



Waythrough



**Volunteering
Annual Report
2025 - 2026**





Waythrough Volunteering Annual Report

Reflecting on a journey of change

In September 2025 we launched our new joined up volunteering offer and brought together resources from Humankind, Richmond Fellowship and Aquarius.

We aimed to bring together the best of volunteering in line with our goal of coming together to create our new foundations by:

- Investment in dedicated roles to support volunteering.
- Embedding volunteering into the culture of the organisation.
- Creating a Waythrough Volunteer Pack using best practice from legacy organisations.
- Simplifying and streamlining volunteer training, making it more relevant and accessible for volunteers.
- Providing support, training and recognition for supervisors.

"I am so proud of how everyone has come together to create a Waythrough volunteering offer, based on best practice and people's feedback.

We've had a significant period of change, and people have navigated this well. We have already seen positive impact as a result, in mandatory training compliance, reduction in Problem Solving Procedures and services who have previously never had volunteers, recruiting volunteers.

I have thoroughly enjoyed our recognition events and am constantly inspired by Waythrough volunteers"

- Ann Denton, Head of Volunteering





**From April 2025 – March 2026,
396 volunteers regularly
volunteered with us**



**Our volunteers gave us, on
average 6,396 hours of their time
each month**

**This works out at £81,293 per
month at the national living wage**

“Without their dedication, there would be a significant gap in the support we provide. We are proud of their outstanding commitment and the meaningful impact they make every month” - STARS



Long Serving Volunteers

In the year 2025-2026 we had:

- 1 volunteer who has been with us for over 20 years
- 2 volunteers who have been with us for 15 years or more
- 8 volunteers who have been with us for 10 years or more
- 24 volunteers who have been with us 5 years or more

Our Reconnected to Health Volunteers and Peer Mentors support prisoners in the North East. In prisons our Peer Mentors support groups, promote the DART service, support men and make referrals. We also have some volunteers in our community services assisting prisoners with reintegration back into the community.

During the year we had 16 Peer Mentors per month

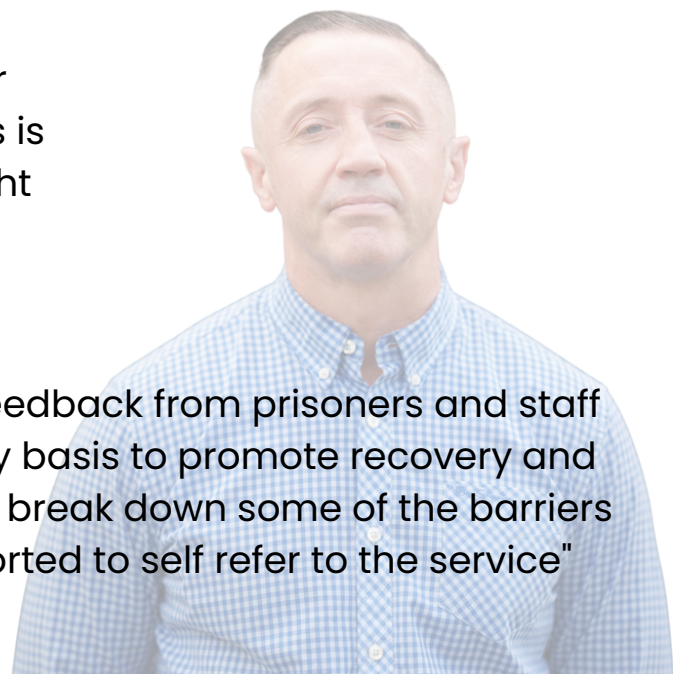
They gave us 2336 hours of their time to support others

“My mentor has really helped me out, he has really supported me. I was really struggling and closed to ending my life but my mentor helped me through and helped me realise that I have so much to live for. I cant thank him enough”

“I was nervous before I was released The volunteers at the Hub made me feel welcome and I felt safe when I was talking to them”

“The support I am getting from the peer mentor on my wing on a day to day basis is outstanding. He is keeping me on the right track and abstinent from drugs”

“Both Peer Mentors receive regular positive feedback from prisoners and staff and attend Governors Inductions on a weekly basis to promote recovery and help reduce illicit drug use. This has helped to break down some of the barriers to accessing help as men have been supported to self refer to the service”





Waythrough
Volunteering

Employer Supported Volunteering

Over the past year, our Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) offer has continued to evolve, strengthening relationships with external organisations, enhancing experiences for our workforce, and delivering meaningful outcomes for the people we support.

The programme shifted from growth in volume to growth in depth and sustainability.

50% of organisations volunteered with us more than once.



17 activities
45 volunteers
12 organisations



211 hours

118 hours = practical (56%)
93 hours = skills based (44%)

8 services supported

100% rated the experience positively across our workforce, organisations, and the people we support

100% of organisations would volunteer with us again

The real impact of our ESV programme is best seen through the experiences of those involved....



Organisation

Northern Trains - "What an absolutely amazing place to spend some time. It was a thoroughly rewarding and an enjoyable day."
Arriva - "From initially speaking with Olivia, to eventually delivering the session, the experience was fulfilling and interesting. I would highly recommend it to any other organisation."

Workforce

Tameside - During their visit, volunteers supported with painting communal areas, significantly improving the appearance and upkeep of shared spaces which have been tired and worn for some time. These activities created a more welcoming, comfortable, and therapeutic environment for residents, contributing positively to their wellbeing and sense of pride in their home which we have lacked as a service. Beyond the physical improvements, the presence of volunteers brought a sense of community involvement and external support into the service. Residents and staff valued the opportunity to connect with individuals outside of the core team, which helped to reduce feelings of isolation and reinforced a sense of belonging within the wider community.



Our 10 Trustees at Waythrough provide strategic leadership, strong governance, and oversight to ensure the charity delivers high-quality, values-driven services. They help shape long-term direction, monitor performance, manage risk, and ensure financial sustainability.

Through board and committee work, service visits, and engagement with stakeholders, they play a key role in guiding the organisation through growth and change while ensuring it remains focused on improving outcomes for the people and communities we serve.



Thank a trustee
making a difference

For Trustees Week 2025, we asked members of our General Executive Management team to share how our Trustees have guided, inspired and motivated them

Paul Townsley
Chief Executive Officer

“I loved the way **Ian Ayling** has with great skill challenged the way we think and made sure the service user is at the centre of our conversations”

“Can I thank **Carolyn** for her inspirational leadership and superb chairing of meetings and drive for achieving more”





Waythrough
Volunteering

It's important for us to monitor our volunteers motivations for volunteering and ensure their motivations are met.....

We had 102 new volunteers join in 2025-2026

Top 4 motivations for volunteering

To help others/support a charity

A stepping stone to employment

To use/share own experinces

To gain new skills

32% of respondents to our annual survey said their motivation for volunteering has changed since they joined us.

Many talked about now wishing to pursue personal development and a career in the field

"My confidence and motivation has grown, the more people I help, the more i want to do"

Leaver feedback



**151 people
moved on from
volunteering
with us**

The top 3 reasons for leaving were



Moved onto employment with Waythrough - 16



Moved onto employment elsewhere - 18



Personal circumstances - 44

"I felt very supported and very inspired to come back to volunteer when I have the time in the future. I loved the available training"

"I have loved every minute of being a volunteer with Waythrough. I have learnt a lot and everyone has been very supportive and helpful"

"It has been an experience of growth and positive change in me"



Waythrough
Volunteering

Volunteer Survey 2025 Highlights

97% said that being a volunteer has made a positive difference to them and their life

"I get absolutely as much benefit myself as anyone might receive from my volunteering"



99% said they would recommend volunteering with us

"By helping others, it's also helping me"

90% said they feel that they make a difference to people's lives through volunteering with us





Waythrough Volunteering

**96% rated their
overall enjoyment
of volunteering as
4 or 5/5**

"I love volunteering for Waythrough and look forward to going in and helping with the groups"

"Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and I feel valued"

**88% rated how
valued they feel
as volunteers as
4 or 5/5**

**91% rated their
expectations
being met at 4 or
5/5**

"The team that I volunteer for are exceptional, I have support when I need it and I'm clear on what my role is and what is expected from me"

“I think that I have managed to use my experiences, within poor Mental Health issues, to help others with similar people. I have led some 4 or 5 Peer groups, and have assisted people with Infoline Duties” – Steve Hall

“I hope my enthusiasm and consistency for recovery has helped others with their recovery journey” – Guy Wing



“Gypsy has been coming to group sessions with our volunteer Vicki. Gypsy also volunteers with Wagg, visiting old peoples homes. She’s very therapeutic, and will greet people as they arrive and also climb on knees if she thinks someone needs a bit more support. All of the clients love her, and she really makes a big difference to put people at ease and welcoming new people into the groups. She really is a Recovery Dog”

“He enabled safe running of an important Opiate safe clinic, and enabled me to deliver more Flourish in Nature wellbeing group interventions than i otherwise would have.”

“My volunteer had a massive positive impact on the clients , team and partnerships my volunteer fitted in like a member of staff”



Our Volunteer Supervisors

From supervisors who gave feedback on their experience, 88% would recommend having a volunteer....

.....and on average they rated their experience as 4/5

We asked them, what was the most rewarding aspect of supervising a volunteer....

“Seeing a volunteer's actions directly benefit individuals”

“Seeing the Volunteer grow in confidence and be leaving due to gaining employment with Waythrough”

“Enabling the service users to access support from someone with lived experience and visible recovery. Having support to the staff running groups”

Supervisor recognition

“Lydia really helped me to understand everything there is to know about addiction recovery, because of her, I am considering a career in this field”

“Angie is very supportive and always has been throughout my volunteer role. She encourages me to take on a challenge and always makes sure I am enjoying my time volunteering”

“I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the outstanding guidance and support provided by Michael throughout my training. His role has extended far beyond supervision”



Volunteer Induction Workshop

In September 2025 we changed our approach to volunteer induction training. We moved from volunteers completing a range of online learning in their first 12 weeks, to them attending one induction workshop, capturing all mandatory training, with our Volunteering Delivery Leads prior to starting their volunteer role.

83% of attendees rated the workshop at 5/5

95% rated the facilitators at 5/5

“I found the workshop to be really helpful, informative and inclusive ”

“It was a very professional induction. Gave me everything I needed. It also showed what value you place on volunteers. I was very impressed”

“The workshop was excellent and I enjoyed the interaction with other participants and facilitators”

Workshops for staff

We run the following workshops for staff to enable them to consistently and effectively work with volunteers:

- Working with Volunteers
- Supervising Volunteers
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Problem Solving and Volunteers

“I have a better insight into supporting my volunteers emotional, physical and mental wellbeing and ensuring that they are being fully supported in all areas of their role”

“I have a clearer understanding of my responsibilities in regards to the development and mentoring of individuals who want to volunteer with our service”

A message from Ann Denton – Head of Volunteering:

"It's important to us that we thank our volunteers for their contributions.

Our volunteers are committed to our cause and don't ask for anything in return for the time they give us and the life experience that they share, but it's still important to us that we recognise their contributions and thank them.

Recognition helps us to create a culture of appreciation, making volunteers feel valued and integral to Waythrough's mission and enhancing the volunteer experience."



Volunteers Week

Volunteers Week is a national event held every year in June to celebrate and thank volunteers. Over the week we hosted an Online Celebration and 6 Thank You Events and shared inspirational stories from our volunteers and their supervisors.

We heard from Paul Townsley & Ann Denton on the power of volunteering, and both volunteers and supervisors shared the personal and professional benefits of being involved in this way at Waythrough.



North East Event



Leeds Event





Derby Event



Old Moat Event



“You assist in our promise to everyone that comes through our doors, of helping people work out who they want to be and where they want to go” – Ann Denton



London Event

South West Event



“The Room to Reward award is much appreciated, as was the winter gift. Several volunteers have told me how much they appreciated their gifts & how nice it was to have their efforts recognised”

December celebration event

It was our biggest ever attendance for this annual event! The event is always so heartwarming and inspirational, and this year was no exception. At the event we presented the Room to Reward Winners.



Room to Reward

Room to Reward is a unique volunteer-recognition charity created to say 'thank you' to the Hidden Heroes – inspirational volunteers who give up their time to make a difference to those who need it most.

Their hotel and holiday park partners donate their unsold rooms, and charities and community groups nominate their Hidden Heroes for a break.

This was our second year of being part of Room to Reward and we had 7 breaks to award to our volunteers. We had 18 nominations and the winners were decided by a judging panel.

One of this years winners, Hazel told us all about her weekend away, courtesy of Room to Reward:

"We've just returned from our R2R break at the De Vere Beaumont Estate. We had a great time & my husband John & I are both very grateful to the charity for giving us the break.



Throughout our stay hotel staff were very helpful & approachable. Our room was very comfortable with a very impressive en suite & a wonderful view across the attractive & extensive grounds.

We had a lovely dinner in the hotel & we enjoyed an outstanding breakfast each morning. The whole visit was the perfect way to celebrate my birthday"





**Volunteering stories were
2 of the top 3 viewed
intranet news pieces**



**Our Annual Report was in the top 3
Instagram stories for Waythrough**

**Volunteer articles featured in 5 issues
of the Coming Together Newsletter**

We ran the following national campaigns

Student Volunteering Week
Volunteers Week
Trustees week
International Volunteer Manager Day



Other national campaigns volunteering featured in included

Mental Health Awareness Week
Recovery month
International Womens Day



As we ended the financial year we wrote our new 3 year volunteering strategy.

Where lived experience and human connection drive real change

Volunteering is a core part of who we are, essential infrastructure that strengthens communities and improves experiences for the people we support, our volunteers and our staff. Over the next three years, we will grow and diversify our volunteering offer through inclusive approaches, strong service ownership, clear pathways and robust evidence of impact, shaped by the insight of those who work with volunteers across Waythrough.

By 2029 we will have ...

- Increased the number of volunteers
- Embedded volunteering consistently across all services and levels of the organisation
- Established clear volunteering pathways
- Built an accessible volunteering offer
- Demonstrated and communicated the social value and impact of volunteering
- Created an inclusive culture with continuous and meaningful recognition

Coming soon for 2026 – The Waythrough Volunteer Awards

We are hosting our first ever Waythrough Volunteer Awards Ceremony in June to coincide with Volunteers week

Staff members, people accessing our services and volunteers can show their thanks to volunteers by nominating them for an award.

The event will be hosted online via a Teams Webinar. Get in touch with the Volunteering Team to book your place at the event!

