

The ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Project Evaluation

“A Friendly Face at the Bedside”



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Acknowledgements

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Please note this document refers to the ABM University NHS Trust which has since become ABM University Health Board.

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Summary

The evaluation looked at the service provided through the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Centre. It sought to look at the benefits that the scheme had introduced to the service of the Trust and concentrated in particular on the work of the volunteers and the benefits of introducing volunteers alongside Trust staff, the patients and their families and the Community. In order to assess this in depth and to establish whether the original objectives of the project (as identified in the lottery funding application) had been met, a range of research methods were employed. The evaluation revealed that in the majority of cases the response was that the Volunteer Scheme had achieved its objectives and there were identifiable benefits to all groups.

We identified that the Volunteer Scheme had been successful in meeting its original project outcomes, both in terms of development of the scheme and the three year plan.

On securing the Lottery funding, the Volunteer Centre was established and within 12 months the project team, working closely with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), successfully achieved the Investing in Volunteers Award that ensures good practice for managing and recruiting volunteers is in place.

The Volunteer Scheme had been introduced initially in year one into wards and departments at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend and at Maesteg Hospital and by year three had developed to include a wide range of settings at Neath Port Talbot Hospital including the main reception desk and ward environments.

The volunteer centre has successfully recruited volunteers with a diverse range of backgrounds and has also encouraged young volunteers (17-24) to participate, therefore meeting its original objectives. Training for all volunteers has been introduced. It also identified wide ranging benefits from the introduction of volunteers in the ABM University NHS Trust.

The evaluation successfully established many benefits to the volunteers who had taken part in the Volunteer Scheme in relation to their increased skills, confidence and knowledge. There were also recorded benefits to both the ward staff and patients. Whilst there was a limited response that could provide evidence of any improved community involvement it was clear that the links that the scheme had made with some organisations had proved to be of benefit to both the organisations and their clients

This also demonstrated the benefits of involving local volunteers within the ABM University NHS Trust as their wealth of local community knowledge had been a valuable asset to the Trust and its patients.

It is evident from this evaluation that the introduction of this Volunteer Scheme has proven to be of benefit to the ABM University NHS Trust in a variety of ways. When calculating the added value that volunteering has brought to the NHS through this Scheme the figures are as follows. Using the National Statistics New Earnings Survey 2003, that recommends a figure of £10.42 as the hourly rate for volunteering. Based on the information received from the Scheme, that 170 active volunteers volunteer for 4 hours weekly, the monetary value for this Scheme in a year amounts to £354,280.00.

Key Findings

Volunteers

The key findings from the evaluation identified that over 90% of the volunteers that had participated within the scheme felt they had benefited through an improved sense of well being, increased social contacts and networks, increased confidence, self esteem and improved career development.

Over 50% of the volunteers reported that they had acquired new skills and had undertaken a wide range of training that had been arranged through the Volunteer Scheme

93% per cent of the respondents reported that they were happy with their volunteer role within the ABM University NHS Trust.

92% reported benefits from their volunteering experience and stated they would recommend this volunteer opportunity to others.

Staff

The staff reported that the Volunteer Scheme had improved the stay of patients while in hospital, indicating an 85% benefit to patients and 75% benefit to the ABM University NHS Trust.

70% per cent of the staff respondents would welcome a continuation of the Volunteer Scheme with 75% identifying the scheme as excellent.

However, there were identified concerns from staff in regard to the initial introduction of the Volunteer Scheme on to the wards and the development of the volunteers' role.

Organisations

The Volunteer Scheme works alongside organisations from different sectors including both the Public and Private Sector. All of the organisations who responded stated they would be happy to continue with their work alongside the Volunteer Scheme. For many, they felt that the main benefit had been to their client group, with 66% reporting that they felt the work of the Volunteer Scheme was excellent and would like to see further new volunteering opportunities developed.

Patients

All of the patients who responded were aware of the Volunteer Scheme and 75% stated that they knew what services they could expect from a volunteer. Some of the patients reported that having the services of a volunteer had made their stay in the hospital easier for their families to deal with as they were secure in the knowledge that their relative was receiving additional support.

87½% of patients felt that having support from a volunteer had improved their stay in the hospital with 75% stating that they felt the Volunteer Scheme was excellent and that the introduction of more volunteers into the ABM University NHS Trust would be beneficial. All of the patients who completed the questionnaire felt that the volunteers benefited from their experience within the Volunteer Scheme.

Background to the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteering Scheme

The Volunteer Scheme was established following a baseline assessment carried out by the then Trust Patient Experience Facilitator (now Head of Patient Experience), to identify the need to develop a Volunteer Scheme that provided additional support within the then Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust. Its aim being to provide a friendly face to patients, their relatives and carers in a way that was not focused on patient's clinical care. Once funded, the Volunteer Project set out to develop the scheme through a three tiered approach.

Firstly, to create a Volunteer Co-ordinator post that would support the introduction of volunteers on a phased basis; aiming to create a sustainable volunteering model that would be on-going. A significant aspect of the Volunteer Scheme would be the development of links within education, with a diverse range of organisations that would include all sections of the community and to develop youth volunteering. The Volunteer Co-ordinator would be supported by a part-time administrator and both managed by the Trust Patient Experience Facilitator.

Secondly, the Volunteer Project planned to introduce a phased ward, clinic and Accident and Emergency Department based Volunteering Scheme. This would see trained and supported volunteers providing friendly and practical support to patients and the public using the services of the ABM University NHS Trust. Training was planned to be in three parts:-

- A tailored volunteer induction based on the Trust staff induction
- Appropriate statutory training
- Patient Experience training to promote good interpersonal skills to support the needs of patients

Thirdly, the Volunteer Scheme planned to develop and introduce volunteer standards for example the Investing in Volunteers Award and the Millennium Volunteer Programme.

The aim of the Volunteer Scheme was to explore the benefits and effects of introducing volunteers alongside nursing and medical staff to support patients in practical ways that would enhance the patient's experience whilst in hospital, to provide a worthwhile experience for volunteers and to develop the relationship of the ABM University NHS Trust with its local communities.

Other identified project outcomes were:

- The provision of improved community support, through the development of a project that would have local people supporting local people.
- The development of worthwhile and rewarding experiences for volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.
- To develop links with partner volunteer providers to maximise the effect of this project through enhanced joint working.
- To help promote volunteering Wales wide.

The Volunteer Scheme was funded through a lottery bid under the People and Places Programme, with the launch of the Volunteer Scheme taking place on the 5th February 2007 and the official opening of the Volunteer Centre at Glanrhyd Hospital on 13th June 2007.

Background to the Research

The need to evaluate the Volunteer Scheme was identified by the Head of Patient Experience, Paul Jones. He recommended to the Project Board that an independent evaluation be carried out during the final year of the lottery funding.

With agreement from the Lottery, Paul Jones then contacted The Vale Volunteer Bureau, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service. Representatives from these organisations met with the Head of Patient Experience to discuss how this could be implemented.

The evaluation set out to investigate the impact of the Volunteer Scheme on the ABM University NHS Trust. It was decided that this should capture information regarding both the implementation of the Volunteer Scheme and its benefits to Patients, their Families, the ABM University NHS Trust Staff and the Community. It also investigates the impact of the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme on the NHS. The evaluation has been achieved through consultation with ABM University NHS Trust staff, volunteers, patients and organisations within the local community. It is envisaged that the information gained will be taken forward by the ABM University NHS Trust to help develop and secure the Volunteer Scheme for the future.

Volunteering

In 2005, it was estimated that 30,000 voluntary and community groups were operating in Wales. Findings from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey suggest that 54% per cent of adults in Wales volunteered in 2002-2003, equivalent to 1.27 million people. (Basic Statistics on the Voluntary Sector in Wales, 2005:1-2, WCVA Website, 2006).

Volunteering is an activity which is visible across the sectors and in nearly every part of life and society and there are a number of definitions of the term. There are no formal requirements of activities which constitute a volunteering opportunity, and it is not only confined to the voluntary sector, but embraces all sectors. The volunteering forum suggests that volunteering “includes formal activity undertaken through Voluntary, Public and Private Sector Organisations as well as informal community participation.” (Volunteering Policy Landscape, 2005, Volunteering Forum Website 2006).

“A volunteer is someone who performs or offers to perform a service out of his or her own free will, without payment, usually in support of a non-profit organisation, mission-based initiative or community. Volunteering can be occasional or regular, part-time or full time. It is often (but not always) of a part-time nature. It may occur over one day or many years in a range of different fields.” (Voluntary Service Overview, 2006: AVSO Website 2006).

The Strategy for Voluntary Infrastructure in England 2004-2014, suggests that although peoples motivations for volunteering are individual, they can fit into four key areas. These are altruism - which is the sense of giving something back to others, community or society, volunteering for personal and social issues, increasing employability and developing new skills and finally in order to positively change the community and society in which we live. (Forster & Penberthy, 2004:12).

It has been suggested that volunteering has a role to play in social integration, poverty alleviation and full employment, which is of major importance to communities. Volunteering makes an important economic contribution to society, on average between 8-14% on a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); whilst the participation aspect of volunteering helps citizens become engaged in the political process and makes for a more stable society. It is also suggested that volunteering can integrate socially excluded or marginalised people into society and that it can also aid in promoting full employment by empowering and enhancing the employability skills of unemployed and unemployable members of society (UN Volunteers, Expert working Group 1999:6-7).

Volunteering aims to be inclusive to all members of society, and it is recognised that the benefits of volunteering are twofold; there is benefit to community or organisation in which the volunteering is taking place, and there are wider benefits to society as well as personal benefits to the individual. “The word volunteering is used for a range of activities such as community service, self-help, charity, neighbourliness, citizenship, public service, community action and community involvement. To some people it is an act of kindness, to others it is a means of achieving a personal goal or putting something back into society. It is also a way of gaining new skills and improving job prospects.” (What is volunteering? 2006, Volunteering Wales Website 2006)

The Current Picture

Established in 2007, the Volunteer Centre is based in Glanrhyd Hospital with a full time Volunteer Co-ordinator, Glenda Phillips and part-time Administrator Wendy Grabham. The Volunteer Scheme is managed by the Trust Head of Patient Experience, Paul Jones.

The Volunteer Scheme is currently operating in the following locations and departments

- Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend
- Neath Port Talbot Hospital, Neath Port Talbot
- Maesteg Community Hospital, Bridgend
- Glanrhyd Mental Health Hospital, Bridgend
- Baglan Primary Care Centre, Port Talbot
- Arc Day Centre (Mental Health Support)

There are 179 volunteers currently active with the scheme against an objective of 100 volunteers by the end of the project.

Years	Hospital	Which Department
Year 1	Princess of Wales Glanrhyd Maesteg	Wards elderly/ rehab Endoscopy Emergency Unit Volunteer Centre Day Hospital
Year 2	Princess of Wales Glanrhyd Maesteg Neath Port Talbot	Wards 5, 6, 19 and 20 Endoscopy Reception Desk Cardiac Unit Emergency Unit Patient Experience Unit Volunteer Centre/Cam Nesaf Day Hospital Cwm Hafan Ward Reception Desk Endoscopy Ward D

Year 3	Princess of Wales	Wards 2,5,6,7,19,20 Reception Desk Accident &Emergency Cardiac Investigation Unit Endoscopy Unit Chaplains Office Garden/Notice Boards Support to Y Bwythyn Newydd Volunteers
	Glanrhyd	Patients experience Unit Volunteer Centre Cam Nesaf
	Maesteg	Day Hospital Cwm Hafan Ward
	Neath Port Talbot	Reception Desk Endoscopy Unit Ward D Baglan Primary Care Centre Reception Desk Support to Y Rhosyn Volunteers

Numbers of new volunteers recruited and active since the scheme started

Year	Male	Female
Year 1 07-08	8	47
Year 2 08-09	11	77
Year 3 To June 09	12	24

Over the 3 years detailed above, 27 volunteers considered themselves to be disabled and 6 volunteers were from minority ethnic groups.

In addition to the above figures 61 existing volunteers have joined the project at the reception desks at Princess of Wales Hospital and Neath Port Talbot Hospital

The Volunteer Role Description

The role of the volunteer is to be as titled in the Lottery application a 'Friendly Face at the Bedside', to act as a befriender/support to the patients and the staff.

The duties of the volunteers include:-

- Prepare hot and cold drinks and check water jugs
- Assist with the serving of meals
- Provide a reading/writing service where appropriate
- Spend time in general conversation and assisting with activities
- Run errands to other departments within the hospital
- Accompany patients who are able to walk to other departments
- Update patient notice boards and education leaflets
- Relaying telephone messages
- Directing relatives to patients/nurses
- Distribute comment cards and assist patients with completion and return of cards to the Patient Experience Unit
- Undertake ad hoc surveys
- Provide feedback to staff on behalf of patients and visitors

All volunteers are expected to be aware of steps taken to safeguard the Health and Safety of patients, visitors and staff, observing all Rules and Regulations appertaining to their safeguard and to have an up to date knowledge of all proceedings.

Analysis of data and findings from the questionnaires

Volunteers

45 volunteers completed and returned the questionnaire and these were the findings.

Age

Table 1: Age distribution of respondents

Age Group	No. of Volunteers
17 – 20	8
20 – 40	3
40 – 60	26
70+	8
Total	45

Among the respondents the highest age was 79 and lowest was 17

Gender

Table 2: Gender distribution of the respondents

Gender	No. of volunteers
Male	4
Female	41

Among the respondents the majority of questionnaires returned were completed by females. This is an accurate reflection of the fact that the majority of volunteers with the Volunteer Scheme are female.

Number of months/years volunteered with the Trust

Table 3: showing the length of time contributed by the respondents

No of months/years	No. of Volunteers
0 – 6 months	12
6 months - 1 year	3
1 year – 2 years	2
2 years - 3 years	12
4 – 6 years	9
7 – 8+ years	7* Some volunteering projects were previously in existence before the Volunteer Centre began

The table shows the length of time that the volunteers have contributed with some of the volunteers contributing over 7 years.

Volunteers with Health Issues or Disability

Table 4: showing the number of respondents who consider themselves to have a disability

	No. of volunteers
With disability	4
Without disability	41

Table 4a: showing the number of respondents who consider themselves to have health issues

	No. of volunteers
With Health Issues	10
Without Health Issues	35

9% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability and 22% identified as having health issues.

Location of volunteering placement

Table 5: showing the location of the volunteer placements

Name of Hospital	No. of volunteers
Glanrhyd	3
Maesteg	1
Neath Port Talbot	23
Princess of Wales	18

Ethnic Origin

All respondents were white with 4 welsh speakers recorded.

Research Methods and Findings

The following research methods were chosen as the most effective means to provide an overall view of the Volunteer Scheme. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used. The figures that have been gathered for this evaluation provide a partial snapshot of the current situation in the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme which aids understanding if not providing a full picture. Every attempt has been made to ensure that the qualitative parts of the evaluation are taken into consideration.

The following research methods were planned

- 1.1 Questionnaires – to collect data from volunteers, organisations, patients and staff who make use of the Volunteer Scheme
- 1.2 Focus group with volunteers.
- 1.3 One to One interviews with Paul Jones Head of Patient Experience and Glenda Philips Volunteer Co-ordinator, who answered a series of written structured questions.
- 1.4 One to One telephone interviews with organisations
- 1.5 Case Studies from volunteers.

1.1 Questionnaire Survey

A survey of volunteers, staff, patients and organisations that have been involved with the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme was carried out. A quantitative approach was taken using the survey method of a postal questionnaire to explore the benefits and effects of introducing volunteers within the ABM University NHS Trust. This was distributed through the ABM University NHS Volunteer Centre, along with a covering letter providing contact details for the Volunteer Support Services to volunteers, patients, staff and the broader community. This method involved collaboration with the ABM University NHS Volunteer Centre and Norma Owen (Paul's deputy) from the Patient Experience Unit. The questionnaire was designed to gather specific data about the volunteers along with information about their experiences within the scheme. There was also an opportunity to make comments that had not been covered in the questionnaire. As a result of this process 77 questionnaires were recorded and analysed. These included 3 from organisations, 21 from ABM University NHS Trust staff, 8 from patients and 45 from volunteers (for a breakdown of the analysis see Appendix 1).

1.2 Focus Group

The focus group was held in the Board Room at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. Eight volunteers attended the session which lasted approximately an hour and a half. As part of good practice all volunteers were offered their expenses for attending. Prior to the focus group taking place ground rules including confidentiality were agreed. The session was recorded.

A volunteer focus group included active volunteers from the Princess of Wales Hospital, Neath Port Talbot Hospital and Glanrhyd Hospital. Their roles within the hospital were varied including volunteers from Reception Desk, Administration, Endoscopy, Chaplaincy and Accident & Emergency Department.

Mixed ages were represented along with both volunteers in employment and those who are retired. All were female as there had been last minute apologies from a male volunteer and all had no apparent disability. They represented a reasonable cross section of individuals who volunteered within the scheme, all of whom were willing to share their experiences and give their opinions and time to this evaluation.

Unfortunately, we did not receive many completed questionnaires from organisations and as none of them agreed to be part of the focus groups it was decided to carry out one to one interviews.

1.3 One to One Interviews

One to one interviews were held with both the Volunteer Coordinator and the Head of Patients Experience; a range of questions had been prepared to cover the development of the Volunteer Scheme from its concept to present as well as its development and future plans. These interviews were recorded.

1.4 One to One Telephone Interviews

One to one telephone interviews were carried out with organisations that work closely with the Volunteer Centre. A range of questions had been prepared to cover the work that the organisations did alongside the scheme and to establish the benefits of joint working and potential developments.

1.5 Case Studies

Alongside the circulation of the questionnaires, letters were included that offered individuals the opportunity to take part in a case study. Three volunteers expressed an interest in being part of the case studies and we had three completed. This was carried out part by written questions and part by telephone interview.

Research Questions and Findings

Volunteers

1. Why did you choose this volunteering opportunity?

Volunteers joined the scheme for many reasons. 25% joined to improve their career prospects. 12.5% joined the scheme as they felt that volunteering would give them an opportunity to use their skills and return to a hospital environment after retiring. 10% of volunteers stated that they wanted to improve their personal development and raise their self esteem. 5% of volunteers stated they joined because they were asked. A common theme was that many volunteers joined for altruistic reasons including two volunteers who wanted to give back for the personal care they had received as a patient.

Reponses of four volunteers

“to give back care received for breast cancer”.

“I always wanted to be a nurse and this gave me ward experience”.

“to improve my confidence and to gain experience in a health care setting”.

“to help others and to do something worthwhile and to help the community”.

2. How did you find out about volunteering in the hospital?

The volunteers identified a variety of sources that had informed them of the Volunteer Scheme, these included word of mouth, local voluntary organisations, statutory support services, CVC/Volunteer Centre/Bureau, contacting the project direct and through promotional materials.

3. Have you acquired any new skills?

50% of the volunteers with the Volunteer Scheme reported that they had acquired new skills which they identified as

- enhanced communication and listening skills
- improved confidence
- improved ability to deal with people
- learnt to respond appropriately in a busy and emotional environment

Whilst the other 50% of volunteers stated that they continued to build and improve their existing skills.

4. Are you satisfied with your volunteer role in the hospital?

- 93% of the volunteer respondents reported that they were satisfied with their volunteer role within the hospital
- Of the 7% who identified any concerns some did state that they had satisfactorily addressed any problems through the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

5. Have you benefited from volunteering with ABM University NHS Trust?

92% of volunteer respondents said they had benefited from the Volunteer Scheme with the Trust, these included:

- Gaining valuable experience to embark on a hospital career
- Building confidence, improving health and self esteem, meeting and making new friends
- Playing an active part in the local community

Responses of four volunteers

“I have gained a lot of experience from volunteering and it has been commented on during interviews for university”.

“I get a feel good factor from working on the information desk. It’s good to be of use in the local community and in the hospital in particular.”

“I have gained skills, more confidence, met new people and had more experience in the hospital.”

“I can communicate with people easier and I now know that I do want to do medicine in the future.”

6. Do you have any positive experiences that you would like to comment on?

Volunteer respondents identified a range of positive experiences while volunteering with the ABM University NHS Trust, some of these included a positive impact on their career, developing new friendships, seeing an obvious benefit to patients, and the appreciation they received while volunteering.

Responses from volunteers:

“The appreciation we get from staff/patients and relatives made me realise how important a job volunteers do in the hospital. Also how much a smile and a chat can improve a patient’s stay in hospital.”

“Due to my experiences with long term mental health, becoming a volunteer has been a “life saving” opportunity. In 2008 I spoke at the Launch of the All Wales Volunteer Network at the Heath Hospital, about my experience – a very good proud moment indeed.”

“Building relationships with the elderly was a very positive experience that I will take with me throughout my nursing career.”

“When people go into A&E this can be a very scary situation. It is very rewarding to know that you can help even if it is only to make a cup of tea or just chat. Some people do not have any family and they are so grateful”.

7. Would you recommend this volunteering opportunity to anyone else?

92% of volunteer respondents would recommend this opportunity to others. Reasons stated included giving something back to the community, an insight into how the hospital works and a very satisfying and rewarding experience. Comments included:

“It’s an excellent opportunity to put something back into the community by helping others. It is nice to be supportive to people who need our help”.

“Helping others makes you feel good about yourself”.

“It gives you a purpose in life; you learn to work as a team. You meet lots of people”.

8. Do you have any other comments that you would wish to make that have not been included in this questionnaire?

26% of volunteer respondents who completed the questionnaire made further comments these include:

- The desire to volunteer for more hours
- Would like the opportunity to volunteer in other areas
- Some identified the desire to meet with other volunteers and see more of the Volunteer Centre Staff

Staff

20 staff questionnaires were completed and returned

Gender

Table 2: Gender distribution of the staff respondents

Gender	No. of staff
Male	2
Female	18

Location of staff respondents

Table 2: Location of the staff respondents

Location of staff respondents	No. of staff respondents
Bridgend Hospital	12
Neath Port Talbot	8

1. Were you consulted in the development of the Volunteer Scheme?

Of the staff 65% who responded were consulted on the set up of the Volunteer Scheme, this gave mixed feedback with some who had been committed to the idea of introducing volunteers into the NHS and had approached the Patient Experience Unit with a view to initiating volunteers into the Trust. Some had been consulted regarding the tasks that the volunteers would be best suited to and had been asked for their advice. Whilst some staff stated that they had not been involved in the development of the volunteers' role.

2. Are you responsible for your volunteers?

Staff responsibilities	Yes	No	No Response
Induction	2	16	2
Training	1	17	2
Support and Supervision	9	10	1
Timetable of work	4	14	2
Allocation of tasks	9	10	1

3. Do you think that having volunteers through the project has benefitted?

	Yes	No	No Response
Patients	17	1	2
Patients families	14	5	1
Staff	13	7	
NHS	15	3	2
Your area of work	15	3	2

The majority of staff responses reflected a positive benefit to patients, patients' families, staff and the NHS in general. 15 expressed some concern that on occasions some volunteers self selected which patients they supported without consulting nursing staff.

4. Do you have any suggestions on how the Volunteer Scheme could be developed?

Staff respondents who completed the questionnaire reported the following suggestions including:-

- More specific specialist training for the volunteers.
- More patient involvement in the development of the volunteers' role.
- More specialist volunteer roles within other departments.
- Stronger links with other departments e.g. chaplaincy.

5. Do you have any current or ongoing concerns about the Volunteer Scheme?

There were a few identified concerns which included:-

- Late notification of failure to attend by the volunteer leaving staff little time to re-arrange cover
- Lack of clarity about the role of the volunteer leading to concerns that volunteers are not carrying out tasks they could do, or are unclear which patients need to be seen.

6. Would you like to see the Scheme continue?

Of the staff respondents 70% would like the scheme to continue, 15% would not like to see the continuation of the scheme and 15% failed to comment.

Seventy Five per cent of staff respondents reported that they felt the scheme was very good to excellent.

Staff responses included.

“Grateful for a member of the public giving their own time up in an unpaid capacity”.

“They are a great help and we miss them when they are not here”.

“Extremely helpful support for both patients and staff.”

“All the volunteers are very professional in their role.”

Organisations

Three organisations completed and returned the questionnaires.

Location and Sector

Table showing the location of organisations respondents and sector worked in

Location of organisations	Number of Respondents	Sector Worked
Bridgend	1	Public
Neath Port Talbot	1	Voluntary
Vale of Glamorgan	1	Voluntary

Client groups worked with included:

- Children (including mainstream special needs)
- The Social Services Spectrum
- Potential Volunteers

Research Questions and Findings

1. Has the volunteer Scheme benefited your client group or complimented the work of your organisation?

The majority of organisations felt that the scheme had benefited the work of their organisations and their clients.

Responses included

- Volunteers who have been recruited have benefited from the scheme.
- Individual clients have benefited from enhanced opportunities.
- The scheme has provided additional opportunities for individuals to access within the community.

2. What other joint areas of work would you like to see developed

Organisation responses included

- Greater opportunities for ward experience and joint working where other experienced volunteers could have a role to play in the ABM University NHS Trust.
- To develop further new volunteering opportunities within the Trust for example, a patient library and a service music station.

Of the organisation responses 100% would like to continue working alongside the project 66% stated that the Volunteer Scheme was excellent and 34% failed to comment.

Patients Questionnaires

8 patients completed and returned the questionnaire and these were the findings (due to the transient nature of the patients this is a snap shot of their views).

Ages

Table 1: showing the ages of the patient respondents

Ages of patient respondents	No of patients
60 – 70 years	3
70 – 80 years	1
80 plus	4

Gender

Of the patient's who responded 2 were male and 6 were female

Of those questionnaires completed 100% of the respondents were aware of the volunteer scheme with 75% being fully aware of what service they could expect from a volunteer. 13% of patient respondents stated that their family felt the volunteer support had been a great help during their stay whilst the remainder stated that their family were unaware of the scheme.

87½% of the respondents felt that having support from a volunteer had improved their stay in hospital and 75% stated that the scheme was excellent

Patients' responses included

“Nice to see a happy face”

“Nice to chat and get help”

“Very useful addition to the team”

Research questions and findings

1. Why do you think the hospital involves volunteers?

There were mixed responses to this with comments including:-

“It's for people who don't get visitors”.

“It helps people when they need a chat”.

“It assists staff and patients, but patients more than staff.

2. What have the advantages or disadvantages been to you by receiving support from volunteers?

Patients comments included:-

“Volunteers can give you information and run errands”.

“Volunteers are a needed resource”.

3. Do you feel that the volunteer project could be improved?

50% of respondents felt that the scheme needed more volunteers whilst 50% stated that the scheme was already doing a good job.

4. Do you think that volunteers benefit from their experience in the hospital?

100% of the patient respondents stated that they felt the volunteers benefitted from their experience. Comments included:-

“Gives satisfaction”.

“Volunteers must enjoy the experience”.

“I would object to volunteers being withdrawn from the hospital”.

1.2 Focus Groups with Volunteers

In order to evaluate fully the success of the Volunteer Scheme it was necessary to establish whether the original aims and objectives as stated in the lottery bid were met. In order to achieve this we set about devising a series of questions that would provide us with more in depth qualitative information. We focused on the areas as stated in the lottery bid which included the benefits of the Volunteer Scheme to the volunteers, patients, their relatives or carers, staff and its relationship with the local community. These questions were to be discussed through a focus group.

Volunteering

The majority of participants agreed that they had achieved their original personal goals in regard to why they had begun volunteering with the scheme, however, for some they felt that they had more to offer as their roles were quieter than anticipated. Some also stated that they would like the opportunity to do more on the wards.

Most of the volunteers felt that the scheme gave them an opportunity to learn new skills, use their existing skills and for some it was the opportunity to have greater time to “listen” to patients. Whilst for some the opportunity for using their existing skills was a definite bonus, others felt that they did not always get the chance to be as productive as they would like. There was some frustration expressed by volunteers that on some occasions they had been in a situation where they had been unable to help, not due to their ability but because of the restraints of their role as a volunteer. They did state that they fully understand and appreciate the reasons for this.

All of the volunteers felt that they had gained skills through their role as a volunteer with the scheme and for some the experience had been “absolutely fascinating”. It was also stated that some had gained employment as a direct result of volunteering with the scheme.

The volunteers had all taken part in both the induction process and a training day and for most the training undertaken had been useful, although some felt that the induction was longer than they required due to their previous experience. When asked, the volunteers had had no awareness of any recognition or award scheme for their volunteering contribution; however, despite this there is a scheme in place that recognises volunteers’ involvement with the scheme. Once a volunteer has completed 100, 200 or 500 hours they receive an award or a certificate that is presented to them at various events held throughout the year (Usually by the Trust Chairman or Chief Executive).

All of the volunteers felt that the scheme was suitable for all ages and backgrounds with a 100% positive response to the question.

There were a few minor concerns expressed by staff in wards in regard to the introduction of volunteers into the hospital but these had been satisfactorily addressed. Some volunteers stated that they had had limited contact with Volunteer Centre staff or were unclear who their contact person was, and some stated that they had their main support via the hospital staff. Any suggestions for the development of the scheme

included more roles for the volunteers within the hospital e.g. volunteering in paediatrics.

When asked how they felt after a day's work as a volunteer the following responses were recorded:-

"If I've had a busy day and I've been able to help then I feel that day was perfect. That I have made a difference."

"Socially, I think it's good."

"I can be on a high when I have contributed and been busy."

"I just love it."

"I feel valued."

Community

The volunteers had differing responses in relation to the effect of the Volunteer Scheme on the local community, this ranged from no perceived benefit to the community generally, to it gives local people the opportunity to undertake a valuable work experience which is of great benefit if they wish to pursue a career in the field of Health Care.

Some of the volunteers had had the opportunity to talk to local groups about their volunteer experience and be part of its promotion at events and they would like to see the scheme promoted more in communities. The many advantages of involving local people as volunteers were identified particularly through some of the long term hospital volunteer projects.

Relationships with Others

It was recognised that the volunteers had a clear awareness of the many benefits of their contribution to the care of patients, visitors, relatives and staff.

This was identified in a variety of ways, for example as a first point of contact; how the friendly welcome for new patients can help to alleviate their fear whilst the ability to provide information or direction was a valuable service to the visitors at the hospital. In some cases volunteers were able to offer some comfort to families of the patients and particularly through the chaplaincy where volunteers are often asked by relatives to give extra support and could identify examples of support offered to relatives/carers by 'listening'. It was identified that volunteers are able to have an informal relationship with patients that the medical staff can't have. In many cases the volunteers are able to help relax people before they go into treatment and the support the volunteer can offer is invaluable for those people who are on their own. Volunteers have the time to support the patients that the staff don't have.

1.3 One to One Interviews

Two semi-structured interviews took place with Paul Jones, Head of Patient Experience and Glenda Philips, Volunteer Co-ordinator. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain additional information about the original planning of the project, the current picture and future plans for the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme.

Paul Jones, Head of Patients Experience

Paul explained the planning of the ABM University NHS University Trust Volunteer Scheme started two years before the lottery bid was secured. Initially, Paul was approached by the Deputy Chief Executive and Nurse Director of the then Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust, to look at involving volunteers on the wards to offer support to nursing staff, patients and their families.

The idea was to include volunteers in worthwhile roles otherwise the scheme would not be sustainable. One of the areas we tackled at the beginning was to establish what would be appropriate volunteer roles within the ABM University NHS Trust, this included working closely with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Unison who are the two main bodies supporting staff.

The other issues that were raised were how the ABM University NHS Trust was going to work closely with organisations that were already operating in the Trust. Paul and the Nurse Director Victoria Franklin decided that the best way to scope out how a Volunteer Scheme could be developed and be accepted by paid staff currently working on the wards was to visit each area and complete a questionnaire to look at the need for volunteers and their roles.

In addition Paul and senior colleagues also visited other hospitals that had well established volunteer schemes; these included the Red Robins in Glan Clwyd, the Aintree Trust and the PALS (Patient Advice Liaison & Support) service in Southampton to look at advantages and disadvantages of these schemes. This gave the Trust a clear idea of how the Volunteer Scheme could operate within the ABM University NHS Trust. Here, the focus was to run a Befriending Volunteer Scheme on the wards however, because of the success of this, other areas have been developed.

After talking to the Nursing, Clinical and Administrative staff, along with the Hospital League of Friends and advice from WCVA it was agreed that the scheme would be able to support 100 volunteers within the Princess of Wales hospital in Bridgend. It was also agreed that elderly care would be a priority and that consideration should be given to wards 18, 19 and 20.

Paul then went on to explain that there was no all Wales NHS Trust procedure or model in place to look at good practice in volunteering within Wales. As a result of this he has worked closely with the Welsh Assembly Government to establish and Chair the NHS Wales Volunteer Network. An early piece of work this group has done is to develop and introduce "Putting Volunteer Schemes into Practice – A Toolkit".

Paul explained that the Trust currently has 179 volunteers working alongside paid staff. Additional developments and increased volunteer numbers will depend on the structure and resources available and the connections they have with other organisations.

Paul is in discussion with the now Health Board regarding the future of the scheme which he feels is no longer a standalone scheme and should now be viewed as an integral part of the Trust. Paul does recognise that this has funding implications for the organisation.

He stated that if the organisation secured an additional two years' funding from the Lottery this would enable them to develop other strands of the scheme.

Glenda Phillips, Volunteer Co-ordinator

After securing Lottery funding, Glenda was successful in her application to become the Volunteer Co-ordinator for the new Volunteer Scheme. When she was appointed in 2007 the funding had already been secured to run the pilot Volunteer Scheme in Bridgend at the Princess of Wales, working initially on wards 5, 6 and 20. These wards had been identified as a priority as they were the Elderly Wards. Previous work had been conducted by Paul Jones to ascertain what current involvement volunteers had within the Trust and whether the staff would be happy to incorporate volunteers within their wards in the future. These volunteers would then be managed through a Volunteer Scheme run on behalf of the ABM University NHS Trust.

During her first year in post, Glenda concentrated on the development of the Volunteer Scheme, looking at good practice in volunteering and ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures were in place. The development of the project also included the training and recruitment of volunteers. The second year would see the volunteer scheme moving into Neath Port Talbot Hospital and also onto the wards. In 2008 the Volunteer Centre successfully achieved the "Investing in Volunteers Award", which was important to them as it acknowledged that they were adhering to volunteering good practice.

As part of her work with the volunteers Glenda recognised the need to reward and acknowledge the work of the volunteers and has initiated a recognition scheme that rewards volunteers for their involvement in the Volunteer Scheme. Volunteers are currently awarded with 100, 200 and 500 hour certificates at events held by the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Centre. It is also the intention to participate in the Millennium Volunteer Award Programme for young volunteers (16-24) in the near future.

Glenda explained how existing volunteers were integrated into the Volunteer Scheme when it was set up in 2007. This was achieved through a series of meetings with staff, hospital units and wards that already had volunteers involved - explaining how the new Volunteer Scheme would be set up and the guidelines and good practice that they would need to consider in the future and how best Glenda could support them. In Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot the volunteers that were part of

WRVS have been incorporated into the ABM University NHS Trust volunteer scheme.

At the moment none of the training for volunteers is accredited but this is something that is being discussed for the future. Glenda also felt that the Volunteer Scheme in ABM University NHS Trust could grow extensively but that the resources and guidance for the further development of the scheme would have to be looked at. A full audit is currently being carried out by the Trust on all aspects of volunteering across the organisation. The next three years could look at how the ward staff take more responsibility for the volunteers that are placed with them and this would enable the staff of the Volunteer Centre to be more involved in the recruitment, selection and placing of volunteers.

1.4 One to one telephone interviews with organisations

Three organisations were contacted, Arc Day Services, the Hospital League of Friends and Careers Wales West, in order to have a more in depth understanding of their work and their working relationship with the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme. In order to establish this, a series of questions were devised to look at the benefits to the organisations and identify any suggestions for further developments.

The nature of the organisations was fairly varied with one offering support for people in recovery from a period of mental ill health, another being a voluntary fundraising organisation supporting the work of the hospitals through the purchase of extra equipment and the third providing an Advice and Guidance Service for all ages.

All three of the organisations agreed that there had been benefits to the work through their involvement in the scheme with replies such as:-

“Yes, because the people we work with are looking to go back into work – volunteering with the scheme has been the first step back into the community for many people”

“Yes, we have signposted the personnel from the scheme to schools, providing contact details, many Adult Guidance Advisors know about the scheme and can signpost if appropriate”

“The League of Friends was delighted with the support that they had received from the Volunteer Centre in their fundraising activities”.

When asked who the Volunteer Scheme had benefitted all agreed with replies such as:-

“By bringing a lot of people together and making new friends – a whole new social life has developed for some people through volunteering on the scheme. Mental Health service users can often become entrenched into services; this has helped to broaden their outlook.”

“Some people - who have worked with the scheme, have gone on to college and one has done nurse training. It is encouraging individuals to go out and do more.”

“Extra item on the menu of services we can offer, the Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator sits on the Education Business Forum run by Careers Wales giving the opportunity to promote the scheme and the potential work experience opportunities available along with any new developments.”

“Helped to raise money; help to raise the profile of Hospital League of Friends; sense of community spirit. The support was tremendous.”

All of the organisations were united in their positive response to continue working alongside the Volunteer Scheme. Suggestions for any joint areas that they would like to see developed included:-

“It would be good if the clients we refer could go on to do further training like NVQ's plus the volunteer centre is seen as the 'work place' to give the expertise.”

“Perhaps to reinstate links with schools from the Education Business Forum and to receive feedback about those who if referred did become volunteers.”

“Definitely happy to continue, no suggestions because very, very helpful and easy to contact “

1.5 Case Studies

Three case studies were incorporated into this evaluation study: two female volunteers and one male. They were identified during the questionnaire process where volunteers stated their desire to be part of the case studies. The decision made when drawing up the questions for the case studies was to identify the volunteering motivations of the individuals, their volunteering history and their experience of being a volunteer with ABM University NHS Trust.

Case Study 1

Elen, aged 42, was medically retired from the Home Office in 1993. She began volunteering in the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend in 2007. It was her first and only experience as a Volunteer with the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Centre

Initially she volunteered once a week on a Tuesday and after several months increased her shifts to include a Thursday. The minimum time she would spend on each shift would be 2 hours and the maximum 4 hours. Because of long term illness it hasn't always been possible to do her volunteering and during her time as a volunteer there have been many occasions when she had to take "time out" periods which could range from several weeks to many months.

She chose to become a Volunteer with the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Centre following a recommendation by her Community Psychiatric Nurse and her Support Worker from the ARC Day Service Centre. She states that becoming a volunteer was a huge "life changing" decision. Having suffered for years with mental health problems she had resigned herself to the fact that she would never again have the opportunity to experience being in a working environment (albeit voluntary) even more so because of the discrimination and stigma she had endured for years.

When she applied to become an ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer it was important to her that people were aware of her background because she didn't want to be judged in any negative way because of her illness. With this in mind she enclosed a brief history with her application form. Her first placement as an ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer was on Ward 20 in the Princess of Wales Hospital which is primarily a Rehabilitation Ward. She also did a couple of shifts in the A&E Department and is currently based in the Cardio Investigation Unit. Additionally she now has responsibility for collecting and logging all

Volunteer Hours which includes collating all relevant paperwork from the Volunteer Files within the Departments where volunteers are based and recording this information. She has successfully organised a volunteer trip to Bath at Christmas, been involved in volunteer induction and training sessions for new volunteers and sits in on interview sessions for new volunteers. She has also had the opportunity on two occasions to be on the Selection and Interview Panel for job applicants within the ARC Day Services.

Since volunteering with the scheme, Elen has attended several courses including – Confidence Building, Violence and Aggression and Infection Control.

When asked what had been the benefits to her as an individual since becoming a volunteer she made the following comments:-

“My confidence and self-respect have increased ten-fold”.

“I have met many people and made many new friends. I now have a social life – something I never had in the past”.

“Through the ARC Day Services I was privileged to have an input into their success in the NHS Wales Awards in 2008, and in June 2008 gave a speech at the NHS Wales Volunteering Network Launch at the University Hospital Wales, Cardiff. To-date this is my biggest achievement and the proudest moment in my life.”

Elen states quite simply that “becoming a volunteer saved my life quite literally and I would like to think that in the future there will be further opportunities for me to “grow” as a Volunteer and gain experience in different roles”.

Analysis

Elen’s experience shows us how volunteering can have a hugely “positive effect” on the health and well being of individuals. Her experience of volunteering with the ABM University NHS Trust has given her the opportunity to grow both in confidence and expertise.

Case Study 2

Karen, aged 38, is currently employed full-time and began volunteering with the scheme in 2007. She currently volunteers in A&E at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend, and has been continuously volunteering over the past two years but not on a regular basis, she tends to do volunteering when on holiday from work.

Following an interview for a job with the NHS that was unsuccessful, Karen decided to do some volunteering with the hospital scheme as she wanted to get a foot in the door. She states that this has definitely provided a stepping stone into her career as she is now working as a nursery nurse in the Heath Hospital.

She carries out a range of duties as a volunteer which include working in the paediatric part of A&E, chatting with patients, making cups of tea and relaying messages, she also takes files to different departments. She feels that through her work as a volunteer she can alleviate the pressure on paid staff allowing them more time to deal with patients. She also feels it is important she is able to sit down and have a chat with patients and offer support until a member of their family arrives.

Since volunteering with the scheme Karen has taken part in a range of training including Fire Safety, Violence and Aggression, Infection Control and Confidence Building.

Karen feels that the main benefits to her from being a volunteer with the volunteer scheme has been her progression into paid employment. She also felt that she has increased confidence, learnt new skills and made new friends she reflected that *"I feel like its opened lots of doors for me."*

Analysis

Karen's experience shows how she has benefited from being a volunteer with the scheme both in terms of increased skills and confidence but also that it has enabled her to progress into paid employment. It may be concluded that voluntary work within the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteer Scheme increases the skills needed for employment.

Case Study 3

Geraint, aged 20 is currently employed on a part-time basis and has been volunteering with the scheme since 2008

He started looking for voluntary work in order to gain more experience working in a health care environment as he was hoping to go to university to study nursing. He started volunteering in May 2008 in the Emergency Department at the Princess of Wales Hospital and has been volunteering there regularly since. He also volunteers occasionally on other wards in the hospital to cover absence and to train new volunteers. As he works part time (casual work) it was important to him that the volunteering he undertook was flexible. This is one of the reasons he chose to volunteer with the Trust as he can fit his volunteering around other things. He is also a volunteer at a primary school occasionally but this is not a regular thing.

Geraint volunteers regularly one day a week (Fridays) but will volunteer extra days when he is not working in order to train new volunteers and to cover absence, he also runs hospital tours.

He decided to volunteer in a health care environment in order to gain experience before he started studying nursing but has continued to volunteer there as he has made lots of friends, enjoyed the experience and really enjoys working within the department. He feels that the NHS staff are very appreciative. The support he has received has been fantastic and the staff are always willing to help if there have been any issues regarding the volunteering. The support has continued to be strong throughout the entire time he has been volunteering.

Geraint's role is in the Emergency Department where the role of a volunteer varies greatly to that of ward based volunteers. His role is to help the staff as well as patients and relatives. He helps to maintain a constant flow through the department as it is often the little things that can hold the whole process up. He will spend time sitting and talking to patients who may need someone to talk to until a relative arrives, run messages to other departments, help in the office, photocopy notes, update patient advice cards and re-stock cupboards etc. He will also assist with any other tasks that the Nurse in Charge requests as long as it has been agreed with the volunteer centre and does not step outside the volunteers remit.

Geraint has taken part in a range of training, as well as the Induction Training he has taken part in Child Protection, Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Managing Violence and Aggression, Fire Safety, Infection Control and Team Building Training run by the volunteer centre. He has also been offered the chance to sit in on internal staff training sessions within the department in which he volunteers.

Geraint feels that he has made a lot of new friends due to the volunteering. He has also had a chance to build on his confidence. He also feels that the volunteering was beneficial to him because during his application for a job in another department at the hospital he was given the chance to have a mock interview carried out by staff he worked with. This helped greatly and his interview technique was commented on even though he did not get the job.

Analysis

Geraint tells us that he has many perceived benefits from his role as a volunteer with the Volunteer Scheme; these have included a greater knowledge of the Health Care Sector and the opportunity to work firsthand in the hospital environment. He has increased confidence and skills and undertaken a range of training that will be beneficial to his future development. The volunteering has been a positive experience for him in many ways.

Conclusion

There are a number of key issues which have been identified through the process of the evaluation. The evaluation of the Volunteer Scheme at ABM University NHS Trust highlighted that there are identifiable benefits to the patients, volunteers, organisations and NHS staff.

Both patients and staff record advantages through the involvement of volunteers either during their stay in the hospital or during their work. What was also stressed was the benefit to the volunteers as individuals, particularly in the case studies with recorded advantages both to volunteers' health and career development.

Volunteers have become involved for different reasons, which highlight how the scheme can meet the needs of many individuals within the local community. These include:-

- It has enabled volunteers who need a valuable experience in the Health and Social Care Sector assisting them with their future training or employment.
- It has helped those who have suffered a period of ill health to develop new skills, gain confidence and make new friendships.
- It has provided an opportunity for people that have retired from different occupations including the NHS Trust to keep motivated to use existing skills, maintain social networks and avoid isolation.

The majority of staff recognised the benefits of including volunteers throughout the ABM University NHS Trust through the help and support they provided to the patients. They also identified and applauded the professionalism of the volunteers within the hospital setting.

Whilst the evaluation of the ABM University NHS Trust Volunteering Scheme was positive there were however some concerns. These concerns included that some ABM University NHS Trust Staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the scheme and the roles that volunteers could play. Also, whilst it proved difficult for the Focus Group to highlight any tangible benefits within the local community they could however identify the importance and value of the work experience for the individuals participating in the scheme. It is also clear that the involvement of local volunteers within the scheme brings with it a wealth of local knowledge that helps to inform and often reassure visitors and patients alike.

The Volunteer Scheme has proved to be successful in many ways but particularly through additional resources that volunteers are able to provide. The evaluation proves that the original outcomes as identified in the lottery bid have in the majority been met.

In conclusion the NHS has seen an enhanced and improved service for patients; staff visitors and families. Through the introduction of volunteers, the ABM University NHS Trust is able to identify proven wide ranging benefits due to the introduction of these volunteers into the ABM University NHS Trust.

The evaluation also showed the benefits of involving local volunteers within the ABM University NHS Trust as their wealth of local community knowledge had been a valuable asset to the Trust.

Recommendations

- In order for the Volunteer Scheme to progress effectively within the new ABM University Health Board (from 1st October 2009), then an agreed operational model needs to be developed in order to take into account the size, location and diversity of the region. For the Volunteer Scheme to successfully continue in its current format extra resources would need to be accessed to meet with the increased demands within the region. It could also be considered that the Volunteer Centre become a clearing house for volunteers.
- Depending on future funding, the Health Board should look to develop more diverse volunteer opportunities in order to engage a wider cross section of the local community.
- To ensure that all Health Board staff who involve volunteers are made aware of good practice in volunteering.
- To involve all key staff in the planning of the strategic and operational plan for the future development of the Volunteer Scheme for the next five years.
- To continue to build on the relationships with the Health Board staff to ensure a clear understanding and awareness of the role of the volunteer within the organisation and to ensure the continuation of good working relationships for example If the organisation is looking to expand services around clinic's etc. they should consult with Volunteer Centre to ensure volunteers in place.
- As part of good practice regular meetings to be held amongst Volunteers, Volunteer Centre and Health Board staff to identify any concerns, issues and developments.
- Millennium Volunteer Programme should be implemented to look at acknowledging young people volunteering within the Health Board.
- We would recommend that through the All Wales Volunteer Network that a working group is established to introduce an accreditation scheme for the volunteers training.

- To introduce a newsletter for volunteers to highlight any developments, events, good news stories and new volunteering opportunities within the Health Board.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Analysis of Data