The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

NHS Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

# Guide to working with volunteers at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals

## Voluntary Services & Our Volunteers

The Voluntary Services Team recruit, train and support volunteers across the Trust and all it's Voluntary Partnerships. We offer advice on utilising volunteers in your department, guidance on how you can best support them and governance matters.

We have circa 300 volunteers undertaking around 35 different roles in 50 departments across the Trust. The work of volunteers should enhance the experience of patients and visitors in hospital and should be supplementary to the statutory care the hospital must offer. A volunteer role can be made to fit the need of the department but it must not replace any role a paid member of staff should be completing. Volunteers agree to a 3 or 4 hour shift per week for six months, however they are not under contract and can leave at any time without notice. Each month our volunteers support roughly 6,000 patients, make on average 1,700 deliveries from pharmacies and are the first face many visitors see when entering Trust buildings.

The Voluntary Services Team is generously supported by Sheffield Hospitals Charity. To keep up to date with what volunteers are doing in the Trust, take a look at our Facebook and Twitter pages @Sheffhospvols.

## What can a volunteer do?

- Department support - Collecting/delivering patient samples, records or pharmacy supplies.
- Help with accompanying patients from a ward or clinic to other areas of the hospital site.
- Collecting or bringing wheelchairs (if trained).
- Meeting and greeting visitors/patients.
- Helping with admin duties such as laminating, putting together packs or Trust Surveys.
- Sit with or do activities with patients.
- Making drinks for patients or helping with meal time support (if trained).

## What can't a volunteer do?

- Provide personal care such as assisting patients with the toilet, washing or dressing.
- Be involved with any general nursing care or administration of medications.
- Deal with complaints and incidents.
- Move and handle patients or heavy items.
- Chaperone patients or translate for patients.
- Transport patients outside of the hospital.
- Complete any documentation including writing patient's names on the board.
- Feed patients (currently).

Sheffield Hospitals Charity
www.sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk

PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# Volunteer Request Process:

Identify a need for volunteers in your department, check the information about what volunteers can and cannot do on page 1, and call the Voluntary Services Team on Ext. 15735 or email sth.volunteer@nhs.net

Speak to one of our team about the needs within your department, think about long term need. We ask for a role commitment of at least six months after recruitment and clearances are completed.

Our team will then send you some forms to complete and return. A role can not be recruited for without a risk assessment and role request form filled out and signed and an updated Role Description agreed.

The Voluntary Services Team will then recruit volunteers for you. We recruit from 1st to 15th of each month. Your need may not get filled straight away and may take a few months of recruitment to fill your rota.

All volunteers will receive volunteer training. They also have to complete all the same checks and mandatory training as staff before starting their role. On top of this they will have any specific role training they might need.

Once their training and checks are complete we will arrange a start date with you. At the start of their first shift you must provide someone to give them an induction into your department.

The volunteer recruitment and clearance process is the same as it is for a staff member. This can take time so you will need to allow at least six weeks if not longer to get volunteers in place. If you have a more urgent need for help consider using our Active Response volunteers. For more information on exactly what Active Response volunteers can help with email sth.volunteer@nhs.net

# Volunteer Inductions

An induction is the first experience a volunteer will have of your department. It should be done at the start of their first shift. The Voluntary Services Team cover a Trust induction and the role of a volunteer in their training sessions, so all you will need to focus on are details specific to your area.

Things to cover might include:

- **A friendly welcome** - someone to meet them at the time agreed and to say hello.
- **Staff facilities** - where to store personal belongings, hang coats, staff toilets, break rooms, where to make a cup of tea.
- **PPE** - any specific PPE needs for your area, bare below elbows if appropriate, where a volunteer might find details of PPE changes should they happen.
- **Department volunteer role** - explain clearly what you need a volunteer to do, where they will find anything they might need to do it and what to do if that task is completed.
- **Introductions** - introduce them to other staff in the department and point out who they can turn to.

You can also add in anything else you think is relevant or might be useful for someone working in your area.

# Ongoing support for volunteers

The Voluntary Services Team conduct regular reviews with volunteers, these are at six weeks after their start date and then every six months. At this point they are offered the chance to change roles if they wish to or stay in the same role for another six months. The team are always here to help and have an office on both sites should a volunteer have a problem they need support with, however the ongoing support day to day needs to come from within the department.

Things to think about when supporting a volunteer might be:

- **Briefings** - include them in any staff briefings, they need to to know the information too. If their shift times don't line up with briefings make sure someone is tasked to update them when they arrive.
- **Check in** - make sure you or someone checks in with them during their shift to see how things are going.
- **Keep them busy** - make sure you have enough work for a volunteer or they know where to turn to find more work and make sure all staff know what volunteer can help with.
- **Deal with problems** - for example, if someone keeps using the volunteer locker so the volunteers don't have places to put their belonging address it, don't ignore it.

# Ten Top Tips for working with volunteers

1. **Be clear on your need for help** - as in the sections on page 3, give a volunteer clear guidance on the tasks you need them to perform and what to do if those are completed, volunteers don't like to be bored. They are there to help so make sure you use them.
2. **Engage with volunteers and make sure your whole team do as well** - volunteers are not paid so the experience is everything, if they are ignored or made to feel like they aren't welcome they won't come back, chat to them in the break room or ask how their shift went as they leave. It will make a big difference.
3. **Ensure you have somewhere for a volunteer to put their things** - make sure you have a locker or shelf in a staff room reserved for volunteers use. This is a small thing but can really help a volunteer feel like part of the team.
4. **Organise an induction** - make sure someone is there at the start time and date agreed to give a volunteer an induction into the department, more details on what to include are on page 3. Showing them around and clearly explaining what is needed will make their first day much easier and mean they will look forward to coming back next week.
5. **Remember your manners** - please and thank you go a long way with a volunteer, remember they are not paid so everything they do is out of kindness and a willingness to help you. 'Please could you...' or 'thank you for doing that for me' will help make them feel respected and valued. Don't give an order to a volunteer, they aren't paid, if they don't want to do something they don't have to.
6. **Have regular catch ups** - the Voluntary Services Team check in with volunteers but make sure you do as well. Volunteers know how busy you are and won't want to disturb you but there maybe things they want to ask or need help with. Make sure someone is tasked with catching up with volunteers every few weeks at least for a five minute chat. Issues are more easily dealt with at the time, at department level.
7. **Listen to your volunteers** - listen to feedback from volunteers; often they have a lot more time to watch how patients and visitors interact with their surroundings than you do. A suggestion from them about moving a table in the waiting area or putting up an extra sign might have a positive impact on patient experience. You might not always be able to act on feedback and that is ok, but listen to feedback and explain why a change can't be made if that is the case. Remember that many volunteers have a broad range of skills and experience of many careers, including the health service, they will often have useful insights.
8. **Remember volunteers aren't staff**- this means they can't do certain things, don't always have the same understanding of hospital policy that staff do or might want to do things their own way. Kindly and clearly explaining why we have the policy or process in place that we do, is the best way to approach this and ensure the volunteer carries tasks out in the correct way.
9. **Make a plan for their breaks** - volunteers might want to take a short coffee break during their shift. If the role is something time sensitive make a plan for when it is best for them to take a break or agree who will cover for them while they do.
10. **Recognise their efforts** - In most cases a simple 'thank you for everything you have done today' will suffice. However if a volunteer has gone above and beyond, make a special effort to say thank you and tell the Voluntary Services Team, so the feedback can go on their records which can be used in award entries or references. If staff or the department have received special comments or feedback in patient surveys then pass this along to volunteers as well, they are part of your team.