

Volunteers Week – Abbie’s Story



Abbie joined our Volunteers team in May 2021, seeking opportunities to grow in confidence, learn new skills and experience working with mental health professionals and patients.

When asking Abbie why she chose to join NHS volunteers, she said: “I just want to make a difference and be the one to help others, like so many that have helped me in the past.”

Her contribution to our volunteer family has grown exponentially, seeing her taking ‘helping others’ to new levels in a varied range of volunteer roles she has committed to already. These opportunities include marshalling at our Covid-19 vaccine site, giving up her evenings and weekends to help others. Similarly, in her role as a telephone befriender, she has been regularly involved in weekly calls to socially isolated and lonely service users throughout the pandemic giving them hope and promoting positive wellbeing.

Since the age of 14, Abbie has struggled with various aspects of her own mental health. Her lived experience from being a service user to now volunteering with our Trust has given her the opportunity to promote inspiration and hope to those in recovery. Her input into our services, learning and development has been invaluable and she is most appreciated by our team and those she spends time with.

Her interest in mental health has also led her towards the Open University, where she is in her final weeks from completing a Degree in Psychology. When we asked her about this, Abbie said: “I very much enjoy my volunteering in an inpatient unit and working with the patients and staff there. This

experience has really supported my studying as I have lived examples that help me to bring the theory to life – it makes it real!”

Abbie has gained not only academic knowledge from her volunteering but also a great deal of confidence from one of our Clinical Psychologists, who has provided encouragement and recognition of her abilities and natural care for others. This has also been recognised by Recovery College staff who have very much appreciated Abbie’s commitment to mental health courses on their new virtual platform, as well as the technical and creative skills she has brought to podcasts shared on the website.

The Voluntary Services team couldn’t be prouder of Abbie and her achievements, and look forward to supporting her in the next stages of her career.

Are you interested in volunteering for the NHS?

You can help us change lives.

Contact us today via email hnf-tr.voluntaryservices@nhs.net to find out about the range of opportunities we have available.