

Volunteer Structures

Kerry, what was Open Stage

and how did it evolve

into a volunteer programme?

We did Open Stage and Open Stage, very simply,

was about us giving up

programming power to our audience

for them to decide a six-month season of work

just before the 2012 Olympic games.

So the fact that it evolved into a volunteer thing,

well, that's how it evolved.

I didn't know we were going to do that before,

and that's where we created

The Stratford East Singers,

which is an all-inclusive singing choir,

which is now 150 people strong.

What other roles apart from the choir

did the volunteers undertake and how is it structured?

What we did was we set up a bank of information

about the volunteers, who they were.

Charlotte had a number two called Simmy.

Her whole job was looking after

volunteers and supporting them.

So if there were 100 people registered,

she would know them all as well as she could.

And those who had free time

on Thursday, she would find out

who they were and what they could do
and she would be the broker.
She would be the conduit and work out
where to place the volunteer
and how to support the volunteer
and how to give them a job that had value to it.

Also, she would also understand
the organisation to help work out
what you need to tour these people.

We'll do that for you.

For some people it was vocational.

For some people it was just,
they were interested, and that's allowed.

For some people it was because they wanted
to get out of the house on a Thursday.

The other thing we learnt,
the other practical thing;
real thing that we learned
was that there were lots of people
who actually were in the community
who needed more support
than what we could give them.

Who needed specialist support or specialist care.

And we hadn't come across that before in that way.

So we had to work out a way
of how to identify people
who needed more support

and then how we referred them.

I also spoke to Dave Thomson from the NHS Trust,
where the 5 Boroughs Partnership
involves participants in reshaping and developing
health services in the Northwest.

Dave, how big is the programme and how does it work?

372 patients, service users, carers, and volunteers
are signed up to a project
called the Trust Involvement Scheme.

The scheme is coordinated
by a full-time member of staff.

She facilitates the involvement
of those individuals in a whole range of work
across the organisation.

Work that includes; staff training,
joining recruitment panels,
audits, investigation teams.

So there's a whole range,
and then the usual; your committees,
your food-tasting panels, your catering groups,
your going onto wards and doing volunteering,
there's a whole range of things;
quality audits, so yeah,
we involve them in a lot of things.