

Staff Experience of Acute Volunteers

2025-26

1. Staff Experience of Volunteers at a Glance

Staff Experience of Acute Volunteers 2025–26

Key findings from staff survey

100%

reported volunteers
benefit their department



97%

said volunteers reduced
or had no impact on staff stress



38 responses



95% said
volunteers are
worth the investment
of time



84% confident
about volunteer
role scope



97% said
volunteers were
well or very well
prepared

1. Situation

The purpose of this paper is to summarise the key trends, successes and opportunities to improve the experience of NHSGGC Acute staff who have volunteers in their area, based on a survey issued to NHSGGC staff who have support from volunteers in Spring 2026.

2. Background

In February 2026, the Volunteering Service shared a short survey with staff who have volunteers supporting their area. Responses were received from 38 people.

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?

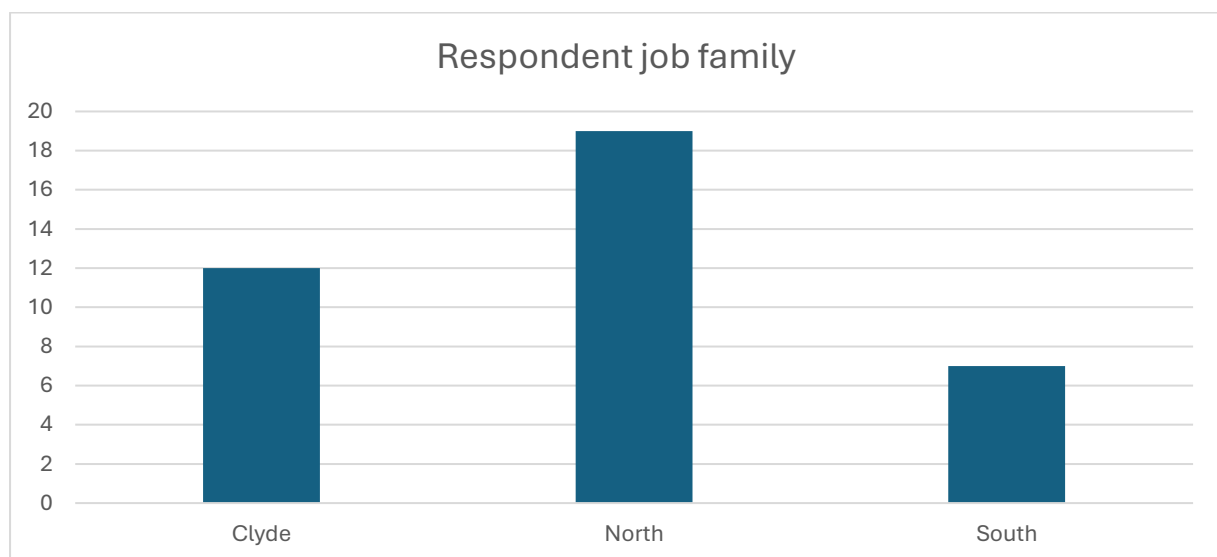
3.1.1 Response numbers

38 responses were received - although low, it represents an increase of 23% on 2024-25 and is testament to the investment staff are willing to make to recognise the benefits of volunteer support.

3.1.2 Breadth across staff and sites

The majority of staff respondents were nursing, along with good representation from AHP and administrative colleagues.

A high proportion of respondents were from the GRI; this doesn't align to volunteer distribution, however feedback received about volunteer experience in these areas is still of value:



3.2 Staff experience of volunteer support

3.2.1 Benefits of volunteer support

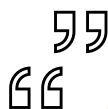
100% of respondents reported volunteers being of benefit to their department.

97% of respondents felt having volunteers in their area reduced or had no impact on their levels of **stress**.

When asked in what ways having volunteers in their area was a benefit to them personally as staff, respondents acknowledged that volunteers:

- Improved the mood of patients (10%)
- Contributed to better person-centred care (10%)
- Freed up staff time to reallocate elsewhere – e.g. medication, care of patients, being with patients with higher needs, discharges (9%)
- Complemented the work of their team (8%)
- Allowed patients to be heard, particularly where they need more 1:1 time (7%)
- Added value to their team’s overall work (7%)
- Contributed to the efficiency of the hospital (7%)
- Reduced patient anxiety (7%)
- Helped staff to deliver better quality of care (7%)
- Improved responsiveness to patients and visitors needs (6%)
- Improved ways of communication between patients and the staff team (5%).

Examples of benefits given included:



“Patients report they are enjoying sessions with Volunteers and feel their communication is improving. They report improvements in self confidence.”

“Ensures patients’ nutritional and hydration needs are met in a timely manner, allows patients to interact with the staff, relieves pressures on nursing staff and allows them to carry out other duties. We would benefit from having the volunteers every day they are a credit to us.”

“Having Volunteers on our ward benefits our patients as they take the time to sit and chat to them and carry out activities which otherwise may not be able to happen for the time it does.”

3.2.2 Role scope

84% staff reported high levels of confidence in knowing appropriate tasks for volunteers.

Staff were asked for suggestions for anything they felt volunteers could do, that they don’t currently do in their area (acknowledging volunteers cannot perform clinical tasks, or undertake roles which are for paid staff). 6/38 (16%) respondents had suggestions:

- Increased volunteer presence x2
- Volunteers recording their activity in patient notes
- Volunteers taking patients in wheelchairs
- Increased activities in partnership with activities coordinator
- Assistance with putting away deliveries.

Where possible and appropriate, these suggestions will be progressed directly with the services.

3.2.3 Support from Volunteering Service

84% staff reported high levels of confidence in reaching out to the **Volunteering Service** about volunteering in their department:

97% of respondents reported that **volunteers were well or very well prepared** when they joined their department. Comments received included:



“New volunteers tend to shadow experienced volunteers initially, so are given lots of support/guidance.”

“They are always punctual and reliable and communicate if they are unable to attend”

“Due to nature of ward, despite good induction it is not quite as they expected, as mental health patients are not always motivated or well enough to participate or engage, which can be demoralising”

3.2.4 Investment required from host teams

Staff were asked to describe the support they gave to volunteers. Key themes were:

- Recognition and thanks (18%)
- Advice and guidance (15%)
- Providing feedback (13%)
- Allocating tasks (12%)
- Providing guidance on patient need (11%)
- Providing reassurance and emotional support (10%)
- Orientation for new volunteers (9%)

88% of respondents spent **less than 30 minutes supporting** volunteers on a typical day.

95% of staff reported that involving volunteers was **worth the investment** of their time. Reasons given included:



“Much better to feel part of the team which adds to the value of the role. Why would you not engage with your volunteer to ensure they enjoy working alongside the staff and be comfortable in the department?”

“An SLT will spend between 30 mins and 1 hour preparing a morning’s volunteering – this role usually falls to our band 5 and is excellent training for her and it also improves quality of care for our patients so worth the investment of time”

“Initially it takes time to induct our volunteers, however we are rewarded afterwards with their support on the ward.”

4. Recommendations

Overall, staff describe an extremely positive experience of volunteer support in NHSGGC; this should be celebrated and shared.

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

- Expanding volunteer provision - 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
- Reinforcing with volunteers the boundaries of their role, where required
- Exploring additional opportunities for volunteers to offer further support in particular areas, as appropriate.

Appendix A – Staff Experience Survey

[NHS Staff - your experience of NHSGGC volunteers \(2025-26\) – Fill in form](#)