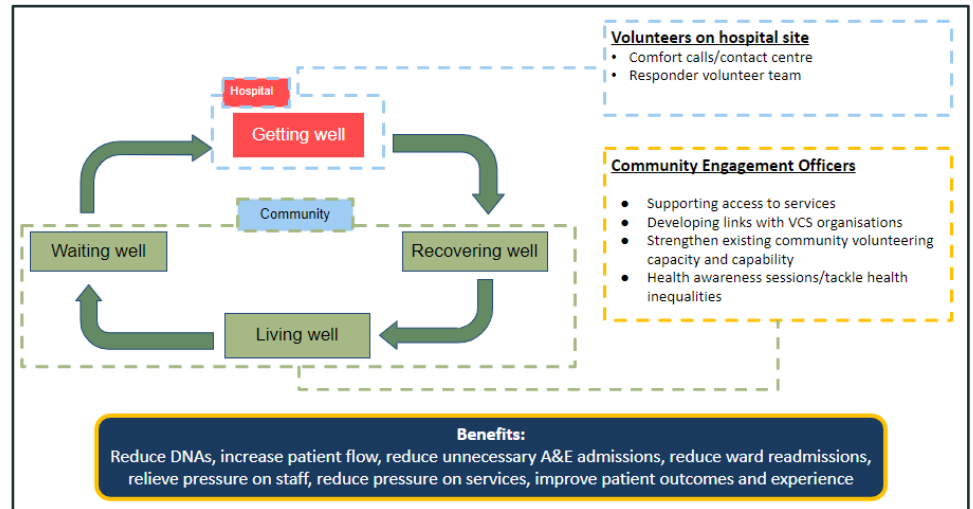


GEH Back to Health Pathway (BTHP) - Progress report August 2023

This is a George Eliot Hospital report, designed to celebrate the first year of the Back to Health Pathway. It brings together a mix of project activity data, learning and interim analysis. A full evaluation will be completed by our evaluation partner Helpforce in November.

What is the Back to Health Pathway?

The BTHP is a volunteer-based programme that GEH have introduced in the last year to support patients on their journey to and from hospital. The programme plays key part in GEH working more effectively in our local communities to address health inequalities. This being a critical role for GEH since the introduction of new structures supporting local health and care systems that came into place nationally in July 2022. Specifically, the creation of Integrated Care Systems (Coventry and Warwickshire ICS) and Place Based Partnerships (Warwickshire North Place) that GEH are now significant members of.



The pathway aims to work with volunteers to support patients whilst they are waiting for diagnosis or treatment **“Waiting Well”**, whilst they are in hospital **“Getting Well”**, when they return home **“Recovering Well”** and to help through encouraging greater volunteering to build stronger, healthier communities - **“Living Well”**. There are some specific components of the programme to highlight that have been introduced and developed over the last year:

Comfort Calls

We have a team of brilliant fully trained volunteers that call patients who are on our waiting lists and patients who have recently been discharged. In essence we call to ask if they are ok. Typically, there will be different outcomes from these calls. The patient...

- is ok and thanks us for the call.
- needs help that can be provided from within GEH’s own resources. We will signpost or refer to that support.
- needs help from another provider, for example they were expecting a call from a community nurse, or a social worker - again we will refer to those providers if needed.
- needs help in the community typically because they are lonely or isolated (e.g. for transport, befriending, picking up shopping or medications etc) - in this case we refer to community partners that are themselves working with local volunteers. We have forged new relationships with organisations that are best placed to provide that support.

Case study 1

Patient Y, age 59. Waiting for treatment on an ongoing knee issue. Due to not being able to drive, reduced mobility, he’d gained weight and is feeling isolated and lacking in confidence. The volunteer call identified that he’d benefit from and be interested in local groups/ buddy programmes.

Call outcome

Patient referred to the social prescribing team.

Case study 2

Patient X, age 83. She is waiting for a procedure and is also her husband’s full-time carer. Sadly, many of their close friends have now passed away and they do not see very much of their son. All of this has left the patient feeling lonely, isolated, and anxious.

Call outcome

Patient referred to the social prescribing team.

Hospital based volunteers.

At the heart of the BTHP are the hospital based volunteers. This is the component that delivers the “Getting Well” element and is well established with GEH. There are several elements to this covering:

- Response volunteers who undertake tasks as requested by staff members, including blood runs, To Take Out (TTO) collections and patient transfers.
- Ward-based volunteers who undertake tasks such as supporting nutrition and hydration, doing activities with patients and providing befriending.
- Meet and greet volunteers who help to direct patients and visitors around the hospital.
- Out of hours medication deliveries to patients at home the evening they are discharged to help speed up discharge.

38,077
patients supported

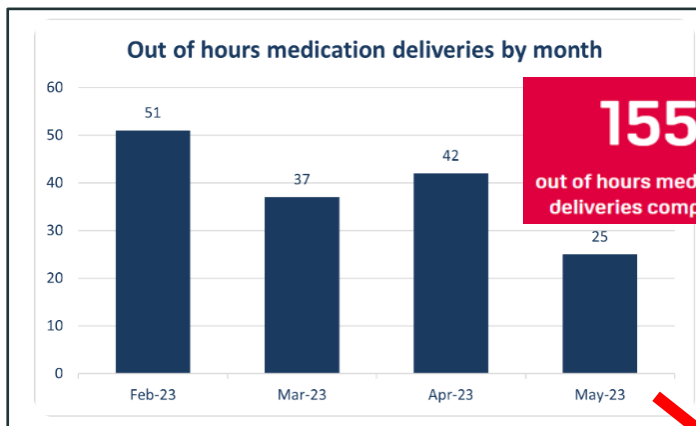
((September 2021 to May 2023. Active response and contact centre roles. 16,668 patients supported April 2022 – May 2023. Estimated total of . 210,000 patient interactions through Meet & Greet)

7,093
hours of volunteering


(April 2022 to May 2023 active response, ward and contact centre roles))

1,554
Tasks completed by response volunteers

(Response volunteer tasks Feb to May 2023)



(Snapshot view - responder drivers out of hours medication delivery Feb '23 – May '23. N=155 total out of hours deliveries)

 **Potential savings of c. £140,000 pa**

Based on an average of 38 out of hours deliveries a month at an estimated saving of £300 per hospital bed overnight stay equates to a potential estimated saving of c. £140,000 per annum.

Outpatient Reminder Calls.

One very specific component of the BTHP is for volunteers to call patients to remind them about outpatient appointments. The aim of these calls is to reduce DNAs which are high in GEH. This is a recent addition to the BTHP and is already proving to have an impact. In the trial period we have chosen to call ENT Outpatients and we have seen a reduction in average DNAs from 10.7% to 8.1% which we believe can be attributed to the Outpatient reminder calls being made by volunteers. As we spread this service to all specialities in the trust the overall impact is likely to be significant. Plans are in place to extend calls to Physio and Maternity appointments.

MyPreOp calls.

This again is a service that we have recently started. All patients coming for surgery need to complete an online MyPreOp form. This is a lengthy complicated form, and many patients find it too difficult to complete online. If they cannot complete it, they need to come in person to GEH and have the form completed by a nurse. This is very burdensome on both the patient and the Trust as each MyPreOp form takes up to 50 minutes of a nurse’s time to support the patient to complete. We are looking to see if trained volunteers can call patients and support them complete the form over the phone.

The Community element

A massive focus of the last 18 months has been building a much better understanding of how voluntary and statutory services are configured and working together in our local communities. Historically this is something we have had very little understanding of as a volunteer team. This has involved building relationships with key local partners (across C&W ICS and WNP) such as Locals GPs, Primary Care Networks (PCNs), Community Nursing teams, Social Care and Reablement teams, and community development teams working for the District Councils and Warwickshire County Council. Critically though we have significantly developed the relationships we have with the myriad of voluntary sector providers operating in the communities we serve.

Example - working with Traveler community our data tells us that the Traveler community place unnecessary pressure on GEH's A&E service. We reach out into that community to work with local people (volunteers) to explore how we can promote more appropriate use of health services so that we deliver better health outcomes for that community and hopefully relieve pressure on A&E services.

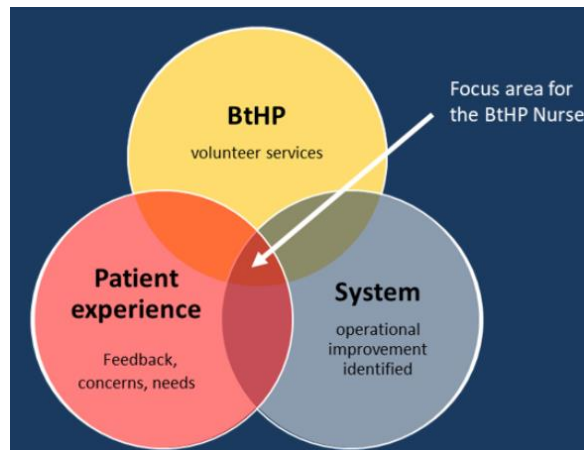
As part of this work, we have secured funding, from GEH Charity, to employ two part time community engagement staff. These two members of our team are building a better understanding of the pressures that different, typically marginalised communities, suffering from health inequalities, place on GEH and are looking for ways in which that pressure can be relieved through working more closely with those communities (see box for example).

Shape Up for Surgery (SU4S)

Another recent addition to the BTHP is the SU4S offer. We have secured funding to commission a local charity (AmbaCare) to provide this service. In a nutshell working alongside clinical teams in GEH we identify patients that are due for surgery who we think, based on agreed criteria (what treatment, BMI, health habits etc) might benefit from the SU4S programme. The SU4S programme is a volunteer supported, 12 week programme co-produced with the patient to help them be as well prepared as they possibly can be for surgery. This service was launched on 1st June 2023.

Clinical involvement.

We recognised from the start that everything we did, whilst volunteer led, needed to be underpinned by significant involvement and support of clinical teams within GEH. We secured funding from C&W Integrated Care Board (ICB) for a BTHP Nurse for 12 weeks. Our Back to Health Nurse has been in place since 1st April 2023 her role is to ensure we were achieving this link between the volunteer service and clinical teams throughout GEH.



Being data driven.

Everything we do, has been and will continue to be driven by data. We must be able to justify why we are focussing on specific challenges and the impact we are looking to have. Why are we focussing on this community, this ethnic group, this speciality, this department etc. Answering these questions must be underpinned by data about the demands being placed on GEH. If we don't understand that then we will not be able to measure the impact, we are having.

How is project being funded?

The project is fully funded until March 2024. By the end of December 2023, we will have developed a detailed and compelling business case to justify, to different funders, the imperative for sustaining this programme over the coming years. Currently the key funders are:

- GEH - Funding the programme management, and the comfort call manager for the second year.
- GEH Charity - Funding Community Engagement Officers for one year.
- NHSE Winter Pressures – Funding the Contact Centre Manager for the first year.
- C&W ICB - Funding (through Health Inequalities allocation) the BTHP Nurse for 12 months.
- Warwickshire North Place - Funding the Shape Up for Surgery offer for 12 months.

What have we achieved?

Summary



Sept '21 to May 2023. Active response, meet and greet and contact centre roles. Service to date 38,077 patients supported)

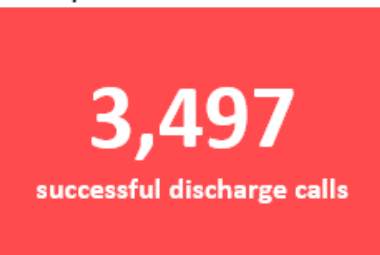


(April 2022 to May 2023 active response, ward and contact centre roles))



Comfort calls

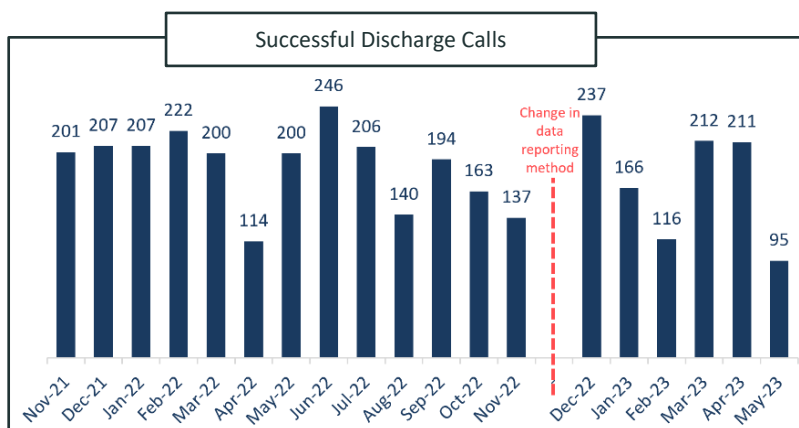
Calls to patients post discharge and those on our waiting list.



November 2021 to May 2023, data collection method changed in Dec 2022



November 2021 to May 2023, 38 internal and 207 external referrals



“What is also clear from the Comfort Calls is that they generate a plethora of data and comments that are captured and logged. This gives a good insight and base to improve and enhance the quality of patient discharge at GEH and the patient experience of those on our waiting list.”

Natalie Mills - Comfort Call Volunteer and Chair of GEH Patient Forum

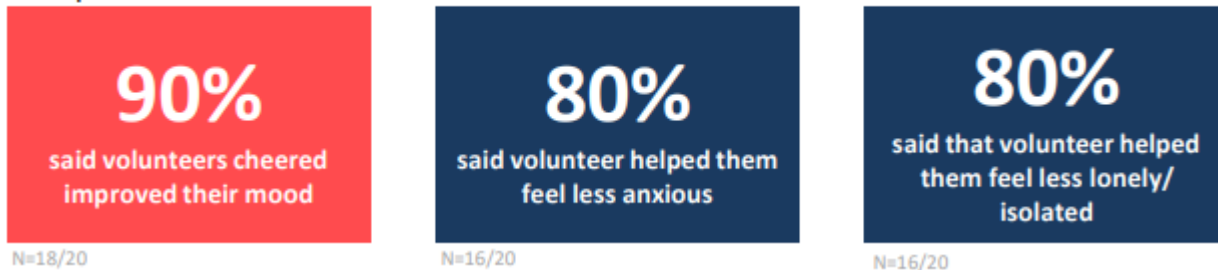
(An average of 183 successful calls have been made each month, peaking in June 2022 at 246 calls)

Feedback from staff, volunteers, and patients

What do patients say?

“The volunteer made me smile when I was sad and provided good company.”

GEH patient



What do our staff say?

“Volunteers are a great asset to any team. If only every department could have help, I think staff would be less stressed. Keep up the good work and recruit many more”

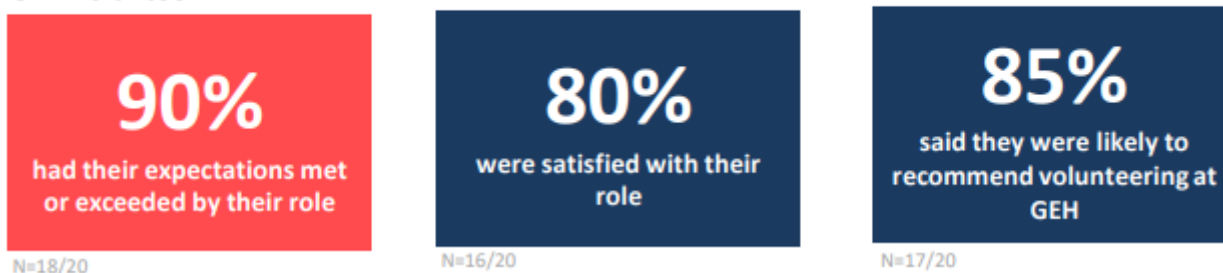
GEH staff member



What do our volunteers say?

“I love volunteering at the George Eliot hospital, I'm sure I make a difference & it's a lovely feeling knowing that you've helped someone”

GEH volunteer



Other achievements



Substantially increased the profile of volunteering across GEH.



Helping GEH more effectively reach into our local communities.



Significantly increasing our connections with partner organisations.

What next?

The programme is funded to March 2024. Over the coming months we will be developing a business for longer term (3+ years) sustainable funding from April 2024.

With Helpforce's support we are also intending to package up what we have achieved so that this can be shared more widely across the C&W Health system but also shared with other Health and Care systems nationally (and internationally). What we have achieved so far is unique in terms of the breadth and scale of the Back to Health Pathway programme. There have been significant lessons we have learned along the way. We have developed a multitude of tools and templates we are happy to share. We know this will be invaluable for others looking to adopt and adapt aspects or all of what we have done.

GEH Volunteering Team
August 2023

For further information please contact:

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