

ASUME

Volunteering in Dementia



Training

The analysis of the survey data shows that training for volunteers is seen as very important by volunteer agencies. Around 93% of them reported providing training to their volunteers no matter whether they support people living with dementia (and/or their family members or carers) or volunteer in other roles.

Volunteers identified a range of training needs for people volunteering with people in dementia care, including support to address stigma and potential fear among volunteers through to more practical aspects of support such as first aid and learning about appropriate activities for people with dementia.

Taking away perhaps the fear element, but I don't know how you can without getting them there first. Because I think a lot of people have a fear of dealing with people with dementia in case something flares up. So taking away the fear element. (CVF16, Cumbria)

Well the one I never did and I think I should do for life generally is first aid, CPR, things like that. I think that's essential. You know, particularly when you're working with people that are more vulnerable perhaps to becoming ill or... yeah, and so definitely first aid. I think the one thing I might have found useful was to have more ideas about activities to do. But I do think it's important to be perhaps coming up with more kinds of things for people to do. At least have ideas of things for people to do. (CVF04, Cumbria)

Most volunteers reported some level of training but for some this had taken place a number of years earlier and for others it was very basic. A minority of volunteers noted they had regular training and contact and this was an element that kept them feeling secure, linked into the organisation and confident in the support they could draw on if needed.

In the four years I've had no training whatsoever, even though the Alzheimer's Society promised this training and you know, this should happen and you should have these weeks of this and all that; nothing has ever happened. (CVF10, Cumbria)

I suppose we know what you'd do if somebody hurt themselves in a way because of your own experience through life but we've no training, so we're looking into that. (CVF10, Cumbria)

Training on a wide range of subjects was reported: dementia, advocacy, moving and handling, first aid, food hygiene, communication, difficult behaviour but a few reported no training at all. There were some very good examples of training for volunteers.

That was actually a very, very thorough training course actually, XX Advocacy, because it went into dementia as well as advocacy and the legal side of it and you know, information about boundaries and how not to overstep boundaries and that sort of thing. (SVF01, Stirlingshire)

Some felt that the lack of training related to their existing skills and experience, which made it unnecessary.

But aside from that there hasn't been much specific training. I think maybe because the people who volunteer, there's me and the other lady both have experience working in care and obviously doing occupational therapy, I think they kind of trust that you know what you're doing. (CVF09, Cumbria)

This was echoed by others who felt that they already had useful training and education from previous work or education experiences. Some would not have taken on their volunteering role without that past experience.

I think although I feel it because of my HNC, I don't know if I would feel prepared if I hadn't have had my college training. (SVF03, Stirlingshire)

I: The roles that you've taken on were they roles you feel that you could have taken on without that professional background thinking about the support that you might have required, or the activities that you did? (Interviewer)

R: No, I don't think so. And I think that the people who I was seeking to work with me on it in the fundraising and the general getting it up and running, they recognised my background and therefore were more supportive than if I hadn't had that background. (SVF02, Stirlingshire)

Others did not feel that training was an important part of their role, although this was not a common view among the participants.

I tend to go with the residents and you offer them a head massage or do their nails, that, kind of, thing. A lot of other things you do, it's just common sense I think, you know. I don't know of any official training would have helped me to do that. (SVF07, Cumbria)

Training might be provided by the organisation supporting and recruiting the volunteers or they may be sent on external training programmes.

S's thing was brilliant. She sent us on loads and loads of courses for dementia and craftwork and all that sort of thing - we've been on loads and loads of courses. (CVF12, Cumbria)

D mentioned doing the dementia friends and the dementia champions training, so I did that on her recommendation. There wasn't much to it. It gives you a basic overview. But aside from that there hasn't been much specific training. (CVF09, Cumbria)



For more information
visit www.asume.co.uk or
contact Dr Vikki McCall,
Principal Investigator of the project
vikki.mccall@stir.ac.uk /
[@vikki_mccall](https://twitter.com/vikki_mccall)