

April 2026

# Volunteering for Health

Hertfordshire & West Essex - Monthly Update



## A Project of Connection and Collaboration

Volunteering for Health in Herts and West Essex has strengthened capacity with a full, dedicated team focused on volunteering in healthcare. At its heart, this work is about strengthening relationships; connecting services, communities and volunteers to better understand and improve. **Thank you for your continued support** in helping us bridge these gaps and drive meaningful change together.



## Lunch & Learn: Recapping The Fundamentals of Our Work

Join us online for a focused **30-minute Lunch and Learn on Thursday 30th April, 12:30-1pm**. Perfect for anyone wanting a refresher on the project's goals, or for new team members seeking an introduction. We're opening doors, sharing insights, and welcoming collaboration. To join us, email [katieedwards@nhcvs.org.uk](mailto:katieedwards@nhcvs.org.uk).

# Building Momentum Across Volunteering for Health



**Katie Edwards**  
Programme Lead

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After what felt like a long winter, March has whizzed by with plenty of activity from the Volunteering for Health team.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March, we held **our second passport workshop, facilitated by Gethyn Williams**, bringing together colleagues from across VCFSE, care and NHS Trusts. This was an opportunity to check in with our wider stakeholders about passporting concepts and through group discussions we unearthed some practical constraints as well as clear examples of how a passport might improve volunteer pathways, as well as reducing administrative burden for organisations.

These discussions coincide with further developments for the NHS around Neighbourhood working, and we also explored in the workshop how we might want to consider the organisation of the passport around the new proposed 'neighbourhoods', with co-located services working to shared agreements around the recruitment, training and onboarding of volunteers. There's more to explore and over the next couple of months Gethyn and the programme team will be **consulting more widely to refine our passport design and function**, including with volunteers themselves.

Another exciting development this month was the **appointment of an external evaluator for our work - Centre for Inclusive Evaluation**. They will be in touch with various stakeholders over the course of the next 16 months so please support this work where you can.

On a personal level, 10<sup>th</sup> March marked 1 year in my role as Programme Lead. It's not been without its challenges, not least the huge changes taking place at the ICB, and with local government reform at the top of many agendas. However, I have also found it to be an incredibly rewarding year. I am **proud of the programme team we have built, and the partnership working we are seeing in action across our region** between NHS and voluntary sector partners. We've still got a lot to do, but I am optimistic about what we can achieve with a collaborative approach. Thank you all for your ongoing support, and as ever, please reach out if you want to catch up on anything.

*Read more about the new NHS [Neighbourhood Health Framework](#)*

## NEXT STEPS:

Regional consultations, including with volunteers, and the first stages of digital developments

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**Diary Date:**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 12:30-1pm**

**Lunch and Learn: Recapping Our Work**

Email [katieedwards@nhcvs.org.uk](mailto:katieedwards@nhcvs.org.uk) to join this online reminder of our goals and outcomes.

# Regional Progress

Programme Coordinators are working closely with NHS and charity managers in their areas, building relationships to pilot new and different ways of working.



**Musarat**  
Mental Health, Learning  
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We are ready to begin placing adults on their pathway to recovery from mental health illness into volunteering placements. Organisations on board include Herts Mind Network, Rennie Grove Hospice, CAD, Watford Football Trust. The team at HPFT working with OTs to begin recruitment this month. Next steering group meeting: Thursday 23rd April.



**Brogan**  
East & North Herts  
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Following a strong start to the pilot last month, I'm now looking ahead to a series of focus groups with students at North Herts College and Hitchin Girls' School. These sessions will explore their perspectives on volunteering, as well as the changes that would make it more appealing and accessible to them.



**Teresa**  
Watford & SW Herts  
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I've been connecting with local community groups at events like Communities Connect and Healthy Hub to better understand volunteers' motivations and barriers, as well as gathering insights on volunteering activity to shape future opportunities, including volunteer pools.



**Nikki**  
West Essex  
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Early stages of the trial are now underway, supported by the development of some strong partnerships across West Essex. It's already clear there is a shared commitment to making a meaningful impact in the local community through the power of volunteering.

