

# School of Volunteers and Carers Project Evaluation Executive Summary



Academi Iechyd a Gofal Powys

Powys Health and Care Academy



# Executive Summary

## 1. The Project

The project was funded by Welsh Government through WCVA, to build on work undertaken in 2021 to produce the Future of Volunteering in Powys report, the associated Volunteering Strategy and the proposal for the scope and function of the newly established School of Volunteers and Carers, which sits within the Powys Teaching Health Board's Health and Care Academy.

The school will support volunteers and carers to develop their skills and knowledge through education, training and development support, not only for individuals but also for organisations that support or involve volunteers and carers.

The project would:-

- ❖ develop the programme and materials that will form the menu of support provided by or signposted to through the school.
- ❖ develop a skills matrix that outlines the skills and development needs of volunteers and carers required today and into the future to support the new model of care.

The remit of this evaluation report is limited to an investigation of these developments and identification of future development opportunities. However, where possible impacts and benefits are addressed.

It is clear from feedback from multiple sources that the term 'school' does not engage volunteers and carers and the name should be revisited, but it is used throughout for the purposes of this report.

## 2. Training Programme – Menu of Support

A training needs survey was sent to a range of volunteers and organisations, to identify current training requirements, alongside a report from CREDU that identified carers' needs. The following themes were identified:-

- Core skills, qualities and values
- Digital skills
- Transferable skills
- Health and Care role specific skills

A Menu of Support for the school is proposed based on these themes, drawing on a scoping exercise that identified current provision and resources available in Powys from the third, public and private sectors, which can be delivered or signposted to through the school.

The exercise also identified gaps in provision and the development of new materials was based on this gap analysis and the feedback from 3 focus groups and one to one sessions that were held to expand on the information from the training needs survey

While there is a focus on Health and Care roles for specific skills, the remainder of the proposed programme also addresses the wider needs and wants of volunteers and carers.

A blend of approaches to delivering training and support is needed, with a mix of face to face and online. This issue could to some extent be resolved through use of the new hybrid technology that is currently being developed in Powys. The online element will be accessed through the school's learning portal, which must be linked to an engaging online presence.

### 3. Skills Matrix

As a 'first in Wales', the development of the skills matrices was a collaborative and constantly evolving process to develop tools that, for individuals, should:-

- identify and value skills
- identify potential roles
- identify training needs
- help to develop personal portfolio
- support career development

For organisations the tools should:-

- support the development of volunteer role descriptions
- identify desirable and essential role requirements
- identify training needs

It was agreed that it was key for this project to develop the content of the matrices and that their final format, which would probably involve the development of an app or other software, should be pursued in future developments.

Four separate matrices were developed for volunteers and carers using google forms, reflecting the themes identified for the menu of support, namely Core skills, qualities and values, Digital skills, Transferable skills and Health and Care role specific skills.

The forms ask levels of confidence or knowledge, depending on the context and also how they have been acquired, to inform the training programme. To make them more engaging for individuals, they were rebranded as personal profile builders.

A fifth matrix was developed for organisations, focusing on the requirements for Health and Care roles, although the concept can be adapted for other roles. Again there are sections on Core skills, qualities and values, Digital skills, Transferable skills and Health and Care role specific skills, this time asking whether the skills etc are either essential or desirable in a role and the level of confidence or knowledge required, to inform development of role descriptions

Although the tools meet most of the requirements in their current format, they do not directly connect individuals to roles. This could be addressed in future developments, by the creation of both an interactive online tool and a 'plug in' to enable the profiles and role descriptions to interface with the Volunteering Wales website. However, they can be used now by Powys Volunteer Centre and other staff working with individuals to make these connections.

## 4. Conclusions

The project has delivered both the training programme, or menu of support, and the content for a skills matrix tool, which will enable the school of volunteers and carers to move forward to the next stage of development.

It has also contributed to the short-term outcomes of a strengthened partnership supporting volunteering, further recognition of volunteer pathways and development of high quality volunteering opportunities.

In order to demonstrate the long-term impact of this work, it has been proposed that a triangulated model is developed to capture the experiences of volunteers, patients or clients and workforce professionals.

## 5. Future Development Opportunities

Future development needs and opportunities have been identified throughout the report. They can be summarised as:-

### **Overarching**

- revisiting the name of the 'school'.
- developing an engaging and innovative online presence

### **Developing the programme and menu of support**

- presenting and delivering the training offer in an accessible format
- ensuring that there are sufficient staffing resources to constantly refresh, update and promote the offer of the school for both volunteers and carers
- considering a mobile equipped adaptable living space

## Skills matrices

- taking forward the skills matrices as online tools
- considering the incorporation of a behaviour preference model
- developing a plug in to interface with the Volunteering Wales website

Of all the future developments listed above, the most important must be resourcing staff who can ensure that the school remains constantly fresh and updated and is well promoted on social and other media, so that this exciting project can reach its full potential.

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**If you would like to receive a copy of the full report then please request one by email to: [Powys.HealthCareandSocialCareAcademy@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Powys.HealthCareandSocialCareAcademy@wales.nhs.uk)**