

A S U M E

Volunteering in Dementia



attract

Pathways

Volunteers described many different pathways into volunteering. There was no common pathway, instead a combination of work, other volunteering, interests and hobbies as well as experience with friends and family led people to volunteer with people with dementia. Some people wanted to volunteer but had no specific volunteering opportunities in mind and were guided towards volunteering in dementia care following personal recommendations or hearing about it through the promotional activities of organisations working in this area.

And I was saying that I was looking for something, something worthwhile to do. And she [another volunteer] suggested coming along, which I did, thoroughly enjoyed it and asked if I could help out and that was it! (SVM04, Stirlingshire)

I think I was just googling volunteer projects in the Stirling area and there wasn't that much that came up, but then that was a wider thing from Age UK that wanted... someone, like a neighbour that maybe lives on their own, you go in and have a cup of tea and that sort of thing. So I thought that would be a really nice thing to do. (CVF09, Cumbria)

Others were at a point in their lives where they were looking for something new to do, they had more time on their hands, often following retirement or a move to a new place.

And my mum died badly of a house fire. That was absolutely horrific and I thought, well, stop feeling sorry for yourself, M, get out (CVF17, Cumbria)

And was looking to do some voluntary work. Really felt that I'd still got quite a lot to give, I suppose, and not ready to just do the garden and knit. (CVF04, Cumbria)

Outwith volunteers looking for ways to give their time, Table 4 shows the recruitment methods used by agencies. Generally speaking, the strategies used to recruit volunteers in dementia care are similar to that for volunteers in other roles. Nevertheless, it seems that it is more common to recruit volunteers in other roles using help from third party bodies, but less so for volunteers in dementia care. Most agencies use more than one recruitment method. More specifically, on average, 5 different recruitment methods were used by each agency. We found no difference in this number for different type of volunteer opportunities out with dementia care.

| | Volunteers in dementia care | | Volunteers in other roles | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| | Freq. | Percent | Freq. | Percent |
| Traditional media | 38 | 46.3% | 35 | 50.7% |
| Digital media | 58 | 70.7% | 52 | 75.4% |
| Recruitment notices at public areas | 43 | 52.4% | 42 | 60.9% |
| Setting up stalls at local events | 53 | 64.6% | 48 | 69.6% |
| Door-to-door leaflets or letters | 10 | 12.2% | 10 | 14.5% |
| Personal contact with volunteers and staff | 73 | 89.0% | 63 | 91.3% |
| Help from existing volunteer agencies, volunteer centres or other relevant bodies | 54 | 65.9% | 56 | 81.2% |
| Community groups | 40 | 48.8% | 36 | 57.2% |
| Other | 14 | 17.1% | 9 | 13.0% |
| Total | 383 | | 351 | |

The recruitment strategies for dementia care are less likely to use personal contact and help from current volunteers when compared to volunteers in other roles. This contrasts with the importance of those networks coming through from the qualitative data. As noted in sections about experience and family, people were influenced by their own experiences of dementia and the skills and knowledge they had acquired. This was a common characteristic of pathways into volunteering. A volunteer in Cumbria describes the change from being a carer attending singing groups to becoming a volunteer there:

I ended up in the kitchen so we were, sort of, at the [singing] group but I ended up making the tea and then something else and something else and then it just sort of...it came from there. Then I just, sort of, joined up. They just asked me and said, would you like to be a proper volunteer rather than just doing it (CVF11, Cumbria)

As soon as I retired I volunteered - I worked at Sue Ryder shop first of all, then the Cancer Research shop. I also worked for the Tourist Information Centre and that was in Skipton - I kept on doing that until I left Skipton...I came to Carlisle 10 years ago and friends said they want volunteers at Tullie House, so I went straight down and volunteered at Tullie House. (CVF12, Cumbria)

Others became involved in volunteering as young people through school projects and volunteering remained a part of their life into adulthood.

I started volunteering as part of a school project thing when I was 14 I think it was. It was something they did as an extracurricular activity. And that was at a care home for young adults with acute learning difficulties. (CVF09, Cumbria)

Several participants volunteered in different settings and their move into volunteering with people with dementia was part of a wider volunteering career.



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