



Volunteer strategy update Nov 2022

Recap of our original strategy 22-23



- Continue with our **local group volunteer** strategy
- We will **simplify the ask** of our volunteer groups
- Focus on areas **mission/vision/work plan KPIs** and ensure the resource we allocate to this is proportionate to the benefit.
- Nurture and **develop the Community Influencer and Strategic Influencer** role,
- Empower our volunteers with **the information and engagement materials** needed to make local community connections
- Support our volunteers to carry out **awareness events** at their local acute / community hospital and a GP surgery
- **Keep volunteers up to date** through a **quarterly webinar** and group meetings
- **Facilitate the groups** that do not have **established Chairs** and work with existing Chairs

Recap of our original strategy 22-23

We will look for new and innovative ways to recruit a more diverse range of volunteers e.g.

- Designing **volunteer opportunities** that require **short term** rather than long term commitment e.g. project/event specific volunteers
- Building **relationships with universities and colleges** to reach out to younger people
- Offer **short term work experience/intern** opportunities for those wishing to **gain experience and skills**.
- Look at **'out of hours'** opportunities for volunteers that cannot commit to daytime activity
- We will **maintain relationships** with local CVS organisations to **promote our volunteering opportunities**.



Progress against 22-23 strategy

Working well....

- Strategic influencers
- Enter & View
- Quarterly Webinars
- Report support from volunteers
- The hub (for logging hours and sign up to events)
- Group meetings in Surrey Heath
- Awareness raising (last few months has seen increasing in expressions of interest)
- Vol support in activities with a clear brief /survey/assignment

Not working so well...

- Community engagement support
- Group meetings (excl. Surrey Heath) – huge administrative drain on staff resources
- Young Healthwatch
- The hub (for news and updates)
- Recruitment (until recently)
- Getting volunteers involved in priority setting

Recruitment update

Volunteering in Surrey – the current climate

- We recently attended The Elmbridge Voluntary Sector Forum and the Surrey Community Action Charities Mash-up, the message was that the whole VCSE sector is struggling to both recruit and retain volunteers. The volunteer pool has reduced dramatically post covid.
- Our annual KPI for volunteer recruitment is 20 volunteers, we are currently tracking at 6 end of Q2. (Our commissioner is aware that the reduction in volunteers is a nationwide issue at present.)
- Thankfully, we have seen an uplift in expressions of interest in the last month, driven by the increased awareness events, via our increased comms activity and the GCAV engagement activity.
- We have recently attended events such as, The Charities Road Show, Royal Holloway Festival of Volunteering and Surrey University part time work and Volunteering Fair to help raise awareness for our volunteering offer
- Some ideas for increasing volunteer interest from the workshops attended included, offering micro volunteering opportunities, some online/desk-based options and recruiting for specialisms e.g. mental health, children etc.

Proposals for 23-24 volunteer strategy

1. Volunteer roles

The division of volunteer roles into Community Listener, Community Influencer and Community Promoter may serve to 'pigeon-hole' volunteers into those roles.

- Propose a move to **generic volunteer role** for new applicants 'Healthwatch Volunteer' to avoid people feeling they are only able to do one type of role
- Note: This does not apply to the Strategic Influencers who will continue to have a defined role.

2. Locality group model

One size fits all doesn't work. Tried for a number of years to establish in other areas which hasn't worked the same. Geographically people in larger areas such as Surrey Downs or North-West Surrey don't identify as being from that area. A locality model would need to work at a hyper local/ neighbourhood level which would be unmanageable given the sheer number.

- Propose a move **away from locality groups** to special interest groups (see special interest group slide for more details)
- The groups that would like to continue to meet to network and socialise would be able to do so, this would be volunteer led. The **information sharing** with volunteers would be done via the **Webinar and newsletters**.

Proposals for 23-24 volunteer strategy

3. Micro volunteering / ambassador opportunities

Based on the feedback from the recent volunteer workshops attended we need to expand our offering to include more short-term opportunities and explore ways to maximise our awareness in reduced volunteer pool

- Propose to create **micro volunteering opportunities** to allow volunteers to join for a specific project or event rather than long term commitment, (e.g. gathering experiences from friends and family)
- Work with other VSCE organisations to look at how we could create reciprocal **ambassador roles** raising awareness and signposting at a hyper local level (PPGs/Smart Cranleigh type organisations etc.)
- Work with **universities and colleges** to look at how we can help students with research projects for their coursework (contacts already made).

4. Information and updates for volunteers

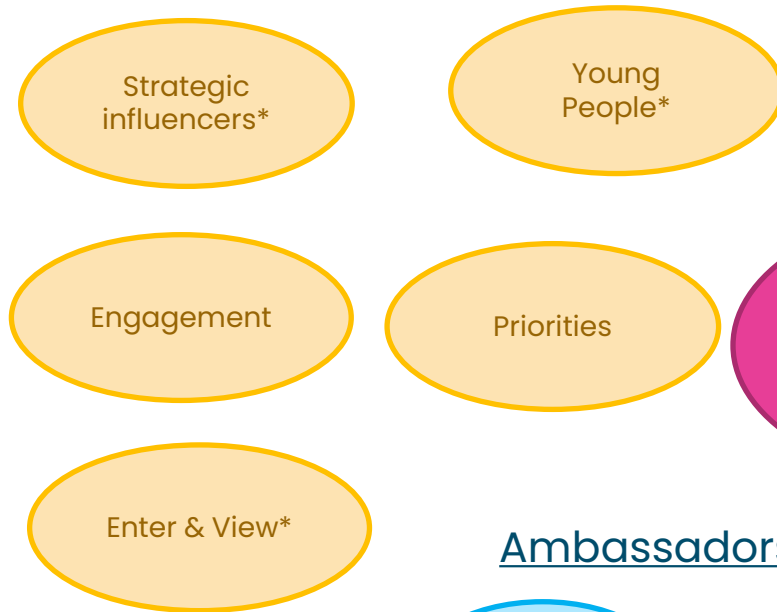
- Continue with the **quarterly webinar** for updates with volunteers (recorded for those that cannot attend). Special interest groups will have regular contact with the staff member leading the group
- A **monthly newsletter** will also update volunteers (re-instated after feedback that volunteers were not using the hub for news and updates)

Special interest vs locality groups

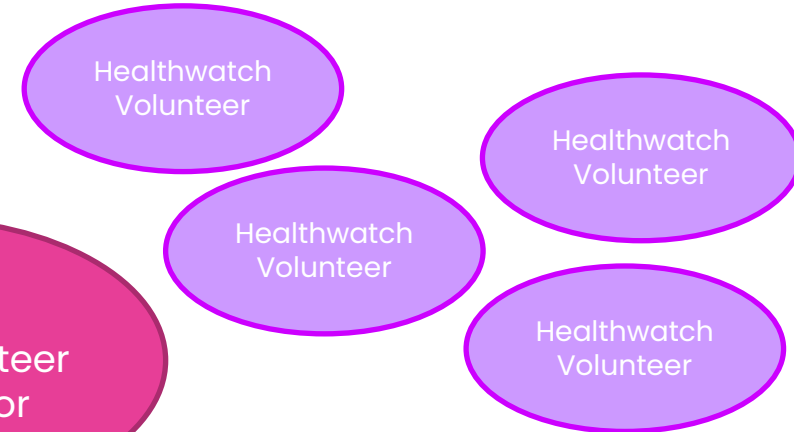
- Whilst volunteers may not relate to the localities (as we have defined them) many will have **special interests**.
- We propose we would **harness their interests** and develop special interest groups for both fixed roles like SIs and short-term projects.
- Volunteers that want to **continue volunteering** without joining a special interest group would do so supported by the Volunteer Coordinator and would have opportunities to volunteer across the **whole of Surrey** in a range of activities
- Some of the **special interest groups** already exist and they are working well (e.g. Strategic Influencers and Enter & View)
- The special interest groups would be **staff led** and volunteers would meet to discuss tasks and ideas **based on the special interest** (e.g. interest based engagement group volunteers may look at where we have gaps in data and formulate a plan to plug those gaps. The activity would be more defined with clear objective and output to provide structure that would hopefully encourage more volunteer led engagement.)

Example of how this could look..

Special Interest groups

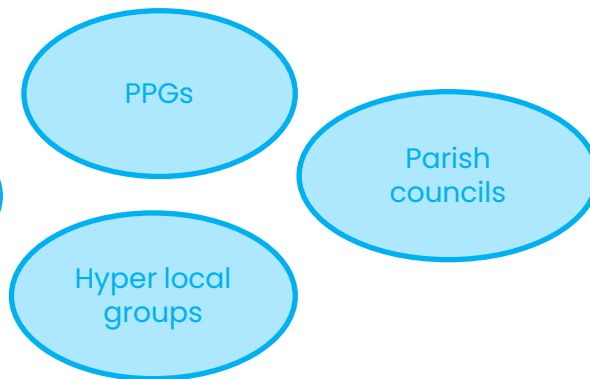
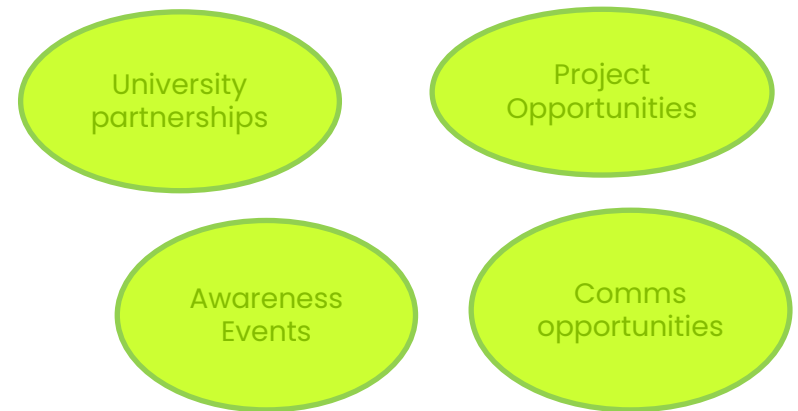


General Healthwatch Volunteers



Micro Volunteers

Ambassadors



*existing group

Next steps

- Board to discuss and agree the proposals for 23-24
- When agreed the changes will be worked into the new volunteer strategy for 22-23 to sit alongside the workplan.
- We will then carefully manage the transition from local area group to special interest, being mindful to not leave any volunteers feeling stranded.
- Implement the changes from 1st April 2023 onwards..