

AUTUMN UPDATE 2021

A brief update on what is happening in relation to volunteering for health and social care in Wales.

FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services launched the Framework at gofod3. In a [recorded video message](#) she expressed her thanks to volunteers who stepped up during the pandemic, noting that many poignant programmes developed which are living examples of the principles espoused in the Welsh Government programme for health and social care: [A Healthier Wales](#).

She spoke of the need to build on our learned experience and to reposition the status of volunteering, integrating it into the fabric of our health and social care services and recognising volunteers as a valuable component of our health and social care workforce.

Don't worry if you missed it at gofod3 – [see Fiona's blog](#) based on the launch event.

The Framework and full project report are available [here](#). Please promote it and encourage its use. We will be keen to hear whether and how it has been helpful and to support any follow up initiatives as appropriate.

MEASURING IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING ON HEALTH OUTCOMES

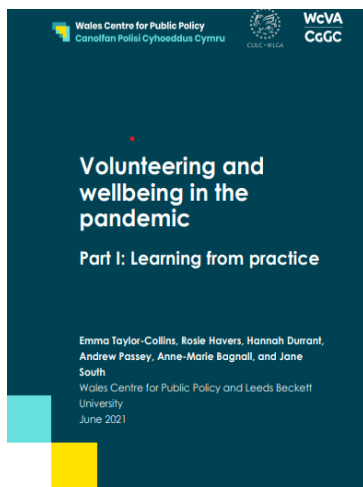
Helpforce has launched new [impact and insight service](#) which will help you to plan and carry out evaluation of the impact of volunteering projects on health outcomes.

It is free to use but you need to register on the website to access the service. As well as an interactive step by step tool, expert advice is available to give bespoke advice and support.

VOLUNTEERING AND WELLBEING IN THE PANDEMIC

WCVA and [Wales Centre for Public Policy](#) undertook research, supported by the Welsh Government coronavirus recovery grant for volunteering, which resulted in [two publications](#):

Learning from practice analyses 50 practice based case studies of volunteering which were collected by WCVA during the pandemic. Key themes were identified relating to the purpose and approach of volunteering, its outcomes and how it enabled individual and community wellbeing.



Most volunteering was aimed at meeting people's basic needs and there were many examples of how volunteering infrastructures enabled this. But the social connection resulting from the interaction between volunteers and beneficiaries emerged as the main individual wellbeing outcome.

A rapid evidence review explored the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing during the pandemic by reviewing UK and international evidence. Changes were noted in relation to who volunteered during the pandemic, with many new (often younger) volunteers, whilst others had to stop due to cessation of services or personal risk related reasons. The mode of volunteering also changed, with more digital / remote role and more intensive face to face support provided.

Connecting with others, doing something purposeful and feeling appreciated are the hallmarks of the pandemic volunteer experience. It provided a crucial distraction at a challenging time. However, some roles exposed volunteers to challenging, stressful and potentially traumatic experiences.

SPECTRUM OF VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION



Helpforce Cymru worked with [Eden Project Communities](#) to develop a paper '[The spectrum of volunteer participation](#)', which aims to increase recognition of the contribution made by informal and formal volunteers individuals' wellbeing in the community. It also produced accompanying [discussion starter suggestions](#).



VOLUNTEERING IN CARE HOMES

Another [gofod3 event](#) was a session on volunteering in care homes, lead by Age Cymru. Seven care homes (in Anglesey, Aberdare, Newport, Montgomery, Neath, Cardiff and Swansea) have agreed to be part of this pilot project, exploring how volunteering can be developed safely and effectively in the first instance, with the aim of facilitating contact between residents and their families and loved ones.



Volunteers are now active in some of these homes but more are needed. **Please promote [this opportunity](#).**

Similar pilot work is being carried out by [FLVC](#) with Flintshire County Council.

We are gathering an informal network of people interested in contributing to or making use of the learning from these projects. Contact Fiona if you are interested.

PILOT PROJECTS

The **volunteering and end of life care** pilot projects (in Aneurin Bevan, Hywel Dda and Powys Health Boards) formally end in July and an evaluation report for the UK wide programme is expected to be available in October. We will be working to ensure that local projects continue to adapt and develop beyond the end of the funded period and will be encouraging and supporting new, similar initiatives elsewhere in Wales.

Meanwhile we are working with Helpforce UK and Bevan Commission on a new proposal to explore **Volunteer to career** journeys. This will support clinical leads to develop innovative opportunities for volunteering within their professional discipline, at the same time exploring pathways by which volunteers might progress to formal training and a career within the profession.

Further details will be available shortly. Support with development and evaluation would be offered as well as access to a variety of opportunities for skills development and peer learning, although no significant funding support for local projects is available.

Helpforce is working with Third Sector Support Wales (WCVA and 19 CVCs), Welsh Government and other partners to develop the potential of volunteering to support health and social care services in Wales.

Visit our newly refreshed [Helpforce Cymru web page](#)

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