

Volunteering Case Study

Royal Voluntary Service, Forth Valley Royal Hospital

Until Lorna Stevenson became manager of the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) café at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in 2013, she had never heard of CVS Falkirk.

“They contacted me just after I began as the manager, to ask whether we’d ever considered having younger people as volunteers, and what kind of age range I had opportunities for.”

In particular, CVS asked Lorna if she would be interested in working with young people participating in the Saltire Awards, which are open to those aged 12-25 years old. Eager to introduce some new faces to her team, Lorna was thrilled with that CVS had reached out. Since then, she has worked closely with the CVS volunteering team to provide young volunteers with the opportunity to develop their skills and experiences in a busy, friendly environment.

Lorna, who started at RVS as a volunteer herself, had noticed something of a “stigma” around younger volunteers in other places. “They don’t seem to want young people there,” she says.

However, she believes it’s important to give young people a bit of responsibility. “Even just going around with our trolley shop service, dealing with cash and stock, it’s amazing how they mature!”

She admits that having younger volunteers doesn’t always work at other RVS branches, and that it was difficult to change some of the longer-held attitudes when she first started bringing in younger volunteers.

But it works well for them, situated in such a busy hospital that sees so many different kinds of people every day, and Lorna now has a “great mix” of people in her team.

“Everyone’s always asking after each other, and they socialise outside of the café too, with things like Christmas nights out.”

Lorna has loved working with CVS Falkirk’s volunteering team over the last two years. “I’ve often found it more beneficial to find volunteers through CVS than our own website.” One of the things she appreciates most is the honesty, “the open lines of communication that are always there,” which she feels works best for her and her team.

“Every volunteer who comes to me through CVS genuinely wants to be here. They don’t feel like they have to be, and there are never any time-wasters.”

“I don’t know what I’d have done without CVS.”