



# **NHS Ambassadors: how you've helped 400,000 young people**

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# Foreword

NHS Health Education England and Education and Employers have worked together for some years now, to promote and drive forwards the success of the NHS Ambassador programme. Giving staff across the NHS, irrespective of grade, profession or experience, the opportunity to volunteer their time, to speak with young people about our careers, is invaluable to everyone involved in the programme. We know our NHS Ambassadors do amazing work, promoting the NHS as an incredible place to work and build your career. We also know young people really value meeting with NHS Ambassadors, seeing people who look like them, in jobs and positions they aspire to. This report focusses on what the benefits are to our staff in undertaking an ambassadorial role.

By being an ambassador our staff hone and develop significant skills in communication and leadership. By connecting with children and young people, we reconnect with our careers, our individual and personal reasons for studying and training for years, for working long antisocial hours, or for working in roles that are physically demanding and often emotionally challenging.

Being an NHS Ambassador gives our staff an opportunity to examine and question judgements of the NHS and of our roles, it also challenges us to step outside our comfort zones. No two ambassadorial activities are the same, because the groups of children and young people we interact with, are never the same. At some events we find ourselves speaking during assemblies, exploring perceptions over 'nursing as a career only for women', or 'doctors only being drawn from the middle-class elites', or undertaking mock interviews, encouraging young people to value their own lived experience and relate it to caring professions. Being able to stand in front of an assembly of teenagers and explain your passion for your role, why you do what you do, and yes answer questions over reward and recognition, equips our staff with the courage and resilience to walk into any professional situation!

Our NHS Ambassadors have thousands of different job titles, and represent the NHS locally, regionally, and nationally. Our ambassadors are apprentices and CEOs. Our ambassadors are Nursing Associates and Chief Nursing Officers. No matter who our NHS Ambassadors are, or where they come from, they all contribute to raising aspirations and motivating the next generation to want to come and fill our shoes.

## **Natasha Davies**

National Senior Programme Lead:  
Volunteering NHS Health Education England

# Introduction

Health Education England has kindly supported Education and Employers since the launch of our dedicated campaign, NHS Ambassadors in 2018; however, NHS staff have been involved with our work and volunteering on our programmes from the outset, when the charity first launched in 2009.

Over the years, Health Education England have become one of our most valued, long-term, strategic employer partners in volunteering. Education and Employers are proud to work in partnership with the single biggest employer in the UK and one of the nation's most loved, diverse, and respected institutions.

Young people find it easy to resonate and connect with inspiring people that may look like them. "If they can do it, if they can achieve it, then so can I". We are incredibly grateful to the thousands of NHS Ambassadors that so positively bring to life careers in health and social care, by giving up their time and sharing their own personal career journeys. This past year has been one of the most challenging periods for the entire NHS workforce, with Covid19 placing NHS staff under considerable strain, yet we continue to see passion and enthusiasm from our NHS Ambassadors who remain committed to sharing their time and skills with young people across the UK.

Just under five and a half thousand NHS staff from across the UK have registered to volunteer supporting local communities under the NHS Ambassadors initiative with the Education and Employers Charity. NHS participants have been drawn from all levels, all regions and a wide range of roles in the service, with substantial support from Health Education England (HEE). Education and Employers is an independent UK-based charity launched in 2009. It exists to help young people become excited by learning and their potential, to see what is possible, and to make informed decisions about their futures. Education and Employers works with state schools, Health Education England and employers, the national bodies that represent employers and a wide range of other partners including the government, trade unions and third sector organisations.

Colleagues across the NHS have been part of the over 2 million school/employer interactions that have taken place since Education and Employers launched the

Inspiring the Future (ITF) initiative. Inspiring the Future is one of three programmes that Health Education England has supported:

- At secondary school level – **Inspiring the Future** provides first-hand career insights to motivate young people to consider the widest range of future working options by connecting secondary schools with volunteers from the world of work and helps motivate students which can lead to an increase in their attainment;



- At primary school level – **Primary Futures** focuses on broadening the horizons of primary school children by helping them understand the link between learning and work. Meeting a wide range of people doing different jobs is particularly important for those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, who might have few successful role models at home or in their local communities;



- At all levels – **Inspiring Governance** helps schools and colleges provide the best environment for student achievements by connecting them with skilled volunteers interested in becoming governors to schools. Inspiring Governance is increasing the number of volunteers, especially those from diverse backgrounds and with business-related skills, serving as governors and trustees in schools.



The main focus of NHS staff has been on Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures, where they have been a significant contributor to the efforts of 60,000 volunteers drawn from 4,500 companies and other organisations. In addition to supporting these programmes and Inspiring Governance, NHS staff have supported one off locally tailored responses to schools' and colleges' requests for careers related support.

In a survey of its NHS and other volunteers in 2020, Education and Employers found that 24% of those volunteering for two days or less a year said they are more efficient or productive at work as a result of their volunteering. This increases among those who volunteer more often, eventually up to 61% of those volunteering 15 or more days a year. The study asked about a wider range of tangible career benefits – work satisfaction, productivity, promotion speed, earnings or applying to roles – 53% of those who volunteer for two days per year or less report that their education volunteering helped with at least one of those areas of substantive benefit, increasing to 73% among those doing 15 or more days (Percy, C., & Rogers, M. (2020)).

The work described here builds on previous work undertaken by Health Education England and Education and Employers which reported that in March 2016, the Inspiring the Future team had overseen state school students and college students undertake 48,087

interactions with a pool of 1,323 Health Ambassadors. In this work Ambassadors were contacted by 453 different state schools and colleges and 40,000 young people had at least one interaction with an NHS staff member. This, and subsequent work together reflects Health Education England's new strategic approaches to removing barriers evidenced in recruitment practice, addressing specific concerns around diversity within the workforce and trends working against recruitment of younger people (aged under 25).

This report outlines the more recent impact and engagement of NHS staff arising from participation in Inspiring the Future, Primary Futures and Inspiring Governance programmes and how they have helped nearly 400,000 students. As well as survey results, we have included comments from participants to allow the story to be told in their words.



# Executive Summary

2020 to 2021 has been one of the most challenging periods for the entire NHS workforce, yet, despite these difficulties, NHS Ambassadors have remained committed and excelled in rallying across the UK to support our programmes in 2020 and into 2021.

They have input an enormous amount of effort, time, and passion during the pandemic to champion inclusion and diversity and shift young people's perceptions of the roles available to them within the NHS. NHS volunteers have given children and young people the opportunity to ask questions and learn about Covid-19, providing welcome reassurance. As part of the recent virtual sessions, NHS staff demonstrated PPE equipment, discussed ways to keep safe, and talked about mental health issues in a relatable way. With the pandemic bringing a public focus on NHS roles as never before, NHS volunteers have enabled young people to explore the reality of careers in healthcare and translate this into tangible next steps.

## Wide ranging national engagement

NHS Ambassadors represent a full range of clinical and non-clinical specialisms and seniority, ranging from various trainee roles and apprentices to local, regional and national leadership across the NHS. At the end of this report we have provided an indicative list of just under 180 job titles from the nearly three thousand reported by participants. Just under five and a half thousand NHS staff from across the UK have, with substantial support from Health Education England (HEE), contributed to success in raising student aspiration and motivation while supporting the curriculum and showcasing the benefits and opportunities that the NHS provides. In so doing NHS Ambassadors have further helped cement the role of the NHS in local communities and lived the values of WE ARE THE NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 – action for us all (NHS England, 2020).

## Evidence of impact on employers and employees

There is a reliable body of international academic research and practical evaluations indicating that employee volunteering benefits employing organisations, their staff and project beneficiaries. Using participant evaluation and participant data supplied by Education and Employers this report suggests that these benefits are being reflected nationally in the NHS Ambassadors programme.

For example, in a study into the value to employers, of the skills staff developed by volunteering in the UK, the majority of respondents reported skills development. These were in areas like communications, managing others (including specific skills in setting performance goals, coaching, counselling, assisting with training and development, and evaluating performance), adaptability, and influencing skills. Line managers verified these areas of skills development, typically measured as part of their standard competency frameworks (Wilson & Hicks, 2010). One study, using the large-scale British Household Panel Survey of private households, indicates that the mean health score was best among those who were involved in frequent volunteering and worst among those who never volunteered. (Tabassum, Mohan, & Smith, 2016).

## Evidence of helping improve personal performance at work

A survey of NHS Ambassadors indicated that 81% believed they had learned some new skills or gained experience. Eighty percent of respondents said they felt challenged by the programme and reported that participation gave them a sense of achievement. Ninety percent agreed that their involvement had made them feel part of a community. Over 90% of NHS Ambassadors said they would recommend the programme to others. A very small number of less positive comments related to the quality of communication from a few schools and dissatisfaction with catering and car parking. Education and Employers followed up these comments. Overall, the evidence indicates that engagement as an NHS Ambassador is likely to contribute to the levels of employee challenge, engagement, retention, career progression and affinity that the wider global research indicates is likely from employee volunteering.

## Varied activities for staff and students

The bulk of NHS Ambassador support nationally has been focused on Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures with some engagement in Inspiring Governance.

- **Inspiring the Future** provides first-hand career insights to motivate young people to consider the widest range of future working options by connecting secondary schools with volunteers. This includes NHS specific events. During Covid restrictions this provision has moved online. NHS specific videos, learning materials and online interaction has been deployed and well received.
- **Primary Futures** focuses on broadening the horizons of primary school children by helping them understand the link between learning and work. This includes NHS specific events. As above, during Covid restrictions this provision has moved online. NHS specific videos, learning materials and online interaction has been deployed and well received.
- **Inspiring Governance** helps schools and colleges by connecting them with skilled volunteers interested in becoming governors to schools. A Let's get NHS Ambassadors on Board initiative is being coordinated with Health Education England and Education Employers, with a view to recruiting NHS Ambassadors to the boards of schools and colleges using the Inspiring Governance tools and technology. 68 NHS Ambassadors have now been placed as governors through the programme.

## Large scale and inclusive

We are incredibly grateful to the 4511 active NHS Ambassadors up and down the country who dedicate their time to our programmes. NHS Ambassadors have accepted around 4,000 invitations to attend Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures events nationally. Around 1,000 individuals engaged in other activities as part of the NHS Ambassadors programme e.g., mentoring, coaching, contribution to curriculum delivery etc. A number of these individuals were engaged in these additional activities as well as Inspiring Governance and/or Inspiring the Future/ Primary Futures, leading to a slight degree of double counting in total volunteer numbers, probably of around 500 individuals.

The gender and ethnic origin of NHS volunteers is representative of the NHS workforce as a whole. Just over 76% of NHS volunteers identify as female, reflecting the gender balance in the workforce overall (NHS Employers 2019.) Those identifying as white or 'any other white background' make up 79% of volunteers (Gov.UK 2020).

## Helping schools and communities nationally

Ambassadors' support overall is clearly helping motivate students by showing potential opportunities and assisting motivation by highlighting curriculum relevance. There is an interest in NHS roles as evidenced by positive student feedback, with 75% of Primary Futures participants reporting that they found about a new job in the session they attended. The activities appear to be successfully challenging gender stereotypes with 88% agreeing that 'After today I know girls and boys can do the same job'. Sixty one percent of Inspiring the Future participants said that the programme helped them understand more about how the subjects they are studying in school can be useful later in life. Just over 50% of participants in the same programme said it had 'made me want to study harder'. The programme has helped both personal and career development as evidenced by these comments:

Three quarters of teachers surveyed said that they saw gains in students' confidence and motivation. Although the time lag between events and student assessments, and the impact of variable other factors, is problematic in establishing a causal relationship it is worth noting that two thirds of teachers said the programme had had a positive effect on student attainment. Over ninety percent of teachers said they would recommend the programme they had been involved in to others.

## Adapting to Covid, ready for recovery

We have seen the NHS Ambassador programme transform into a national network. The materials being developed and deployed to maintain support during the current Covid pandemic have a channel for distribution and represent a lasting legacy that this network can use to supplement face to face activities when they return in some form. The charity has worked hard to pivot delivery to virtual interactive activities with positive feedback from schools, students and volunteers.

Autumn 2020 saw over 400 students, across five events, from four schools in Bodmin, Slough, Somerset and Suffolk take part in our charity-facilitated, live virtual interactive events, showcasing a range of roles within the NHS, that were well received with many more forming part of 'virtual panels' for both primary and secondary schools.

NHS Ambassadors contributed to two NHS focussed films during spring/summer 2020 period, along with supporting materials. Five contributed to a Secondary age video and five to the Primary age video. The films

focus on a number of different career paths available within the NHS, with volunteers explaining how they got to where they are today and answering questions submitted by students. Launched in June the films have been viewed by 400 schools.

Ambassadors from Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust and Sheffield Hallam University provided a half day virtual work experience programme for Health and Social Care students from eight local colleges in December 2020. Polling was incorporated into each session, with some questions at the start being repeated at the end.

- 94% of respondents thought being an Allied Health Professional is a 'very rewarding' career; a 27% increase as a result of the session;
- By the end of the session 65% of participants were confident about a career choice in Health and Social Care; an uplift of 14% from the start of the session

Education and Employers, supported by Health Education England, have recruited 12 NHS Ambassadors from diverse roles and backgrounds to film themselves talking about what their job entails, the skills they use and their career journey. A further 8 are in process.

The future potential for NHS Ambassadors to continue to contribute both to inspire and motivate students and as governors for schools remains significant. The virtual activities combined with face-to-face, once these resume, mean an even greater reach not limited by geography can be achieved enabling schools across the country to benefit from this fantastic volunteer pool. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Health Education England for their support and look forward to continuing to work together.

## Selected student comments from NHS Virtual events

For one student there was a personal benefit. When asked about what they like most about the event they replied:

“Using the equipment to check your heart rate, height, veins and many things. Also learnt new ways to prevent anxiety and to improve self-esteem. It taught me new ways to be positive about myself.”

From a career development perspective some students felt motivated to explore further careers:

“I learnt that there are loads of jobs that we haven't even heard about and we should search for them. I also found out that apprenticeships are very useful.”

“I learnt that there are many different jobs in the NHS that don't have to do with hospital work (being a doctor) and made me think about becoming a occupational therapist.”

Positive feedback from a teacher highlighted behavioural change and an increase in motivation:

“One of the students who was particularly engaged in the talk and asking questions, generally has real problems focusing in class and never normally wants to engage... This may prove a turnaround in her behaviour. These talks are definitely inspiring!”

# Impact

This chapter analyses questionnaire responses collected by the Education and Employer charity over the course of the programme to consider the impact of Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures on those involved:

- NHS Staff
- Students
- Teachers

We consider the impact of the programmes on the development of skills and attributes that are important to the three participating groups.

## On NHS Staff

A landmark report from 2010, 'Volunteering – The Business Case', examined the value to employers of the skills staff developed by volunteering in the UK (Wilson & Hicks, 2010). The study covered 16 businesses and 546 volunteers, as well as a sample of line managers. The majority of respondents reported skills development in areas like communications, managing others (including specific skills in setting performance goals, coaching, counselling, assisting with training and development, and evaluating performance), adaptability, and influencing skills. Line managers verified these areas of skills development, confirming that improvements were noticeable in their business, typically measured as part of the standard competency frameworks used to monitor staff development at their respective workplaces.



NHS Ambassadors report benefits from their volunteering activities. In a survey with 322 NHS Ambassadors 53% *strongly or very strongly* agreed that involvement had helped them learn new skills and gain experience. A further 25% *simply agreed* they had learned new skills and gained experience. A total of 81% overall believing they had learned some new skills or gained experience demonstrating generally positive views about the programmes. Just over 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed about gaining skills and experience, some of their comments indicated dissatisfaction with organisation by the school they visited or indicated that they were content to use the skills they already had to make a community contribution.

### Call Centre Manager

I use my skills to influence the students and also with my work colleagues to work with NHS ambassadors. There are things you don't gain insights into without going into schools. It's about using your skill sets in the right way.

Over 80% of NHS survey respondents said they felt challenged by the programme and reported that participation gave them a sense of achievement.

### Engagement Officer

As I usually work with adults only, it challenged me to explain things in a much clearer way which will also assist me when working with some of the patients I deal with on a daily basis.

For many participants the experience had helped them gain confidence with 80% agreeing that it had helped them in this regard.

Table 1: Volunteer self-assessment of how they believe the programme has affected them.

The programme ...	Strongly Disagree – Very Strongly Agree						% Total
	% of responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Helped me gain confidence	6	2	12	19	28	33	100
Helped me build a sense of achievement	3	4	6	17	33	38	100
Helped me challenge myself	4	4	5	19	30	38	100
Helped me feel part of a community	3	1	6	17	30	43	100
Helped me learn new skills and gain experience	5	6	10	25	28	25	100
<b>Recommend Programme</b>	1	0	2	6	23	68	100



## Case-study Daniel Duffield

**Job title:** Emergency Medical Technician Apprentice

**Organisation:** West Midlands Ambulance Service  
NHS Foundation Trust



### When did you begin volunteering with Inspiring the Future, and why did you decide to start?

I started volunteering with Inspiring the Future back in November 2019. I still remember my very first event and how nervous I was. I joined so that I could express my passion to younger people and also share some tips being a younger person who is in this job.

### What Inspiring the Future activities have you participated in so far?

I've participated in careers talks, mock interviews, presentations, group activities and virtual events during the pandemic.

### How have you benefited from volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

I've benefited incredibly. My confidence in public speaking and group presentations has literally gone from next to nothing all the way to being able to stand to a group of 100+ students and give a talk on careers events.

### What would you say to those thinking of joining our volunteer community?

#### Do you have any tips/ advice?

Just do it. Cliché, but to the point. I have no regrets and I am very thankful to be able to share my experiences with other people. You'll learn a lot, meet other wonderful people and find out about other interesting jobs! Maybe start off with a smaller event and see how you get on if you've not done something like this before.

### **Trainee Clinical Scientist**

I was nervous about speaking to the whole school, but the kids were so welcoming, well-behaved and full of brilliant questions about my job. It was short, so I had plenty to say, and the experience really built my confidence. It was much less daunting as there were a few of us visiting together, representing different jobs. A bonus highlight was a personal 'thank you for sharing' from a child as I was leaving!

### **Staff Nurse**

Thoroughly enjoyable activities, both the 'What's my line?' event and the speed dating career session. Found it beneficial personally with confidence and being able to talk about my role, as well as for the pupils who were able to ask lots of questions.

Ninety percent agreed that their involvement had made them feel part of a community, with 73% strongly or very strongly agreeing that their involvement had made them feel part of a community.

### **Director of Workforce Development**

I wanted to do this networking event because I want to give something back to my local community and use the opportunity to tell the students about the wonderful job opportunities in the NHS.

It is worth noting that research shows volunteering has benefits for wellbeing more generally. One study used the large-scale British Household Panel Survey of private households, relating mental health (measured by the General Health Questionnaire) positively to volunteering (Tabassum, Mohan, & Smith, 2016). The mean health score was best among those who were involved in frequent volunteering and worst among those who never volunteered.

In the context of the potentially positive contributions to mental health, overall skills development and community engagement reported here it is perhaps unsurprising that over 90% of NHS Ambassadors said they would recommend the programme to others.

### **Team Manager (Clinical Nurse)**

This gave me the opportunity to share my passion and experience with other students. Whilst really nervous I enjoyed engaging with the students and would love to participate in something similar again.

Global research indicates that this positive response is likely to translate into workplace benefits for employers and patients. The 'Benefits of Employee Volunteer Programs' report shows that employers benefit from volunteering as a result of employees who are more

productive and satisfied. Cited evidence includes more positive attitudes from their staff who volunteer, higher job satisfaction, and higher retention rates. Employers whose employees volunteer gain a more highly skilled workforce (Junior Achievement, 2009).

Although not designed to specifically explore the impact of NHS Ambassador engagement on career progress there are several indications that employee involvement leads to positive work outcomes. Overall, the evidence indicates that engagement as an NHS Ambassador is likely to contribute to the levels of employee challenge, engagement, retention and affinity that the wider global research indicates is likely from employee volunteering.

## **On Students**

The NHS Ambassadors programme works with both primary and secondary schools. The Department for Education 2017 Careers Strategy extended this policy focus beyond secondary and into primary education. The Ambassadors' work is about broadening students' horizons and raising aspirations, it is about showing them the range of possibilities available to them and helping to develop options. There is a range of attributes, skills, and behaviours that can be encouraged in this early stage of a child's life.

Primary Futures links into the national Careers Strategy and to date has engaged mainly with Key Stage 2 primary children aged 9-11 years. It is clear the programme is having positive effect on careers related learning and attitudes. The goal of introducing students to new jobs has been achieved with 75% reporting that they found about a new job in the session they attended.

### **11-Year-Old Girl**

I learnt about different jobs and I also found out that not all of the people that work in hospitals are doctors or nurses.

Furthermore 80% reported feeling they can become what they want when they grow up and 69% were more confident in what they can do following the activity in which they participated. The activities appear to be successfully challenging gender stereotypes with 88% agreeing that 'After today I know girls and boys can do the same job'.

### **11-Year-Old Boy**

(I enjoyed) When we learned about Doctor XXX and how she got her job. Also that you don't have to be afraid, you can be whatever you want to be!

The programme has helped students understand the relevance of maths and science in job roles with 86% reporting that they saw how they were useful subjects. Overall findings that involved 263 respondents are summarised in the following table.

When asked in an online survey 'Did the activity today change your mind about who you want to become when you grow up?' of 263 respondents 26% said Yes and 24% were Not Sure. The remaining 51% said No. The relatively high percentage of those individuals whose opinion was unchanged should be seen in the context of understanding that by the time they start primary school children are already starting to form taxonomies of adult roles, maps for navigating the adult world that exerts such control over their own, on top of which they construct their own stereotypes and personal preference (Gottfredson, 1981) (Buzzanell, Berkelaar, & Kisselburgh, 2011). This means that Inspiring the Future may have helped students confirm their pre-existing choices or not exposed them to opportunities that were sufficiently attractive. If the latter were proved to be the case this would support the case for greater and more varied links between schools and employers. Regular, varied interventions would likely be of help to the 24% who recorded not being sure about the impact of the event. A significant number, over a quarter, reported changing their thinking about future jobs as a result of the programme.

#### Girl, Year 10

I learnt about some jobs that I didn't realise you could do and it made me realise that there are lots of jobs that interest me.

At Secondary and College level just over 445 students answered questions anonymously online about their experience with Inspiring the Future. Eighty six percent of participants said that they had learned about a new job as a result of the experience they had. This learning included better understanding of different pathways into jobs, including NHS opportunities.

#### Boy, Year 10

I learnt about the different ways you can get into the different fields of work such as engineering and healthcare. I also learnt about the different skills that employers look for.

The scale and nature of opportunities in the NHS was something participants did not know about prior to the events.

#### Girl, Year 11

I learnt a lot about the opportunities within the NHS, it was surprising to find out that there are more than 350 job roles, and whilst I am not specifically looking to join the NHS it could still be an option in the future.

#### Girl, Year 10

I learnt that in healthcare there can be non-clinical jobs as well as clinical jobs.

Research evidence indicates that employer related events can help student motivation seems to be borne out by the over 50% of post-primary students who said the event had made them want to study harder. The events have also helped students better see their schoolwork in the context of future careers with just

Table 2: Primary student responses on the impact on them of a Primary Futures Event

Statement	Disagree %	Not Sure %	Agree %
I found out about a new job today	16	7	75
After today I know girls and boys can do the same job	7	5	88
I now understand how learning Maths/English/Science can be useful in many jobs	6	8	86
I felt the volunteers today were similar to me and I could relate to them	28	42	29
Today made me feel that I can become anyone I want when I grow up	8	12	80
I feel more confident in what I can do after today's activity	14	18	69

\*some percentages are less than 100% due to rounding calculations

Table 3: Secondary student responses on the impact on them of an Inspiring the Future event

Statement	Disagree %	Not Sure %	Agree %
Today I learnt about a new job	4	9	86
After hearing from volunteers, I understand more about how the subjects I am studying in school can be useful later in life	13	26	61
Today's event has made me want to study harder	13	35	52
Today helped me learn more about the different pathways into jobs	5	12	82
After hearing from volunteers, I can make more confident decisions about my future	13	39	47
After hearing from volunteers, I changed my mind about what I want to do in the future	58	25	16

\*some percentages are less than 100% due to rounding calculations

over 60% agreeing that 'After hearing from volunteers, I understand more about how the subjects I am studying in school can be useful later in life.' No surprise then that just under 50% now felt they had been helped to make more confident decisions about their futures.

#### Girl, Year 10

I particularly enjoyed listening to the NHS Doctor and I found it interesting learning about her job role.

It can be inferred that schools are realising that the NHS Ambassadors input will help with issues of motivation and curriculum relevance. This is seen by the fact that the largest take up of Inspiring the Future is for years seven, 10 and 12. These coincide with, respectively, entry into secondary school, the usual start of GCSE programmes and the usual start of A level programmes, these key transition stages benefiting from efforts to improve motivation.

The Ambassadors' support overall is clearly helping motivate students by showing potential opportunities and assisting motivation by highlighting curriculum relevance. There is an interest in NHS roles as evidenced, not just by positive student feedback but by the secondary student who commented at the end of one of the virtual activities, that we describe later, 'I think the next virtual activities should be slightly more specific to people's interests. For example, a whole webinar on the NHS and different areas in it.'

#### Girl, Year 11

Listening to Georgia- the NHS doctor because it made me feel more confident that I want to do medicine.

## On Schools and Colleges

Online questionnaires were completed by 138 teachers asking about the impact of Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures on key aspects of their school priorities. Teacher satisfaction that Inspiring the Future / Primary Futures programmes are having a positive impact on students is reflected in a 90% rating from those responding indicating that they would recommend the programme they were involved in.

The major impacts were reported in improvements to students' aspiration and understanding of a range of jobs.

### Primary School Teacher – Commenting on a What's My Line Event

The volunteers were all excellent and answered the children's questions brilliantly. They were all engaging and the children were very interested in learning more about their roles, what skills they needed to conduct their roles and how they got into the roles. The children found it inspiring to have an ex-pupil as a guest and we would be keen to keep in contact with XXX, YYY and ZZZ. Please thank them for their time.

Teachers appreciated the realism events brought to students who were able to gain insight into the practicalities of professions. It is likely that these sorts of insights led to teachers reporting a score of 75% that they saw gains in students' confidence and motivation. The time between events and student assessments, and the impact of variable other factors, led to impact of attainment being rated lowest although this still rated at 66% for helping improvement.

### Primary School Teacher – Commenting on a What’s My Line Event

XXX from NHS (radiographer) was the best as she brought items from her workplace and was able to relate to the children.

### Secondary School Teacher – Describing Step Into The NHS Event

All the volunteers were amazing, very confident and conversed easily with the students.

### Primary School Teacher – Commenting on a Super Heros Event

XXX attended and was great with the children. She stayed longer than we had asked which meant the children all got to ask questions and to play with the resources she supplied. She has also agreed to come back for our speed networking event, with a colleague who is a male nurse. She brought lots of props and made the learning experience lots of fun.

### Secondary Teacher – Commenting on Raising Aspirations for BAME Girls event

Volunteers were amazing. They all came with such great positive attitudes and were brilliant with the girls. 2 out of 9 cancelled but we worked around that. One volunteer brought in props and did role play, they absolutely LOVED that! I have wanted to try and get hold of role models, working women from different backgrounds for a long time, it’s really hard to do. This platform has made it all possible! We brought girls from 2 schools together – in hindsight we’d do an afternoon of getting to know each other before putting them together for this Raising Aspiration activity.

### Secondary School Teacher – Commenting on 6th Form Mock Interview Day

... I just wanted to drop you a line to share our sincere thanks for attending our year 12 mock interview event on the 1st May. I hope you found value preparing our year 12s for their future interviews. Having ran events like these in my past schools employer involvement in these activities can help to enhance the students, the school and even the volunteers. Our young people need access to quality experiences like the one you attended on Wednesday in order to prepare them for the opportunities, experiences and challenges that the future world of work has to offer. You could have been the key to unlocking the potential that is present in every young person currently making their way through year 12 so I can’t pass on enough thanks for your support. Some volunteers expressed they feel that they personally made a worthwhile contribution and felt you had increased knowledge and understanding about interview processes. From a school’s point of view these career events can improve students’ level of achievement and helps to enrich learning experiences and opportunities for our students. From a student’s point of view, we hope these events help our students to get a real sense of why learning is important, better results and outcomes and generates a thirst for knowledge going forward.

Table 4: Teacher evaluation of the impact of Inspiring the Future / Primary Futures on students

The programme helps students improve ...	Average score on a six point scale
Confidence	4.57
Motivation	4.88
Aspiration	5.11
Attainment	3.97
Understanding of a range of jobs	5.11
Understanding of career pathways	4.42
Understanding of recruitment processes	3.92
Employability skills	4.32

Using the six point scale to determine if teachers would recommend the programme they had been involved in the average score was 5.42.

## Impact Since Covid

This past year has been one of the most challenging periods for the entire NHS workforce, with Covid19 placing NHS staff under considerable strain, yet we continue to see passion and enthusiasm from our NHS Ambassadors who remain committed to sharing their time and skills with young people across the UK.

In Spring and Summer 2020 Ambassador events gradually moved online. Clearly, operational requirements in the workplace and Covid restrictions in schools and colleges have impacted on the programme. To mitigate the effects of Covid on the benefits from the Ambassador programme during the summer a more NHS focussed offer was developed, with Education and Employers. This allowed the efforts of a reduced number of available personnel to be focussed in areas that might provide tangible outcomes for the NHS and maintain or increase the reach of the interventions. Several virtual events have been developed.

In June 2020 two films about NHS careers were launched with Ambassadors having leading roles. One is aimed at Primary schools, the other at Secondary schools. Both have supporting resources. The Secondary material had been viewed just under 1000 times and the Primary age material just under 800 times between launch and mid-January 2021. So far over 400 schools have requested the resources, including 10 Special schools. The greatest take up has been with secondary level material where 195 secondary schools, 26 FE colleges and 11 Middle schools now have the supporting teaching resources.

In December, a half day virtual work experience programme was delivered for 600 Health and Social care college students from eight colleges across South Yorkshire. Polling was incorporated into each session, with some questions at the start being repeated at the end.

- 94% of respondents thought being an Allied Health Professional is a 'very rewarding' career; a 27% increase as a result of the session
- By the end of the session 65% of participants were confident about a career choice in Health and Social Care; an uplift of 14% from the start of the session

### College lecturer – commenting on Virtual Work Experience

Thank you, the students enjoyed the work experience, this would be fantastic if it could be repeated in September. It would help with the exam unit and support decisions in regard to university opportunities.

Over 400 students, across five events, from four schools in Bodmin, Slough, Somerset and Suffolk took part in our charity-facilitated, live virtual interactive events showcasing a range of roles within the NHS, that were well received.

### Secondary School Teacher – Commenting on Virtual Work Showcase Event

I just wanted to say thanks so much for organising and delivering a fantastic session to our students. The presentations were pitched at the right level for our learners and the students really engaged with the session. Please could you pass on our thanks to the volunteers who gave up their valuable time to speak to our students and inspire them to think about their own futures?

Analysis of overall student comments from the five virtual showcase events held during autumn term 2020, suggests that many of the benefits and impact of the face-to-face work has been retained, and with a specific NHS focus being reinforced. The number of students involved was too low for a meaningful statistical interpretation of their responses but the following comments indicate the sort of learning that is taking place is similar to that from the face-to-face activities.

Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures have also continued their more general online events with NHS support and the transition to online working generally seems to have helped to provide benefits to the Ambassadors, students and schools.

### Secondary School Teacher – Commenting on A Live Webinar

All the volunteers were fantastic! Really easy to communicate with and their engagement with students was really practical and insightful – feedback from students was so positive and personally I feel that I learnt a lot from the sessions – which has benefited my professional knowledge base.

12 of the planned 20 films to be hosted on the icould website have already been completed. The icould website has over a million visits per year. The 20 films cover a range NHS roles and opportunities with supporting data on salaries and career progression.

NHS Ambassadors (and all Inspiring the Future volunteers) have been provided with the option to deepen their volunteering commitment by registering with Inspiring Governance through the portal since the charity commenced this programme in 2016 with several ambassadors having registered their interest.

To further promote this opportunity to staff, Let's Get NHS Ambassadors on Board launched in August 2020 with an aim to recruit NHS Ambassadors as school and college governors using the Education and Employers Inspiring Governance portal and support structures. Around 900 NHS Ambassadors have now registered their interest in Inspiring Governance and between January 2017 and mid-January 2021 80 Ambassadors have gone on to express interest in specific governor opportunities, with 67 of those Ambassadors since being matched as a school governor with one of their local schools.

The NHS's Long-Term Plan, including the 2020 People Plan, highlights the importance of increasing the number of people with clinical backgrounds and from diverse backgrounds involved in strategic leadership. Traditionally, doctors and nurses get engaged, however, other roles – allied health professionals (AHPs), pharmacists, healthcare scientists, midwives,

psychologists may be less able to find their way to strategic roles that maximise their contribution. Research indicates that school governor roles can provide opportunities to develop strategic governance skills. OFSTED research indicates widespread vacancies on school governing bodies with over 70% of respondents indicating vacancies in their school, regardless of phase of education (OFSTED 2020).

This review suggests that there are positive impacts for NHS workforce development through engagement in the NHS Ambassadors programme both for current staff and potential recruits. These benefits are combined with enhanced community insight and understanding and a reputational boost resulting from engagement with schools. The commitment of NHS and Education and Employers staff to facilitate engagement is appreciated by those benefiting from the service and this engagement is effectively facilitated via the online matching service provided by the charity used to link interested parties. The films being used are the basis for a sustainable, efficient legacy.

The next chapter considers in more detail the various forms of the engagement undertaken by NHS Ambassadors before and during the Covid pandemic.



## Case-study Amita Aggarwal

**Job title:** Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Clinical Fellow

**Organisation:** Health Education England

### What activity did you participate in?

Earlier this year, I participated in a virtual NHS Careers Chat with year 12/13 students from Haggerston School in Hackney. As the focus was on healthcare careers, I was joined by a dietician and felt the combination of pharmacy and dietetics was great.

### Why did you decide to take part in the activity?

I am passionate about my profession and am proud to be a pharmacist. There can be misconceptions about our role and lack of awareness around it. Pharmacist's roles are changing and becoming more patient focusing and it is important for students to hear about the impact we have on patients and the exciting opportunities there are for pharmacists.

### How did you prepare?

I prepared firstly by reflecting on my career to date and the journey I have taken to becoming a pharmacist. I put myself back into the shoes of when I was deciding about career choices to understand what information would have been useful for me. I decided to make a fun PowerPoint that would be engaging for the students.

### What was the best part about the activity for you?

The best part about the activity was seeing the students engage and be interactive. The questions they asked showed that they had been listening and it was wonderful that they were interested in pharmacy.



# What has been done?

## Overview

The bulk of NHS Ambassador support nationally has been focused on Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures with some engagement in Inspiring Governance.

- Inspiring the Future provides first-hand career insights to motivate young people to consider the widest range of future working options by connecting secondary schools with volunteers.
- Primary Futures focuses on broadening the horizons of primary school children by helping them understand the link between learning and work.
- Inspiring Governance helps schools and colleges by connecting them with skilled volunteers interested in becoming governors to schools. A Let's Get NHS Ambassadors on Board initiative is being coordinated with Health Education England and Education Employers, with a view to recruiting NHS Ambassadors to the boards of schools and colleges using the Inspiring Governance tools and technology.

Around 1000 individuals engaged in other activities as part of the NHS Ambassadors programme eg mentoring, coaching, contribution to curriculum delivery etc. A number of these individuals were engaged in these additional activities as well as Inspiring Governance and/or Inspiring the Future/ Primary Futures, leading to a slight degree of double counting in total volunteer numbers, probably of

around 500 individuals. Enthusiastic support has been provided across all NHS regions and the devolved nations, summarized here.

### Consultant Surgeon after a Career Speed Networking event

This is one of the most fun, eye opening and rewarding ways I've spent a morning for a long time.

Table 5: Number of NHS Ambassadors by programme choice, still active on the online platform (note Primary Futures activities are included in Inspiring the Future)

Region / Nation	Both	Inspiring Governance	Inspiring the Future	Grand Total
East Midlands	39	3	252	294
East of England	60	10	270	340
London	228	51	641	920
North East	55	6	229	290
North West	97	25	457	579
Northern Ireland	0	1	2	3
Scotland	5	0	29	34
South East	105	21	473	599
South West	41	13	346	400
Wales	1	1	25	27
West Midlands	64	11	300	375
Yorkshire and the Humber	86	17	547	650
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4511</b>

From the earlier stages of the programme in 2017 a wide variety of activities have been supported by NHS staff as part of the NHS Ambassadors work. Health Education England and Education and Employers ran five showcase events, targeted geographically across the UK in Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Sheffield and London. These events demonstrated to schools the easy match-making technology and how NHS Ambassadors can supplement good careers provision in both secondary and primary schools. They also broadened the reach of the NHS. Working with Trusts and NHS organisations operating across the UK, they highlighted the job opportunities for young people with one of the biggest employers in the UK, with a diverse range of job roles and a diverse workforce.

It is worth noting that schools and colleges look for support for a variety of students. Requests for help cover a range of abilities and circumstances from Oxbridge entrants to school students identified by their teachers at risk of unemployment or those with barriers such as disability, language or confidence. The programme also works with special schools. Several teachers and lecturers explicitly identified raising aspiration and providing local role models as part of their rationale for engaging with Ambassadors. Typical activities that Ambassadors provide are described here, along with some anonymized examples of requests. These indicate the diversity of need and the customised responses required, and provided, through HEE and Education and Employers collaboration:

#### **Support Request (Anonymised)**

On 7th and 8th November 2017, The XYZ School are holding a careers activity for Year 9 students – half of the total cohort will complete the activity on the 7th and the other half on the 8th. Students will complete ‘Step into the NHS’ careers activity where they need to choose one of the 350+ NHS careers to research, write a job description for the role, capturing the key responsibilities of the roles, qualifications and training routes and also an advertisement for the job in the form of a poster or leaflet. Following a presentation by myself to the whole cohort on the activity and preparing students with their resources/ sorting them into groups of 4 (within each tutor group) – students will then spend Periods 2 and 3 (9.30-10.30 and 10.50-11.50) working on the activity and presenting their research to their form/tutor/ volunteers who will agree the best 2 groups (from each form) to go through to the final in the main hall during period 4 (11.50-12.50) for final judging. At the final judging, 3 groups will be judged GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE and these 3 will be sent off

to the NHS competition. We are looking for several volunteers for each of the 4 form groups (on both days) to support students with preparing their job description and poster/leaflet as we feel employer volunteers will really be able to support students with ideas, help with what employers look for in candidates (volunteers do not need to work for the NHS) and bring some realism to this task. Ideally, if you can help between 9.15-11.50 either or both days – this would be fantastic.

**What’s My Line** – This is an interactive activity that involves children asking a panel of 4-6 volunteers a series of yes/no questions about their role, before trying to guess their job. Volunteers leave the room and return in work clothes or with an artefact from their job and reveal what role they actually perform. Depending on the request from the school this initial discussion takes place in a large group in an assembly hall or similar. Afterwards volunteers go into classrooms for breakout talks, to give children the opportunity to ask any questions they have about their jobs. Experience has shown this is a very effective activity in challenging gender stereotypes eg revealing female surgeons, male nurses.

**Careers Fairs** – These varied in format. Commonly held in a large hall where employers have booths/ displays employees, explaining roles, entry and application processes and anything else students might want to know about NHS careers. Sometimes these events included talks from NHS staff in addition to hosting a stall. Often the events were broad across a range of employers and roles but several were held that were STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) specific or with a focus on health and social care careers eg Step into the NHS. Thirteen such requests were identified on the data base, but given the general nature of many initial enquiries the number of these types of events supported is likely to be far greater.

#### **Support Request (Anonymised)**

We would like to invite volunteers to work with our most able Year 12 students to discuss their university choices, whilst working with volunteers from an Oxbridge / Russell Group background. The sessions will take place on Tuesday 4th December from 2-4pm and Tuesday 11th December from 2-4pm. The format would be a short coaching session where coaches would discuss students’ current state of mind regarding university, encourage them to aim high, and offer them some advice and guidance about what steps they could take to develop further.

Sessions like this also help develop students' confidence. We welcome all volunteers, but are particularly keen to work with volunteers who reflect the ethnic make up of our school. The largest ethnic groups in our school are Asian Bengali, African-Somali and Black British, but we also have students from almost every other ethnic background.

**Subject specific talks** – Multiple talks have been provided covering a variety of disciplines. Requests for help with talks on science, dentistry, medicine, psychology, neuroscience, nursing, professions allied to health, biology, mathematics, biology, business/management and English were responded to by NHS staff.



## Case-study Bamidele Farinre

**Job title:** Senior Executive Officer (Healthcare Scientist)

**Organisation:** Public Health England



### Why did you decide to start volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

Volunteering with Inspiring the Future gives me the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than myself and use my civic responsibility to empower people especially the young minds across the globe. I wanted to give back to my community especially the underrepresented groups who would not have otherwise considered STEM subjects or careers. As a woman in STEM-related careers there are a lot of obstacles and having the advice of a woman who has already "been there, done that" can help them see that success is possible. Volunteering is another avenue for me to develop new skills and build on existing experiences and knowledge.

### What has been the best part about volunteering?

The best part of volunteering is the complete satisfaction I get when I see the enthusiasm on the faces of the students who were otherwise not engaged at the beginning of the sessions. I relish the idea that I am influencing the minds of the younger generation at such a crucial time in their lives when their minds are being formed.

I believe I have been able to positively influence the mindset of some of the younger generation through my volunteering activities. There are still misconceptions about STEM careers and there's a myth about IT and Engineering being a male dominated field. A lot of students have come up to me after STEM sessions to tell me that they would love to be like me when they grow up. The sense of accomplishment that comes with this is second to none.

### How have you benefited from volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

I have benefited immensely from volunteering with Inspiring the Future. I have been able to network strategically and work outside my boundaries. My communication and presentation skills have greatly improved because I have learnt to explain scientific technicalities to students in the simplest forms possible.

### What would you say to those thinking of joining our volunteer community? Do you have any tips/ advice?

There's no better time than now to join the wagon of Change AGENTS out there, inspiring the future generation and showing them, they can do it just like you. Committing even as little as one hour a year can have a profound benefit on your own life.

**National Initiatives** – NHS staff supported several events in schools and colleges as part of national initiatives such as NHS 70th Birthday Celebrations, Apprenticeship Week, British Careers Week, International Women’s Week, International Men’s Day, British Science Week.

#### **Support Request (Anonymised)**

I am a Year 6 teacher from XYZ Primary School, Bradford. I am currently in the process of arranging a whole school event titled, ‘Dream, Believe, Achieve,’ that is due to take place on Monday the 26th of November. XYZ school is situated in ABC an inner-city, deprived area: 29% of children in the district currently live below the poverty line (Council Intelligence Bulletin) meaning that the children often lack enriching life experiences. This event is aimed at exposing the children to a number of exciting career paths to raise their aspirations and show them what they are capable of achieving when they believe in themselves. We are seeking to invite a number of professionals from a range of career paths to come and speak to the children and carry out short interactive activities based on what they do in the workplace. Whilst this would be voluntary, it would be invaluable to the children, undoubtedly good fun and you would have the chance to be in the local press. Please let me know if this is something you would be interested in.

**Mentoring** – Volunteers responded to 13 specific mentoring requests. These varied from one off sessions to multiple sessions with identified students. However, the general nature of many initial enquiries leads us to believe that more mentoring sessions than this have taken place.

#### **Support Request (Anonymised)**

We are looking for mentors in the legal and healthcare sectors. We have a number of students on our scholarship programme looking at careers in these areas. We ask mentors to attend at least one face to face meeting with their mentee (first meeting – 23rd November 2018). After this, mentors are then available over email/phone to offer guidance and give a helping hand to their mentee e.g. with university applications/work experience advice. It is a relatively flexible arrangement and we do our best to work around you and your schedule as we understand you are likely to be busy.

**Career Speed Dating** – Volunteers remain at a table and students, either individually or in small groups, come and ask about the volunteer’s role for a short time eg 10 minutes. Students visit several tables so they have

the opportunity to talk to as many professional people as possible. The aims are to ignite interest or address students’ most pressing enquiries with, perhaps, follow up afterwards by some combination of students, school or volunteer.

**Mock Interviews** – There were 121 requests for mock interview support, often these involved several students over the course of a day. These sessions were about helping students develop interview skills or improving their CV generally and didn’t specifically mention NHS careers, although it is likely that some participants may have had an interest. However, six requests identified assistance with medicine specific applications and five requests were for support in entering health and social care roles.

#### **Support Request (Anonymised)**

Presenting Yourself at St XYZ School (for boys) is an employability skills workshop where business professionals co-coach and guide groups of up to 10 pupils/ students through a series of activities that help them to develop confidence in marketing themselves effectively in their CVs, personal statements and performance in an interview. All the learning activities / resources are provided in the “Student Booklet”. The workshop runs from 9am-12.40pm with the final 45-60 minutes devoted to mock interviews.

Volunteer feedback, which is recorded on the Education Employer system, is overwhelmingly positive about their experience of participating in face-to-face events. They talk positively of student and staff engagement and how well planned and prepared the events are. Volunteers talk positively of ‘giving something back’, sharing their passion for their roles and the challenge of communicating complex roles and ideas meaningfully to young people. The few negative comments recorded related to car park provision, refreshments and, occasionally, student behavior being disruptive or some schools not being fully prepared.

### **Activities Since Covid**

The onset of Covid and associated restrictions has limited face to face interaction and, so, relegated some of these concerns to the past, at least temporarily. The form of support and the numbers of NHS volunteers has been, unsurprisingly, greatly impacted by the need to respond in a Covid safe way. In Spring and Summer terms 2020 Ambassadors continued to work with schools and colleges, albeit with a lower level of activity due to operational requirements in the workplace and

Covid restrictions in schools and colleges. During this period activities increasingly migrated to online or digital support.

### Support Request (Anonymized)

We would like volunteers to record or be available for a live call with students where they explain their career, the process to achieving that career, and what experience was needed. We may also want an opportunity for questions and answers. We are happy for these to be pre-recorded at any time and we will simply show them to students in the Easter term (2020). Due to Covid restrictions, a virtual event seems most sensible. If being available in the easter term is difficult, no live session will be required.

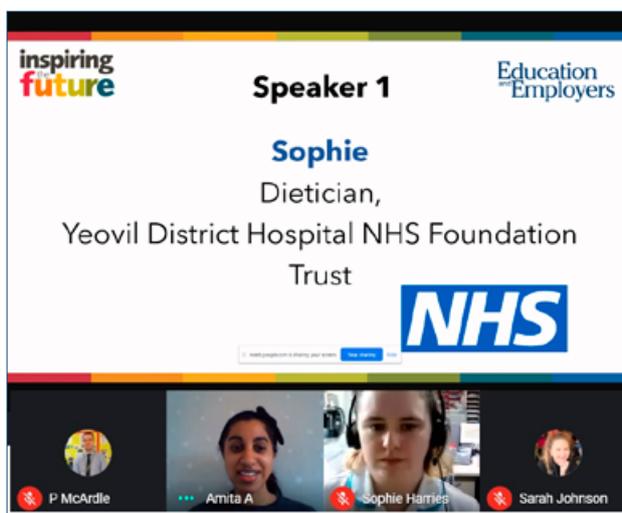
NHS frontline staff contributed to two short, pre-recorded films produced by Education and Employers which launched in June 2020. One was aimed at Primary age students and the other at Secondary age students. Numbers viewing the videos continue to increase. The films focus on a number of different career paths available within the NHS, with volunteers explaining how they got to where they are today. The films and accompanying teacher resources can be used as with students as part of a lesson plan for careers-focussed learning. Since June, over 400 secondary schools, primary schools, FE colleges and Special Education schools have requested the pre-recorded teacher resource to accompany the film, which in turn has seen over 1,600 views.

In December a half day virtual work experience programme was delivered for Health and Social care college students for eight colleges across South Yorkshire covering Doncaster, Sheffield and Rotherham. Approximately 600 students took part in total. Ambassadors and Education and Employers ran three sessions:

- Nursing careers;
- Allied Health Professionals (AHPs); and
- Pathways into Nursing.

Five virtual health and social care sector showcase events were held during the autumn term of 2020 to demonstrate a broad range of roles across the NHS and facilitated by Education and Employers staff. These took place with both primary and secondary schools in Bodmin, Slough, Somerset and Suffolk, involving 400+ students and were supported by 15 NHS Ambassadors.

As part of the partnership, we are building a suite of video case studies of diverse volunteers, creating a lasting resource of our NHS Ambassadors. Using the power of authentic personal stories these videos will



inform and inspire young people's career choices and help draw links between school subjects and jobs. These videos, which are currently being self-filmed by participants due to the pandemic, will be hosted on the **icould** site which receives around 1 million visitors annually and features over 1000 videos of real people talking about their careers.

Education and Employers, supported by Health Education England, recruited 12 NHS Ambassadors from diverse roles and backgrounds to film themselves talking about what their job entails, the skills they use and their career journey. A further 8 are in process. Films so far include:

- Prosthetics
- Paramedic
- Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
- Osteopath
- School nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist x 2
- Nursing Associate
- Midwife



- General Practitioner
- Research Support Worker

The icould videos can be filtered by job type or subject and cover a range of sectors and levels, encouraging young people to discover opportunities they may not have known about before. Exploring these real-life stories also enables students to tap into perspectives outside their networks or take inspiration from situations that reflect their own experiences. Each video is matched with labour market information – such as salary, qualifications and future employment – bringing together first-hand insight with practical next steps.

A couple of examples can be seen in [Monica, Nursing Associate from Nottingham University Hospitals](#), and [Nicola, Paramedic from South Central Ambulance Service](#).

### Support Request (Anonymised)

Our Wonderful School Needs Some Of Your Precious Time Please. Our annual event has had to change and move online! Please help us run online Destinations Day for our pupils. The event will run from 8.30am until 3.00pm on Friday 26th February, 2021. The event will use School Cloud software, where you will log onto a link and meet small groups of around three pupils (who have chosen to speak to you) to chat about your career in 10 minute appointments. Please volunteer for as many slots as possible, but any of your time will be gratefully accepted. If you are able to send us an email address, we can send you a booking document for you to confirm availability. We will be dividing year groups up as below: Year 11X (half of Year 11) Period

- 1 8.35am-9.34am Year 8x (half of Year 8) Period 2
- 9.40am-10.41am Year 8y (half of Year 8) Period 3
- 11.00am-11.51am Year 11y (half of Year 11) Period 4
- 11.00am-11.53am Year 12 and 13 Period 5
- 1.55am-3.05am Thanks so much for your support; it means a lot to our school community. XYZ High School

One benefit of virtual activities has been to overcome the limitations of distance and travel time. However, as a national programme NHS Ambassadors from across the service have built up a range of personal connections in the localities they serve which, combined with the positive response of all concerned to face to face work, has made the migration to online support less difficult.

It is these local connections that make the Let's Get NHS Ambassadors on Board programme so promising in providing leadership development opportunities for NHS staff and supporting local schools. Health Education England and Education and Employers delivered a promotional session to a nursing cohort and Education Employers have shared promotional information materials with HEE to circulate internally. Research indicates that school boards had between 11% and 13% board vacancies on average (OFSTED, 2020). This indicates the potential for mutual benefit from this programme when it resumes, particularly in preparing a more diverse section of the workforce for strategic roles, when a suitable point in the vaccination programme is reached.

The following chapter considers where the engagement described in this report has come from.

# Who did it?

## Overview

NHS Ambassadors is a national programme with several dimensions that we examined in the previous chapter. This section considers the location and characteristics of volunteers.

NHS Ambassadors have accepted around 4000 invitations to attend Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures events nationally. Usually this means they have been invited by schools to take part via the matching service provided online by Education and Employers. This number represents an approximate 10% acceptance rate amongst NHS staff. Short notice, changes to school plans or changes to NHS staff workload are understood to be factors affecting the take-up of invitations. This 10% take up rate is in line with the take up rate from the wider volunteer cohort involved in Education Employer school work. However, in the last couple of years the matching platform used by Education and Employers has allowed volunteers to put themselves forward for school events notified on the site. This has resulted in just under 700 NHS Ambassador expressions of interest, pro-actively offering to help.

The gender and ethnic origin of NHS volunteers is representative of the NHS workforce as a whole. Just over 76% of NHS volunteers identify as female, reflecting the gender balance in the workforce overall (NHS Employers 2019.) Those identifying as white or 'any other white background' make up 79% of volunteers (Gov.UK 2020).

A wide range of NHS organisations have engaged in the programme with the encouragement of Health Education England. Volunteers individually identified 1007 organisations as their employer, including multiple independent sector organisations supporting patients and NHS services. Unsurprisingly Health Trusts were the main source of volunteers. This diversity of organisations helped highlight a variety of roles and opportunities to young people. Using data from participants we can see that volunteers included individual GPs, commissioning group representatives, Royal Colleges, ambulance trusts, NHS Digital, NEL CSU, NHS Employers, Universities, Public Health England, NHS Improvement, NHS Business Services Authority, Association for Project Management, Medical students, Nursing students, retired doctors, retired nurses, NHS Property Services, NHSX, NHS Resolution,



NHS Confederation, Royal Navy, and NHS Litigation Authority. The list indicates that the NHS made a major contribution to the programme's aim of ensuring that young people are exposed to a range of roles and professions. A fuller indicative list of job roles is presented at the end of this chapter.

However, just over 600 volunteers identified their employer as 'the NHS' in some form. Inconsistent use of naming conventions by volunteers and the volume of data to be analysed means that data presented here about the number of organisations involved in the programme should be treated as indicative only and indicating broad representation rather than an exact summary. Although the details of individual employing organisations are less than wholly accurate there is clear evidence of a wide range of support

To provide some sense of how widespread volunteer engagement has been we note, as a basis of comparison, that NHS Providers identifies a variety of organisations as NHS organisations

- 207 clinical commissioning groups
- 135 acute non-specialist trusts (including 84 foundation trusts)
- 17 acute specialist trusts (including 16 foundation trusts)

- 54 mental health trusts (including 42 foundation trusts)
- 35 community providers (11 NHS trusts, 6 foundation trusts, 17 social enterprises and 1 limited company)
- 10 ambulance trusts (including 5 foundation trusts)
- 7,454 GP practices
- 853 for-profit and not-for-profit independent sector organisations, providing care to NHS patients from 7,331 locations NHS Providers, 2020)

Of those organisations that could be individually identified as providing 60 or more volunteers Leeds and

Sheffield Trusts were the source of the largest number, 96 and 73 volunteers respectively. Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS 62 and South London and Maudsley Mental Health Trust (SLAM) 60.

Analysis indicates that of the 1307 identified organisations providing 4890 volunteers the average number of volunteers per identified organisation was four. This takes no account of the 600 volunteers who self-identified generically as NHS without identifying a specific employer, not does it consider the respective size of contributing organisations.

Table 6: Indicative summary of volunteers and organisations

Number of Volunteers (range)	Total Number of Volunteers	Total Number of Organisations
1-10	2575	1200
11-20	1074	74
21-30	417	17
31-40	237	7
41-50	181	4
51-60	60	1
61-70	126	2
71-80	73	1
81-90	0	0
91-100	96	1
*101+	651	Not known

\* Volunteers who identified 'NHS' as employer without identifying specific organisation



## Conclusion

Our partnership with Health Education England goes from strength to strength and it is with thanks to the continued commitment of our NHS Ambassadors that we can continue our mission and work towards our partnership goals. We were delighted to see Health Education England further their support for the charity in 2020 by contributing to **'The Value of Volunteering' report** (in collaboration with The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) and participating in the report launch event. More recently, the charity published a new research report **'Starting Early'**, which draws upon international evidence as well as a study of 10,000 children in England to examine how activities that involve role models from the world of work reduce stereotypes, enhance confidence, foster a positive attitude towards school, and improve attainment. This research would not be possible without the support of our volunteers including from our NHS Ambassadors.

We hope that this report and the detailed qualitative and quantitative feedback has given some insight and indicates the level of positive impact our NHS Ambassadors programme is having in schools and on the lives of so many young people.

With the current lockdown and national pandemic continuing to impact children's lives, our mission and partnerships with employers, such as with Health Education England, remains more important than ever, in helping to motivate and inspire children, whilst making those vital connections with the outside world.

Volunteers enter their job titles in free form on the system used to match volunteers. This means there is no consistent format that would allow robust exact understanding of the roles involved in the programme. However, it is clear from reviewing data and the content of volunteer and school feedback that a large range of roles and occupations at all levels is involved in the Ambassador programme. Using the 2743 individual job titles we were provided with we extract here a sample list intended to indicate the broad range of representation from the NHS. For the sake of brevity, we have not generally included full details of specialisms or seniority. However, NHS Ambassadors represent a full range of clinical and non-clinical specialisms and seniority, ranging from various trainee roles and apprentices to local, regional and national leadership across the NHS. It is this range of roles and the commitment of Ambassadors that has



contributed to teacher acknowledged success in raising student aspiration and motivation while supporting the curriculum and showcasing the benefits and opportunities that the NHS provides. In so doing NHS Ambassadors have further helped cement the role of the NHS in local communities and lived the values of the NHS People Plan.

## Indicative Job Roles (As Described By Participants To Students)

A&E Doctor	Director of Information and Business Intelligence
A&E Sister	Director of Workforce and Organisational Development
A&E Nurse	Doctor
Academic General Practitioner	Embryology Practitioner
Academic Psychiatry trainee	Emergency Medical Dispatcher
Academy Lead Clinical and Professional Education	Employee Relations & Engagement Manager
Academy Project Manager	Equality and Diversity Practitioner
Access to Work Facilitator/Trainer	Events Coordinator
Accident and Emergency Medicine Registrar	Finance Management Trainee
Acute Care Pathway Manager	Fundraising Manager
Acute Care Practitioner	Future Careers Development Facilitator
Acute Contracts Manager-Quality	General Manager
Administrator	General Practitioner
Allied Health Professions Workforce Lead	Governance Officer
Ambulance Care Attendant	Graduate Management Trainee
Ambulance Dispatcher	Hazardous Area Response Team Paramedic
Ambulance Technician	Head of Administration
Anaesthetist	Head of Allied Health Professions
Analyst	Head of Allied Health Sciences
Apprentice and Work Experience Coordinator	Head of Business Management
Apprenticeship Lead & Registered Nurse	Head of Commercial Services
Audio Video Technician	Head of Communications & Engagement
Biomedical Scientist – Biochemistry	Head of Estates & Facilities
Business Administration Apprentice	Head of Financial Services
Business Intelligence Business Partner	Head of HR & OD & Talent
Call handler	Head of Logistics
CAMHS Case Manager	Head of School – Health & Social Care
Cardiologist	Head of School for General Practice
Cardiology Consultant Nurse	Head of Technology
Care Support Worker	Head of Workforce Programmes & OD
Catering manager	Health Analyst
Chair	Health Care Assistant
Chief Executive	Health Care Support Worker
Children's Occupational Therapist	Health Visitor
Clinical Engineer	Helpdesk Advisor
Clinical Fellow (Dentist)	Home keeping
Clinical Photographer	HR & Recruitment Assistant
Clinical Scientist	Human Resources Manager
Community midwife	Imaging Assistant
Consultant	Information Analyst
Contract Manager	Information Systems Manager
Corporate General Manager	Invoice Validator
Cyber Security Programme Manager	Junior Doctor
Data Manager	Junior sister
Dental Nurse	
Dentist	
Dietitian	

Lawyer  
Learning & Development Manager – Apprentices  
Learning and Development Lead – Widening Participation  
Librarian  
Library Assistant

Management Accountant  
Managing Director  
Matron  
Medical Copywriter  
Medical Director  
Medical Engineering Apprentice  
Medical Records Assistant  
Medical Secretary (Apprenticeship)  
Medical Student  
Mental Health Care Coordinator  
Microbiology Laboratory Manager  
Midwife

NHS HR Graduate Management Trainee  
Nurse  
Nursing Assistant  
Nutrition and Dietetics Manager (Dietitian)

Occupational Therapist  
Office Manager  
Operational Service Manager  
Organisational Development Manager  
Outreach Support Worker (CAMHS)

Paralegal and Information Governance Assistant  
Patient Experience and Quality Manager  
Personal Assistant  
Pharmacist  
Pharmacy technician  
Physiotherapist  
Practice Business Manager (GP Surgery)  
Pre – Registration Pharmacist  
Pre-Registration Pharmacy Technician  
Prescription Coordinator  
Primary Care Accountant  
Procurement and Logistics Category Manager  
Programme Manager  
Programme Support Manager  
Project Administrator  
Project Manager  
Project Officer  
Psychiatric Social Worker  
Psychiatrist

Psychotherapist  
Public Health Practitioner

Quality & Business Performance Manager  
Quality & Workforce Development Manager  
Quality Improvement Facilitator

Radiographer  
Reception team leader  
Receptionist  
Recruitment & Retention Manager  
Recruitment Advisor  
Recruitment and Marketing Project Officer  
Regional Allied Health Professions Lead  
Rehabilitation Support Worker  
Research Assistant  
Resourcing Manager  
Risk Support Officer  
Risk, Compliance & Continuity Lead

Secretary  
Security Manager  
Service Improvement and Patient Safety Lead  
SISTER  
Social Worker  
Sonographer  
SPA 111 and  
Speech and Language Therapist  
Staff Engagement and Retention Facilitator  
Student Mental Health Nurse  
Student nurse  
Student Paramedic  
Student Strategy Analyst  
Supplier Manager  
Support Services Manager

Talent Acquisition Apprentice  
Talent for Care Apprentice  
Technical Instructor  
Technician  
Trainer/Assessor/Facilitator  
Trauma Physiotherapist

Vocational Pre-employment Co-ordinator

Ward administrator  
Waste & Environment Manager  
Weight Management Coordinator  
Work Experience & Apprenticeship Lead

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