

# Volunteering Today

“Volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless; but because they are Priceless”

October 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the Volunteer Services Newsletter.

## Return of Volunteers



Back in May 2021, the SE Trust Executive Management Team agreed to the rebuild of Volunteering in the Trust. Since then, Key Workers have been completing risk assessments to determine what PPE and precautions must be taken to reduce the risks of reintroducing Volunteers.

We are proud to report that 40% of our Volunteer placements have now restarted and we are keen to have more volunteers back with us as soon as possible. That said, the decision to come back is up to the individual volunteer. We fully respect the decision of any volunteer who chooses not to return to volunteering right now. It is up to you! Do what feels right.

Thank you for your continued patience and enthusiasm to return to your roles. The SE Trust, its staff and patients have all missed you and are very much looking forward to your return.

## Save the Date

Volunteer Services would love to host another Virtual Tea Party with you all on Thursday 28 October at 11am. All you need is a device to join the Zoom Session, some tea/coffee and something good to eat. We would love to see as many of you as possible.

For anyone who wishes to join us but would require some Zoom Tips please let us know and we can help you.



## Activity Volunteer within Children's Disability Services



Natasha has worked within Volunteer Services as an Activity Volunteer for over 7 years. Her role was within Children's Disability and with the experience gained through Volunteering and her studies at university she is now happily employed as a Behaviour Specialist Support Worker within Children's Disability.

Natasha shares that '**she loved every minute of it**' when talking about her role as a Volunteer. Natasha explains that she learned so much in her volunteering role and can take this knowledge and experience into her new job.

Natasha feels that being consistent and following a routine was always one of the most important things for the children that she volunteered to assist. Her role was to get to know the children and their needs; therefore she was then more able to assist them in achieving their goals. As a volunteer she had time to build up their trust and relationships. Sometimes she could be with the same children for 5-6 years. Natasha is passionate about helping the children.

One story she enthusiastically shared was about a time within a group of looked after children and they were telling stories about their lives. A young boy who was non-verbal was assisted by Natasha to tell his story using drawings therefore the young boy was able to be very much included and involved in this group activity. With the additional assistance provided by a volunteer, there is more support around the young people to help them engage. Natasha feels that by being a volunteer she was able to give her time 1-1 to assist this young boy and both therefore benefitted from this. Natasha says 'I got so much back from it, even the small changes'.

As mentioned earlier Natasha has gone on to now work within Children's Disability and is encouraged to be working with some of the children she has already got to know previously through her volunteer role.

Volunteer Services would like to wish Natasha all the best in this new role and thank her for her volunteering.

### A quote from Natasha's Keyworker Mal

Natasha has been a volunteer within children's disability service for a number of years. Her enthusiasm and commitment to supporting young people with learning disabilities has been evident throughout.

Natasha has a very engaging personality and she was able to build rapport and relationships with the young people very quickly. Natasha is also very caring and thoughtful and she brought a strong value base to her volunteer role alongside a good awareness and understanding of the needs of young people with a disability. She also brought energy and fun to the groups she was involved in. Natasha was extremely dependable and professional at all times and was a very valued volunteer within our service.

*Volunteer Services office is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm*

*If you are interested in volunteering please contact Volunteer Services on (028) 9056 4817 or email [volunteer@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:volunteer@setrust.hscni.net)*

## Since COVID – what have our Volunteers been up to?



### **Cardiac Investigations Delivery Service**

93 Cardiac Monitors have been delivered to patient's right across the SE Trust from Newcastle to Portaferry.



### **Voluntary Laundry Service**

Since May 2020 this service has continued to deliver clean bed linen to 40 palliative patients every Thursday in their own home



### **Breastfeeding Peer Support Service**

629 Breastfeeding mums have had support from the peer support Volunteers at any time through calls or texts at a time when services were scaled back



### **Virtual Telephone Befriending Service**

56 calls to a socially isolated patient whilst in Hospital and 48 calls weekly going out to an older person in their own home



### **Ex-Patients Guild**

Since July, our Volunteers have been welcomed back by the staff of the Lagan Valley Hospital who use the shop for essential purchases



## Meeter & Greeters

Since July, our Meeters & Greeters have been back at the front foyer of the Ulster Hospital providing a welcome to all patients and clients, as well as offering directions



## Play Volunteer Surestart

Since August, our Play Volunteers have been able to return to Downpatrick Surestart and help with the 2 year old programme. The Volunteers interact with the children in child led activities, read stories and help set up and tidy away the different programmes being delivered.



## Peer Advocacy

Since September our Peer Advocates have been able to return to the Wards to provide help and support to patients within the Mental Health Inpatient Unit.



## Activity Volunteers

From September our Activity Volunteers have returned to a wide range of roles working with older clients in our Training Resource Centres.

We also have Activity Volunteers returning to Children's Disability Services and our new Horticultural Volunteers working within Glenmore Children's Home.

## Meet Our Volunteers

<b>Name</b>	<b>Lauren O'Doherty</b>
<b>Volunteer Role</b>	<b>Breastfeeding Peer Support</b>



### **1. What is your role?**

I'm a peer supporter with the Breastfeeding Friends service which offers mother-to-mother support to breastfeeding mums. Mums can be referred by their midwife or Health Visitor and my role is to support them on their breastfeeding journey by providing information and sharing my own experiences.

### **2. How did you find Volunteering over lockdown?**

We mostly keep in touch with mums through texts and phone calls, so thankfully lockdown didn't have too much of an impact on the service we provide. It did mean we weren't able to direct mums to or meet them at breastfeeding support groups though, which is a shame as face to face support is also so valuable. Over lockdown I felt privileged to still be able to help other mums when they needed support.

### **3. What sort of feedback did you get from the mothers?**

The mums I spoke to were really appreciative of the service because they weren't able to see their midwives or health visitors as much as they might have liked. Lots of mums have said they continued to breastfeed for longer than they would have done if the BFF service hadn't been available.

### **4. Why did you sign up for this role?**

After breastfeeding my first baby I was really keen to share the information I'd learned with other mums, so signing up as a peer supporter sounded like a fantastic opportunity to do that. Breastfeeding rates in Northern Ireland are the lowest in the UK, and anything I can contribute to increasing those rates is beneficial for babies, mums and public health in general.

### **5. What have you gained from volunteering?**

I've learned so much from the training provided by the Health Development team and feel really proud that I am able to help mothers on their breastfeeding journeys. I've also met a lovely group of friends in the rest of the peer supporter team!

## Some quotes from the mothers who have benefited from the Service

- "Peer support was fantastic. I was about to give up as it was so hard but it made all the difference hearing the advice and experience of other current breast feeders and helped me to find new solutions that worked"
- "Easy to access, friendly peer support and helpful ideas and tips"
- "This service is amazing and helped me so much still going 8 months in"

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