

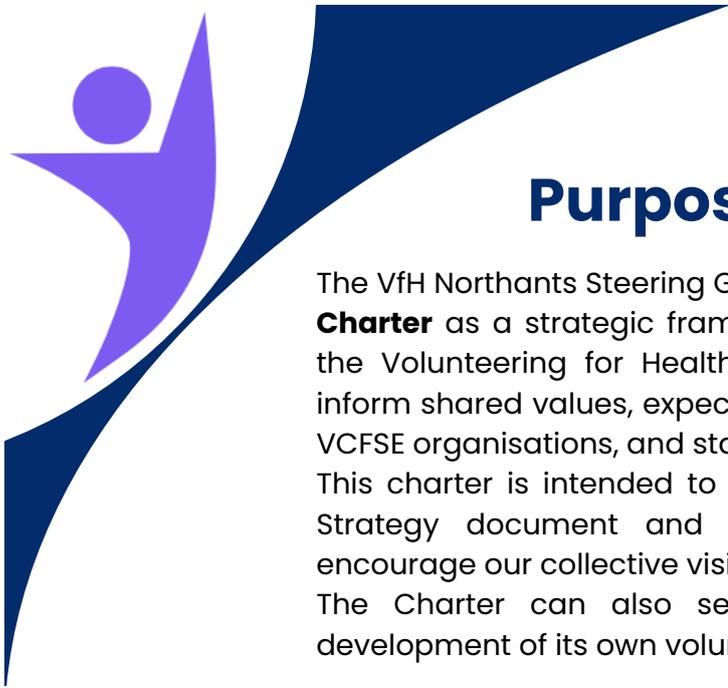
# Volunteer Charter

VOLUNTEERS FOR HEALTH NORTHANTS  
FEBRUARY 2026



Volunteers for Health  
Northants  
Embedding Volunteers  
in Health Care





## Purpose of the charter

The VfH Northants Steering Group recommends the adoption of a **Volunteer Charter** as a strategic framework to guide volunteer engagement across the Volunteering for Health (VfH) in Northamptonshire. The Charter will inform shared values, expectations, and commitments between volunteers, VCFSE organisations, and statutory partners.

This charter is intended to be issued alongside the Volunteers for Health Strategy document and the Good Practice Volunteering Toolkit, to encourage our collective vision and operational consistency.

The Charter can also serve as a foundation for an organisation's development of its own volunteer framework/policy or practice.

## Rationale – Why this is important?



### **Unify practice across diverse organisations.**

- Ensures consistency in volunteer experience and standards across the
- Volunteers for Health Northants (VfH) Partnership.

### **Support volunteer wellbeing, progression, and retention.**

- Creates a supportive and safe environment that values, encourage and nurtures volunteer engagement at frontline staff, management and leadership levels.

### **Embed the Volunteer to Career and Portability offers.**

- Aligns operational delivery with strategic pathways for volunteer development and mobility across organisations within the VfH partnership

### **System-wide Embedding of Volunteering**

- Supports ICS ambitions to integrate volunteering into health and care systems

### **Demonstrate quality and consistency to external stakeholders and funders.**

- Provides a visible commitment to good practice and accountability in volunteer management and support at all stages of the volunteer presence in organisations.

### **Strengthen governance and accountability in volunteer management.**

- Establishes a shared framework for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

## Our Vision



*Creating an inclusive, volunteering system for all health volunteers in Northamptonshire*

# Core Values

## Inclusivity

Welcoming all backgrounds and abilities. Promotes equity and access for underrepresented groups in volunteering.

## Respect – valuing time, contribution, and lived experience

Recognises the unique strengths and perspectives volunteers bring.

## Empowerment – enabling volunteers to grow

Supports personal and professional development and leadership opportunities.

## Transparency – clarity in roles, feedback, and progression

Builds trust through open communication and shared expectations.

## Recognises not all volunteers are recruited online

Ensures inclusive recruitment by supporting paper-based and offline engagement options.

# Volunteer Commitments

## 1 Act with integrity and compassion.

Uphold the values of the organisations you volunteer with in daily interactions with staff, service users, fellow volunteers and the leadership teams.

Act with honesty, reliability, and compassion and maintain clear boundaries whilst upholding the values and policies of the organisations they work with.

## 2 Avoid Conflicts of Interest

Act in the best interest of the organisation and disclose any potential conflicts.

## 3 Respect, confidentiality and people's choices.

Ensures safe and ethical practice in all volunteer roles.

## 4 Respect Diversity

Value and respect differences in culture, background, and perspectives on Social Media Posts

## 5 Engage in training and feedback

Encourage continuous learning and programme improvement.

## 6 Represent the programme positively.

Strengthen public trust and community engagement.



# Volunteers Rights



## Be treated fairly and respectfully.

- Reinforce dignity and equality in all volunteer interactions.
- Have equal access to roles and opportunities regardless of background, identity, or circumstances.
- Personal information should be handled with respect and in line with data protection laws
- Receive constructive feedback and have the chance to share their own views
- Have a clear process to voice concerns or complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses.

## Be consulted on relevant decisions.

- Encourages co-production and shared ownership of the programme when relevant

## Withdraw without penalty.

- Respect personal circumstances in volunteering, including the option to take time out or pause from their activities.

## Access to Appropriate Training

- Volunteers have the right to receive relevant training to carry out their roles safely, confidently, and effectively. This includes initial induction, role-specific guidance, and ongoing development opportunities to support best practice and personal growth.

## Right to Raise Concerns and Freedom of Expression

- Volunteers are entitled to express their views, raise concerns, and provide feedback without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

## Volunteer Support & Wellbeing

- Volunteers can expect appropriate supervision, wellbeing support, being offered regular check-ins and feedback to ensure they feel valued, heard, and supported in their roles.
- Volunteers should have access to resources or guidance to help manage their wellbeing, including signposting to further support if and when needed.



# Organisational Commitments



## To provide clear role descriptions and expectations.

- Help volunteers understand their responsibilities, boundaries and impact on service users, patients, staff and the organisation.
- Volunteers do not replace the work of staff, but complement it



## To offer induction, training, support and supervision.

- Equip volunteers with the skills and support needed to succeed.
- Build confidence where relevant, considering volunteers' interests.
- Respect volunteers' commitments and their ability to volunteer for other roles and or with organisations.



## To ensure safe, inclusive environments.

- Create welcoming spaces that reflect safeguarding, confidentiality and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles.



## To recognise and celebrate volunteer contributions.

- Build morale and regularly acknowledge the value of volunteer work.
- Allow volunteers to voice their views in relation to their roles and responsibilities
- Treat volunteers with respect at all times.



## To enable progression via Volunteer to Career and Portability.

- Facilitate meaningful development and mobility of volunteering across organisations, avoiding duplication of processes.
- Where possible, support volunteers to move into paid employment, including those returning to the job market.



## To recognise that not all volunteers are recruited online.

- Support accessible recruitment and communication for digitally excluded individuals.
- Support in-person recruitment for non-digital enabled individuals, offering a smooth onboarding process.



# Progression and Portability



**Portability enables flexible engagement across organisations.**

- Allows volunteers to move between roles and partners without redundancy.

**Volunteer to Career supports career pathways via mentoring, training, and job shadowing.**

- Opens doors to employment and long-term involvement in health and care.

## Safeguarding and Wellbeing

**Volunteers are protected under safeguarding, GDPR and Health & Safety policies.**

- Ensures all volunteers operate in safe and secure environments, irrespective of the type of roles and responsibilities



**Mental health and wellbeing support is available.**

- Promotes resilience and emotional support for volunteers.
- Provide equal access to training and development relevant to the role.
- Values the contribution of all Volunteers with Lived Experience.

**Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns safely.**

- Builds a culture of openness and responsive safeguarding.

Monitoring	&	Evaluation
	<p><b>Volunteer experience will be reviewed regularly.</b></p>	<p>Volunteer feedback and experience will inform improvements in volunteer management/support.</p>
	<p><b>Feedback will inform programme development.</b></p>	<p>This ensures that volunteer voices are taking into consideration when updating or upgrading the Northamptonshire Volunteering for Help Programme.</p>
	<p><b>Data will be used ethically to enhance impact and equity.</b></p>	<p>No personal volunteer information will be used in evidence-based decision-making without prior written consent. Any changes, development, and or improvement to the programme that involves data management or control will be in full compliance with GDPR.</p>

# Implementation

**Charter to be co-endorsed by all VfH Steering Group members and participating organisations.**

- Builds collective ownership and credibility across the system, including ICS.
- Launch the Charter in January 2026.

**Launch alongside the VfH Strategy Document.**

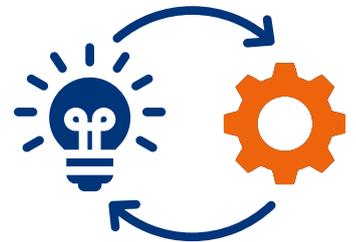
- Aligns messaging and reinforces strategic coherence.
- Responds to VfH Survey and Conference findings

**Include in volunteer induction packs and partner toolkits.**

- Embeds the Charter into operational practice from the outset.

**Review annually via the VfH Steering Group.**

- Maintains relevance and responsiveness to evolving needs, including changes to ICB and NHS plans.
- Consider volunteer feedback in future updates/changes to the charter, linked to strategy document.



## Endorsing Organisations

Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN)

Integrated Care Board Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire University Hospitals

Mental Health Northants Collaboration (MHNC)

General Practice alliance (GPA)

Northamptonshire Community Foundation (NCF)

Support Northamptonshire / Northants Black Communities Together (NBCT)

NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)

St Andrews Healthcare (STAH)

Northamptonshire Carers Association

Groundwork/Aspire North Northamptonshire (Aspire NN)

Northamptonshire Libraries



## For More Information

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