

Hunter New England  
Local Health District  
Information for  
Interested Volunteers



**Health**  
Hunter New England  
Local Health District

## Acknowledgements

Hunter New England Local Health District (HNE Health) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land in which our health facilities are located. We pay respect to the Elders, community members and the community-controlled sector who partner with us to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our District.

## About this information

This *Information for Interested Volunteers* is for people interested in volunteering with any HNE Health program, site, facility or service.

Your local Volunteer Manager will give you information about your specific volunteer service.

Please direct any questions to your local Volunteer Manager.

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# Glossary of Terms

## Direct Supervisor

This person manages you on a day-to-day basis. They might be a Program Leader, Team Leader, Nurse Unit Manager (NUM), Service Manager or other suitable staff member.

## Hunter New England Local Health District

We refer to Hunter New England Local Health District, as *HNE Health* in this document. *HNE Health* provides a range of public health services to the Hunter, New England and Lower Mid North Coast regions and is one of 15 local health districts in NSW.

## NSW Health

The NSW Ministry of Health and various NSW Health organisations (such as HNE Health) make up NSW Health. This is the NSW public health system. More information is available on the NSW Health website.

## Patient

We use the word 'patient' in this document, when referring to any person who is in the care of HNE Health. We recognise that 'patients' may also be called clients, residents or consumers in your relevant service.

## Volunteer Manager

We recognise that there are many different volunteer services across HNE Health.

In your relevant service, the person who organises or manages the volunteer service may be a:

- Nurse in a management position
- Senior Health Manager/Administrator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Volunteer Manager
- Other suitable person.

We use 'Volunteer Manager' in this document as a general phrase. It describes the person coordinating or managing the volunteers in your service.

## Volunteer Service

The place where you volunteer may be a program, site, facility or service. We use the phrase 'volunteer service' in this document, to describe all types of volunteer groups.

# Section 1: About us

## Why volunteer with HNE Health?

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with HNE Health. We appreciate your time, knowledge and skills.

We are one of 15 local health districts in NSW and we provide a range of public health services to the Hunter, New England and Lower Mid North Coast regions.

We have over 16,000 staff and 1,600 volunteers, who work across many roles in various locations.

Our volunteers are an essential and valuable asset. Their tireless efforts and hard work supports better outcomes for patients, staff and visitors.

## Our opportunities

There are many opportunities for volunteers within our organisation.

Our volunteers assist with:

- **Wayfinding.** Meeting, greeting, directing and/or escorting patients, families and visitors to our facilities in a friendly and positive way.
- **Fundraising.** Operating Volunteer kiosks and shops, organising and participating in fundraising events such as fetes, raffles, cake stalls, craft stalls and functions and working alongside the hospital auxiliaries.
- **Companionship and support.** Visiting and spending one-on-one time with clients, patients and families, listening to music with patients, reading to patients, Ward

Grandparent programs, Neonatal Intensive Care Support and providing palliative care support.

- **Patient activities.** Organising activities in emergency departments, palliative care, wards, hydrotherapy pools, equipment pools, outpatient clinics; working in the libraries, working with the 'Arts for Health' program, delivering recreational programs and helping with diversional therapy activities.
- **Patient welfare and care.** Pastoral care, managing patient washing, clothing repairs and providing hand massages to patients.
- **Patient transport.** Assisting with transport and escorting patients to treatment or programs.
- **Organising and distributing.** Providing patients with newspapers, books, magazines, toys, craft and/or DVDs.
- **Helping with meals.** Preparing and delivering morning teas and lunches.
- **Play opportunities.** Helping with child care during therapy sessions and providing toys, craft and resources to children.
- **Administration.** Preparing resource packs, folding gowns, patient arm bands, start up charts for outpatient clinics, pre-admission clinics, ante-natal clinics, wards, clinical information, community health and staff health.
- **Gardening and outdoor activity.** Assisting with maintenance.
- **Minor equipment maintenance.** Checking loan equipment for possible repairs and managing minor loan equipment repairs.
- **Participating** in community events.
- **Guiding and archiving** for hospital museums.

Volunteering contributes to our vision of Healthy People – now and in the future.

It also allows you to share your resources, improve your communication skills and self-confidence.

It improves your wellbeing and promotes a healthy community.

## About HNE Health

Visit our website and read more in the 'About us' section, for the most up-to-date information.

[www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)

## Excellence

You are likely to hear or read the term 'Excellence' while volunteering with HNE Health.

Excellence for every patient, every time is our ultimate aim.

It's about providing consistent, quality communication and clinical care for all patients, at all times.

It's about doing the right thing for patients and their families, doing it consistently and doing it with respect. It also makes HNE Health a great place to volunteer.

Examples of Excellence you might find in your volunteer role include:

- Rounding with your Direct Supervisor or Volunteer Manager.
- Standards of Behaviour in your team.
- Volunteer recognition.

## Our workplace expectations

You need to understand what our expectations of you are, on a day-to-day basis.

The *Workplace Expectations* (Appendix 2), reflects our values. It describes our expectations of you, and what you can expect from us.

Our *Values Charter* (Appendix 3), the *NSW Health Code of Conduct* and local *Standards of Behaviour* give you more information about the workplace behaviour that is expected.

If you have any questions please ask your local Volunteer Manager.

### Further information

Appendix 2: *Workplace Expectations*.

Appendix 3: *Values Charter*.

NSW Health Policy *NSW Health Code of Conduct*.

## Our CORE values

HNE Health is committed to building an organisation that lives its values.

Our values are reflected in the way we behave in the workplace, how we treat each other and our clients, and our attitude to safety.

Through Collaboration, Openness and Respect, we create a sense of Empowerment.

### Further information

Appendix 3: *Values Charter*.

## Section 2:

# Volunteering in NSW Health

## What is volunteering?

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain (Volunteering Australia).

A volunteer is someone who:

- freely and willingly chooses to undertake an activity, without compulsion or legal obligation.
- gives their time and skills and receives no monetary reward (except for out-of-pocket expenses).
- provides a service that benefits the community.

## The vision for NSW Health

Volunteering within NSW Health increases the health care experiences for patients and clients. It is rewarding for volunteers and the service.

## Principles of volunteering supported by NSW Health

Volunteering:

- benefits both the community and the volunteer.
- is unpaid.
- is always a matter of choice.
- is not a substitute for paid work.
- does not replace paid workers nor is a threat to paid workers.
- is a vehicle for individuals and groups to address human, environmental and social needs.

- is a legitimate way in which citizens can take part in the activities of their community.
- respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- promotes human rights and equality.
- builds the capacity of individuals and organisations.
- can be a pathway to further education and/or paid employment.

## Volunteer rights in NSW Health

Volunteers with us:

- are able to work in a healthy and safe environment.
- are engaged under equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.
- are adequately covered by insurance.
- are appropriately reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of us.
- do not fill positions previously held by a worker.
- do not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.
- know what the volunteer role is, how it will be delivered and what result is expected.
- are provided with appropriate orientation and sufficient training.
- are given the same respect and dignity as paid workers.

## Volunteer responsibilities

As a volunteer with HNE Health, we expect you to:

- be reliable and accountable.
- respect confidentiality.

- have self-respect and respect the rights of others.
- have a good understanding of the role of HNE Health.
- have a good understanding of our policies and procedures.
- represent our interests.
- carry out your specified position description.
- give feedback.
- undertake training.
- ask for support when needed.
- be aware of health and safety risks.

If you have any further questions, please ask your local Volunteer Manager.

### **Further information**

NSW Health Policy *Volunteers – Engaging, Supporting and Managing Volunteers.*

## **Things to consider**

### **Do you have time to volunteer?**

Before deciding if you would like to volunteer with us, think about your availability.

Your commitment to our service is personal. You choose your hours and how often you volunteer. Your Volunteer Manager will talk about your choices with you. You may need to work to a set roster depending on the activities you become involved in.

Volunteers generally attend weekly, fortnightly or monthly. It is important that you can commit to being available and are dependable.

## Section 3: Applying to volunteer

### How to apply

There are many different volunteer services across HNE Health. We cover 25 local government areas.

If you get in touch with the relevant local Volunteer Manager, they can provide details on how to apply. This includes the forms you need to fill out.

Take your time to read all the information provided, then make your decision. Any questions should be directed to your local Volunteer Manager.

### Mandatory forms & checks

We ask all volunteers to submit forms, in order for us to do mandatory checks. This must take place before you can start volunteering.

#### National Police Check

We lodge a National Police Check (NPC). This is to protect the safety, welfare and wellbeing of HNE Health clients, patients and assets. A person's prior convictions may be relevant to their volunteer duties.

You will be required to complete the NSW Health *National Police Check Consent* form. We need to see your original identifying documents as per NSW Health's *Identification Checklist* and we can tell you what to provide.

#### Further information

NSW Health Policy *Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks*.

#### Working with Children Check

Your local Volunteer Manager will tell you if you need a Working with Children Check (WWCC). Anyone in paid or voluntary child-related work in NSW will need it.

It must be renewed every five years and is free for volunteers.

#### Further information

NSW Health Policy *Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks*.

#### Aged Care Check

Aged care volunteers need a valid National Police Check. It should be renewed every three years. Relevant volunteers must complete and have witnessed an *Aged Care Statutory Declaration*.

#### Further information

NSW Health Policy *Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks*.

#### Privacy Undertaking for Volunteer Worker

In NSW, the law protects the privacy of patient and health employee information.

You must read, sign and have witnessed the *Privacy Undertaking for Volunteer Worker* form. This shows that you have read and understood it. The form includes the Health Privacy Principles.

#### Further information

*Privacy Undertaking for Volunteer Worker*.

#### NSW Health Code of Conduct

Your local Volunteer Manager will talk about this with you. Read and sign the *NSW Health Code of Conduct* (the Code). This shows that you have read, understood and accepted our conditions while volunteering.

Together with our CORE Values, the Code of Conduct provides a guide for your behaviour, decisions and actions. It applies to all volunteers.

Your appointment as a volunteer depends on your obedience with the Code. Be sure to read and understand the Code, as any breaches may result in disciplinary action.

The standards in the Code also extend to:

- social activities that take place outside work premises but under HNE Health auspices (e.g. volunteer functions).
- commenting on social media where your status as a HNE Health volunteer is indicated or can be inferred.

Please ask your local Volunteer Manager, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Code of Conduct.

### Key Standards

The *NSW Health Code of Conduct* requires volunteers to:

- promote a positive work environment.
- show honesty and integrity.
- act professionally and ethically.
- use official resources lawfully, efficiently and only as authorised.
- keep professional relationships with patients or clients.

### Further information

NSW Health Policy *NSW Health Code of Conduct*.

## Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination

It is important for volunteers to comply with NSW Health occupational assessment and

vaccination requirements. This reduces the risk of transmission of vaccine preventable diseases to our patients and health care workers.

We classify volunteers as either Category A, Category A - High Risk or Category B, depending on where they volunteer.

The categories will be based upon a risk assessment performed by the facility manager, according to the specific location of the volunteer's position.

### Key Information

Category A and Category A - High Risk volunteers have direct patient contact.

Direct patient contact may involve:

- direct patient care / support in clinical areas.
- close personal contact with patients (within personal space) in clinical and non-clinical areas.
- close contact in a confined/ enclosed / semi-enclosed area where lung conditions such as influenza and whooping cough are easily caught through coughing or contamination of surfaces. This may also occur in the following non clinical environments and situations:
  - in the kiosks where group activities occur.
  - in close contact with patients.
  - in the kiosk where seating is provided or where patients may stay for long periods of time.
  - when helping with meals.

Category B volunteers do not volunteer in clinical areas or have contact with patients.

Category A volunteers must be vaccinated/screened for the following infectious diseases:

- Hepatitis B
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (dTpa)
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Tuberculosis (TB).

Category A - High Risk volunteers must comply with the above requirements. They must also have an annual flu shot (and provide supporting documentation) before the 1st June each year.

You will have to fill out the Volunteer's *New Recruit Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Package* for Staff Health.

If you need to have any missing vaccinations, Staff Health Service will provide them for free.

If you have any questions, please ask your local Volunteer Manager.

### **Further information**

NSW Health Policy PD2018\_009 *Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases.*

## **Other forms**

You may need to fill out other forms such as a *Volunteer Application Form*. Your local Volunteer Manager will tell you about specific forms for your volunteer service.

## **What happens next?**

### **Interview**

After we receive your application, we may ask you to an interview with your local Volunteer Manager. Interviews may occur individually or in a group. We may ask you about where and why you would like to volunteer.

## **Volunteers approved**

We will call or write to you if you have been accepted as a volunteer. You will be asked to complete Volunteer Orientation.

## **Volunteers not approved**

Unfortunately, your application may not be approved.

Reasons for this include:

- National Police Check (NPC) not approved.
- No positions available at the time of the application.
- Applicant too young (under 14 years of age). Most areas will only accept people 18 years +
- Training required and no current training options available.

Your local Volunteer Manager will speak with you regarding your application, should this occur.

## Section 4: Our top 10 tips

### Top 10 tips for volunteering with us

1. Have the time. Give the time you can spare. Walk away if you need to.
2. This is a two-way relationship. It relies on us all for it to be successful.
3. Think Excellence. Live the CORE values.
4. Be prepared for the paperwork.
5. Look after your health. Our policies and procedures around things like immunisations and safety exist to keep you safe.
6. Be flexible. Do not be afraid of change and growth.
7. Know your boundaries and what your role involves.
8. Look for and celebrate the positives. There are many.
9. Remember – you are a volunteer, not an employee.
10. Ask for help.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Information for Potential Volunteers Declaration Form

Hunter New England Local Health District

### “INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS” DECLARATION FORM

I \_\_\_\_\_(name)

confirm that I have read and understood the essential information contained in the Hunter New England Local Health District *Information for Interested Volunteers* in preparation for volunteering with HNE Health.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions of a Volunteer Manager about the *Information for Interested Volunteers*.

By signing this document, I also agree to the expectations and requirements of a volunteer in the HNE Health.

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

**Office Use Only:** Volunteer Declaration – HNELHD record-keeping process: When completed, the Volunteer Manager can store an electronic and/or paper copy of the signed declaration as part of their local files.

## Appendix 2: Workplace Expectations

Delivery of our services is based on our planned disciplined Excellence approach to doing the right thing for patients and their families, doing it consistently and doing it with respect. It is also about making HNE Health a great place to work.

When you work with HNE Health it is important that you understand what is expected of you on a day-to-day basis.

Our Values Charter, the NSW Health Code of Conduct and local Standards of Behaviour provide you with more detailed information about the workplace behaviour expected.

To make it simple the statements listed here reflect our values and make it clear what is expected of you and what you can expect.

#### We expect that you will;

- Be responsible and accountable for your maintaining effective workplace relationships, your contribution, to the team and your actions on a daily basis
- Be truthful, open, and trustworthy in your interactions with everyone.
- Communicate and behave in a courteous, polite and respectful manner with all people to promote a harmonious workplace
- Do your job professionally, ethically and within the scope of practice of your role.
- Report inappropriate or unethical practice and speak up when things simply don't go right, even when you make a mistake yourself.
- Provide the best service possible to everyone at all times, striving for excellence in everything you do.
- Deliver your service in a caring, compassionate, empathic and supportive way.
- Be punctual, continuously develop yourself personally and professionally and see things through when you begin them.
- Be familiar with your team's Standards of Behaviour; actively use them and speak up about workplace issues early and directly with the person concerned
- Escalate an issue at any stage where you perceive an inappropriate or ineffective response.

#### You can expect;

- A workplace that supports and demonstrates the behaviours listed above
- Regular time to catch up with your manager including 30 and 90 day discussions, rounding and annual development review conversations
- Cooperative and supportive team members and managers focussed on providing excellent service

# Appendix 3: Values Charter



Hunter New England Health is committed to building an organisation that lives its values. Our Values Charter and Code of Conduct provide the framework for the standards of behaviour demonstrated at Hunter New England Health. Through collaboration, openness and respect we aim to create a sense of empowerment so staff can use their knowledge, skills and experience to provide excellence for every patient, every time.

### Collaboration

In living this value we will:

- Work together to achieve strategic direction and goals
- Take responsibility for contributing to effective team performance
- Share information, knowledge and skills with colleagues
- Capitalise on the individual strengths of the team
- Demonstrate a 'can-do' approach
- Actively add value to the organisation, our team and our patients
- Celebrate success
- Value and acknowledge team members

### Openness

In living this value we will:

- Communicate honestly and openly
- Provide timely accurate information to patients and colleagues
- Express our point of view in a positive and constructive way
- Acknowledge when we are wrong
- State how we feel so others can understand our concerns
- Speak up when we observe inappropriate behaviour or practice
- Invite and use feedback to learn and promote positive change
- Act in ways that encourage people to raise issues and express their opinions
- Undertake critical reflection for continuous organisational and self improvement

### Respect

In living this value we will:

- Communicate and behave in ways that deliver a quality experience for our patients, clients and customers
- Be empathetic, polite and professional in our interactions with others
- Treat others with courtesy and compassion
- Behave in ways that maintain self-esteem and dignity for ourselves and others
- Actively listen to others so they feel they have been heard
- Value the diversity of our colleagues and community
- Address conflict directly in a respectful way that focuses on early resolution
- Consistently act in ways that model our agreed standards of behaviour
- Take personal responsibility for following through on assigned tasks

### Empowerment

In living this value we will:

- Deliver patient centred services that engenders trust and confidence
- Explain the rationale behind decisions to foster better understanding
- Use resources responsibly
- Strive for quality and excellence in everything we do and say
- Update knowledge and skills regularly and commit to lifelong learning
- Seek and encourage innovation
- Accept and embrace challenge and change