



[Volunteering for Health](#) is a national programme being delivered in partnership between NHS Charities Together, NHS England, and CW+ (the official charity of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) to test and build volunteering infrastructure in health and care. The programme is funding 15 local partnerships to deliver volunteering infrastructure projects in their geographies over three years. Local partnerships include organisations across: Integrated Care Boards (ICBs); NHS trusts; NHS charities; and the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, including local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) which support local VCSE organisations to foster partnerships, build capacity and develop volunteering opportunities.

This snapshot shares learning from local partnerships on embedding volunteering within neighbourhood health. It provides a summary of a more detailed [learning into action guide](#) on this topic. This is one of five snapshots sharing learning from the [Volunteering for Health programme](#).

What is the role of volunteering in neighbourhood health?

Neighbourhood health is a key ambition set out in the Department of Health and Social Care's [10 Year Health Plan](#).

It involves health, social care, VCSE, and other local partners in ICBs working in collaboration to form Neighbourhood Health Teams, giving people easier access to the right care at the right time in their communities.

Volunteers are already active in supporting people's health and they are expected to play an important role in supporting neighbourhood services. They can help people access care and prevent deterioration and hospital readmission through community-based wellbeing support.



What are local partnerships doing to support neighbourhood health?



Supporting hospital discharge and recovery in the community

Black Country partnership is integrating volunteers into hospital pathways with a social prescribing model that supports patients through hospital discharge and recovery at home.



Supporting the shift from treatment to prevention

Lancashire and South Cumbria partnership has introduced bowel cancer champion volunteers into community settings to raise awareness, and increase take-up, of cancer screening.



Connecting people to the support they need closer to home

Herts and West Essex partnership is delivering a community volunteering initiative to improve social connection for those who face barriers to accessing care and support, linking them into prevention and wellbeing services in the community.

Actions for health and care system leaders to sustain good practices identified in the Volunteering for Health programme



Action 1: ICBs should ensure a volunteering strategy is included within their workforce portfolio

Neighbourhood health is a live and fast-moving national programme. ICBs need to **understand the potential for volunteering** to support neighbourhood health services and **link volunteering with other workforce programmes**.



Action 2: ICBs and local authorities should partner with LIOs to connect with the VCSE sector

The principle of neighbourhood health (providing multi-agency health and care closer to home) is well-developed in many systems, supported by volunteers and the VCSE sector. ICBs, NHS organisations and local authorities should partner with LIOs to connect with the local VCSE sector. **Together, partners should explore collaborative opportunities to develop neighbourhood health** through health and care volunteering roles.



Action 3: System neighbourhood planning and evaluation should include local volunteering strategies

ICBs should **consider how volunteering aligns with neighbourhood health services** and include monitoring the impact of volunteering in local evaluations of neighbourhood health.

"Volunteers can play an important role in supporting neighbourhood services."

10 Year Health Plan



For more information about Volunteering for Health, visit <https://www.cwplus.org.uk/volunteering-for-health/>, contact volunteering@anhsc.org.uk, or connect with the [Volunteering for Health Programme group](#)