

Asthma + Lung UK



Ambassador Programme + Support Group Network

Aim: Engage volunteers to support people with lung conditions through raising awareness, peer support and addressing health inequalities.

Approach:

- Ambassadors: Recruited and supported to deliver talks, visits, social media campaigns, build partnerships with local groups and healthcare providers.
- Support Groups: Volunteer/NHS staff -led safe spaces for sharing lived experience and information.
- Neighbourhood approach: Collaborations with local organisations, schools, healthcare professionals to embed lung health support locally.
- Engagement model: Online/ in-person activities, flexible volunteering, varied roles (lead, back-up, finance volunteer; community/ schools ambassador)

Outcomes

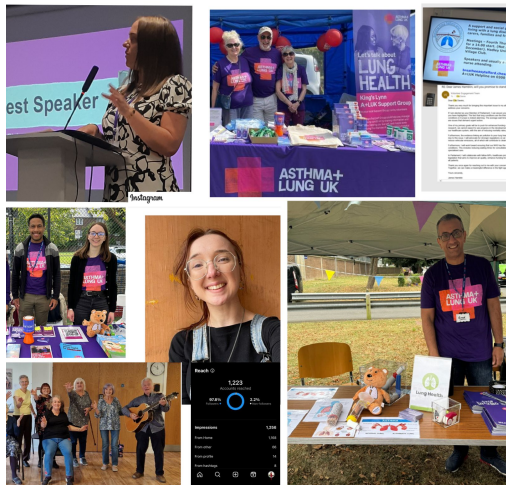
- **24 Ambassadors:** 313+ hrs, 155 activities, reaching 450+ in person and 5,900+ online; 2,023 health resources shared.
- **73 support groups, 111 volunteers:** independent research shows 42% fewer unplanned GP visits, 57% fewer hospital admissions after 6 months.
- **Wellbeing impacts:** COPD (93%), bronchiectasis (95%) participants reported better understanding of their condition and Feelgood Fridays (92%) participants reported improved breathing.

What Went Well

- Strong community links to address health inequalities; peer support reducing stigma; widened access through online activities/webinars.
- Volunteer stories highlight positive impact, increase trust and engagement

Learnings

- Local collaboration ensures sustainability and integration into local systems.
- Digital offer helps extends reach; community-led partnerships reflect real needs and priorities.



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Case study: Involving people with complex barriers to employment in heritage volunteering



BACKGROUND

- Make Your Mark supports everyone in Scotland to volunteer with heritage organisations.
- We partnered with Access to Industry to support their students to volunteer with the Scottish Stonemasons' Marks Project.
- Participants had complex barriers to employment, such as experience of the criminal justice system or being unhoused or being in recovery from substance use.
- We enabled participants to volunteer by co-designing volunteer days, paying travel expenses, providing snacks and food, giving references and building deeper, trusting relationships over time.



IMPACT

- 10 people volunteered multiple times over the course of a year.
- Hundreds of masons' marks were recorded. These will be entered into the national, digital record.
- 95% of participants said the sessions helped them develop skills.
- 84% of participants said the sessions improved their wellbeing.
- One participant has shared that “coming to the sessions and having everyone be so nice was the only thing that kept me from relapsing”.

Investors in People impact and reach

- Over the past two years, the Sanctuary Care Volunteering Programme has welcomed an impressive **3,335 starters**
 - 1,458 work experience** participants
 - 1,877 volunteers**
- This growth reflects our commitment to **creating meaningful opportunities** for individuals to contribute to the care sector
- Collaborations with universities and organisations have helped us reach a **broader demographic** and support the **next generation** of healthcare professionals, through clinical placements and youth development



- Involvement in the **Widening Access Demonstrator (WAD) programme** further underscores our dedication to inclusion, providing pathways into care roles for individuals from underrepresented and disadvantaged communities
- One standout story is Zimo, a 15-year-old volunteer at Iffley, who received the **Good Morning Britain 1 Million Minutes Young Volunteer Award** (read more - Facebook, read more – [SC website](#)). His musical talents and joyful presence have left a lasting impact.

Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Trust

Volunteer to Career (VtC) Programme



Aim

To support volunteers into NHS jobs through practical experience, mentoring and tailored career guidance.

Approach

- 30+ hours volunteering to access support
- An offer of career coaching and mentoring: CV, PS, interview prep, job matching
- Access to training and mentoring
- Targeted recruitment from local communities and unemployed individuals

Outcomes

- 96 volunteers have accessed the VtC programme
- 64 secured NHS jobs, including Trainee Peer Support Worker, Healthcare Support Workers, Admin, and Assistant Psychologist

What went well

- Volunteers report increased confidence and professional clarity
- Services benefit from enhanced patient experience and increased staff morale and support
- Success stories, including 'Day in the Life' and 'Where Are They Now?' series, showcasing volunteer journeys to boost engagement and services buy-in.

Learnings

- Co-producing roles with clinical teams and service users leads to better integration and outcomes
- Flexibility and emotional support matter to volunteers
- Inclusion drives lasting change.

Ania Adams - Volunteer to Career Lead

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Centralised volunteer onboarding



What were we trying to solve?

- Applications being passed onto up to 210 volunteer managers.
- A slow process for all, and some applicants facing long delays (measured in weeks not days).
- We had training and standardised interview forms, but no real oversight of consistency and quality.

What was our solution?

A new 23 strong 'Volunteering Onboarding & Care' team responsible for our application and interview process:

- **Administration** - references, disclosure checks.
- **Pre-screening** - checks expectations, motivations.
- **Interview** - part of same call if pre-screen is satisfactory. Role specific and competency based.

What are the practicalities?

- Online booking - applicants can select a time that suits them.
- Video call/telephone interviews (face-to-face interviews for roles requiring disclosure checks).

What was the result?

3806 interviews between January and July 2025:

- **Puppy Raiser** - Qtr 1 2025 application to interview time reduced to **34 days**. Qtr 2 reduced to just **19 days**.
- **Fundraiser** - Qtr 1 2025, application to interview time reduced to **23 days**. Qtr 2 further to just **10 days**.
- Applicants report average of **96%** 'Good' or 'Excellent' service. Key indicators applicants are asked to rate the service against: helpfulness, level of information provided, friendliness, and professionalism.

Further info:

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UK and Republic of Ireland

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