

newsletter



A message from our CEO Siobhan Melia

The work of volunteers is vital to NHS organisations and I am writing to thank you for your continued commitment and dedication to Sussex Community

the NHS, but for all of us. Professionally and personally, we've all been touched by coronavirus. COVID-19 has meant that both the Voluntary Services Team and our volunteers needed to adapt quickly, and work in very different ways.

Your response during those early weeks and months was really outstanding. You rallied and supported us in so many different ways and our staff and patients were extremely grateful.

We were amazed at how many people came forward to help during the peak of the pandemic. It was also heart-warming to receive messages of support from those of you unable to volunteer, and reassuring to be able to stay in touch with those who want to come back when it is safe to do so. As an organisation, we want to take the opportunity to thank you all for your patience and support over the past 6 months. It has been a challenging time, but what our volunteers have NHS Foundation Trust.

This has certainly been a year like no other, not just for achieved has been incredible and we look forward to working with you all, in whatever ways we can, to support our staff and patients during the coming weeks and months. I am aware that some of you have had to stand down from your volunteer placement and I know for some of you this will be a great loss. You will continue to be in our thoughts and we will always be grateful to you for the difference you made to our organisation. Thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, in support of SCFT.

Our Covid-19 Response

At the start of the pandemic, we had to respond quickly to the needs of staff and services, while keeping volunteers safe.

During that initial period, 90% of our volunteer workforce were safely stood down however, by the end of April 2020, 54 existing volunteers had been re-deployed into new or adapted roles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of July, 112 volunteers were placed in 31 new roles.

Some of the most successful COVID-response roles have been the PPE and equipment drivers. These volunteers delivered vital PPE, thermometers, medication and IT equipment between SCFT sites at the height of the pandemic – and continue to do so – saving staff time and ensuring teams have the equipment they need to care for patients safely.

Volunteers have also been making befriending calls to patients from their own homes; collating lists of support available in local communities; carrying out remote ward administration; telephone chaplaincy; remote breastfeeding support - to name but a few. We even had volunteers recording videos of themselves telling stories to entertain the children of keyworkers in our nurseries. It has been incredibly rewarding to see so many new roles develop and this experience will influence our service in so many ways for the future.

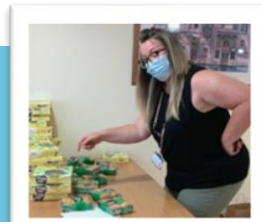
Survey

For us as a team the last 6 months have opened up different ways of working. It's been difficult for us to see so many of volunteers having to stand down due to the pandemic, as we know you add so much value to our organisation.

We want to learn from this experience and continue to develop our service. For us to do this, we have put together a short survey for you to tell us about your experiences as a volunteer during this time.

We are also looking at ideas for our volunteers who are unable to return to their roles, if you are interested in other opportunities such as peer support and fundraising for the trust.

We really do value your feedback and ask for your honesty. **THANK YOU.** [Start Survey](#)



Immunisation Service Drivers

As pupils return to school and everybody is doing all they can to reduce the threat of flu this winter, a team of volunteers across the Trust have been playing their part. The SCFT immunisation service delivers 681 influenza school sessions to children from reception, year 6 and year 7 over a 11 week period for the whole of Sussex. The 'Imms' Drivers assist the service by delivering and collecting paperwork to and from schools.



Many of the drivers also volunteer with SERV (Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers) in addition to their 'Imms' work.

They began their role under the SCFT banner in July and will have been active throughout the Autumn.

The deliveries and collections for each area are co-ordinated by 3 volunteers; Mark Gawley for West, Colin Bush for Central, Andrew Welch for East.

A huge thank you to these 3 volunteers for all the additional work they do to ensure that the collections and deliveries are made as efficiently as possible and to each of the 'Imms' Drivers who have stepped up to help out.

Michele Silvester, Primary Vaccination Project Coordinator commented; 'I would like to say a BIG thank you for supporting the service with the deliveries and collections, it would be a huge task without your help. Drivers saved 47 hours of staff time in their first week supporting the National Influenza Vaccination Programme across Sussex'.



Reset – what our service will look like in the forthcoming months

And now? We are working on volunteers returning to pre-COVID roles where possible and safe to do so.

Centres in the coming weeks however; things will not look the same to our volunteers returning to these roles. We have to follow strict guidelines around PPE, socially distancing and hand hygiene in order to keep volunteers, patients and staff safe.

If you have any questions or concerns about returning to volunteer or the current situation, please do contact your local Voluntary Services office.



Living Well

SCFT delivers a Living Well Programme, which is a free 6 week self-management course developed for adults living with any long-term physical or mental health conditions.

The aim of the course is to help you to take more control of your health, by learning new skills and techniques to better manage your physical and mental symptoms on a daily basis. The course also provides a great opportunity to meet other people who share similar experiences.

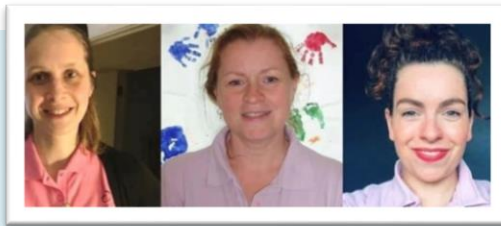
For more information to attend these courses or indeed to be trained to deliver the Living Well Programme please contact the Living Well Team:

Tel: 01273 267545 or 01403 620448

Email: sc-tr.livingwell@nhs.net



MUM
"I can't tell you how
amazing your service is"



Peer Supporter
I have truly loved being part
of peer support online
closed group. I was so
worried about new mums in
this time, once I learned face
to face groups were
suspended and when this
idea was suggested I was
100% on board

Brighton and Hove Breastfeeding Team

Brighton and Hove Breastfeeding Peer Support Service goes on-line.

When Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers had to stop their face-face work with breastfeeding mums and babies due to Covid 19 restrictions, they were keen to explore offering breastfeeding support in different ways. The Breastfeeding Peer Support Coordinators (Zoe Faulkner and Dawn Kielty) responded quickly and worked with the Peer Supporters to establish a closed FaceBook Group for mums to join.

The group took off straight away – mums were really pleased that there was a safe, on-line Breastfeeding Peer Support Service for them to access. The group launched on 1st May 2020 and we now have 134 group members which includes 17 Peer Supporters. Six of these Peer Supporters 'administrate' the page, supported by the Breastfeeding Team in the background.

We are really proud of the Breastfeeding Peer Support volunteers; they have really risen to this challenge. The group has become a great community where mums support each other and really value the nurturing and supportive contact with Peer Supporters. Brighton and Hove is unique in the South East in continuing the Peer Support service in this virtual way.



With the ongoing difficult situation we're all experiencing and the uncertainty with Covid 19, it's even more important for us to take time to look after our own wellbeing and to practice self-care. When thinking of wellbeing we often think of our physical health, what's going on in our body. We now know that our mental and physical health is so very connected and both can have a huge impact on how we cope and bounce back during difficult and potentially stressful times.

You will most likely have your own way of managing stress, anxiety and low mood. These might already include; connecting with people and surroundings, being active, giving to others, taking notice and learning. As a volunteer with SCFT you'll most likely already be doing a good amount of these whilst volunteering with us! The [5 Ways to Wellbeing](#) are all good ways to support your wellbeing. Keep doing the things that work for you and perhaps try something new too!

At Sussex Community NHS Trust we place the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers as a priority and have various resources and tools to help you to stay well. Nationally, the NHS People Plan 20/21 sets out its commitment and intention to getting it right for staff and volunteers so that they are well-supported in their role.

No-one size fits all and it's about finding things that is going to best support and work for you. We would love to hear how you keep well – get in contact with us to let us know

Here are some useful resources tools and places of support:

Support through our staff networks – LGBTQ, Religion, BAME and Disability – please look in your volunteer handbook for contact details or contact your Volunteer Manager

- Access to our Employee Assistance programme offering advice on a range of issues (**0800 783 2808**).
- The Sussex Mental Healthline is a 24/7 telephone line providing confidential psychological advice and support. You can access the line by calling 0300 5000 101.
- [Action for Happiness](#) - themed calendars with daily actions - Octobers theme is optimism
- Every Mind Matters - There is a quiz giving you top tips to support your wellbeing and is aimed at adults aged 18 and over - [Every Mind Matters](#) - If you are under 18 [Every Mind Matters U18](#)
- We have also been celebrating Black History Month here at SCFT. If you have any stories, photos on how you have celebrated, please do get in touch. For more info [Black History Month](#)