

How Macmillan can support the design and delivery of services incorporating volunteers

1) Why involve volunteers?

To meet the current and future needs of people affected by cancer, the workforce needs to be reviewed and more innovative methods of providing services needs to be considered. One key addition is the involvement of volunteers. Volunteers bring a unique perspective and a positive shift in the atmosphere/energy of the service, which often stems from personal reasons for giving their time. They also offer a new set of skills and experience to the team.

Quality

The correct recruitment, deployment and support for volunteers is crucial to providing high quality, safe and effective services. Macmillan can support you to ensure that processes are in place to provide this level of quality. The enthusiasm often seen from volunteers, coupled with the range of skills they offer from a variety of backgrounds, adds value to the service and can deliver quality services to meet local needs.

Innovation

Macmillan has years of experience in developing volunteering roles within service delivery. We have many examples of where volunteers have provided or supported service delivery. Examples range from befriending and bereavement services, carer support and practical help with social activities to manning information and support centres. These services provide a skill mix, whereby professionals provide support for more complex cases and volunteers support simpler cases.

The volunteering department are also working with the Macmillan Solutions project being piloted in Hampshire and Manchester. This groundbreaking project involves Macmillan working with several partner organisations (such as a church group, community centre, a hospice and a Chinese Women's society) to provide solutions that people affected by cancer may need to enhance and improve their overall well-being and quality of life. Such solutions include providing responsive and individualised emotional or practical support or access to financial assistance (small non-means tested grants).

Volunteers work with recipients of the service to identify the type of support they may require and then provide this. The services are providing clear benefits to people affected by cancer through the different types of support the volunteers can offer. These have included offering a listening ear, support with food shopping, light domestic chores including cleaning a bath, providing a culturally sensitive service, eradicating language barriers and providing a small grant to buy a new wig to improve confidence and self-esteem.

Productivity

Whilst not a replacement for staff, volunteers clearly allow an expansion of capacity: they allow you to provide more services to people affected by cancer within limited budgets. Although there are costs associated with the involvement of volunteers there is the obvious benefit of having the skills of people who are giving their time freely. The correct involvement of volunteers within teams can free up the time of skilled staff to ensure they are being involved effectively increasing throughput within services.

Prevention

The development of volunteers within services enables organisations to give support to people with low to moderate complexity needs. This is often not an area of priority for limited budgets but the investment in volunteers can help resolve this. It can also prevent people with low to moderate needs developing more complex ones and subsequently putting a higher demand on services.

2) What does Macmillan provide to support the involvement of volunteers?

Volunteering toolkit

A toolkit called 'Supporting your service' will help you plan, set up and run an effective volunteer programme. The toolkit is free and you can access it from Macmillan's Learn Zone website (<http://learnzone.macmillan.org.uk/>) or through your regional Volunteering Adviser. It contains:

- Guidance and materials on planning, recruiting and selecting your volunteers, including a template volunteer role description
- Guidance and materials on inducting, training and supporting your volunteers
- A training pack consisting of 7 modules which can be used as stand-alone units or part of a wider training programme, including:
 - Introduction to Macmillan
 - Cancer and treatments
 - Listening and responding
 - Equality and diversity
 - Dealing with difficult situations
 - Loss and bereavement
 - Information giving

Professionals can also approach our regional Volunteering Advisers for support and advice, which can be provided by telephone, email, or face-to-face. The following are examples of the support on offer:

- brainstorming meetings and action plans to develop volunteer support in your service
- advice and guidance on planning, recruiting, selecting, training, celebrating and thanking your volunteers
- Template materials such as application forms, interview questions, review meetings, volunteering policies
- Access to the be.macmillan web based ordering system for items to support volunteer involvement such as badges, t-shirts, certificates and posters
- troubleshooting and problem-solving advice
- putting forward your volunteers for Macmillan awards
- ideas and resources for Volunteers' Week (1-7 June) which provides an excellent opportunity to recognise and thank your volunteers; includes template press releases, guide to running awards events, 'Top Tips on Thanking' and access to Macmillan e-cards
- Macmillan professionals working with volunteers can join the Macmillan staff course on 'Working Effectively with Volunteers: The Essentials' (contact training coordinator on 020 7840 7858 for details)

3) How Macmillan helped Janice, Cancer Information and Support Service Manager in Glasgow, with volunteers.

Janice attended the 'We manage volunteers' course. She had a volunteering advisor, Zoë, who gave her guidance on recruitment and interview/selection of volunteers, and she used the 'Supporting your service' toolkit to help her with training. Here she tells us how she found the service.

'The course was a wonderful opportunity to highlight and discuss problems and successes in a supportive environment, and leave the day feeling positive about working with volunteers.'

'Having support from Zoë during the recruitment and interview/selection process had real benefits. Being experienced in working with volunteers, Zoë understood the difficulties in selecting the right volunteers for the role – that you can't just accept anyone who wants to help, and sometimes people might still be too close to their own cancer experience to help. Having someone impartial to bounce thoughts and ideas off and to talk through difficult decisions gave me confidence in my decision-making process.'

Training

'I began putting the training programme together with an idea of the elements which needed to be covered but fairly unclear on the framework and structure.'

'The 'Supporting your service' toolkit broke information into manageable pieces and was presented well, in a format where I could choose the areas that were relevant to me. Also, I was able to add new sections of training and move things around to suit the group of volunteers.'

Ongoing support

'I know that Zoë is there at the end of the phone to talk through any issues/problems relating to volunteers. It's a massive bonus as not many colleagues locally have experience of working with volunteers.'

Learning and development for volunteers

There is training available for both professionals who manage volunteers and for their volunteers on Learn Zone, our web based learning and development forum. All materials are available free of charge and include:

- Volunteer recruitment toolkit: intended for people managing volunteers which builds on the initial information in the Supporting your Service toolkit, providing extra guidance on planning, recruitment, and selection.
- Access to 'Macmillan in a Nutshell' and Macmillan factsheets which provide an overview of Macmillan's work and services to volunteers
- Various e-learning courses, including 'Introduction to Cancer', 'Buddying and Befriending', 'User Involvement' and 'Information Giving'.

Recognising volunteers

Volunteers make an outstanding contribution to cancer support and care and saying 'thank you' is vitally important to ensuring volunteers remain motivated and feel appreciated. We have numerous suggestions in our 'Top Tips for Thanking Volunteers' document which can be accessed for free through your regional Volunteering Adviser.

The Macmillan Volunteer Awards are a formal way of recognising the efforts and achievement of your volunteers and can be a highly effective way of showing your organisation's appreciation of their time. As well as being appreciated by your volunteers, awards can also offer an opportunity to celebrate the good work of your organisation and several partners have been able to secure positive media coverage from volunteer award presentations.

Awards are considered in two ways:

- Years of service Awards are for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years service. It doesn't matter if your volunteers have changed roles during this period; the award recognises loyalty to a particular service rather than time in a specific role
- Outstanding display of activity or skill – awards for those who go above and beyond the scope of their role. There are several categories for this.
- Macmillan professionals can nominate their volunteers throughout the year, the deadline for nominations is 1st December. All nominations are then ratified by Regional Advisory Panels and then Macmillan's Board of Trustees. You can access the awards criteria, nomination forms and guidance on how to write an excellent nomination, on our website:

http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Get_Involved/Volunteer/Macmillan_Volunteer_Awards.aspx

For more information on the involvement of volunteers, please contact your local Service Development team who can put you in touch with your regional Volunteering Adviser