

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

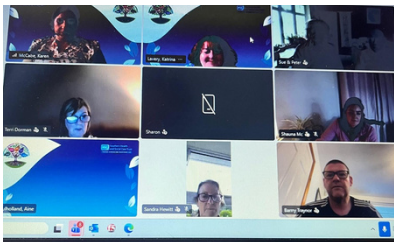
Summer 2026

VOLUNTEER WEEK CELEBRATED OVER MAY AND JUNE



CHATTY WALKS

Craigavon and Newry held volunteer walks in May and June. Unfortunately, we didn't get the dates and weather aligned properly, and ended up with lovely days for ducks, falling between the beautiful weather we had in May! But we didn't let that stop us, and went on with our walks anyway.



VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION IN LOUGH NEAGH DISCOVERY CENTRE

RELAXATION AND RESILIENCE WORKSHOPS

"Bend Don't Break" and a Relaxation session were held online to enable volunteers to improve their resilience and practice relaxation techniques. Both sessions were very well received.



Nature Connections Walk



Community Connectors



Silk painting



This is Our Health



Once again the boccea got competitive and required the measuring tape.



Holding the winning cups

Newly Inducted Volunteers



BBC Sing! 2026 Event

Our Choir has participated in the BBC Sing! 2026 event which brings together singers and choirs from across Northern Ireland to take part in a series of musical events and programmes for BBC Radio Ulster, to celebrate Northern Ireland's vocal talents across the community through a musical theme. For 2026 choirs will be singing songs from the decades – the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's! Our choir participated in the Newry event on 16th March and had a wonderful evening. You can listen to the event on BBC sounds.



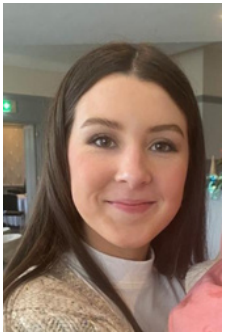
Mealtime Support Training

Many thanks to Andrea Ballantine (staff nurse) & Dana Suitor (dietitian) for helping to deliver Meal Time support training for the latest cohort of volunteers. 25 student volunteers are now newly trained, and are excited to be starting meal time support roles across the Trust. The next meal time support training session will be on Wednesday 28th October in Ballybot House, Cornmarket Newry from 10.00 to 12.30. Contact your Volunteer Coordinator to register your place.



Hopefully you were able to catch some of our social media videos and posts during volunteer week.

If not, don't worry we have included some here.



Aisling
O'Callaghan

I'm currently in my third year studying Medicine at the University of Aberdeen. Looking back, my time volunteering on the children's ward in Daisy Hill was such a meaningful experience and definitely played a role in shaping my path into medicine. I was able to use my volunteering experience in both my personal statement and interview. It was also very useful to get experience on a ward, even just getting used to speaking to patients and their families, I would say it definitely helped my confidence when speaking to patients even now!

Watch our short video where 4 of our Mealtime Support Volunteers share their Volunteering Experience.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/L3EheZji7XQ>

Thank you to all the Trust staff who support Volunteering

This Volunteers' week, we would like to take time to thank the staff who support our volunteers, on a day to day basis.

From volunteer Key Workers, to those staff who help every day, such as nursing staff, porters, receptionists, Play Therapists, support staff, and Breast Feeding mentors.

We would also like to thank those who give up their time to help train new volunteers; the dieticians, safeguarding team, support services staff, nurses and midwives.

We thank each and every one of you
for your support.

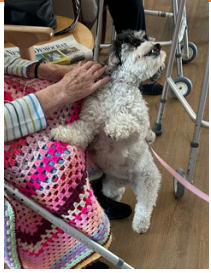
**THANK YOU
SO MUCH**

"Aoife has been an exceptional asset to the staff and patients on Ward 1, always willing to help and assist patients she has gone above and beyond her original remit of helping with meal service. She is more than willing to initiate conversations with the patients, ask general questions and brings an air of empathy, patience and understanding in everything she does on the ward. She has been highlighted by several members of staff as being a genuine, polite and courteous student. We have no doubt that she has all the necessary attributes to pursue a career in healthcare, and we are delighted to have her on the ward. Well done Aoife and keep up the good work" Ward Sister Erin McMinn.



Aoife
O'Neill

Pets as Therapy



Ira was wowing residents again in Cloughreagh House and Bluebell House, with cuddles, tricks and her special pink diva coat.

Kaija & Ulvi

Hello everyone, my name is Kaija and I'm a Finnish Lapphund. I'm nearly eight years old, and have lived with Sue and Peter since I was a tiny puppy. My favourite thing is chasing squirrels, sniffing and running around investigating wherever I am. I really just like to have fun, and enjoy almost everything I do. I'm very popular with people, and if I smile nice, they give me treats!

My 'little sister', Ulvi is a Keeshond, she looks kind of similar to me but not closely related. She is just 18 months. She is loads of fun to chase and have wrestling matches with. We get to go lots of places; but best of all, we get to go to Craigavon Hospital and visit lots of lovely people, getting loads of cuddles and showing off our tricks, so we can get treats. We're both registered Pets As Therapy dogs. We look forward to meeting you on our visits to Craigavon Hospital, and getting lots of cuddles and maybe even treats!



**When you
decide to end
your
volunteering
please...**

- 1 Let Key Worker and Volunteer Coordinator know you are leaving
- 2 Return your polo shirt and ID badge to your Volunteer Coordinator
- 3 Free your role for new volunteers

**THANK
YOU**

HSC Southern Health and Social Care Trust



XU Matter
Supporting U to Live & Work Well

Do you know that as a volunteer with Southern Health & Social Care Trust you have free access to our health & wellbeing portal?

Website: <https://u-matter.org.uk>
Username: **southerntrust**
Password: **umatter**

Or you can download the U-matter App directly to your phone.

PROUDLY
INVESTING
IN OUR
VOLUNTEERS

Promoting
Wellbeing
DIVISION

Looking after
your mental health
is important



**MINDING
your HEAD**

Minding your head has information, advice and support to help people in Northern Ireland look after and improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It is a useful tool to have at our disposal:

- for our own mental health and wellbeing
- to find support
- to support others

Click this link to go to [Minding your head](#) website

Volunteer Coordinators

Aine Mulholland, Craigavon & Banbridge, 028 3756 3950

Karen McCabe, Armagh & Dungannon, 028 3756 4498

Katrina Lavery, Newry & Mourne, 028 3756 6295