



**NHS Borders: Interim Volunteering Policy**

**June 2010**

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### *Volunteering Mission Statement*

*NHS Borders values volunteers. Volunteering enhances the services we provide, has benefits for our patients, individuals and helps build stronger communities. We know that the volunteers give their time for many reasons. Some are former patients wishing to give something back; others are former staff who have expertise they want to share, for others it is the first step into a career in health and social care. We want to make sure that volunteers are treated in a fair and consistent way and they receive a high quality level of support. The Board is committed to continue to improve our volunteering processes and support the Scottish Governments NHS Scotland Strategy on Volunteering.*

*M. Wilson*



*Chair  
NHS Borders*

## **1) Introduction**

There is a long history of volunteer involvement in NHS Borders. Volunteers may be recruited directly or indirectly through voluntary organisations that provide help and patient support within healthcare settings. There is a diverse range of volunteers within NHS Borders who contribute in a variety of ways. NHS Borders values the role of volunteering within the health board and recognises the valuable contribution they make.

## **2) Refreshed Strategy on Volunteering**

This is an interim volunteering policy that reflects the Scottish Governments Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering in the NHS Scotland CEL10 (2008). The strategy requires all health boards to:-

- Provide clarity about what constitutes volunteering in Scotland's NHS
- Ensure effective leadership in volunteering
- Plan for continuous improvement in volunteering management
- Create a positive and consistent environment for volunteering
- Develop a modern, dynamic and robust infrastructure for volunteering
- Broaden the range of people involved in volunteering
- Measure the impact of volunteering and shared learning

## **3) Investing in Volunteers**

The Scottish Governments Better Health, Better Care Action Plan (2007) and the Refreshed Strategy on Volunteering requires all health boards to achieve Investors in Volunteers Award (IiV). Volunteer Development Scotland has a contract to support Health Boards to deliver it across Scotland. In July 2008 NHS Borders signed an agreement with Volunteer Development Scotland to complete the accreditation process for the IiV Award by March 2011. The award is designed to ensure health boards attain a number of consistent practices and approaches to volunteering. Achievement of the awards is assessed against ten indicators which are:-

- Ensure there is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers
- Commit appropriate resources
- Ensure that NHSScotland is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community
- Oversee the development of appropriate roles for volunteers
- Protect volunteers from physical, financial and emotional harm
- Use fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures
- Take a considered approach to taking up all references and official checks
- Establish clear procedures for introducing new volunteers to the organisation
- Ensure NHSScotland staff are aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.
- Take account of the carrying support needs of volunteers

#### **4) Purpose**

In issuing this Volunteering Policy, we:-

- Acknowledge and support the role of volunteers
- Set out the principles governing the involvement of volunteers and provide a set of procedures to ensure good working practice
- Define the roles, rights and responsibilities of NHS Borders and of its volunteers
- Encourage and enable the involvement of volunteers from all sections of the community

The Volunteering Policy and accompanying guidance and procedures are intended primarily for the use of NHS Borders employees and volunteers. A commitment to the principles contained within them would also be expected from voluntary organisations whose volunteers provide help within NHS Borders. However, NHS Borders respects the independence of these voluntary organisations and recognises that they are responsible for the management of their volunteers.

NHS Borders recognises the diversity of the population and the differing individual need of different sections of the Borders community. It is essential to acknowledge that this diversity may impact on the needs of volunteers and they visible and invisible barriers people may encounter. NHS Borders will act on these needs to ensure fair and equal access to volunteering by working in an inclusive manner, considering and valuing all potential and actual volunteer contributions. Where volunteers need additional support to take part in volunteering opportunities NHS Borders will always seek to ensure these support mechanism are in place.

#### **5) Scope**

Alongside the hundreds of people who volunteer in our health service there is a growing number and range of individuals who contribute in a voluntary capacity to our Patient Focus and Public Involvement agenda as formal members of a statutory forum (e.g. Public Partnership Forum), on patient councils, networks, groups, or attending committees. This policy also broadly applies to all those people, while acknowledging that such groups may be subject to separate guidance from the Scottish Government.

#### **6) Management, Monitoring & Evaluation**

NHS Borders Public Involvement and Communications Team will be responsible for establishing appropriate arrangements for the development of this policy and achieving liV. Operational responsibility for volunteers will rest with the service that engages them; corporate governance responsibility lies with the Board and responsibility for recruitment processes lies with Human Resources Department.

A work plan will be developed by a steering group of NHS Borders stakeholders to ensure we monitor the implementation of this policy so we can attain and sustain the liV Award. The steering group will be invited to meet at least once a year to help steer and design the volunteering. A short life working group will be established to drive forward this work.

## **7) The Role and Value of Volunteering**

NHS Borders recognises values and supports the role that volunteers play in the work and culture of NHS Borders.

A NHS Volunteer is:-

*"A person who gives freely and willingly of their time to help improve the health and wellbeing of patients, carers and users of Scotland's NHS." Scottish Government CEL (10) 2008*

The scope for volunteer involvement is wide and varied and includes work carried out by volunteers both on NHS Borders premises and within the wider community. Volunteering has benefits for the volunteer and the service in which they are volunteering – both of these aspects are equally important. With the increase of care provided in local areas it is likely that the need for volunteering in the community will increase in years to come.

## **8) Relationship with NHS Borders Staff**

NHS Borders is committed to ensuring that:-

- The activities/role of volunteers complements the work of our employees and will not be used as a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers are not asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by employees or to work in ways which facilitate a decrease in paid employment.
- Volunteers are not asked to do the work of paid staff during times of industrial action, however at such times they may continue with their regular duties.
- Steps are taken to ensure that staff at all levels, are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster, good working relationships between staff and volunteers.
- Training and support is provided for those working alongside and managing volunteers.
- The safety and wellbeing of NHS Borders patients and staff is paramount. The standard of care and conduct of volunteers should be of the same high quality as that of employees.

## **9) Funding**

NHS Borders recognises that developing effective volunteering programmes is an investment with significant benefits, however there are many associated costs including staff time. NHS Borders is committed to identifying and covering the costs of involving volunteers, for example, arranging, recruitment, selection, training and staff costs, and appropriate designated posts to manage volunteers. The Scottish Government "Guidance on Out of Pocket Expenses for Volunteers within NHS Scotland", issued through the Scottish Government CEL 8 (2009), sets out guidance for payment of out of pocket expenses for volunteers – the link to this CEL is attached at the end of this policy.

## **10) Recruitment and Selection**

NHS Borders will:-

- In line with HR policies and related Scottish Government / best practice guidance, recruit volunteers from all sections of the community.
- Acknowledge the importance of social inclusion and recognise that all prospective volunteers have something of value to offer.
- Place volunteers in accordance with appropriate volunteer recruitment and selection procedures, volunteer placements will be defined by the needs of NHS Borders and its service users.
- Make all reasonable effort to find suitable placements for those who offer their time and energy. Where there is no suitable placement, the volunteer will be informed of the reasons and redirected, where appropriate, to another agency such as the Borders Volunteer Centre.

## **11) Information and Training**

NHS Borders will:-

- Ensure that volunteers receive full information about their area of volunteering and their responsibilities to NHS Borders. This will include information about disciplinary and grievance procedures for volunteers and about their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong.
- Provide volunteers with induction and training in the specific tasks to be undertaken, and ongoing opportunities for learning and development.
- Ensure that volunteers are given the same opportunities as staff to contribute to the decision-making processes of the team and NHS Borders. Procedures will be put in place to enable the views of volunteers to be represented.

## **12) Support and Supervision**

Volunteers will be assigned a volunteer lead for supervision and support, and will be given clearly specified lines of accountability.

Risk assessments, where indicated, will be completed with all volunteers' to ensure that their individual support needs can be addressed wherever possible.

### **13) Expenses and Insurance**

NHS Borders will ensure that:-

- There is a clear, consistent, accessible and equitable system for claiming reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. The system conforms to Scottish Government Guidance on the Reimbursement of 'Out of Pocket' Expenses CEL (8) 2009. This includes travel to and from place of volunteering (excluding travel beyond the boundaries of NHS Borders); travel in the course of volunteering; subsistence allowance - e.g. refreshment costs where the volunteering has been in excess of four hours (unless other arrangements agreed in advance).
- Volunteers are adequately covered by insurance whilst they carry out their agreed duties both on NHS Borders premises and in the community
- Volunteers are given information on other legislation and policies e.g. Health and Safety, which may affect them and will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.

### **14) References**

On the basis of their volunteering, volunteers will have the right to request a reference from their volunteer lead.

### **15) Organisational Expectations of Volunteers**

Volunteers are expected to:-

- Participate in induction sessions and training relevant to their volunteering roles and placements.
- Comply with all NHS Borders policies and procedures, particularly in relation to Confidentiality, Incident Reporting, Health and Safety, Disclosure Scotland and Occupational Health.
- Undertake their volunteering at agreed times.
- Inform the volunteer lead, as soon as possible, if they are unable to attend, and if possible in advance.
- Give notice if unable to continue volunteering.
- Raise any issues of concern relating to their volunteering with their volunteer lead.

### **16) Other Services Involving Volunteers**

Organisations commissioned by NHS Borders to carry out work which involves volunteers, have a volunteering policy, which adopts the commitments and standards outlined in this policy.

## **17) Encouraging Staff Volunteering**

NHS Borders will develop a policy for NHS Borders employees volunteering which support its employees who are involved in volunteering and will:-

- Increase employees' awareness of volunteering opportunities through advertising within NHS Borders weekly staff bulletins, website and promotional literature.
- Acknowledge the value of employees' volunteering activity, and the development opportunity it represents.
- Consider access to help in kind, for employee volunteers, for example premises, use of equipment.

## **18) Developing and Sustaining Relationship with the Voluntary Sector**

In accordance with the 2005 Scottish Borders Compact NHS Borders will endeavour to continue to build relations within the voluntary sector whilst respecting their independence. We recognise the significant contribution of volunteers working within NHS premises and service but engaged through the voluntary sector. We will aim to work with the voluntary sector in a consistent way and learn from their wealth of experience of working with volunteers.

## **19) Volunteering Procedures and Guidance**

- 1) Interim Volunteering Policy
- 2) Volunteering in NHS Borders: A Guide for Volunteers
- 3) Volunteering Application and Equal Opportunities Form
- 4) Volunteering in NHS Borders: A Guide for Staff
- 5) Volunteering Confidentiality Agreement
- 6) Volunteering Induction Letter
- 7) Volunteer Request Form
- 8) Process for Engaging Volunteering Graph
- 9) Volunteer Expenses Policy (staff)
- 10) Volunteering Expenses Policy (volunteers)
- 11) Volunteer Evaluation Form

## **20) Equality Impact Assessment**

The NHS Borders Interim Volunteering Policy (this one) has been Equality Impact Assessed.

## **21) Additional Information**

Achieving Inclusive Volunteering IN NHSScotland: A Practical Guide for Staff Working with Volunteers. Volunteer Development Scotland 2009

[VDS Inclusive Volunteering June 2009](#)

Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering in Scotland. Scottish Government CEL (10) 2008.

[Scottish Government Volunteering Strategy](#)

The Refreshed Strategy for Volunteering in NHSScotland: A Reviews of Existing Literature and Research: Volunteer Development Scotland 2008

[VDS Refreshed Strategy: Literature Review](#)

Understanding How to Engage People in Volunteering: A Report Prepared for the Commission on the Future of Volunteering by Opinion Leaders: Volunteer England 2008. [How to Engage Volunteers; Volunteer England 2008](#)

Guidance on Reimbursement of 'Out of Pocket' Expenses for Volunteers within NHS Scotland. Scottish Government (CEL) 8 2009. [Scottish Government Volunteer Expenses](#)

*Reviewed March 2010, subject to annual review*