volunteers, and was open for responses for 1 month. The response rate was 34% (n=103), meaning valid conclusions can be drawn about its representativeness.

3.1.2 Demographics

Overall, the demographics of respondents suggests a largely older, female volunteer base, with representation across various roles and sites. There are encouraging indications however that a more diverse volunteer base exists when looking at ethnicity and caring responsibilities. In addition, when looking at demographics information for **newly recruited** volunteers over 2025-26 (as opposed to total volunteers), a more diverse picture can be seen:

Protected characteristic	Total	Newly recruited
Age – over 66 years	61%	16%
Caring responsibilities	34%	19%
Disability/ long term condition	8%	8%
Ethnicity – white Scottish	79%	50%
Gender reassignment	0%	1%
Sex - female	69%	67%
Sexual orientation - heterosexual/ straight	98%	87%

3.2 Scotland Volunteering Principles

3.2.1 In Summary

NHSGGC volunteers were **positive** about their experience across the 6 volunteering principles; **95%** on average.

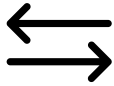
In summary, compared to last year, there was an **increase in positivity of response in 12/19 domains**.

4/19 domains had a decrease in response positivity compared to 2024/25. These were:

- I can **adjust my commitments** or change my role when I need to – 89% agreed or strongly agreed
- I **enjoy** taking part and feel good about my contribution – 98% agreed or strongly agreed
- I **receive practical help** with expenses, access and training – 74% agreed or strongly agreed
- I volunteer with or for people with **common objectives** – 85% agreed or strongly agreed
- I feel that what I do is **worthwhile** – 98% agreed or strongly agreed.

2025-26 saw a change to expenses provision in NHSGGC; an uplift in mileage rate and commitment to reimbursement through NHSGGC core funds led to a change in process. It is thought this lower positivity response may in part be due to new processes becoming embedded and familiar.

The service will also consider for 2026/27 the provision of training for volunteers, where appropriate.



3.2.2 Flexible and responsive

I can adjust my commitments or change my role when I need to		I can give my time on my own terms and around my life		I know what I'm being asked to do and how to stop if I wish	
92%	89%	95%	98%	96%	99%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26



3.2.3 Enabled and supported

I enjoy taking part and feel good about my contribution		I receive practical help with expenses, access and training		I know who to ask for help if I need it		I understand the process of how I carry out my role and why it's necessary	
99%	98%	76%	74%	98%	99%	98%	98%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26



3.2.4 Sociable and connected

I can meet and spend time with people if I want to		I enjoy the experience and feel part of something		I volunteer with or for people with common objectives	
95%	96%	99%	100%	91%	85%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26



3.2.5 Valued and appreciated

I am valued for what I bring		I feel that my contributions are appreciated		I can see how my volunteering makes a difference to NHSGGC	
95%	95%	95%	97%	91%	97%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26



3.2.6 Meaningful and purposeful

I feel that what I do is worthwhile		I know how to make a difference		I am contributing to something that resonates with what matters to me	
99%	98%	93%	96%	99%	100%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26

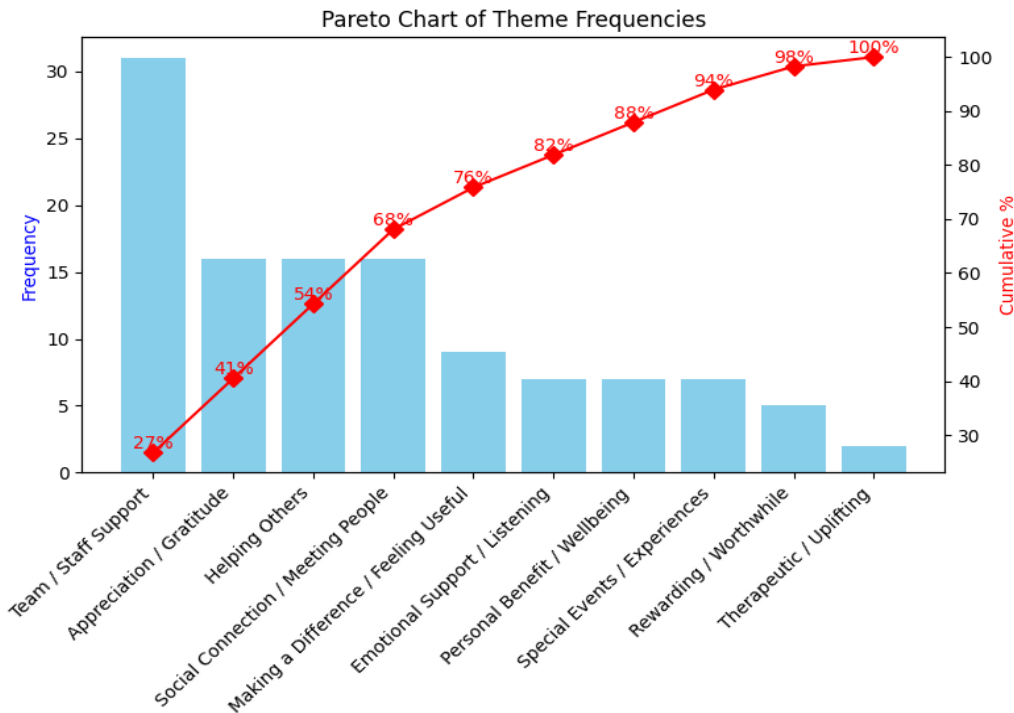
3.2.7 Recognises diversity – NHSGGC Volunteering is a welcoming place for everyone



I feel 'volunteering' is something I can be involved in or be part of		I do not feel excluded from roles because of who I am		I feel like my knowledge, skills and experiences are respected and utilised	
68%	96%	62%	97%	58%	90%
2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26

3.3 Volunteer highlights

Volunteers were asked to describe their favourite moment from volunteering in the last year:



3.3.1 Team / Staff Support

Volunteers shared comments about support from colleagues, managers and staff, and working within a supportive environment:

“I have had the most wonderful support from the hospital chaplaincy team to be able to offer this aid to wellbeing. Cindy and Louise assist me in practical ways with a room, a timetable of appointments, and feedback from staff. They check in to see how I'm doing and will offer a listening ear after sessions, if needed. I feel valued and cared for and their professional manner is as asset to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde...”

“... it is the Volunteer Managers who provide the support and monitor the standard of service provided by a very diverse corps of individuals who come with varied valuable skills. Someone needs to ensure that a uniform service is being provided and they quietly do this brilliantly. Much of the success of this commodity is due to the skillful selection of the right kind of people and training them in the best way to perform their voluntary role.”

“...I have just enjoyed it - my volunteer manager colleagues are always available, my co-volunteers have become friends: it's a happy team to be in, because most of us are happy.”

3.3.2 Appreciation / Gratitude

Expressions of thanks and the experience of being valued and recognized:

“It's a positive experience and our manager Harry Balch is extremely good at making us feel valued. Too many to mention but usually when you feel you've made someone's visit to hospital that bit easier, a thank you on their way out or making someone feel a little more cared for whether it's using the taxi link for them or accompanying them if they're scared of the lift. Every week brings a moment of feeling useful.”

“A patient was so grateful for my support and said she would never forget me. It is such a privilege to be involved with people who are feeling vulnerable.”

“Being thanked by a Ukrainian lady through an interpreter for helping her husband.”

3.3.3 Helping Others

Concrete practical acts of assistance to patients and their families:

“Helping one man in a care home fix his hearing aids, and he could hear the TV, he was new in home and been waiting months to get new tubes in then”

“...Being able to assist an extremely hard of hearing patient to his appointment and to assist getting him on correct transport back to his home area. His appointment had been cancelled and he was unaware of this. Working alongside staff at his appointment area, they arranged an earlier follow up appointment for him. Teamwork.”

“...My favourite moment is to look around after a busy spell of serving coffees and see all the tables full and staff looking relaxed and enjoying time chatting with their colleagues. This happens most times I'm in the Hub! ...”

3.3.4 Social Connection / Meeting People

Enjoyment of meeting, chatting and connecting with patients, staff and fellow volunteers:

“I have made so many new friends, my mental health has improved - I am just happy. The fabulous ward staff... treat me as one of their own and include me in all aspects of the ward...”

“I have no doubt that my work as a volunteer benefits me socially, emotionally and spiritually... It is a huge privilege for me week after week to spend time with patients in Critical Care and sometimes also with their relatives or friends at a critical time in their lives. It enriches my life in ways beyond measure to sit with them, to listen and respond to their stories, and at times, when invited, to share aspects of myself. I'm honoured by the trust placed in me by them...”

“Being able to share a good laugh with two separate groups of patients and their families (all women) even although people may have been unwell and anxious.”

3.3.5 Making a Difference / Feeling Useful

Feeling that one's presence makes a difference or eases stress for others:

- ”...Every time I can bring a smile to someone who is terminally ill is a special moment.”
- ”...I feel it is one way I can give something back to the NHS which has been very good to me and my family. The thanks from patients.”
- ”...I went through cardio rehab and appreciated all what the physios and specialist nurses did for me... I felt as I was retiring I could utilize my skills and be part of the cardio rehab team as a volunteer...”

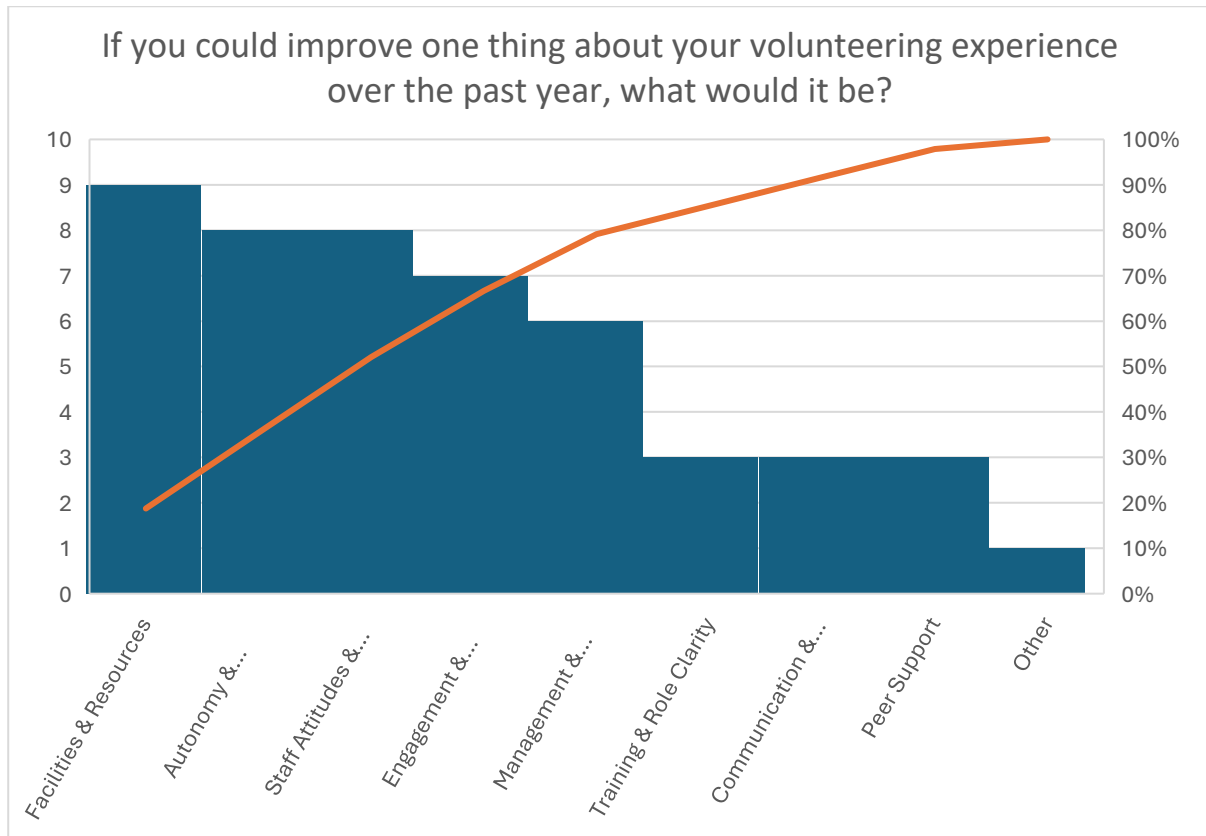
3.3.6 Emotional Support / Listening

Providing comfort as a listening ear and emotional support:

- ”Being a listening ear for staff when especially new staff when they feel overwhelmed it makes me feel proud and humble that they feel they can come and talk to me.”
- ”I just love it. Being thanked for chatting to a lady who was feeling a wee bit low & thanked me made my day.”

3.4 Opportunities for improvement

Volunteers were also asked, if they could improve one thing about the volunteering experience, what it would be. **41(40%)** of respondents shared suggestions directly in relation to their experience of volunteering (as opposed to more general feedback about NHSGCC):



3.4.1 Facilities and resources

Practical barriers affecting volunteers' ability to carry out their role comfortably or efficiently: lockers, identification, desk space, car parking, temperature, and break facilities:

“Easier carparking”

“Having a yellow badge with my first name on it rather than the formal designation badge. Also it would be helpful if we had a locker for personal property.”

“To have the air conditioning switched off in winter... it's so cold”

In conjunction with Estates and Facilities colleagues, each of these practical suggestions to improve volunteer experience will be explored. Where possible, improvements will be made.

3.4.2 Autonomy & Responsibilities

Desire for greater flexibility in role boundaries and ability to perform tasks independently:

“Allow more autonomy... we are not allowed to push wheelchairs...”

“No demarcation with Porters, just an aid to needy patients.”

“To be allowed to volunteer on a weekend.”

The possibility of volunteers being able to handle empty wheelchairs will be reviewed.

Volunteering on a weekend is encouraged, provided the volunteer is able to confidently and competently undertake their role with a degree of independence, and there is a service need.

3.4.3 Staff attitudes & Inclusion

Perceptions of being undervalued, or misunderstood by wider NHS staff groups:

“Sometimes I feel other NHS staff don't necessarily understand what we do...”

“Perhaps some of the porters could be more pleasant towards the welcome guides.”

“Our role in clinical areas can be difficult... not wanted by certain staff.”

Positive examples of the benefits of volunteering will continue to be shared widely by the Volunteering Service, to increase understanding and appreciation of the role volunteers play. Where specific issues are described, these will be fed back to the service in question.

3.4.4 Engagement & Numbers

Desire for more meaningful activity, greater engagement, and more volunteers on shift:

“To be busier.”

“We need more recruits. We are getting older! Down to one at 4 pm last Monday...”

“Maybe doing one extra day.”

Thanks to Greater Glasgow and Clyde Healthcare Charity, the Volunteering Service has been fortunate to secure additional capacity for 2026-27 – this will be used in part to focus on growing volunteer numbers where appropriate and required.

3.4.5 Management & Support

Expectations of managerial presence, stability, faster processes (e.g. expenses), fair treatment, consistent coordination, and emotional support when incidents occur:



“A long period of non appearance of a manager, for too long. It is getting better.”

“Having to wait over a month for expenses to be paid seems excessive...”

“If only we had stronger support from financial sponsors would help keep the good work Volunteering Staff do for the good of every area.”

Again, thanks to the additional financial support from Greater Glasgow and Clyde Healthcare Charity and consequent expansion of the Volunteering Service, we are hopeful that volunteers will experience fewer process delays and greater support for the services provided by volunteers.

4. Recommendations

Overall, volunteers describe an extremely positive experience of volunteering in NHSGGC; this should be celebrated and shared.

Opportunities for improvement exist, and will be considered by the Volunteering Service, including:

- Explore ways to increase volunteer retention of those from all walks of life, in particular those under retirement age, men, and people from different ethnic groups.
- Consider what improvements can be made to volunteer experience where this has dipped compared to 2024/25 feedback (although still very positive overall)
- In conjunction with Estates and Facilities colleagues, explore practical suggestions to improve volunteer experience (such as car parking, storage of belongings, tea breaks).
- Review volunteers handling empty wheelchairs
- Continue to share positive examples of the benefits of volunteering, to increase understanding and appreciation of the role volunteers play. Where specific issues are described, these will be fed back to the service in question.
- Review of approach to volunteer support and supervision, to ensure that opportunities to maximise volunteer support are realised as far as possible.
- Thanks to Greater Glasgow and Clyde Healthcare Charity, the Volunteering Service has been fortunate to secure additional capacity for 2026-27 – this will be used in part to focus on growing volunteer numbers where appropriate and required, and also to enhance administrative support with, for example, expenses claims.

5. Appendix A – Volunteer Experience Survey

[Volunteer Experience Survey 2025/26 – Fill in form](#)