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Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru

Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEERING 2021 – 2026

Visible Valuable Volunteering

Time is the greatest gift of all; a quality volunteer experience is *time well spent*

Time Well Spent - A National Survey on the Volunteer Experience NCVO 100 – January 2019

Foreword



In 2019 our People and Culture Strategy committed us to build on volunteering capacity, strengthening governance and oversight, and improving the quality of the volunteering experience. I am pleased to share out inaugural Strategy for Volunteering which outlines our ambition for the next five years. Supporting the implementation of this strategy is a detailed action plan which outlines the ‘What and How’ of our aspiration.

We recognise the important and valuable contribution our volunteers make in enhancing the service provided by our paid workforce and improving the experience of our patients and service users across Wales. Our volunteers do not replace roles or process within the Trust, but complement and work alongside the paid workforce, enhancing, adding value, and improving outcomes and experiences. We are

also committed to taking our corporate social responsibility seriously and bringing these opportunities to life.

Providing opportunities for volunteers that will embrace cultural diversity is an aim of this strategy. We want our volunteers to be representative of the communities in which they live. Building resilient communities is a priority for us and this strategy will help build healthier communities with improved resilience. We believe our volunteers are at the heart of this.

Our strategy also aims to unite and bring under one umbrella the existing work undertaken by Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) volunteers and recognising the contribution of our uniformed co-responding partners with their own unique and valued identity. We also hope to further strengthen and support collaborative opportunities within the voluntary sector.

This document has been developed with the intention of supporting our three-year People and Culture Strategy which aims to enable our people to be their best. This strategy will also make an important contribution to the implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Welsh Government’s ‘A Healthier Wales’ vision and identify ways our volunteers can support a number of actions highlighted in the Amber Review 2018 and our internal Being Our Best: Our People and Culture Strategy 2019-2022.

We fully acknowledge and appreciate the significant contribution that volunteers can have on the lives of others. It can be as powerful as the impact any of our employees can have with a unique opportunity to leave a positive long term impact. We also recognise that working with volunteers is quite different to working with employees, so we are committed to recognising these differences by providing extra support and opportunities for volunteers who chose to gift their time to WAST.

Lee Brooks QAM
Director of Operations

Our values and principles

During 2015, we spent time together reflecting on where we have come from and where we need to go to. Many colleagues helped shape our story so that we can explain our journey.

We considered what we are here for *[our purpose]*, where we want to go to *[our vision]* and how we need to behave to get there *[our behaviours]*.



We are now confident that we all understand where we are heading, what we must do, and how we can do it to achieve our aim. We are part of a bigger picture, as demonstrated by how the Welsh Public Services Values and NHS Wales Principles link with our own behaviours.

Being Our Best is our way of understanding, reminding ourselves about, and practicing our purpose, vision, and behaviours.

Our purpose

To be a caring and responsive ambulance service for the people of Wales.

Our mission

A leading ambulance service providing the best possible care and services through our skilled professional and healthy workforce.

Our vision for volunteering

Our vision for volunteering is:

- Our volunteers will add value to user experience and the care we provide;
- Our volunteers will have a personally rewarding experience and know that their contribution has made a difference;
- Our approach to volunteering will strengthen the contribution we make to community resilience.

What our current volunteers do

About volunteers:

- ✓ The Trust has approximately 800 volunteers across Wales
- ✓ Volunteers have been part of the Trust for many years
- ✓ Volunteer Car Drivers were introduced in 1974
- ✓ Community First Responders began to operate in 1998
- ✓ The Learning Disability Community Champions programme was developed in 2016, and is led and supported through the Patient Engagement and Community Involvement (PECI) team
- ✓ In the financial year 2019-20, our Community First Responders attended a total of 24,486 incidents of which 2,760 were immediately life-threatening emergencies
- ✓ Our Volunteer Car Drivers undertook 122,828 journeys to transport patients to their appointments
- ✓ Working alongside the PEGI team in sharing lifesaving skills, our volunteers regularly attend major public engagement events such as the annual Royal Welsh Show and National Eisteddfod
- ✓ In 2019, 44 of our Community First Responders supported the nationwide Restart a Heart campaign, demonstrating to young people in schools across Wales how to carry out effective CPR

Our commitment to volunteering

WAST is committed to:

- ✓ Providing a meaningful experience for all our volunteers
- ✓ Recognising and valuing the contribution of all our volunteers
- ✓ Listening to the views and ideas of volunteers and integrating the volunteer perspective
- ✓ Always treating our volunteers with respect and ensuring that they are treated fairly in accordance with WAST behaviours
- ✓ Communicating effectively with our volunteers and involving them in the development of our services
- ✓ Offering flexibility in the way we receive our volunteers' gift of time
- ✓ Providing regular support in an individual and group setting
- ✓ Creating the capacity to deliver on our commitments to volunteering
- ✓ Providing best possible training and equipment to enable volunteers to undertake their volunteering safely and in accordance with WAST policies
- ✓ Explaining the standards we expect of volunteers, encouraging and supporting them to achieve and maintain these standards
- ✓ Supporting our volunteers when things don't go to plan

We will provide all volunteers with the following:

- ✓ Flexible hours – volunteer when it suits you
- ✓ Paid expenses
- ✓ Full support and training
- ✓ Uniform
- ✓ Access to supervision and management support
- ✓ Wellbeing support
- ✓ The opportunity to make a difference to patients in communities across Wales
- ✓ A career pathway into the Welsh Ambulance Service



Our plans for volunteering 2021 – 2026

Our key strategic priorities

1. Build awareness and embed a culture of volunteering
2. Enhance training, support, communication and involvement of volunteers
3. Increase volunteer contribution and diversity

To support delivery of our strategy, an initial three-year action plan has been developed. At the mid-point of this strategy, it is our intention to undertake a progress review and respond with the action plan for the final two year period.

Nik Dart, Community First Responder



“Hi, I’m Nik, a volunteer Community First Responder in the Maesteg area. I am married with two children of primary school age. I work in I.T. and I also volunteer as a Chair of Governors for a primary school.

I have always been interested in First Aid and held the First Aid at Work qualification in previous employment in the custodial and education sectors. In 2018, I attended a local open evening for persons interested in finding out more about the CFR role. Now, two years later, I respond regularly, either solo or with another responder from the locality. The training and support we receive from the Welsh Ambulance Service is second to none. We have a fantastic management and training department and receive regular refreshers and sessions to maintain and upskill our team members. We have good relationships with our local crews and stations and are seen as part of the team.

I love responding as a CFR. We get to meet so many members of our local community and help in times of need, whether providing immediate treatment in a serious medical emergency or providing reassurance and monitoring before our frontline colleagues are available to attend. We work with community partners to install and maintain public access defibrillators locally and provide free CPR and AED awareness sessions in the area. It really is a volunteer role where you can make a difference.”

Build awareness and embed a culture of volunteering

To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key objectives: what we aim to achieve
Encourage a culture of open, effective and honest dialogue between employees and volunteers that embraces the voice of our volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for employees and volunteers to openly discuss volunteering across WAST • Create a governance structure within WAST that recognises the role of a Volunteer Steering Committee and Chief Volunteer
Ensure that volunteering is embedded within our organisational strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight volunteering within the Being Our Best: Our People and Culture Strategy 2019-2022 and our Local Development Plans
Celebrate the success and recognise the contributions of all our volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure stories and successes, including internal and external awards and conferences, are shared. • Raise the profile of volunteers within WAST at national volunteering events
Seek to increase partnership opportunities with the voluntary sector and include blue light partners across Wales to maximise their valuable contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our partnership model and models of care, and explore opportunities for innovation and collaboration
Encourage, support and equip our workforce to pursue volunteering opportunities outside of the Trust that benefit individuals, communities and returns value to the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and support more opportunities for our workforce both at home and abroad to volunteer
Prepare and equip our employees to work with volunteers to best effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the right infrastructure to support volunteers and volunteering across WAST • Prepare our employees to work alongside and with volunteers
Increase opportunities to volunteer across WAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate services to assess capacity to involve volunteers in current roles and open opportunities for new volunteers
Ensure that we work towards the highest standards in volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve externally recognised accreditation
Learn from concerns raised promptly and supportively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Volunteer Policy that outlines procedures to address concerns or reported issues that involve volunteers

Enhance training, support, communication and involvement of volunteers

To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key objectives: what we aim to achieve
Ensure that volunteers are sufficiently equipped to carry out their role and explore opportunities for skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and deliver an induction that is accessible to all new volunteers • Regularly review service-specific volunteer training and ensure appropriate levels of training and supervision are provided • Provide the necessary and fit-for-purpose equipment that enables volunteers to perform their role • Develop and implement an approach to training using technology
Ensure that volunteers are aware of what is happening across the organisation and are encouraged to contribute their ideas and views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to internal communications • Provide opportunities for volunteers to contribute and participate through available communication channels
Promote good health and wellbeing of our volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Occupational Health services to our volunteers, including vaccinations and wellbeing initiatives
Ensure suitable governance frameworks are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise our current governance frameworks and policies to recognise the voice of the volunteer

Anthony Roberts, Volunteer Car Driver

“I’ve been a volunteer for a couple of years now and still feel, from the first day on the road to now, an honour to be part of this amazing volunteer team. To be a part of helping patients, especially during these unprecedented times, to get to their hospital appointments is very rewarding. I get to meet a lot of different patients who could be the only person they have seen for weeks during the pandemic. A lot of patients say they don’t know what they would do without us. I feel very honoured to be able to help people in our community, to get them to and from their vital appointments.”



Increase volunteer contribution and diversity

To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key objectives: what we aim to achieve
Build stronger links and work collaboratively with other community and voluntary organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase WAST volunteering at external conferences and events • Promote and publicise the activities and skills our volunteers undertake and use to support additional opportunities
Create more publicity about WAST volunteering through marketing and communication plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relevant volunteering information through multiple media platforms • Highlight volunteering stories and successes • Generate volunteering stories for local and national media
Provide volunteer opportunities which attract individuals who are representative of local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise and promote volunteering opportunities within communities across Wales • Work with diverse groups to promote WAST volunteering • Record and retain accurate demographic information about our volunteers
Work with the Patient Engagement and Community Involvement team for opportunities to diversify best use of volunteer time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our volunteers are included in the delivery of key WAST campaigns • Supporting and educating communities with lifesaving skills and health messages
Increase numbers and improve access to public access defibrillators (PAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with volunteers, the public, charities and funding bodies to promote and support an increase in the number of PAD sites across Wales and ensuring these are detailed on our systems
Increase sign-up for GoodSAM alerts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage uptake of the WAST workforce, volunteers and other partners
Create a development pathway through our volunteering schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a progressive pathway that will enable volunteers (who wish to) to take on more responsibility as a volunteer or to progress into permanent roles across WAST

Grahame Giles, Volunteer Car Driver

“Having retired from the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust in 2018, I needed something to do a couple of days a week. What a great choice I made, the Welsh Ambulance Voluntary Car Service. I really enjoy meeting so many interesting people, who appreciate what you are doing for them. “



We will know we are making progress when:

- ✓ Our volunteers feel valued and part of the WAST family
- ✓ We have achieved accreditation for our volunteering approach
- ✓ The voice of the volunteer is valued by our Trust Board
- ✓ We have an infrastructure that is resourced to support and develop volunteering opportunities, and this strategy is being delivered across the Trust
- ✓ We have increased the number of volunteers
- ✓ We record improvements in volunteer activity through accurate data and have evidence of their contribution
- ✓ We are all engaging with our volunteers across WAST in our day-to-day work
- ✓ Our volunteers are representative of the communities they serve

Ben James, Community First Responder



“Hi, I’m Ben and I’m a CFR in the Tenby/Saundersfoot area. In my normal daily life, I’m the I.T. Network Manager at Greenhill Secondary School in Tenby. I also have a busy family life, being married with two primary age children.

My interest in First Aid began back in 1997 when I joined Tenby RNLI Lifeboat crew. I soon did the Casualty Care training, and this comprehensive First Aid course sparked my passion for helping those in need.

In 2016, the Welsh Ambulance Service advertised for CFRs in my area and I jumped at the chance. I completed the training over a combination of evenings and weekends and haven’t looked back since. I now respond both solo and with another responder, depending on availability. The ongoing training is great, with several CPD sessions a year and the support is first class – there’s always someone at the end of the phone if you need it after a difficult job. As a team, we are heavily involved in the community and have placed more than 40 AEDs [automated external defibrillators] over the years and continue to do so.

What I love most about being a CFR, is being able to make a difference in people’s lives when they need it most, whether that be from a life-threatening condition, or simply lifting someone back up off the floor after a fall. It’s definitely a role I can highly recommend.”



Aberafan Shopping Community First Responder Team